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CONTENTS

- 6 RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES: WHAT YOUR HOUSE IS REALLY TRYING TO TELL YOU
- 8 RECIPE OF THE MONTH: TANGHULU
- 10 SAFE AND SOUND: ACCIDENTAL POISONING
- 12 MENTAL HEALTH MOMENT: DATING SAFELY: RECOGNIZING THE RED FLAGS OF AN UNSAFE RELATIONSHIP
- 15 BUSINESS CLASSIFIEDS



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GREENVIEW



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What Your House Is Really Trying to Tell You

by Dan Honkanen



Most homes don't fail without warning. In fact, they're usually trying to tell us something long before a major repair is needed.

The problem is that homeowners are busy. We get used to seeing the same walls, hearing the same noises, and walking past the same small imperfections every day. Over time, those little clues blend into the background. Then one day a contractor points to something that seemed insignificant and says, "That's probably been happening for quite a while."

The good news is that many costly repairs begin with small warning signs. Learning to recognize them can help homeowners address problems earlier, often saving both money and stress.

Here are a few things your house might be trying to tell you.

That Musty Smell Isn't Normal

A musty smell is easy to ignore.

Many homeowners assume it's just a basement smell, seasonal humidity, or something that comes with

owning an older home. Sometimes that's true, but musty odours can also indicate excess moisture hiding where you can't see it.

Basements, crawl spaces, utility rooms, and attics are common places for moisture to accumulate. Small leaks, poor ventilation, or condensation can create conditions that allow mould and mildew to develop. The smell often appears long before visible damage. If a room consistently smells damp or stale, it's worth investigating before a small moisture issue becomes a larger problem.

Your Utility Bill Just Sent You a Message

Most homeowners glance at their utility bill and focus on the total amount due. What they don't always notice is the trend. If your heating or cooling costs have been steadily climbing despite no major changes in usage, your home may be telling you something.

Air leaks, aging insulation, failing weather stripping, and moisture-damaged insulation can all reduce energy efficiency. A sudden increase in utility costs isn't always caused by higher rates. Sometimes it's your home quietly becoming less efficient. Paying attention to those trends can help identify problems before comfort and energy costs become major concerns.

That Small Ceiling Stain Probably Didn't Start There

One of the most common mistakes homeowners make is assuming a ceiling stain originated directly above where it's visible. Water rarely works that way. Moisture can travel along framing, insulation, and building materials before finally showing itself. By the time a stain appears, the source of the problem may be several feet away. A small stain doesn't necessarily mean major damage, but it does deserve attention. Ignoring it rarely makes it disappear.

Your Gutters Are Giving You Clues

Most homeowners only think about gutters when they're overflowing, but gutters can reveal a surprising amount about the condition of your home.

Excessive roofing granules, shingle fragments, rust particles, and unusual debris can all indicate developing issues. After major storms, it's worth taking a quick look. Your gutters may reveal signs of roof wear long before those issues become visible from the ground.

That Door Isn't Sticking for No Reason

Doors and windows occasionally stick – wood expands

and contracts, homes settle. But when a door suddenly becomes difficult to close, especially if it wasn't a problem before, it's worth paying attention.

Changes in moisture levels, foundation movement, and structural shifts can all affect how doors and windows operate. One sticky door doesn't automatically signal a major issue, but several changes at once might.

The Paint Is Telling a Story

Paint often serves as a home's first warning system. Bubbling, peeling, cracking, or discolouration can indicate moisture problems that haven't yet become visible elsewhere. Many homeowners focus on repainting the surface without asking why the paint failed in the first place.

Sometimes the problem is simply age. Other times, the paint is pointing toward a larger issue hidden behind the wall.

That New Sound Deserves Your Attention

Homes naturally make noises. Furnaces cycle on and off. Water pipes expand and contract. Floors creak. But new sounds deserve attention.

