



## Millennium bug doesn't bite



The dawn of the year 2000 came and went without any Y2K-related power outages or inconveniences for our customers.

MECO employees worked long and hard to make sure all systems were Y2K ready and the transition went off without a hitch. Meeting the Y2K challenge was a team effort and thanks go to our suppliers and commercial customers for their Y2K readiness actions as well.

Our efforts will pay dividends long beyond New Year's Eve. The extensive Y2K work resulted in more efficient computer systems and strengthened communications and emergency preparedness procedures, helping us to continue improving service to you, our customers.



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## What about leap year problems?

Some customers have asked about potential computer problems because the year 2000 is a leap year. Why the concern? The years 1700, 1800 and 1900 were not leap years and there's a slight possibility some computer programs may not recognize the extra day for the year 2000.

At MECO, we'll be monitoring the issue, but do not anticipate any interruption in electric service due to the leap year.

Year 2000 Readiness Disclosure

## POWER TIPS

### Some charcoal grills aren't so bad, after all

A few months ago, *Consumer Lines* ran an article, "The Electric Backyard," which extolled the environmental virtues of using electric appliances and tools. We noted that electric grills can use 91% less energy than charcoal grills. A customer emailed this reminder: While electric grills are more energy-efficient than grills using conventional coal briquettes, they're not as environmentally friendly as using charcoal made from keawe or other biomass. In those cases, the trees grown to produce the keawe absorb the carbon dioxide generated from burning the charcoal. Bottom line: Using keawe or other biomass charcoal results in no additional carbon dioxide in the environment.

### Today's refrigerators are better, but...

perhaps not as energy efficient as we indicated in our January issue of *Consumer Lines*. In the article, "We've come a long way, baby," we printed information from the Edison Electric Institute stating that "Refrigerators made today consume 80 to 90 percent less electricity than those built in the late 70s." Subsequent checking reveals that newer refrigerators may use closer to 50% less electricity than their older counterparts — still much better for your electric bill!



## Finicky electronics: What's the cause?

- You're watching TV and want to change the channel. You reach for your remote, push a button and...nothing happens.
- You turn on your radio and hear a fine static hum or crackling sounds. Adjusting the tuner does no good.
- You're in a plane ready to taxi onto the runway. The flight attendant reminds you, "Please turn off computers, video games and cell phones during takeoff."

What do all of these situations have in common? The answer could be Infrared Frequency or Radio Frequency Interference. These problems are often mistakenly assumed to be related to problems with quality of power in your home or supplied by MECO. Sometimes nature or electric equipment gives off electromagnetic energy that can interfere with the operation of other electric equipment. The most common form of this interference is lightning, but other household sources include microwave ovens, air purifiers, hair dryers, video games, computers, cell phones, electronic fluorescent lighting, compact fluorescent lights, and electronic light dimmers. When these items are operating near sensitive electronic equipment, they may cause interference.

What can you do? There are no easy answers, but as a precaution, consider checking for a notation on the equipment when you buy it. Often electrical equipment will include a note (next to the model number) that states the unit complies with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules and indicates, "Device may not cause harmful interference."

Also consider the sensitivity of equipment you buy. Equipment with a low susceptibility to infrared or radio frequency interference may carry a notation, "This device must accept any interference received, including interference that may cause undesired operation."

Another simple solution may be to relocate the equipment causing the interference. For a complete discussion of remedies, consult with the FCC web site for the "Interference Handbook" [www.fcc.gov/cib/Publications/tvibook.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cib/Publications/tvibook.html).

Remember, the next time your TV remote doesn't work, first check the batteries. If that's not the problem, it could be due to interference from nearby electronic equipment.

## Get ready for... The Electron Marathon



It's bigger and better than ever! Pitting student-built electric go-carts in an exciting competition of endurance and speed, the **Fifth Annual Electron Marathon** in Honolulu features vehicles from 27 public and private high schools around the state, including Maui, Hana, Lanai and Molokai High Schools.

Don't miss the action:

**When: Saturday, March 25, 10 a.m.**  
**Where: Ford Island (behind the gymnasium)**

Public is welcome!

MECO sponsors the annual event, along with our affiliated companies, Hawaiian Electric and Hawaii Electric Light Company, in partnership with the State Department of Education and the U.S. Navy. Young Brothers also provides assistance. Students work for months on the design, engineering and construction of their cars, learning about electric vehicle technology but also on documentation and an oral presentation.



### RECIPE OF THE MONTH

## Swiss steak in foil

- 2 lb round steak, 1-inch thick
- 1 cup reduced-sodium catsup
- 1/4 cup flour
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 large Maui onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 tablespoon vinegar

Trim fat from steak. Place a large sheet of heavy foil in a baking pan. Combine catsup and flour; put half of the mixture in center of the foil. Place steak on catsup mixture; season steak with salt and pepper. Top with onion and remaining catsup mixture; sprinkle with vinegar. Fold edges of foil to tightly seal the meat in the foil. Bake at 450°F for 1-1/2 hours, or until meat is tender. Makes 8 servings.

