



# handsOn

A Newsletter of the  
Boston Building Materials Co-op and  
the Building Materials Resource Center

spring/summer 2001

## Save Energy, Money And Time With Compact Fluorescent Lamps (Light Bulbs)

By Matthew St. Onge

The Boston Building Materials Cooperative is now stocking an assortment of Compact Fluorescent Lamps, known as CFLs. We want to take this opportunity to explain why today's CFLs are worthy of your consideration.

CFLs have the following advantages over incandescent bulbs:

- ☛ they last up to 10 times longer
- ☛ they use 1/4 the energy with the same light output (lumens)
- ☛ they produce significantly less heat
- ☛ they reduce labor and associated costs for changing light bulbs

**Energy efficient, long lasting.** Incandescent (standard) light bulbs work when an electric current heats up a metal filament inside the glass bulb, causing it to glow white-hot and give off light. Amazingly, only 10% of that electricity is used to produce light; the other 90% ends up as heat. Another shortcoming of incandescent bulbs is their short life span. A standard 75-watt bulb will last just 750 hours. Today's Compact Fluorescent Lamps last from 6,000 to 10,000 hours!

**Compatible with most standard light fixtures.** CFLs require a ballast to work. A ballast is a device that alters the electric current flowing through the tube, which activates a gas inside, causing the tube to emit light. The most accepted and widely used CFL is one where the ballast is "integral" with the lamp and the combined unit screws into a standard light bulb socket. The other type of CFL is "modular." A modular CFL has a

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## "I Can't Tell You How Happy I Am That the BMRC Exists" . . . an interview with Building Materials Resource Center customer Ann Goncalves

Interview by Meg Perkins Ames

*The following interview was conducted in March 2001.*

### How did you hear about the BMRC?

Through a HomeWorks class I took in 1997 sponsored by Mayor Menino.

### What was your experience on your first visit to the BMRC?

I was thrilled on my first visit because of the enormous amount of resources I found there. The place was neatly organized and the staff greeted me at the door and basically gave me a mini-tour of the place. As I trailed along, I could picture my run-down house as a mansion without



Ann Goncalves

having to spend the thousands of dollars contractors had proposed to renovate it.

### What materials have you purchased from the BMRC?

Oh my goodness, I could go on and on with the materials I have purchased there!

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Introducing a New Feature for *Hands On*



## Don't Throw Away Your Old Kitchen Cabinets

### Donate Them!

Are the cabinets you are replacing still usable? Don't throw them away! Donate them to the **Building Materials Resource Center**, where they will be made available to income-eligible homeowners. If you have cabinets (or any other good quality building materials) to donate, call the BMRC at 617.442.8917. *(Note: The BMRC is the non-profit spin-off of the Boston Building Materials Co-op.)*

## Spring Fever!

### Garden Supplies at BBMC

Yes, we specialize in cabinets, windows, and doors. But did you know that the Boston Building Materials Co-op also carries many items for your garden? Things like:

- rain barrels for \$42.00
- 50' soaker hoses for \$11.99
- a variety of gardening tools from pruning shears to spading forks
- composters for \$23.00

*Prices given are for members. Non-member prices are slightly higher.*

## The Wait is Over!

### New French Doors

True divided light, insulated glass, vertical grain fir exterior doors (whew!) are now available with 1 1/4" wide muntin bars. These narrow dividing bars offer a look similar to traditional interior french doors. Available in short lead times.

## Don't Wait 'til the Fall

### Replacement Window Sale in June

Don't miss the BBMC's replacement window sale. During the month of June, all wood and vinyl replacement windows will be 5% off. Our window experts will be happy to help you determine size and type. Call us at 617.442.2262 to find out more.

## Window News

### Exciting Design Changes

Boston Sash and Millwork, one of our window manufacturers, has made some exciting design changes to their new and replacement windows. These include improved balance (track) systems, a number of new glazing options, and some creative solutions to the problem of combining insulated glass with divided light sashes. Come see our demonstration model.

## New at the Co-op!

**Canvas Tote Bags.** Don't miss out on our handsome new canvas tote bags, complete with the BBMC name and logo. They are great for groceries, tools, books, diapers, and more. Replace all those plastic and paper bags with our earth-friendly cloth ones and while you're at it, help spread the word about the Boston Building Materials Co-op! Two sizes: \$8.50 and \$10.50.

**Tape Measures.** We also have 25' tape measures with the BBMC's name and logo. These are available in four great colors — Teal, Red, Forest Green, and Silver. Just \$7.50.

