



House Warmers

For years I sat under Marty's wing, watching him

rack his brain on a seemingly daily basis over the ever volatile and always moving fuel oil prices. I learned a lot. I learned how to hedge, how to speculate and how to buy in stages with consistency. I also learned that there is always more to learn. Just when you think you have the concept in your grasp, it darts in another direction causing you to give chase. Through all of this, I learned a lesson I wasn't expecting. I learned how much he and his brother Richie truly care. By seeing how these decisions impacted the business and, in-turn, the customer base, I saw how much it meant to them, how determined they were to secure the best price and how badly they wanted to be fair and not get sucked into the games that their competitors were playing. Why? Because every customer means something to them and they always wanted to offer a fair and reasonable price, just like their father did before them.

Loyalty is a trait not often found in people and especially in business. We live in a "what have you done for me lately" world, where the decision seems to fall solely on price and the almighty \$. It is so easy to jump on a phone, tablet, or computer to compare and contrast price. The conglomerates of the world make it more and more difficult for the local homegrown family based business to survive. As consumers, which we all are, we often lose track of what we are buying and the value we put on it. Sure many things are cut and dry; electronics, clothing, and material items, can all be equally priced and you know exactly what you are getting. If you are in search of the latest and greatest gadget and Amazon has it for \$50 and Wal-Mart has it for \$60, well then most people

will obviously save the \$10 and get it from the cheaper place, because they are getting the same item. This same example is very different when it comes to energy and a service provider. There are so many aspects to consider in the sticker price, which often become forgotten about and don't rear their ugly heads until you are in a time of need or desperation. People forget they need a company who will be there for them at all times and how extremely important customer service and quality work truly is.

Most Long Island residents use 1,000 gallons a year on average. If you factor in the variance of prices on the market, even as big a difference of 10 cents per gallon or even 20 cents works out to be, possibly not even \$100 a year. We are talking, in most instances, less than \$10 a month. I think when people see it broken down so simply, one would have to truly consider the time and energy it takes to evaluate and consider a switch, not to mention getting adjusted to a new company and the service they provide, or lack thereof.

Why am I telling you all of this? Well, because, in this industry there always seems to be a "too good to be true" offer on the table for my customers. You know what I tell them? "When something seems too good to be true, it usually is!" We live in a very different world, very different times, than many, if not all of us are used to. We are engulfed with political unrest, nations clashing with one another and within themselves, sad terrorist acts and uncontrollable natural disasters. All of these acts tend to cause fluctuation in the price and availability of the goods and products we have come to rely on to survive.

As I alluded to earlier, there are many lessons to be learned time and time again when it comes to creating an oil program. The combination of controlled factors vs. the uncontrollable make it an ever changing market, literally by the minute. We at OSI Comfort Specialists, are truly one of the last of

our kind. We are a fully run and owned family business through Four generations and nearly 90 years of serving the community. We take pride in the way we operate and how we always value our customers above all else. That is why we have always chosen to run and offer a true buying program by way of our GAP program. Our program moves the price and gives back to the customers. We never want to be like "the other guys" who play pricing games or slide in hidden costs/fees. We do everything in our power to keep the price as low as possible! I am proud to announce that we accomplished that task and given all the duress, we are still able to hold the price ceiling just slightly above last year at \$2.499. Again, I reiterate that this is only the ceiling and the current price is nearly .10 cents lower and I hope we can continue to see it fall. All too often, customers get fixated on the "price and the ceiling" associating that with every single gallon they will consume over the course of the season and that is simply not true. No one knows what we are up against as a nation moving forward, but we have to hope and pray that many of these terrible disasters are behind us. We hope to move forward towards rebuilding and regaining some normalcy for those affected in those areas and for the rest of the country which lean upon those areas for our energy sources.

As always, if anyone has any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly. I am always open to and available for conversation and would be happy to help anyone at any time. Thank you all for your continued support and loyalty, I look forward to another great season.

Sincerely,

Phil