

# Solar heating not so far away

What is solar energy? And is it expensive?

M.M. Troy

Simply put, solar energy is using the sun as our energy generator. The sun is an inexhaustible resource for man's use. Consider this: The energy potential of sunlight falling on the surface of Lake Erie in a single day is greater than the present annual U.S. energy consumption rate. At high noon on a clear day in June, the sunshine falling on New York City is the equivalent of the energy produced by all the power plants in the entire world at peak performance.

Using the sun as our energy gener-

ator provides several unique advantages. It is available to every country on earth. It is clean and safe. Its technology is understood. Its "fuel" is free.

HOWEVER, if this solar abundance is to be useful to man as a power source, the energy must be collected, stored and transmitted in a practical and economic way.

Sun power, long a distant dream, is now becoming a reality thanks in large part to the energy crisis and spirating fuel costs. Solar heat is already

more economical than electric heat in most new houses according to a government report prepared by the Mirex Corp., a research firm, after a study of 13 cities.

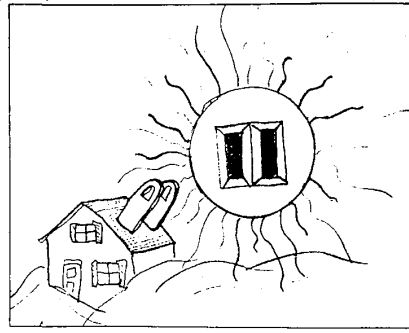
The report predicted that oil, gas and electricity prices will increase 10 per cent a year for the foreseeable future. By contrast, it said, solar energy costs will be cut in half by 1980, if federal energy program goals are met.

COSTS FOR solar energy are not yet stabilized because of the newness of the industry. However, reasonable

estimates are possible and as mass marketing develops, prices will become more competitive.

Solar Energy Research Center in Washington, D.C. has available a list of manufacturers offering a variety of solar energy devices. The address is 1801 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 632, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Concern, Inc., Detroit also has information on solar energy. For Eco-Tips No. 7 Part 3, send 25 cents and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Concern, Inc., Detroit, 1 Northfield Plaza, Troy, Mich. 48066.



## ABWA plans garden party

The Oak branch chapter of the American Business Women's Association will hold a Bloomington Garden Party for its spring enrollment event, beginning at 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 15, in the Farm House restaurant on Nine Mile in Hazel Park. Dinner will be served

## THE CHATHAM CONSUMER FOOD COUNCIL ASKS:

# WHY ARE FOOD PRICES RISING?

## Genealogy group meets

The newly-formed Oakland County Genealogical Society will meet 13 p.m. Monday, March 14, in the Royal Oak Public Library, 222 E. Eleven Mile.

## ABWA plans garden party

at 7 p.m. following a social hour. Besides the spring garden theme, a skit based on the television show "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman" will be on the program, with Julie Orr, Mary Ann Bruggeman, June Schelzlel, Betty Wacht and Betty AHearne participating.

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**Chatham and Food Council members agreed that food shoppers would want to know the causes of price increases. Here is a summary of answers from trade and other sources.**

**Natural causes.** A freeze in Florida, a drought in California will mean higher prices because of its effect on food supplies. When there isn't enough of a particular food to satisfy demand, the price rises. When it becomes abundant again, the price drops. This law of supply and demand has nothing to do with any food retailer because it is beyond his control.

**Labor causes.** Labor is the biggest factor of all in food costs. Current local wages, now in negotiation, are among the highest in the nation. In fact, every increase in wages anywhere in the food industry must be reflected in the prices you pay. It's understandable that workers want to keep up with inflation and they are justified in their desire. Unfortunately, the increases in wages are reflected in the prices you pay for food.

**Transportation causes.** Nobody has to tell you fuel costs are up. Gasoline, diesel oil and fuel oil. This affects food prices because it boosts the cost of bringing in foods from producing areas.

**What can the supermarkets do about rising prices?** The supermarket is at the end of the food distribution line and unable to influence costs incurred before receiving the food. However, Chatham is a good example of what a progressive retailer can do to hold down overhead and boost efficiency. Chatham has installed Michigan's newest and most modern meat plant to process meat with minimum waste and move it quickly to its stores. Chatham also operates a central produce plant for the same reasons. And Chatham conducts training programs for food handlers and cashiers to boost in-store productivity. We want

you to get the most for your food dollar. Our success depends on it.

**What can you do?** Chatham suggests these basic steps. Use a shopping list and take advantage of manufacturers' coupons and weekly price specials. Avoid buying the foods that have risen most in price. The Chatham Consumer Affairs Department can help you plan economical and tasty meals, too. For ideas on stretching your food dollar, write Chatham's Consumer Affairs Department, 2300 E. 10 Mile, Warren, Michigan 48091.

The Chatham Consumer Food Council was established to inform you, to help make you a better shopper and to make Chatham a better place to shop at. We invite you to apply for membership. Write: The Chatham Consumer Food Council, P.O. Box 42, Dearborn, Michigan 48126.

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