

# HOUSE WARMERS

## GOODBYE WINTER...WELCOME SPRING!!

I can't remember when we had a winter quite like this one. I hope that you did not suffer from too much damage from the storms. Personally, my family was pretty lucky. We only had some tree damage on our property (although my daughter did not think we were so lucky when she could not get her car out of the driveway to return to school in Boston). Yes, luck played a part in our minimal storm damage; but we had several preventative measures in place that really helped to alleviate problems that could have occurred.



Many of you think of us as only a heating oil company. That is how we began when my grandfather Morris Levi, started the company back in 1936. Through the years we have grown and diversified to offer our customers many more services.

Years ago we might have looked at "gas heat" as a dirty word. Although we are still avid proponents of oil heat, we realize that people have various reasons to choose the type of heating that they prefer. To accommodate ALL of our customers' needs, several years ago, we went into the plumbing business: installing, selling and repairing gas heating systems as well as being a full service plumbing company. Oil heat, gas heat, central air conditioning, general plumbing issues- we're here for you.

Back to the storm and the Levi house- We had taken precautions that

we can offer to you, our customers.

On our block in Lawrence, power lines are above ground. Often the slightest wind can leave us without electricity. In this storm, one huge tree brought down all the power lines on our block. This problem required both tree removal crews and power line crews from LIPA to restore power. Although our neighbors were without power for over a week, we were not.

A few years back, we installed a generator in our home. When the power goes out, our generator automatically kicks in and we get power from that source. Generators come in all sizes. The size determines how many rooms and appliances will get powered up in case of an outage. In our house we have only the bedrooms, major appliances and a few outlets on our generator. Hence, after the last storm, while our neighbors gathered in the street to dis-

cuss when LIPA would come and they would get power back, one neighbor asked, "Why do the Levis have their lights on?" Once they learned about our generator.... well we have some generator installations scheduled for our neighbors in the near future. We at OSI/CSI would be pleased to guide you in choosing and installing a generator.

Now, another problem caused by the storms. We are susceptible to flooding because of our property's location and the water table level near our home. Several years ago, we

had a sump pump installed and have never had water in our basement since. After this storm, we heard so many complaints about flooded basements. We at OSI/CSI can install a sump pump for you if you too would like to have a dry basement in all weather. (See Jerry's article)

As you can see, we have come a long way from my grandfather Morris Levi's day when we just sold heating oil. We are a full service heating, plumbing and air conditioning company. We are also now involved in solar heating. If you have any questions about anything I have discussed- or any other heating, plumbing or air conditioning questions, please don't hesitate to call us. We are here to serve you and we will never take your business for granted.

*Marty*



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# GENERATORS & THE NEW AIR CONDITIONERS



It was a dark and stormy night, I mean really dark. The lights were out everywhere; everywhere, that is, except at the Levi's house. Why in the middle of this terrible storm would they be running what sounded like a lawn mower?? Well the reason they were not in the dark was because that lawn mower was really an automatic generator they installed a few years ago when they lost power and ended up throwing out two freezers full of food. This last storm was a wake-up call for a lot of us to just how vulnerable we are to the forces of nature. It looked like a war zone in the Five Towns. Some homes were without power for over a week. We received many calls about getting generators installed but, as often happens, after everything returns to normal no one is anxious to spend the money. This is understandable. (The cost is based on the size of the unit, it is not inexpensive however for some, the peace of mind outweighs the cost) If you are interested in having a generator installed, call us to set an appointment for a free estimate.

Speaking of returning to normal, as far as air conditioning is concerned, this year is going to be anything but normal. As of December 31, 2009, air conditioning manufacturers are no

longer allowed (by law) to produce the old style Freon systems. What does this mean to you? If you have a system that uses the old Freon and have to change the outside condenser, your only option is to install one from a rapidly dwindling stock that suppliers have on hand. After the stock is gone you will have to replace both the inside air handler and the outside condenser which is quite a bit more expensive. There are two schools of thought on this:

1. ***If the old Freon system is being phased out and I need to replace the condenser why would I not change to the new style?***
  - a. The inside air handler is not that old and with a new outside condenser you should get many years of trouble-free service.
  - b. You plan on moving in a few years and just want to keep the existing system running.
  - c. You don't want to spend a lot of money right now.
2. ***Here is why you might want to change to the new style:***
  - a. You just want to change everything out and not worry in the future about dealing with old Freon not being available.
  - b. By changing the entire system, we can address any issues you might be having with your existing system (whether it be uneven cooling or zoning your home differently).
  - c. New systems are more efficient and may be eligible for certain rebates and tax credits.

