

HOMESENSE

**Your Cleaning
Products May
Be Toxic**
(See page 2)

Smart and simple ways to enrich your home living.

Fall 2004

\$3.00

MONEY WISE

Save Energy the Easy Way

The positive outcome of saving energy is undeniable: it reduces air pollution while reducing your energy bills.

But sometimes people hear the phrase "saving energy" and think of drastic measures – living ruggedly and abandoning modern convenience. Without going that far, you can take many steps to keep energy bills from soaring while also doing your part to protect the environment. These include:

- Turn off lights and equipment when not in use. This is a no-brainer, but easily overlooked by family members in a hurry. (Read=children.)
- Buy ENERGY STAR qualified appliances. This is the federal government's seal of approval for the most energy-efficient products. ENERGY STAR products, available in more than 40 categories, use less energy, save money, and help protect the environment.
- Replace incandescent lamps with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs). Compact fluorescent lights use *one-fourth* the amount of electricity that incandescent lamps use, and they last seven times longer. They pay for themselves.
- Use task lighting, which allows lighting to be applied directly to a task rather than illuminating an entire room. A bright light over a desk or under-counter lights in the kitchen are examples.
- Install occupant sensors for lighting. They turn lights on automatically

when someone enters a room, and reduce energy use by turning lights off when the last occupant leaves. Sort of weird at first, but what a great invention. (This same approach is also effective for outdoor security lighting.)

- Tune-up home comfort systems. At the start of each heating or cooling season, have maintenance performed on furnaces and air conditioners to keep them running efficiently.
- Regularly change/clean HVAC air filters. This is an easy, inexpensive step that shouldn't be overlooked.
- Install programmable thermostats. You can save as much as 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills by turning your thermostat back 10% to 15% for eight hours. A programmable thermostat enables you to do this automatically.
- Plug leaks with caulking and weatherstripping. Air leaks through exterior walls, windows, doors, the roof and floors can waste a large amount of energy.

Improving the energy efficiency of your home can result in big savings in your energy bills – and protect the environment too. What a great result for a few simple steps!

Let us perform a Free Energy Survey when we tune-up your system this Fall. If you haven't scheduled your Fall tune-up yet, give us a call before the busy winter season and we can schedule you right away.

MY WORD

Time of Harvest

By Glenn Pack

Dear Friends,

As the days get shorter and the temperatures drop, I'm reminded that this time of year is traditionally thought of as a time of harvest.

Now, you all know that I certainly can't claim to be a farmer, but I think that we can all take a moment to harvest some memories from the past year. Since all we take with us are our memories, it's fortunate we can be selective! (No computer can claim this trait; but what mine does "forget" often seems to be the document I need most!)

These memories are most important as we create or relive these during the Thanksgiving season with friends and family. So make some good memories this year and vow to recall them. They live on that way.

Discussing cool weather and friends brings me to something that's *always* on my mind this time of year: your heating safety inspection. Your heating system sat idle for many months while dirt, dust, rust, and scale got a chance to develop. This can rob your home of comfort and energy dollars... or even something much more valuable.

Having a simple tune-up can

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Your Quik Call Comfort Hotline:
203-847-8781

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Don't You Deserve... Poison-Free Cleaning?

If you've ever sneezed or coughed while cleaning, or gone to bed with a migraine, you won't be surprised that many household products contain toxic chemicals. You'll find them in cleansers and disinfectants, wood preservatives, aerosol sprays, air fresheners – and lots of other sources.

Product labels will give you “safe handling” procedures, and you'd be wise to follow any precautions. Also, allow for plenty of fresh air while you're using them, and by all means keep them out of reach of children and pets.

Better yet, many cleaning chores can be performed with simple and safe products. For example:

- **Baking soda** can be used to clean and polish aluminum, chrome, jewelry, plastic, porcelain, silver, stainless steel and tin; deodorize refrigerators, carpets and drains; extinguish grease fires; soften fabrics; and remove stains.
- **Cornstarch** can be used to clean windows, polish furniture, shampoo carpets and rugs, and starch clothes.
- **Lemon juice** can be used to clean glass and remove stains from aluminum, clothes, and porcelain.
- **Vinegar** can dissolve mineral deposits and grease; remove traces of soap, mildew or wax buildup; clean brick or stone; polish some metals; shine windows without streaking; clean coffeepots; and deodorize.
- **Borax** can deodorize, inhibit the growth of mildew, boost the cleaning power of soap or detergent, remove stains, and can be used with attractants such as sugar to kill cockroaches.
- **Isopropyl alcohol** serves as a good disinfectant.

