

# Bursting the balloon on energy conservation myths

Sometimes the people with the best intentions make the worst mistakes. Energy efficiency around the home is one area where good intentions can go a long way to reducing energy bills. Sometimes, though, those good intentions are based on myths and misconceptions. These straightforward answers about home energy efficiency should set the record straight.

• **Turning a fluorescent light on and off wastes more energy than leaving it on all day.**

A widely held

belief about fluorescent lights concerns the energy used in turning them on and off: that fluorescent lights must be turned off for at least half an hour before the energy saved equals the energy used to energize it in the first place. People argue that you should not turn off the lights when leaving a room for short periods.

In fact it takes less than a second for a turned off fluorescent light to save the amount of energy required to turn it on again. As a

rule, if fluorescent lights are not going to be needed for five minutes or more, switch them off.

• **Turning the hot water heater off at night is a valuable energy saving habit.**

It is more practical to maintain the hot water tank at a set temperature than to reheat it every day. There are better ways to save energy and dollars. One simple alternative is to lower the temperature setting on the heater. This alone can result in

energy savings of 5 to 20 per cent, depending on the temperature drop. A fixed setting of 43°C should result in notable savings. Some people choose to keep the setting as low as 38°C. Remember, though, that a dishwasher requires a higher water temperature setting to be effective.

Insulating the heater and the piping is another realistic way to save energy and money, especially if the water tank is located in an unheated space such as

a cold basement.

There are two types of heater insulation. One is a simple-to-install tank blanket; the other is strip insulation. Either is appropriate for gas- and oil-fired heaters, but controls, junction boxes, air inlets and the top and bottom of the tank should be left free of insulation. Covering a gas- or oil-fired heater's control box is a dangerous fire hazard.

Insulating an electric heater without first having it inspected by a utility representative is

not recommended. If you are renting an electric heater, the utility may install a blanket for you.

• **Insulated shutters and blinds are too expensive to make the energy savings worthwhile.**

Custom-made insulating shutters and blinds can be expensive, but there are many cheaper do-it-yourself varieties. Some shutter kits, for instance, cost less than \$20. An even cheaper solution to the expensive shutter is a removable foam board

pop-in, cut to the size of the window and weatherstripped along the edge for a tight fit.

Insulated curtains need be no more than in-place heavy curtains sealed tightly to the wall and window sill with special tape. Or sew in energy savings the next time you make curtains by adding a layer of insulating material between the fabric and the backing. Insulation values can range from a high of RSI 1.25 (R7) for a well made shutter to RSI 0.19 (R1) for insulating drapes.

• **To be cost effective and keep out cold winter drafts, insulating shutters and blinds should be closed day and night.**

Interior window insulation helps stop warm household air from seeping into the night air, but it should always be opened or removed during the day, for two important reasons. In the first place, uncovered windows on all but northern exposures take advantage of passive solar gain during daylight hours, allowing the sun's heat to warm the house. Second, when the blinds or shutters are left closed day and night, there is a danger of heat build-up between the glass and the window covering. The windows may overheat, sometimes stressing the glass to the breaking point.

## Programmable Thermostats

A programmable thermostat is a reliable and inexpensive way to save up to 20 per cent on your heating bill. For example, it lets you program in a temperature reduction to start one hour before you go to bed and end an hour before you get up in the morning. A second setback can reduce house temperature when everyone is out during the day, and increase it again prior to their return. The most sophisticated models can accommodate complex weekend schedules as well. All types can be used with either forced air or water circulating heat distribution systems.

## REPLACE YOUR OLD GAS FURNACE NOW!

# PAY US NOTHING UNTIL APRIL '86.

If you think that old furnace is getting ready to leave you cold this winter, replace it now and get a winter full of comfort before you make your first furnace payment.

