

Be on guard, don't get ripped off

In the last few days I received a phone call from a homeowner who reads this paper and asked me not to use his name. He received a call from someone claiming to represent a well known furnace manufacturer. This guy said his name was Smith and that he had two service technicians in the area checking out a problem with his 13-year-old Brand X furnace.

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

He knew that the homeowner had this brand furnace and exactly when it was installed. He said the furnace might catch fire so the homeowner author-

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ized Smith to send someone over to check it out. Two guys looked at the furnace, and without taking anything apart, they confirmed he had the problem that would cost \$600 to repair.

They also offered to install a new furnace if he didn't want to fix his old one, and said the cost would be \$400. The other stipulation was that he had to decide now because they were leaving to go back to the factory and wouldn't be back his way for quite a while. The homeowner for these facts and figures in writing but they refused, and said they didn't have any serv-

ice invoices with them. They couldn't even give him a phone number where he could return a call.

The homeowner informed the guys that he was not going to get the work done and they left his house. He noticed the shirts they were wearing had no names on them and neither did the white van they were driving. As soon as they left he called the police department and reported the incident. The officer asked if the homeowner had written down the license plate number of the white van. He hadn't but was told he should have. This is the

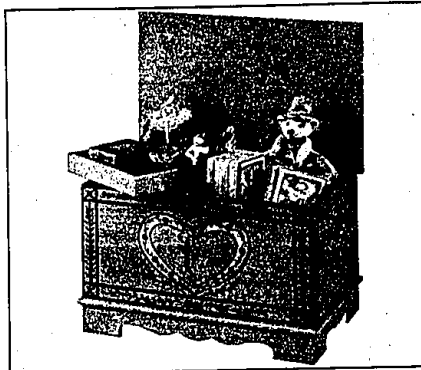
end of the story for now.

Not long after Jennifer Granholm became Attorney General, she closed down a furnace company who had been ripping off consumers for many years. These are the very same guys who called and came out to the gentleman's home. They installed the furnace 13 years ago. That's how they know the model number and exact date of installation.

As reports and complaints about this company start to filter in to police departments across the area, be aware that the Attorney General doesn't take too kindly to violations of stipulations set forth in her lawsuit. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can be heard Saturday and Sunday on 760 WJLB. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. His phone number is (313) 873-9789.

Marketplace



Life Chest: Art Van Furniture stores offer the Life Chest, \$199, an heirloom quality chest created by Powell, and designed to store precious mementos. It has a plush, acid-free lining to protect photos and documents; and a lift-out or self-rising tray and working lock with decorative key and tassel. It also includes an 82-page journal for organizing letters, photos and more. Children ages 7 to 14 are invited to write an essay of 100 words or less on "Why I Love My Mother," and win a chance to receive a Life Chest for their Mom this Mother's Day. Entry forms are available at all Art Van locations and entries must be received by May 5.

DESIGN CALENDAR

APPRAISAL CLINIC

The Plymouth Historical Museum will sponsor an Antique Appraisal Clinic from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, May 8, featuring Antique Roadshow appraiser Ernest DuMouchelle. Find out what your collectibles are worth! Appraisals are \$10 per item oral, \$15 per item written. Please call the museum for an appointment at (734) 465-8940. The museum is located at 155 South Main Street, Plymouth.

HANGING ART FOR A CAUSE

The Home Accessory Warehouse in Walled Lake hosts a special sale throughout the weekend, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, to benefit Gilda's Club

of Metro Detroit. The Home Accessory Warehouse is located at 1017 E.W. Maple Road, between Decker and Pontiac Trail, in Walled Lake. (248) 624-6700.

LACE SHOWING

An exclusive showing of Prate's Summer Collection 2002 of fine linens is 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. May 2, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. May 3, in the showroom of A Touch of Lace, 7001 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 430, West Bloomfield. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to HAVEN, Oakland County's center for the prevention and treatment of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. (248) 598-5223

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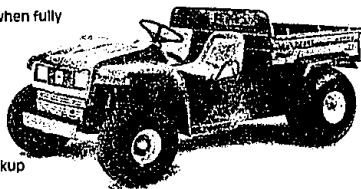
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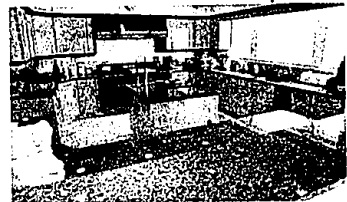
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