

# SPRING CLEANING IN THE DAYS GONE BY IN JASPER PLACE

MAXINE HEBERT

I feel spring is just around the corner, don't you? It got me thinking about spring cleaning in the days before electricity, Swiffers, heavy-duty cleaners, and power vacuum cleaners.

At our house, it started while there was still snow on the ground. First of all, all the dresser drawers and closets got cleaned out and sorted. Old shirts, dresses, and cotton things were put into one box, old wool jackets and pants into another. Old bed sheets were cut up to see if enough of the edges could be salvaged to make pillowcases. Sometimes our pillowcases were really rather skinny because there was only so much good material left. The scraps were made into cleaning rags. Now, the wool jackets and pants were another matter. They were all taken apart at the seams and washed very carefully, and then Mom would cut out all the pieces that were still good. She would press them between pressing cloths with an old flat iron that was heated on the stove and I still remember the smell. Then, she would take a template that was an elongated half-circle and cut out all the good pieces. These were made into the

most beautiful rugs. We would take wool and do a buttonhole stitch all along the curvy part. Next, on a piece of burlap, oval-shaped about four feet long and two feet wide with a hem stitched to hold the edges, we would start to hand-stitch the half circles of woolen material, row upon row, until there was a smaller oval in the centre. Mom would then cut another piece of woolen or felt material, place it in the center, and stitch it down. The rugs were called penny rugs, and in antique shops today they fetch a pretty penny.

When spring looked like it was going to burst into action, we would take down all the curtains, and they were washed along with the doilies, with the lace ones dipped into blueing rinse water to make them super white. They were then all hung outside on the clothesline, but first of all we would put all the bedding and blankets out to air, all the time praying the clothesline wouldn't break otherwise everything would have to be washed all over again. Believe me, that did happen once in a while. The windows would then be

washed with vinegar and water and newspaper before putting the curtains back up.

The furniture was all washed down with a solution of Fels Naptha or Sunlight soap, and given a new coat of lemon oil. The hardwood floors were all wiped down with Varsol. This could only be done on a warm day when all the doors could be opened, because one spark and "poof." Then, when they were dry, a new coat of Shinola wax was put down and then hand rubbed to a shine. Lots of work, but it really smelled good. Then, of course, the rugs were put out on the clothesline to be beaten.



All the knickknacks and figurines were given a dunking in soapy water and rinsed, and anything brass was polished up after cleaning with half a lemon dipped in salt. That always left the kitchen last, and the cupboards were all cleaned out and washed with ammonia water. The coal-and-wood stove had to have a thorough cleaning, cleaning out all the wood ash and dust and then shone up with newspaper. The water reservoir on the side was always thoroughly

cleaned out, which was not an easy job as there was always scale that had to be chipped off first and then carefully removed with a cloth.

By this time everything was starting to sparkle, and Mom and I were feeling pretty proud of ourselves, but very glad we only had a small house to clean. Before all the cleaning things were put away, I used to like to make a Magic Crystal Garden that always fascinated me. You should try it – it will fascinate kids, young and old alike. First, find an old fish bowl or rose bowl. Even an old pickle jar will work. Then mix up 6 tablespoons of blueing (for laundry – yes, still available) and 1 tablespoon of ammonia. Put some pieces of charcoal (get barbecue charcoal that hasn't been treated) or coal into your container. Sprinkle a few drops of food colouring over it, pour the above mixture over the charcoal or coal, place in a warm spot, and within a day or so it will start to grow. It is truly magical.

Well, I guess I should think about my own spring cleaning, but I am thankful I have a good vacuum cleaner, some really good heavy duty cleaner/degreaser, and the name of a good professional rug cleaner to come and clean my carpets and furniture – very thankful!

## VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE

Check out the restaurants listed on the front page and vote for your favourite to be our next "DINNER ON US" contest restaurant. Place the name of your favourite restaurant in the entry box below, submit with your contact details and we will tally up the votes and arrange for a new "DINNER ON US" monthly contest.

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Entrants must be 18 years of age or older, some conditions may apply. Winners name will be published in following issue of SPURR.

CONGRATULATIONS TO LAST MONTHS DINNER ON US! CONTEST WINNER JENNY DAVIES



To be entered in our draw please fax this form to 780-401-3438, email reasonable facsimile to contest@thespurr.ca or mail to Pie Communications Inc. 544, 12222-137th Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T5L 4X5

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## THE DRAGONFLY DEN



MICHELE HEBERT

Finally – spring in Edmonton! It was such a long winter, or perhaps it always seems like that for a gardener. Spring is a time for renewal. Out with the old, in with the new. What better way to start the new season than by renewing yourself. Get a new, updated hairstyle with colour and maybe highlights. Update your wardrobe with a new blouse or cotton sweater. Get a manicure and pedicure (even if you're a guy) and feel like a million bucks. It gives you a fresh outlook, a better attitude, and a spring in your step.

Renew your home, also. It is too easy to get buried under sentimental "junk" – knickknacks and

stuff that has been around for way too long. If you're really attached to it, take a picture and then sell it or donate it. My community, Parkview, is having a garage sale at the community hall on 91 avenue and 146 street on May 2. I have my table booked – come out and meet me and Old Fart. I am going through my house, garage, and garden shed (when I can get to it through the snow), and purging everything I don't really need or want anymore. Anything I can't sell, I will donate. It feels so good, and I have found so much more room in my closets, cupboards, and storage room. Why I have kept my daughter's old, outgrown ballet slippers all these years, I will never know. I have pictures of her in them, and that's all I need. For sale: four pairs of ballet slippers, cheap.

Contact your community events coordinator for a garage sale in your community, and feel "renewed." I certainly do.

