

## **M R. FIXIT *on Heat, Hot Water & Garbage Disposal***

Several people have asked me recently about their hot water and heating systems, so I thought I would make a few comments on these topics.

**HOT WATER:** In single family dwellings, a delay for hot water to reach the faucet is normal. At Telegraph Landing, you should not have more than a few seconds between turning on the tap and having hot water.

The hot water from the boiler is circulated in a loop around the garage ceiling. At the bottom of each stack of apartments there is a pump. That pump operates a separate vertical loop of pipes running hot water up to all the units in that stack and back down again. It takes water from the main loop as necessary. Thus, since there is hot water circulating in the wall near your faucet or shower, the hot water has to go only a short distance and you should get it very quickly.

If you don't get hot water quickly, it is most likely because the pump for the vertical loop has failed. Since there is no external sign of this failure, no one will bother to repair it until you notify them. If you don't get hot water in 15 seconds or less (at full flow), please tell the Property Management office. Once they know there's a problem, they can get it repaired.

**HEATING SYSTEM:** Another inquiry was about a heating system not working when the fan switch was set to LOW. Let me review your heating system. It's in a small closet behind the filter. Hot water goes into a radiator-like thing called a heat exchanger. Air is sucked through the filter to blow over the exchanger and then the warmed air circulates through your apartment. So what can go wrong? There are five possibilities, described below: the valve, exchanger, thermostat, fan motor and the three-speed fan switch.

First, there's an electrically-operated valve which controls whether hot water goes into the exchanger. If the valve fails in the off position, you will never get heat. If the valve fails in the on position, hot water will flow into the exchanger at all times and you will feel heat near the filter area. This valve is expensive to repair.

If the exchanger fails, it will result in a water leak. You'll find that soon enough. A new exchanger is expensive.

The thermostat decides whether to open the valve for water flow over the exchanger. If it fails, again you will never or always have heat. Rotate or slide the thermostat's heat setting and listen closely. Somewhere between its lowest and highest settings you should hear a click. If you don't hear a click, you may need a new thermostat. It's not very expensive.

The fan motor is a medium cost to replace but rarely fails if you change the filters at least twice a year. If it fails, you will get no air movement at all, or a weak airflow or noise from the motor.

The three speed control switch (original equipment, newer switches may vary) is more likely to fail in only one position, so if your system works in two of the three settings, you probably just need a new switch. Fortunately, this is not very expensive.

Now for two personal gripes. Telegraph Landing has a wonderful deal with our scavenger company. Any trash container that has nothing but recyclable trash is hauled for free. But if there is ANY non-recyclable stuff in that container, we pay full cost for the whole load. So it behooves all of us to be careful in separating the good stuff from the bad. Please note that all plastic foam is bad stuff and can't be recycled. So if you put any of the foam packing of that new TV or some foam peanuts (ghost turds, we call 'em) in the recycle container, you are costing yourself and your neighbors some serious money.

Paper, flattened cardboard, glass, plastic drink bottles and plastics with 2, 4 or 5 in the little triangle are all recyclable. If in doubt, please check the recycle posters in our lobby bulletin

boards. Anything else currently is not! Help yourself, help your neighbors and help the planet by being careful how you throw out your trash.

Next, the garage access ramp. There seem to be two opinions about whether entering or exiting cars have the right-of-way. Because of this, we have numerous near-misses as one neighbor assumes right-of-way that is different from the other driver's expectation. Let me suggest that outbound cars have the right of way, for three reasons: 1) for cars with manual transmissions, an uphill stop is not ideal, 2) it's a courtesy for inbound cars to allow an outbound car to exit rather than cutting them off abruptly, and 3) there's a mirror at the top of the driveway that allows inbound cars to check for traffic, while outbound cars must reach the top before the driver can see approaching traffic. Others obviously feel differently and have good reasons for their opinion. I hope the Board will take a position on this and install appropriate signs. We need a clear, shared understanding.

Finally, a question for you: I'm looking for a source for door closers for the front door of our unit. I'd like to find one with the same hole dimensions as the old one, thus saving drilling new holes. If you know of a source, please tell me at robinben@aol.com. So far, all I've found are either too big or too small. - *Bennett Woll 408-1*