

The



Herald

Winter 2000

Meet The Halco People Behind the Voices That Greet You On the Phone



When you call for service during the day and early evening, you will speak to (from left) Heidi Westfall, Brandon Granger, Geri Sawdey-Martin or Phoebe Williams.



Over night, you will speak to cousins Rob (seated) or John Tweedie. Rob and John work nights in our fabrication shop assembling ductwork, boiler manifolds and other systems.

We emphasized in our premier issue of the *Halco Herald* that 24/7 is more than a buzzword at Halco. Hal and Tammy Smith don't like talking to answering machines or remote, live answering services that answer the phones for many businesses, so they won't make you do it either. Rather, a real, live staff person answers the phone in house 24 hours a day, seven

days a week. They have your computer records right at their fingertips.

That's one of the benefits of working with a large, service-oriented company like Halco. There are many sole practitioners around who are good technicians, and may even cost less than us. But, they aren't always available. Not a week goes by that we don't

get panic calls from people who have an emergency but can't find anyone to help them.

Besides making sure that you always speak to a knowledgeable, professional person working in our own office, we have another way to make sure you go to the head of the line in emergency situations. See page 4 for details.

Serving the Finger Lakes & Central New York Since 1984

Annual Furnace Cleaning & Tuning Assures Safety & Efficiency



HVAC technician Steve Andrews checks the burners of a furnace during the cleaning and tune-up process.

There's a good reason to have your furnace cleaned and tuned before each heating season. Our trained service technicians have the special knowledge and equipment to make sure your furnace is in top working order. This is important to the safety of your family, as well as to your heating budget.

Cleaning the furnace reduces the musty, dusty smell associated with the heat hitting dust mites. That is particularly unpleasant when you first turn on the furnace. Although the smell seems to wane as the furnace operates, the dust is still in the air. You can see it when the sun pours through a window just right.

Our technician will do more than just clean your furnace. He/she will check all controls for safety, inspect the chimney or flue, check the pilot light or igniter to be sure it is working properly, check the cycling time to be sure the furnace stays on for the proper amount of time. A furnace that turns on and off too often, or not often enough, uses more fuel than necessary.

The most important service a technician performs during a furnace cleaning and tuning is to inspect the heat exchanger for cracks that could allow deadly carbon monoxide into your home. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that is the product of incomplete combustion. Complete combustion produces carbon dioxide.

Some carbon monoxide results from all combustion, but it goes up the chimney or flue in a properly operating furnace. If the heat exchanger is cracked, however, carbon monoxide can seep out of the combustion chamber and into the ducting. Too often, the result is disastrous.

Our technicians are required to turn off the gas and "red tag" your furnace if they find a cracked heat exchanger that is allowing more than a certain level of carbon monoxide into your home.

We have all the latest state-of-the-art equipment. Since furnaces wear from the inside out, they also have an infrared camera on a flexible wand. It is similar to the SeeSnake described in the next column. It allows us, and you, to see the condition inside your furnace. (This is a far cry from those who are still using flashlights and mirrors.) Our technicians also have sophisticated, digital carbon monoxide measuring devices.

It goes without saying that you should be more concerned about the safety of your family than the cost of replacing a furnace. In most cases, however, cost is a moot point. Manufacturers share your concern and offer very long warranties on their heat exchangers. In fact, some furnaces carry lifetime warranties on the heat exchanger. So, the only furnace in which a homeowner would have to pay out of his own pocket would be a very old one, which probably doesn't owe you anything anyway.

**Visit Us On
the Web at
www.halcoheating.com**

Our Plumbers Can Now See Inside Pipes To Pinpoint Clogs & Breaks



Plumber Jim Perry feeds the SeeSnake into a pipe while he checks condition of the pipe by viewing the small television monitor.

We now have the ultimate in reality TV. It's a new instrument that will actually show you the inside of your plumbing pipes. Most people would rather not get that realistic, but the new instrument allows our plumbers to see exactly where a break or clog is located. They can also see what's causing a clog. Roots growing in the pipe is often the culprit.

The unit, called the See Snake™, is a flexible cable with a tiny light and TV camera on the end. Our plumbers feed it into a pipe just like a conventional drain snake, except that they watch its progress on a TV monitor. When the See Snake reaches the clog or break in the pipe, an in-line transmitter emits a signal that is received by an instrument, called the XL Line Locator, which is outside the pipe.