**The bags and tape measures make great gifts, too!**

## In the Black

We are pleased to report that the Boston Building Materials Co-op ended the year 2000 in a strong financial position. Total sales in 2000 were 10% higher than 1999, with sales of kitchen and bath cabinetry up 16.5%, core building materials (windows, doors, weatherization products, etc.) up 6%, and membership income up 7%. This growth, along with prudent cost controls, has allowed the Co-op to successfully fulfill its mission and remain in the black for the 6th year in a row.

### Boston Building Materials Co-op FY 2000 Income Summary:

Total Income	\$ 728,099
Less: Cost of Goods Sold	(470,307)
Gross Profit	257,792
Less: Operating Expenses	(241,186)
Net Profit	18,005
Plus: Other Income	1,399
Net Income/Profit	\$ 18,005

## SHOP NEWS

### Thinking of Remodeling your Kitchen?

#### High Quality Cabinets at the BBMC

The Boston Building Materials Co-op sells beautiful, high quality cabinets at affordable prices. Come in and see our display or make an appointment for a design consultation.

### Display Sale!

#### BBMC Selling Display Cabinets

We are upgrading our cabinet display area — and selling our white Yorktowne display kitchen. Includes four base cabinets, five wall cabinets, and a countertop. Price new: \$3,600. Our price: \$1,800. Call for details: 617.442.2262.

## THANK YOU!

The Boston Building Materials Co-op wishes to thank the many people and companies who gave of their time and expertise in 2000. Our most sincere thanks go out to...

### Workshop Instructors

Mitch Barden  
Raymond Borsman  
Lauren Clarke-Mason  
David Foley  
Ken Griffin  
Pernell Jackson  
Ian Johnson  
Carl Johnson  
David Karas  
Linda Lesyna  
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**Nixon Peabody LLP, Counselors at Law** and in particular John Snellings and Suzanne Cartledge for providing pro bono legal work associated with refinancing the BBMC's mortgage with Wainwright Bank & Trust

**Femi Adegbesan and Kobe Abdul-Salim** for their countless hours improving our computer and database systems

*Note: The Building Materials Resource Center is grateful to the hundreds of individuals and companies who supported us in 2000 with donations of materials and/or money. A list of these will be provided in our annual report, due out in early summer.*

**New England Baptist Hospital** for printing our workshop schedules and newsletters

### Tools for Rent

Did you know that the BBMC has tools for rent? Here's a sample list:

- Cellulose Insulation Blowing Machine — \$40/day
- 40' Aluminum Extension Ladder — \$25/day
- Hot Melt Electric Glue Gun — \$5/day
- Pipe Calipers (to measure pipe sizes prior to ordering insulation) — FREE with refundable deposit
- Electric Stapler (a real time saver when weatherstripping windows) — \$10/day
- House Jacks — \$10/week/each

Is there a tool or machine that you would like to add to this list? Let us know!

### Repair Your Own Windows and Screens!

Don't forget about our free Window and Screen Repair Clinics! Every 1st and 3rd Saturday, from 9:00am to 10:00 am, our Shop Technician is available to give you individualized instruction on how to repair your windows and screens in our fully equipped shop. Also, check out our new glazing table! Once you learn how to repair your own windows and screens, you may return as often as you like to make repairs. You pay only for materials.

### Or, If You Like, We'll Fix Your Windows and Screens for You — and More

Did you know that the Co-op repairs windows and screens and cuts lumber to specified lengths (for shelves, door frames, and so on)? Call us at 617.442.2262 to find out more and/or to suggest other shop-related services you'd like to see us offer. Ask for Don.

### Do You Need Your Saw Blades, Scissors, or Pruning Shears Sharpened?

If you drop off on a Wednesday, our sharpening service will have it ready for you to pick up the following Thursday. Most hand and power tools can be sharpened.

**Call for more information, 617.442.2262.**

## Save the Dates – Both of Them!

### Free Day!

**Saturday, June 16**  
**(Rain Date:**  
**Saturday, June 30)**  
**9:00 am - 2:00 pm**

Spring-cleaning at the BMRC means free materials for you. From 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on Saturday, June 16, the BMRC's parking lot will be bursting with building materials that are free for the taking — kitchen cabinets, bathroom vanities, doors, windows, sinks, tubs, electrical fixtures, flooring, and much more.

