Issue 58

Energy: U.S. Consumption

In the course of a year, more energy passes through the windows of buildings in the U.S. than flows through the Alaska pipeline.

The U.S. has only 4.7 percent of the world's population, but it uses annually 31 percent of the world's energy. This rate is equivalent to 59.3 barrels of oil per year per American. Does this rate of consumption carry with it any obligation (a) to the rest of the world's population or (b) to conservation of the sources of energy? What should be done, if anything? What should *you* do, if anything?

Amory B. Lovins, energy conservation advocate and author of *The Energy Controversy: Soft Path Questions and Answers,* (Brick House Pub. Co., 1978) has observed that civilization in this country, according to some, would be inconceivable if we used only half as much energy as now. But that is just what we did use in 1963 when we were at least half as civilized as we are now.

See how many forms and sources of energy you can identify that flow into and out of your home in various forms in the course of a day. Do you see any ways to reduce your net use of energy (inflow minus outflow)? Could you live comfortably with only half your present use, as Lovins mentions?

Think about this . . . *Would it save energy to extend daylight saving time throughout the year? If so, should we do so? Why do we use it now?*