

Shirley Whittington



Parents and kids are doomed to struggle eternally about messy bedrooms. Parents like a casual yet well-organized look, enlivened by a few tasteful pennants and an artistically placed tennis racket. They paper the walls with ballerinas or racing cars, put up yards of shelving, and install hooks at convenient levels.

In truth, most kids prefer the early sweatsock look. Some of those socks are really early. I have fished footwear out from under the bed that has been there so long it's too small for the owner.

As far as kids are concerned, only two things in a bedroom need to be immediately accessible—the light switch and the stereo. Everything else exists to be layered with other things. The wall paper is quickly obscured by hockey posters and pictures of Who. The shelves hold empty pop cans and balled-up rugby shirts. The clothes hooks are used to drape patch cords and headphones on. Almost anything goes in the window—anything except the carefully co-ordinated, mom-chosen drapes.

Even in the most look-alike subdivisions, you can always tell which household includes a teen-ager. It's the place with the Canadian

flag draped across the upstairs window.

It would be unfair to suggest that parents never have messy rooms. Our bedroom mixes the ambience of backstage at Minsky's Burlesque with an explosion in a garment factory. We too store unused clothing and overdue library books under the bed. We are no strangers to the art of hanging clothes from curtain rods and light fixtures. The difference is that we definitely plan to clean the place up, as soon as we have time or move, whichever comes first.

Mess never seems to bother kids. They can live happily in chaos until it becomes necessary to hire an archeologist to find them—under all the offal layers. But messy bedrooms bother mothers because we know that that hideous disorder signifies a parent who is too lazy to say "Go up there and clean your room" a lot.

Just last week I talked to a friend who said she thought her daughter was out until she looked in her room and saw a pile of dirty clothes moving. "Then" she said, "I realized she was lying there on the floor, listening to her Walkman."

I tried to reassure her. I told her she was lucky the kid was in the clothes. If clothes

Those clean-cut kids

move around by themselves, it's exterminator time, and that really wows the neighbours.

I told her I knew how she felt. I used to worry about messy bedrooms too, but after a while I just closed the door—providing there was enough clearance on the floor. As it turned out, the kids didn't suffer any permanent damage from spending all that time inside a giant Cuisinart. Actually, once they got out on their own with their own vacuum cleaners and Tidy-Bowl sets, they changed.

Last week I visited three young men, all of who were at one time declared unclean by their parents. All three live away from home now, and I was prepared to find them half buried in unwashed laundry and dirty dishes.

Such was not the case. The first lad welcomed me warmly and suggested I leave my boots in a tray in the outer hall so I wouldn't scar the hardwood. "My landlord's a neatness freak," he said.

At the next place I visited, I tried to be helpful by putting away the dishes which were air-dried in a rack beside the sink. I just kind of shoved the mixing bowls into the bottom cupboard with the pots and pans the way I do at home. My son grabbed them. "They go

over here," he said pointedly. "I have a special shelf for them. Then I know where to find them when I need them."

Finally I visited a dear nephew whose unorthodox housekeeping habits almost drove his mother to despair when he lived at home. I rushed up the stairs to his big bright flat and dumped my coat and parcels on the floor. Then I settled in the spotless kitchen. Before he put the coffee pot on, my nephew quietly hung up my coat and stowed my parcels safely in the bathroom where the cat couldn't get at them. (This flat is picturesque and the only door that shuts tightly is the one on the bathroom.)

So you see—all three are living tidy well-ordered lives. Not one has been jailed for leaving his towel on the bathroom floor, and nor has any one of them been evicted for not making his bed.

I suggest you think about all this—all of you out there in mum-and-dad-land. Your young people may be temporarily untidy, but it's not terminal. When they get their own nests they will not defoul them with candy wrappers and dirty clothes.

Still—I suggest an advance phone call before you go down to the city to visit them.

Bill Smiley



It never fails. Never fails. Every holiday season, my wife, in desperation at what's ahead, hurls 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 eighteen 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 doorknobs 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 sleezy, 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 to 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 living-room, surrounded by liquor boxes, listening avidly while she experimented 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 clipped all the fresh paint away, and at last everything's back to normal.

