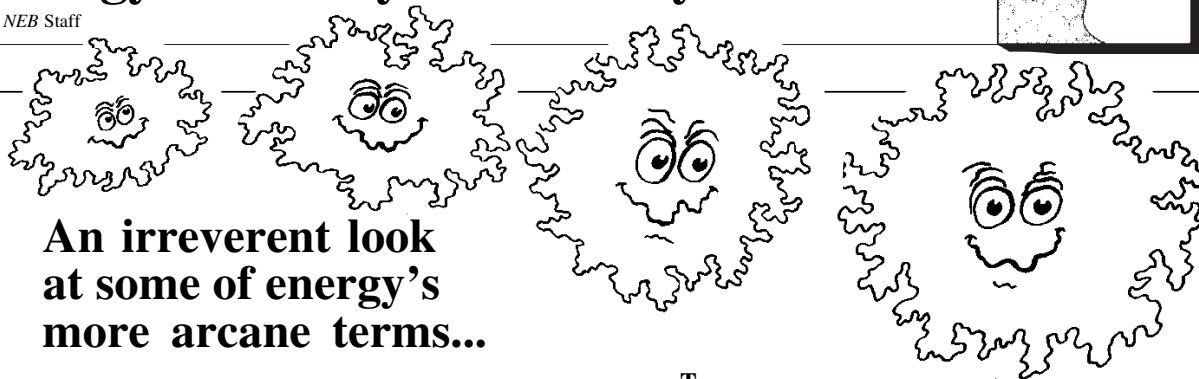


# Energy Beastiary & Glossary

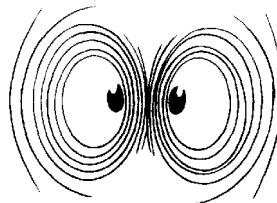
by NEB Staff



## An irreverent look at some of energy's more arcane terms...

Ah, what strange and curious creatures roam untamed in the interstitial spaces wreaking havoc on our heating bills and the unwary contractor! Anyway you cut it, energy is a tough nut. With the exception of a few wavelengths of visible light, it's mostly invisible, very slippery, hard to measure, and always rising in price. And the jargon doesn't make it any easier. But don't be intimidated. The next time you're called upon to wrestle the wily Btus, just keep this guide close by. In no time, you'll be running circles around convective loops and have anomalies eating out of your hand. Study well.

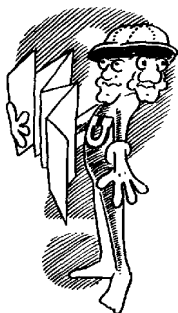
**Thermal Anomalies**—What to blame when your client's heating bills contradict your heat-load calculations. Rarely caught, these shy devils can only be seen in the dead of winter with an infrared camera. Subspecies: short circuits, glitches, bridges. (See also Voids).



**Voids**—Evidenced only by the holes they leave in your new blown-in insulation, these crafty predators usually keep one step ahead of the house doctor. If you find a void, just stuff it with insulation—or call it a dead air space.

**Heating Degree Day**—The day you received your diploma from the Matchbook Correspondence School of Dampers, Ducts & Hot Air.

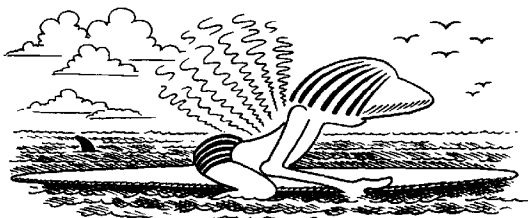
**Solar Load Ratio**—The cost of a solar collector divided by the salesman's commission.



**Lost R-Value**—This weary traveler lost its way while searching for an escaped Freon. If you find it, please write the Society for Plastics, Inc. with its whereabouts. (See Entrapped Freon.)

**Underground Insulation**—Worked during WW II for the thermal resistance. Now used to slow down the rate at which you heat the surrounding countryside in winter.

**Air-to-Air Heat Exchanger**—Two hamsters on treadmills running in opposite directions connected to three miles of ductwork and an electronic timer. If one hamster runs too slow, prod it with a hot-wire anemometer to balance airflows.



**Long-Wave Infrared**—The heat emitted from the back of a sun-burned surfer. Compare with short-wave infrared, which is the warmth emanating from an overcrowded hot-tub.

**Thermocouples**—Can be seen dancing the night fantastic at ASH-RAE fundraisers to the music of a prominent thermal conductor.

**Airtight-Drywall Approach**—The Canadian attempt to enter a Sheetrock boat into the America's Cup Trials. The water-resistant drywall held up, but the gaskets suffered corrosion from the spilled beer.

**Entrapped Freon**—This dreaded creature is serving hard time in a plastic cell for damaging the ozone layer. If you confront an escaped Freon, the best defense—according to the Reagan Administration—is to wear sunscreen and dark glasses.



**Guarded Hot Box**—Where manufacturers keep the results of their products' R-value tests. Unfavorable results are kept in a closely guarded hot box.

**Balance Point Temperature**—The temperature of a tightrope walker's big toe. Also, the temperature below which your heat pump turns into a black hole and devours your savings account.

**Continuous Vapor Retarder**—A large, perfectly airtight plastic bag meticulously constructed by framing crews using Saran-Wrap, Sawzalls, roofing cement, and nailguns.

**Dead Air Space**—A punk band formed by out-of-work energy auditors. Also, what's between the ears of your heating contractor after spending eight hours trying to wire the controls of your integrated heating, cooling, ventilation, and radon-removal system.

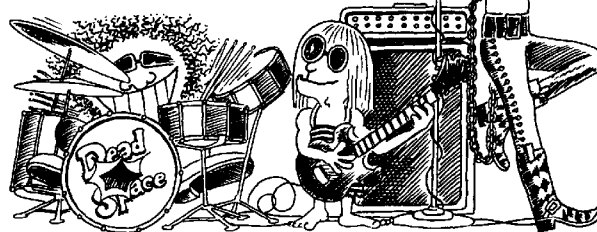


Illustration by Robert Huntton