### Women's Night at the BMRC!

**Tuesday, June 19**  
**5:30 - 7:30 pm**

The BMRC is pleased to announce its second Women's Night on Tuesday, June 19. Building-related professional women will be available to answer questions, give demonstrations, and in general be helpful to our women customers. Dinner and childcare will be provided. Stay tuned.

# BMRC News

## Another Reason to Give to the Building Materials Resource Center

Starting this year (tax year 2001), the tax law in Massachusetts has changed in a very important way. If you donate to a charity like the BMRC (materials or money), you may take a deduction on your state

income tax EVEN IF YOU DON'T ITEMIZE. If you have been using the standard deduction and thinking you would get no tax benefit from donating to charity, that is now changed. So consider a tax-deductible (on the state level) donation! *(Note: There is still no charitable deduction from FEDERAL income taxes unless you itemize. Congress is considering changing that, but hasn't yet.)*

## City of Boston Offers Grants and Low Interest Loans to Income-Eligible Boston Homeowners

• **HomeWorks** is a city-sponsored program that helps income-eligible Boston homeowners make affordable home improvements. HomeWorks offers grants for 1/3 the cost of certain home improvements, up to \$3,000, or \$4,000 if you paint the exterior of your house. Discount loans are also available. For more information or to find out if you qualify, call HomeWorks at 617.635.0600.

• **HomeWorks Plus** provides discount loans to help income-eligible Boston homeowners make exterior repairs and improvements. For more information, call HomeWorks Plus at 617.635.0565.

• **Purchase/Rehab Option** offers income-eligible participants an opportunity to purchase a "fixer-upper" home in Boston with a purchase-rehab mortgage, with grants of up to \$5,000 for repairs.

For more information about Purchase/Rehab Option, call 617.635.0369.

• **Historic HomeWorks** provides grants of up to \$7,500 to help income-eligible Boston homeowners make historically appropriate exterior repairs and improvements. The grant will cover up to 50% of the repairs/improvements. Their phone number is 617.635.0492.

## SERVICES FOR HOMEOWNERS

### Low-Cost Energy Efficient Products, Heating Oil

**Mass Energy Consumers Alliance** (formerly BOCA) is a nonprofit organization that offers vouchers to income-eligible residents for the purchase of energy efficient products like **hot water tank wraps, high efficiency lighting, weatherstripping, caulk, programmable thermostats, and more.** You may

then use these vouchers to purchase items at the **Boston Building Materials Co-op** and the **Energy Federation.** In the colder months, Mass Energy offers discount heating oil to hundreds of cash strapped families. For more information on these and other programs at Mass Energy, call them at 617.524.3950 or check out their website at [www.massenergy.com](http://www.massenergy.com).

### Save on Heat, Electric, and Water Bills!

NSTAR's **Free Home Energy Audit** will show you simple things you can do to save big on your heat, electric, and water bills. They'll even give you **free CFL light bulbs, low flow shower heads, window and door insulation kits, and more.** You may also be eligible to receive more substantial energy upgrades (a new refrigerator or heating system, fuel assistance). To learn more, call NSTAR at 1.800.592.2000.

### Having Trouble Paying Your Heating Bill?

The number to call to find out if you qualify for fuel assistance is 1.800.632.8157.

### Need Help Planning Home Renovations?

The **Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership** has launched a new consulting service for income-eligible homeowners planning to renovate their homes. Under the program, an MBHP consultant will work with homeowners before they choose a contractor to help prepare the specifications needed to solicit a bid, after a contractor is selected to negotiate a contract, and prior to construction to ensure that proper documentation (permits, etc.) is obtained. The service is available on a sliding scale fee of \$200 to \$500. For more information, call Al Williams at 617.859.0400.

### Want to Learn More About How to Care for Your Home?

Did you know that the **Building Materials Resource Center**, in collaboration with the **Boston Building Materials Co-op**, offers educational workshops and one-on-one counseling to individuals and families interested in learning more about basic and not-so-basic home maintenance and repair? For more information, call the BBMC at 617.442.2262. Ask for Don.

Also, **Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA)** has a list of agencies that provide pre and post-homeownership counseling and workshops. For a copy of the list, call CHAPA at 1.800.466.3111.

### Summertime is the Right Time . . . to Weatherize Your Home

Don't wait for the cold weather to weatherize your home! Here are a few simple projects that you can do now in preparation for the cold months. . . and to help you keep cool in the hot summer days ahead.

