

# HOME COMFORTS

As the days get shorter and the nights get cooler, local professionals share tips to keep you cosy.



PHOTOGRAPHY SARAH TACOMA

## ROB WEPPLER *Air-Tech Mechanical*

**Tell us about Air-Tech Mechanical:** Rob Weppeler first started as a general labourer almost 30 years ago. He went on to complete trade school as a sheet metal journeyman and became a co-owner in 1992. Over the years Rob has also obtained his refrigeration and gas licences. Air-Tech Mechanical has operated from its current location in Keady since 2002, when Rob and his wife Erin became sole owners. They are happy to say that many customers from long ago are still valued as a big part of their business today.

**Please explain your services:** Air-Tech works on both residential and commercial projects, including furnaces, heat pumps, fireplaces, air conditioning, ventilation, indoor air quality, ductwork and stainless steel fabrication, as well as restaurant exhaust systems. As an HRAI (Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada) certified contractor, they can also assist customers with the new Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) rebate program.

**Please explain the benefits of a heat recovery ventilator (HRV) system?** An HRV is legally required in new builds as homes are being built so air tight. Fresh air is necessary to help with humidity and mildew that gets produced and trapped in the home. If you have a space that is showing signs of condensation, an HRV will help bring fresh air in and damp air out and provide a noticeable difference.

