

Inside This Issue:

A Pain in Your Drain
Raining Inside Your Home?
Online Concerns for Parents

Fall 2006

Smart and simple ways to enrich your home living

HOMESENSE



MoneyWise

New Hybrid Technology Saves Energy Costs

■ On My Monthly Utility Bill?

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 is installed and preset to run until temperatures reach a certain level, called the "breakeven" temperature. This is the point at which it is no longer economically feasible to run the heat pump. In other words, it costs more in electricity to run the heat pump than the heat pump can return in energy savings.

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, which is usually just a few degrees above the economic "breakeven" temperature.

The furnace is then able to deliver the warmer heat provided by gas or oil, creating a "toasty" feeling to the air when temperatures are colder.

So what does all of this really mean to the homeowner? Though dependent on variables such as equipment efficiency and utility rates,

a hybrid home heating system can typically save homeowners 30% – 50% in fuel and energy costs. That's nothing to shrug at, especially since fuel and energy prices are expected to continue increasing through the Winter.

So when you call us for your seasonal tune-up – ask for a free, no-obligation survey to determine how much you can save with a new hybrid home comfort system.



MyWord



Take a Breather

By Jim Luggie

Hello Friends,

Whew! I'm breathing a sigh of relief as the last days of a scorching Summer move into the pleasant weather of Fall.

This is the time to breathe in the fresh, cool air outside – while taking a breather from the "hot air" emergencies our customers faced in their homes all Summer long.

Believe me, we're glad to help, and we'll be here when you've got "cold air" emergencies this Winter. Yet, before that happens, we'd like to let you in on a little secret (that's not actually very secret, since we talk about it all the time).

A small amount of preventive maintenance before the start of the season can go a long way toward keeping your furnace running trouble-free all Winter long. So, give us a call, and we'll schedule your tune-up well before a "cold weather crisis" has you wearing earmuffs indoors!

Keep in mind, the cold season can also hit a plumbing system hard – from frozen pipes, as well as from heavier use from all the "indoor" activity. Call if you have any trouble at all.

In the meantime, enjoy this
continued on page 4

HomeSense
is published
for friends of



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





Who's Cyber-Sitting Your Child?

In many homes, children can be far more savvy than their parents about use of the Internet. At the same time, they can be unaware of the risks posed to them by revealing personal information online.

To help preserve privacy, the FTC recommends several precautions for parents, including:

- Spend time together – online. By exploring the Internet with your children, you can see what they're seeing. Help them find kid-friendly sites and explain why they should be careful never to give out real names and addresses in chat rooms, to online pen pals, or on bulletin boards.
- Have rules for going online. Rather than non-stop access, limit usage to certain times.
- Consider using filters. These parental controls aren't fool-proof, but they do help filter out certain sites and subjects, keeping them off limits to your child.

- If the web site is directed to children, look for privacy policies and learn the kinds of personal information being collected and how it will be used.



The best protection requires the involvement of the parents.

Screen the Screen Names

Talk with your kids about their screen name selections. The impulse to create a name that has a special meaning for your child is also what strangers can use for clues. So while kids are thinking of a pet's name, a hometown, their age, a school mascot – or worse, their name and address – others can quickly put two

and two together and find out who they are and where they can be found.

Online Socializing

The potential for online socializing also raises serious concerns, especially when kids are pre-teen and older.

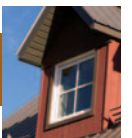
Evaluate these sites for their “kid-friendly” environment before you give the go-ahead.

Remind your teens and tweens to be careful about getting too personal with someone who might not be who he says he is. Tell them to only post information they would want anyone and everyone to see.

Make sure they know to trust their gut if they have any suspicions. If anything causes them to feel threatened or uncomfortable, they should tell you immediately.

And perhaps the most logical safeguard of all... keep your computer in a common area and keep an eye on your kids when they're online.

HomeFront



“Why is it Raining in My House”

and other practical questions that you should've asked *before* you bought your house

Buying a home can be an exciting time. But even when location, price, size and curb appeal are exactly to your liking, other “added extras” could be headed your way in the form of high repair bills or costly surprises.



A thorough evaluation of the home by a qualified home inspector prior to purchase is your best bet for protection and preparation. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, home inspectors:

- Evaluate the physical condition of the home, including the structure, construction and mechanical systems;
- Identify items that should be repaired or replaced;

- Estimate the remaining useful life of the major systems (such as electrical, plumbing, heating, air conditioning), equipment, structure and finishes.

Though it's easy to confuse the two, a home inspection is not an appraisal. Appraisals give estimates of market value and are tools for lenders to use to authorize mortgage approval. Inspections are designed for potential buyers to make sure they know what they're buying.

To find a qualified home inspector, check with state regulatory authorities, professional organizations, the Yellow Pages, internet searches, or your real estate agent.