This unit, one of the first in the Finger Lakes area, is particularly helpful when a pipe is broken underground. Our plumbers can see exactly what the break looks like inside the pipe, and the line locator transmits a signal to the surface so the plumbers know the exact location of the break.

SeeSnake is a trademark of Rigid Tool Company.

Tips For Saving Fuel This Winter

Saving fuel this winter is on most people's minds. Regardless of the type of fuel you use to heat your house, whether it's natural gas, oil, propane or electricity, suppliers have been warning their customers of huge price increases. We can't do anything about the soaring fuel prices, but we do have some suggestions for reducing the amount of fuel that you need.

First, be sure you have adequate insulation and install more if needed. Second, tighten up and caulk anywhere that drafts can come in. When the wind comes into the house, you are actually losing heat to the outside.

Once the maximum amount of heat is kept inside the house, there are a number of things you can do to squeeze top efficiency from your furnace. Consider a set back type

thermostat; some utilities are offering a rebate on the purchase of such a thermostat. They are relatively inexpensive, can be installed by the average do-it-yourselfer, and are easily programmed for round the clock comfort.

Many people turn their thermostat settings down when they go to work in the morning or to bed at night. However, they want to be nice and warm when they arrive home or get up in the morning. A setback thermostat lets you actually program into the system the times to raise and lower the heat. The result is extra efficiency."

Zoning and sealing ductwork are more sophisticated approaches to fuel savings. Sealing the ductwork inside and out reduces heat loss through the ductwork, allowing the maximum amount to reach the registers.

There are different approaches to zoning. One system we often recommend can be retrofitted to current installations with minimum cost or disruption. That system uses air controlled dampers that open ducting to the zone that needs heat and closes it to the zone that doesn't need heat at the moment.

Our technicians make sure everything, including the filter, is clean and moving parts are lubricated, but each one also has a combustion efficiency kit to measure flue gas samples. This data is used to make adjustments for maximum efficiency. They also have an electronic gas leak detector that can measure the slightest gas leak. (Imagine, some contractors are still using the old soap bubble method.) So, call us to maximize your efficiency this winter.

How Efficient Is A High Efficiency Furnace?

Furnaces today boast efficiencies up to 95 percent. That is a far cry from the 70 - 80 percent efficiencies of a decade ago. But, there is more to furnace efficiency than the AFUE (Average Fuel Usage Estimate) figure that is posted on each furnace.

First, be sure your new high efficiency furnace has a multi-stage burner and variable speed fan motor, rather than the older style fixed speed motor and single stage burner. Variable speed fan motors run continuously, circulating a small amount of air constantly. When heat is called for, the fan begins to speed up until it is running at the speed needed to adequately distribute the necessary heat.

We all know how a conventional system works. When heat is called for, the burner comes on with full force. When it has heated the heat exchanger sufficiently, the blower comes on fully, and you get a blast of hot air through

your house. Variable speed motors work more subtly. When heat is called for, the burner is activated in stages, and the fan speeds up as the burner stages activate. Consequently, you enjoy nice even comfort, fuel is saved, and you don't experience the noise associated with conventional systems.

Variable speed systems deliver comfort as evenly and quietly as radiant heat. But, they have all the advantages of forced air. You don't need a boiler, and you have ducting and a fan system for air conditioning.

A 95 percent efficient furnace with single stage burner and fixed speed fan or an 80 percent efficient furnace with a multi-stage burner and variable speed fan cost just about the same. If given that choice, however, we would recommend the 80 percent furnace with variable blower over the higher efficiency furnace with fixed blower. Both the comfort level and fuel

efficiency will be better. Of course, the 95 percent model with the multi-stage burner and variable speed blower is the ultimate.

Where We Are

Call any of our local phone numbers listed below and a service or installation team will be dispatched from right nearby to take care of your problems quickly.

<u>Community</u>	<u>Number</u>
Phelps	315.946.6200 800.533.3367
Fax	315.946.6676
Newark	315.331.3912
Geneva	315.781.0556
Canandaigua	716.396.2668
Penn Yan	315.536.0633
Auburn	315.253.7939
Rochester	716.271.4330
Ithaca	607.277.3154
Elmira	607.733.0420

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Penn Yan	315.536.0633
Auburn	315.253.7939
Rochester	716.271.4330
Ithaca	607.277.3154
Elmira	607.733.0420