

Home & Garden

Spring is the time to make your home energy efficient

If you're like most Canadians, your home is the biggest investment you'll ever make — and you have to protect that investment.

"Spring is when Canadians love to take on home improvement projects," said Bob Huggard, vice-president of retail services at Consumers Gas.

"Purely cosmetic home improvements do add value, but not as much as ones that also improve energy efficiency. Besides, saving on energy costs can end up paying for themselves."

Good business sense

Huggard said that it's good business sense to keep updating your house so that it remains competitive with new homes. But he also said it's common sense too.

"Even if you never sell your home, it's where you spend two-thirds of your life — more if you work at home. So you might as well enjoy it."

So let spring fever run its course. Remodel. Renovate. But spend each dollar wisely. Don't just put in a new front door, buy one that's energy-wise.

Install dimmer switches and water-saving fixtures when you remodel kitchens and bathrooms.

And get someone to clean out the dust that's been clogging your ductwork.

Spring is the perfect time to get into gear. 'Tis the season, after all, for rebirth.

Energy-saving household tips for spring

Kitchens and bathroom are the biggest energy culprits.

"Of all the rooms in the house, kitchens and bathrooms are the worst villains when it comes to energy consumption," said Huggard.

"It really pays to install new energy-efficient appliances, energy-smart lighting and devices that conserve water."

Energy-wise tips for the kitchen

• Install an inexpensive low flow aerator nozzle on your kitchen faucet. You'll cut hot water flow by as much as 50 per cent.

• Buy a new fridge. In the most popular size range, today's energy-efficient refrigerators use more than one-



Keeping the roof of your home properly sealed, insulated and vented is key to keeping your house warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

CONSUMERS GAS

third less energy than the ones 25 years ago.

• Don't keep your old refrigerator in the basement to provide extra cold storage capacity.

One new large unit is more energy efficient than a new, smaller one in the kitchen and the old energy-guzzler downstairs.

• Wait until you have a full load of dishes before running the dishwasher. Check your dishwasher drain regularly to make sure it's not getting clogged.

• Install a dimmer switch on the lights. It will not only give you control over the mood of the room, it will also give you control over lighting levels,

making any bulb more energy efficient and increasing its life span. (Dimmers don't work with conventional fluorescent lights.)

Energy-save tips for the bathroom:

• Switch to a low-flow shower head. It can cut the amount of hot water you use by half.

• Fix leaky taps. One drop of water per second is equivalent to 16 baths a month. And chances are, all you'll need to do is replace a washer — which cost pennies.

• Install an aerator on your sink faucet to cut water flow in half. And don't leave the water running while you shave or brush your teeth. That can add up to several more tubfuls of water over the course of each month.

• Use venting fans as little as possible.

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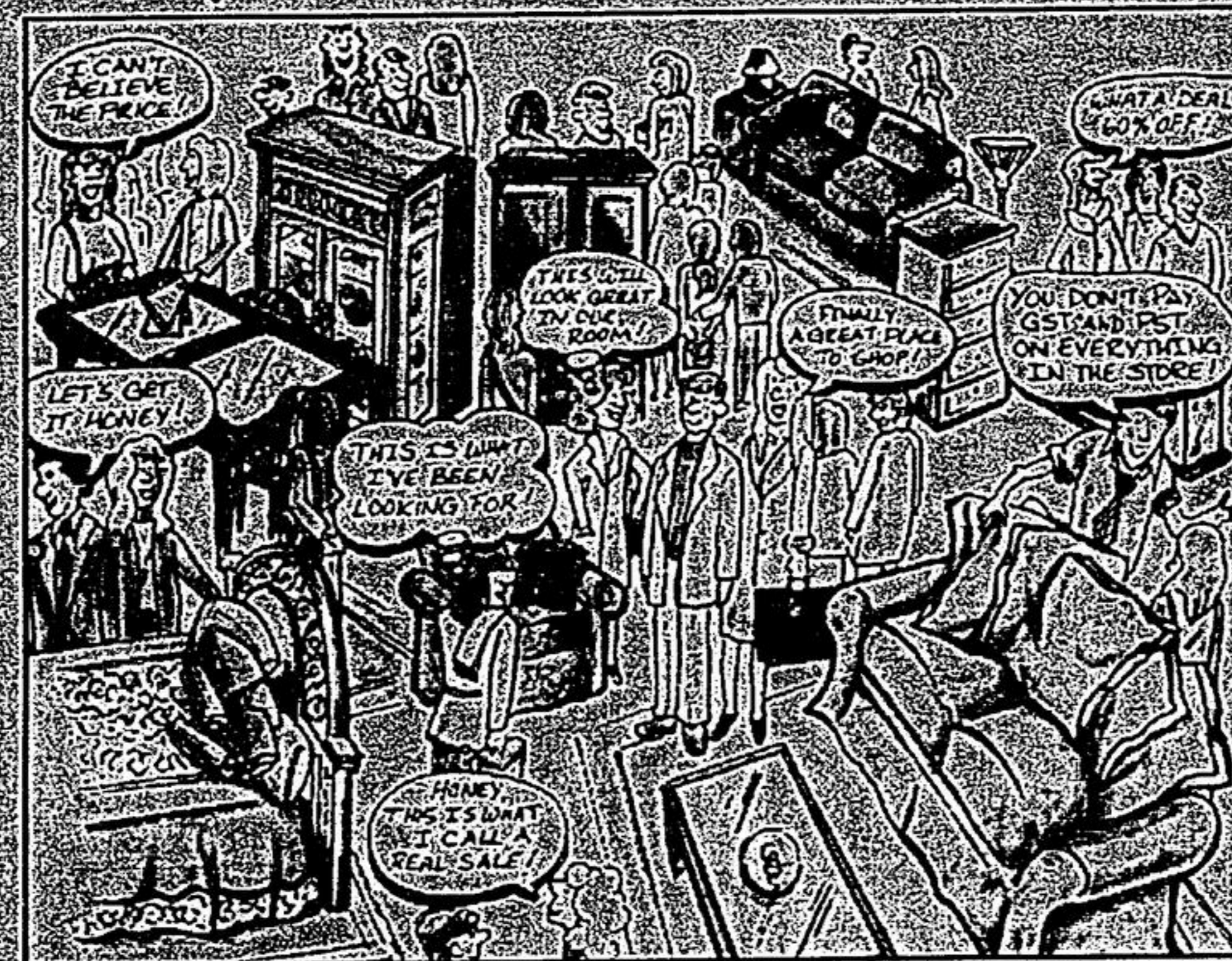
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