



**Masonry  
Heater  
Association**  
Of North America

# NEWS

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## MHA Press Release To Promote Clean Burn Features

David Lyle has just sent in the following press release and asked for comments. David states that Stig Karlberg, who heads the MHA marketing committee, had asked for help in his effort to gain recognition for the clean-burning aspects of masonry heaters, as confirmed at the Blacksburg tests.

Accordingly David has put together the following release. The goal is to release it in the fall, for maximum impact. If you have any comments, you can include them in the questionnaire that you will find inside. You can also write to David directly at:

Heating Research Co.

Acworth Hill Road

Acworth, NH 03601

### **New/Old Fireplace Design Is Efficient and Clean-Burning**

### **Substantially Betters Federal Standards For Clean Woodstoves**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Fireplaces built according to an old European technique are among the cleanest wood-burning systems ever developed, it was announced today.

The announcement came from Gordon Jones, president of the Masonry Heater Association. It followed extensive testing of two masonry heaters in laboratories at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Va.

"These tests represent a real breakthrough for the masonry fireplace and woodburning," Jones said.

The breakthrough comes just in time, according to David Lyle, fireplace industry consultant and head of Heating Research Co., Acworth, N.H. "National air quality concerns make it absolutely necessary that we have clean-burning masonry fireplaces today," Lyle said. "Smoke emissions from woodstoves are already regulated, and fireplaces will be next."

The VPI tests clearly show that techniques are available to build clean-burning masonry stoves and fireplaces, Lyle said. "What's more, they are going to be efficient, and that's a new concept in North American fireplaces."

During the energy crisis of the 1970's, millions of Americans closed up their fireplaces and

put a woodstove on the hearth because it heated more efficiently. "Next time oil gets expensive, that won't be necessary if you have one of the new fireplaces," Lyle said. "It will warm the house efficiently, and it will burn very, very cleanly."

Air quality problems have led to steady tightening of smoke emissions regulations in recent years. On July 1 of this year, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) invoked its most restrictive smoke emissions rules to date.

At present, these EPA rules apply only to woodstoves. Fireplaces and masonry heaters are exempt. But smoke emissions are a critical issue in states like California, Oregon, Washington, Colorado and Montana. The regulators have begun looking at fireplaces, and the industry expects regulation to follow.

In California, the city of Fresno has been considering an ordinance that would require fireplaces to meet the same smoke emissions standards as woodstoves.

"If that ordinance passed," said one industry expert, "it would amount to a ban on traditional fireplaces. There is no way that traditional fireplaces can meet the same clean-burn standards now required for woodstoves."

Under the new EPA regulations for woodstoves, particulate emissions are limited to 7.5 grams per hour for non-catalytic units, and to 4.1 grams per hour for catalytic units.

Official figures are not available for traditional fireplace emissions. But old-fashioned woodstoves, of the type built before the EPA

crackdown, were recently field-tested in Oregon. They showed particulate emissions of 42 grams per hour. Industry experts expect traditional fireplaces to have pollution levels at least as high.

The two masonry heaters tested at VPI averaged emissions of 1.4 grams per hour. The cleaner of the two units tested out at less than one gram (.99 grams) per hour, which MHA believes to be the lowest emissions level for any woodburning unit ever tested. Pellet burners have also tested at very low emissions levels, in the 1 to 1.3 grams per hour range, according to MHA.

Sixty to sixty-five per cent of American homes have fireplaces, "So any issue directly affecting the use of these fireplaces is going to be extremely important, to every builder and to most homeowners," according to Lyle. "The industry knows it must meet these emissions issues, and it's fortunate now that we have the technology to do it in masonry. After all, the fireplace is the heart of the home."

Clean-burning masonry heaters like those tested at VPI represent a concept that is centuries old in Europe and Asia. The technology can be applied either in woodstove or in fireplace form, according to MHA.

Masonry heaters are widely used today in countries like Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, Russia, Poland, Hungary and Romania. Styles differ from one country to the next. But the masonry heater principle is everywhere the same: Build a hot fire for an hour or two, once or twice each day; trap and store the heat within the masonry. The

masonry then gives off this heat for many hours at a steady, even rate. The clean burn is made possible by very high temperatures in the firebox, and by the trapping of particulate matter in a complex flue system within the fireplace, according to MHA.