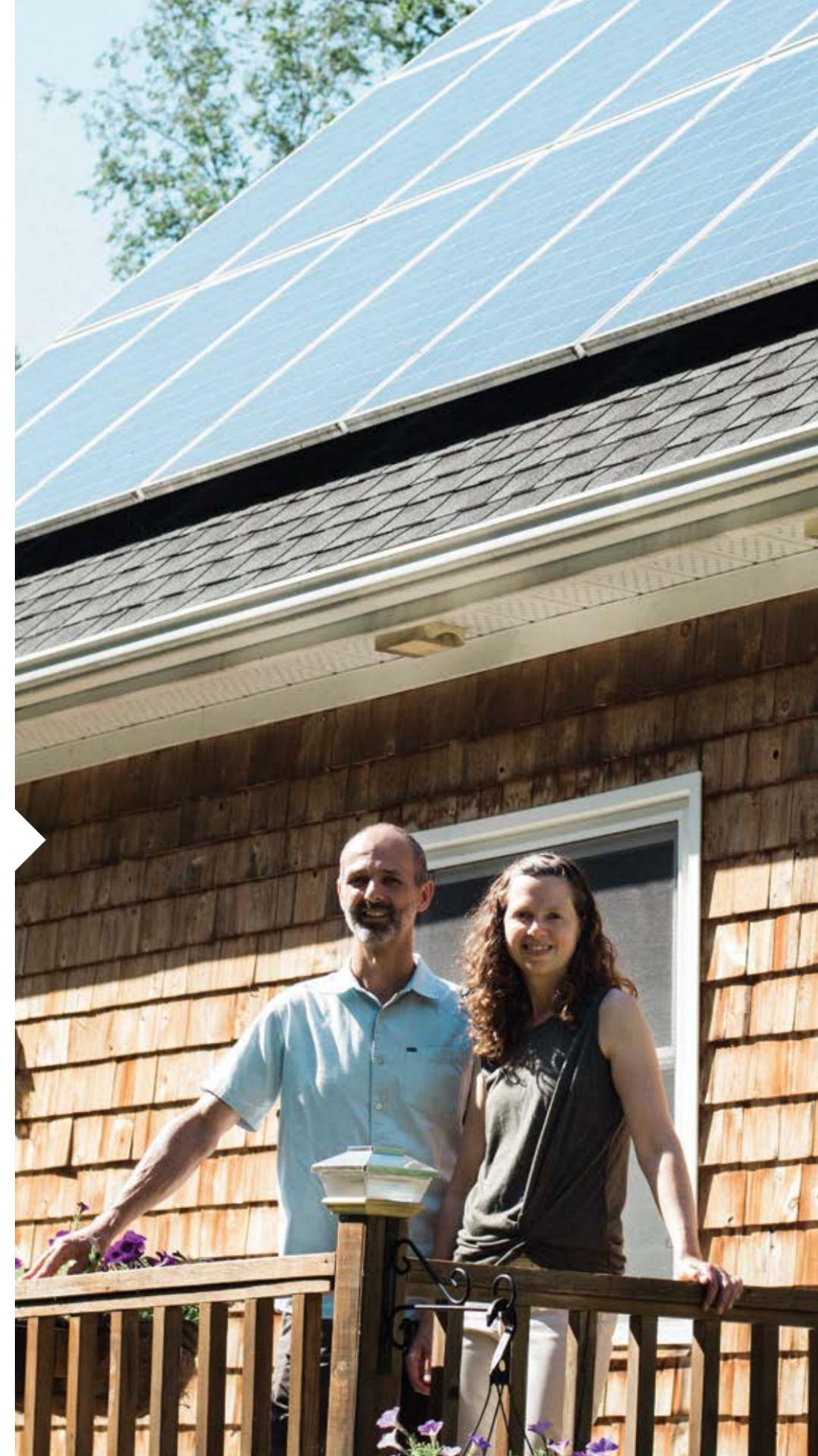
## ROB & JOY BLACK *Blackline Power*

**What are the greatest benefits of installing solar?** It is an amazing feeling knowing that your property is being powered by a clean energy source – the sun – that is 150-million kilometres away. Closer to earth, having a predictable electricity bill that is insulated from rising costs for 40-plus years is also a strong motivation.

**Tell us about this project:** The Maunders, owners of this home, moved to Grey-Bruce last year. As they have electric heat and are environmentally-minded, they were eager to investigate solar. Blackline installed a 10 kilowatt net metering system shortly after they moved in. Our clients are our greatest resource and happy to talk about their solar projects.

**If someone is interested in solar power, where should they begin?** Give us a call or email. We are trained industry professionals and have been installing solar since 2010 for homeowners, farmers, businesses and municipalities. Owner Rob Black is one of only 25 NABCEP-certified (North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners) installers in Canada, which is the highest accreditation available. We also have one of the most experienced installation teams in Ontario.

*Continued on page 64*





**ZIGGY KLAUS, MORT RAPP & TOM RAMAGE**  
*Sandy Hamilton Plumbing & Heating Inc.*

**You have a new member of the family:** We are pleased to welcome Air Star Mechanical to the Sandy Hamilton Plumbing & Heating family. This recent acquisition, along with Northern Heating and Classical Gas four years ago, has enabled us to become one of the area's largest full-service mechanical contractors. Our team consists of TSSA (Technical Standards & Safety Authority) licenced natural gas, oil burner, liquid propane, refrigeration and sheet metal technicians, as well as plumbers and apprentices.

**What services do you offer?** Sales, installation and service for all types of forced air systems, including propane, natural gas and

geothermal; hydronic heating systems, including boilers and in-floor heat; cooling systems such as central air conditioning, ventilation and roof-top units; and complete plumbing services, including water treatment, well pumps, pressure systems and camera service.

**What do you recommend as the most efficient form of heating in Grey-Bruce?** We work directly with homeowners to select the most efficient heating for their particular home as it depends upon a variety of factors, including the design and layout, the square footage, the site and location, budget, etc.



**PAUL WILSON**  
*The Fyre Place & Patio Shop*

**What services do you provide?** We provide quality sales, service and installation of natural gas, propane, wood, wood pellet and electric fireplaces, stoves and inserts in Grey and Bruce counties. We also sell patio furniture in season and rattan furniture all year long. When the Patio Shop is off season, we open our Christmas Wonderland for the remaining months.

**Annual fireplace maintenance tips for homeowners?** Maintaining your heating appliances should be performed by a licenced contractor annually. We service what we sell,

and are often called upon to service products installed by others. Homeowners can perform general duties that will help with performance and life of the unit, such as keeping glass clean and dusting control areas.

