



**Ken
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Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times

Dark Places Hide Energy Flaws

You may be interested in saving money on your energy bills but you may not see the value of having an energy audit. After all, you could be spending that money on insulation. What you may not realize is that a good energy auditor can find problems with your home that also relate to health, safety, and the degradation of the structure that you might not ever find on your own. There are many things that are not good for a home and they are found often hidden in the places you rarely visit inside your own home. I have only ever seen one or two crawl spaces that are not causing multiple problems.

Odors and moisture are usually the worst problems and the odor usually is a byproduct of moisture acting on porous building materials. Attics hide a lot of rodent activity and since they are hostile places to work, much of what gets done there is not done properly. Get in and get out is the name of the game for electricians and usually for HVAC people too.

They move insulation to access something and never put it back or cut a hole for something and never seal the part of the hole that is unused. It doesn't take much of that to cut a hole in your wallet. The level of equipment used by a good energy auditor today also allows them to find a lot of concealed problems. Thermal cameras and blower doors will locate problems that you could never find on your own. Some homes could cut their energy use by 50% if an investment was made in airsealing and insulation. The higher energy costs go, the quicker the return on investment is realized. There are some really good products on the market today for sealing a crawl space and building science has proven that ventilating them is the worst thing you can do. If a crawl space is encapsulated and insulated it becomes storage space like a miniature basement. No more energy lost and no more foul smell. It isn't a fun job to do but if you have a crawl space your home is one of the easiest to save a large amount of energy on and improve the comfort and living conditions in. The cost varies on crawl space encapsulation but it needs to be done properly. Not plastic from home depot and duct tape but spray foam, 20 mil liner with liner tape on every seam and a sump pump. You can start it yourself by installing a string of LED lights. That should get you close enough to what's going on there to realize you need help.

Ken Field is the owner of Slate Belt Energy and Field's Service, Inc. As a certified energy rater and contractor, he is qualified to assess every aspect of energy usage and prescribe solutions to save energy. He can be reached at 610-759-6306 or email Ken@FieldsService.com

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Martin Guitar Charitable Foundation

Accept proposals for 2024 grants from June 1 through Aug. 31.

By Martin Guitar

NAZARETH, Pa. — The Martin Guitar Charitable Foundation awarded \$485,500 in grants to local and national nonprofit groups in 2023, among them some of the Lehigh Valley's biggest arts organizations.

Grants of \$1,000 to \$35,000 per organization were awarded in 2023 to more than 60 local groups.

The funds support acoustic-guitar music and education; community activity in the Nazareth area, where Martin Guitar is based; education, arts and culture; and help for poor, hungry and homeless people in the Lehigh Valley, and other causes.

Among local grant winners were the Allentown Art Museum, Allentown Rescue Mission, ArtsQuest, Bloom for Women, Community Bike Works, Godfrey Daniels, Moravian University, Touchstone Theater and the Wildlands Conservancy. A complete list is available in a statement from the foundation.

Also, 18 national arts organizations and programs for acoustic-guitar education and research received grants. They include Boston University, Birthplace of Country Music (Virginia) and the Musical Instrument Museum (Arizona).

The foundation was started in 1996 by C.F. Martin IV. It gives to non-profit music, arts, education, environmental action and human-services groups. It does not fund political or religious organizations.

The foundation will accept proposals for 2024 grants from June 1 through Aug. 31.

C.F. Martin IV was chief executive of the family company until 2021, when he became executive chairman. He was succeeded as CEO by Thomas Ripsam, a guitar player and former partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Martin Guitar was founded in 1833. Music stars including Hank Williams, Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, John Lennon and many others have played Martin instruments.

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