

THERE'S A STOVE for anyone's taste as this picture illustrates. The stove to the left is an American made version of the popular (but very expensive) Swedish stoves; on the far right is the economy model made by Ashley,

while more traditional wood heaters and a barrel model are pictured in the center. Fortunately, most stove buyers are absolutely convinced the stove they purchased is the best one around-

no matter what kind it turns out to be. They almost unanimously agree that savings on their electric and oil heating bills cause them to feel warm affection for even the most ungainly

Most Wood Stove Owners Agree:

'The Best Money I Ever Spent'

BY ELIZABETH HUNTER

About a century and a half ago Henry David Thoreau observed that wood heats you wice: once when you cut it, and again when you burn it.

The accuracy of that observation can be attested to by a sizable segment of the residents of this area, many of whom have turned to wood eat in the last three years to fight steadily rising electric nd oil bills.

I just couldn't afford to turn the heat up as high as we wanted it," said Tommy Westall of Spruce Pine, who added a Buck Stove to his home two winters ago. "But my family is comfortable now-and our house is warmer."

Westall, like many others, does not rely exclusively on his wood stove for heat (he still heats two bedrooms with electricity), but calculates his savings on his electric bill to be running between 50 and 60 percent.

The Tull Maces of South Toe community have had a similar experience. Until the end of the winter before last, they heated their home with a combination of an electric fireplace and a Franklin stove. Then they traded in the Franklin on a Fisher stove, "and we don't use the electric

fireplace anymore," said Mrs. Mace. "Oh, I guess it's been, on once or twice this winter, but that's all. We got the Fisher because we were cold all the time. Now it's warm everywhere in our house."

This reporter surveyed a number of families who have added wood stoves to their homes in the last few years and almost all are delighted with the results, though one dissenter said she "hated" her stove and was sorry she bought it. Almost every family added the stoves for economy reasons, and few feel their stoves have let them down. Doctors David and Carolyn

Cort of Burnsville only bought their Fisher stove a week or so ago, but Dr. David reports that "the stove is doing exactly what I had hoped and planned it would do-we haven't had the furnace on since we

Although the Corts haven't had their stove long enough to compute actual savings, there are many people who have, and the results are spectacular. Take, for example, two families-the Jerry Phillips' and the Allen Mc-Murrays.

Phillips installed two Buck stoves (though he does virtually all his heating with one) in his home after receiving an electric bill of \$394 for the month of December, 1977. Since that time he has completely eliminated the use of electricity for heat, and his light bill has dropped to between \$75-79 per month. "It's probably that high because we have two hot water heaters. he says.

The McMurrays have had a similar experience. They installed their stove in February of 1977, because their electric bills had been running in the neighborhood of \$245. "Our electric bill for 1976 totaled about \$1,400 for the year," McMurray said. "For 1977, after we got the stove, it was about \$500. Last winter alone, we figure the stove saved us between \$800-900.'

Though the initial cost of installing a wood stove may be as much as \$1,000 (including the cost of the stove, pipe and flue), most of those surveyed are confident their stoves are paying for themselves. The McMurrays feel theirs paid itself off last winter. Tommy Westill thinks his paid for itself in two winters. Reid Duncan, who installed a Fisher in his house on Grassy Creek three months ago, estimates that he's cut his electric bill in half (even though he still uses electricity in three bedrooms) since he bought the

The large savings reported are due, in part, to the fact that almost everyone surveyed was cutting his own wood or getting it supplied to him for free. But Allen Mc-Murray estimates that the price of wood would have to double (from its current average of \$30 per pickup load) before the expense of heating with wood would begin to approach the cost of electric heat. Several others, however, were not sure they would "come out" if they had to buy the wood they burned.

Though the motivating force (in all cases) behind buying a wood stove was to save money on fuel bills, several of those queried have discovered a number of fringe benefits of having a wood stove. Mrs. Macesays she does a lot of her cooking on her Fisher. And Staunton Norris, Burnsville attorney, who installed a Swedish Lange in his new eight-room house, is enjoying

the process of getting to know his stove. "I'm tickled with it," he says. "Tlike the novelty of it-fooling around with the intake valves, things like that."

Although everyone admitted it is "work" to cut wood for their stoves, most find that work enjoyable. "I don't mind cutting wood," Tommy Westall said, "I enjoy it." Reid Duncan agrees, calling the labor "good exercise." And Allen McMurray and Jimmy Phillips find that cutting wood serves a dual purpose: they are clearing land at the same time they are supplying their homes with fuel.

Almost everyone polled reported they prefer to burn oak, hickory and locust, though they'll use whatever comes along. There was much less agreement on whether the wood should be green or dry, however. Staunton Norris will burn whatever dry wood he carr get; the Maces will burn anything (including pine) that's green. Theories abound as to which is better and why.