Using fewer cleaning chemicals is one way to help prevent indoor air pollution. Give us a call to perform a free indoor air quality inspection and we'll show you other preventions and how filtration and other new innovations can protect the air your family breathes.

HOME WISE

Better Curb Appeal Means Better Value

Whether you're selling your home or just wanting to be a good neighbor, improving curb appeal generally improves property value.

Start by taking a step back. You come in and out of your home so often you may have become immune to the impression it sends. For a different perspective, stand across the street or at the edge of your driveway. What do you see?

- **Good points vs. bad points.** Look for the features you like best. Can you enhance them? By the same token, analyze the features you like least. Can they be downplayed or even replaced?
- **Repair and maintenance needs.** Do you see paint peeling, wood rotting, driveway cracking? Some of the details you walk past every day without noticing could be the very thing that catches someone else's attention.
- **Clutter and debris.** What's in the yard? Remove lawn equipment, garden tools, even excessive children's toys. Clear the walkways and driveway of debris. Also, clean out the garage, renting a storage room if necessary. Keep the surroundings as uncluttered as possible.
- **Landscaping.** This area has great potential to add – and detract – from your “curb appeal.” Attractive landscaping can not only increase the number of lookers, it adds to

the value of your home. Keep the lawn mowed, remove weeds and trim shrubbery. For added touches, try a planter of flowers on the porch or hang a seasonal wreath on the door. Fresh mulch and bedding around the plants helps too.

- **Extra touches.** Pressure washing can freshen the look of the trim and walkways, while a fresh paint job would do wonders. You might also want to consider accessories like brass knobs on the door or a new mailbox. Replacing the front door with a newer more attractive one can make an amazing difference. And don't forget the welcome mat. A big “welcome” is what curb appeal is all about.

Conduct your review from all different angles. The backyard view of many homes can be seen from the street, so you'll want to give the same attention to curb appeal in that area too.

After your review, you can also seek another perspective from a neighbor or friend, especially one who will advise you honestly, but not harshly. Ask about strong points and weak points – and if anything should be changed.

Remember, even if you're not selling anytime soon, investing in “curb appeal” pays dividends in your own enjoyment of your home. (Plus, your neighbors will love you. You may want to send this article to one of them.)

HEARD BY OUR EDITORS

Good News About Vegetables

“Eat your fruits and vegetables” is one of the tried and true recommendations for a healthy diet. And for good reason. They are rich in essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, carbohydrates, and phytochemicals which can lower the risk for certain cancers. Research is increasingly uncovering links between specific fruits and vegetables and preventing diseases.

A recent study by the University of Illinois has found eating certain foods together can reduce the risks even more. The July 2004 study looked at the benefits of eating tomatoes and broccoli together and found that it can have enormous cancer-fighter potential.

Eaten together they bring out the best in each other and maximize the cancer-fighting effect. The interaction may not be limited to tomatoes and broccoli, the chemical reaction takes place in any diet containing a variety of plant foods.

Conduct A Home Checkup This Fall

For most folks, owning a house is just about the biggest investment you'll ever make. Surprisingly, however, many people follow the policy of: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

The worry only starts when something stops working. But that approach is simply a "crisis in waiting." Something will surely go wrong. The only question is when.

Regular home maintenance is your best choice for staying ahead of needed repairs, and the practical aspects are undeniable. It maintains the value of your property, makes your home easier to sell and makes it more comfortable in the meantime. Perhaps most importantly, regular home maintenance keeps small repairs from becoming large, expensive ones.

Conducting a home checkup every six months can help you detect problems. Inspect your home thoroughly and look for pressing needs. This could include painting walls and doors, cleaning roof and gutters, as well as replacing warped or worn shingles.

Watch for these other areas too:

- **Home comfort system** – Furnaces and central air conditioning systems last for about 15 years. After that, you tend to pour so much money into repairs and energy costs that, truly, you'll end up saving in the long run by installing a newer energy-efficient system. Also, regular maintenance is designed to keep your system running smoothly year in and year out.
- **Water heater** – Ideally, you'd want to start shopping for a new one when yours is 7 years old. Doing some research before your water heater fails will help you select one that best meets your needs. For example, a new water heater which comes with a thick insulating shell may cost more initially than one without insulation, but the energy

savings will continue during the lifetime of the appliance.

- **Attic insulation** – You may not spend much time in your attic, but don't let the principle of "out of sight, out of mind" cause you to underestimate how much that area is affecting your home energy bills.

Because air leakage is a leading cause of energy waste, insulating your attic can make a big difference in energy efficiency.

- **Electrical system** – A faulty electrical system can create hazards for your family. Check to see that all lamp cords, extension cords, appliance cords and plugs are in good condition.

