



Natural Gas,  
Old Buildings,  
Assumptions  
And No Good Deed  
Goes Unpunished

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# ENGINEER'S NOTEBOOK

COLUMN

BY MICHAEL GALLAGHER, P.E.,  
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Michael Gallagher

I had a mechanical experience recently that epitomized the expression, “no good deed goes unpunished.” Interlaced were some assumptions, some inevitabilities and the need to keep smiling. The process was a journey, not a destination, and I learned several things that were not immediately obvious.

It was late in the first week of December when I got a call from my church’s office. “There is a gas smell in the church basement. What should we do?” Since no one there would have a clue as to how to turn off the gas at the meter, I told them to call the gas company, and I also dispatched a service technician. To make a long story short, there seemed to be a small leak in the furnace room.

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