Though stove owners are glad to have their wood stoves, they do admit to drawbacks. Among those mentioned most frequently are the mess of bringing the wood into the house and removing and carrying the ashes out. Reid Duncan reports his wife has to dust constantly, though others find that wood is not much dirtier than other sources of heat. Some find that the sound of a fan on their stove takes a lot of getting used to.

Probably the biggest drawback to a wood stove, however, is the potential danger of fire. According to Duncan, who is a member of the Grassy Creek Volunteer Fire Department, the problem is usually with the chimney or flue rather than the stove itself. "We need to encourage everyone with a wood stove to do everything possible to minimize the contact of wood with flues or chimneys," he said. "Lots of people are using chimneys that used to be used for fireplaces, and the heat buildup with a stove is much greater. You can't be too careful with a wood stove.

Duncan urges everyone with wood stoves to install smoke detectors in their homes (as most of those queried have done) to protect their families. 'We've been to several fires where families would probably have perished had it not been for smoke detectors," he said. "Very few people burn to death; most die from smoke inhalation."

Despite the chance of fire, however, which is "always at the back of my mind," Tommy Westall says, most people around here who have installed wood stoves in the last five years would probably echo his final comments. "The price I paid for my stove is the best money I ever spent. Not only that, my wood stove is one of my favorite topics of

conversation.'

Photos By Elizabeth Hunter



Parents Should Get **Drug Information**

By DONALD BLANKENSHIP Today the highest incidence is

Alcoholism Counselor Here are some questions

teenagers ask about drinking: Do parents really think their children don't drink? Some parents don't think about it at all. Others know, but don't let on. A lot of young people DON'T drink--at all. Most teenagers don't drink much or

often. Why do so many young people have drinking problems someone asks him to drink. today? There is no easy an- The choice is yours-and so are swer to that question. The the consequences. most honest answer is probably that young people available through the Alcohol have problems with alcohol and Drug Program of the Blue because they live in a society that has problems with alcohol. Ours is a drug-taking society. Young people tend to drink the way they see adults

drink. My boyfriend thinks it's cool to get drunk. Why? Many boys and young men pick up the idea that there is something "macho" or grownup about drinking. Some young men go through a period of insecurity and may drink in an effort to make them feel more secure about their manhood.

What should I do when my date tries to get me drunk? Try to find out why he wants you drunk. It may be so that he will feel free to drink. Perhaps he wants to get you drunk in the hope that you might say "yes" to something you say "no" to while you're

Do a lot of young people drink hard liquor? Most of my friends drink beer. Beer is the most popular alcohol choice among teenage drinkers. Wine is second, Beer, wine and hard liquor all have the same active ingredient..ethyl alcohol. A 12ounce can of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, and a 11/2 ounce shot of whiskey all contain about the same amount of alcohol.

Does it help to drink milk to coat your stomach before drinking? Nothing will keep alcohol from having its effect. Eating before and during drinking will slow down the effect of the alcohol.

What's the fastest way to sober up? Sorry...there is no shortcut. Once the alcohol is in the bloodstream, only time can sober up the drinker. Black coffee might make the drinker more nervous and wakeful, but he will be just as

Why so much emphasis on the dangers of drinking and driving? Fact: More than half of all traffic deaths involve a drinking driver. The percentage is much higher among people. Traffic fatalities are the leading cause of death among teenagers.

Aren't most alcoholics middle-aged men? Not any more.

among young males...under 30. Alcoholism can happen to anyone ho drinks...regardless of age or sex.

Should I drink? This is a decision you should-and willmake. It is the wise person who takes the time to think through all aspects of the decision before the time to make it arrives, and makes his or her decision before

Help and information are Ridge Community Mental Health Center. Call Don Blankenship at 682-6717 or 682-6117 in Yancey County or call Jim Pembroke at 688-3332 or 688-3711 in Mitchell County.

Dental Health Week

The leading health problem among children in the United States is dental decay. Good dental health is essential for proper nutrition, correct speech and socialization. Untreated dental problems can cause infection and lead to serious illness, according to Dr. George Dudney, head of the Dental Services Program of the Division of Health Services, N.C. Department of Human Resources.

February 3-9 is the 31st National Children's Dental Health Week. The purpose of the week is to focus attention on the prevention of dental health problems at the time it is easiest to stop them from occurring-in childhood.

North Carolina has the oldest public health dentistry program in the country. The Dental Public Health Program which was founded in 1918 began working early to instill the basic ingredients of sound dental health: nutrition, proper cleaning of teeth and gums and, later, fluoridation.

"All teeth, including baby teeth, need to be guarded against tooth decay," Dr. Dudney said. "Baby teeth are not only essential to good nutrition when a child's body is growing the fastest, they are also important in the proper development of permanent teeth. Children with severe dental problems also have trouble with speech and social development which can have life long complications," Dudney said.

"Children's Dental Health Week is designed to draw attention to this aspect of the development of a healthy adult," he concluded.



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