

Business

Energy store offers alternative heating sources

By SUSAN LEINOFF

Mankind has been playing with fire ever since striking the first flint. It's no surprise then — in light of the present fuel crisis — that someone started taking fire seriously as an alternative home-heating source.

Meet Robert Posch of The Energy Store, 421 Main St., downtown Rochester. To sell wood-burning stoves and back-up electrical generators, Posch gave up a full-time career entertaining and playing guitar in nightclubs and bars.

In other words, "he cleaned up his act," said Pepper Posch, his wife. There was more to the job change than that, according to Posch.

"I've always been interested in energy," he said. Posch said he "started tinkering" in electronics while stationed in the naval air force several years ago. More recent efforts included developing an auxiliary power system — to market to homeowners — for use during electrical failures.

"It's inexpensive compared to all other systems because we custom-design and build them, and installation allows for easy, low cost hook-ups," Posch said.

He delivered his sales pitch like a true professional, before shifting the spotlight to stoves.

POSCH CONSERVATIVELY estimated that wood-burning stoves cut home-heating costs by 75-80 percent. They're about 65 percent energy efficient.

Posch said the stoves are thermostatically controlled to distribute heat evenly, with enough power to warm up to 2,500 square feet.

"They can heat a room 1,200 square feet in size within a half hour," he said.

The Energy Store carries two brand lines and is soon to retail a third.

The most popular stoves, manufactured by Black Bart, are available in two models. One is free standing, while the other inserts in most fireplaces. Each model sells for \$649, in addition to a \$55 standard installation fee.

Technologically speaking, Posch said wood-burning stoves have dramatically improved to the point where even Ben Franklin would have a hard time recognizing them.

The original models "radiate heat like a very large light bulb," Posch said.

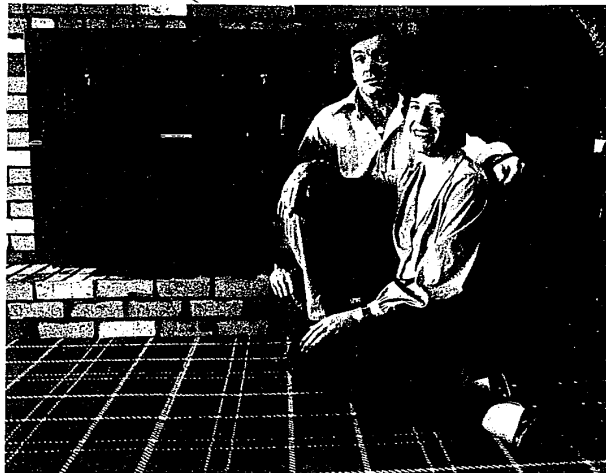
"The heat is tremendous right next to the stove, but the warm air doesn't circulate."

He said the updated models he sells are equipped with "strong, variable speed blowers" which force air through the vents and send heat evenly through room space.

"MOST PEOPLE are up using these stoves as primary heat sources," Posch said.

The Energy Store in Rochester is the fourth outlet Posch opened in the last 1½ years.

In the future, Posch said he plans to further expand around the metro area.



Robert and Pepper Posch, owners of the Energy Store in Rochester, sell wood-burning stoves and back-up electrical generators. (Staff photo by David Frank)



Naturally good foods A shop for eating & living well

By BARBARA UNDERWOOD

When was the last time you made lemonade with fresh lemons? Twenty years ago, when Betty

LEFT: Betty Matthaei (left) and Lois Gaigalas are business associates who run the expanded Betty's Grocery Store in Birmingham. BELOW: The use of a rustic wagon highlights the variety of items on sale at the store, including a serve-yourself section with bins filled with everything from exotic flour to adzuki beans. (Staff photos by Dick Kelley)



Matthaei of Bloomfield Hills had no frozen lemonade mix in her freezer, she suggested to one of her children that he could use fresh lemons to make some.

"Make lemonade with fresh lemons," the child asked. That was one incident which started Mrs. Matthaei thinking about how dependent American people had become on pre-packaged foods and mixes.

"I WAS SURPRISED at how far and how quickly we had gotten away from natural foods," said Mrs. Matthaei, owner of Betty's Grocery Store, 677 Hunter Blvd., Birmingham.

The store opened Labor Day week after moving from its previous location on Bowers. In addition to a new name and greater visibility, Betty's has expanded both its space and selection of "naturally good foods." The shop previously was called Bettelle's.

Mrs. Matthaei's interest in natural foods may have had its beginnings with the lemonade incident, but a bout with infectious hepatitis, also about 20 years ago, sharpened her awareness of health hazards.

"I recovered clinically," she said. "But then I began reading books by Adele Davis and I became totally fascinated. I started reading labels and discovered we were eating a lot of things that weren't nutritious."

"Now I read everything and I pick what makes sense to me," she added. "We provide an alternative that I believe is really needed in the community."

LOIS GAIGALAS of Birmingham, a business associate of Fred and Betty Matthaei for the past 15 years, is the secretary-treasurer for the business.

"It's almost like people in the community had been waiting for something like this," she said. "The response has been tremendous."

Mrs. Matthaei said she decided about a year ago to expand her store in order to provide a greater selection and to offer some items in bulk that previously were only offered in small packages.

As a result, customers now may select from a variety of nuts, dried fruits, grains and other items all displayed in large covered containers.