- ☛ Weatherstrip windows, doors, and attic accesses
- ☛ Caulk around door and window frames
- ☛ Get a tight sealing damper for your fireplace and keep it closed when the fireplace is not in use
- ☛ Check to see that windows close properly and that window locks pull sashes securely together
- ☛ Install an automatic setback thermostat and program it to run only when you are home
- ☛ Replace standard curtains with tight sealing, insulated or quilted window coverings.

separate ballast which plugs into a socket and a separate lamp that screws into that ballast. While there are some advantages to modular CFLs — their ballast lifespan is up to 50,000 hours and the lamps cost less to replace than integral units — the fact that they flicker when turned on and hum during operation are annoyances that many people would rather avoid.

**Replacing incandescent bulbs with CFLs.** How does one determine which CFL bulb will give the same or similar light output as the standard bulb that is being replaced? Buy the CFL bulb with the closest number of “lumens” (light output) as the incandescent one. For example, a 100-watt standard bulb has 1,075-1,750 lumens (depending on the brand). The best CFL bulb to replace it with is 25 watts, which has 1,750 lumens. (Look for lumen information on the box the bulb comes in; you will not find it on the bulbs themselves.) The chart below shows comparisons between CFLs and incandescent bulbs.

**Selecting the Right Sub-CFL to Replace Your Standard Incandescent Light Bulb**

Sub-CFL [Lumens <sup>1,2</sup> ]	Incandescent [Lumens <sup>1,2</sup> ]
15 Watt [900]	60 Watt [500-890 Lumens] <sup>2</sup>
18 Watt [1100]	
20 Watt [1200]	75 Watt [700-1210 Lumens]
23 Watt [1500]	
25 Watt [1750]	100 Watt [1075-1750 Lumens]

1 Depending on the type of light fixtures being retrofitted, it may be necessary to install sub-CFLs with higher light output (lumens) than the incandescent bulbs that are being replaced in order to maintain equivalent lighting levels. Experiment with different wattage lamps or consult a lighting expert for advice.

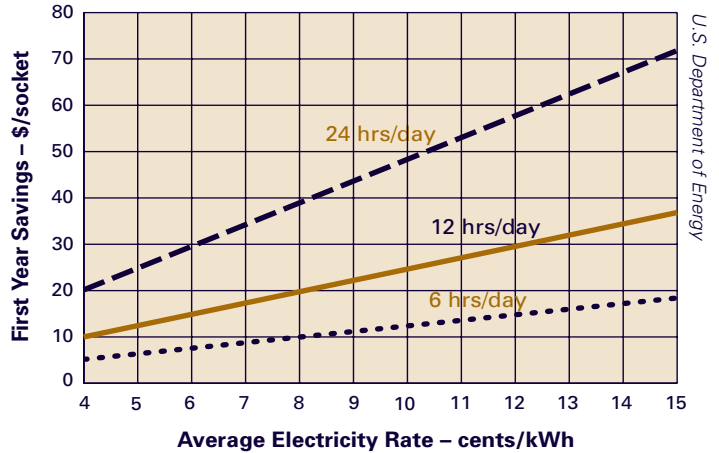
2 As reported by the light bulb manufacturers

*U.S. Department of Energy*

The BBMC now stocks compact fluorescent lamps in 15, 20, 23, and 25 watts.

**Pay more up front. Save money in the long run.** While the initial cost of a CFL is much more than a standard bulb (\$16.65 vs. \$0.43, the savings in operating costs — lower wattage (20 watts vs. 75 watts) and longer life span (10,000 hours vs. 750 hours) — makes the lifetime cost of the CFL much less.

**20W CFL Replaces 75W Incandescent**



**A single CFL for 13 ordinary light bulbs.** Let’s assume that a particular light fixture is on for six hours per day and that electricity is \$0.11/kwh (kilo watt hour). The graph above demonstrates how using a CFL will save you approximately \$13.00 in electricity costs in the first year alone!

**Inferior light output?** There is some concern that the light output from CFLs is inferior to that of standard bulbs, especially for reading. An article in the January 1999 edition of *Consumer Reports* indicated that some CFL manufacturers make claims to the contrary that do not hold up under scrutiny. The Boston Building Materials Co-op decided, after researching the different brands, to carry CFLs by Philips Electronics whose quality and light output have received consistent high marks.