A new dripping noise, rattling vent, buzzing electrical component, or banging pipe may be your home's way of asking for maintenance. The sooner unusual sounds are investigated, often the easier they are to resolve.

Listening Before Problems Become Expensive

Homeownership will always involve maintenance. No house is completely immune to wear and tear. A lot of the difference often comes down to timing.

Small issues are usually less expensive to fix than large ones. And many large problems begin by giving homeowners subtle clues that something isn't quite right.

- A musty smell.
- A ceiling stain.
- A sticking door.
- A spike in the utility bill.

Individually, these signs may seem minor. Together, they represent something important: your house is communicating.

The more attention you pay to those small messages, the better your chances of catching problems early, protecting your investment, and avoiding costly surprises down the road.

Tanghulu

by S. Law



Looking for a fun way to use your fruit? Try making tanghulu at home! This classic Chinese snack is easy to make and the perfect treat, check out the recipe below!

Ingredients

- Any fruit that can be pierced on a skewer.
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1/2 cup of water
- Wooden skewers

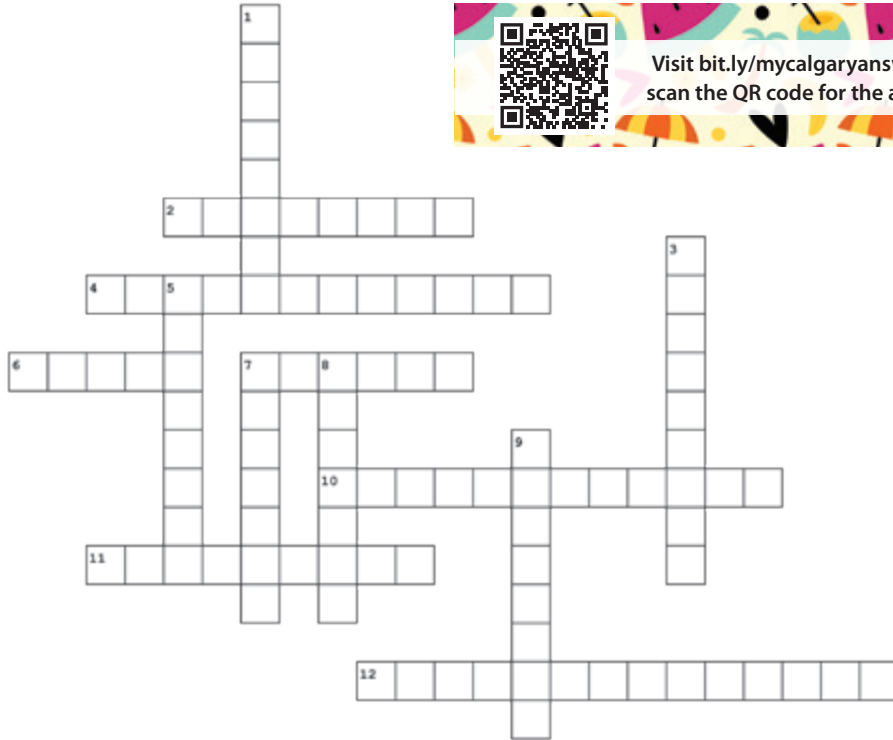
Directions

1. Wash and dry your fruit of choice, cut it into 1 to 2 inch pieces. For berries keep them whole.
2. With your wooden skewers, pierce the fruit, pushing each one down until your skewer is full, leaving enough room at the end for you to hold. Set aside.
3. Pour your sugar and water into a pot, making sure the pot is not too full.
4. Stir the water and sugar together until fully combined, then turn the heat on medium and cover with a lid.

Do not stir while the pot is heating! The water will prevent the sugar from burning, stirring only agitates the crystals making the mixture clumpy.

