

# Newsletter 85      Winter – 2003

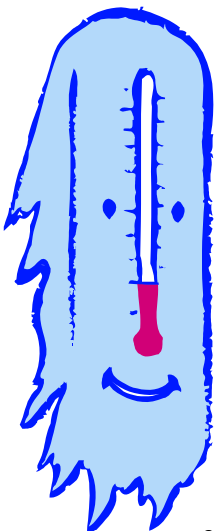
## **We Now Have a Website**

Yes, it's hard to believe! We have been working with congregations and energy since 1980, and only now do we have a website. Check us out at

**WWW.INTERFAITHENERGY.COM**

We also appreciate your referring people to our site.

## **How Cold Has it Been?**



We compare one year's weather with another by using heating degree days, or HDDs, that are recorded at the Philadelphia International Airport. HDDs were designed to help fuel dealers optimize their delivery routes. When the outside temperature drops below 65oF one degree for an hour, that is called a degree hour. Twenty-four degree hours are a degree day. Since each building is different, oil companies multiply the HDDs by a factor for each delivery.

The HDDs are recorded at <http://tgs5.nws.noaa.gov/er/phi/clidat.htm> - the National Weather Station at Mt. Holly, NJ. The HDDs for November through January were over 44% more this season than last. So, if your congregation didn't touch a thermostat setting or make any other changes, the number of CCF of gas or gallons of fuel oil to heat your building would be about 40% more this heating season (so far) in comparison to last year. And, it ain't over yet!

## **Our Thoughts on Large and Inefficient Cars Light Trucks**

Most of our energy advice involves large, leaky buildings. From our experience and from that of others in various parts of the country, we believe the most important activity for a congregation to take is to turn things off. This means setting interior temperatures very low when the buildings are not occupied, turning off lights, appliances and whatever else you can.

We fully understand that more efficient boilers and lamps lower energy use when you use them, but when they are off, it doesn't matter how efficient they are. Similarly, when a car is not used, it doesn't matter how many miles per gallon it's rated for. On the other hand, we may think that a small and efficient car is an environmental winner, but the environment does not respond to miles per gallon; it responds to gallons.

Our position is, therefore, that you can own whatever vehicle you want. The more miles per gallon it gets, the better. But far more important than that, whenever possible, we don't think you should not drive it. Instead, walk, bike, take mass transit, ride with others – do whatever it takes – just don't drive your car or light truck.

### **Taped Circuit Breakers**

A member of a congregation asked us about the danger of taping electric circuit breakers so that they could not be turned off. A breaker may be taped "on" if it controls electricity to a load that should not be interrupted, such as an internet server or security system.

We asked a qualified electrician about any dangers in doing this. He explained that electricians sometimes attach a similar device more permanently with screws to hold the breaker on. He explained that neither the screw nor the tape presented any danger because the breakers trip with an internal mechanism that is not directly controlled by the position of the breaker switch.

Of course, we prefer breakers that are taped "off," rather than those that are taped "on."

### **Aid from the Federal Government**

The January 23, 2003 New York Times reports that, "The Bush administration plans to allow religious groups for the first time to use federal housing money to help build centers where religious worship is held, as long as part of the building is also used for social services.

The policy shift, which was made in a rule that the Department of Housing and Urban Development proposed this month, significantly expands the administration's contentious religion-based initiative. The White House says it wants to end discrimination against religious groups. Opponents say the policy breaches the separation of church and state. Current regulations generally prohibit religious groups from using federal housing and community development grants, which totaled \$7.7 billion last year, to build or rehabilitate structures. The new rules, still subject to final approval by housing officials, allow the use of federal aid to acquire, rehabilitate or build centers used for religious and specifically approved nonreligious activities, so long as no federal money is used for the religious section.

A church could erect a building using federal money to create a shelter for the homeless in one part and private money to create a sanctuary in another part,



officials said. A synagogue could use a grant to rehabilitate part of its building for a counseling center for AIDS patients or the poor. A Muslim group could apply for federal money to upgrade the lighting and equipment in a room in its mosque to allow it to be used as an counseling center for single parents.”

## Religious Building Construction Outlook

The FMI Corporation in Raleigh, NC is a consulting firm to the construction industry. In the January 2003 issue of Heating, Piping and Air Conditioning, they predicted that \$4 billion to \$5 billion of value in new religious buildings would be added each year to the United States gross national product. The value of construction in place of religious buildings increased 19% in 1999, 6% in 2000 and 4% in 2001. From 2002 through 2006 they anticipate increases between 3% and 5%. That’s a lot of collection plate passing!

