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Green and Greener

Less-power or Power-less?

By Dave Rochlin and Katy Foreman

ave: Well it's mid summer.

the time of year when many

folks around Lamorinda are left

shaking their heads in disgust when

their PG&E bills arrive. If you de-

cipher PG& E's complex rate struc-

ture, it gets pretty clear that they

really want you to use less power.

That big bill isn't profiteering-- it's a

message. Building power plants

and new transmission lines is ex-

Katy: I think everyone benefits

when we consume less power - es-

pecially the expensive peak power,

which is what prompts utilities to

build more power plants, something

none of us want. Particularly coal

ones! I'd rather see us meeting the

state's clean energy requirements.

Dave: So PG&E has arranged it so

that the more wasteful Kilowatts

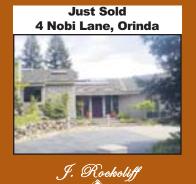
that you use are more costly....the

last 200 Kwh you use in a month

can actually cost 3 times as much as

pensive.

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1031 Exchanges...

the first 200. This means that many

of us can cut our electrical bill in

half, just by cutting our power

usage by 25%. It's almost like get-

ting free car payments or free cell

phone service, just for being aware

of your energy use. Cell phone

service...now there's profiteering.

Katv: Well according to Nielsen,

the average teen sends 80 text mes-

sages a day...so that's another bill

Katy: Anyway, don't forget that re-

ducing power use also helps the

Dave: Of course! But whatever the

motivation, we need to cut down on

Katy: Pools can be a killer on the

power usage. A typical home pool

uses about as much energy as it

takes to power a home for three

months (without a pool!). So it's

important to look at how often you

you can take control of.

Dave: Not likely.

run the filter, use timers so they run

off-peak, keep filters clean, and

consider a solar solution for heating

the water. Solar water heaters for

pools can pay for themselves in five

Dave: As a former pool owner, I

couldn't believe how much my bill

went down by running the sweep

less. Air conditioners can also push

you into the higher rate tiers. Keep-

ing the ducts and filter clean, using

a programmable thermostat, and

only cooling the house when you're

home can help. Where we live,

opening windows at night and clos-

ing them during the day can make a

big difference as well. Finally, re-

placing incandescent light bulbs

with CFLs saves on both lighting

AND cooling bills, since most of

the energy used by incandescent

... continued on page 14

bulbs produces heat, not light.

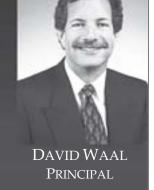
years or less.

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