

Don't let your winter warmth go out the windows

This article is provided by local Realtors and the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) for the benefit of consumers in the real estate market.

If your home has started to feel like it's gone into a deep freeze now that winter's almost here, maybe it's time to take a careful look at your windows. A major source of heat loss (up to 25 per cent), your windows can account for a hefty portion of your home heating bills.

If you're concerned, check around your windows for leaks and gaps. If you discover a problem, there are two courses of action available to you to help stop those hard-earned dollars from literally "flying out the window." You can either upgrade your existing windows or you can replace them altogether with new, energy-efficient units.

Upgrading

If you find you're experiencing heat loss problems with your current windows, you can boost their efficiency by simply installing an extra layer of glazing (glass) or purchasing a special shrink wrap layer of plastic (available at hardware stores) which adjusts to fit your window when you apply heat to it.

If you have storm windows, you should make sure they fit well and are in good condition.



... about home ownership today

You can also install weatherstripping and caulking around your windows to help keep out draughts. There are many different types available; if you have questions or concerns, talk to the experts at your local building supply centre.

Before applying these sealants, be sure to remove any old caulking and weatherstripping first and apply the new materials to a clean, dry surface.

Replacement

If you want to give your home a facelift or if your existing windows are steadily decaying, you'll probably want to replace them altogether. Keep in mind that this will cost you a lot more than the simple upgrades mentioned above. However, you may only want to replace two or three win-

dows at a time if you have a limited budget.

Before you choose your new windows, be sure to do your homework. Check around and compare the energy advantages as well as the cost differentials of different types and styles of windows. To get maximum insulation value, it's a good idea to consider installing energy-efficient units.

Today, there are several different window styles to choose from. With a fixed window, you'll get a very energy-efficient unit, but unfortunately, you won't be able to open it when you want fresh air.

Casement, awning, and tilt or pivot windows are popular options because they can be easily opened and their rate of air leakage is fairly low. These types of windows are also popular with homeowners because most can be easily cleaned from the inside of your home.

Vertical sliding windows (either double or single-hung) are more traditional and can be found in many older homes.

Horizontal sliding windows are a popular replacement option

with homeowners because they are easy to operate and can be less expensive. However, these windows can have a higher air leakage rate.

Once you've decided on the type of window you want to

incorporate, it's time to look at the energy efficiency ratings of various units. Basically, the insulating value of a window is determined by the amount of air space contained between each layer of glazing.

