

# HOMESENSE

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Smart and simple ways to enrich your home living

Spring 2010

\$3.00

## MONEY WISE

### A Quick and Simple Home Investment

Routine air conditioning tune-ups are among the best home investments you can make. That's because tune-ups improve your system's efficiency and increase its lifespan, saving you operating dollars, postponing replacement dollars and keeping you comfortable at the same time. Not only that, you can avoid problems with mold build-up that can harm your breathing space.

It's the same principle as routine dental cleaning and annual medical appointments. Nothing's wrong, and you want to *keep* it that way. But some folks let the "ounce of prevention" opportunity pass right on by, thanks to a misguided impression that it's just too much trouble.

Yet tune-ups are simple and quick and very much worth a very minor inconvenience that can save you a good bit of time and money in the long run. Basically, a licensed professional will:

- 1) **Clean evaporator and condenser coils**, as needed, and straighten bent fins.
- 2) **Check all electrical components and controls.**
- 3) **Oil motor and shaft bearings.**
- 4) **Check the condenser.**

- 5) **Examine fan belts** and replace if frayed or worn.
- 6) **Calibrate the thermostat.**
- 7) **Check to see if the system is properly charged** with refrigerant and that there are no leaks.
- 8) **Check filters.** (Filters should be replaced monthly.)

Oh, and you can keep a watch on this on your own. While many homeowners choose to shade their condensers with trees and shrubs to improve efficiency, you'll want to watch to make sure vegetation doesn't grow around the condenser and restrict the air flow.

Most tune-up tasks are too extensive for the average homeowner – because of the risk of electrical shock and the potential for shorting in the electrical components. But one of our techs can tend to these things in a very short time.

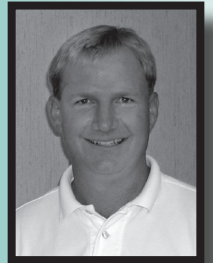
Think of it as a way to save money while avoiding a *whole* lot more trouble later on. Equipment failure in the heat of August is never as fun as a preventive measure taken in springtime!

## MY WORD

### Our Best Foot Forward

By Dennis Bergstrom

Dear Friends,



I hope this newsletter finds you well and ready for the first signs of spring. We're enjoying a breath of fresh air ourselves after a very busy season of keeping our customers comfortable. There's nothing more important to us than the work we do for you.

Put this in the category of news you'd expect. The Better Business Bureau recently issued a list of the top scams and rip-offs from last year. It was full of schemes involving work-at-home offers, job-hunting, debt assistance, very "pricy" sweepstakes winnings, and government grants. Sadly, many of these schemes have at their heart the worst possible motives – taking advantage of people who are having a tough time in a tough economy.

There are a couple of lessons here. One is the one our parents taught us: if it sounds too good to be true, it is. And the other is this:

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**Your Quick Call Comfort Hotline:**

**(507)373-6161**

www.jimanddudes.com

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- Supermarket Trickery





## What Emotions Are Behind Your Shopping Decisions?

Emotions affect our behavior, including our shopping decisions. For example, if someone has cut you off in traffic on the way to the store, and you are experiencing a flash of anger, you may bring that anger into your decision-making process over, say, a new outfit. That might not sound logical, but once emotions are triggered, they influence what you do – whether you realize it or not.

Though anger is thought to be a negative emotion, it can actually give you a sense of optimism and a feeling of control, which can lead you to take more risks, says Dr. Jennifer S. Lerner, director of the Emotion and Decision Making Group at Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government.

On the other side of the emotional scale, sadness can cause you to spend more money than if you were in a neutral state. Lerner’s research involved two sets of participants – one group watched a sad film, the other group watched a neutral film. The participants watching the sad film were certain that the sadness would not influence their spending habits. Yet during another part of the study, they were willing to pay almost 300% more for a routine item than those who had seen the neutral film.

## SEASONAL SHIFT

## Eat Right, Breathe Better?

### • How Some Foods Improve Allergy Symptoms

You’ve heard about food allergies, of course. Wheat, egg, milk and peanuts are among the substances that can send quite a few folks into reactions that are quite hard to swallow. But did you also know that some foods can actually help with allergies of the airborne type?

When airborne particles are causing a runny nose, sneezing, watery eyes and more, try taking a bite out of your breathing trouble with strategic dietary selections. For example:

**12 walnuts and a teaspoon of ground flaxseed recommended daily**

- **Omega-3 fatty acids** have “anti-inflammatory” properties. Look for these in cold-water fish (wild salmon, mackerel, trout, herring and sardines), walnuts and flaxseed. Try two servings of the fish weekly year-round, bumping up to three servings during allergy season. Also recommended daily: 12 walnuts and a teaspoon of ground flaxseed.
- **Spicy foods** can help clear your sinuses. Think hot salsa, green chilies or a dash of cayenne pepper.
- **Fruits high in vitamin C** are edible antihistamines and antioxidants too. Include two pieces of vitamin C-enriched fruit in your diet daily. When congested, an orange, an apple, or servings of watermelon, grapes or strawberries could be just what the doctor ordered.
- **Nuts** like almonds, hazelnuts and peanuts add a delicious touch to your dishes and can also help

minimize inflammation as good sources of vitamin E.

