

Community

Canadian consumers squander cash

By TOM MITCHELL
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Statistics Canada

Ottawa - OK Santa, ditch some of those toys and teddies destined for the small set. Set aside some sleight room for household heating conversion kits, microwave ovens, personal computers and hand-held video cameras.

Of course Santa will have to bring the dolls and all those other toys the kids expect. But if he wants to spread some Christmas cheer up the age ladder, Statistics Canada figures show he'll need some of the items mentioned above to satisfy adult consumer appetites.

In its first survey of household facilities and equipment for the 1990s, Statistics Canada identified the gadgets, appliances and other equipment that have, in recent years, become so popular that they could almost be considered necessities rather than luxuries.

While some items on the popularity list certainly fall into the "frill" category, the question of how to heat the household through a Canadian winter is definitely a matter for serious consideration. And, keenly aware of threats of oil supplies which drove prices sharply upward in the 1970s and again this year, Canadians have been turning to other heat sources.

Fuel oil was used in just over 37 per cent of all our homes in 1980. By 1990, this had dropped to less than 18 per cent of homes, the

survey figures show.

The biggest shift was to electricity. It was the heat source in just under 20 per cent of homes in 1980 but more than 33 per cent in 1990. Piped gas, which had already made some big gains during the 1970s, moved from under 40 per cent of all homes in 1980 to almost 44 per cent by 1990.

In the areas of less vital household equipment, gourmets galloped out for more microwave ovens through the 1980s. More than 68 per cent of all households had a microwave in 1990, almost triple the proportion that had one just five years earlier and more than eight times the proportion of homes so equipped in 1981.

Personal computers invaded our homes in strength. More than 16 per cent of homes had a PC by 1990, up from just over 12 per cent

two years earlier. Camcorders, hand-held cameras that turn a home into a TV studio, went from less than 3 per cent to almost 6 per cent of households in the same period.

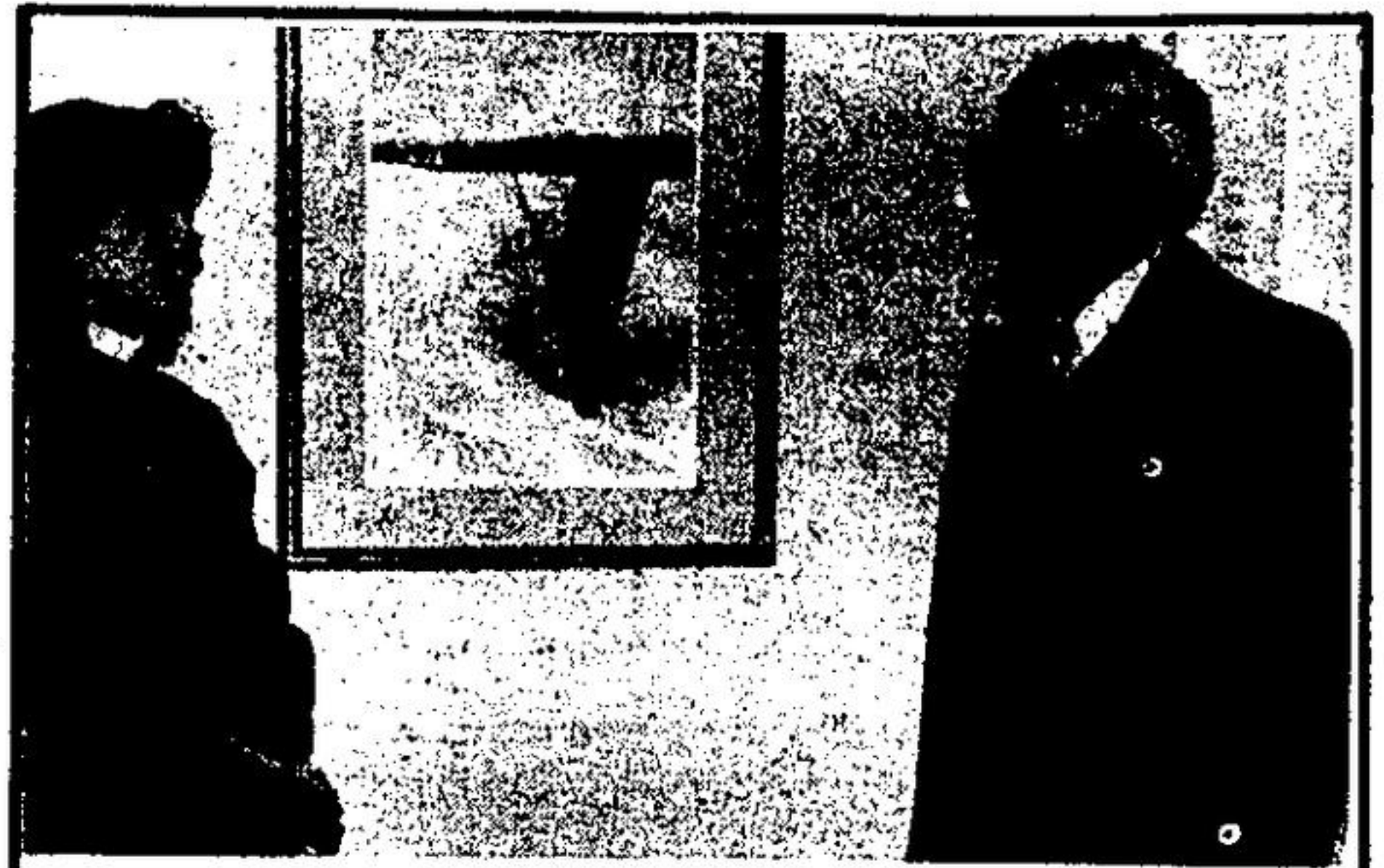
If there isn't a record of White Christmas in the house already, Santa better bring it on compact disc. CD players are in more than 15 per cent of homes, up from less than 12 per cent just a year earlier. Video cassette recorders are in two-thirds of all houses now, up from less than a quarter of homes just five years ago.