Investor's Inquiry



by Charles Colling

This is a good time to take inventory of your safety deposit boxes. Many people have more than one box owing to the volume of paper that is being stored.

Perhaps you are storing more than one certificate of the same stock—an accumulation of Bell shares for example. These can be registered in one certificate and still be as readily negotiable and save your valuable deposit box space at the same time. Your broker or banker can advise you on registration of these certificates.

Perhaps you have old certificates that you

are storing because you have no idea of their value. Now would be a good time to review these certificates and find out if they are worth the space they are occupying. Again, your broker can help you.

Sort out your papers in your box - perhaps you are storing old insurance and mortgage papers which are outdated or paid off. These could be destroyed, or transferred to a home file, saving valuable space.

Stamps, coins, jewellery etc. could be sorted and perhaps sold if no longer wanted, or perhaps now is the time to give a special

piece to a relative or dear friend rather than have unwanted articles sit in the dark - unused and uncared for.

Whatever you do with your safety deposit box, however, do keep a complete, comprehensive and accurate list, preferably in duplicate, of the contents of your box, including any pertinent description of shares, debentures and policies. Include numbers and names of registration where they may apply. Leave one copy of the list inside your deposit box and keep another one in a safe place at home. You may wish to leave another copy with someone you trust.

It is wise to keep a list with your personal papers of the banks where you deposit your

funds. Many people today deposit funds in various cities away from their home area as a convenience when travelling.

Charles Colling is the resident manager of Yorkton Securities Inc. in Midland. In sending in questions to be answered, please remember Securities Commission Regulations will not permit giving opinions or recommendation on any specific securities through this column.

All other signed inquiries will be answered as soon as possible. In all answers only the inquirer's initials will be used. Address all questions to "Investor's Inquiry" c/o The Midland Times, Box 609, Midland, Ontario.

Safety deposit boxes

ESPSS News and Views

by Andrea Dault

ESPSS teams battled against ODCVI in both basketball and volleyball action this past week. On Wednesday, Dec. 5, the boys basketball teams faced those from ODCVI.

Our Senior team won with a score 70-42. Paul Balabuck and Lorne Marcille were high scorers with 16 points. The Juniors lost by a score 67-42. Pat Dion was their best scorer with 9 points. The Midgets did ex-

ceptionally well in a close game that ended with the score 48-46 in our favour. Mike Pilon was the top scorer with 28 points.

Our girls volleyball teams also played against ODCVI. The Seniors lost their games as well as the Midgets. The Juniors did win and brought home a bit of hope.

At the same competition, the teams also battled against Elmvale. Our Senior Junior, and Midget

teams all won their matches. Congratulations girls!

Getting away from sport-related competitions, I'd like to talk about mind-related ones. Specifically, I'm referring to our Reach For The Top team who won in their game against Sutton District High School on Jan. 5 with a score of 222-160.

The team consists of the masterminds of Patti Murphy, Karen Desrochers, Martin Walker, and Pat Cote.

The team's advisor is John Bayfield.

If you're interested, watch the match on television on Jan. 29 at 6 p.m.

The team is now preparing for an upcoming battle against Huntsville on Tuesday, Jan. 18. Good luck guys!

Today was the last day to purchase school T-shirts. However, don't despair, the fashionable trend-setting items will probably be put on sale again if enough people seem interested. For

only \$8.00 you can buy a white T-shirt with 3 4 lenth red sleeves. An amusing emblem of our symbolic red Indian is on the front. Please talk to members of the student's council if you're still interested.

House T-shirts are also on sale. They're available in the four house colours with their respective house symbols on the front. The price is less than \$4.00 so make sure you buy yours soon.

Mr. Belanger would like to announce the disappearance of his Christmas present. The gift (a tiny Kermit frog) was given to him by his beloved Grade 13 students. It is reputed to have been brutally frognapped from his spot in the ceiling by a spiteful thug. Mr. Belanger is offering a small reward for the return of his little friend.

On a more serious note, I'd like to say good-bye to an

Australian exchange student, Gay Cudmore, who has haunted our halls since Sept. Her charming accent and customs endeared her to our hearts. She has been in Canada since Jan. of last year and left last Friday.

On Thursday she treated the school to a slide demonstration about her homeland. Although she left a few days ago, she will make a brief detour to San Francisco.