Other additions which have come with four times the space of the previous shop are a complete range of fresh fruits and vegetables, a deli-tesse offering sandwiches, fruit drinks, frozen yogurt, fresh salads and many kinds of cheese.

"WE STAY away from orange cheeses," Mrs. Matthaei said. "All orange cheese has color added. And we stay away from cheese with preservatives."

"Our cheese does mold because it contains living enzymes," she added. "Any food that doesn't mold is not worth eating."

Mrs. Matthaei said the theory behind her business venture is to bring natural foods, which have been organically grown and have not been processed, into a grocery-style atmosphere instead of a small specialty shop atmosphere.

"We run the whole gamut — from gourmet to grocery," she said. "And I really feel strongly that if people want to live well and eat well, 80 percent of their diet should be raw. But none of us do that, including me."

"People used to eat like that 25 or more years ago and they don't realize what has happened," Mrs. Matthaei said. "I prefer not to eat something and five years later learn that it can cause cancer."

THE STORE is intended as an educational center, offering demonstrations on everything from tofu to wok cooking, she said.

"A lot of people on special diets come to us because we have done the leg work for them by reading the labels," she said.

Even the family pets are remembered, with a complete selection of "naturally good" dog and cat food.

Betty's Grocery also sells bottled water, a full line of cleaning supplies and cosmetics, home baked breads and cakes, frozen meats, farm fresh eggs and glass bottles of "real milk with cream on top," including goats milk.

"It is pasteurized but not homogenized," Mrs. Matthaei said. "Nothing has been added. When people lug those heavy bottles and pay a deposit on them, you know they must be sold on."

Bernie Toppin, a customer, picked up two large bottles of milk and said, "You started something here. My kids won't drink anything else."

MRS. MATTHAEI believes people should know that the kinds of foods she carries are available and that they have an alternate choice.

"I really believe in free selection," she said. "But most information about our foods comes from the manufacturers. People have to take that into consideration when they read the ads."

One section of the store is devoted to dozens of cookbooks and other books pertaining to health and natural foods. Autograph parties by authors are planned for the future, Mrs. Matthaei said.

The store is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

BUSINESS PEOPLE

HOWARD E. JOHNSON formerly of Birmingham has joined D'Arcy-MacManus & Masius Advertising as senior vice president-management supervisor on Standard Oil Co., (Ind.). He moved to LaGrange, Ill.



Johnson

Lent

Carr

J. WILLIAM LENT, has been elected vice president, human resources by the board of directors of Ex-Cell-O Corp., Troy, and JAMES H. CARR has joined the corporate public relations and advertising department as a staff writer.

B. J. HARE JR., formerly manager of the downtown Detroit office of American Federal Savings, has been named assistant vice president market research and assigned to the Savings and Marketing Group at the firm's Southfield headquarters. ANTHONY PICCIRILLI has been promoted from assistant manager of the Woodward branch to take Hare's place. GARY D. LINDSEY, moves to the downtown office as assistant

manager from the association's Farmington Hills office, and CHARLES W. KIRKPATRICK was promoted to manager and assumes responsibilities of the office in Farmington Hills.

LAWRENCE C. CRIPPS of Franklin has been promoted to assistant vice president by the Michigan Mutual Insurance Co. Cripps has served as regional claims manager for the Detroit Metropolitan region.



Cripps

Watson

PIGOTT

RICHARD P. WATSON has been named to the new position of vice president, administration, H&B Tube and Manufacturing Co., Detroit based brass and copper tubing mill. He will be responsible for overall coordination of purchasing, scheduling and marketing operations.

LEO P. PIGOTT of Rochester has been promoted to superintendent of

inspection in the heavy-duty truck plant for GMC Truck and Coach. Recently, he had been general foreman of inspection.

JAMES DORSCH, has been promoted to vice president retail marketing for Vlastic Foods, Inc. of West Bloomfield, and PETER NOLAN was promoted to vice president retail sales.

Andries Storen Reynaert Inc., architects, engineers, construction managers, based in Troy, have named new appointments to its existing management and board of directors. STEPHEN BOYLE of Southfield has been appointed superintendent to manage construction of a hotel addition in Romulus. DENNIS W. HEINE of Birmingham has been appointed project manager. JOSEPH E. KRUL, CPA, of Rochester has been appointed secretary-treasurer.

W. DAVOID TULL of West Bloomfield was appointed group vice president in the commercial loan division, Michigan National Bank, and DAVID J. ZIEGLER of Troy was appointed vice president in the commercial loan division.

STEVEN L. MORRIS and STEVEN E. WOHLMAN, both of Birmingham, have joined the Hayman Co. of Southfield as vice presidents specializing in the leasing and sale of office buildings, shopping centers, industrial facilities, land and apartments.

Seven high-level appointments in the GMC Truck & Coach Division engineering department have been announced. They are: WILLIAM H. TRAVIS of Troy, to chief engineer for product lines; PERRY C. DOOLEY of Bloomfield Hills to chief engineer for components; F. JOSEPH COFFER of Troy, to assistant staff engineer for the Astro truck; LAWRENCE J. KELLY of Union Lake, to assistant staff engineer for engine systems; DEL C. SCHROEDER of Bloomfield Hills, to staff engineer for truck body-plastics.