

■ BY THE NUMBERS

1.93

Estimated dollar value, in billions, of candy sales at Halloween in North America – making it by far the “sweetest” holiday of the year. (Take that, Valentine’s Day!)



1/4

Proportion of candy sold annually that is snapped up between September 15 and November 10.

1,844

Number of dinosaur species that ever existed, according to a University of Pennsylvania paleontologist and a Swathmore statistician.



527

Number of dinosaur species that have been discovered so far.

10

Estimated per cent of money spent on gift cards that is never redeemed by the final card holder.



4.5

Annual profit, in millions, pocketed by Canadian businesses as a result of non-redemption of gift cards.

■ THE  INSIDER

# Shopping Alternatives “Yule” Just Love

Does the thought of facing the pilgrimage to the mall for your annual bout of Christmas shopping send a shiver down your spine?

Well, rather than surrender to your inner Grinch this holiday season, why not pursue a less consumeristic approach to seasonal giving? The “Buy Nothing Christmas” campaign has gained buzz in recent years, urging us to rebel against the materialistic overtones the season has assumed and to resist the urge to become “mall zombies.”

Here are some ideas gleaned from the movement, alternative gift ideas that may spark your own brainstorm:

- ❶ **Just Like Grandma Made**  
Compile a hand-made recipe book filled with handwritten favourites that have been passed down through the generations.
- ❷ **The Gift of Time**  
Give coupons to young parents for

some free babysitting, or to that elderly neighbour for snow shovelling. Maybe Mom or Dad would enjoy a coupon for a neck rub. If you are skilled in a particular area, offer a free lesson or class. The possibilities are limitless...

- ❸ **Sweet Charity**  
Donate some dollars to a charity in the name of your gift recipient. There are literally hundreds of well deserving organizations that make this process quick and easy, particularly online. So, whether you want to sponsor the care of a Third World child in need or adopt a corner of the tropical rain forest, this is a gift with an altruistic twist. Happy holidays! •



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■ WELCOME

# “Fall” Into Place

January may mark the beginning of the calendar year, but for many of us fall brings with it a variety of fresh starts as well: the kick off to a new school year (we’re still not quite used to the “year round” school concept), the renewal of real estate licenses (obviously an important marker for us!), the kick off to the new TV season, and, of course, the bow of a new hockey campaign (go Rebels go!).

As the trees change colour and eventually shed their leaves and Old Man Winter waits impatiently to enter stage left, the passing of the seasons causes us to reflect on important milestones in our own lives. One such marker for us this year has been the departure of yet another son from the nest, off to university and new adventures.

Sometimes the rapid passing of time can make everything an

unfathomable blur, but it is important to put an occasional halt to the endless hubbub and take stock. Part of that process for us was a recent decision to perform some necessary “decluttering” in our home. After



advising clients through the years to perform this task prior to putting their homes on the market, it was good to undergo the process again ourselves – and to experience the mixed emotions, resistance and

ultimate sense of relief that this exercise engenders. (You will find some decluttering tips on page three of this edition of our newsletter.)

Whatever your fall brings, we hope that you enjoy the cycle of seasons that Mother Nature spins – and that you take the time to pause and savour the changes in your own lives as well. •

■ EYE ON RED DEER

# Market Still Sitting Pretty

September brought with it a new, more relaxed pace to the Red Deer and area real estate market. The number of homes available on the MLS grew, while prices levelled off. Price adjustments are now the order of the day as sellers respond to the shifting market.

Although certainly not as frantic as it was during the spring of this year, the market remains very active. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns about the current market outlook – we will be happy to address any queries you may have. •



# Red Deer College Eyes Major Expansion Plan



**YOUR COLLEGE**  
*Building Communities  
Through Learning*

*Bryan and Lynn Wilson have enjoyed a variety of experiences at Red Deer College: both attended the institution and Lynn also worked there briefly during the 1980s. They have thus watched the recent expansion plans at RDC with keen interest. Home Matters recently chatted with RDC's Michael Donlevy, Associate Vice President, Community Relations, about the current **Your College: Building Communities Through Learning** initiative.*

**HOME MATTERS:** The *Your College: Building Communities Through Learning* initiative is the largest growth project Red Deer College has undertaken since its inception in 1964. Can you give us a brief overview of what this expansion entails?

**MICHAEL DONLEVY:** Over a five-year period, *Building Communities Through Learning* will invest \$110 million in improving learning opportunities for central Albertans. This year we launch major expansions in facilities, in learning programs and in services to students. We will also be increasing bursaries, scholarships and awards for learners.

