

# 'Tis The Season!



**Yes, it's the perfect time to make that extra effort to recycle, reduce, reuse, and rethink. It is also a time to resolve, revise, and reverse.**

**Holiday Resolve:** The shopping season is upon us, as many join in the spirit of showering gifts upon our loved ones. Resolve to go out with your cloth bags, and decline those plastic bags at the shops. Co-op is now selling large cloth bags at their customer service counters, at a pretty good price, too.

Choose the item less packaged. Go for cloth napkins and washable plates and cutlery; we're running washing machines and dishwashers anyway, (not during the energy rush hours, of course). Consider helping reduce Santa's stress by leaving some ribbon and a stack of colorful towels or pillowslips to wrap things in after midnight on the 25th. Try seasonal fabric to wrap your offerings in. Can you find that reusable paper you saved from last year?

Think of environmentally friendly gifts. Subscribe, support, donate. Eat, share time, be active. Look up, around, about. Clear the decks before decking the halls by making an early trip to the bottle depots and recycling

*continued from page 9*

Falconridge/Castleridge area is serious about taking care of their own problems.

"Now we have a reputation with foundations that when we say we're going to do a good project," he said, "we do a good project."

Tomiyaama has learned that foundations do talk amongst themselves and that a solid image with one will translate into strong, through-the-grapevine relations with others. It's a cause-and-effect situation that builds upon itself, not only in raising grant money, but also in generating self-sustaining revenue.

Falconridge/Castleridge is now seeing the effects of this in how impressed people are with their facilities – making them want to rent the centre for their own functions.

And the president of Tomiyama's board, Denis Walsh, is grateful for all of Chris's efforts. When he moved to the area in 1980, he realized there was little for kids to do. So he got involved, but soon was overwhelmed by the needed time commitment.

"We just didn't have the time to do it, because of our jobs," said Walsh. "Chris helps us better perform our mission statement and our overall objectives."

Walsh also spoke highly of Tomiyama's efforts in giving the community association such peace of mind when it came to financial concerns.

"The day the new building was finished," he said, "it was all paid for. That was mostly due to Chris."

centres. Recycle that real Christmas tree through the city's tree program.

**Holiday Sprucing Revisions:** 'Tis also the season to make our homes sparkle and shine (or go to someone else's gleaming home, if you didn't have a chance to get to your own cobwebs). Being determined to involve my offspring on the domestic front, the ideas from UCS listed earlier make safe, environmentally friendly cleaning alternatives that are also safe for children! Get 'em scrubbin' this holiday season. Their future life partners will thank you.

**Holiday Reverence:** 'Tis also the season to think globally, as well as locally. Reverence for the environment is inextricably tied to reverence for each other and for our world community. More than ever, our world hungers for a thoughtful, considerate humanity. May the little things we do ripple harmoniously outward. With wishes of peace and hope for all, for our interconnected circle of life. Happy holidays.


Environmentally yours,

*Polly Lee Knowlton Cockett*  
<plknowlton.cockett@shaw.ca>

**WE GET YOU**

# RESULTS

**RENFREW**  
EDUCATIONAL  
SERVICES



Helping Kids Soar

March 21, 2001

Renfrew is a private school that offers an inclusive educational environment for children with special needs and typically developing children. Renfrew operates out of five Calgary locations, in all four quadrants of the city. Being a not-for-profit society and registered charity, we have to spend our advertising dollars carefully. Calgary Community Publications allows us to reach a large number of Calgary families at a very reasonable cost. The idea of a free, home delivered publication is very appealing when trying to reach families who may not access other forms of print media.

Over the years, we have been extremely pleased with the service and flexibility that Calgary Community Publications offers. The 'personal touch' to their service has made doing business with them a pleasure.

Ray Fox

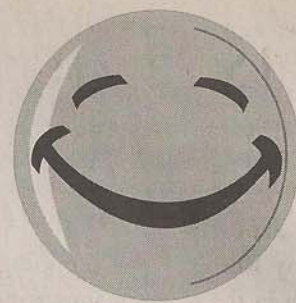
*Communication Coordinator, Renfrew Educational Services*

# Cleaning House



with

# Natural Cleansers



Following are some household green tips from the Union of Concerned Scientists  
Also see: <http://www.ucsusa.org/guides/?tip10.html>

## A thorough cleaning might do more harm than good!

Though commercial cleansers are effective at cleaning dirt and stains, many are downright dangerous. You know this already if you've ever read the labels: "harmful or fatal if swallowed", "use only in a well-ventilated area" or "causes severe burns on contact."

Warnings like these are so vague, you may not take them seriously, but you should. The threat is real - both to your health and to the environment - when the cleansers are produced, used, flushed down the drain and disposed of.

The interesting thing is how unnecessary they seem to be. It is remarkably easy to do light cleaning jobs with old-fashioned, natural cleansers - and awfully hard to do tough cleaning jobs with even the strongest commercial brands.

If you recognize the truth of this from personal experience, and are sick (perhaps literally) of the fumes, it may be time to explore the alternatives. Following are some homemade mixes, based mostly on baking soda and white distilled vinegar.

Don't be afraid to play with the proportions.

**All Purpose Cleaner** - All you need for most cleaning jobs is a few tablespoons of baking soda in a quart of warm water. Or mix some vinegar and salt with warm water.

**Scouring Cleaner** - Many brands are made with chlorine bleach, which release hazardous gases when mixed with ammonia (found in glass cleaners). Try plain salt or baking soda instead. For a disinfectant version, mix equal amounts of baking soda and borax with a little hot water. You can also try a non-chlorine scourer.

**Drain Cleaner** - Instead of chemical drain cleaners, which can damage your skin and eyes, pour 1/2 cup of baking soda down the drain, followed by 1/2 cup of vinegar. Wait 15 to 20 minutes. Then, pour in 1/2 gallon of boiling water. For clogged drains, use a plunger or snake.

**Toilet Bowl Cleaner** - Like drain cleaners, these can burn your skin and eyes. As an alternative, pour 1/2 cup vinegar and baking soda in the toilet bowl and scrub with a brush. Or scrub with 2/3 cup borax and 1/3 cup lemon juice.

**Glass Cleaner** - While commercial glass cleaners are less toxic than many other cleansers, they can still irritate eyes and lungs and cause headaches. You'll find that club soda works just as well, or warm water with a little vinegar.

**Furniture Polish** - Most commercial brands are made with petroleum distillates, which are flammable. Try olive oil mixed with a little lemon juice. (Experiment on a hidden section of the furniture first.)

**Floor Cleaner** - A mix of equal parts vinegar and warm water is enough for light jobs. Try a vegetable-based liquid soap, like Murphy's Oil Soap, for tougher jobs.

**Air Freshener** - Get rid of cooking odors by putting out bowls with a little vinegar in them. Scent the air by boiling cinnamon and cloves. Open your windows.

**Safety Tips** - Don't put your homemade mixes in bottles that once housed commercial cleansers, lest they interact with chemical residues. Buy new bottles at the drug store or reuse food bottles. Label your cleansers and store them out of the reach of children.

For related information,  
see these pages on the Web:

Safer Alternatives To Hazardous Household Products  
<http://es.epa.gov/new/contacts/newsletters/shopping.html>  
Household Cleaners And Polishes  
<http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/house/cleaners.html>  
Hazardous Household Products: Reducing The Risks  
<http://www.urbanoptions.org/nontoxic/Nontoxic.htm>