

Constant Comfort

A Tradition of Service Since 1912



news

SPRING 2004

Energy Savings: What You Can Do For Little Money

We recently read an article in the *Boston Globe* on energy savings and thought we'd pass on some of the better ideas. Some of you may have seen this, but for those who haven't it's quite worthwhile.

- Wash your clothes in cold water whenever possible. This will save the energy used for heating the water and your clothes will last longer.
- Use compact fluorescent lights instead of regular bulbs. They will pay back their additional cost in about a year and last about ten times as long. The newer designs are better than those of 10 years ago.
- Weatherstrip and caulk the gaps in your home this spring. It's not exciting, but it works.
- Use a low-flow showerhead; it saves money in heating the water and on your water/sewer bill.
- Eliminate the halogen torchere. They are cheap to buy, but expensive to use and are a fire hazard.
- Use the microwave oven where practical; it uses much less energy than cooking on an electric stove.

**North Shore Fuel
Myers Brothers Oil**

100 V.F.W. Parkway
Revere, MA 02151

781-289-1500

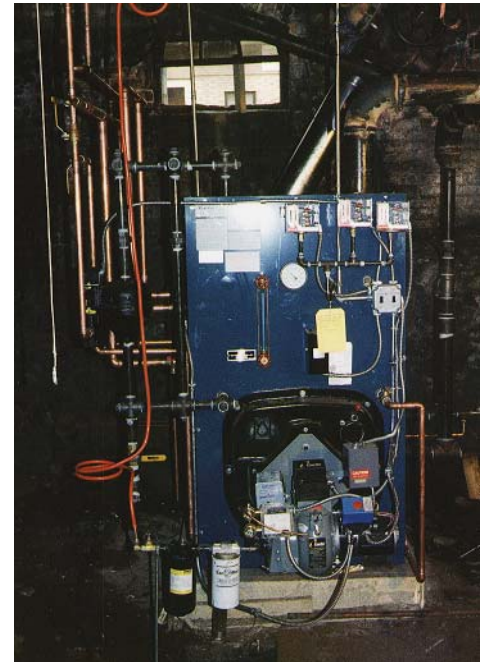
781-286-3030 • Fax: 781-284-6037
www.northshorefuel.com

Projects We've Done...

Many of the older apartment buildings in our area were heated by steam and had empty basements in which there was a janitor's apartment. He had the job of shoveling coal into the old steam boiler and hauling out the ashes, as well as keeping the building clean. When these buildings were converted to oil, the live-in janitor often was replaced with a part-time cleaner, and the basement was converted into apartments.

Heating these new apartments was often done using hot water from the steam boiler.

The replacement boiler in this photo shows the piping (on the left side) that feeds the basement apartments in the building. By the way, a similar system can be used in a home to heat an addition.



Water and Candle Use In Your Home

Water

We've seen a number of instances where someone's water and sewer bill was higher than their fuel bill. Here are a few suggestions:

- If your town allows, get a separate meter for outside use (lawn and garden watering). This eliminates the sewer charge on this major use.
- Change any well-used old toilet to the new 1.6 gpm flush model; it will usually pay back its cost in a year or two.
- Cool your drinking water in the refrigerator, not by running it in the sink.

Candles

There have been a few instances where we've gone into homes where people complain of soot and we've found numerous candles burning, often with some very strong odors. Well, the source of the soot was the candles, and often the more strongly scented the candle, the more the soot produced.

If you want to prove this, just light a candle a few inches under a clean glass and wipe the glass with a clean paper towel after the candle has burned for an hour of use. If it's very dirty, use that type of candle only rarely, as it's leaving a layer of soot over everything in the house.

By the way, your TV screen will tend to attract dirt and should be cleaned regularly, which will also give you an improved picture.

Your Comfort Systems Are Not A Suit Of Clothes!

We are sometimes asked how do we select the equipment that we use. Well, the average heating system runs 1,000 hours a year, starts many thousand of times, and usually lasts 20 years or more. That's like a car going 500,000 miles...and it doesn't go out of style like a suit (or no longer fits). Thus, our most important selection criteria is durability with minimal maintenance.

To this end, over the years we have gone to:

- Better oil filters than the yarn-wrapped ones of 10 years ago.
- The use of double filtration on all new installations.
- Plastic covered oil lines with grooves to detect and prevent underground oil leaks.
- Electronic high voltage igniters instead of old style transformers.
- PSC motors (a more reliable type) for the burner itself.
- Light sensing main (primary) controls instead of mechanical (stack) relays.
- Ball valves, which are more reliable than other types.
- The use of interrupted ignition, which saves electricity and puts less strain on other parts.
- Effective adjustable steam vents—these cost 5–10 times what the cheap versions do but work far better.
- The continual training of our technicians on the **best** ways to pipe both steam and water systems, with emphasis on the **why** as well as the **way**.
- The use of outside combustion air intake on burners, especially in tight or dirty areas (lint and sawdust are big problems) so the burner does not suffocate and produce dirt.
- The use of anti-scald valves on domestic water systems, not only to prevent scalding, but also to be more economical to operate and stress the piping and valves less.

That's only a dozen of our ways of installing one of your home's most important tools—**YOUR HEATING SYSTEM.**



Telephone Tag? Not Us!

The other day, we called another business and the call was answered by one of those machines that offers you multiple menu choices, then finally sends you to a recording.

While this may be a technically efficient way to handle calls, it can be very difficult and aggravating to use. So far, we have been able to resist the trend. We hope you like talking to a real person, so please remember that the individual answering the phone is trying to help you and rarely is the cause of any problems you may be experiencing. We're almost always part of the solution, not the cause of the problem.

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