



TERI STANLEY/ENTERPRISE

Kevin Winget and Richard Chickering, employees of Gary Sylvester's Building Movers and Excavators of Falmouth, are just visible as they work in the shadow of a historic County Road, Pocasset, home. Homeowners Louis and Brenda Kerr had to have their house jacked up and contaminated soils removed, per the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency, after their home heating oil tank ruptured. The couple decided to have the entire house raised and a new, full foundation installed.

Oil Tank Rupture Displaces Pocasset Family For The Holidays

By DIANA T. BARTH

It would have been nice to have been home for the holidays, but for the Kerr family of County Road in Pocasset, that possibility ended when their outside oil tank ruptured, spilling gallons of oil around, and under, their restored circa 1890s home.

"Get your tank inspected," was the message sent out by homeowners Louis M. and Brenda C. Kerr, whose tank gave way in November, starting a process that involved everyone from the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency to Gary Sylvester's Building Movers and Excavators of Falmouth.

The Bourne Fire Department, building department, and the

conservation commission were among the departments and boards involved as the Kerrs began to address the minor disaster created by the spill.

There had been a brick foundation and a small crawl space under the Greek Revival-style home prior to the home heating oil spill. Now, the house is shored up and the contaminated soil has been removed from under it.

Given the extent of the digging necessary, Mr. Kerr said, it was deemed "prudent" to redo the full foundation before lowering the home back down onto its new underpinnings.

The work, which started the first week in December, displaced

the Kerrs, who spent the holidays with family in Falmouth, but who will be living with friends in Pocasset now that school has resumed for their children.

As for having oil tanks inspected, homeowners should not just look at the tank, themselves, Mr. Kerr said, they should have a professional inspect it.

The tanks rust from the inside out, he said, using the voice of experience. He said his tank looked fine from the outside.

He said water can get inside a tank, whether that tank is outside or down in the basement.

Given the expenses involved in cleaning up the mess an accident creates, the cost of the inspection is money well spent, he said.