5. Once the sugar water begins to boil, you can remove the lid and let it cook.
6. You are waiting for the sugar to become golden in colour, do not stir with a spoon, but you can lift the pot above the heat and gently swirl the contents, so it cooks evenly.
7. Once you think the sugar is close to being done, prepare an ice bath in a large container that will fit your skewers.
8. When the sugar turns that golden shade, remove it from the heat immediately and begin carefully dipping your prepared skewers. The sugar will be very hot, so be careful not to burn yourself.
9. As soon as they have been dipped, place them into the ice bath so the sugar hardens, and you're done!
10. Enjoy your hard-earned treat with family and friends.

August Crossword



Visit bit.ly/mycalgaryanswers or scan the QR code for the answers

Across

2. Described as a period of abnormally hot weather, August is a typical time for these extreme weather events.
4. *Everything Everywhere All at Once* stars _____ as Evelyn, a mother trying to save her daughter from the evil forces of Jobu Tupaki in every universe.
6. *I Barely Knew Her*; is the title of this new artist's first album.
7. Weeping _____, is a popular tree native to northern China, but is now found in many places in North America.
10. These freshwater fish have a deceptively colourful name and can be found in the Bow River.
11. This American artist released his album *Wishbone*, featuring the songs, "Vodka Cranberry" and "Eleven Eleven" in August of last year.
12. If you're out on the lake, you may see people participating in this relaxing water sport.

Down

1. In this popular card game, you and your partner need to accrue a total of 121 points to win, even better if you skunk your opponents.
3. This popular Broadway musical was recently performed here in Calgary, telling the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.
5. Anne Hathaway's character in *The Devil Wears Prada* wears this blue that "represents millions of dollars of countless jobs."
7. This award-winning horror film follows Julia Garner as she tries to find her 17 students that go missing in the middle of the night.
8. These public spaces often promote a summer reading challenge for young kids.
9. These cold, fruit-flavoured treats are well-loved on a hot summer day.

Accidental Poisoning

by Emergency Health Services



Emergency Health Services (EHS) paramedics would like to remind parents and caregivers of precautions they can take to help prevent accidental childhood poisonings around the home. Ingesting prescription or over-the-counter medication is a frequent cause of accidental childhood poisonings. Other causes include ingesting or contact with household items such as dishwasher/laundry tablets, mouthwash, chemicals such as paints/solvents, cleaning products, and button batteries.

Storage

- Place all medications in locked containers and store in an area inaccessible to children.
- For easy identification, store all medications in their original packaging; do not mix multiple medications in a single bottle.
- Install child locks on all cabinets, or drawers where medications and button batteries are kept.

Safety tips

- Child-resistant medication bottles are not necessarily child-proof. They can still be opened by a child.

- Take extra precautions with medicines designed to appeal to children such as chewable vitamins or flavoured cough and cold syrups.
- Promptly dispose of any medications or toxic household products no longer in use.

Prevention

- Store household products, cleaning supplies, and cosmetics in locked cabinets or drawers.
- Install child latches on cabinets children might also access by climbing on counters or chairs.
- Label all plants in and around your home and garden.
- Antifreeze, windshield washer fluid, and pesticides are extremely poisonous. Even a small amount can cause serious illness if ingested.

Find poisoning information by calling the Poison and Drug Information Service (PADIS) at 1-800-332-1414.

In Case of a Poisoning Emergency, Call 9-1-1

Provide the name of the product ingested and, if it is safe to do so, a sample of the substance for EHS paramedics to inspect on their arrival.

August's Reflection

by Michelle Macdonald, Letter Writing and Mail Club Enthusiast.

List your favourite hobbies. Pick one that gives you great fulfillment. Why is it so special to you?

Dear reader,

It has taken me some time to figure out who I am and which pastimes I need to feel truly content. My favourite hobbies are reading, gardening, camping, hiking, and jigsaw puzzles. To properly nourish our whole selves, I surmise we each need a combination of hobbies that embody various aspects of our lives. For example, we need something active to move our bodies, something to challenge and sharpen our minds, something social to connect us to others, and something peaceful to help us relax.

