

HomeXpert

Simple ways to improve your home comfort, safety and value.

Winter 2007/2008 \$3.00

MY WORD

Special Feeling

By Steven Heidler & Mick Heidler



Hello Friends,

Lots of people love this time of year. How about you?

The cold days of winter are great times to gather in front of a roaring fire, serve up soothing soups or sports-related snacking and settle in front of the television with family and friends.

Yes, winter is certainly a wonderful time for being indoors – as long as your indoors stays comfortable!

As quickly as you throw off the caps and jackets, you've got that special feeling you can't find anywhere else – "I'm home." So come in from the cold and relax.

While you take a load off, please know that if anything goes wrong with your home plumbing system, we welcome you to let us do the worrying.

We know from experience that home plumbing can hit some rough patches during the winter months, including the risk of frozen pipes and the increased strain from more people spending more time indoors.

These challenges from temperature

(Continued on page 4)

MONEY WISE

High Energy and Utility Costs Tanking Your Budget?

During the cold months there's nothing quite like a hot shower or a nice long soak to warm you up. Yet there's a sad truth, one you face every day – the costs of energy and utilities continue to rise with no end in sight. And it can be hard to enjoy your nice hot shower when it's costing you a fortune.

See, traditional water heaters have to reheat the water in the tank as it cools, causing what is called standby loss. Essentially, you're paying over and over to reheat the same water. Then there's the wasted water in the pipes between the water heater and the faucet. You know – the water that you have to let "run" until it gets hot.

It may seem that the waste is inevitable since cold showers in the middle of Winter probably won't be catching in any time soon. But there are alternatives to the conventional water heater that can save both energy and water use. One such option is the tankless water heater.

The tankless heater cuts your excess energy and water waste in two ways:

By heating water instantly and only once, energy required for hot water output it decreased.

Because there isn't a tank and water is heated instantly, no water is left in the heater – meaning "run" time is shortened. Only water left in the pipes has to be flushed from the system – and with point of use heaters, that too can be reduced.

Aside from the energy and utility savings, there's the added benefit that your hot water is continuous and never runs out. Of course, there are considerations to take into account before you switch to a tankless water heater:




Size of electrical wiring or gas pipeline should be considered. They may have to be increased, which can add to the price of installation.

There can be a "flow delay" for faucets further from the heater.

Tankless water heaters are typically incompatible with hot water recirculation systems.

The energy savings and continuous hot water typically outweigh installation concerns, but you should consult a plumbing professional (like us!) to be fully informed of your options. Give us a call and we'll be happy to explain each of them.

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Your Quik Call **Comfort Hotline:**

410-268-7191

www.heidlerplumbing.com

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HEIDLER, INC



the Home
Front

Keep Colds From Catching You

It's winter and close proximity plus more airtight homes leads to an overabundance of germs and opportunities to spread them. Even small things like doorknobs and toothbrushes can make your family sick.

Don't leave your health to chance. Use these tips from www.rd.com to keep colds from catching you this season:

- **Learn to love yogurt.** The University of California-Davis found that those who consume a cup of yogurt each day had 25% fewer colds than those who skipped the yogurt.
- **Beware of your toothbrush.** Sure, it gets your teeth clean. But it's also a haven for germs as soon as you're done brushing. Microwave it for 10 seconds to kill any germs, or simply replace monthly and after you've been sick.
- **Crack the windows.** Leaving a couple of windows slightly cracked allows fresh air to circulate, which is especially important in newer airtight homes. Fresh air flows in, chasing germs out.
- **Drop the heat by 5 degrees.** Viruses and colds thrive in dry environments. Plus, when your home is overheated, your protective mucus membranes dry out as well, leaving them ineffective at trapping germs.
- **Don't blow your nose.** Wipe it with a tissue instead. When you blow, the force causes drainage to propel back into your sinuses, leading to infection and longer illness.

HOME WISE

Give Your Home a Little TLC This Winter

In the lead up to winter weather, it's a good idea to take stock of your home's condition and tend to routine seasonal maintenance. After all, the steps you take now can help you and your family stay comfy and cozy when the weather turns bitter.

Winter home maintenance typically involves several areas of attention, including:

- **Gutters and downspouts** – Keeping gutters and downspouts clear of debris and fallen leaves should be a routine task, especially as winter approaches. Spraying water down the downspouts will help loosen and wash away debris. You may also want to consider gutter screens for your gutters.
- **Roof** – Speaking of the roof, check for loose, damaged or missing shingles or tiles, or problems with flashing – any of which could lead to leaks. If found, make sure they're repaired. Also, check the underside of the roof for any spots or odors that may be signs of a leak.
- **Windows and Doors** – Check weather-stripping on doors, and check caulk on windows. Or consider both if you've done

neither. Caulking helps seal gaps, keep heat in and keep moisture away.

- **Seal Leaks** – While windows and doors are obvious sources of cracks, any cracks in the exterior of your house can let heat out. Check all exterior areas and fill and seal with a caulking compound any cracks that are located.
- **Home Heating** – Schedule a cleaning and inspection of your heating system. Ask about duct cleaning too if it's been awhile since you've had that service done. Also, inspect your fireplace and chimney.
- **Tree limbs** that hang over the roof can be a potential problem. If you can reach the limbs safely, trim them away from the house and make sure that none is hanging over the electrical, telephone and cable lines coming in from the street to your house.
- **Other Areas** – Once you've given your home a complete once-over, don't stop there. Check the driveway and sidewalk for cracks, and check the curb and gutter near your driveway to make sure they are clear of debris.

