



CNY-ASHI
"The Training Leader of Central New York"

OCTOBER, 2012

THE OBSERVER

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★ [This Month's Chapter Education!](#) ★

In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.
~Martin Luther King



INSPECT-OUT!



Come and share your knowledge with other inspectors. You might even learn something!

THE OBSERVER



We are always on the lookout for articles or items of interest. Anything which you feel would help educate our readership. Please feel free to forward to either Mike Chapman or

Tom Sherman. Also, if you should have any thoughts or ideas which you feel would make this a better publication, please let us know.

CNY-ASHI Officers and Committee Chairs

- President – Mike Chapman, Closer Look Home Inspection*
- Vice President– Dave Gambocarto, DG Home Inspection*
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- CNY-ASHI Website/Newsletter– Tom Sherman*
- Membership/Mentoring-Dave Gambocarto*
- Building Performance Institute Liaison– Ed Voytovich*
- NYSAHI Representative–Bob Sterner*
- Chaplain– Will Morgan*

WHAT'S NEXT...

MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETING

WHERE:: 2840 Cold Springs Road (SR 370).
 Its a grey building on the south side of the road about a half mile east of the SR 631 bypass

WHEN: Wednesday, October 10, 2012. 5:00 -9:00 PM

October Education—Annual Inspect-Out

More Photos From the Field

Pre-heating the floor above



Why waste the heat from the vent. Simply redirect it for a nice toasty floor. Thanks to Dave Gambocarto for the pic.

Two traps must be better than one!



What Exactly Is a Home Inspection?

By Tom Sherman~ Editor

I received a nice note the other day in reply to a report that I had recently sent out to a client. One of the things that she mentioned in the note was how she had no idea what to expect going through this inspection procedure, as she had never done this before. She was glad I explained everything in detail, and she felt like an educated consumer at the end of the inspection. I understand that if one has never experienced a specific “process”, if you will, it makes sense that said “process” will be a bit of a mystery. I get that. But what really stood out to me while reading her note is the fact that this home inspection process that we perform daily is one that the lion’s share of the general public often will personally experience maybe only once or twice in their lives. And for many

people, it’s never.

So where do they draw their reference on what to expect while going through this course of action? Well, we have reality TV to thank for “home inspection” shows, where the “inspector” performs “archaeological digs” through a house, tearing down walls and such. This “household-colonoscopy” procedure is done in order to see what the last home inspector “missed”, all the while making our profession look like a bunch of numbnuts. All this, with no chance to defend ourselves. This is Hollywood, baby! Buckle your seat belts, cause we’re goin’ in! The producers are looking for the kill...that point of pain which draws people to remain on that “same bat-channel”.

But you and I know what a farce these shows really are. And one of the things

we need to do during the course of every home inspection, is to redirect our clients expectations from that of a wall tearer-downer, to a generalist who is performing a detailed overview of a house and the condition of its components. Remember, **they** have nothing but “Holmes” to demonstrate to them what a home inspection is when we take the helm. If they are still relying on the “Holmes” interpretation at the conclusion, then we haven’t done our job properly, now have we babycakes! Be clear with your clients and manage their expectations. Among other things, this is why they are paying us.



Stay safe



WHY YOU SHOULD NEVER, EVER, QUESTION A DRUNK...

I was shopping at the local supermarket where I selected:

- A half gallon of 2% milk
- A carton of eggs
- A quart of orange juice
- A head of lettuce
- A 2-lb. can of coffee
- A 1-lb. package of bacon

As I was unloading my items on the conveyor belt to check out, a drunk standing behind me watched as I placed the items in front of the cashier. While the cashier was ringing up the purchases, the drunk calmly stated, 'You must be single.'

I was a bit startled by this proclamation, but I was intrigued by the derelict's intuition, since I indeed had never found Mr. Right. I looked at the six items on the belt and saw nothing particularly unusual about my selections that could have tipped off the drunk to my marital status.

Curiosity getting the better of me, I said, 'Yes, you are correct. But how on earth did you know that?'

The drunk replied, 'Cause you're ugly.'



Got questions?

The Wall is the place to get your answers. It's a very friendly part of Heating-Help.com and everyone's wel-