**HM:** What specific changes will people notice on the RDC campus as a result of this expansion?

**MD:** *Building Communities Through Learning* will provide space and upgraded equipment for students

waiting to take advantage of expanded learning programs. College learning space will grow by almost 50%. Expect a new Centre for Trades & Technology, a Centre for Innovation in Manufacturing, a Centre for Business Enterprise, a Centre for Visual Art, a Centre for Regional Sport & Wellness and a Centre for Health Education.

**HM:** We know that Red Deer College strives to provide its students with the best educational experience possible. In addition to the upgraded building facilities, what benefits will students derive from this campaign?  
**MD:** Red Deer College has committed to a sustained initiative of Access & Excellence that will increase the value of awards, scholarships, bursaries and endowments available to our learners, as well as support programs to help ensure student success. The Access & Excellence initiative will raise a minimum of \$5 million by 2009. Increased availability of bursaries will reduce financial barriers and increase the

opportunity for students to achieve their full potential. Scholarships will attract students, motivating them to stay in central Alberta.

**HM:** Will this initiative have any impact on the larger community?  
**MD:** Alberta's growing economy has challenged us to meet the needs of learners, employers and communities in our region. *Building Communities Through Learning* will benefit central Alberta by enhancing a strong, diverse regional economy as it will provide quality education and training close to home and contribute to a skilled work force. This initiative will provide facilities, services and learning opportunities that support central Alberta's towns and

rural communities.

**HM:** Any other major changes on the horizon for Red Deer College that you can share with us?

**MD:** Red Deer College is committed to being the leading comprehensive college serving learners and communities through excellence and innovation. *Your College* will be significantly expanding degree completion opportunities in Business/Commerce, Education (Early Years), Visual Arts, Liberal Arts, Integrated Science and Social Work.

**HM:** We look forward to seeing the changes on campus! •



*The RDC campus is currently undergoing some major changes.*

## Make A Clean Sweep!

Has your home begun to resemble an indoor jumble sale? Well, it may just be time to perform a "clean sweep" and rid your castle of its unnecessary clutter.

This is often a "must do" activity for those contemplating putting their home up for sale, but it can also be a useful tactic at the office as well. Herewith some pointers on how to make a clean sweep – without losing sleep:

### 1 Pick A Room, Any Room

It may seem obvious, but your first step should be deciding which room to tackle first. Focusing on a single room at a time will help you avoid the overwhelming urge to flee when looking at the house as a whole.

### 2 Make Like Bugs Bunny

What's up, Doc? Well, just like Bugs, you should focus on a "carrot" – an enticing reward that you will treat yourself with once your organizing session has been completed. It could be a hot bath or a round of golf ... whatever will motivate you to stick with the program. Just don't knock off early to indulge in your chocolate reward!

### 3 Time Is of the Essence

Set a specific time to begin your clean up, as well as a set length of time for the task at hand. (Be realistic!) Then, stick to it.

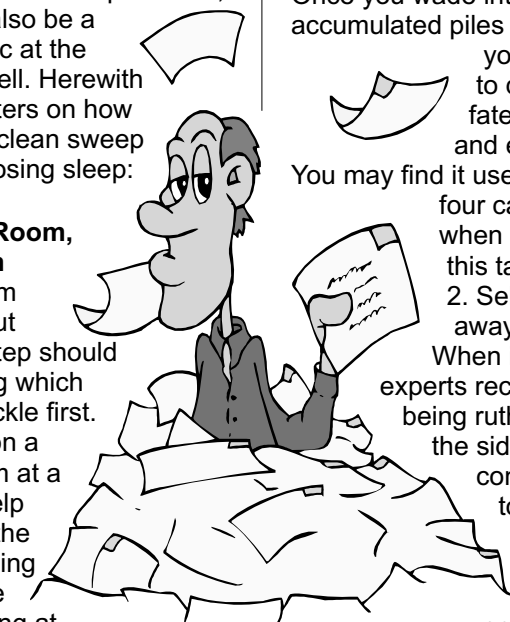
### 4 An Assortment of Sorts

Once you waded into your accumulated piles of material, you will need to decide the fate of each and every item.

You may find it useful to employ four categories when performing this task: 1. Keep; 2. Sell; 3. Give away; 4. Garbage. When in doubt, experts recommend being ruthless: err on the side of what will contribute most to your final goal... a less cluttered space. Asking yourself the question, "Am I storing this or using it?" can also be helpful when in doubt – provided you are honest with yourself.

### 5 Explore Outer Space

You need not book a flight to the moon, but an investigation of alternate storage strategies may be in order. Sometimes "clutter" is not so much a matter of retaining useless items as it is a sign of poor storage tactics. •



*Got that "snowed under" feeling? It may be time to declutter!*