

# New York Oil Heating Association, Inc.

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October 1, 2009

Anne Sweeney, Co-Chair  
Disney Media Networks  
500 South Buena Vista Street  
Burbank, CA 91521

Dear Ms. Sweeney:

My name is John Maniscalco and I serve as the CEO of the New York Oil Heating Association, (NYOHA), Inc. NYOHA is a heating oil trade association which was established in 1939, and whose membership, for the most part, is comprised of family-owned home heating oil distributors which service the City of New York's five boroughs.

I am writing to express my deep and serious concern over the network's misleading and inappropriate misrepresentation of heating oil as an unsafe source of home heating that was made by your network on September 27<sup>th</sup> during *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. Specifically speaking to one conversation, the program states that oil is a "...flammable fluid that's like a bomb waiting to go off underneath their house..." Does your network have factual, indisputable data which indicates that people who live in oil heated homes are blown up on a daily basis? Heating oil will not even burn unless it is atomized and above 126 degrees Fahrenheit! The wood in the basement will burn much sooner than the oil in the tank, so are you going to malign the lumber industry in your next segment?

Today's reliable energy from heating oil serves approximately 23 million people in 8.6 million households throughout the United States, and it enjoys a tremendous track record of safety. To suggest that heating oil is in any way dangerous or something that homeowners should be "scared of" is not only false, misleading and borders on product slander, but it does a disservice to viewers in more than 6 million households where the episode was aired. Those viewers and countless others rely on opinion makers such as the ABC Television Network for accurate, truthful information.

As a past president of a Rotary Club I know all about service to others as it relates to helping one's community, and subsequently one's fellow man. I was under the impression that *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* was at the vanguard of "service to others before self," but I was apparently mistaken. ABC has replaced that holistic image with drama, deception, and fabrication ... and for what ... ratings? In doing so ABC has maligned thousands of hard working, family-owned businesses spanning twenty-five states. Why even the episode's oil and propane cosponsor of the makeover project in a recent e-mail to me stated ... and I quote ... "*We were happy to help support a worthy local family. But, in retrospect, if we would have known how the show was going to turn out, we would not have been a sponsor. The oil tank segment just added to the frustration. After the show aired, I actually apologized to my staff for getting us involved in the project.*" I'm sure the above "...apology comment..." would have made Mr. Walt Disney proud.

**NYOHA, along with participating associations, spends approximately \$1.5 million per year advertising in the New York DMA, and my colleagues as much as \$8 million in other oil heat regions across the United States. Your unfair *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* portrayal of oil heat has galvanized the industry to the point where advertising on ABC affiliates would be akin to committing blasphemy! Must I offer an opinion as to the chances of NYOHA advertising dollars purchasing spots on ESPN Inc. or ABC Sports, not to mention my colleague's across the nation on other ABC affiliates? If 77WABC radio here in New York City was not owned by Citadel Broadcasting, I'd pull my :60 spots based solely on the station's call letters!**

**Lastly, I have to ask you a trade secret. How did your program's producers get Mrs. Huber to "tear on cue?" Did they drop an eye-tear solution into her eyes before the shoot? My hats off to your producers because that scene was an amazing piece of creative, entertaining, dramatized cinema. It was scatological ... but nonetheless ... amazing, and I'm sure a true "ratings grabber!"**

**So Ms. Sweeney, does ABC have the intestinal fortitude to own up to its mistakes and correct its inflammatory, discriminatory bias against oil heat? That can easily be done by simply ... *telling the truth about oil heat!***

**Awaiting your response, I remain,**

**Highly annoyed,**



**John Maniscalco  
Chief Executive Officer**

**Cc: Robert A. Iger, President & CEO  
Kevin Mayer, EVP, Corporate Strategy & Business Development  
George W. Bodenheimer, Co-Chair  
John E. Pepper, Jr., Chairman of the Board**