Where the elite meet and talk heat. Find good help. Find a job. Make a friend. Make a business connection. Size a contractor. Compare one product to another. Get great advice from good people. Keep it or replace it? Calculate a heat loss. Ask a question. Get sensible answers. Get inspired. Which pump to use? Which boiler? Oil or gas? The old stuff. The new stuff. The hard stuff. What does it do? Make it more efficient. Chat with pros from other countries. Find a more valuable employee. Will this work? How do I do this? The air. Design for disassembly. Innovate. Automate systems. Get the most out of your time. Control it smartly. Travel the world without leaving your desk. Get smarter each day. Find that old product's literature in the HeatingHelp.com Library. Learn history. Post videos of your work. Never be alone. Learn Green through hundreds of articles and links. Make it efficient. Make it last. Save energy. Save money. Get addicted to education. Learn about Solar. Get real help in minutes. Mingle with people who have spent time in basements. Get Listed in a Professional directory. Get your name on the wall. Read hundreds of technical articles. **You're never alone.** some of the best work in the world. Help one another. connect with great suppliers. Prove the best minds in the business. Get new ideas. Shop for easy-to-understand books. Become an Affiliate and make money. Stroll through the Virtual Trade Show. Hang out with positive people. See what's new. Learn radiant. Get Holohan's weekly newsletter. Check out Dan's Reading List. Swap a story. Ask the pros who know. Tap the experience. Steam experts hang out here. Challenge yourself. Grow and grow and grow. Cutting edge heating cooling and solar talk. FREE!

(Written by members of the HeatingHelp.com community. Join us!)



Free in-depth information for home inspectors is found online at

www.inspectapedia.com

Encyclopedia of building & environmental inspection, testing, diagnosis, & repair.

We welcome questions from home inspectors & are glad to research answers as needed.

The Last Man to Install One-Pipe Steam by Dan Holohan

Editor's note: Dan Holohan runs HeatingHelp.com, a wonderful site which should be bookmarked by every home inspector out there. Dan has also published several books on heating which are both informative and entertaining. These books should be in every home inspectors reference library and are available on the site. A gifted story teller, Dan has been kind enough to allow me to reprint this article.

About a half-hour south of Albany on the New York State Thruway, just as the Catskill Mountains get their backs way up, there's an exit sign that states, simply, "Catskill." Swing off there and follow the signs that lead you to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. You can't miss it; just follow the curve, and watch yourself going down the hill if it's raining. You'll cross the Hudson River at a place of such striking beauty that in any given season you just may forget the business that brought you here in the first place. There are gnarled apple trees on the side of the mountain hundreds of them. And just below, near the river, are the weathered tracks of Cornelius Vanderbilt's New York Central Railroad. It's old here, and for the minute or so it takes to cross the river, your thoughts slip into the past. You can't help it. You're on the road to Hudson, a proud old city that holds onto its past like a treasured heirloom.

It's pretty here. There's a town square with an old firehouse and a wooden gazebo that gets a fresh coat of white paint every spring. Lots of them. Some of them were installed before the Civil War. But no one gives them much thought.

I've spent days here, crouched in basements, staring in wonder at old dark shapes. I love this stuff, I really do. It's my pornography. But, you know, I always walk away from Hudson shaking my head. There's stuff here that history has just about forgotten.

It's true. I have a collection of old heating books that were written in the 1890s. The authors of these tattered books speak wistfully about the very systems I spend time staring at in Hudson.

"Here's how they did it in the old days," they say.

The old days! These books were written in the Old Days, for Pete's sake! The authors have been dead for nearly 100 years, but the steam systems are still in the basements. You figure it out.

The funny thing is that no one in Hudson gives those old systems much thought. They'll say, "Oh that thing's always been down in the basement. Long's I can remember anyway."

In Hudson, you'll find every sort of heating oddity you can imagine. If you're into heating, Hudson is Disney World.

Ed Bratton lives in Hudson. He's my friend. Ed installs one-pipe steam heating systems in people's homes. Crazy, eh? What's even crazier is that people pay him a lot more than they'd pay to have him install a hot water system.

"I just tell 'em steam is what the house should have because the house is old. Old houses should have steam heat. It's the way it should be. I like the steam. It's a good system.

"And the people say "Okay, Ed, do it. "Now this whole idea of installing supposedly "dead technology" into people's homes in 1990 may seem a bit wacky to you. I'll admit it did to me when Ed first told me what he was up to. But then I remembered that this is Hudson. In Hudson, they don't tear buildings down, they restore them. Oh, sure, they call it "fixin' up" not "restoring," but whatever they call it, a lot of those people have hired Ed Bratton to either install or fix up the one-pipe steam systems in their homes.

And you have to see these things when he's finished with them. They're beautiful. They're quiet. They're efficient. They can't freeze. They're, well...classic. Now I'll admit it takes a few minutes to get over that nagging feeling that whispers in your brain, "Hey, wait a minute. Ed just installed a system in that house over there that should have been laid to rest in the 1940s!"

That's a natural reaction. Believe me, I understand. You're probably used to looking at old steam systems that have seen much better days. Heating guys get prejudiced about steam. They'll tell the customer that steam is a problem, always has been. They'll tell him that the only people who know anything about steam are dead. They'll tell him that the best thing he can do with an old steam system is to put it out of its misery.

"Put in a nice baseboard loop system," they'll say. "And drive a stake through that old boiler's heart before you drag it out of the basement."

