

Inside This Issue:

It's Not the Heat...
Control Your Heating Bill
Keep Your Home Safe

Winter 2006/2007

Smart and simple ways to enrich your home living

HOMESENSE



MoneyWise

"Weird Contraction" from the 1980's is Now Slimmer, Way Smarter, and Ready to Slash Up to 47% Off Your Energy Bill

Yes, I thought it was weird then too. But that was the era of blue spiked hair as a fashion statement, so what do I know? Yet this inventor's "thing" had promise. It was just a few years too early.

If you've heard anything about hybrid cars, you know they're the next wave in ultra fuel and energy savings. But did you know that same technology is available to reduce energy costs in your home?

It's been around since the 1980's but as with automobiles, the spike in fuel recently has caused an upsurge in popularity. Like hybrid cars, dual home heating systems work by splitting operations between fuel and electric sources. In this case, between a heat pump and a furnace.

The heat pump draws free heat from the outdoors and disburses it throughout the home, creating a consistent "mellow" heat. Most systems are programmed to switch automatically to the furnace at the "comfort" balance point.

The furnace is then able to deliver

the warmer heat provided by gas or oil, creating warmth when it's cold outside.

What Does This Mean to You?

Okay, look at your heating bill. Not just this month, *but all season long*. Now, mentally put **half that money in your wallet**. Feel better?

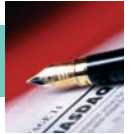
Anyway, the point is that it doesn't appear that energy costs are coming down anytime soon. When the popularity and savings generated by this system gains strength, so will the prices for them. Simple economics.

Just know that hybrid systems in your home – just like in cars – will be the 'hot' things to have. And you read it here first!

When you call for your service this season, ask for a free no-obligation survey to see how much one of these systems could save you. (Hey, the savings might pay for it!) Either way, just know we appreciate you and look forward to helping you in any way we can. Stay warm!



MyWord



Holiday Hair Pulling

By Jim Lugas



Hello Friends,

I always forget how busy this time of year can be! Between holidays, family, and friends, it seems like there's little time to focus on anything else.

And that's exactly the way it *should* be, so I hope you're taking this time to enjoy everything that Winter has to offer. Whether it's sitting in front of a warm fire catching up on your reading, taking advantage of Winter sports and activities, or simply spending time with family and friends, this is a great season to focus on the things that make life important.

That's why we're happy to focus on your home comfort *for you*. By now your heating and plumbing systems are working overtime and that can mean bothersome breakdowns or repairs. If you had a pre-season tune-up, you've probably avoided this interruption with just a bit of preventive maintenance. If you haven't scheduled your tune-up yet, give us a call and we'll be happy to make sure your systems run smoothly for the entire season.

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Your **Quik Call** Comfort Hotline:
618-234-3310





HomeWise

It's Not the Heat, It's the...

All together now: "Humidity!" Okay, we've heard this so long we're sick of it. Kind of in the same category as, "Cold enough for you?"

But there is an essential truth to the well-worn phrase, because the humidity is *the* element that makes you feel hotter, or colder.

That's right. You and I have a personal humidity and once we get too much or too little in our environment, we not only "feel" it, but it can actually make you sick.

Too Much or Not Enough?

Too much humidity can make wet stains appear on walls and you may notice a musty odor. Skin feels sweaty, clammy, or sticky and this is the optimal environment for mold, fungal, and bacterial growth. That can mean frequent respiratory issues for your family, especially for members with asthma or allergies.

On the other hand, air that is too dry can cause cracks in the ceiling

and walls, and shrink framing around windows and doors. Not only does your home become less energy efficient, but breathing dry air can cause nasal and throat irritation. Skin dries out faster becoming itchy and flaky, lips chap, and nose-bleeds can occur.



When running the furnace, the humidity in your home

may be as low as 10% during the Winter. Since the ideal relative humidity is between 30% – 60% what can you do to balance the moisture in your home's air?

Seen Any Cool Hygrometers Lately?

First, take the time to pick up a hygrometer. These inexpensive

devices measure the humidity in your home. Depending on where your home falls in the moisture spectrum, both humidifiers and dehumidifiers are available.

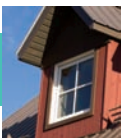
If you're not sure what the best choice for your home is, a professional (like us) can assess your home and your options.

The options are all over the place. You can get equipment for just one room... or your whole house. Once we determine your real needs, we can pick the right equipment.

This is easily done in a free survey during your seasonal service. (We can answer a few questions over the phone too.)

Having the right humidity in your home can really add to your comfort, save you on energy, possibly even save you and your family an illness or two. Because as you know, it's not the heat...

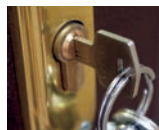
HomeFront



Will the Government REALLY PAY for Your Home Improvements?

(Finally, a program that we can all use!)

You may know that the higher the Energy STAR rating on your appliances, the more energy you save. What you may not know is now the federal government is willing to pay you to save that energy.



On qualifying energy efficient appliances and home improvements made January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007, the government will issue the purchaser a tax credit of up to \$500.

Unlike a *deduction* which reduces the amount of taxable income, these credits directly reduce the amount of taxes you will be required to pay. Home improvements/appliances covered by this tax credit include:

- Windows and Doors
- Metal Roofs
- HVAC systems, Furnaces, and Heat Pumps
- Water Heaters
- Insulation

In order to receive the tax credit, you will need to save your product receipt as well as the Manufacturer's Certification Statement.