HEARD BY OUR EDITORS

- The average child recognizes over 200 company logos by the time he enters primary school.
- In California, the owners of homes with Christmas lights on them past February 2nd may be fined up to \$250.
- In Bhutan, all citizens officially become a year older on New Year's Day.
- For every ton of fish caught in all the oceans on our planet, there are 3 tons of waste dumped into the oceans.
- There are more coffee addicts in the U.S. than drug addicts of any other kind.

Digital TV is coming. Will You Be Ready?

Does the date February 17, 2009, mean anything to you? If it doesn't, it will – because that's the date that all American television stations will make the switch from analog to digital television. In fact, Congress says they have to.

One result of the change will be to free up space on the broadcast spectrum – a very valuable technological infrastructure – and make it available for public safety services. That's the reason for the government's interest.

There's also a benefit to consumers. Digital television is an advanced broadcasting technology enabling television stations to broadcast movie-quality picture and sound, while also offering multicasting (multiple programming choices) and interactive capabilities.

At this point, TV stations across the country are already airing digital television programming, while most are also continuing to air analog programming. The big change that happens in February 2009 means that they will no longer broadcast on the analog channels. But they'll continue airing digital television programming they've already begun.

So what does this mean to you?

Maybe a lot, maybe a little.

If your television set is connected to cable or satellite, there's the possibility that you won't have to do anything to keep programming uninterrupted. But prior to the changeover, you should check with your cable provider or satellite company to see if you need new DTV equipment to view and receive DTV programming in digital format.

If you have a television set that is not connected to cable or satellite, you may need a special tool to convert the signal to digital.

Be Alert When TV Shopping

If your set does not include a digital

tuner, you will need a "digital-to-analog set-top converter box" to continue to receive a television signal after the switch date. Typically, this will affect individuals who have older TVs, but not necessarily, so be alert when you're TV shopping.

All new TVs manufactured after March 1, 2007, must include a digital tuner. However, retailers may continue to sell TVs with analog-only tuners from their existing inventory. Thus, the FCC has created a rule requiring a consumer alert to be displayed on any such set that a converter box will be needed to view programming after February 2009.

Converter Box Coupon Program

According to DTV.gov, digital-to-analog set-top converter boxes receive digital signals and convert them into analog format for display on analog TVs. Analog sets connected to these converter boxes will display digital broadcasts, but not necessarily in the full, original digital quality.

Before you shell out the cash for the converter, here's something else you'll want to know. Between Jan. 1, 2008, and March 31, 2009, all U.S. households will be eligible to request up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, to be used toward the purchase of up to two, digital-to-analog converter boxes. Look for more info at www.ntia.doc.gov.

"Quotable"

"Winter is not a season, it's an occupation."

—Sinclair Lewis



Drivers That Drive You Crazy – Or Worse

The weather is tricky during this time of year – rain easily turns into sleet or snow, and ice can form on bridges with little or no warning. That makes driving conditions hazardous, especially when you add the increased traffic of the season.

Depending on other drivers to be responsible isn't your best bet for a safe road trip under the best conditions, so it's important to take steps to protect your family. As is often said, the best offense is a strong defense:

- **Avoid driving between midnight and 3 am on Saturdays and Sundays.** These are the hours when the most drunk driving collisions occur. The safest weekend drive times are between 9 pm and midnight.
- **If you don't have running lights, keep your headlights on at all times.** This makes you more visible to other drivers, even during daylight hours.
- **Watch drivers, not just their cars.** Drivers don't always use turn signals to advise you of their intentions. Paying attention to body language is an important substitute. For example, if a driver keeps glancing in your direction, he could be planning to change lanes or merge in front of you.
- **Let aggressive drivers pass.** Aggressive drivers are more interested in how fast they can get to their destination than with your safety. Vehicles frequently weaving through traffic, flashing their lights, or honking should be given a wide berth.

MY WORD (...from page 1)

and from indoor activity can cause real problems. But don't worry. We'll be here when you need us. If you run into any plumbing trouble at all, give us a call, and we'll get someone out there to fix you right up.

Remember, the sunnier, warmer days of spring will be here before you know it. In the meantime, we wish you all the best that winter has to offer.

Sincerely,



Steven Heidler & Mick Heidler

P.S. This newsletter has some great tips to help customers like you run your home, but feel free to pass it along to family and friends when you're done. We're glad to help them too! And don't forget to check out the special offers on the back, or you could be missing a chance for big savings!

HomePoints

If water drips from a leaky faucet at a rate of one drop per second, 2,777 gallons of water will be wasted in one year.

Some Things Are Just Better Au Naturel...

Like environment friendly Bio-Clean®. It destroys blockages and odors in your plumbing system naturally – and helps prevent future drainage problems.

But it's only available through your plumber. So call **Heidler, Inc** at **410-268-7191** for your Bio-Clean® today.

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Let us Repair What Your Husband Fixed.

We know how it is. All you have to do is jiggle this, juggle that... and voilà! It's worse than before. A question crosses your mind: "Now what do I do?" The answer is simple. Call one of our trained professionals.

We'll help you out of your plumbing mess as quickly as possible. And we might even maintain a little peace (or pride) in the process. (No extra charge!) Just give us a call.

Call **Heidler, Inc**
at **410-268-7191**.

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