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A Tiny Cash Machine
Raining Inside Your Home?
Online Concerns for Parents

Fall 2006

Smart and simple ways to enrich your home living

HOMESENSE



MoneyWise

Get Sky High Heating Bills Down to Earth

The cost of home heating continues to hit the homeowner harder each year. But sometimes you can end up spending even more than necessary by overlooking energy wasters in your home that, in many cases, are easy to remedy.

A home energy audit can help by pinpointing these areas and identifying ways to cut energy costs. In fact, you can conduct a simple audit on your own by following a few recommendations from the Department of Energy. To take stock of your home energy use:

- Check insulation levels in your attic, exterior and basement walls, ceilings, floors, and crawl spaces.
- Check for holes or cracks around your walls, ceilings, windows, doors, light and plumbing fixtures, switches, and electrical outlets.
- Check for open fireplace dampers.
- Check caulking and weatherstripping, and repair if necessary.



- Schedule an annual tune-up for your heat pump, furnace or boiler.
- Seal and insulate leaky ducts to ensure that the airflow distribution system serving your heating equipment is operating at peak efficiency.
- Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators as needed; make sure they're not blocked by furniture, carpeting, or drapes.
- Seal holes around plumbing and heating pipes.

As Winter sets in, make an effort to set your thermostat as low as is comfortable. Or consider having us install a programmable thermostat that will automatically lower temperatures at night or during the day when the home is unoccupied. When you call us for a tune-up, ask for an estimate of how much you can save with a new energy-efficient system.

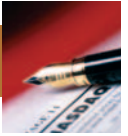


Your Quik Call Comfort Hotline:

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MyWord



Take a Breather

By Glenn Pack

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!

In the meantime, enjoy this great season. For many it's a time of school days, football games and busy family schedules. When you look

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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.

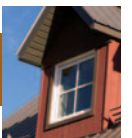
Evaluate these sites for their “kid-friendly” environment before you give the go-ahead.

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.





The Little Tiny Cash Machine On Your Wall

For many homeowners, knowledge of the inner workings of their home comfort systems begins and ends with the location of the thermostat. But not to worry: that's as good a place to start as any.

The thermostat is certainly not one of the most expensive parts to your system, but its far-reaching effects make it perhaps the most vital. Many heating problems are actually thermostat problems. Yet they can usually be easily remedied, including common problems like these:

- **Incorrect temperature readings.** This could be caused by something as simple as dirt or a location.
- **Cycling issues.** If the system is cycling too often (or infrequently), it could be time to adjust the thermostat differential control.

Thermostats are divided generally into two main types – electronic and conventional. Of these, the conventional model works well for people who like an easy-to-use, non-technological setup and tend to maintain regular schedules. The electronic types, however, offer homeowners more control at different times of the day, while also serving as a more sensitive gauge of temperature.

Get With the Program

The electronic types also come in programmable models that can save big on energy use during the height of cold weather.

You can preset the temperature to fall to a lower level after you've

gone to bed, but kick the heat higher before the alarm goes off in the morning. Or you can choose a similar setting for time spent away during the day.



Weekends can have their own schedule.

By using your home comfort system more efficiently, you could also

see real results in lower energy bills.

Home comfort systems with multiple heating and cooling zones can be operated with either type of ther-

mostat. But certainly programmable electronic thermostats offer the greater potential to set each area for ultimate comfort – keying in on the right place at the right time.

Choose Wisely

When choosing between conventional and electronic models, homeowners tend to weigh between ease of use and lower initial cost versus greater control, added comfort and potential energy savings. Make sure you evaluate the benefits carefully – especially when choosing a programmable thermostat.

Give us a call to discuss a compatible choice for your home comfort system.

Household Trivia



1. 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
2. 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
3. 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
4. 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



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back, it's usually "the ordinary routine" that brings the best moments of life. So make the most of it every day. And if you can, there's still time to get in a few outdoor activities before the cold weather kicks in!

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

HomePoints

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

Sincerely,

Glenn

Glenn Pack

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

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(We recommend cutting this out and putting it on your refrigerator. Just a thought!)

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