**Energy Trailblazers of the Month: Don and Peggy MacGlashan**

Growing up on a dairy farm during the Great Depression, Don MacGlashan was a conservationist by necessity. "Those were tough times and we were taught to make the most of what we had because there wasn't a lot of extra to be had," Don recalls. An engineer by training and household tinkerer by choice, he has repurposed broken down machines for other uses. However, Don takes a very pragmatic approach to home improvement and energy savings that is easily replicable.

"Do the no-brainer stuff first – things that don't cost a lot or take a lot of time but make a real difference in terms of your energy costs and comfort."
After more than 34 years of reducing home energy use in his Chevy Chase house, here are Don's big "no- brainers"
**Attic insulation:** If you have an attic, check your insulation and add more if necessary. Most old homes in the area don't have enough insulation, period. Adding insulation to the attic and especially the attic floor is a great place to start. It's easier and less expensive than adding insulation to the walls. Don prefers fiberglass blanket or batts insulation to loose fill because he believes it is easier to install and has great longevity.

- **Attic Fans:** Don has two attic fans: One is a solar attic fan that keeps the attic temperature under 90 degrees so that the AC doesn't have to work so hard. The other attic fan is a 30 inch, 250W whole-house fan. "We use it on cool, dry mornings when the outside temperature is two or three degrees below the AC temperature setting. Using it this way cools the whole house down by replacing the warmer inside air with cool, dry outside air. The A/C often doesn't come on until 2 pm, even on hot days. "However", Don says, "Use only the smaller attic fan when the AC is on. "

- **Radiator reflectors:** Don's home has cast iron radiators that pump out heat in the winter. About 25 years ago he made his own heat reflectors – aluminum backed Styrofoam that he put behind each radiator that was against an exterior wall in the house so heat was reflected into the room instead of being absorbed into the wall. Calling this a total no-brainer, he asks, "Why would you heat the wall when you want to heat the room?"

- **Shading windows:** After a developer removed four large shade trees outside a bank of west-facing sun porch windows, Don's electricity consumption jumped more than 50% and by the end of the season, his A/C failed from overwork. The next year he had to install a new A/C, purchase an electric Sunair awning to shade the windows, and install a sun porch exhaust fan made from an old dehumidifier. These changes brought the electricity consumption back to where it was. However, Don thought saving the trees would have been a better solution for both properties.

- **CFL lighting:** Don has replaced at least 15 incandescent bulbs for CFLs bulbs. These he knows will cut the lighting power consumption by a factor of three and will reduce the amount of cooling required during the summer because most of the incandescent lighting is lost in heat and that puts an added load on the AC. Don has had regular fluorescent lighting in his kitchen and basement for years. He finds that the one especially good place for CFL's is in the ceiling fixtures. They save the number of times one has to climb a step ladder to replace the bulb. His wife, Peggy, doesn't like CFL's for reading, so they have one incandescent for that purpose.

Don and Peggy have done so much work on their home since moving into it in 1977 that they can't point to specific energy savings for specific improvement projects, but they recently learned that their home uses 38% less energy than other similarly sized homes in their neighborhood.

Got a story to share about reducing energy waste at home? We want to hear it. Email climatetocc@gmail.com to tell your story and share your experience. This story was written by Ian Halperin of Larkspur Energy, which is working with the Climate and Environment Committee to spread the word about energy efficiency in our Town.