If Santa needs more room on the sleigh, maybe he can ease up on new radios, telephones and TV sets. There are already two or more radios in better than 80 per cent of Canadian homes, two or more phones in more than 67 per cent and two or more TVs in 53 per cent.

Christian School presents musical

The students of Georgetown District Christian School will present the musical "Once Upon A Christmas", tonight (Wednesday) at the school location on Trafalgar Road.

In it Grandma remembered the joy of Christmases past, but this Christmas held no wonder, no laughter...just loneliness. Suddenly one of the tree ornaments tumbled out of the closet, taking Grandma by surprise. One after another the ornaments emerged, slowly and gently reminding her that the "wonder" of Christmas is really a "matter of the heart."



Artist at work

Local artist Linda Donais will be lending a helping palette to the Georgetown Chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society. In conjunction with the local chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society, Miss Donais has offered for sale two of her works (both limited edition prints), "Country Threshold" and "Milk Can" for \$65, with \$30 of the proceeds going to the Georgetown Chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society. Samples of the prints will be on view at the Georgetown Credit Union, next to McDonald's restaurant on Guelph Street, until Jan. 15. Pictured above, Miss Donais discusses her art work with Allister Rorison, President of the Georgetown Chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society. (Herald photo)

Lions Club hears the deaf

Most Canadians think that international aid travels only in one direction - from Canada to Third World nations or to areas where disaster strikes. But a grant of \$60,000 from the Lions Club International Foundation in Chicago, Ill. proved that Canadians can also receive international aid.

The grant was welcome news to the Canadian Hearing Society and the Lions clubs in northern Ontario, who are spearheading the construction of a \$3.4 million lifeskills resource centre for the deaf.

The new facility, to be located in Sudbury, will be known as the Northeastern Ontario Resource Centre for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Lions clubs from Ontario, Quebec and Labrador had already raised more than \$200,000 when the news came that the

Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF) would contribute another \$60,000 toward the project. The LCIF draws from contributions made by Lions clubs around the world to assist in special projects or to provide disaster relief.

The Lions clubs in northern Ontario plan to raise an additional \$300,000 in the months ahead, and are seeking provincial government funding for the balance. The new centre will be the seventh Lions' facility in Ontario to assist the deaf.

The centre will offer a 24-week lifeskills course and will employ 10 full-time staff of lifeskills instructors, counsellors, sign-language instructors and administrative staff that will be headed by the Regional Director for the Canadian Hearing Society.



Christmas coloring contest

Budding Georgetown artists Jena Gatto, 8, and Jennifer Shields, 10, were announced as the winners of the Georgetown Central Business Improvement Area 1990 Christmas coloring contest during the BIA breakfast with Santa at the McGibbon Hotel in Georgetown on Saturday. During the festivities Jena (left) and Jennifer (right) took time to show Santa their artwork. Jena won the 5-to-8-year-old category

while Jennifer won the 9-to-12-year-old category. Both won the same contest in their respective categories last year. Brennan Hunziger of Georgetown won the first prize in the 2-to-4-year-old category but wasn't on hand to receive his prize due to illness. Each of the winners took home a \$25 gift certificate to spend at any BIA store. (Herald photo)

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