



Finished in 2005, this 2300 sq. ft. Fruita home was built by Serra Construction, using passive solar, a row of large south-facing windows that heat the central living room/kitchen area. The house also hosts a high-efficiency Munchkin boiler, made in Germany. It's unique because the tall "side arm" on the left of the boiler supplies hot and cold water for the house, replacing the need for a separate water heater.



## Going Solar: the Greening of a Grand Valley Home

Dr. Steve Meyers always liked much about his 25-year-old home, with its big overhanging roof that shades a yard he and his wife Lisa had landscaped, in a good neighborhood to the north of Grand Junction, not far from work.

But the house's dated windows and heating and cooling weren't efficient. It was also "fragmented into small spaces that were acoustically challenging," Meyers says. "We wanted help with the noise factor and a better flow with a family of five."

A self-confessed "pragmatist," he found the price tag of geothermal "phenomenal," and photovoltaic energy, under Xcel, too uncertain. But he remembered the mothballed solar panels at his mother's home, which were in good condition, and decided to take them to the Atlasta Solar Store in G.J. for credit. "That got me thinking and looking," he explains.

Working with architect Stephen Boelter and Serra Construction, the Meyers will have a very different house by spring.

The roofline and structure will remain. On the house's west end, the front and back of what was once the garage are being extended into an addition housing a new garage and a large, light-filled kitchen with a curved wall of windows facing into the back yard. Adjacent to it, the former kitchen, now converted into a dining room, will open into what was a closed-off living

room. More walls torn down throughout the house will change traffic patterns and open up space. More interior walls will curve, and on the east end, a deck will flow out from a rebuilt master bedroom.

New solar panels, plus a high-efficiency Munchkin boiler, will drive the hot water for the house and the radiant baseboard heat.

Almost all the windows in the house will be replaced with Marvin Integrity low-e II windows, the cedar siding by Hardiplank, and the house tightly sealed with a strong building envelope to keep in both warm and cool air.

The Meyers house will also sound different.

"The cellulose insulation is fabulous and I'm kind of surprised another contractor didn't offer it," says Meyers. "It's really good. A it's recyclable,; and B, it has better insulation, both thermal and acoustic."

The Meyers are still deciding on renewable flooring, considering Swedish and Asian wood products.

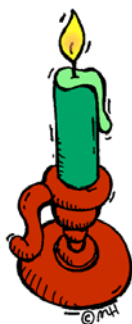
"Economically, in the short run, it seems pretty wild," he muses. "In the long run, I think it will be fine."

Look in a future newsletter for news of the completed renovation.

**Green Building Talk at Rotary Club:** Gary Poush will speak on green building at the 7:30 a.m. breakfast meeting of the Horizon Sunrise Rotary Club on Thursday, Dec. 15.

## *Holiday Recipe Dunk Molasses Cookies*

14 tablespoons butter, melted  
2 cups sugar, divided  
1/3 cup molasses  
1 large egg, lightly beaten  
1 1/4 teaspoons ground ginger  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
3/4 teaspoon baking soda  
1/4 teaspoon salt



**THESE COOKIES REALLY STAY SOFT!!!**

Preheat oven to 350°. In a medium-size bowl, mix the melted butter, 1 cup of the sugar, and the molasses. Beat in egg. In a separate bowl, mix the flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, and salt. Gradually, add to the butter mixture, stirring until a soft dough is formed. Shape the dough into 1-inch balls, then roll each ball in the remaining sugar. Bake on an ungreased baking sheet for 10 minutes. Makes about 5 dozen cookies.

## *Did You Know...*

Thanks to Amendment 37, Colorado's renewable energy initiative, homeowners and businesses can receive rebates and tax credits for both installation and use of solar energy, starting 1/1/06. Amounts vary depending on the type of solar system and residential or commercial status. Individuals can take a 30% credit up to \$2,000 for photovoltaic systems, for example, with a simultaneous \$2,000 credit for solar water heating. Businesses, which could formerly take a 10% credit, can also qualify for a 30% credit through 12/31/07. Credit for homeowners may be carried over to future years.

*For more information, see [www.coseia.org](http://www.coseia.org), the site for Colorado Solar Energy Industries Association (CoSEIA)*

*Another helpful resource on solar systems:*

*[www.sunelectricsystems.com/why-solar/rebate.htm](http://www.sunelectricsystems.com/why-solar/rebate.htm)*

*Also, Denver will host a forthcoming Solar 2006*

*conference: "Energy Key to Climate Recovery." See*

*[www.solar2006.org](http://www.solar2006.org)*

"It is impossible to get away from (the energy question). It is impossible to overemphasize its centrality. It might be said that energy is for the mechanical world what consciousness is for the human world. If energy fails, everything fails."

E.F. Schumacher, [Small Is Beautiful; Economics as if People Mattered](#)



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