Either way, you can always call us to give you an honest answer to any questions you might have about your air conditioning needs.

If you are lucky enough to have a system that is working fine we recommend you still have a 15-point check on it to ensure a comfortable summer. We check to make sure all of the drains are clear, the Freon levels are right, the filters are clean and we see if there are any hidden issues that should be addressed before they become problems.

Have a good summer and give me a call if you have any questions.

*Mickey*

## DO YOU OWN A SUMP PUMP? *(I bet you wish you did this winter!)*

Boy did it rain! This winter people who had never experienced flooding in their homes found themselves up to their knees in water after some of the storms we had. What a mess! Between the heavy snows and torrential rains, the ground became saturated with water. Any opening, a crack or crevice, creates an opportunity for the ground water to enter our homes. It wasn't long before our phones started ringing off the hook. Our customers needed us to help them pump the water out and they were asking us for preventative solutions for the future.

Our service technicians went right to work. We keep several pump and hose kits ready for just such an emergency. It took about four days for the water in many of your homes to begin to subside. Those of you who had working sump pumps did not have this problem.

Now our customers would like to know what they can do to prevent future flooding from severe storms. The sump pump is

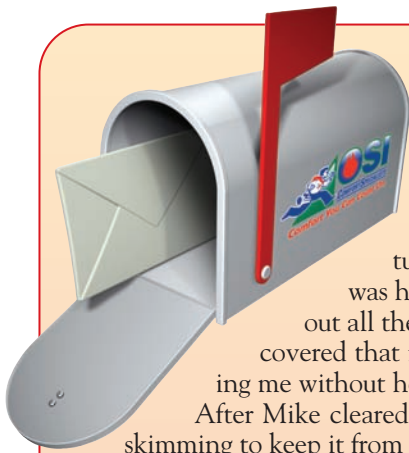
usually the first line of defense. Installed properly, they work well. Sizing is important and the discharge of water is critical. As water is being removed, it must be channeled away from the home, preferably down a walkway or driveway. The water must be discharged far from the house or it will come back in.

If you are interested in having a sump pump installed, please call us. Some models even come with a battery backup allowing them to run for up to seven days with no electricity.

If you already own a sump pump, please be aware that it should be checked periodically. Like any other appliance in your home it must be checked to be sure it is always at peak performance. We at Comfort Specialists can check your existing sump pump, as well as install a new one if that is necessary.

So whether you would like us to install a new sump pump for you or check your existing one, we at Comfort Specialists are here to help you. Please remember that we at Comfort Specialists are a full service plumbing company. We will never take your business for granted.

Sincerely,  
Jerry Viola, Master Plumber



## Keep Sending Us Your Letters!

*Dear Sirs,*

The other day your repairman, Mike Caulfield, came to my home in Far Rockaway to tune up my boiler. I was very impressed and pleased with his work. For I observed that not only was he very thorough and meticulous in removing the flue pipe, top and side of my boiler to clean out all the soot, but after replacing the flue filter and cleaning the nozzle and igniter his check out discovered that my low water cut off was not working. This could have been dangerous in addition to leaving me without heat this winter.

After Mike cleared the sediment from the cut out switch to get it working, he called the office to schedule a skimming to keep it from happening again. The next day he returned, skimmed the boiler and cleaned out the cut out switch again.

Now the water drains clean and the low water cut off works every time. So I am sure that I will have no more problems this winter. In addition Mike explained to me how to operate the system to get the best efficiency from it.

Mike is a real professional and I hope you can send him next year when my boiler needs a tune up again. You should be very proud to have an employee such as him.

*Thank you,  
Eugene B. Michaelsen*

*Dear OSI,*

Thank you so much for sending Patrick to my home the other day. He was just fabulous and showed me the problem and explained it all to me. What a wonderful guy.

He explained the function of the Relay Switch and assured me that all should be fine. My heat is back to normal and I'm grateful to you for it and for sending Patrick to the rescue.

I'm sorry I had to bother you all again but even my kitchen area is warm again.

