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Rental Energy Conundrum

I see questions online where people renting a home ask about how much oil is normal for them to use. Many people have never lived in a home heated by oil so they have no basis for comparison. Asking the question is fine but there is no right answer. One person I saw recently said they used 230 gallons of oil in the month of November. My background is that I have owned a fuel delivery business for almost 30 years and was involved long before I bought it. I have been calculating automatic deliveries for my customers using a computer system for just as long so I have had a real basis to develop knowledge of what kind of homes use more than others and just what could be considered average usage. This November was warm and not one of my residential customers used 230 gallons so to me that is excessive. One huge problem is that if you rent a home, the fuel is typically your responsibility. Because you can set the temperature to anything you like, the owner should not be penalized for your wasteful habits. On the other hand, the owner has no incentive whatsoever to make the house energy efficient and some old homes have no insulation at all. This creates a situation that cannot be resolved without someone spending money they don't want to spend. Insulation is an investment and this year the return on that investment has gone way up.

But who sees the return? The owner makes the investment and the tenant reaps the reward. Rent could be increased on energy efficient homes because the monthly operating costs to the tenant are significantly reduced. But since you can't see the insulation, there is no way to know when you sign the lease if the place is a wind tunnel or a thermos. Even if you purchase a home you can't be positive what the fuel cost will be because sellers don't brag about thousand dollar oil bills on Zillow.

The bottom line is that a good energy inspection can spot things that are grossly inefficient and even things that can be improved without a lot of expense.

You don't need a \$500 energy audit to find huge problems. But if you don't own the home, that won't be much help unless you can get the owner involved and have them make a commitment to improve it.

In my mind this explains the frequent turnover of some homes that are rentals. You have to actually experience the total cost before you realize it isn't worth staying there.

Ken Field is the owner of Slate Belt Energy and Field's Service, Inc. As a certified energy rater and contractor, he is qualified to assess every aspect of energy usage and prescribe solutions to save energy. He can be reached at 610-759-6306 or email Ken@FieldsService.com



A Thanksgiving Celebration

By Rep. Ann Flood

I had such a great time at the Chestnut Retreat Center for their 22nd annual Thanksgiving dinner. This is a great opportunity to get together with members of the community and celebrate our wonderfully diverse community.

The food was delicious! It was prepared by a Turkish chef that traveled all the way from Alberta, Canada for this event. I was also presented with an ebru painting that will hang in my district office signed by the artist who gave the demonstration.

Suicide Prevention Task Force Screening Of "My Ascension"

By Becky Bartlett

EASTON - The Northampton County Suicide Prevention Task Force and Bangor School District will show the documentary, My Ascension, on November 30, 2022 from 6:00PM – 8:30PM at Bangor High School, 187 5 Points Richmond Road, Bangor, PA 18013. My Ascension is a documentary about sixteen-year-old Emma Benoit's attempted suicide, how she survived and how it propelled her on a mission to use her experience to help others find hope and stay alive. The film also highlights the stories of two other young people who, tragically, did not survive their attempts and the devastating effects suicide can have on families and communities.

Community mental health providers will conduct a resource fair before and after the movie, supplying information and support. Information about the film is available at www.myascension.us

This event is free and the community is welcome to attend. However, due to the film's subject matter, it is recommended that children under the age of 10 do not participate unless their parents have seen the film previously and are okay with their child viewing the content.

"Northampton County's most precious resource is our residents, especially our younger generation," says Lamont McClure. "The Suicide Prevention Task Force continues to work to make sure everyone has the resources they need to get through the dark times."

Director of Student Services for the Bangor Area School District, Joe Kondisko explains, "The partnership with the Northampton County Suicide Prevention Task Force is a great asset to the Bangor Area School District, helping to deliver this event to support mental health in our school community."

Anyone struggling with thoughts of suicide can call the Northampton County crisis line at 610-252-9060 or the National hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

