

HOUSE WARMERS

NEW YEAR THOUGHTS AND HOPES

Although we are all concerned about today's economy, happily my report to you on energy prices today is much more positive than it has been in the past few issues of Housewarmers.

Months ago, newspaper headlines claimed that this winter many people would have to choose between feeding their families or heating their homes because of the high price of energy sources, especially home heating oil. I knew that I would have to act quickly and effectively to protect my customers. I put reserves on heating oil, as early as this past Spring to be sure that I had enough oil for my customers this winter. The oil at that price was how I computed the GAP ceiling price.

Happily I can report to you that the price of oil has come down dramatically. Now I can purchase oil at a lower price and charge you a lower price. Today's oil price is much lower than the GAP ceiling price (and it is even lower than last year's GAP price as well). I am sure that you have noticed the lower prices per gallon of your recent deliveries. We have even adjusted many of your balanced billing payments to reflect the lower price of oil today. We are receiving many calls from our customers thanking us for our commitment and their lower prices!

I am sure that you have read in the newspapers about all of the angry people who committed to a FIXED price (at other companies). Their cost remains at that high price that they signed for. They must pay an exorbitant fee to get out of their contract or continue paying that high fixed price per gallon.

A few weeks ago I received a most appreciated (and heartwarming) telephone call from a customer who spends his winters in Florida. Over 50 years ago when this customer purchased his home, my Dad came over to sign him up and Dad



bled his radiators on the spot. Now, fifty years later, I had personally written a note to him, in Florida, that I was concerned because his home took such a small delivery. I knew that he was in Florida, but the delivery was still not right. Sure enough, his burner had shut off and there was no heat in his home. We sent a technician to meet his son at the house and the problem was solved. He commented that our personal service has not changed in 50 years and how proud he knew that Irving would have been to see the company that he worked so hard to build and the sons who he raised to follow in his footsteps.

This has been such a difficult year economically. Many times I wondered if it would even be possible to continue the GAP program. Many customers thankfully never knew that retail oil prices last Spring exceeded \$5 per gallon. Our GAP club saved our customers from those terrible price spikes.

We continue to recommend updating your heating equipment and we offer many suggestions to lower your fuel consumption. Please feel free to call us with any questions.

In this past turbulent year, my brother Richie and I learned a great lesson from our dad, Irving's teachings. Irving always said, "Never look short term; even when things look darkest stay focused and they will improve." Indeed we were lucky to have such a fine teacher, and a wonderful Dad.

We are thankful for your patronage and continued support. We wish you, our dear customers and our wonderful staff, a New Year filled with good health, happiness, and warm toes!

Marty



OIL SERVICES, INC.

516-763-1400
718-634-8447
www.osi-ny.com

Comfort Specialists

516-764-2300



PLUMBING • HEATING • AIR CONDITIONING

GREEN CORNER

With the economy on rocky ground and the future unclear, we as consumers are looking for any chance to save money. One of the largest costs facing homeowners is keeping our homes warm in the winter and cool in the summer. According to the U.S. Department of Energy heating and cooling makes up 56% of the total energy consumption in homes, the rest is lighting, cooking, entertainment and clothes cleaning. Across America, 39% of residential air conditioning and 60% of residential heating equipment is over 10 years old. Despite the fact that heating and cooling equipment is 30-50% more efficient than it was 10 years ago many homeowners cannot afford to upgrade their systems.

In response to this problem ACCA, a contractor organization we belong to, has asked the new administration to make this a priority issue. Some of the proposals they have suggested expand tax incentives for installing highly efficient HVAC systems. A \$500 tax credit creat-

ed under The Energy Policy Act of 2005 helped offset the costs for homeowners who invested in highly efficient furnaces, air conditioners, heat pumps, hot water heaters, and other appliances in 2006 and 2007. The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 extended those tax credits for 2009. The administration can help the success of these tax credits by promoting them throughout the year, but also by supporting their extension and expansion to \$1000 per household. You can go to www.energystar.gov scroll down to bottom of page and click onto "Tax Credits Under the Energy Bill". Promoting routine maintenance under the energy policy act of 2005, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Small Business Administration were directed to carry out two comprehensive national programs to inform

consumers and small businesses about the practical, cost-effective benefits from simply maintaining and repairing heating and cooling ducts and equipment. However, no money has ever been requested by the Bush Administration or appropriated by Congress for these programs. A federal endorsement of these programs would help elevate public awareness of proper maintenance.



In this economy any help would be good. We have also found an interesting web site hes.lbl.gov/. This site has you fill in the particulars of your home and lets you know how much money you can save

with different upgrades. It has a place to put in your address but it is not mandatory; it will give you the info anyway. Try it, we found it to be quite informative and fun. And, as always, if you have any questions about how to save energy or new technologies feel free to call us any time.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THESE TOUGH TIMES

It was a dark and stormy night; suddenly a scream rang out, "**Have you seen the heating bill???**" Fortunately it was a recent bill that reflected the lower energy costs and it was a cry of relief. A nice break from the high prices of late. That being said will we learn from this latest price hike? Will efficiency become an effect of falling prices? Remember the 70's when alternative energy sources were abandoned as when the oil crisis ended? Well some local governments do, and are not taking chances. I read recently that some townships are requiring all new construction be energy-star rated. This is a program the government has that sets energy standards on products used in homes. They will not give a new home a certificate of occupancy unless the home is certified by a rater; this is someone the homeowner has to



hire to ensure that the home meets a certain score. The bigger the square footage, the higher the score it has to meet. Imagine, you have to pay someone to force you to be more efficient. At least the energy saving they require are rational, things like set-back thermostats, insulation, double pane windows, high efficiency heating and cooling systems and even building materials on the outside of the house that require less upkeep, thus saving money in the future.