But not Ed Bratton. Nope. He puts in one-pipe steam systems. And as far as I can tell, he's the last

Continued next page



Thoughts to ponder...

Fishing rod is a stick with a hook at one end and a fool at the other.

~Samuel Johnson

The brain is a wonderful organ. It starts working the moment you get up in the morning, and doesn't stop until you get into the office."

~Robert Frost

"Money: There's nothing in the world more demoralizing than money"

~Sophocles

"I am not young enough to know everything."

~Oscar Wilde



Continued from Page 6

man in America to be doing so. And you know what? When I tell him that, he smiles. "That so?" he says, "The last man? I can't understand why." And then he gets this twinkle in his eye. "You know, Dan," he says, "anybody can put in a hot water loop system, but it takes a heating man to do steam."

He's a proud man, Ed Bratton, and you know what he's done for me? He's shown me how it was in the old days when Steam was King and the systems were clean and new and loved by their owners. "The systems worked back then, there's no reason why they can't work now," says Ed Bratton, Heating Man.

Back To Basics: Ed has a couple of old Studebakers out in his garage. He's lovingly restored them to showroom condition. "That's what I do with the old steam systems," he says. "If you know what you're doing, you can put anything back together. If you're a good enough mechanic." When I look at old steam systems that bang, spit and cost a fortune to operate, I think about Ed's brand-new systems. And then I use the rules Ed uses on the new ones to restore the old ones. Hey, let's face it, the physics haven't changed over the years. And when you come right down to it, there's really not that much to it. Air and dirt are the enemies. Get rid of them and you'll have a pretty good system.

Oh, and of course, you have to realize that today's boilers are very dependent on the piping that's right around them. That piping is designed to dry out the steam. If you ignore the manufacturer's piping specs when you replace a boiler you're going to have problems. Big problems. Ed makes sure he takes as high a full-size vertical line out of the boiler to the header as possible.

Most boiler manufacturers call for a minimum of 24 inches; Ed goes all the way to the ceiling on most of his jobs. That gives him nice, dry steam. Dry steam has more heat than wet steam. It also moves quicker and doesn't bang.

Ed pitches his mains in the direction of flow. That gives him the best efficiency and gets the condensate out of the pipes in a hurry. He makes sure the pipes are sized to carry the load at a certain velocity. That's not hard to figure out. He just looks it up in a book I got him from the Hoffman Specialty distributor. This book, a reprint of the classic Hoffman Handbook, has all the sizing charts you'll ever need whether you're installing a new system or just moving a radiator.

Ed puts a large main vent near the end of every main, making sure it's at least 15 inches back from the elbow and 6 to 10 inches up on a nipple (that's to protect it from water hammer). The main vent gets the majority of air out of the system very quickly and prevents burner short-cycling.



You see, trapped air is what causes short-cycling in a steam system. Most guys crank up the pressuretrol to "cure" short-cycling. That doesn't work. It just runs the fuel bill up and makes the system heat more slowly. The customer still has uneven heat, but now it costs him a lot more for the privilege. It doesn't make sense.

If you add a main vent to a steam system you'll be amazed at how quickly the steam moves. It's simple. Air is a gas and steam is a gas. One won't go where the other one already is. Get rid of the air and the burner stops short-cycling.

Ed uses slow vents on the radiators. That's the way they did it in the old days -fast vents on the mains, slow vents on the radiators. That keeps the radiators from overheating and the vents from spitting.

The last thing he does is skim the boiler through a horizontal tapping. He does it with cold water. That gets rid of the oil and stops the water line from surging.

Ed's taught me a lot (and he's only a few years older than me). There's a lot you can learn from the old ways and from guys like Ed Bratton. There's no reason why those old steam systems can't be restored. It's a real nice business. Just ask the last man in America to install one-pipe steam. He "fixes 'em up" all the time.



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THIS
BANNER
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WORLD'S
FINEST
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Plumbing vent system



This is what I saw outside of the house at the foundation. Hummm...I wonder what this could be.....

And this is what I found in the basement. I bet this vents nicely under 2 feet of snow.

Clothes washer stand pipe



Note the leakage behind the pipe on the insulation. This pipe is too short and will always leak.

CNY-ASHI LIBRARY

The chapter library is filled with books, videos and an assortment of other excellent training and refresher information relating to our profession. Everything from setting up and running a home inspection business, to technical journals and training information is at your fingertips.

As a chapter member, you are allowed to access this information free of charge. Dan has just put an updated list of the contents on the TRAINING PAGE of the CNY ASHI Website. Check it out.

We are always on the lookout for additional items for this library. Also, if you are looking for specific information on items we have, please contact Dan at dhager3@yahoo.com

*Chapter Librarian, **Dan Hager~ Tyler Home Inspections***