*Yours truly,  
Bernadette Liegey*

## NEW YORK STATE GRANTED MONEY

Throughout the past year, our green energy company, New Comfort Systems has been offering the Home Performance program through ENERGY STAR. The program offers fantastic rebates and granted money incentives to our Brooklyn and Queens customers. Unfortunately, the response to this program has been marginal at best. I believe the reason why we have not reached the level of success we had hoped for is due to the fact that our customers are simply un-aware of how this program can assist them. To find out if this program can work for you, all you have to do is call New Comfort Systems to schedule an appointment. We would be happy to come to your home to provide a full house assessment at a very affordable and partially refundable fee if work is to be done. During the course of our assessment we will make recommendations for energy improvements, provide cost estimates for those improvements and connect you with the most reliable installers for each improvement. In addition to receiving comprehensive energy efficient equipment & services, when you use a participating

contractor in the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program, there are a number of attractive financing options & incentives to help budget the total cost of your selected upgrades.

**Here are the 4 current options we offer at NCS:**

**Option One** is ENERGY STAR Financing through a low-interest loan, provided by the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program. We can supply you with the current interest rate during the time of assessment. This is an unsecured loan, not a second mortgage or equity loan. The limit on the loan is \$15,000 or \$20,000, depending on your credit score. You can select a term of 3, 5, 7 or 10 years. Financing is available to owner-occupied 1- or 2-family homes.

**Option Two** is the New York Energy SmartSM Residential Loan Fund. This is an Energy Smart Loan which is offered through a network of Participating Residential Loan Fund Lenders servicing New York State. Loans up to \$20,000 (\$30,000 in the Consolidated Edison service territory) may be obtained on a secured

or unsecured basis, at the option of the Lender and the Borrower. Your interest rate is bought down by up to 4.0% or 400 basis points, reduced as low as 3.0%, for a term up to ten (10) years.

**Option Three** is the Homeowner Financing Incentive. If you choose not to select, either ENERGY STAR Financing or the New York Energy SmartSM Residential Loan Fund, you may be eligible to receive 10% of the cost of eligible energy efficiency improvements, up to a maximum incentive of \$3,000, directly from the program.

**Option Four** are the Additional incentives that are available to income-qualified homeowners through Assisted Home Performance with ENERGY STAR. These incentives provide an additional subsidy to assist income-qualified customers when budgeting for cost-effective energy efficient improvements.

If you have any questions please feel free to check New York State Energy website <http://www.getenergysmart.org> or call the office and ask for Michael Levi (516) 763-1400.

*Yours truly,  
Michael Levi  
Comfort Engineer*



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## VISIT US ON OUR NEW WEBSITE

In any family owned business, as the new generations enter, new and exciting ideas emerge with progress for the future. It's not that our old methods aren't relevant or no longer work; it's just that the emergence of today's new and ever evolving technology has vastly improved the way we can reach you. We still believe that personal interaction is what makes us different and separates us from those big corporate organizations. Everyone's lives are so busy, and schedules are packed so tight that the ease of the internet makes company websites so attractive and convenient. This is why we have added many new features to our OSI/Comfort Specialists website,



[www.osicomfort.com](http://www.osicomfort.com). Over the course of just a few short months, our website has materialized into a cornucopia of helpful information. You will find everything from monthly specials and online dis-

counts to an option that allows you to schedule your next oil delivery with the simple click of the mouse. Our newest feature is our Direct Bill Pay via checking account or your debit/credit card. We now offer you the ability to link your preferred payment option to your OSI/CSI account through our friendly website. The easy set-up and smooth worry free transactions make for one less thing to worry about in your busy lives. Please visit our website for further details and do not hesitate to call with any questions you may have. Our website will continuously be updated with new promotions, helpful hints, and news from our staff. Our customers are what count and we really hope you begin to take advantage of all the great features that can be found at [www.osicomfort.com](http://www.osicomfort.com).

### **ATTENTION CUSTOMERS! Do you have a very talented young artist in your family? Are you artistic? Are you an amateur photographer? ENTER OUR CONTEST**

As you know, HOUSEWARMERS is published three times yearly. Once we finish writing our articles, we look for a picture for our cover story. We decided to have you help us. Send us your seasonal pictures. Each issue we will choose one of your pictures to be on the cover of HOUSEWARMERS. You will be recognized under the picture and you will receive a \$25 gift certificate for OSI/CSI. Send in your pictures and maybe you or your little budding artist will be on our cover!!