



Massachusetts

Interfaith Power & Light



Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light Newsletter

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Dear MIP&L Members, Friends and Supporters,

Ahhh. Fall in New England. The cornflower blue sky...leaves of ochre, gently falling to the ground...lovely, cool mornings....squirrels twittering in the trees...and then along comes that most dreaded of sounds: the boiler kicking in.

It's time to once again turn our attention inside, and see where we can put our faith to work in our homes and churches- taking personal (and community) responsibility for the precious gift God has given us.

What choices will YOU make this season to live out your covenant with God as a steward of creation?

We hope that MIP&L can offer some guidance along this path, and help you make some informed decisions.

In this issue we focus on a new Everyday Environmental Stewardship (EES) report on the Home Energy Audit, put together by our wonderful intern, Andrew Siliski. Andrew has researched and written additional, new EES reports as well, which you'll find on our website, MIP&L.org, featuring many easy and eminently do-able ways to put our "green faith" to work!

Also in this issue, our Carbon Bigfoot series continues, as MIP&L Communications Manager Mary Downes takes a serious look at "conversion."

Thanks for joining us for this edition of the MIP&L newsletter! Read on!

The Home Energy Audit

(Do you know what's going on in your basement? In your attic? Behind your walls? A few simple changes can impact your energy consumption!)

MIP&L's intrepid intern, Andrew Siliski, took MIP&L's long-standing advice and arranged for a *home energy audit* through [MassSave](#). His story about that experience is interesting and inspiring. He walks us through the whole process, using his folk's 100-year-old home in Newton as the guinea pig.

- . How did Andrew prepare for the auditor's visit?
- . What did the auditor find? What recommendations did he make?
- . And how can we take Andrew's experience and use it to map our own road to change?



[Click here to read Andrew's story.](#) We think you'll find that a home energy audit is nothing to be afraid of- and even if you don't go the route of replacing your aging oil/gas boiler, you'll find- as Andrew did- that there are simple - and often inexpensive- changes you can make now that will cut your energy use this winter.

Andrew Siliski
(uber-intern)

Understanding the Lingo

One of the challenges in embarking on a greener lifestyle is understanding all the language! Photovoltaic technology...volatile organic compounds....therms.... degree days...what does it all mean?

Understanding your energy use patterns involves tracking *degree days*. So let's deconstruct that central term you just encountered in Andrew's Home Energy Audit story.

Here's what MIP&L's Co-Founder & President Tom Nutt-Powell said when asked, "Tom, what the heck is a DEGREE DAY?"

Tom:

"Hmm, one of those things I've just 'known' and never needed to ask.

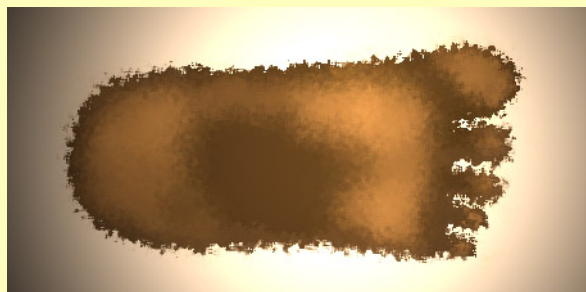
Here is the answer. First, go to the [MIP&L website](#) and download the Energy Use and Cost calculator. You'll find an explanation there. Then use the worksheet to input your own info, and calculate your own Energy Use and Cost, like Andrew did.

You can also download and read the MIP&L handout on "What You Can Do Now."

The example (for a house of worship, but the dynamic is the same for one's own house) shows how the gas use exceeded the Degree Day movement.

Ideally use matches need. Degree Days are the measure of need.

So if one's % is higher than Degree Days, it's lazy, sloppy, bad stewardship."



Confessions of a Carbon Bigfoot

by Mary Downes

I've been thinking lately about conversion. Conversion to gas from oil (cheaper, better for the environment). Conversion from our old, 37-year-old, rusting, expensive and creation-damaging oil boiler (which could die on us any day, truth be told) to a new, high efficient model. But more importantly, and more fundamentally, I've been thinking about my own, personal conversion from a person who talks the talk of environmental stewardship to a person who walks the walk of environmental stewardship.

Excuses abound. My most well-worn excuse is "It costs too much." I don't think Jesus would have a lot of patience with that one. Remember the money changers in the temple?

I wonder-am I like them? With my narrow focus and my selfish fretting about how much it costs to be a better steward of the earth?

If my washer and dryer run all day long on the weekend, setting my electric meter spinning, I need to do something- and not just sit here and lament. If my oil and electric bills total close to \$700 a month and my chimney is black from the pollutants my boiler is spewing into the atmosphere, it's time for a conversion of my equipment: my heart.

Will it be faith and action? Or will hangin' with the money changers prove too tempting to resist? We need to pray for one another, for our precious earth, and for real *conversion*.

More next month...

-Mary

PS... Got a personal experience, reflection for the Carbon Bigfoot series? We'd love to hear from you, and what you're dealing with in your efforts to live out your faith in your care for the environment. Email your story or thoughts to: mdownes@mipandl.org.

Check out our new EES (Everyday Environmental

Stewardship) reports!

They're free and downloadable from our website!

They're written especially with you in mind- giving you solid information about a variety of products, technologies, concerns and issues related environmental stewardship. Check them out at www.mipandl.org!!

You'll find EES briefs on wind, carpet, paint, thermostats, vending misers (!), appliances, green electricity, bio-fuel and more!



So, here's this month's check list for you:

Go to the MIP&L website!! And...

1. Download the worksheet and track your Utility Use and Cost -- How can we make informed decisions if we don't what is really going on?
2. Use the "Low-Hanging Fruit" strategy -- Do the low-cost/high yield actions NOW. (Programmable thermostats, even cheaper strategies like DRYER BALLS!! (\$9.99 at Walgreens!)
3. Contact MassSave and schedule your home energy audit today!

Remember...

It's not just about the money. It is especially about care for God's creation and God's creatures.

Reduce your carbon footprint!

Because if we don't...who will?

Sincerely,

Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light



the lowly dryer ball

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