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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.

Summer 2012

\$3.00



MyWord

By Jim Lugge

Hello Friends,

Hope all is well in your world.



I came across an interesting footnote in history the other day. It seems the tin can was patented in 1810, but the can opener wasn't patented until 1858. Apparently, it took a hammer and chisel to get to the canned goods in the meantime.

Effective maybe, but not easy.

Timing matters. That's one reason we recommend preventive maintenance. We like to help you before there's a problem. It's easier, more effective and helps keep your comfort uninterrupted. Even so, if you have any trouble at all, just give us a call, and we'll get someone out to help you right away.

With air conditioners running full blast, energy use can really ramp up in the summer months. If your energy bills are running higher than expected and your system is showing signs of age, you may be wondering if it's time

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Your Whole-House Approach to Better Comfort

Instead of piecemealed improvements, wouldn't it make more sense to consider your house as one whole with many parts – and see how together they can operate better? In the trade, this is called “a whole-house approach.” In reality, this is called “common sense.”

Key areas that affect your home's overall well-being:

The Building

Envelope – This is what separates inside from outside and is made up of your foundation, roof, walls, doors and windows. If the barrier these elements create is tight, air conditioning and heating is more efficient. Also, a tight barrier prevents moisture buildup from rain and condensation.

Mechanicals – These are the systems that operate your home, including lighting, water heater and home comfort systems. Decisions made here will have a significant impact on the home overall.

High-efficiency home comfort systems, water heaters and appliances will use less energy than their low-efficiency counterparts and cost less to operate. Home comfort in particular can take up to half of your energy dollars, so make energy efficiency your priority.

Water Features –

Low-performing toilets, showerheads and faucets can waste a lot of water. Conversely, high-performing features save that water without any need to sacrifice comfort.

We all want healthy, energy-efficient homes.

By healthy, that means the things within don't make us sick, like poor indoor air. Energy efficient means it doesn't cost us more money than we should pay, like energy-hogging air conditioning.

A whole-house approach means we take all areas into account for a more comfortable home overall.



Your **Quick Call** Comfort Hotline:

618-235-6626

Clean Your Home's Air with Houseplants

HOME SMART

Before you start imagining your English Ivy scrubbing your return vents, there are a few things you should know about your indoor air:

- 1) According to the Environmental Protection Agency, indoor air quality is now in the **top 5 threats** to human health.
- 2) **Poor indoor air quality** can be caused by small things – from cleaning products to burning candles.

The most important thing to know? There's plenty you can do about it, starting with these four houseplants:

Lady Palm – resistant to most insects and highly effective at improving your home's air quality. Plus, the care is simple:



water generously and fertilize once a month.

Peace Lily – one of the few plants you can count on to

bloom indoors. Keep the soil moist, and clean leaves with a damp cloth to keep insects away.

Rubber Plant – tolerates limited light and cool temperatures, but be sure not to overwater. So far, this plant is the most effective of the *ficus* genus at removing chemical toxins from indoor air.

Areca Palm – also known as Butterfly Palm. Keep the rootball damp and be sure to remove dead branches quickly.

Of course, if anyone in your family has major allergies or other indoor air-related health issues, we can help you find the air filtration method that fits your needs. Just give us a call.

Shopping for Digital Products – A Quick Picture

MONEY WISE

For the non-techies, shopping for digital products can be overwhelming. With the features and extras to choose from, deciding which ones to upgrade is like deciding what part of the ocean has the most water.

For example, want a camera? But what kind of lens, how many megapixels and what about something called “resolution?”

For your next digital camera purchase, the experts say the quality of the lens is a sound upgrade. Faster is better, and the “f-stop,” which is the

measurement of the aperture setting in a camera lens, will be your guide.

The **f-stop functions** like the pupil of the eye and controls how much light is let through the sensor. For sharper images, lower is better. $f/1.4$ lets in the most light, $f/22$ the least.

How many **megapixels** are right for you? That has to do with resolution, which is the amount of detail that can be captured by a camera. For most ordinary purposes, resolution will be fine at around 10 megapixels. But if you want really large

pictures, you may want to go higher.