- **Black tea** contains flavonoids, an antioxidant from water-soluble plant substances, that can relieve your immune system. Green tea is also a source of antioxidants and reduces the production of histamine.

- Don’t forget **foods high in zinc**, which feed antibacterial and antiviral effects. How about a half dozen oysters or shrimp each

week – and more often when allergies are in full swing? During those times, try a serving of whole grains and beans too.

While you’re adding foods to your diet to improve your allergy symptoms, you’ll also want to keep in mind some food groups to avoid. Milk products are at the top of the list because they can cause a thickening of mucus in the nasal cavities. A glass of milk, slice of cheese or cup of yogurt can actually make you feel more stopped up.

Also, sodas with caffeine and alcoholic drinks dehydrate the body and can make symptoms worse. Hydrate your body instead with eight glasses of water a day.

### “Quotable”

*I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden.*  
—Ruth Stout

## How Supermarket Trickery Increases Your Spending

You've got your grocery list, and you're making your way through the aisles. But what about the unbelievable specials that you're ready to snap up and throw in your shopping cart? Not so fast.

When supermarkets are tempting you away from your planned purchases, they're not likely trying to save you money – but instead are trying to get you to spend more. Watch especially for these areas:

- ▶ **Buy one, get one free.** Do you really need or want two when “half-price” is a better deal? Check with a clerk to see if you can get the price cut with just one item.
- ▶ **Product positioning** – The word is out on “impulse items” at the checkout counter that prompt you to throw in an extra magazine, candy for the kids or a travel-size pain reliever. But did you know that stores



are carefully positioning items throughout the store?

- ▶ **Product displays.** Are some products getting more attention than others? It's probably not because there's an overflow in the warehouse, and they're offering you a great deal to move them out. More often, you'll find displayed products to be higher-priced products. Particularly beware of the “end-aisle” displays. These are the items you see at either end of an aisle, placed for prime product visibility. Check the regular sections for these items to make sure you're getting a good price.

- ▶ **Purchases with a limit.** You see the sale price, and that sounds good. But what's this? “Limit five.” Suddenly you want to make the most of this bargain, and you're reaching for your “limit.” **Remember:** if you don't need it, don't buy it.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The country of Andorra has a **0% unemployment rate.**

According to scientific studies, a rat's performance in a maze can be improved by playing music written by **Mozart.**

In the U.S., *Frisbees* outsell footballs, baseballs and basketballs combined.

It takes about **63,000 trees** to make the newsprint for the average Sunday edition of *The New York Times.*

Human thigh bones are **stronger** than concrete.

The first CD pressed in the US was Bruce Springsteen's “*Born in the USA*”.



### Too Much of a Good Thing

Humidity – too little and your lungs feel like you're in a desert, too much and it can feel like you're walking under water. **Why the big deal about a little water?** Well, too much humidity isn't just uncomfortable, it's unhealthy. Mold and mildew thrive and can cause *serious* air quality issues in your home. The key for your comfort (and your home's well-being) is finding the right balance. Sometimes that means using a dehumidifier to keep the moisture *outside* from taking over *inside*.

So what kind of dehumidifier is right for you? A lot depends on the area with the moisture problem...

**Large Spaces** – If you've got a whole house humidity problem then your best bet may be a dehumidifier that attaches directly to your heating and cooling system. These systems can be more expensive, but worth it if you're waging a serious water war.

**Single Rooms** – Many manufacturers offer dehumidifiers that treat just one room, say a bedroom or office. These models usually remove anywhere from one to three pints of water from the air per hour, and can be a good solution for problem areas.

**Small Spaces** – Humidity that builds up in closets can cause serious problems for the adjoining walls. Small heaters designed for long-term use (and cheaper to operate than a 100-watt light bulb) can keep the temperature of the closet above the dew point which keeps mold and mildew at bay.

## MY WORD (...from page 1)

it's best to do business with people you trust.

Every day, we work hard around here to put our best foot forward for you, and we place a very high value on the trust you place in us. Thank you for that.

So as you enter this new season and

look forward to warmer days, let us know how we can help.

Hopefully we'll see you soon for your pre-season tune-up. That's the best way to make sure your system is ready for the heavy summer use – and we can also give you tips on how you can improve your energy efficiency while we're there. So give us a call. We're here to help, whenever you need us.



Dennis Bergstrom

P.S. Please pass along our name – and even this newsletter – to your friends, and we'll give them our best service and value too.

### HomePoints

Using a programmable thermostat properly can help you save about \$180 a year in energy costs.



## How Would You Like To Increase Your Income Every Month?

That would be nice, wouldn't it?

Basically this is the same thing – instead of paying them 20% too much, you could pocket those savings with a new, whisper-quiet system. When you add in your repair bills to keep your “old wheezer” running, you may actually save more than a new system would cost!

This is the marvel of high technology and the skill of our installation technicians. You can even find out for free with a quick call. We'll come out, evaluate the situation, share some comfort tips, and tell you how much a new system really can save you. And this info won't cost you a penny, but it could be like getting a nice check each month.

You won't know until you call to find out!

**Jim & Dude's Plumbing & Heating at (507)373-6161**

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## It's Like Having a Butler Adjust the Temperature “Just So” ...

(But Without the Snippy Attitude)



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Albert Lea, MN 56007



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**HOMESENSE**