**Change is. . . good.** The “look” of a CFL is different than standard bulbs. Some manufacturers are making CFLs with a plastic housing that mimics the look of incandescent bulbs, but these are more expensive and slightly larger, causing them to be less compatible with existing fixtures. Many manufactures, including Philips, are developing CFLs that can be used with virtually any fixture. ♦

*You would need roughly thirteen 75-watt incandescent bulbs to match the life expectancy of one 10,000 hour 20 watt CFL.*

I've purchased paint, sheetrock, doors, windows, door locks, water and other forms of heaters, iron spiral stairs, a toilet, sinks, faucet (actually those come free with the sinks, don't you love that?), a mirror, nails, screws, oak stairs, railings, balusters, light fixtures, appliances, wires, pipes, vents, ducts, ceramic and marble tiles, hardwood flooring, fiberglass insulation, plaster, patio chairs, and my favorite — hardwood kitchen cabinets with a granite countertop. Anytime I need something, the first place I go is to the BMRC to avoid spending more than I should elsewhere.

***What home repair/home improvement projects have you done with materials from the BMRC?***

I have set tiles, installed cabinets, sheetrock, doors, windows, flooring, and much more — all with the help of the BMRC.



***How did you find the staff?***

The people who work at the BMRC are so friendly and helpful. Even though it is a self-service warehouse, they hardly sit and leave you to do it all alone. They climb shelves to get closet doors. They help load materials. They give advice on measuring and installing certain materials. They even miss me when I don't show up for a day or two! Can you believe that?

***Were you able to get answers to your questions about how to do a particular project?***

All the time. Sometimes when they weren't sure, they would ask around and always get back to me.

***"I have set tiles, installed cabinets, sheetrock, doors, windows, flooring, and much more — all with the help of the BMRC."***

***Would you recommend the BMRC to others?***

Oh yes, thousands of times over. In fact, I brag about BMRC to people who come to my house and ask where I got this and that. They say, "Wow Annie, you must have spent a lot of money doing this!" I smile and say, "Not really." Then I tell them about BMRC.

***Anything else?***

I can't tell you how happy I am that the BMRC exists. They do a great service to the community and prevent the disposal of perfectly good items that someone else can use. I hope the government and others will support the BMRC, to keep it staffed and most importantly to help homeowners to be proud to own and maintain their dwellings at a reasonable cost. The BMRC is making our city a cleaner, more beautiful and healthy place to live and work.

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***"I've purchased paint, sheetrock, doors, windows, door locks, water and other forms of heaters, iron spiral stairs, a toilet, sinks, faucets (actually those come free with the sinks; don't you love that?), a mirror, nails, screws, oak stairs, railings, balusters, light fixtures, appliances, wires, pipes, vents, ducts, ceramic and marble tiles, hardwood flooring, fiberglass insulation, plaster, patio chairs, and my favorite — hardwood kitchen cabinets with a granite counter top."***



# handsOn

*HandsOn is the semi-annual newsletter of the Boston Building Materials Co-op and Building Materials Resource Center.*

**The Boston Building Materials Co-op** is a member-controlled building materials retailer and technical assistance provider. Founded in 1978, we specialize in cabinets, counters, windows, and doors. We offer a range of affordable homeowner support services, including in-home consults, phone and office consults, educational workshops, a Tradesperson Referral File, a lending library, and a Saturday morning window and screen repair clinic. You don't have to be a member to shop at the Co-op, though members get product discounts and other benefits.

**Contact the BBMC at:**

100 Terrace Street, Roxbury, MA 02120  
**phone** 617.442.2262 • **fax** 617.427.2491  
**email** info@bbmc.com • **web** www.bbmc.com

**The Building Materials Resource Center** is the nonprofit spin-off of the Boston Building Materials Co-op. Founded in 1993, the BMRC is a building materials re-use project. We accept donations of good quality used and surplus building materials and distribute them, for a very modest fee, to income-eligible homeowners and nonprofits. Many of the homeowner support services of the Co-op — in-home consults, phone and office consults, workshops, window shop — are available to BMRC customers for a reduced price.

**Contact the BMRC at:**

100 Terrace Street, Roxbury, MA 02120  
**phone** 617.442.8917 • **fax** 617.427.2491  
**email** info@bbmc.com  
**web** www.bostonbmrc.org

**The Building Materials Resource Center is a nonprofit building materials re-use project. Your tax deductible gift will help us divert perfectly good building materials from landfills and place them into the hands of needy homeowners and nonprofits.**

**Yes**, I would like to make a contribution to the Building Materials Resource Center. Enclosed is my tax deductible gift of:

\$200    \$150    \$100    \$75    \$50    \$35

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your check to: **Building Materials Resource Center**  
100 Terrace Street, Roxbury, MA 02120

**Thank you!**

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