One of the not very rational ways people tried to save on energy costs was to convert to a natural gas boiler for home heating. The average cost to do this is between five and seven thousand dollars. For this expense the homeowner received new equipment that may not be much more efficient than the unit they replaced. And now that the price of oil has returned to reality, the time it

takes to recoup the cost of the conversion may be 10 to 15 years. A less expensive way to have the same outcome is to install a conversion gas burner in the existing boiler. A conversion burner looks like an oil burner but uses gas. The upside to this is if you want to change back to oil it is a simple job. With the gas conversion boiler, which is the whole heating unit, you can only use gas. A lot of people were told incorrectly that only a new boiler could be used for natural gas. I know, we received many calls asking about it. Now to be honest with you we do gas conversions at Comfort Specialists but we never use scare tactics and we always give all the options. If you are interested in a conversion, we will be happy to give you a price quote and do the job. When our customers do the job it is with a clear understanding of all the options, with their questions answered. So if you have any questions please feel free to call us. We will always give you a straight answer.

Mickey



We Love Hearing from You!

Dear Mr. Levi,

We would like to applaud Scott, as the service man of the year! He came out on a snowy freezing day, and was so nice, pleasant and most of all efficient and knowledgeable. He left the house immaculate (not a spot of snow). We're all lucky to have him. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

*Sincerely,
Dr. & Mrs. Charles Citron*

Just a note to tell you....

On Tuesday afternoon, I called Oil Services because I didn't have heat or hot water. Well, Greg was here almost before I hung up the phone. He was extremely courteous, analyzed the problem and got it fixed. Even though I could have waited until the next day, that didn't matter, you treated me as if I was your most important customer and took care of the problem. Just another example of your caring, quality and efficiency. I've been with Weyant for 40 years and my father for at least 30 before that and my Uncle Dan Vario also for many years.

The fact that families stay with you certainly says a lot for your company and is a tribute to you.

*Thank you
Johanna Richichi*

Dear Mr. Levi:

I just want to let you know what a marvelous job your Company does. For some time I had been having intermittent starting (only) of my furnace and we kind of minimized it during the annual Service. It usually lasted only a few weeks and then went back to its intermittent "coughing." It was really nothing to worry about and probably was caused by "dirt" in the underground 550 gallon tank. During my last Service, the person who performed it suggested that I speak to Tom Danza who might suggest a "quick fix." Tom came and assessed the situation to be sludge in the 50 plus year old tank. He suggested replacing it. I too had been thinking about this because I worried that the tank would spring a leak. We'd be in real trouble then.

In any case, we agreed to abandoning the old tank and replacing it with one standing in the basement. Your people came and did the job PROFESSIONALLY.

The furnace never worked so well in the 30 plus years that we owned the house and OSI started servicing it. Congratulations and many thanks to Tom and all the men that worked on this Project.

*Cordially,
Fred & Gloria Strauss*

Dear OSI?

Thank you so much for your honesty and integrity by lowering our monthly budget payments...In all of the past 27 years that we have been your customers, you have never let us down. Happy Holidays to all!

Mr. Robert Paiva

Dear Jerry and Marty,

I have just put in a new oil burner after being a customer for a lifetime. Your staff is to be praised.

I would especially like to speak of Shlomo who is very extraordinary. He is a pleasure to have in my home and was a very big comfort to me during this messy job. Shlomo is a most wonderful person and a tremendous asset to your organization. I truly appreciate your sending me such capable men.

On the second day another great man came. His name is Andrei. I found him to be most conscientious and dedicated.

Tom Danza was in charge and was truly a gentleman. He handled himself beautifully.

I know you are very proud of your business as well you should be. Keep up the excellent work.

Thank you again for your kind cooperation.

*Sincerely,
Harriette Shiffman*

Dear OSI?

While I should not be surprised (after dealing with your fine company for so many years), I was shocked and delighted to get the notice of a price reduction in my budget. Thanks for that and your fine service all year long. Happy 2009!

*Sincerely,
Gerrie Wodicka*

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THIS WINTER SEASON

With the rising costs of just about everything, we understand that financial assistance might be needed. If you qualify for financial assistance the federal Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) might be able to help. Grants are available to help low-income customers pay their energy bills. Seniors are also eligible for the program if they fall within the income requirements (call HEAP for details).

The department also offers a Weatherization Referral and Packaging Program, or WRAP, which helps low-income seniors make boilers, windows and doors more energy-efficient, as well as a program called Senior Assistance for Fuel Emergencies or SAFE for seniors who struggle with high heating bills but are not eligible for HEAP or WRAP.

For further information - getting help could be as easy as a phone call away:

- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Nassau 516-227-7607 or 1-800-674-6327
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Suffolk 631-853-8825 or 1-800-674-6327
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Queens 718-471-3702
- Education and Assistance Corporation (EAC; administers HEAP) 516-565-4327
- Social Services in Nassau County 516-565-4327
- Social Services in Suffolk County 631-853-8825
- Middle Income Home Energy Assistance Program – 1-631-854-2368
- Project Warmth 1-631-940-3757
- Citizens Energy (*Ask Joe*) 1-877-563-4645

GIFT IDEAS

Although it might be a bit late for this year's holiday season, we have a gift idea for you to keep in mind. If you would like to purchase a gift; heating oil, or perhaps an instant hot water heater, or even a new boiler for a loved one, we can help you with that; we can even give additional suggestions. Just call our office, give us a credit card number and tell us who and where it is going. We will send the recipient a gift certificate and letter indicating your generous gift-it's that easy. Call us at 516-763-1400 and ask for Fran.

