



Ken Field

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The Sad Reality of Energy Retrofits

I was in an attic recently to perform an energy inspection and to make recommendations for how I could improve the energy efficiency of the home. The original reason for the visit was because there was water dripping from the ceiling diffusers in a few rooms. The house was a ranch style with living space on one floor only. The attic was huge and the design of the house had skylights in 2 rooms and the entire center of the house had a vaulted ceiling on one side at the front entry. None of those features changed the outward appearance but it did make things more interesting inside. There was an air conditioning system installed in the attic but it wasn't used as part of the heating system. That's where the dripping condensation problem originated and the roofing contractor who was there before me was honest enough to admit that. Repairing one problem without repairing all of them makes the outcome something that can't be guaranteed and will probably not save any energy at all so I'm not recommending any partial fixes or band aids. Skylight tunnels and sidewalls of vaulted areas need to be built just like they were on the exterior of the house.

They never are and that leaves me with the job to finish what the builder didn't do. The attic was full of flexible and large trunk ducts that leaked air horribly and made it difficult to traverse the attic. Most of it was built using trusses and there was only 4" of wood as the bottom of that truss. It looked like a herd of elephants had been trampling through the place forever and the insulation was all crushed because no real walkways were built.

The challenge for me is to come up with a plan that doesn't send the homeowner into cardiac arrest and still leaves a job I can guarantee because air leakage and insulation are as good as possible. The job will take me a week to do and require a fair amount of materials. The payback needs to be 5-7 years at most or I can't blame anyone for not tackling it. There are no tax credits and no incentives at all except that it will stop raining in the bedrooms. It is sad because all of this could have been done much more easily at the time the house was built 15 years ago but none of it is required the house passed the building code inspections. There are as many flaws in the energy code as there are in this attic and neither are going to change anytime soon.

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



Twins at Chelsea Sun Inn

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had lunch, and shared more of their adventures with me. After a few photos they were on their way to their final destination, Brooklyn Bridge in NY.

The Prizant's began their journey at the Golden Gate Bridge in California and will end at the Brooklyn Bridge in Brooklyn, NY on New Years Eve.

The Prizant's, originally from Poland, Ohio, had been planning a trip like this for years and after they lost their jobs due to the pandemic, they decided to run to raise money for a good cause. Their goal is to raise \$10 per mile, do 30 miles a day, (they are averaging around 26). Their best day was 62.5 miles.

"We decided that this was the trip that we had talked about doing years down the road and was something that we really should consider doing," says Max Prizant. "So, we did a lot of research on which charities were raising money, specifically for COVID relief."

Heart to Heart International is a global humanitarian organization based in Lenexa, Kan., which works to improve health and to respond to the needs of disaster victims worldwide. The organization has expanded their efforts to help those affected by COVID-19 by calling on the public for monetary donations to help fund testing, cloth face coverings and thank you notes for health care workers, among others. So far, the pair has raised almost \$10,000 of their \$30,000 goal.

The twins began their journey on May 21 at 6:30 p.m. from the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. They drop off one of their vehicles at the day's destination, then circle back in another car to the starting point and then run back to their destination.

Along the way, the twins have had their camper catch fire, ran with stray dogs and kittens, been chased down by a herd of wild horses, ran in sweltering heat and freezing cold temperatures, encountered rattlesnakes and been witness to America's natural beauty.

"Our sixth day in Iowa, we had 15 degree wind chill and 40 mile-per-hour winds in about four to five inches of snow one night," says Zac Prizant. "We ran about 22.6 miles straight through it, so that was really difficult."

When they reached their home town of Youngstown Ohio they left their car their and decided to run from hotel to hotel till they reached NY.

"So far, it's pretty much been our family members and friends who have made donations, because our only link for donations is on my Facebook page," says Max Prizant. "So, we try to direct everyone we meet along the way to our Facebook page to make a donation."

"Covid sort of gave us an opportunity we never thought we would have and just to be doing this for the very thing which gave us the opportunity is sort of a blessing in disguise but we're hoping that we can really make it a blessing by raising as much as possible," Zac said.

Donations can be made at: <https://www.facebook.com/donate/786354105481037/786354152147699/>. You can also follow their journey on their Instagram accounts, @mpzant or @zacinthebox.



Above - Max Prizant, James Howard co-owner Chelsea Sun Inn, Zac Prizant.

James and his co-owner brother Alex donated the room to the twins. "Charitable causes are not uncommon for the Chelsea Sun Inn and the Howard Brothers" said Alex.

Left - Along the way, the twins have had their camper catch fire, ran with stray dogs and kittens, been chased down by a herd of wild horses, ran in sweltering heat and freezing cold temperatures, encountered rattlesnakes and been witness to America's natural beauty