

# VILLAGE VIEW

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Although figures show inflation is gradually declining, all of us know that prices are still rising gradually, day by day and week by week. Until we actually see prices drop from previous highs, we must do whatever we can to combat inflation.

Higher prices for gasoline and heating fuels accomplished what no amount of persuasion achieved. Predictably, people responded to price increases and stopped wasting oil. Now we have more oil on hand than we know what to do with. Oilmen advise once it comes out of the ground, oil must be consumed because this country has few facilities for storing it for the future. That's why fuel prices are running a few cents lower per gallon than a year ago. Perhaps it's time oil companies invest some profits in more storage facilities.

Whatever oil companies decide, Americans continue to conserve fuels, and although prices have declined somewhat, heating living space in our homes, offices, and factories, and keeping automobile tanks supplied with gasoline still account for a larger part of our budgets than we'd like. We're all still looking for ways to pare those expenses.

According to recent tests made by a Cornell University professor, wearing a wool jacket over a flannel shirt enables a man to be as comfortable with the thermostat set at 56° as he would be at 69° without the jacket. Replacing a summer-weight jacket with one of winter-weight permits lowering the temperature 2.5 degrees without loss of comfort. Women wearing slacks feel as warm at 67° as they do at 69° wearing skirts. A light-weight long-sleeved sweater allows for 1.7 degrees lower temperature, and temperatures 3.7 degrees cooler feel fine if a heavy long-sleeved sweater tops a long-sleeved blouse.

Because heating water for domestic use accounts for almost 30% of our fuel costs, by equipping showerheads and faucets with water-saving devices, and by limiting showering to five minutes a day, a family of four can save 20,000 gallons of hot water per year. This saves two ways; both fuel to heat water, and water, itself, are conserved.

Housewives who hate to iron (and I never knew one who didn't) will be happy to learn that using an electric iron costs 8.2 cents an hour; by cutting down on time spent performing that chore, money as well as work is saved. Most laundry, removed promptly from the dryer, and smoothed, or better still, line dried and folded, needs little ironing. Using an electric dryer costs, on the average, 43 cents a load, while a washing machine costs only 2.7 cents a load to operate.

Several years ago, before fuel adjustment charges added to electric bills amounted to more than 100% of the basic cost of used kilowatts, a test of machine drying vs. line drying resulted in a monthly saving of 17 cents. Since then, the fuel adjustment charges per kilowatt used have more than doubled. Thrifty housewives can now save a tidy sum by hanging the wash outside to dry in the sun.

As people everywhere feel the financial pinch resulting from our country's economic problems, they search for every possible way to make dollars go farther. The more ways, however small, we find to save, the more our shrinking dollars will buy. Savings almost too small and insignificant to bother with, put all together, add up to money in our pockets.

If you've shopped for a furniture polish recently, you may have been aghast at the price. You can make your own quite inexpensively and may find it does a nicer job than commercial brands. Buy a pint of boiled linseed oil and a pint of turpentine at your local hardware store, and a pint of white vinegar. Mix these in equal parts, shake well, and apply to your wooden furniture with a small soft cloth. Wipe off all residue with another clean soft cloth. Try it; you'll like it. If you want a lemony scent, grate the rind of a lemon into the mixture, shake, and strain through an old nylon stocking before using. Because oily rags can become a fire hazard, store the cloths in a glass jar with a tight screw cap, or discard them after each use, to eliminate any chance of spontaneous combustion.

Keeping children supplied with mittens can be expensive; these items are easily lost. If you sew buttons on them, the children can button their mittens to their coats when they take them off. Another trick is to crochet a long string chain, fasten one end to each mitten, and thread the mittens through the child's coatsleeves where they will dangle conveniently at the cuffs and seldom be misplaced.

Now that so many of us have beefed up the insulation in our houses, weather-stripped windows and doors, installed foam pads behind electric outlets, and caulked all those air leads around casings and foundations, our homes are warmer, but household odors aren't easily dispersed. To freshen interior air, you may use expensive sprays or sweet-smelling cakes said to absorb odors. Alternatively, you can put a few drops of wintergreen oil on a cotton ball to achieve similar results. This works in must basements or in cars reeking of unemptied ashtrays, too. And for only pennies per treatment.

As inflation shrinks our grocery dollar, some of us turn to different purchasing methods. Whenever possible, we buy in bulk, by the case or carton. We choose meats we can cut up or slice ourselves instead of chicken pieces or packaged cold cuts. By learning a few tricks of the butchering trade, we can save 20 cents per pound in some instances.

Another way to economize is to lower the thermostat when guests are expected. Parties generate excitement and excited people feel warmer. People giving off heat at 98.6° are walking radiators. The more, the merrier becomes the more, the warmer.

Making liquid soap is easy, and soap is expensive. Drop slivers of leftover bar soap into a jar half-filled with water; keep adding soap scraps until the jar is full. Pour into a bowl and mix with an egg beater, adding water until the desired consistency is attained, and transfer to an empty liquid soap bottle. More savings.

Using non-fat dry milk for cooking gives your family the same nutrients as using whole milk, but lowers their caloric intake. Get the packaged milk that lets you do the measuring; pre-measured amounts in envelopes are relatively expensive. Purchase only as much as you'll use up in a month or so. It doesn't keep forever.

To effect important savings at the grocery check-out counter, and further decrease calories in the family's diet, substitute fresh fruits, juices, and raw vegetable snacks for potato chips, pretzels, fritos, candy, and carbonated drinks. You'll probably be surprised to discover how much you've been spending for these and how quickly you adjust to living without them.

When inflation is running at around 10%, whenever you can save a dime on a dollar spent, you're trimming inflation back to zero; while scrounging 10 cents here, a nickel there may seem ridiculous, it is precisely those dimes and nickels, added to the price of individual items you buy that account for inflation. We can, if we will, find ways to offset those increases.