

Constant Comfort

A Tradition of Service Since 1912



news

WINTER 2002



Delivery With A Smile!

Our customers on the North Shore have had their oil delivered the past season by "Marty." Marty, who almost always has a smile on his face, returned to us after an absence of several years, mainly because he enjoyed working with us, at a place where everyone works as a team, with the right attitude and equipment.

Marty lives nearby with his wife, Kathy, and his children, Michael, 21, Jason, 19, and Kevin, 15.

**North Shore Fuel
Myers Brothers Oil**

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

781-289-1500

781-286-3030 • Fax: 781-284-6037

It's The Man Doing The Work, Not The Brand, That Really Counts

Recently, a posting on a heating website asked what was the best brand of boiler or furnace. While there are definite preferences in equipment (some very strongly held by professionals in the trade), the overwhelming response was that the people designing and installing the system were, by far, the most important choice to ensure long term satisfaction with a heating or cooling job.

As an appropriate analogy, a master chef can make a delicious omelet out of just eggs and vegetables, while a less skilled cook will ruin the finest steak. And a good mechanic will try to work with the best brands he knows, using both quality materials, accessories and tools, so that he can be proud of his work. We at NSF/MBO work with the following ideas in mind when designing and installing equipment.

First comes your comfort and safety with heating, hot water (for washing), cooling, and use of space. Second, we use parts and installation methods that will minimize maintenance and make necessary maintenance as easy as possible. For example, we double filter your fuel oil so that you are less likely to require an emergency call.

Third, we install the most efficient equipment that's practical for you. In this vein, we install the smallest boiler that will heat your home in the severest weather, as this is the most efficient and comfortable. Last, we do look at first cost, but as the initial cost is often only 15%-20% of the total lifetime cost of equipment (which includes both fuel used and maintenance needed), this is nowhere as important as the first three needs.

Oil Pricing

As many of our customers know, NSF/MBO offers a guaranteed fixed price for those customers who want the assurance of both supply and cost. Our purchase of this oil is one of the hardest things we have to do. It would be nice to be smart enough or lucky enough to know when oil prices on the futures market are at their lowest, but if we did we would be financial prophets of the highest order, with the capability to earn millions of dollars. Unfortunately, we do not have that ability.

What we do is try to buy at an acceptably low price so that we can, in turn, sell to you at a fair guaranteed price. We purchase this oil through legally binding contracts from two locally-managed companies that, in turn, buy oil for future delivery on a public market.

These companies, which bring the oil into local oil terminals, have a long history of meeting their obligations (at times very expensively for them). We have also looked at trying to insure our customers should the price drop a lot so that they can have their cake and eat it, too. However, the insurance protection would add between five and ten cents to your cost so we do not buy this protection.

By the way, unseasonably cold weather is not a winner for us, as the overtime costs needed to supply you are very costly.

Our basic idea is to give you, our customer, a reliable, stable price for your heating needs, while providing the service of which we are justifiably proud.



Happy Holidays

From our family to yours, we wish you the best of health and happiness at this joyous time of the year and in the days to come. The holidays are a perfect time for us to stop and reflect on how very much you mean to us. We want you to know that we truly appreciate the business you've given us, the letters you've sent us throughout the year, and your continued friendship, especially in this year of troubled times. God bless America.

Our New Website Is Online!

For those of you with Internet access, we now have a website that you can visit. The address is www.northshorefuel.com and it offers some general information as well as an archive of the last five newsletters. For those of you seeking heating information, we suggest you visit www.heatinghelp.com.

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Why Isn't My Tank Full?

One of the most common phone calls we receive in the course of a day is from customers who have received an oil delivery and noticed that the gauge on their tank is reading only seven-eighths full. The reason for this is a safety device commonly referred to as "The Whistle."

When you receive a delivery, you hear the whistling sound. The noise is coming from a gadget called the "vent alarm." As the oil is being pumped into the tank, air is being forced out the vent pipe. The whistle is installed in the vent pipe. It continues to screech while there is air coming out of the tank.

When the oil reaches a certain point (usually 250 gallons in a 275-gallon tank) the oil is above the whistle and the screeching stops. The driver knows that the tank is full and stops pumping the oil. Sometimes the driver may have to stand by the fill pipe in order to hear the whistle, then hustle back to the truck to shut off the pump before the tank is over-filled.

Often times, the whistles are faint or they don't work at all. In such a situation, you will see the driver bend over the vent pipe, "listening" to the air escaping from the tank. When the tank is about full, he can hear a gurgling noise that lets him know the tank is full. Obviously the margin for error is far greater using this method, rather than simply listening to the whistle.

So, when you hear that irritating sound early in the morning disturbing your sleep, roll over and understand that we are well aware of your heating needs and your tank is full.

Meeting The Challenge

- To encourage creative thinking and idea generation when you're in charge of a meeting:
- Ask open-ended questions. Participants must answer with more than just a "yes" or "no."
 - Encourage people to continue—even if they start to back off because they're repeating points made earlier.
 - Paraphrase ideas when someone makes an unclear point.
 - Don't force your views on others. Always remain neutral.
 - Make sure everyone contributes to the discussion. Direct questions to people who haven't spoken. And ask for examples and elaboration
 - Have opposing sides state one another's opinions when conflict occurs.
 - Direct questions to other people—or ask to hear another view—when one person tries to dominate the discussion.
 - Say to the last person who spoke, "Tell me more."

—from *communications briefings*