## New, Small Water Meters

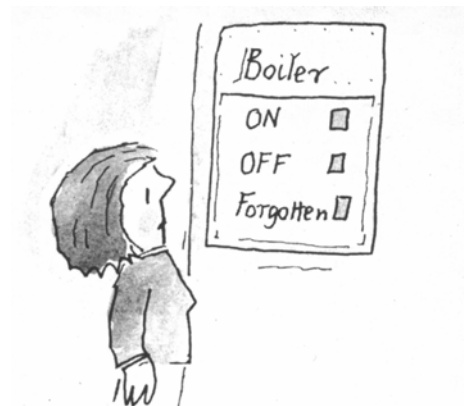
Water Watch (actually H<sub>2</sub>O Watch) in Los Angeles has introduced two interesting water meters. The are about the same size – about 3 ¼ inches long and 2 ¼ inches wide. One is for indoor showers and counts up to 50 gallons. The other is for outdoor hoses and counts up to 100. Both are easily reset by turning an outside indicator dial, are made in the USA and carry a one-year guarantee. You can order them over the web at [www.h2owatch.net](http://www.h2owatch.net) or by calling toll free 866-426-9282. They are about \$18 each with \$6 for shipping one. Prices go down with greater quantities. We tried the one for the shower, and it seems to work well.

## New Data Loggers

Dickson ([www.dicksonweb.com](http://www.dicksonweb.com)) has introduced its version of a small an inexpensive dataloggers for measuring temperature and humidity. They are just a bit bigger than a quarter. One drawback is that you have to order them a dozen at a time for about \$900. One cable and software is another \$70. So, while they cost \$75 each, you apparently have to shovel out close to \$1,000 to buy them. Other data loggers are Hobo’s for about \$90 each ([www.onsetcomputer.com](http://www.onsetcomputer.com)) or Thermochrons at \$15 each ([www.iButton.com](http://www.iButton.com)). The Thermochrons measure only temperature. All of them require software and a cable. Thermochrons use free downloadable software. A starter kit with 1 iButton, cable and plastic holder is only \$25. What is the drawback? We ordered some a few months ago and are backordered.

## The Churchwarden’s Year

What do you think of this drawing? We think that it is fairly representative in that boilers have two states of existence – they are either invisible or a complete disaster!



The artist is the Reverend G. Jeffrey at St. Andrew's in West Sussex, England. When we bought his book, *The Churchwarden's Year*, we so liked his drawings that we asked his permission to reproduce them in our newsletters.

He wrote back, not only granting permission, but saying, "So, may God bless you as you use all you want and do come back to me. Ill health is a great burden, and I should really draw more, but seem too burdened or perhaps unasked in this way. One does not have to know the answers to find the question."

Thank you, Reverend Jeffrey, and best wishes.

### **Interruptible PGW gas versus #2 fuel oil**

Some of our readers are on PGW's Rate BPS-Small, which we testified against bringing into being. In order to have this rate, you need to be able to burn natural gas from the Philadelphia Gas Works and also to be able to shift to an alternate heating fuel when necessary. The alternate fuel is usually #2 fuel oil. How can you tell when it is best to switch?

PGW is posting part of the answer on its website at [www.pgworks.com](http://www.pgworks.com). Click on "Major Accounts" on the left side of the page, then on "Interruptible Rates" on the left of the next page. In January and February 2003, the price was \$7.39 for 1,000 cubic feet of gas (MCF). You are billed however, in hundreds of cubic feet (CCF) so you have to divide the price by 10 to get \$0.739 per CCF, or 103,000 Btus.

The energy in a gallon of fuel oil is about 138,600 Btus – about 35% greater than that in a CCF of natural gas. What to do? First, divide PGW's price per CCF by 0.743. Second, find out from one or more oil dealers the price per gallon of #2 fuel oil. Compare the prices.

For example, if you divide \$0.739 by 0.743 you get \$0.994. If you can find oil for less than that price, it is the better deal, whether or not PGW has interrupted service. Service has been interrupted for much of February.

### **Note from ICE Enthusiasts**

"I have been a subscriber for several years for the Dumbarton United Methodist Church. This church was founded in 1772. The present building was built in 1844. Needless to say, we have our building problems, and your Newsletter has provided much useful guidance in responding to them. I am pleased to enclose a check for \$30 to convey my interest and support.

Sincerely,  
Walter Wells"

The enclosed check is a contribution toward the newsletters for next year. Based on the helpful information in Comfort and Light, I almost ordered a “Watts Up” energy meter, and was debating how to elaborate to go in the feature of the two models. Then, your most recent newsletter came with information on “Kill-a-Watt” and it became clear that this bare-bones meter will serve our needs quite well. I’ve got one measuring the electrical usage on an antique chest freezer that a local church is using for a food bank – the results will be fascinating! Thanks for ongoing stream of product information. Blessings on your good work in the year to come.

Shalom,

**Peter Sawtell**  
Executive Director  
Eco-Justice Ministries”