

Phil's Basement



Our kids, Kyle and Belinda, are into their summer jobs now and it's amazing how little we see them these days. Belinda is lifeguarding again, and Kyle was happy to get an ushering job at a local theatre. Of course, Kyle thinks Belinda has the better deal being out in the sunshine and enjoying the weather. On the other hand, Belinda thinks Kyle has it made in the shade, literally, and says she'd like to be nice and cool all day long like him. And anyway, she pointed out, getting tanned isn't the thing to do anymore.

What with working and going out with their friends Kyle and Belinda are in and out at all hours of the day and evening. This means they're cooking more of their own meals, which we certainly don't mind. But rather than have the oven on and off a lot, especially during these hot days, Em and I told them to use the smaller appliances. It'll keep the place a little cooler and it's also a good way to save energy.

The ones they use the most are the microwave and the toaster oven. The less time they have to spend preparing something, the better, as far as Kyle and Be-

linda are concerned. This is fine with us since the microwave doesn't heat up the kitchen and only uses half as much energy as the oven. The toaster oven is an energy-saver, too.

Em and I also try to make a point of using small appliances when we can. For instance, sometimes we use the electric frypan and the slow cooker instead of the oven. They're both easy on our energy bill, and the slow cooker is great for doing less expensive cuts of meat.

And while I'm at it, did you know that an electric kettle will use less electricity to boil water than a range element or even a microwave oven? Yup. If you're going to buy a kettle, look for one that shuts off automatically. And don't forget - a watched kettle does boil faster if it isn't loaded down with mineral deposits.

This newspaper, in conjunction with Ontario Hydro, is bringing you Phil's Basement to help "bring home" ideas on how to save energy. To receive a copy of the brochure "Energy Efficiency in Appliances", call Ontario Hydro at 1-800-263-9000 and tell them Phil sent you.

OHBA discusses land tax proposal

The Ontario Fair Tax Commission may have missed an excellent opportunity to examine the causes which lie behind increases in housing prices, according to the Ontario Home Builders' Association (OHBA).

The commission working group studying the NDP's proposed land speculation tax released its report in early April. The majority of members on the group recommended against the tax.

Ian Rawlings, president of the Ontario Home Builders' Association, described the recommendation as "half a victory". He said that speculation, when it occurs, is a symptom, not the disease. "I was hoping that the commission would make recommendations that address the real reasons why speculators can sometimes make profits in the housing market," he said.

The largest single group of members recommended that there be no changes to the current tax

treatment of real estate gains. Rawlings said this simply recognizes the fact that there are no big loopholes in taxes affecting real estate.

"In fact," he said, "when taxation of real estate gains is compared with any other types of gains, the differences favor the other gains."

While Rawlings agreed with the suggestion in one of the minority reports that current laws be better enforced, he said that recent changes in the Land Transfer Tax make this less of an issue.

Rawlings was more critical of other minority suggestions.

He described as grossly unfair the proposal that profits from the sale of a house be rolled over into a more expensive house or an RRSP.

"What about employees in the Ontario Lottery Corporation who are being relocated in Sault Ste. Marie?" he asked. "Will they be taxed because they can't find a more expensive house than the one

they have in Toronto?"

Rawlings said the roll-over requirement is used in the United States. "But in the U.S.," he explained, "mortgage payments count as tax deductions. Where's the fairness in adopting the debit side of a tax scheme and ignoring the credit side?" he asked.

The more extreme minority recommendations simply reveal a profound lack of understanding of how business functions. "A certain level of profitability is required to offset risks," he said, "and the uncertainty and risks in the housing industry are growing each year."

"If you reduce legitimate business profits," Rawlings said, "you can expect to see fewer subdivisions and fewer apartment buildings being built." The reduced supply will mean that demand pushes the prices up even higher.

The Ontario Home Builders' Association is a professional association representing the residential construction industry.

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HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO

Improving your odds against Canada's #1 killer

Here's the good news about stroke!

The best line of defence for any healthy person is an annual blood pressure check. Many strokes can be prevented if high blood pressure, a leading cause of stroke, is controlled through early diagnosis and prompt treatment.

In fact, stroke-related deaths have been decreasing, especially in recent years. Since 1980, deaths from stroke have declined by approximately five percent a year, largely due to the effective treatment of high blood pressure.

Today the outlook for every stroke patient is brighter because of the advances in diagnosis and medical treatment, as well as improved rehabilitation.

For more information on blood pressure or stroke, contact your local office of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario.

Turf Tips



Duncan Atkinson
Eileen Atkinson

THEY'RE HERE!

Chinchbugs have arrived and they are ready for another summer of destruction. The eggs are hatching and the little red nymphs are starting to suck the juices from the grass. If you are watering your lawn regularly, yet it still appears to be dry in patches, it may be due to chinchbug damage.

Even though the nymphs are only 1/16" long, they are fairly easy to see because of their red colour. They will be scurrying along the soil or thatch surface in sunny locations. They are seldom found in the shade because they like hot, dry areas in your lawn.

If you peer between the grass blades at the soil level, you may be able to see the little red nymphs running for cover. It's best to look on the edge of the brown grass, where it is still green.

As the young chinchbugs grow older they will change to a brown colour and then to a black colour as they become adults. Complete coverage is essential when treating for chinchbugs. If only the damaged area is treated, they will just move to the untreated area. Chinchbugs are easiest to control before they reach the adult stage.

Remember, always follow instructions carefully when applying lawn care products to your lawn. Twice as much is not always twice as effective.

NEXT WEEK: Is it Crabgrass?



WE CARE FOR YOUR LAWN!

This is a weekly lawn care column.

For additional information contact Duncan or Eileen

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