Gardening is particularly special to me, fulfilling both my active and relaxation needs. I have had a deep affinity for the outdoors and growing things since childhood, heavily influenced by my parents. My dad always tended to the vegetable garden, while my mom creatively landscaped their farm in Southern Ontario.

Working with the earth is a natural lesson in hard work and reward. One morning this spring, I was roaming the backyard with my hot cup of tea, impatiently wondering when my peas would finally begin to sprout. When I noticed a flash of green, I was elated. A single pea shoot was poking proudly out of the soil, and my heart was happy.

However, gardening also requires realistic expectations and acceptance of things entirely outside of our control. Since those peas sprouted, I've had to battle hungry birds and mischievous squirrels. Losing plants to hail, insects, and other pests is simply part of the deal.

Gardening in a climate with a short growing season requires flexibility. It forces me to accept that hours of hard work could be thwarted on any given day by Mother Nature. Honestly, if I hadn't learned to accept that reality, I likely would have quit by now! Yet, despite the frequent challenges, it remains deeply rewarding. Soon enough, I will be eating fresh peas, lettuce, herbs, raspberries, and other delicious food that I managed to nurture, protect, and keep alive.

Happy writing,

Michelle

Write It Forward



Now it's your turn to write it forward. Write a friend, neighbour, or family member about our monthly reflection.



Dating Safely: Recognizing the Red Flags of an Unsafe Relationship

by Nancy Bergeron, R.Psych. | info@nancybergeron.ca



Dating can be exciting. However, it's a time when we overlook warning signs because our attraction leads us to want to believe the best about someone. According to security expert and author Gavin de Becker in his bestselling book *The Gift of Fear*, our intuition is one of our greatest tools for recognizing danger. Learning to trust our instincts and identify red flags can help us avoid unhealthy or unsafe relationships before they become deeply established.

One of de Becker's central messages is that fear is not something to dismiss. It is valuable information.

Many people who later experienced emotional abuse, coercion, or violence report that they had an uneasy feeling early on but talked themselves out of it. Rather than ignoring these feelings, de Becker encourages us to pay attention to them.

A common red flag is boundary violations. Healthy people respect your "no," your need for space, and your personal preferences. An unsafe person may repeatedly push your boundaries while disguising their persistence as affection or determination. One of de Becker's most important observations is that when someone ignores

a small “no,” they are often testing whether they can ignore a larger one later.

Another warning sign is forced teaming. This occurs when someone creates an artificial sense of connection by speaking as though you are already a team. Statements such as “We’re exactly alike,” “No one understands me like you do,” or “We’re in this together” early in a relationship may be attempts to accelerate trust and intimacy before it has naturally developed.

Becker also describes the danger of love bombing, where a person overwhelms you with attention, gifts, praise, or declarations of love very early in dating. While genuine affection develops gradually, love bombing often creates pressure to reciprocate feelings that have not had time to develop authentically.

Another tactic he identifies is charm versus genuineness. Genuine people do not need to work hard to convince you they are good people. Excessive charm, flattery, and polished behaviour can sometimes be used to lower your guard. As de Becker notes, charm is often a strategy intended to persuade, while genuine kindness expects nothing in return.

Watch for loan sharking, another concept from *The Gift of Fear*. This occurs when someone does favours, buys gifts, or provides help that you did not ask for, then expects gratitude, access, attention, or compliance in return. Healthy generosity is freely given without creating a sense of obligation.

Becker also discusses typecasting, a manipulation tactic where someone makes a subtle negative comment in order to provoke you into proving them wrong. For example, “You’re probably too busy to talk,” or “You seem like someone who wouldn’t give people a chance.” The goal is often to influence your behaviour by triggering a need to defend yourself.

The most important lesson from *The Gift of Fear* is simple: trust your instincts. If you feel pressured, confused, manipulated, or unsafe, you do not need to justify those feelings. Your intuition exists to protect you. Healthy relationships feel respectful, safe, and consistent. When something feels off, listen to that inner voice, it recognizes danger before your conscious mind can explain it.

