



INSIDE

## CLASSIFIED

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## LIFE AT HOME

DECOR • DOMESTIC ARTS • RENOVATIONS • RENTALS • RESALE

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## AROUND THE HOUSE

## Put a tetra in your tank

**NOVELTY** • Bring a decorative twist to your bathroom with a product that's sure to have your guests talking.

The Fish-n-Flush clear, two-piece toilet tank replaces a standard toilet tank and cleverly contains a fully functioning aquarium inside.

Introduced by U.S.-based AquaOne Technologies Inc., the aquarium toilet tank fits most toilets and operates as a conventional interior tank. The aquarium will accept fresh or salt water.

It has a capacity of roughly eight litres and can be removed for cleaning without obstructing the toilet from working. It comes with gravel, two plastic plants, a dual filter system, LED lighting, a built-in feeder, fill valve, overflow tube, flapper, suction pump and two screws. The power level is set at a safe 12 volts.

The Fish-n-Flush sells for around \$400 Cdn. Because the product is so new, it isn't available yet in retail venues, but it can be purchased online at fishnflush.com.

— CanWest News Service

## Snowblower buying 101

**TIP** • Because it's inevitable the snow will blow at some point, you may wish to treat yourself to a snowblower.

The Home Depot offers this advice for first-time or seasoned buyers.

■ Buy as much machine as you can afford. Eight horsepower is a good size; anything less will have trouble with heavy wet snow.

■ Buy a long-standing, quality brand name backed with reliability and a warranty.

■ Smaller machines should only be considered for special needs — narrow walkways or decks.

Trying to do a big job with a small machine can end up taking much longer and requires a lot of patience.

■ Grab the handles, twist and rock the machine — if it creaks and rattles, chances are it will break easily.

■ Always check the lower end of the machine where all the moving parts are visible. Parts should be either welded or bolted — if put together with sheet metal screws, the machine will be more likely to come apart.

■ An electric start is nice if you have limited strength, however, a power source is required. It's important to find a machine with a battery system, or be sure to buy a heavy-duty extension cord. These machines have a fairly strong motor, so read the owner's manual for recommen-

## A MERRY MODERN CHRISTMAS

SEVENTH IN A FOUR-WEEK SERIES

**DEC. 2:** New hues for the holidays

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**DEC. 16:** The lazy person's Christmas

**DEC. 17:** Dreaming of a green Christmas

**TODAY:** Holiday hangovers: Remedies for festive faux pas, hiccups and spills

**SUNDAY:** Small space party throwing tips

## Cures for holiday hangovers

There's bound to be a festive faux pas — or three. Spilled wine, splashed gravy and unexpected gifts. What's a harried host to do?

LISA KADANE AND LORI FAZARI  
CALGARY HERALD

## Gift gaffes

When it comes to Christmas present pickles, there's only one thing worse than receiving a bottle of wine you'll never drink: being re-gifted the same bottle of wine you gave the giver the year before.

Calgary social graces gurus Sue Jacques and Erika Isnor tackle gift guilt, gift burnout and the controversial topic of re-gifting.

**1. Gift guilt:** Good friends drop by with a gift, but you're empty-handed. Do you run out and buy them something?

A better idea, says Erika Isnor of White Gloves and Party Manners, is to have a selection of pre-wrapped generic gifts on hand under the tree, such as candles, bottles of wine or mugs filled with hot chocolate packets. Simply match a gift to the friend in question.

Another option is to graciously accept the gift, thank them for it, and invite them in for holiday cheer.

**2. Gift exchange gone wild:** It started out as an exchange of presents with your parents and siblings, but now your brother and two sisters each have three kids. It's beginning to look a lot like Chapter 11.

If the joy of buying is gone and it feels more like an expensive obligation, it's time to have a frank conversation with those involved, says Sue Jacques of Influence, an etiquette consulting company. A good rule is to limit gift giving to nieces and nephews (or grandchildren), and cut them off at age 12 or 18.

**3. You hate the puffy, Christmas-themed penguin sweatshirt Granny gave you. Is it OK to re-gift it to an acquaintance?**

No, Isnor says. "If somebody has taken the time and effort to go out and purchase something for you, it's the thought of giving."

Unwanted gifts should be donated to a charity.

If you do decide to re-gift, Jacques imparts words to wrap by: "Make sure you're not re-gifting it to the person from whom it came."

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## The drunk uncle (drunkle)

When hosting a holiday party, establish beforehand how much — if any — alcohol will be served, or put away the wine after dinner and serve tea or coffee.

Be a responsible host. If the drunkle knocks back too many rum-spiked egg-nogs, don't let him drink and drive.

Illustration, Pierre A. Lamielle, Calgary Herald

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