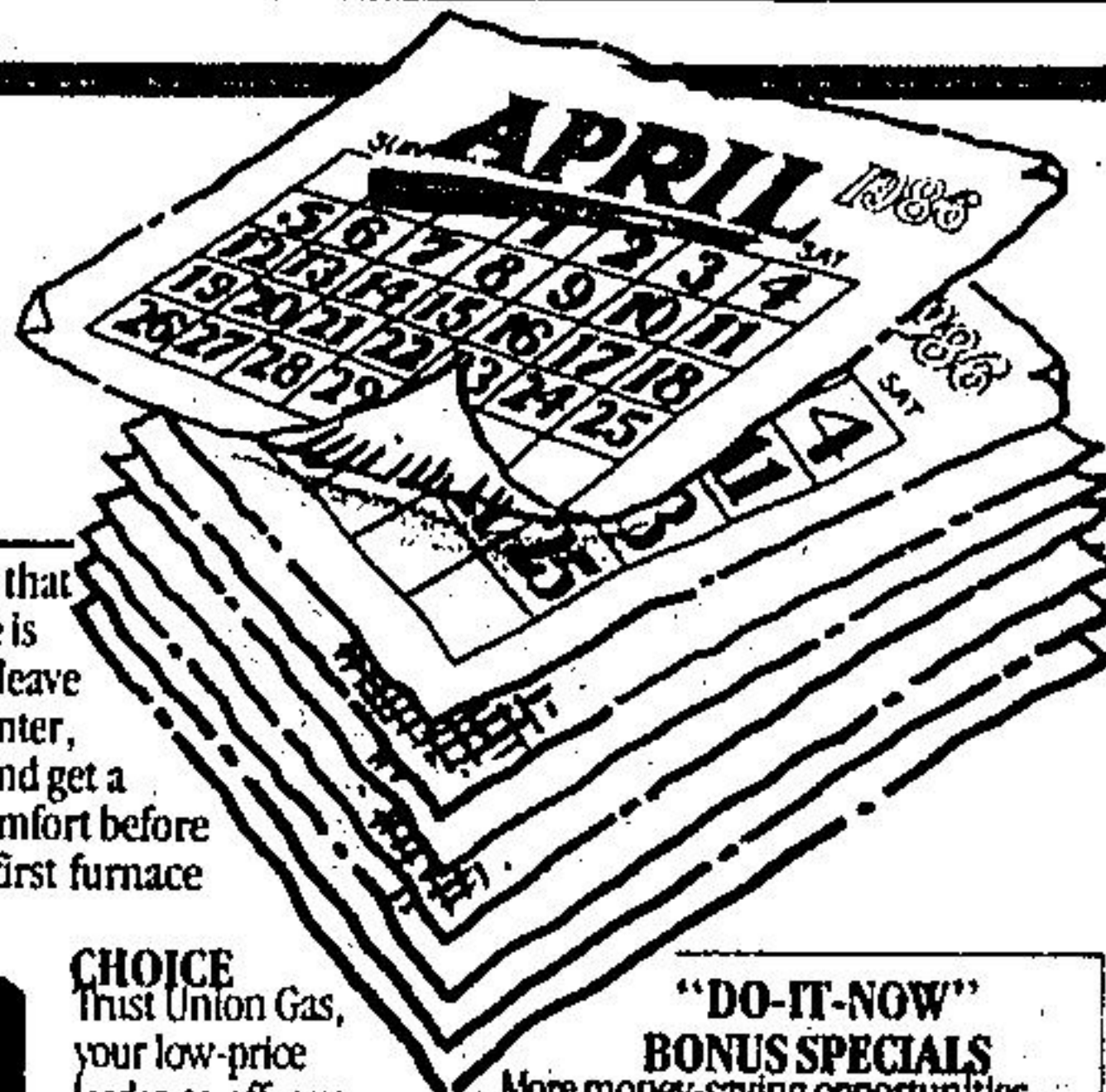
**CHOICE**  
Trust Union Gas, your low-price leader, to offer you the replacement furnace that best meets your needs and your budget. A Conventional - economy-priced. 63% fuel efficient.

**NEW!**  
A Mid-Efficiency - Value-priced. Up to 80% fuel efficient.  
A High-Efficiency - Top-of-the-line value. Up to 93% fuel efficient.  
The choice is yours, and it's never been better.

**DEFERRED PAYMENT**  
Act now and get a winter full of money-saving comfort before you make your first furnace payment.

**ACT NOW**

With approved credit. Bonus Specials apply to residential customer equipment only. Installed by January 31, 1986.



## "DO-IT-NOW" BONUS SPECIALS

More money-saving opportunities from your low-price leader in home comfort.

Act between September 14 and November 30, 1985 and look what you get:

**\$350.00 OFF** installation costs and **NO PAYMENTS** until April, 1986 with the purchase of any gas furnace and central air-conditioning package.

**\$150.00 OFF** installation costs and **NO PAYMENTS** until April, 1986 with the purchase of any gas furnace or central air-conditioning.

**NO WATER HEATER RENTAL PAYMENTS** until April, 1986 when converting from oil or electricity to our natural gas rental water heater program.

Put natural gas to work in your home with a new gas furnace from Clare; Olsen; Lennox; Roberts-Gordon; Grimsby-Stove. Complete your package with a Honeywell Electronic Air Cleaner.

**Call 1-800-263-8831 NOW**

**UNION GAS**  
We bring the energy