

# Constant Comfort

*A Tradition of Service Since 1912*



# news

WINTER 2004

## A Holiday Of Hope

The past year hasn't been an easy one for many folks. Our country at war, the continuing violence in the Middle East, the ongoing threat of terrorism, and an economy that can't seem to gain the necessary traction for a full recovery have left us with a lingering sense of anxiety.

On the other hand, however, we removed an evil dictator, have made great strides in controlling terrorism at home, and for the first time in quite a while, the economic recovery appears to be gaining a foothold.

This holiday season, as always, let us count our blessings, among which we number our families, friends, clients, business associates and, of course, our faith in the future. We know we'll never have a nation without problems, but with our indomitable spirit and willingness to fight for what we believe, there will never be a better place to live.

All of us at North Shore Fuel wish you happy and safe holidays and a year to come that fulfills all your dreams.

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## Projects We've Done

### Oil For Gas With Radiant Heating

Last year, we received a telephone call from a man in Nahant who works as a facilities engineer. He had radiant heat in his home (built about 30 years ago), which was heated by a gas boiler and he wanted to change to an updated oil system.

We designed a complete system and installed it in November 2002. During last winter, he burned about 600 gallons of oil and had a very comfortable home.

### What Affects Oil Use?

People often ask us, "Why do I burn so much oil?" (By the way, average annual oil consumption is down about 500 gallons per home in the last 20 years.) Well, there are two basic reasons:

#### House design and construction.

It is obvious that a house with leaky, drafty windows will lose more heat and burn more oil than one with good, tight, energy-efficient ones, but even the better windows (double glazed) lose heat at a rate 10 times greater than a well insulated wall of the same size. We don't want to live in a house with no windows, but we have to realize that they are big heat losers. Insulation, or the lack of it, is one of the bigger problems in older homes. You will get most of the savings from 6" to 9" of insulation in the attic; after that the savings are small. Walls are now often built with 5-1/2" of insulation, but older homes

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## I've Got No Heat. What Should I Do?

**F**irst, check the thermostat in the affected area and raise it several degrees above room temperature. If it's a clock thermostat, make sure the time is correct and that you didn't reset it 12 hours off when you changed to daylight savings or standard time. Then wait a couple of minutes to see if the heat comes up.

Second, check that all the switches for the boiler are in the on position, especially the cellar door switch, which is sometimes shut off in error. (If that happens a lot, we have clips for the switch to reduce the chance of it continuing to happen.)

Third, if it's a steam boiler (usually large radiators with a shiny piece halfway up one side), check the gauge glass for proper level and add water to fill the gauge glass between half and three-quarters full. Careful here; a completely full glass resembles an empty one.

Fourth, check the oil tank level, and if it's on empty, call us. If you are on automatic delivery, there is no charge for a technician to come out and give you 10 gallons to carry your home through the

night. If you are on "will call," it's less expensive for you to have us send a delivery in the morning.

Fifth, check your fuse box for a blown fuse or tripped circuit breaker. If the boiler/furnace is wired correctly, it should be the only system on that circuit. If it blows (trips) a second time, call us; something is wrong.

Finally, as a temporary solution, press the reset button ONCE. If the burner starts up and fires, you'll have heat, but you should still call us in the morning, as something is not right. ***Do not press this reset button more than once, as each time you may be pumping oil into the boiler/furnace, and a start-up with more oil than should be in the chamber is a scary thing.***

We keep men on call all through the year, but the earlier that you call us, the better the chance that you'll not be uncomfortable long. Remember, we return your calls before going out, so use an available phone so we can check the address and serve you better, and possibly cure your problem over the phone.

## Oil Use...

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don't have that choice. If you reside your house, ask them to put the thickest insulating board that's practical under the siding. Its extra cost will be paid back in fuel savings over the next few years.

### **Heating equipment design and choice.**

Good heating equipment costs more and saves more. The hot water that you use can cost as much as one-third of your annual fuel bill. The best systems that we have seen use a storage tank or are fed by your boiler either with an internal or an external coil. These usually use about 20 gallons of oil per month during the summer and about the same in the winter, where the colder incoming water reduces the savings of standby losses. We have documented evidence that new equipment has saved as much as 40% in fuel consumption, but that depends a lot on how inefficient the old equipment was.

If any of this is interesting to you, give us a call and we will evaluate your system and suggest changes for higher efficiency and more comfort.

*"Taking a break in the middle of a job is not as rewarding as taking it when the job is finished."*

—Unknown

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