The masonry heater tests were undertaken under the auspices of two industry groups, The Wood Heating Alliance, and the Fireplace Emissions Research Coalition. The goal of the project was to establish an emissions test method suitable for both fireplaces and masonry heaters. The test program was developed by Curtis H. Stern and Dennis R. Jaasma, of the Mechanical Engineering Department at VPI, and by Jay Shelton, of Shelton Research Inc., of Santa Fe, N.M.

The test program received support from the Brick Institute of America, the National Brick Distributors Association, the Wood Heating Alliance and the Fireplace Emissions Research Coalition.

The Masonry Heater Association of North America is made up of masons experienced in building heaters, and of companies which manufacture masonry heaters or components for them. The Association can be reached c/o General Shale Corp., P.O. Box 3547 CRS, Johnson City, TN 37601. Tel. 615/282-4661.

## Opinion Poll

As many of you are aware, clean air concerns are a hot political issue at both the local and national levels, and don't show much inclination to go away in the not too distant future. The conventional masonry fireplace may soon be on the endangered species list, and its no longer much of a secret that the recent Blacksburg tests put it on a par with old-technology airtight stoves in terms of emissions. Some heater builders who are also fireplace masons feel that the "Rosin" firebox design (known by various trade names such as Bellfires, The Original Firecrest, Firecast, Heat-Force etc.) is probably a much cleaner burning unit. Jerry Frisch just informed me that Brent Gabby from BIA has been trying to cook up a deal to get a unit tested at Blacksburg and that the cost would run in the \$5000 - 7500 range. BIA would like to know what other support is out there besides their own. Jerry has been canvassing various colleagues for support.

It should be pointed out that Jerry has a direct interest in that he is the manufacturer of the Original Firecrest. In addition, another MHA member, Sleepy Hollow, distributes the Firecast unit and would probably directly benefit the most from any positive results. Also, Masonry Stove Builders (your editor) manufactures the Firecrest unit on a very small scale. The masonry industry in general would also be a secondary beneficiary in that some good numbers on an all masonry fireplace could potentially save the whole

## New Members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members.

### Voting

Steve Cohan  
Hot Rock Masonry  
Box 247, Floyd, VA, 24091

Douglas Hargreave  
Inverness Masonry Heat  
1434 Dairy Rd., Charlottesville, VA,

genre from impending dinosaur status.

Jerry has recently spoken with various MHA members, including our president, Gordon Jones from General Shale.

Gordon has suggested that the membership be canvassed as to whether they think MHA funds should be used to support this project. Therefore, the following questionnaire.

In the past, we have had several instances when MHA funds were allocated on short notice by the Executive without prior consultation with the

membership. On at least one occasion this generated a lot of flack from some of you. Since we're all new at this, and since we probably all have different opinions on what the purpose of the MHA is, a membership poll like this may help us all to define what sorts of issues are appropriate for the Association to deal with.

# NEWS:

## New MHA Address

Tom Trout sends news that BIA through Brent Gabby has offered to take over the function of MHA head office from Gordon Jones at General Shale. Gordon has had an extremely heavy workload lately and is very willing to delegate this particular task. For those of you who have bought brochures, Tom has agreed to get little sticky labels printed to change the MHA address on the brochures. If you would like to express your opinion on this or any other matter, please feel free to do so in the "Comments" section of the questionnaire.

## MHA Lapel Pins

Again from Tom Trout: The MHA lapel pins are ready to roll, and from all accounts are extremely spiffy. Those of you who placed orders at the New Orleans meeting should be receiving your pins shortly. Anyone who would like to buy pins can do so from Tom at \$1.50 apiece:

Tom Trout

Vesta Masonry Stove Inc.

373 Old Seven Mile Ridge Road  
Burnsville, NC 28714

## 1990 Dues

Tom has also agreed to be in charge of invoicing the

membership for their 1990 dues, so be prepared.

## Shirts, Jackets and Hats

Jerry Frisch has asked me to include an order form for the MHA shirts, jackets and hats that were unveiled in New Orleans. It didn't get here in time to make it to the typesetter, so you'll find a photocopied FAX instead.

- The following excerpts are from a Tuli-Kivi press release recently received:

## International Audience Participates in Stone Company Opening

As the new nine-foot, diamond-tipped, red saw blade spun effortlessly through a boulder of soapstone, The New Alberene Stone Company in Schuyler, Va., came alive, sparking a new age of technological and economic revival and the renaissance of soapstone as a viable material for fireplaces, bake ovens and architectural products.