Not all Energy Star products will qualify for the tax credit. For a complete listing of products and specifications, visit www.energystar.gov.

We'll be glad to look at your heating and cooling system to determine how you can get in on these tax credits. Who says we're not looking out for you?





Fuel Shortages? War? Greed? Get the Truth to Managing YOUR Energy Bills

With all the “outside” factors that make juggling your heating bills a full time job, here’s my one word of advice: Control.

Take some tips and some comfort here... by taking more control over what “seems” to be uncontrollable. Not so...

Although fuel prices are expected to level out this season, it may still be too soon for consumers to breathe a sigh of relief. According to the Energy Department’s Energy Information Administration, the average price of fuel will be 15% higher for homeowners this year than two years ago, and 64% higher than five years ago.

The uncertainty of the fuel market combined with the lackluster results of alternative fuel production leaves many consumers wondering how to take control of their energy expenses without sacrificing home comfort.

You can’t control the world fuel market. But you *can* take control of your family’s comfort – and costs. By taking a few small steps you can save hundreds of dollars in heating costs this Winter.

An Ounce of Prevention

Even small things like leaky seals around doors and windows or inadequate insulation can increase your heating costs. Give your home a pre-season inspection for any small repairs that can send your fuel prices spiraling out of control. A little preventive maintenance

goes a long way to keeping your hard-earned dollars where they belong – in your pocket.



Having your heating and cooling system cleaned twice a year can not only save on your bills, but also prevent problems and extend the life of your system.

Choose Efficiency

One of the most important

things you can do to control energy expenses is to increase the efficiency of your home equipment. Water heaters, furnaces – these things require large amounts of fuel, yet models are now available that can increase efficiency *and* your savings.

Give us a call to discuss your fuel saving options. Whether it’s just a repair, a tune-up or a more energy efficient system, small investments in preparation can reap large rewards in energy and fuel savings.

Let us come out and make your system as efficient as possible.

Household Trivia



1. Winter is cold and uncomfortable for almost everyone, but for scientists at the Russian science station in Antarctica this was especially true when they recorded the world’s lowest confirmed temperature of:
A. -42° C B. -88° C C. -116° C D. -28° C
2. The first battery was created when a scientist realized that when moisture comes between two metals, electricity is created. The unit of electrical potential is now named after him. Which scientist created the first battery?
A. Alessandro Volta B. Thomas Edison C. Benjamin Franklin D. Michael Faraday
3. Ice always melts at 32° F, but water does not always freeze at 32° F. It must freeze onto something. However, if you poured a cup of water out of a window, it would freeze spontaneously at temperatures equal to or below:
A. -15° F B. 15° F C. 0° F D. -40° F
4. It may surprise you to know that in a traditionally male dominated field, a woman actually invented the gas furnace that allowed central heating. In 1919 the patent for this furnace was issued to:
A. Marie Curie B. Susan B. Anthony C. Alice Parker D. Betty Rozier

Answers on page 4.

MyWord



continued from page 1

In the meantime, take advantage of the opportunities to make memories this season offers. Something about the cold on the outside brings people closer together on the inside. And after all, people are what make the special moments in life just that – special.

Wishing you a happy and safe season.

Sincerely,

Jim Lugge

P.S. We hope you'll enjoy the great home tips that come in this newsletter, but don't forget to check out the super discounts on services you'll find on this page. If you aren't able to use them, feel free to pass them on to friends. After all, your friends are our friends, and we'd love to help them out too!

HomePoints

By properly venting and insulating your attic, you can save 20% to 35% in heating costs, as well as help control moisture and indoor air problems.

Here's Your "One Call" Plumbing Solution

- **24-hour Service, 7 Days a Week.** Why wait for more water damage?
- **Professional Plumbers.** Our skilled techs can solve most any plumbing problem. Like yours!
- **Fast Effective "Drain Relief".** We send water away. Quickly, cleanly.
- **Water Heaters Repaired or Replaced.** Sometimes you *want* to be in hot water! Get it!
- **Over 47 solid years** of caring service. Let us solve your problem.

Call Bel-O The Plumber at 235-6626.

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Your Pests should be our Problem... not Yours!

Because you are a valued member of the BEL-O family, we are offering you a

10% Discount

- Premier Service Plan (year long program) Winter visit includes free attic treatment!
- Sentricon Termite Elimination System
- Rodent Treatments and more

Call 235-6626 Today



Start the Premier Service Plan now and avoid the spring pest invasion.

Is It Really Possible to Eliminate Your Home's Power Outages?

Each minute your refrigerator is off increases the chances of **bacteria and mold breeding** on your food. If your power fails during freezing weather, hypothermia is a very real, very deadly risk. We read about tragedies like this every year.

Then there's the basic stuff that goes out: No lights, phones, or security system. You keep wondering "when" or "if" the power will come back on. You can quit wondering because all this is avoidable.

We've looked at *hundreds* of generators, and none have been to our standard. The ones at the discount stores are loud, require messy and dangerous fuels, emit choking exhaust and invite fumbling with long cords.

But with the *Carrier Systems* you can forget about losing power and dangers of "other" systems. That's a thing of the past.

Call Bel-O Sales & Service for a completely free generator survey at 235-6626. Make sure your home and family are protected before the first storm.

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Trivia Answers: 1. B, 2. A, 3. D, 4. C



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If your mailing label is not correct, please call us!

HOMESENSE