**What are the benefits of a wood pellet stove?** Wood pellet stoves are becoming popular for home heating. Compared to a wood stove, the most noticeable benefit is the consistent value of heat. Homeowners looking at pellet stoves should be somewhat handy, as there are routine cleanings that will need to be done by the homeowner. *Continued on page 66*



**NYK KIMBALL, CHRIS MACKENZIE & DUSTIN MCARTHUR**

*South-Port Mechanical Geothermal Inc.*

**Tell us about your company:** For over 20 years, South-Port Mechanical/Geothermal Inc. has been providing quality heating and cooling solutions and service for homes and businesses. From the time you walk through our door until the time we walk out of yours, South-Port will install, guarantee and service every aspect of your project, keeping your system up to date and running smoothly. Don't forget to ask us about our fast, fair and friendly financing options and available rebates.

**What are the benefits of geothermal?** Geothermal takes advantage

of the natural heating and cooling capacity of the earth (on property you own) by drawing upon a resource that is essentially free. A great benefit is that a geothermal system effortlessly maintains a steady ambient room temperature when compared to other sources.

**Advice for preparing your system for fall and winter:** During those cold winter nights, your heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system becomes the most valuable commodity in your home. Have your system inspected in the fall to best prepare it for the demands of winter.



**PAUL SUTTER**  
*Warton Home Hardware  
Building Centre*

**Tell us about the services you provide:** As a home dealer, we offer the home installation program for products we sell. The most popular items for installs are home and garage packages, decks, fences, roofing, windows and doors. We schedule the best contractors (who are all fully insured) for each install – and guarantee both the materials and the installation.

**What tips do you have for upgrading windows?** There are a variety of window styles available and some are more efficient than others. We advise our customers of the differences so they are fully informed

when making decisions. They can also see different window options on display in our Warton Home Design Centre. It is important to note that great installers make all of the difference.

**What should homeowners look for when selecting exterior doors?** If a new door is in your plans, the selection of glass styles is almost unlimited to suit your taste and the style of your home. Similar to windows, there are quality differences to consider and again, professional installation is key to ensure years of carefree service. *Continued on page 68*



PHOTO: BONNIE FOX

## GREG, CHARLIE & TOM MACDONALD

*Macdonald's BrandSource Home Furnishings*

**Tells us about your family business:** Macdonald's was founded in 1953 by current owner Greg Macdonald's father and uncle. Over the years the business has been passed down to the second generation. And today the third generation, Tom and Tara Macdonald, are heavily involved. Doing business in a small town means we treat every customer like family.

**What makes your showroom unique?** The original building is the size of a hockey rink. So that's how big our main showroom is.

We're now the size of three hockey rinks! But unlike the chain stores, our furniture, appliances and mattresses aren't just for display. See something you like? You can take it home today.

**What are top sellers this season?** La-Z-Boy sofas are always popular, but customers are particularly excited about this year's fall designs. Also, sectionals draw a lot of interest because we have so many to choose from. And many people come by just to see our latest wall art to complete their new room design. *Continued on page 70*

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**CHRIS ROVINELLI, MERNA NORRIS & RORY TOMLINSON, WITH DAKOTA**  
*Tintean & Chantico Fireplace Gallery*

**Tell us about your company:** Chantico Fireplace Gallery specializes in the full installation of gas and wood-burning fireplaces, including indoor and outdoor fireplaces, kitchen islands, barbecues and fire pits. We've recently opened a divisional store west of Meaford on Highway 26 called Tintean, which specializes in offering quality-valued wood and gas burning fireplaces and stoves.

**What trends are you seeing in the design of fireplaces in the home?** Multi-sided fireplaces as well as outdoor fireplaces and fire pits are all very popular. At Chantico, we offer the entire package: we design customized, one-of-a-kind fireplaces and fireboxes, including the focal

wall and related elements. In some cases the fireplace can be structural, therefore it's important to hire experts that can determine the proper sizing to create a desirable aesthetic as well as proper function.

**A fireplace can be a big investment. What advice do you have for homeowners?** We once read a real estate article that stated that homes with fireplaces sold for five per cent higher than those without and that a fireplace was the second most desirable feature in the sale of a home (double car garage being the first). That being said, the ambience of a burning fireplace is priceless. **OH**

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