Wasting Money and Water Can Be a Pain in the Drain

A glass of water in a restaurant may come for free, but water use in your home comes at a price.

Taking a few small steps to conserve water can help you save big. The Department of Energy offers several recommendations:

Fix Leaks

The sound of dripping is annoying and expensive, with one drip per second typically costing \$1 per month. Repair leaks in fixtures and pipes.

Install Low-Flow Fixtures

Quality, low-flow fixtures can be quite inexpensive, while achieving water savings of 25%-60%.

Wash Dishes Efficiently

Hand-washing dishes does not necessarily save hot water. An energy-efficient dishwasher when properly used and operating with full loads can consume less energy than washing dishes by hand several times a day.

When available, use shorter cycles to reduce hot water use. Plus, save by not using the heat-dry, rinse-hold and pre-rinse features.

Wash Clothes Efficiently

Use either cold or warm water, and always use cold water for rinsing. In the case of aging appliances, an old washer can cost three times as much to operate as an energy-efficient one.

When selecting a new machine, look for one that allows you to

adjust the water temperature and levels for different loads. Keep in mind that front-loading machines use less water than top loaders.



Also, look for the ENERGY STAR label to ensure that your new clothes washer is energy efficient.

Lower Water Heater Thermostat

Reduce water heating costs by lowering the thermostat setting on

your water heater. Each 10°F reduction in water temperature saves between 3%-5% in energy costs. Reducing water temperature to 120°F also slows mineral buildup and corrosion in water heater and pipes.

Replace Water Heater

The average life span of a water heater is between 8 and 12 years. Energy use can be cut considerably by replacing with a newer, more efficient model. Plus, you could also avoid the mess and inconvenience of an untimely breakdown.

Give us a call for an inspection of your systems. We can help you shave dollars off your utility bills every month.

Household Trivia



- In 1902 when a Brooklyn printer complained of warped paper, the "Apparatus for Treating Air" was introduced by Willis Carrier. Air conditioning gradually spread beyond the industrial world, but was not available for residential use until what year?
A. 1928 B. 1917 C. 1941
- Sir Isaac Newton is still remembered as the man who "discovered" gravity when an apple fell from a tree and hit him in his head. In another famous experiment, what scientist used a steel spike and silk kite in his "discovery" of electricity?
A. Thomas Edison B. Benjamin Franklin C. Alexander Graham Bell
- Insects, water stagnation, and a certain "unpleasant" taste were several problems that arose in the early years of indoor plumbing. All of these side effects are associated with what material used for plumbing pipes?
A. Wood B. Iron C. Steel
- The "Silent Valveless Water Waste Preventer" (what a great name) was the first toilet that could effectively flush when the tank was only half full. It was invented in 1898 and the patent rights were sold and heavily marketed by none other than...
A. Mae Flush B. Thomas A. Crapper C. Porsa Lynn D. Larry Tate

MyWord



continued from page 1

great season. For many it's a time of school days, football games and busy family schedules. When you look back, it's usually "the ordinary routine" that brings the best moments of life. So make the most of it every day.

HomePoints

Keep draperies open on south-facing windows during the heating season to allow sunlight to enter your home.

Wishing you the best and looking forward to visiting you in your home soon.

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!

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

Drip.Drip.Drip.

(No wonder they call it water torture.)



- **Years of water pressure** cause leaks and can be caught before costly damage.
- **Sediment in pipes** can cause a major drop in your water pressure.
- **Contaminated pipes** lead to contaminated drinking water. Have it checked.

Let us come out for a thorough home plumbing inspection. We can also see if you qualify for a Plumbing Preventive Maintenance Plan. Stop the torture!

Call Bel-O Sales & Service today at 618-234-3310.

©2006

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)
- Mole Treatments
- Sentricon Termite Elimination System
- Mosquito Treatments and more

Call 235-6626 Today



Let us decorate your home for the Holidays

The Future of Home Heating is Here with the Hybrid Heating System

■ And so are \$1,100 rebates through 11/10/06!

Want to keep cash in your wallet where it belongs instead of handing it over to utility companies? While your neighbors are scrambling for extra blankets or constantly shoveling their paychecks into fuel guzzling furnaces, you can be as snug as a bug in a rug. And save 30% - 50% in energy costs while you're at it.

How? A Hybrid Heating dramatically reduces monthly utility bills by using the heat pump when the weather dictates and automatically switching to gas during colder weather. That means you're getting safe, continuous home comfort for about *half the price*.

And you're not just saving this season. A Hybrid Heating system allows you to save money for years to come, since you can always choose which source of heat you'd like to use, based on the cost of gas and electricity.

Call Bel-O Sales & Service at 618-234-3310 for a free no-obligation survey to determine how this state of the art system can benefit your home. A **rebate of \$1,100 on select models is available through 11/10/06**, so call soon to schedule your free survey.

©2006



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

HOMESENSE