

"Very often people will have items in their homes that aren't being used in the best way, or can be given a new look," said Empey.

A former health care employee for 22 years, Empey was a victim of provincial downsizing and turned her energies into a home-based business that combined a needed service with her natural talents for decorating.

She spent more than a decade with the Belleville Theatre Guild, where in addition to acting, she learned how to design sets, make

costumes and arrange lighting.

Now she "sets the stage" in client's homes.

"When I look back on the years I spent with the theatre guild, I have to say I never thought I would be applying all those different skills in so many ways today," said Empey.

Home improvement planning, interior and exterior co-ordination, redecorating through reusing and recycling, and applying the

principles of Feng Shui — the ori-

ental philosophy based on the flow of energy throughout a home and its relationship to the elements — are all services Empey offers, either at a flat hourly rate of \$50, or through special project rates.

Clients receive a consultation, and depending on the service they want, can receive a computer-designed analysis package they can implement themselves or with Empey's assistance.

Elements such as placement of furniture, colors of paint and wallpaper, orientation of windows and doors, and incorporating family treasures into a decorating scheme are all considered during a consultation.

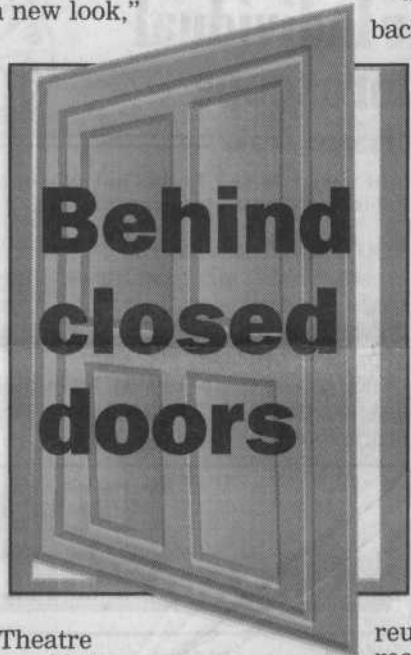
Whether a client is a renter,

first-time home owner, or older couple planning their retirement home, Empey works very closely with them "to find out how they want their home to look and function."

She has followed the principles of Feng Shui closely in her own home, an 1840s limestone farmhouse north of Foxboro, which strikes a harmonious balance between its interior furnishings and outdoor living spaces.

"You have to be comfortable in your home," said Empey. "It's your refuge, your retreat. It should be in tune with your environment."

Empey can be reached at 477-2034.



**Behind closed doors**

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