

2020 Report from Maine

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 02 January 2021 12:09 - Last Updated Saturday, 02 January 2021 20:18

2020 was unfortunately a year to remember! What with the Covid-19 virus which spread worldwide from Wuhan, China, to the economic and personal disruption the pandemic created...yes, it is best to move on to 2021.



Our solar house was challenged in several ways this year. We're still operating with a 10% reduction in electrical output due to two panels that have given up the ghost. Still, the roof-mounted PV panels are still making a significant contribution to our electrical needs with 3,916 kWhrs of free power in 2020 (the system paid for itself a decade ago). The designer of our home/solar roof will be upgrading our active solar elements this year - more on that soon.

The biggest challenge this year was to determine why our radiant floor heat was misbehaving. The tubing that carries the solar-heated water from our basement storage tanks was taking on air, thus bringing the circulation to a halt. Was there a leak in the tubing embedded in the concrete subfloor? Workmen from the company that built our home some 26 years ago took on the challenge. I noted some stain spots on the oak flooring that might indicate the location of the leak.

So it was necessary to rip the flooring up and chip through the concrete to expose the tubing to find the leak. Alas, there was no leak in the floor. One of the workmen discovered stained ceiling tiles in the basement and the source was discovered to be a first floor manifold that distributes heat to several sections of the house. All that was needed was to tighten the retaining clip on one of the connections and it was fixed, some \$6,000 later! Twenty-six years and still the house outperforms any conventional structure.