Look for any exposed wires, wires with cracked insulation and signs of wear in the service box. Also, check ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) monthly or after an electrical storm. If fuses blow frequently, call an electrician.

- **Plumbing** – Leaks, drainage and insulation are areas of concern for plumbing. Look for leaks at the main water shut-off valve, as well as at sinks, toilets and washing machines. Is there wood damage? That could be a sign of a leak. Check the drainage in sinks, tubs, and showers. Also, to protect them from freezing, install insulation around outdoor water pipes.

"Regular home maintenance keeps small repairs from becoming large, expensive ones."

"Quotable."

Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

– Mark Twain



How To...

Be a Savvy Shopper

The cost of groceries may be growing, but not for the savvy shopper. Holding the line on your spending can be helped a lot by following some tried-and-true principles like these:

- Always shop with a list. Know what you need, so you won't be tempted by what you "want."
- Do your shopping at outlets and discount grocery stores. Saving a dime, a quarter or even a dollar here and there quickly adds up.
- The larger quantity, the better the deal? Compare unit prices with price per item to be sure.
- Buy in bulk. If you don't need bulk, go in together with friends to split the food and the cost.
- Use coupons. Some stores offer double or triple the manufacturer's value or even accept competitors' coupons.
- Extend your hamburger meat. Add 1/4-1/2 cup plain oatmeal to each pound of hamburger meat. You can use it with meat you're browning, make bigger patties or super-size that meatloaf. A cup of ground, non-sugared cornflakes also works.
- Look for in-house specials, including store sales, discounts on dented cans or specials on soon-to-be expired items.
- Buy store brands rather than name brands. There's little difference in taste and a big difference in cost.
- Look at the cost per unit when deciding which size to buy. Larger isn't always better, especially when using a coupon.
- Instead of buying expensive plastic food covers, purchase shower caps from your local discount store. They work perfect and are very cheap.

Groceries consume a lot of the family budget, and that's certainly understandable since most families consume a lot of groceries! But by watching your shopping habits, you can save hundreds of dollars every year.

MY WORD (...from page 1)

save you time, money, and the hassle of a breakdown. It doesn't really make for warm memories when you're sitting around in the cold! And if even a *tiny* gas leak develops, Carbon Monoxide can seep into your home with deadly consequences.

Every year over 100 families experience a needless death

in this country due to this colorless, odorless gas... usually in their sleep. Protect your loved ones from this silent

killer with a quick call to get a system tune-up that *includes* this critical check.

Remember, we're here for you; just tell us what you need. I hope you all continue to have a great year and have a wonderful time creating more memories to "harvest" next year.

Sincerely,

Glenn

Glenn Pack

P. S. I think you'll really find this issue full of some great information that you can really use. If you think any of your friends and family could also benefit, give us a call and we'll send 'em a copy.

HomePoints

Deflect Winter winds by planting evergreen trees and shrubs on the north and west sides of your house.

Just set it, then forget it!

With a programmable thermostat, you program your "ideal" temperature for comfort and savings.

Then let it adjust the temperature while you're away. When you're home. When you're asleep. Silently and efficiently.

It saves time, energy and trouble. Don't you wish everything could be this simple? Call today and tell us you want to "forget it!"

That's Pack-Timco, Inc. at 203-847-8781.

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The Real Problem with 8-year olds...

If your heating and cooling system is over 8 years old, you may be spending more on energy and repairs than a new system would cost!

So let us come out for a **completely FREE, no obligation** survey of your equipment. We can tell you how much a new one could save you, right on the spot. It's fast, painless, and free.

Call Pack-Timco, Inc. at 203-847-8781.

Warning: If your system is a teenager, you need serious help. But you already knew that. Call now.

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FILTRATIONSSENSATION

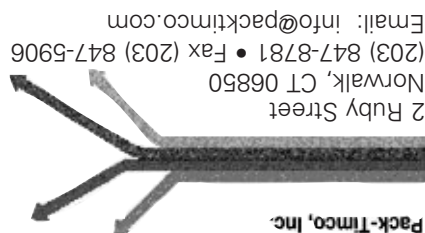
Okay, I couldn't pronounce it either, but if you have **allergies**, too much **dust**, or random **sneeze attacks**, you may just need better, more efficient filtration.

**Put an end to that with one phone call.
Get the ultimate filtration. Absolutely guaranteed.**

Just call and say, "I want the filtrationsensation!" Oh, nevermind – Just say you need cleaner air, we'll do the rest.

Call Pack-Timco, Inc. at 203-847-8781.

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HOMESENSE