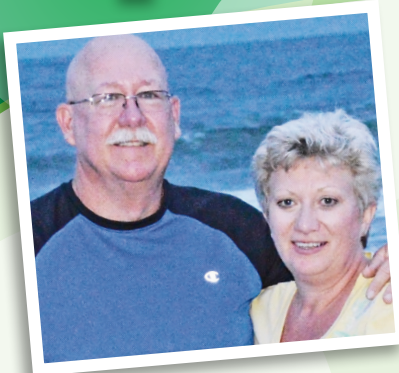


spotlight on:



Allen and Sherree Luzak

Home Performance

We are excited to introduce **Allen Luzak** as a new addition to our team. Brought on to manage our Home Performance division, Allen brings a variety and depth of knowledge to our team. In the Home Performance and Building Science industry since 1985, Allen is well-versed in utilizing blower doors, infrared and a myriad of diagnostic equipment to help make homes and buildings become more comfortable and more efficient while lowering energy bills.

After serving in the US Army as a Telecommunication Specialist with the 4th Infantry Division, Allen earned a degree in Solar Engineering from Colorado Technical College. Upon graduation, he began his career in the Building Science field performing energy audits and weatherization for the Wilmington Housing Authority and the low income Weatherization Program for the State of Delaware. Allen has also worked with researchers from Princeton University to help determine how energy moves in and out of buildings and develop air sealing protocol for new construction to avoid energy loss and enhance comfort in homes.

Currently, Allen holds a Building Performance Institute Building Analyst certification – a certification for which he is also qualified to teach – a HERS certification for home energy modeling and a Masters Certification in Environments for Living.

In addition to these professional accomplishments, Allen and his wife Sherree just celebrated their 30th anniversary and have been blessed with three children, 2 daughters and a son, as well as two grandchildren. Outside of work and family, Allen is also an avid photographer who enjoys photographing the beautiful landscapes and sunrises and sunsets here on the Eastern Shore as well as the abundant wildlife. He also enjoys doing family portraits at the beach and measures his success on how many family portraits make the Christmas card each year! During warmer weather, Allen can also be found on one of the many mill ponds in the area trying his luck for some bass or enjoying the occasional golf outing.

As manager of the Home Performance division, Allen's primary objectives are to provide education on building science and home performance not only to our team, but also to Custom Mechanical's clients and the public. Training the field staff on what to look for concerning the issues that will drain the energy from a house, create comfort problems and waste energy dollars is also part of Allen's mission. In the end, it's all part of Custom's overall goal to continue to improve for you by finding more and better way to make your home more comfortable and save you energy dollars.

custom mechanical's Helping Hands

It's a privilege to be able to help our community; since our last newsletter we've contributed to the following national and local organizations through donations of our time or money as well as sponsorships:

- Special Olympics
- American Cancer Society
- The Worcester County Humane Society
- Believe in Tomorrow – Children's Foundation
- Delaware Seashore Preservation Foundation

And, again this year, we were happy to support our team member, **Robert**, and his daughter **Nicole** as they participated in their 13th and 6th years (respectively) in the **Polar Bear Plunge** to benefit the Delaware Special Olympics on February 2nd. Special kudos to this dynamic duo for their fundraising skills and imperviousness to the cold!

For a complete list of supported organizations, please visit our website.



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Not applicable with other discounts. Diagnostic fee may apply. Coupons expire 5/15/14. Coupon must be surrendered at time of service. Call for full terms and conditions.

Seaside Tidings

Spring 2014 Newsletter from



Welcome back!

Whether you're traveling back to your home here at the beach after a long (cold, snowy) winter away or are coming out of what I like to call my "post-summer-craziness hibernation," warmer weather means that it's time again for our seasonal wrap-up and more timely homeowner tips.

Our whole team has been extremely busy this offseason, making improvements and training like mad in between extreme temperature swings. After being promoted to service manager, Jay instituted a new training schedule for our technicians. In the office, our team has been learning new dispatching procedures to go along with the tablets our technicians are using out in the field. With this wireless technology, our goal is to reduce lag time between calls and also when parts or return visits are needed. Probably the biggest change this offseason though, has been the development of our Home Performance division. We're really excited about this addition to our services and the improvements we'll be able to make to your home comfort with these additional diagnostic procedures and resolution options. You can check out our "Spotlight" for more information about this department.

So, without further ado... let's get into it! Have a great spring and summer!

Regan

Regan Roberts Deck
Chief Operations Officer

Visit us at these upcoming events:

March 21-23 Ocean City Home Condo & Outdoor Show at R.E. Powell Ocean City Convention Center

April 5-6 Rehoboth Beach Home Expo at Rehoboth Beach Convention Center

Simple Steps to Improve Indoor Air Quality

Keep your floors fresh.

Suck it up. Chemicals and allergens can accumulate in household dust for decades. By using a vacuum with a HEPA filter, you can reduce concentrations of lead in your home. You can also get rid of other toxins, like brominated fire-retardant chemicals (PBDEs) as well as allergens like pollen, pet dander, and dust mites.

Mop it up. Mopping picks up the dust that vacuuming leaves behind. You can skip the soaps and cleaners and just use plain water to capture any lingering dust or allergens. New microfiber mops (and dust cloths) reportedly capture more dust and dirt than traditional fibers and don't require any cleaning solutions whatsoever.

Keep it out. Put a large floor mat at every door. People track in all sorts of chemicals via the dirt on their shoes. A door mat reduces the amount of dirt, pesticides, and other pollutants from getting into your home. If the mat is big enough, even those who don't wipe their shoes will leave most pollutants on the mat — not the floors in your home.



Keep a healthy level of humidity.

