

energy
Barry
Jensen

Insulate and caulk, caulk and insulate

Keeping warm will cost much more this winter. If you are on a level-payment plan with Consumers Power, you already know that. Several people I've talked with have complained about their monthly payment for natural gas going up 40 percent. One reported an increase of 50 percent.

Consumer's Power blames the sharp increase this year on both the rising cost of natural gas since decontrol of its price and on the cost of imported liquefied natural gas.

Those of us who pay as we go won't feel the effect of the increase until the heating season begins, but people who choose to spread their winter payments over the entire year are feeling the new rates already.

For those who pay as they go, insulate now. November is a poor time to try to caulk and insulate.

IF PATRIOTISM won't get you to insulate, if ecological awareness won't tempt you to wind-proof your house, how about the terrible cost? Perhaps you have an inexpensive-to-heat house and paid only \$500 last year. This winter you'll pay \$700 for the same amount of heat.

If you paid \$1,000 last year for natural gas, you'll pay an extra \$400 this year.

And if the weather turns really cold, we'll all be facing high bills.

The only rational answer is to insulate and caulk. Caulking compound goes on easily in warm weather, so plan to spend part of your vacation digging out and replacing the old caulk around your windows.

Are there any places where two different materials join on the outside of your house? Because they have different expansion rates, these are the places that need caulk.

DO YOU have any holes in the outside of your house? Of course you do, the windows. So if you don't have storm windows, buy them.

If you have a brick or stone house, you probably have holes where electrical lines, TV antennas or plumbing lines penetrate the walls. Plug these holes with caulk.

The same is probably true for wood or aluminum-sided houses.

If you can insulate your walls, do so. A little insulation is much better than none at all.

Do you have windows that can be covered with decorative panels of solid foam plastic? You can add R-6 to a window with foam insulation. Take the opportunity this summer before the tremendous price increases hit.

Unless your house is new, you probably need weatherstripping around the doors. Summer is the best time to put in new weatherstripping. During warm weather, the rest of the house won't be chilled by the cold air as you install good weatherstripping.

IF YOU have a natural gas water heater, wrap a blanket of insulation around it... hot water will cost 40 percent more this summer, as well as winter.

Have your furnace checked. A 40-percent increase in your gas bill will justify a lot of preventative maintenance.

If you have any novel ideas to save gas, or just ideas you use that you haven't seen mentioned anywhere else, drop us a line.

And in the meantime, insulate and caulk. It's going to be an expensive winter.

Thursday, May 28, 1981

(D7A)

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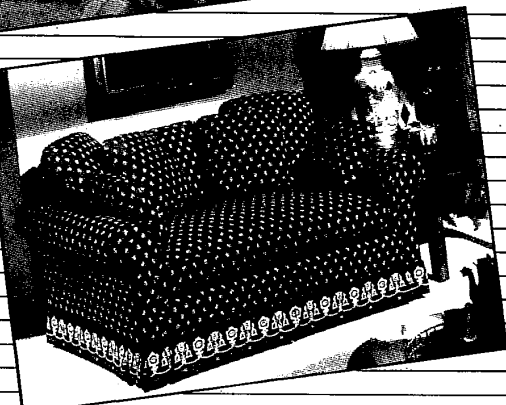
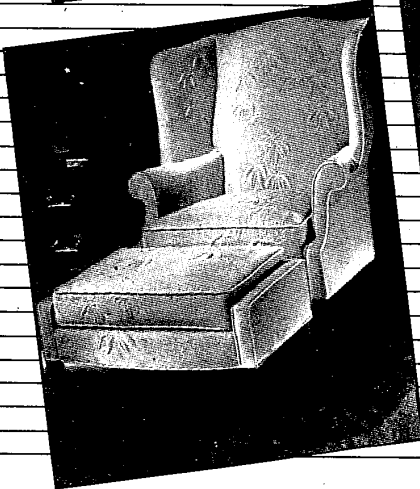
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