



Ken Field

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Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times

Evolution of Indoor Space

Most older homes are products of the evolution of many aspects of construction. Plumbing and electricity wasn't available until the early 1900s and many homes still standing today were built before that. Even when homes were equipped with those amenities they were not installed the way we install them today. So when the electrical or plumbing systems are upgraded, there is some ingenuity required to make the old and the new work seamlessly. Air conditioning systems weren't really available to residential customers until about 1960 and it wasn't until the mid-70s that half the homes in the US had central AC. I'm sure the half that had it were in the hot climates too. I installed dozens new complete systems from 1980 until probably the late 90s. We still do a few every year for people who had large through the wall units and finally got tired of the noise or the unit failed.

When a new system goes in any home other than a ranch style home, there are challenges to be met. In a 2 story home the system typically is installed in the attic and it is difficult to distribute air to the first floor without running ducts through bedroom closets to reach the lower level. I have seen many closets have their space reduced by half for that purpose. It is not acceptable to many homeowners because closets in the older homes were not nearly as large as the ones preferred by most people. Asking them to sacrifice that space for ducts is a deal breaker for most. Conversely when a furnace was installed in a home built in the 50s, the duct system was designed for heating only. That means no return air ducts from high in the rooms. When central air came to town, many contractors just added it to a furnace and did not modify the duct system or the fan motor in the furnace. Both of those things quickly created unhappy customers. A more powerful fan motor is required and if the hot air is not drawn off of the top of a room, comfort will never be acceptable. Many Cape Cod style homes never had the upper level finished at the time they were built but eventually it became necessary to use that space too.

Those homes are the worst for summer comfort. It was a difficult design to modify also because the space in the first floor was all allocated and there was no way to get ducts to a useful location on the upper level. Next week I'll dig into some ways to do it the right way from the start and ways to fix what doesn't work now.

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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Danger Of Water Beads, As Lawmakers Seek To Ban Beads Marketed As Children's Toys

By Consumer Product Safety Commission

Water beads are small balls made of super-absorbent material, and they can expand up to 100 times their original size, making them extremely dangerous if swallowed. That's why a new bill, sponsored by Pennsylvania Sen. Bob Casey, would ban the sale of water beads marketed as a toy for children.

Water beads often look like colorful toys, and you can buy thousands for under \$10. What they do is expand up to 100 times their size when exposed to water.

They expand in the, in your intestines and they cause internal damages and bleeding. Infants have passed away because of this. Children, older children also as well have caused internal damages.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission says, from 2016 to 2022, water beads caused about 7,800 emergency room visits. That's why Senators Bob Casey, Susan Collins, and Tammy Baldwin are sponsoring Senate Bill 4298, which would ban the sale of water beads marketed to children. It's called "Esther's Law" after 10-month-old Esther Jo Bethard of Wisconsin, who died from swallowing a water bead.



Peace Officers Memorial Day

By Rep. Joe Emrick

BETHLEHEM - Wednesday, May 15, marks Peace Officers Memorial Day.

First established by President John F. Kennedy in 1962, the day is designed to pay tribute to the brave local, state and federal peace officers who have died or been disabled in the line of duty. The day falls during National Police Week, which is being marked from May 12-18.

We are blessed by the men and women who have taken an oath to serve and protect and particularly those who have sacrificed their lives to protect public safety.