



## LIFE AT HOME

DECOR • DOMESTIC ARTS • RENOVATIONS • RENTALS • RESALE

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## AROUND THE HOUSE



Courtesy, Toilet Tattoos

## Tattoo your toilet

**NOVELTY** • For summer, it's butterflies. For fall, it's autumn leaves. For the holidays, it's a festively wrapped gift box. It's your toilet flushed with beauty created by Toilet Tattoos.

The \$9.95 temporary tattoos are lid embellishments that peel on and off for easy changes and cleaning. All you do is peel one off a backer card, place it on the toilet lid and smooth it out. They are made from electrostatic vinyl film, so they are reusable and will not harm the lid when removed.

In addition to whimsical and classical themes, you can get original paintings or photographs made into tattoos.

Visit toilet-tattoos.com or call 1-330-468-3226.

— McClatchy Newspapers

## Daytime break-and-enters

**CRIME** • The Calgary Police Service is warning city residents about an increase in daytime residential break-ins since the end of September. The culprits forced their way into homes while no one was home and searched for items to steal.

Police report the targeted houses seem to have been chosen randomly, and include those both with and without alarm systems. They're encouraging you to report any suspicious people, vehicles or activities in your community right away to the police non-emergency line at 266-1234; crimes in progress can be reported at 911.

To find out what you can do to help protect your home, go to calgarypolice.ca and click on the Sections and Units link and then on Crime Prevention. You'll find tips listed under Home Security.

— Yvonne Jeffery, Calgary Herald

## Last weekend for leaves

**RECYCLING** • If leaves and pumpkins are lingering reminders of fall around your house, you have until tomorrow to bag them and take them to city landfills or seasonal drop-off locations free of charge.

For the location nearest you, call 311 or visit calgary.ca/waste. The city says this is an easy way to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions created when yard waste and other organic materials break down in landfills.

If you miss the city's pickup, you can always use the leaves to provide winter protection for tender perennials — or start your own composting system.

— Calgary Herald

## THE SECONDARY SUITE SOLUTION

Is it for you? Looking at rental realities

YVONNE JEFFERY  
CALGARY HERALD

**M**y career as a landlord was mercifully short. Just a few months' duration, in fact — long enough to realize I didn't want to share a house (albeit separated into upstairs and downstairs suites) with someone I didn't know, and especially that I didn't want to tiptoe around on the hardwood floors or forgo early-morning showers to avoid disturbing the tenant downstairs.

In a different house, however, built to today's building code, a secondary suite — a completely separate space in your home that's

rented to a tenant — makes a lot of sense. As Calgary real estate agent Halyna Tataryn says, legal secondary suites can be great mortgage helpers for landlords and affordable housing for tenants.

## ALSO SEE

■ Q &amp; A on secondary suites

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lack of legal secondary suites," she says. "There are actually very few of them in the city. If I have a client who's looking at a house with a secondary suite, I always recommend that they phone the city to confirm. Assume all suites are illegal unless the city says it's legal."

Calgary's current land use by-law doesn't even include the term: if you want to have a secondary suite in your home, it's a duplex you're looking for. That's about to change, however. Effective June 1, 2008, the city's new land use by-law will clearly define five different types of legal secondary suites, from the traditional basement suite to backyard or even garage-top versions. It also redefines the residential zoning areas in which you can apply for one.

## Landlords and tenants

Alexes Hushlak didn't wait for the city to change its land use by-laws. He made a legal secondary suite his top priority when he was house-hunting last year.

"My criteria was inner city and a place with a rental unit in it so that I could afford a bigger place," says Hushlak, who works in sales and marketing for a start-up IT company. Earlier this year, he moved into a Ramsay home built more than a century ago — in his words, a giant pink stucco box that was once a hotel and possibly a bordello. At some point in its history (before land use bylaws restricted secondary suites) it was split into two suites, with the secondary suite upstairs. The date of the split gives the suite its magical "legal non-conforming" status.

This means that even if it doesn't comply with today's

land use bylaws and building codes, it gets to stay — legally — because it was there before the rules were. Even better, the rental income can be used on a mortgage application to help qualify the buyer for a larger loan.

"It's actually one of the few legal suites — it's been grandfathered," says Hushlak. "It has the full separate everything — its own furnace, water heater, electrics, plumbing."

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Leah Hennel, Calgary Herald  
Alexes Hushlak is the homeowner of this pink stucco, 1890s home that's divided into two suites, one up and one down.



## Freshen the fumes when selling your home



Robert Gauthier, Los Angeles Times

Deep-frying food leaves lingering smells many potential home-buyers will find offensive.

JENNIFER CAMPBELL  
FOR CANWEST NEWS SERVICE

**D**ale Carnegie, North America's original motivational speaker, made a fortune extolling the virtues of first impressions and getting it right from the get-go. This philosophy applies to human interactions and is also key in our homes, especially when entertaining and — even more important — when you are attempting to sell your home.

While most of us do much of our judging with our eyes, we also judge with our noses. Entire industries and ad campaigns have been built around creating appealing scents in the home or masking nasty smells with nicer ones.

But do prospective home-buyers really want to be hit with the cloying smell of synthetic strawberry or lilac?

Probably not. And such scents in the air may lead to the suspicion that something more ominous is

being covered up.

So, what are the best approaches for creating a positive scent memory in the minds or noses of would-be buyers?

To get the fresh goods, we contacted realtors and florists. Marilyn Wilson of dream-properties.com claims to have such a refined sense of smell, she once told a prospective buyer the home they were about to look at had mould.

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