

Redecorate one room and the rest look sleazy

IT never fails. Never fails. Every holiday season, my wife, in desperation at what's ahead, huris herself into some project that discombobulates the household, turns her into a vixen, and drives me right out of my skull.

I well remember the year she decided to have some brickwork done in December. Of course, the weather turned wild, the bricklayer couldn't work, and we wound up with four thousand wet bricks in the back kitchen. Dripping and smelling like wet brick.

Another time she decided to have the whole family for Christmas: her parents, aunts, and assorted relatives. By the time she'd finished scouring and scouring, that old house was shining like two bubbles in a chamber pot, and groaning in every board. That's the year the kitchen floor was waxed so highly, I dropped the turkey on it when I slipped en route to the dining-room. She didn't speak to me until about Valentine's Day.

Sometimes, it's sewing. All else is forgotten as she tries to make clothes enough in three weeks for her daughter and grandboys to wear for a year. Material, tapes, patterns, pins and needles everywhere. And I have the

wound-marks to prove it, should I pull my pants down.

If she can't dream up something to push away the thoughts of Christmas, she'll tackle it head-on, with a baking spree. Every mixing bowl in the house is activated, the oven goes full blast 18 hours a day, and if you're not stepping in butter, you're stepping in flour, while the fancy cookies, cakes and puddings pile up to the point where the inmates of a logging camp couldn't eat them all.

This Christmas, she outdid herself. Back in the fall, some idiot mentioned on the air that there were only eleven-seventy shopping days until Christmas. The old lady immediately went into a frenzy that would make a whirling dervish look like a statue.

First, she went into her mechanic's routine. She bought a caulking gun, a wood chisel, a hammer, and a key-hole saw. All the door knobs were to be changed, because they have a habit of coming away in your hand, a new lock put on the back door, though there was nothing wrong with the old one, except that you could open it with a credit card, and all the windows were to be insulated.

Now, none of the door-knobs work at all, and you have to pull doors open with your toes or fingernails, the lock is on the back door and it's a dandy, but we have to leave the door braced open with a slipper when we go out, so that we can get back in, and the wind coming in around the windows would make your hair stand on end.

Halfway through this job, which is why it wasn't finished, she declared the master bedroom must be painted. She got the ceiling done, with the resultant chaos of moving furniture and taking everything out of the closets, a half-day's job.

Just then she was struck by a desire to start taking piano lessons after some years away from the machine. Anybody knows you can't paint and practise the piano at the same time, so she hired a chap to finish the painting.

This made the bedroom so dazzling that the bathroom suddenly appeared sleazy, and it had to be painted. By some strange osmosis, this in turn made the kitchen woodwork absolutely shabby, and the paint job spread downstairs.

Had your kitchen painted lately? I

wasn't against having the woodwork done, but I can see no point in painting the insides of cupboards. She can. After they've been emptied and thoroughly washed. We have enough cupboards, in the front and back kitchen, to hold enough stuff to withstand a three-year's siege.

As I write, it's all sitting in liquor boxes, on the kitchen floor, in the front hall, in the vestibule, the living-room and the basement. If you want to make a sandwich, you go the basement for bread, prowl through eighteen boxes to find a knife, look for the butter in the box with the winter boots, and find a slice of ham in a box on the attic stairs, in with the soap, the adhesive tape, and the thumb tacks.

You'd think that would be enough to keep Christmas at bay. Not at all. She suddenly decided that after 36 years of married something or other, we absolutely must get a stereo outfit, with cassette, the whole works. Simple enough. We had only two hi-fi machines and a cheap cassette recorder.

For three weeks, I huddled in my chair in the livingroom surrounded by liquor boxes, listening avidly while she ex-

by
Bill Smiley



perimented with two different sets of speakers, various microphones and about 300 yards of wire all over the floor.

Whichever speakers she liked, I eagerly agreed were the best. Then she'd change her mind. She wanted to get perfectly clearly the mistakes she made while practising the piano, in order to correct them.

It made a nice change, to be tripping over wire instead of stubbing my toe on a paint can, or stepping in my sock feet, on a chisel.

Of course, it all came right in the end. The turkey smelled of fresh paint, I was awakened every morning at 5 a.m. by a squeal of a microphone, and you still lock yourself in the bathroom if you pull on the knob.

But the butter's back in the fridge, the grandboys have chipped all the fresh paint away, and at last everything's back to normal.

Summer jobs in recreation

Applications for summer employment are now being accepted by the Halton Hills Recreation and Parks Department for a variety of summer positions. Application forms may be picked up at the Recreation Offices, located at 25 James Street, Georgetown or 40 Mill Street, Acton. They are also available at the school guidance office.

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Outdoors

by Lorne Fletcher

A good many hound enthusiasts are having a great time these days with just the right amount of snow on the ground for tracking bunnies. Some are out with the old scattergun to make the hunt more interesting and productive while others are out just to hear the sweet music of a hound doing its thing.

The Beagle is the favourite breed of most rabbit hunting enthusiasts. With rather short legs these dogs tend to hunt at a slower pace. This allows the game to circle then push straight out of an area.

There are plenty of rabbits this winter and evidence around my shrubs and raspberries show they can be a nuisance in the wrong place. They are much better in a pot, cottontail rabbit is probably the cleanest meat with virtually no cholesterol or fat.

Ice fishing is still a slow starter for this season. However, cold conditions now will soon make a change for the better. There's plenty of ice on small lakes like Seugog but no ice as yet in Owen Sound harbor.

Be very careful on ice with deep snow as this acts as an insulator, slowing down the ice making process. The most dangerous places under these conditions are not out in the middle of the lake but within a few feet of shore where expansion and contraction couples with sunlight reflecting from the shallow areas, can mean bad news.

Rod and line enthusiasts will dream a bit about Maskinongie in the photograph below.

Jim Barclay of Georgetown is the fellow with the big smile. Jim is a light line fisherman and he landed this fish on a four pound line and a five foot ultra light spin rod white on a fishing trip to Lake St. Clair. It just proves that one does not have to go north for good fishing in Ontario.

Tip of the day is that there is good bow fishing in the Sauble River. Wear your snowsuit.

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