Cats, Canines, & Critters of Calgary



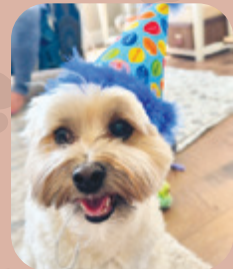
Bear, Cranston



Chico, Richmond



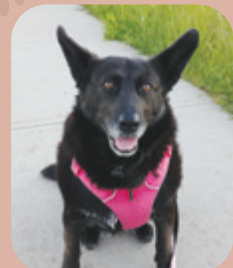
Dexter, Tuscany



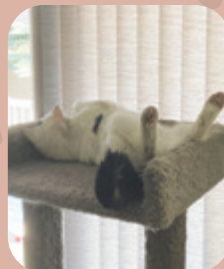
Ferland, Cranston



Honey, Cranston



Kenna, Bridlewood



Pixel, Chaparral



Tui, Hillhurst Sunnyside

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News from the Friends of Nose Hill

by Anne Burke

As I write, it is Calgary Aboriginal Awareness Week. In 1979, the Native Urban Affairs Committee was established to represent Aboriginal issues and concerns. In 1987, the name was changed to the Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee. I was contacted by a grade nine Math and Social Studies teacher who wanted to plan a tour of Nose Hill by a First Nations guide. There are a few documents related to the protocol for inviting Indigenous Elders. If you are in the Calgary area and need to connect with an Elder or Knowledge Keeper, you can consult the City of Calgary Indigenous Collaboration policy or the CBE Indigenous Education Protocol for local guidance. In First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, the Elders are leaders, teachers, role models, and mentors. The CBE Indigenous Education team has kept wisdom and teachings shared orally from Elders and community Knowledge Keepers for several years. The CBE document represents a summary of those teachings. It also includes knowledge gained from other organizations and districts. The Alberta Teachers Association offers a guide to accompany the Association's Stepping Stones, Truth and Reconciliation resources. Crystal Manyfingers and her family are all members of the Kainai Nation of the great Blackfoot Confederacy who signed Treaty 7 in 1877. Crystal holds a B.A., B.Ed., and a Master's degree in Education (Adult and Workplace Learning) from the University of Calgary. She has written numerous magazine articles, published a children's book, and was awarded the Faculty of the Year Award for 2020 from Bow Valley College as a Learning Design Consultant for Indigenization and Decolonization of Curriculum, Research, and Innovation. Crystal serves on the Board of Directors for the Calgary Public Library as well as the Alberta Library Trustees Association.



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As August arrives with its long, warm days and golden evenings, I'm reminded of one of the season's greatest gifts: the opportunity to connect with one another.

There is something special about this time of year. We spend more time outdoors, gather at community events, visit local markets, and linger a little longer in conversation with friends and neighbours. Summer creates space for the spontaneous interactions that help bring communities together.

Strong communities are built not only through policies and programs, but through the relationships we create with one another. A neighbour checking in, a conversation at the park, or a friendly greeting on a walk can foster a sense of belonging and strengthen the bonds that make our communities resilient.

I'm especially grateful for the chance encounters summer seems to encourage. Running into a familiar face at a festival or meeting someone new at a community gathering can turn an ordinary day into a meaningful moment of connection. These experiences remind us that we are part of something larger than ourselves.

In a time when we are so often being pushed toward division and conflict, these moments matter more than ever. They help us see one another not as strangers, but as neighbours. They build trust, understanding, and the sense of safety that allows people and communities to thrive.

This August, I encourage everyone to embrace opportunities to reach out, say hello, and spend time together. The warm weather will not last forever, but the connections we build can endure long after summer ends, strengthening our communities and reminding us that we are all better when we look out for one another.

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JOKE OF THE MONTH

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but I couldn't find any.



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