

RE People

Who: Bill & Debbi Lord

Where: Cape Porpoise, Maine

When: 1995 to present

What: Solar-electric & solar hot water systems

Why: Social & environmental responsibility

Over the years, Bill Lord has turned up in *Home Power's* pages several times. In 1997, we first covered his crusade for sensible net metering in Maine. Two years later, Bill and his wife Debbi's home graced the cover of *HP70*.

According to Bill, the *Home Power* cover story put their home "on the publicity map." Since then, the Lords have had numerous articles written about their "Maine Solar House," and television coverage has included spots on HGTV, The History Channel, and, most recently, *Nova*.

With 31 years at ABC News as an executive producer of *Nightline* and *World News Tonight*, Bill is no stranger to the powerful influence of mass media. Now a journalism professor at Boston University, he merges his professional expertise with his environmental convictions, providing information about renewable energy through a personal Web site (www.solarhouse.com). Here, visitors can learn about the home's solar energy systems, listen to Bill's solar podcasts, and even participate in an online solar forum.

"When we constructed our home, the issue of treading lightly on the environment was uppermost in our minds," says Bill, "though my wife suspected that the gizmos in the basement—inverters, pumps, and controllers—had a certain attraction to my male mind."

Despite its high-tech bent, the Lords' very normal-looking, contemporary-styled saltbox home has all the amenities and conveniences of a typical American home. "We basically live like everybody else," Debbi says, "but the sun is providing our energy."

Solar thermal collectors, which provide water and space heating, cover half of the Lords' south-facing roof. The other half harvests the sun's free energy for electricity: The 4,200-watt PV array generates approximately 4 megawatt-hours annually, completely meeting the home's electrical needs. Bill says that their utility bill—a \$7.47 monthly connection fee for being hooked up to the grid—is "a pleasure to pay."

Even during Maine's legendary winters, the home shines. Passive solar design and the solar thermal system keep the home warm. Bill reports that



Debbi & Bill Lord, solar pioneers.



"interior temperatures rise above 75°F if a window isn't kept open. Our feet are greeted in the morning by the welcoming warmth of our radiant floor."

"There is a free lunch and dinner with solar energy, as long as you can afford the breakfast," says Bill. The up-front costs are "not to be scoffed at, but they are an investment in a lifestyle that is personally rewarding, financially beneficial in the long run, and socially necessary. Do join the solar generation. It is worth the effort."

—Ian Woofenden