You may have a camera in your future in the form of a **smart-phone**. The digital cameras in smartphones typically range from 5 to 8 megapixels – good enough for uploading cute pictures online, but maybe not for the family portrait.

Whether you're talking 3G or 4G connectivity, Wi-Fi or GPS, all of these smartphones have one thing in common: they use a lot of battery power to do the amazing things they do. When looking for upgrades here, longer battery life is a good bet.

Stress Can Affect Your Health

You don't have to be a doctor to make the connection: stress can affect your health. In fact, all you probably need to know to conduct the research is life experience – maybe that time you had a churning stomach right before a job interview, or felt that sharp pain in your head just before a big meeting.

Stress, as you probably suspected, can take a far bigger toll too. The heart is exhibit A. Studies show that the risk of heart attack is twice as high on a Monday over other days of the week.

The daily routine itself, when accompanied by continuing low-level stress that covers anything from job and family demands to financial issues and personal conflict, can have a health impact. It can increase inflammation in the arteries which can cause other problems, including increasing the risk of clots, a cause of heart attacks.

Big-impact life events, such as a death of a spouse or divorce, can also deliver a punch. A recent study showed that men who ex-

perience moderate to high-level stressful life events over several years have a 50% higher risk of dying.

Stress causes a physical response in a number of other ways. For example, it can increase blood



sugar, providing a boost of energy almost as a survival mechanism. In a true emergency, that may be a good thing – but as a routine occurrence, an elevated glucose level could be a setup for diabetes or heart disease. Stress also can lead to memory impairment and create situations for weight gain (comfort food anyone?).

To control the stress in your life, develop and follow good life habits. For example:

► **Manage your time** so that you have plenty of time to get things done. Arriving for a meeting 10 minutes late is a stressor.

► **Get organized** so that you'll have what you need where and when you need it. Not being able to find the materials you need for the meeting is a stressor – and probably the reason you're 10 minutes late.

► **Keep a positive attitude.**

► **Take a break if you feel overwhelmed.**

► **Avoid alcohol and other drugs and don't smoke.**

► **Get regular exercise.**

► **Eat healthy well-balanced meals.**

► **And get enough sleep.**

- A completely blind chameleon will still take on the colors of its environment.
- Of the 3,000 islands in the Bahamas chain in the Caribbean, only 20 are inhabited.
- The pupil of the eye expands as much as 45 percent when a person looks at something pleasing.
- The oldest piano still in existence was built in 1720.
- Grover Cleveland is the only United States President to have been married in the White House.

Did You Know?



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for a new system. We know this is a big decision for a homeowner.

Back to that history footnote – the tin can tops were actually much thinner by the time the can opener was patented. That made them easier to open, which made it easier to invent an opener. Progress is like that. Same goes for home comfort. If you have an old system, it's likely missing many of the energy-efficient, high-performance benefits of newer models. So let us know if you'd like to learn more.

In the meantime, enjoy your summer.

Sincerely,

Jim Lugge



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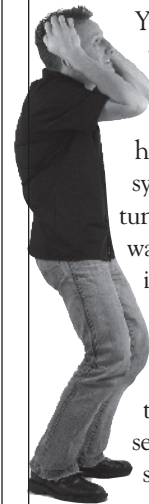


What Does Your Laundry Have to Do With Your Plumbing?

More than you may think, actually. You see, burst hoses on washing machines are one of the most common causes of home flooding. The damage can go from the hundreds of dollars up into the thousands. Too bad since prevention costs only a fraction of that. When you get your plumbing system tuned up by **Bel-O Sales and Service**, we don't just check to see if you have problems. We'll go ahead and replace your machine's supply hose at no cost. You tend to the laundry, We'll tend to the plumbing. Just call **235-6626**.

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A Little Fine Tuning Makes a Big Difference



You wouldn't run a car for years without checking under the hood from time to time. The same is true for your home's heating and cooling system. If your system isn't tuned regularly, you pay big with wasted energy and repairs. Plus, it could conk out at a most inconvenient time. **Bel-O Sales and Service** wants you and your family to get the comfort you deserve this season. Call **235-6626** today to schedule your Tune-Up.

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