

SIMPLE LIFESTYLE

CONSUMER TIPS for January 2007

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

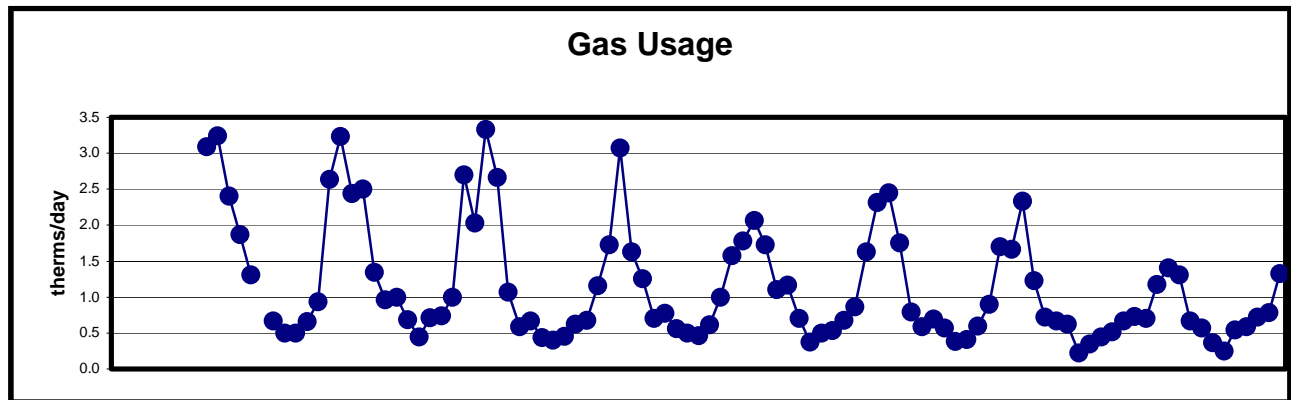
At my house, our greenhouse gas emissions come from four main sources:

- electricity use (25%)
- natural gas use (20%)
- vehicle use (two cars) (55%)
- air travel (highly variable, but our trip to India and back for 5 people equaled an entire year of electricity, natural gas, and vehicle use).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION:

ELECTRICITY peaks in summer if we use the air conditioning and in winter with lots of lighting; we've cut our use substantially thru fluorescent bulbs and other measures, and are now almost always well below baseline usage.

NATURAL GAS is pretty much just for cooking, the water heater, and the furnace. As you can see by the winter peaks in the graph below (spanning our last nine years), the furnace is the big player. You can see over time the effect of our more careful furnace use (winters 4-7) and using our wood-burning stove (the last 2 winters).



If you're into more details, I've attached a copy of my carbon emissions spreadsheet, which you may modify for your own household.

SEAFOOD

There's plenty of "green" seafood that is delicious and not any more expensive than the "yellow" or "red" (i.e. bad) choices. Here are some simple things to remember.

GREEN: farm trout, tilapia, pollock (fish sticks, imitation crab, etc.), anything from Alaska

RED: most shrimp, farm salmon (incl. lox), orange roughy, swordfish, most shark

For details and rationale for every species, see <http://www.mbayaq.org/cr/seafoodwatch.asp>

FREecycle

Here's a great example of how modern communication can make life more efficient. Check out www.freecycle.org; there are over 1,500 participants in Davis! The Freecycle Network™ is a grassroots and entirely nonprofit movement of people who are giving (& getting) stuff for free in their own towns. It's basically an email listserv within each town. Membership is free. Go to the website and follow the instructions.

SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS for future tips are welcome! Email me at hamptons@sbcglobal.net