Dust mites and mold love moisture. Keeping humidity around 30%-50% helps keep them and other allergens under control. A dehumidifier (and air conditioner during summer months) helps reduce moisture in indoor air and effectively controls allergens. An air conditioner also reduces indoor pollen count — another plus for allergy-sufferers.

More tips for dehumidifying your home:

- Use an exhaust fan or crack open a window when cooking, running the dishwasher, or bathing.
- Fix leaky plumbing to prevent moisture-loving mold.
- Don't over water houseplants.
- Empty drip pans in your window air conditioner and dehumidifier.
- Vent the clothes dryer to the outside.

Smell good naturally.

You may associate that lemony or piney scent with a clean kitchen or clean clothes. But synthetic fragrances in laundry products and air fresheners emit dozens of different chemicals into the air. You won't find their names on the product labels. Conventional laundry detergents, fabric softeners, dryer sheets, and air fresheners in solid, spray, and oil form may all emit such gasses. What can you do?

- Look for fragrance-free or naturally-scented laundry products.
- Switch to mild cleaners that don't include artificial fragrances.
- Stop using aerosol sprays — deodorants, hair sprays, carpet cleaners, furniture polish, and air fresheners.
- Let in fresh air. Open windows so toxic chemicals don't build up in your home. What if you or your child has pollen allergies? Keep rooms ventilated with a filtered air conditioning system.
- Use sliced lemons and baking soda to get a clean scent in the kitchen.

<http://www.webmd.com/health-ehome-9/indoor-air-quality>

Mr. Neil's Chocolate Brownies

Yes, that Mr. Neil Our oldest employee at 29 years and baker of Neil's Famous Cheesecake, y'all have heard me pontificate about the awesome-ness that is Mr. Neil's baking prowess before. Well, after much whining and cajoling, he agreed to share one of his fabulous recipes with us. Ok, there wasn't really any whining or cajoling; he's the aforementioned awesome, so I asked and he said yes. But, I digress... chocolate-y goodness comin' atcha:

Ingredients

- 1½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 eggs
- 1½ cup boiling water
- ¾ cup Hershey's cocoa powder
- 6 Hershey's chocolate bars
- ⅔ cup butter at room temperature
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¼ teaspoon salt



1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Grease 13x9x2" baking pan.
3. Stir together cocoa and baking soda in a large bowl.
4. Add half the butter.
5. Add boiling water and stir until mixture thickens.
6. Stir in sugar, eggs and remaining butter until smooth.
7. Add salt, vanilla and flour. Blend.
8. Pour half of batter into greased pan.
9. Add one layer of Hershey's chocolate bars.
10. Pour remaining batter over the top.
11. Bake for 35-40 minutes.
12. Cool on wire rack.
13. Enjoy!

Like Oil Changes For Your Car

We've mentioned it before: *preventative maintenance* (a.k.a. maintenance checks, performance tune-ups, clean and checks) are for your heating and air conditioning system like oil changes are for your car. In fact, one year of heating and air conditioning system age is equal to putting 10,000 miles on your car. Automotive experts agree that proper regular maintenance is the most critical thing you can do to extend the life of your vehicle. The same thing is true for your heating and air conditioning system.

On most vehicles, regular service occurs every 5,000 miles, or twice a year in this example. That's the perfect schedule for your heating and air conditioning system, too. Whenever it's most convenient for you, try to schedule those tune-ups about six months apart and keep in mind that you may want to change or wash your filters more often than that, especially if children and/or pets live in your home.

Since your furnace and air conditioner are the most used appliances in your home and consume the most energy, regular maintenance also rewards you with the greatest energy savings since you'll keep your equipment running at peak efficiency for as long as possible.

What do you think? Our website, e-mail reminders, and newsletter formatting are brand new and redesigned. Let us know what you think by sending us an email at customerservice@custommechanical.com or filling out our survey on-line!

SAVING YOUR SANITY: Keep Kids Occupied in the Car This Summer

Even in these days of MP3 players and portable DVD players, keeping kids occupied during long car rides can still be a challenge. After a few hours of songs and movies, the cries of "We're bored!" and "How much longer?" and "I'm hungry!" start to come from the back of the vehicle. Prepare to combat two of the biggest challenges — hunger and boredom — and you can transform your trip into one that's fairly quiet and peaceable.

LICENSE PLATE BINGO

Make up several bingo cards for each child using the name of a state on each card instead of numbers. Give your children each a card and a washable marker. As kids find the matching license plate on a car as on their card, they mark off the appropriate box on their card. The first one to get bingo wins! Prizes can be a small toy or even a dollar that can be spent once you reach your destination.

If you are going on a very long trip — one that will take more than a day — you may want to consider a larger surprise that will keep the kids busy longer. Do they love their electronic games? You could buy a new game for each child but make sure it is one enjoyed by others too, so the kids can share. Allow kids to play the new game for a time. When the time is up, everyone must pass his or her game to the right.

BORED NO MORE

Battling boredom is a snap. Gather some more brown paper bags — one for each hour of car time. You do not need one bag per child, just one for each half-hour. Fill each bag with an activity that they can complete in about thirty minutes. When children start complaining about boredom, hand them a bag!

MUNCHIE ATTACK!

Snacks. Snacks. And more snacks! A good rule of thumb is to have one snack bag and small drink per child for every one-and-a-half to two hours that you will be on the road. Pick up some fun re-usable bags (with your child's favorite characters on it = bonus) and you can customize the bags to your child's tastes or simply choose several different combinations. The added surprise of the kids not knowing what is in each bag gives the kids something to look forward to.

Whatever you decide, you can customize it for your children and, hopefully, make time spent in the car not just a means to an end, but an enjoyable beginning and end to a stellar vacation.

