



The Comfort Zone

Quarterly News from the Air Comfort Experts

(410) 679-3794

Our Experience, Your Comfort

Letter from the President

Greetings,

The holiday season is upon us, and with it comes a nip in the air! Prepare your home to be cozy and warm this winter season with a heating system that's right for you. Comfort Zone explores the advantages of geothermal heat pumps, wood stoves and gas fireplaces this month. HGH Mechanical can help you with all three, no matter what your preference. Best of all, if you act now, you can realize the benefits this season!

As the pressure heats up for the holidays with gift shopping, cooking and entertaining, keep your own temperature and that of your home cool – we give you some tips in the Cool Down section, along with some great holiday entertaining ideas. Don't miss our winter specials, and meet one of our technicians in Tech Talk.

Happy, healthy holidays to all our customers and colleagues!

Sincerely,

Manny Gomes
President
HGH Mechanical

What's Hot:

Keeping your home warm this winter is what's hot this month! What's right for you?

What in the World is a Geothermal Heat Pump?

A geothermal heat pump uses the heat from the earth's core to heat your home. It's an economical, earth-friendly way to use natural resources and renewable energy. In the winter, a geothermal heat pump pulls heat from the center of the earth into your home, and in the summer, it removes heat from your home and dumps it back into the ground. The Environmental Protection Agency has found that geothermal heat pumps can reduce energy consumption by 40 percent compared to air source heat pumps and by 70 percent compared to standard HVAC equipment. These systems are also nearly 50 percent more efficient than gas furnaces with source fuel, and 75 percent more efficient than oil furnaces. The geothermal heat pump requires an underground loop system, so you will need to check with a professional HVAC technician to be sure you have the land available to install the system. It will work for all seasons, and while it is a higher investment up front, the benefits are realized quickly.

Wood Stoves: Do They Deliver?

Wood stoves can be smelly, dirty and a genuine pain in the neck to keep stocked with wood – not to mention the expense if you have to buy the wood – right? Not so. Today's wood stoves are no longer smelly and dirty. They are clean, efficient, and beautifully designed. The wood that fuels them is cheaper than other sources of heat, and it's a renewable resource. A wood stove can be a wonderful secondary source of heat that doesn't rely on electricity. This is helpful in keeping your energy bills down in the winter, as well as having something to rely on in the event of a power outage. A wood stove is actually cozy and warm, and if the wood is an issue, consider a pellet stove. In addition, wood burning stoves provide carbon neutral energy and improve your carbon footprint. Talk to your HVAC professional today to learn how a wood stove would benefit you this

winter.

Hearth and Home – Do You Use Gas or Wood?

What's next to your hearth – a switch or a woodpile? If you flick a switch and get an instant fire, you are also getting a clean, maintenance-free experience. You're getting heat, light and comfort – fast. If you light a fire using wooden logs, newspapers and a match, it takes time to get to the heat, light and comfort. But when you do, you've also got ambiance, more heat, and less cost. Sure, you have to have the right ventilation, use it correctly, and keep your chimney free of dust and critters. But nothing beats the crackling sound and delicious smell of a wood-burning fireplace. Any fireplace is a great way to pull yourself away from the hassles of everyday life and just relax. If you're interested in adding a fireplace to your home, talk to the experts at HGH Mechanical. Then, cozy up to the hearth, and throw another log on the fire – or flick the switch. Either way, you'll be home.

Cool Down

Beat the Holiday Heat

If you're turning up the heat on entertaining this holiday season, you may be wondering at what temperature your guests will be comfortable. Everyone is different, but the last thing you want is a home that feels like a sauna because of the heat from cooking and crowds. Here are a few tips:

- Turn down your thermostat the morning of your gathering. Generally two or three degrees cooler than your normal setting will do the trick. Give your home enough time to get to the comfortable temperature and stay that way.
- Try to do the majority of your cooking and baking before the guests arrive so that the appliances are turned off, or at least are on a warming setting. Limit the number of times you open the oven, so you're not pumping additional heat into the room.
- Use a ventilator fan or hood fan to keep the air moving and to keep the different scents from hanging in the air.
- Ventilate the area by cracking a window or a sliding door to let fresh air into the house.

Cool Holiday Entertaining Ideas

Want to keep your cool during the big holiday festivities? Try these hints to maintain your sanity when your home is filled with guests on the big day:

- Provide a basket or bin at the entry way for wet shoes, boots and umbrellas so that the slush isn't dragged into your home.
- Have a designated place close to the entry area for non-food hostess gifts from your guests – a miniature tree or festive table -- you can accept the gift, put it down with little hassle, and welcome your guests.
- Use glass markers for wine, martini or champagne glasses so guests can keep track of their drinks. Even rocks glasses or water glasses can have colorful ribbons tied to them -- or try ones with built-in chalk boards!
- Use place cards or small tent cards with festive artwork to describe food items on the buffet. Indicate allergens like seafood, dairy or nuts. Your guests will appreciate not having to ask.
- Have a fire burning in your wood or gas fireplace to add ambiance. Or, try a display of lit pillar candles behind your fireplace screen for a glowing effect.
- Keep your cool by enjoying yourself – if you're having fun, it's likely your guests will too!

The Coming Season – Winter/Holiday specials from HGH

Winter Service Special – Don't get caught without heat – call and schedule a preventative maintenance for your heating system for only \$75 through February 28, 2015.

Free Programmable Thermostat with the purchase of a complete system through February 28, 2015.

Tech Talk: Meet Susan Walker

She's Getting the Gadgets

Bringing HGH Mechanical into the 21st century in office technology is one of Susan Walker's most rewarding

accomplishments. She says the company has come a long way since basic e-mail and a pin-fed printer. When Walker joined HGH Mechanical 13 years ago, she brought with her a background in office management and equipment, as well as a zest for gadgetry. "If I see something new out there in terms of office gadgets, and I like it, I'm going to get it," she says. Today, HGH Mechanical has color laser printers, laptop computers, scanners and dual monitor systems, to name a few, and Walker says it was a several-year process to get there. "Pushing for technology made life easier for everyone, even though they didn't realize it until they got there," she says.

On any given day in the office, Walker plays the role of office manager, administrative assistant and president – to meet the needs of customers and colleagues. "It's a small company, so we all do a little bit of everything," Walker explains. That small size is what endears customers and employees alike. Walker says that everyone in the company cares about each other, and they are flexible. She is given the latitude to do her job well. "I make decisions on my own, within boundaries," she notes.

In addition, Walker attributes her love for her job to the people. "We have some great customers," she explains. "I've gotten to know some of them personally over the years. We work together to make a difference."

When not doing a little bit of everything in the office, Walker enjoys spending time with her eight grandchildren, who range in age from 18 months to 10 years old. She is also active with the Boy Scouts organization as an adult leader trainer. She likes to cook and has her own part-time embroidery business. "The next big thing is the cookie baking party," she exclaims. Her annual holiday cookie baking includes all of her grandchildren, nieces and nephews, with crowds sometimes totaling more than 20 people in her Joppa home's kitchen. The one rule: "No parents allowed!"

**Keeping you comfortable,
*HGH Mechanical***

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