



LIFE AT HOME

DECOR • DOMESTIC ARTS • RENOVATIONS • RENTALS • RESALE

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AROUND THE HOUSE

Douse your fire risk

SAFETY • As the temperature drops, the fire risk posed by heating appliances — from furnaces to fireplaces — increases... and that's just way too much warmth, no matter how cold the day.

Experts recommend an annual professional servicing for the appliances and an annual cleaning for fireplace and stove chimneys — so if you haven't had yours serviced yet, now is an excellent time to book your appointment.

You'll find fire prevention information at calgary.ca/fire and appliance service shops in the Yellow Pages.

— Calgary Herald

Recharge and retool

TOOLS • Black & Decker has launched its new VPX system, a line of power tools and household products that share an interchangeable lithium-ion battery — you buy one or two batteries plus the battery charger and you're set to go, however many of the VPX-compatible tools that you buy — just switch the battery from one tool to the other.

This offers you cost savings over traditional tools because you're not buying the rechargeable battery for every one of them — plus, the lithium-ion technology is smaller and lighter than traditional power tool batteries.

So far, the line includes a 14-volt drill, seven-volt drill, screwdriver, cut saw, hand vacuum, air inflator, power source and flashlight. Next year and beyond, they'll be rolling out additional power tools, plus home, kitchen, cleaning, electronics, technology and yard maintenance products.

For more information, go to blackanddecker.com.

— Calgary Herald

Don't touch that sink

RENOVATING • If a kitchen reno is in your new year, put down the cabinet catalogues and step away from the shiny faucet displays. Go instead to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. website at cmhc.ca for the "Before You Start Renovating Your Kitchen" checklist.

The free document lists everything you need to consider before tackling a kitchen renovation, whether you're doing it yourself or hiring a contractor. It will walk you through size and design, fixtures and appliances, and heating and ventilation, helping you to figure out if you need repairs to your kitchen before you hit the design and decor stage.

— Calgary Herald



Herald Archive

From heartwarming to just plain happy, Herald readers share their favourite Christmas customs

TREASURED TRADITIONS

YVONNE JEFFERY
CALGARY HERALD

We asked and you answered. In early December we sent out the call to Calgary Herald readers to share their favourite ways to celebrate Christmas. It was tough to choose just four of the responses, but we think that those profiled here provide elements of delight and even a little inspiration. To all who took the time to write in — a heartfelt thank you. And to everyone, a very Merry Christmas — may these stories start your holidays in just the right way.

PJ Party

Charlene Sim says that her family's jammies-

on-Christmas-Eve event is "the most fun tradition ever" and it's tough to disagree. Imagine one grandparent, two parents and three daughters all decked out in matching pyjamas (even if they're in different cities), and that's the family on the evening of Dec. 24 — something that Sim says they've done ever since the girls (now aged 16 to 24) were babies.

"I've always bought new jammies for Christmas Eve, to kind of get the girls to go to bed," she says.

"They would get the PJs, and that way they had a present, and could go snuggle up

in bed and think about Santa."

She even added a new pillow to the tradition every year, to ensure sweet dreams.

"Sometimes (the pyjamas) are a hit and sometimes they don't fit properly and they're a miss... but they're so much fun in the meantime," she says.

"One year, they didn't fit anybody — my husband's were up to his elbows, and the girls' granny nightgowns were tight and short."

Despite that, when she tried to stop the tradition, she received a chorus of objections and offers of help.

"Do it for your family," Sim says. "Honestly, you will get more giggles — everybody has to put them on, no matter how stupid they look."

She says it also offers a chance to slow down on Christmas Eve and come together as a family.

"It's not always the easiest tradition, but it's worth it," she says.

Letters from the Heart

Several years ago, says Linda Hunter, her daughter Dawn suggested the family write letters to each other, to be opened on Christmas Day. Today, Hunter says that letter exchange forms a "priceless gift" each year.

"Every November 30th, our family gathers together to celebrate my birthday," she says.

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Seriously, he really gets into it.

Sam loves real estate and it shows.

In 2007 he sold 100 million dollars worth of property and his clients celebrated big time. He knows the market, he's responsive and he's available to work with you across all price ranges. If you are making a move in 2008, Sam will get into it for you with exciting results.

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