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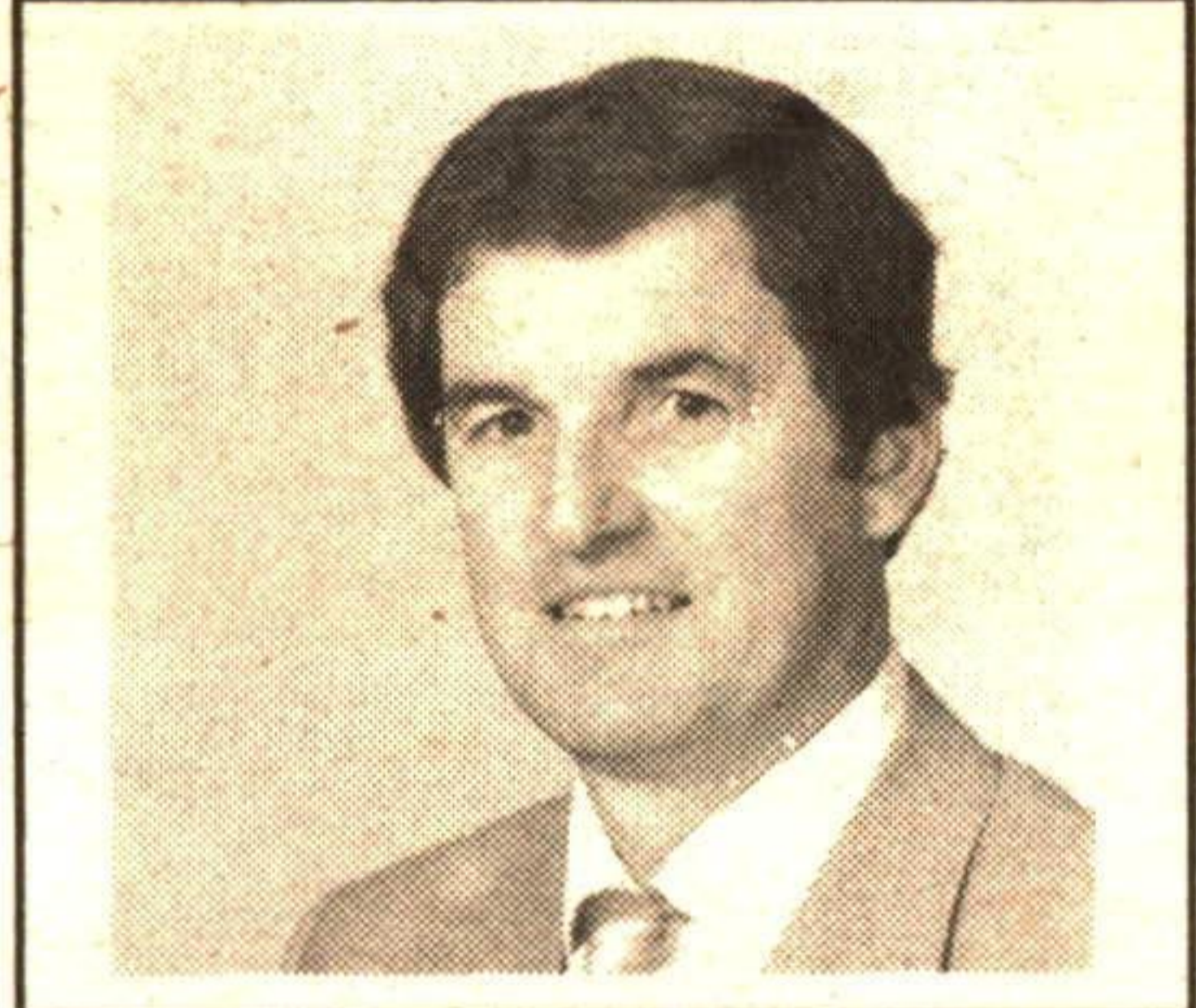
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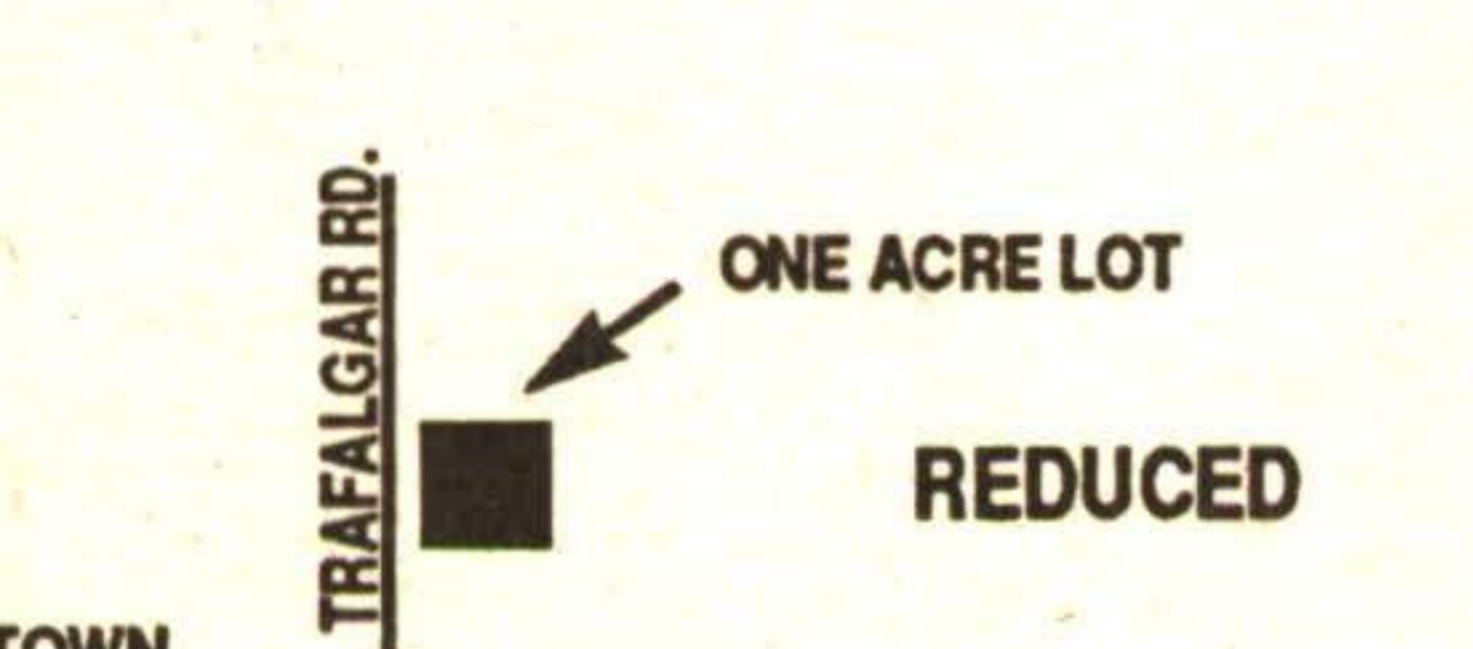
