

Run down this list before snow blows

The cold winds are beginning to whistle around our house. Be sure you... and your house... are ready for winter.

Here's a handy checklist you'll want to keep with you, checking off each chore as it's finished. You'll be ready for the blustery season ahead sooner than you thought.

OUTSIDE:

• Drain garden hoses and shut off outside water supply. Then take the garden hoses inside. Rubber as well as plastic will last longer.

• Check downspouts and make sure they are directing the water away from the house. If there are any cracks, caulk and seal.

• Clean gutters, removing all twigs and leaves.

• Cover window air conditioners with heavy-duty plastic or, if possible, remove them from the windows, making sure to close the windows tightly. Seal if necessary. Your energy auditor (you did have an energy audit, gave you, among other goodies, a roll of plastic tape for sealing windows).

• Plastic storm windows keep out a lot of cold air. Put them up if your home doesn't have regular storm windows.

• Take a window tour and note which windows are cracked. These should be replaced. If we don't get any more warm days to install windows, tape the cracks with clear tape, inside and out, for the duration of the cold weather.

• If your chimney has a small opening on the outside of your house, clean out the soot from last year. And make sure no bricks are missing and that the chimney is in good repair.

• Wood for fireplaces should be stacked and stored on a pallet. Cover with plastic to ensure it remains dry. Take a supply of wood indoors for that first fire.

IN THE YARD:

• Store lawn furniture and cover with plastic to protect finishes.

• Cover rosebushes with mulch or rose cones.

• Cover vines, etc. out of garden and turn over soil so you'll have a head start for next year's efforts.

• Clean and store all garden tools. Some can use a coating of oil.

• Drain oil and gasoline from the lawn mower and cover with plastic.

• Then check the snow blower to make sure it's ready to help when the snows come.

• Unbury your snowshovels and make sure they are accessible.

INSIDE:

• Clean registers and cold air returns. Make



energy

Barry
Jensen

sure the cold air returns are not blocked by furniture that will impede the proper circulation of air throughout the house.

• Furnace filters should be cleaned and replaced if necessary. Have the furnace checked by a professional at least every other year.

• If you have hot water heat, a quick check of the boiler and the asbestos insulation should reveal any cracks or leaks. Repair immediately.

• Weather stripping on door sills should be checked for air leakage. And don't forget the weather stripping around the doors. It should also be airtight.

• Close attic fans.

• Get a supply of de-icer before the ice and snow start.

• If you have problems with water pipes freezing, insulate those on the outside walls with a special tape. Your local hardware dealer or plumbing supplier can advise you what will suit your needs.

OCC hosts energy fair

An energy fair, sponsored by the Alternate Energy Technology Department at the Auburn Hills campus of Oakland Community College, will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 11.

Examples of solar energy systems, wind generators, energy conservation equipment and homemade energy systems will be featured.

Solar collectors built by Oakland County students in grades eight through 12 will be displayed and judged as part of the Solar Collector Building Contest.

The fair is free and open to the public.

A special session on alternate energy, geared to the needs of real estate agents, will be held at 12:30 p.m. A second informational session for builders is scheduled for 1:30 p.m.

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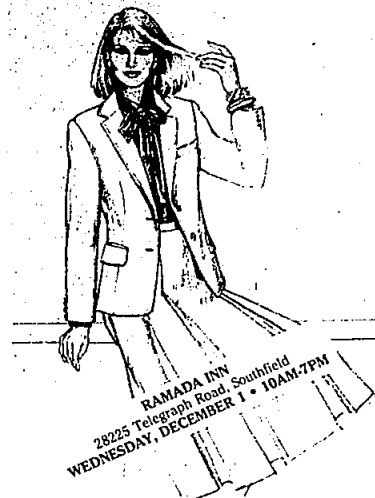
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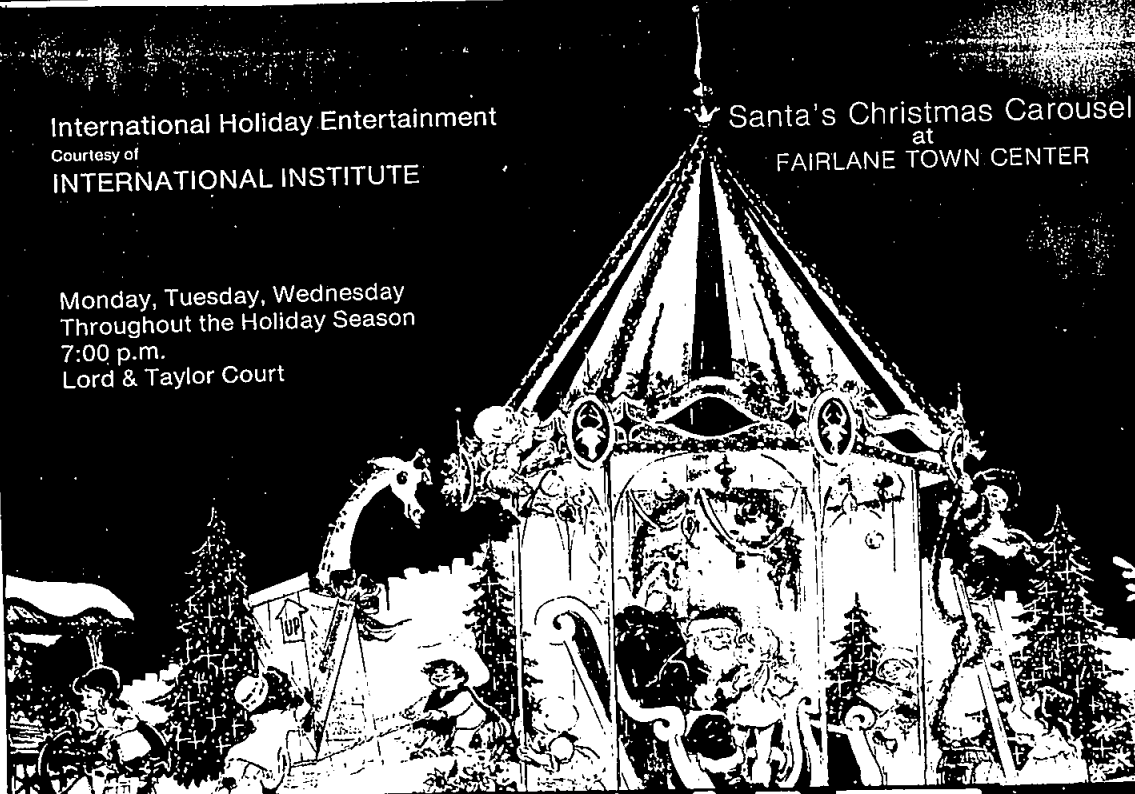
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