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BEL-O Sales and Service's

HOMESense

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Time saving, money saving and energy savings tips for your home.

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MyWord

By Jim Lugge

Hello Friends,

An article in *The New York Times* not

long ago had

one of those stories that makes you go "hmm." It seems there are historians concerned about preserving historic artifacts – on the moon.

While there aren't plans to go back to the moon anytime soon, what would happen if the next folks carelessly drive their lunar ATVs across Neil Armstrong's footprints? Some want a way to "rope off" these world-history-changing sites.

It's human nature to want to protect and preserve your investments as well as important memories.

But you don't have to live in an old home to want to preserve your investment and the place where family memories were created. And we can help you preserve some important features.



Why Would Anyone EVER Replace a Working Heating and Cooling System?

We've all heard, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Though it contains a certain amount of homespun charm, there are "fixes" that don't have anything to do with being broken. They're called **up-grades** and **improvements**.

You don't wait for termites to eat through your bedroom wall to get your home treated. And you don't need to wait for your cooling system to have a catastrophic failure to shop for a replacement. Why?

First, if it's **over 8 years old**, it is an energy hog. Second, air conditioners *always* go out at the worst time possible, so be sure to schedule a checkup before the summer swings into full gear. Even if you don't

need to buy a new unit, you'll be comfortable during the hot months knowing your unit isn't about to die.

If you do need to replace your unit, consider this fancy acronym: the **SEER rating**, which stands for Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio.

The **higher this number, the more energy efficient the unit is** which means the more money you will save on energy bills. Try a unit

with a 16 – 23 SEER rating. These units have a higher upfront cost, but will save you much more in the long run.

Give us a call and we'll come out to determine if your old system is costing you more money than you could save with a new, higher SEER unit.



Your **Quick Call** Comfort Hotline:

618-235-6626

Why “Going Green” is the Way to Go

HOME SMART

We’ve all heard the term “going green,” but have you ever actually wondered what it takes to go green? With phenomena such as global warming and air pollution constantly making headlines, industries have tried to make more environmentally friendly products. Now you have the chance to save the environment (and money!) with these easy tips:

- **Use a high-efficiency showerhead** – this will save up to 3,000 gallons of water a year, as well as reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 1,000 pounds.

- **Compost** – Buy a compost bin. Depositing food and lawn wastes in a compost bin will create nutrient-rich soil perfect for spring planting.



- **Increase the efficiency of your water heater** – we all love hot water, and now you can reduce your carbon emissions and energy bills by 25% or more. Set your water temperature to 120° and wrap the heater in a water heater insulating blanket. Insulating the first 6 feet of your pipes will also reduce energy costs.

- **Replace Current Lights with Compact Fluorescents** – Buying compact fluorescents may be more expensive; however, they pay for themselves in less than two years. Compact fluorescents last longer than normal light bulbs, and can significantly reduce your energy costs.

5 Easy Ways to Save Money on Gasoline

MONEY WISE

We all hate seeing the dollar ticker increase as we wait for our gas tank to fill. So, enjoy these quick tips that will help you save money the next time you fill up:

- **Combine trips.** Every time you start your car, you’re using a lot of gas. To avoid starting your car several times a day, just combine your errands.

- **Premium isn’t always best.** Avoid paying for “premium” and “high-octane” gas unless your

car requires it. For most cars, the cheapest gas will work just as efficiently.

- **Keep your trunk clean.** Remember that 11th grade physics course that you never paid attention in? Here’s a quick refresher: the heavier an object is, the more energy it will take to move. While having your prized cinderblock collection in your trunk at all times “just in case,” may seem like a great idea, you’d be better off taking it out.

The lighter the car, the more fuel efficient it will be.

- **Seek out the cheapest prices.** While this may sound pretty simple, we sometimes choose convenience over logic. Gas stations often change their prices around noon, so try to fill up in the morning if possible.

- **There’s an app for that.** Apps like GasBuddy or www.GasPriceWatch.com search your location for the cheapest gas around.

Fight Fires With Safety Facts

Some things are too hot to handle, and home fires are one of them. They pose a very real threat to homeowners – yet, like many things, fire safety isn't thought about until it's too late. Since statistics show that over 3,500 Americans die each year in fires, that's a dangerous mentality. So what can you do to keep your family safe in the event of a home fire?

Have an evacuation plan.

No, this is not a “Hey, let's just meet somewhere outside in case of a fire” plan. Have a real plan, where you have contingencies for each room in case of a blocked exit. Every member of the family should be aware of the plan and know what to do in case of a fire.

Leave the possessions

behind. We know that there are important items in your home that you would want to save,

but is that so important that you would sacrifice your life for them? The number one priority in case of a fire is to get out of the house as safely and as quickly as possible.



Stay low to avoid the

smoke. Also, never open a door that is hot to the touch. Use your hand to feel the doorknob or gap between the door and door frame. If it is hot, use your secondary escape route.

Designate a meeting place.

Creating a specific place to meet after your escape is essential to a fire safety plan. Everyone knows where to go and it will be easier to see who has made it out of the house safely.

Once out, stay out.

Once you have made it to the meeting area, call 911. As much as you may want to go in and snag your favorite Snuggie, leave it to the professionals. The firemen are much better equipped to go into the house and save someone/something

than you are.

Detectors save lives. Check your smoke detector at least once a month for dead batteries. Placing a smoke detector on every floor of your house dramatically increases your chances of survival.

- The average coach airline meal costs the airline \$4.00. The average first class meal: \$50.
- In 30 minutes, the average body gives off enough combined heat to bring a half gallon of water to boil.
- An earthquake on Dec. 16, 1811 caused parts of the Mississippi River to flow backwards.
- The symbol on the 'pound' key (#) is called an octothorpe.
- In Ancient Egypt, some people paid their taxes in honey.

Did You Know?



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The passage of time affects the systems that run the home, including air conditioning and heating equipment. Routine maintenance is your best bet for lengthening the life of your system. Tending to small repairs before they become big expenses is another sound practice.

So, if you haven't already done so, please call to schedule a pre-season tune-up on your air conditioner. Think of it as a way to "preserve" its energy efficiency for the next generation.

Sincerely,

Jim Luge

P.S. Hope you'll use the offers in this newsletter for helpful savings – or share them with a friend!

HomePoints

System maintenance combined with thermostat settings and recommended insulation can cut your energy use for heating and cooling by 20%-50%.



Comfort is your call when you set your programmable thermostat to get the temperature the way you want it.

Day and night, at home or away, your thermostat follows your commands. Convenient, comforting – and reduces energy use, too! Call us to find out more.

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at 235-6626**

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Clear the Air. Literally.

Breathing issues make a strong case for themselves. There are over 30 million asthma sufferers in the United States. Indoor air is 10-100 times more polluted than outdoor air. EPA ranks indoor air pollution as one of the top 5 health concerns. But what's even more important is that we can show you how to give your family clean air to breathe.

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The Best Deal Around

When it comes to regular maintenance of your heating and cooling system, you won't find a better deal than our Comfort Club. Just look at these benefits:

- **Two pre-season tune-ups a year**
- **Energy savings from improved efficiency**
- **Better indoor air quality**
- **Longer equipment life**

- **Discounts on repairs, every time**
- **Priority service at no extra charge, even during the busiest season**

With discounts and energy savings, you'll soon find that club membership can pay for itself – while keeping you comfortable year after year. Join today!

Call **Bel-O Sales and Service** today
today 235-6626.

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