During its June 8 grand opening, The New Alberene Stone Company, a member of the Tulikivi Group, hosted an international audience, comprised of more than 300 Tulikivi fireplace dealers, fireplace and emission specialists, architects, international and local dignitaries and members of the media - representing Finland,

Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Canada and the U.S.

A breakfast seminar at the Sheraton Charlottesville Hotel featured Dennis Jaasma, Ph.D., associate professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and John Crouch, emissions specialist and lobbyist for the Wood Heating Alliance. They addressed the most updated information on fireplaces from an environmental and emissions standpoint, as well as a more philosophical look at the role fireplaces have in homes.

The social theme of the grand opening featured a "hard hat/lunchbox" luncheon reception, factory tour and multi-image slide presentation about the evolution of fire and the development of the Tulikivi fireplace and bake oven.

The following day, Tulikivi dealers participated in a full schedule of seminars and training sessions.

The Tulikivi group had 1989 revenues of \$ 30 million and has sales offices in Finland; Lebanon, New Hampshire; Frankfurt, Germany; and Stockholm, Sweden.

## Tulikivi Opens New Sales Office

West Lebanon, NH - the largest manufacturer of soapstone contraflow in the world, Tulikivi, announces the opening of a new sales office for the

marketing of Tulikivi soapstone fireplaces, bakeovens and cookstoves in North America, near the largest concentration of dealers in the U.S.

Heading the office is Ted Corvey, former marketing director for Vermont Castings. Marketing and office administrator is Martha McClain, formerly of TESS and Vermont Castings. Dale Hisler, long time MHA member and well known to many of us, is Technical Advisor and will field all technical questions, develop troubleshooting guidelines and assist with dealer training, home shows and field installations. Janice Whitcomb, formerly of Vermont Castings, is sales assistant.

## Editorial

Just received the May issue of Kamin & Kachelofen, the German magazine for the stovebuilding professional.

The most interesting thing in this issue is the focus on the emissions issue. Seems like its becoming very hot there politically as well. This

particularly includes local politicians trying to make a name for themselves by picking on an easy target.

This issue of the magazine has an editorial as well as two full articles devoted to the issue. Unfortunately I didn't have time to translate any of them in time for this newsletter.

Germany is without doubt the most environmentally conscious country in the world, so its probably time for us to look beyond our own borders if we want to be on top of this issue, which is of vital concern to our future as stovebuilders.

The tone of the articles is that new clean-air legislation is coming down the pipes, and the authors hope that the government is sensible enough to not kill the stovebuilding trade (sound familiar?). They also strongly imply that the anti-woodburning flames are being fanned by powerful lobby groups for gas, oil and district heating. Included is a chart from an "Environmental Tips" brochure issued by the city of Erlangen comparing emissions from various fuel sources. The numbers for wood look bad, even going so far as to attribute some sulphur dioxide emissions to wood, which to the best of

my knowledge is totally bogus. The last "tip" they give is that if you're considering a new heating system, its best to just forget about wood, since its so environmental unfriendly. The Kachelofen Einsatz manufacturers over there have made great strides in cleaning up their stoves, and I wouldn't be surprised if their technology is as good as or better than the latest North American offerings, yet that fact seems to be conveniently ignored.

At the Wood-Gas 90 Forum recently held in Toronto, I got the impression that the newest generation of non-catalytic metal stove is going to be very clean burning, even in the field. This is good news for all of us, because we now have a very good case to make for wood heat, and particularly from an environmental point of view (see article on the Greenhouse Effect in the last issue).

The Grundofen still has the cleanest numbers, but the gap with the metal stoves is definitely narrowing, so hopefully we'll soon see some friendly competition for even cleaner numbers that will benefit everyone.

## MEMBERSHIP POLL

Do you think that MHA should financially support emissions testing of a Rosin style fireplace?

YES NO

If you answered yes to the above question, how much should MHA be allowed to spend?

100.00      500.00      1000.00      2500.00      5000.00      10000.00

Do you think that this questionnaire is appropriate?

YES NO

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COMMENTS:

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail completed questionnaire to: MHA NEWS

c/o Masonry Stove Builders

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Shawville, Que. J0X 2Y0

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