

VILLAGE VIEW

ANDREA LEONARD

How's your memory? Pretty good? Think back to February, 1979... do you remember what you paid for a gallon of gasoline a year ago... it seemed like quite a price, at the time. Can you come within five cents of what it cost?

Regular gasoline was selling, just a year ago, for \$.72 a gallon. If you've filled your tank this week, you know what the price is now.

Do you remember what the power cost charge on your electric bill was a year ago? It was \$.02985 per kilowatt hour or about \$.03. A quick check of the current bill will reveal the power cost has risen to \$.04724 or almost a nickel.

Like the price of gasoline, the electric power cost has nearly doubled in just one year. It's not electric rates that have increased; they remain level. It's the power cost that's sending those bills soaring.

What can you do about it? Nothing? Oh, yes, you can. You can do a lot about it. It takes some planning and it may take changing your habits, but there are definitely things you can do, and they will definitely make a difference.

No one can promise you'll lower your electric or gasoline bills to their previous levels; no. But you can reduce them.

Using less is the obvious answer to steadily rising gasoline prices. That means driving fewer miles. If you're in the market for a new car, it could mean trading for one that gets better mileage. A combination of the two steps is worth consideration. The picture is not likely to improve.

Organization is the first priority in driving fewer miles. Think of the thousands of people who make but one weekly trip to the grocery store. Job-holding wives, for one example, have little choice and must plan marketing on a weekly basis. Their at-home hours are limited to evenings and weekends and are too precious to spend on more than one trip to the

shopping center. They do all their errands at once, once a week, usually on Saturdays.

If a working wife doesn't have her own washer and dryer and takes her laundry to a laundromat, she makes that her first stop, loads the machines with the weekly wash, then hot-foots it to the nearby supermarket, shops, and rushes back in time to transfer the wet clothes to a dryer. While the dryer spins, she slips away to pick up clothes from the cleaner, take shoes to the cobbler, and choose a birthday card.

On the way home, she stops at the bank to make a deposit, at the drug store for a prescription she phoned in earlier (to save time), and finishes her errands in time to put away the groceries while preparing a soup-and-sandwich lunch.

Should you encounter such a person whirling through these activities of a Saturday morning, don't be surprised if she doesn't seem to have time to chat or if she appears distracted. Her mind is on her shopping list and schedule. Next week she'll go through the same routine again, only this time, she'll be picking up the shoes, dropping off library books, and making a quick stop at the hardware store for a can of paint.

One difference between wives who hold down full-time jobs outside the home, and those who don't, is the Saturday-morning-routine. The gal with an outside job hasn't time to shop more than once a week. She must organize her non-business hours very carefully or have no free time at all. Although she may not be doing it purposely, she's saving gasoline as well as time.

By planning to cluster your own errands in a similar fashion, and by making only one trip each week to the shopping center, you can achieve important gasoline savings.

Everytime you drive to Hyannis and back from Cotuit, with stops for traffic signals and errands, you use at least a gallon of gas even if you have a subcompact car. If yours is standard size, you consume two gallons. At today's prices, that's about \$2.50. One trip a week, instead of two or even three, can make a big difference in your monthly gas bills.

From Centerville, you save less when you reduce your trips to Hyannis by half, for the distance is smaller; on the other hand, because it is smaller, you probably think nothing of going into Hyannis, or over to Osterville, several times weekly.

The secret to organization is list-making. Keeping a pencil and note pad handy in the kitchen may save you more than you believe possible. Whenever you need to replace something, jot it down. Try to organize your list, and as it grows, arrange needed items to conform with the general lay-out of the store you plan to visit. Leave space at the top for other errands to do enroute. Mark them down as you think of them. This will give you time to do all your errands at once.

On your day to make your weekly trip, your list will be complete and you won't find yourself wasting time or gasoline, running back and forth every other day when once a week suffices.

Saving electric dollars falls in the same category. Use less. A few moment's study of your bill from the power company will show that after the first 140 KWs, which are charged at varying rates from \$1.68 once a month to \$.0527 per kilowatt hour, the rate drops to \$.0172 for the next 260 KWs used, and after the first 400 KW, down to \$.0137 for the next 1100 KWs. It's obvious that after the first 70, for which you're charged the highest rate, useage is relatively inexpensive. Or so it seems until you read all the fine print.

An electric rate adjustment charge of 21.92% is applied (that means added) so the more kilowatt hours you use, the higher the adjustment charge will be.

Then, on top of that, comes the power cost charge. It's fixed at \$.04724 per kilowatt hour, and it adds up to more than both the basic charge plus the adjustment charge.

Every kilowatt hour costs you almost a nickel. Peanuts? If you use 400 KWs, it costs you \$20 a month. If you use 1,000 KWs, it costs \$50. Not peanuts. Dollars.

Keep it in mind whenever you burn a light you don't need. Remember it when your furnace goes on to heat water. Think of it when you use your big oven to bake a couple of potatoes.

You can stop wasting electricity--and dollars-- by using cold-water detergents for laundry, taking showers instead of tub baths, switching off the water heater if you're away for the weekend, wearing warmer clothing and keeping your thermostat at a lower setting, turning it even lower at night or when you'll be away from the house all day.

It won't save enough to bring your bills down to where they were a year ago; the only way to do that is to go back to kerosene lamps and stoves, or have the electric service discontinued and go totally solar, with a windmill to generate juice.

If the price of electricity continues to escalate at the rate it's climbed in the past year, that could begin to seem a pretty attractive alternative. What do you do when the sun doesn't shine? Light a fire in the woodstove. What do you do when the wind doesn't blow? Cook on your woodstove and go early to bed.

Just as our grandparents did... Remember?

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