



Poppy Sale

Farmington American Legion Post 346 will be out in force asking for contributions for the annual poppy sale on May 19, 20 and 21. Preparing for the sale are (seated, from left) Trena Quinn, Richard Tupper and Harold Quinn, poppy sale chairman. (Standing, from left) Maynard Mastin and Lorraine Christensen.

Chimney cheater saves energy for homeowners

By CARL STODDARD

Once in a while a product comes along and everyone says, "Gee, I wish I'd thought of that." A new energy-conserving device, introduced in Oakland County last week, is that kind of product.

The device, called the Chimney Cheater, is based on such an obvious concept that it seems surprising no one had developed it before.

Development of the unit, however, was not as simple as it might appear. Joseph Kleist, president of Kleco Inc., the company that markets the device, says it took nearly four years to bring the invention from an idea to a reality.

The bread-box-size unit attaches to the exhaust pipe between a gas furnace and the chimney. Inside the box are eight stainless steel tubes. The tubes are heated by the hot exhaust fumes; and air forced through the heated tubes is circulated through the house with a 110-volt fan.

The unit sells for \$225-\$275 and reportedly can reduce homeowners' gas bills about 15 per cent a month. Kleist says the unit takes advantage of the fact that fumes leaving the furnace bring the temperature of the exhaust pipe up to about 500 degrees. About one quarter of that heat can be reclaimed with his device, he said.

"IN THE AVERAGE home, about 40 to 50 per cent of the heat a furnace produces goes up the chimney," Kleist said. With his device, part of that heat can be rerouted into heating ducts or routed into the cold air return ducts to preheat the air and help the furnace operate more efficiently. As an alternative, the reclaimed air can be used to heat a basement or spare room.

When attached to the average home furnace, Kleist said, the unit is capable of putting out more than 12,000 BTUs an hour.

The unit has been tested and approved by the Detroit Testing Laboratory. The thermostatically controlled fan and other electrical components have received UL approval.

Kleist said the unit also meets most local building codes and can be installed by any licensed heating contractor.

The device has received approval from testing laboratories and most city building departments because — unlike other devices that attempt to capture heat lost through the chimney — the unit does not hinder the flow of exhaust fumes, Kleist said.

The Chimney Cheater, which carries a five-year warranty, is manufactured by Atcor Corp. of Troy. Kleco of Ferndale, which holds the patent on the unit, is the distributor.

Kleist said the heat exchange unit was put on the market last week and has already chalked up 50 sales in Michigan and 200 in Ohio. Most have been sold to furnace supply companies who in turn will sell the devices to licensed heating contractors. Homeowners may not buy the unit directly from Kleco, Kleist said.

THE HEAT EXCHANGER began with an idea conceived by a heating contractor about four years ago, Kleist said. Kleist, 29, began experimenting with the notion of saving heat from the chimney and finally brought the unit to its present state in mid-December. He and partner Robert Ealba formed Kleco to market the unit.

At present, the unit may be installed on most forced-air furnaces which are fueled by natural or propane gas. It has not yet been approved for use with furnaces powered by fuel oil, Kleist said.

Kleist estimates that if the unit were installed on all gas burning home furnaces in Michigan about 80 billion cubic feet of gas could be saved in 1 year.

Monday, May 16, 1977

(F16)

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