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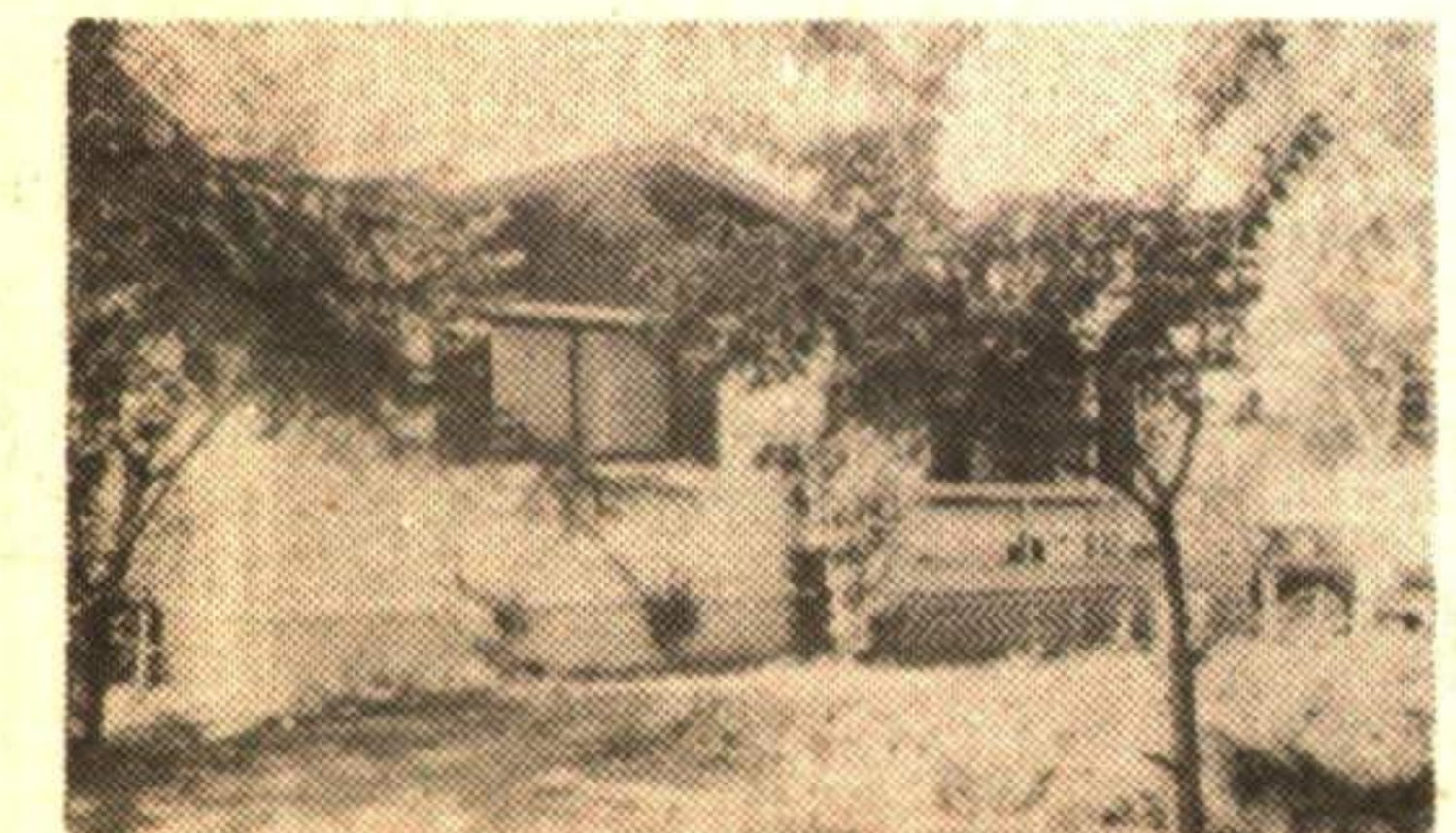
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