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HOUSE WISE

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Volume 2 Issue 4

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*"Solar is not what it used
to be!"*

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Where's the Green Board?

By Elizabeth Guinn

Been to Lowes lately looking for a piece of drywall to repair the ceiling in your bathroom? You head down the drywall isle in search of a piece of green board. You don't even have to look at the signs because green board is easy to spot because it's, well, green. But, oh no! Did I pass it? Look again, no green board. Are they just temporarily out? No, they're permanently out. They no longer carry it. What are you going to use in its place you ask? Keeping up with the latest advances in drywall, Lowes has decided to replace the old standby with a newer and better product, paperless drywall.

Paperless drywall is the latest rage in drywall technology. Why do we need high tech drywall anyway, you may ask? One word, hurricanes. With all the recent hurricane damage around the country, especially Katrina, people have become keenly aware of what happens to the drywall after even a small amount of water gets on it. You may cut off the wet part of the drywall but

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Dan's Desk

By Dan Guinn

I have been spending the last couple of months investigating radiant floor heating. So needless to say I was inspired to write when I received a question from one of our readers on the subject. Nick H. wrote "My wife and I are moving along with our house plans and we'd like to do radiant floor heating. In your opinion, what is the best way to heat the water?"

Several issues back we reported on whole house boilers for heating both hot water for consumption and hot water for radiant floor systems. Nick read that article and liked the idea of the

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the moisture may continue to cause mold to attach itself to the paper and grow up the wall. The terrible part is that it could be growing up the inside of your walls right now and you would never know unless you pulled a piece and checked.

Mold and mildew is not only bad for people with asthma, but can cause a myriad of breathing problems in completely healthy people. Using the paperless stuff will insure that you will never have issues with mold.

The sheets are a little heavier than what you are used to so you might not be able to carry as many in your vehicle as you thought you could. So don't go putting ten sheets in the back of your minivan and expect your bumper to not drag on the ground. And they are a little pricier than the green board coming in at almost \$13 a sheet. Higher price or not, this stuff is great and worth the extra cash as well as the extra sore arms from the extra lifting.

The Daffodil Festival

By Elizabeth Guinn

Come out on April the 7th and see Dan and his truck pulling the float for the Creative Families 4H Club. We will be the ones with the green shirts with the large clover on the front.

Come out for the parade at 9:30 or anytime during the day for great food, vendors and live music. The festival has been going on for decades and is in celebration of Gloucester's heritage as the Daffodil Capitol of the World. The parade will head down Main Street and will end up at the historic area of Gloucester Courthouse which is worth seeing all by itself.

Look forward to seeing you there!

Always the 1st Saturday of April

April 7, 2007

9 am to 5 pm

Main Street,

Gloucester Courthouse

Sponsored by :

Daffodil Festival Committee &
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radiant floor heating but because of busy work schedules didn't think feeding a boiler every evening was the way he wanted to go.

Why would you want to install radiant floor heating in a house anyway? With allergies at an all time high, many people have become keenly aware of how a forced air heating system (i.e. a heat pump, etc.) moves lots of air in order to move the heat around your house. A forced air system is great for quickly raising the temperature of your house. With an adjustment to the thermostat you can raise the temperature in your house in a matter of minutes. The down side to this type of heat is the dust, pollen, dander and pollutants that are made airborne that can cause problems for someone with allergies or asthma.

A radiant floor system is a coil of flexible tubing that is run throughout the flooring of the house which when in use, heats the floor slowly which then slowly releases the heat into the living space. Much like a passive solar design, a radiant floor system works best if it has a large mass to heat. That is why most radiant systems are installed over concrete slabs and then covered themselves with a thin layer of concrete to conceal them. The tubing can be coiled under a wood framed floor system but with not nearly the amount of efficiency that the slab installation will give you because of the lack of mass to store the heat.

So how do you heat the large quantities of water necessary for heating an entire house? The right answer for you depends a lot on your lifestyle. A large gas fired boiler will do the job nicely and with some diligence, you can find ones that operate extremely efficiently. The problem is that the location where you are building has to have access to natural gas in order to make this feasible from a cost standpoint. Propane would be an alternative however propane can be rather costly at times. Not to mention that the trend for gas prices over the past five years is definitely up. An electric boiler would draw a tremendous amount of power and would not be anywhere near as efficient. Keep in mind that the U.S. has used more than 50% of its gas reserves and adding systems that use gas as they're primary source may hit you in your bank account in the coming years. Look for systems that achieve a 90% efficiency to insure that you are using as little gas as possible.

We have been looking into solar hot water systems for heating water for just this purpose. While it is the energy from the sun is the warming source you still need a small amount of electricity for running the water pumps with most systems. Moving water is much more efficient than moving air and the electricity requirements are minimal. A solar system requires a large warm water storage tank either under ground or in the basement of the house. This is a great free source of

**Contact Elizabeth and Dan
Guinn at
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Ten Best Ideas to Reduce
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email requesting a copy
and I will speed one out to
you!**

energy but needs to be backed up with something like a gas boiler for periods where you have many cloudy days in a row.

I still like the whole house boiler system for the secondary source of heat. Yes, you do need to feed the fire, but not nearly as often as you think. I went and saw one in use. The guy was heating his house and his shop and supplying all his hot water. He decided not to feed it for a while to see how long it could go before the temperature dropped out of his optimum range. After 3 days of waiting he gave up figuring that he had proved that the unit was extremely efficient. Some sort of boiler backup or even a forced air backup would be necessary. Since most people do want to have a central air conditioning system installed, a back up heat pump is a viable option.



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Taking you from Dreams to Reality
Psalm 127:1a

