



# welcome to **COMO** country

DELIVERING A LOT MORE THAN FUEL.

ISSUE NO. 11  
SUMMER 2009



## Como's Credit Department WORKING WITH YOU!

Ask Pete Coda, Como's credit manager, what his job description is and he will tell you it's to build and promote a kinder, gentler credit department. Credit managers at most organizations have a reputation for being uncaring and difficult to work with, but not Pete. He trains staff at all Como divisions on solutions to help customers manage to pay their annual heating costs in a way that is convenient for them.

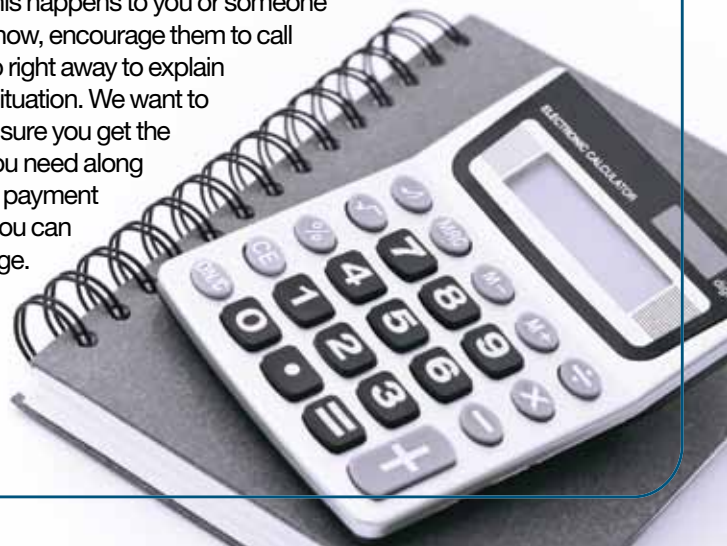
The majority of Como's customers are net-30 customers and have little problem paying their fuel bills 30 days after delivery. However, some customers who are seasonally employed or on a tight fixed income may find it more difficult to pay. These are the customers who enjoy talking with Pete.

"Working with customers to create a payment plan to meet their needs is something I take great pride in," says Pete. "We care about our customers here at Como and want to do what's best for them."

One of the ways Como helps clients better manage their annual heating costs is with the Budget Pay program. This program allows customers to choose an 8 – 12 month payment plan. Once you've chosen how many months you'd like to take to pay, Como will review your usage history and calculate a fixed monthly payment for you.

"Many customers try to pay their annual heating costs by making just a few large payments a couple of times a year," says Pete. "This can be difficult to do year after year. I encourage people to think about paying their annual heating costs much like they do other household bills including mortgage, car payment, electricity, etc. and spread the expense out over a monthly basis."

The key factors to making any kind of payment plan work is open communication and consistency. Many people hit a bump in the road once in a while and this is nothing to be ashamed of. If this happens to you or someone you know, encourage them to call Como right away to explain your situation. We want to make sure you get the fuel you need along with a payment plan you can manage.





## Meet John Reilly

Como proudly welcomes John Reilly as the newest member of the sales team. John began working for Como in May of this year and is responsible for managing commercial and residential customer relationships in Duluth and Two Harbors.

Before coming to Como, John was busy finishing up his bachelor's degree at the College of St. Scholastica and interning at the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce.

While John just recently began his career with Como, John has already been a part of the Como family for many years. His father, Al Killoran, has been the manager of Como's Tower office for seven years and is thrilled about working with his son.

"I'm glad John found an opportunity to come and work for Como," said Al. "We're having fun working together, finding ways to sell customers on the many benefits there are to being a Como customer."



## EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Meet Jim Frasheski – Como's Cable Division

In his 35 years of working as a service tech, Jim Frasheski has helped thousands of customers and has seen it all. Besides his impressive experience, Jim brings much more to work with him each day. He brings a can-do attitude and a commitment to getting the job done right.

"Jim is the kind of person that always goes over and above your expectations," explains Michelle Barth, manager of Como's Cable and Minong divisions.

During this past harsh winter, Jim volunteered to be on call 24 hours a day including the weekends,

to serve the repair needs of customers in Cable, Minong and Ashland.

"It's rare that you find someone willing to make that kind of a commitment," said Michelle. "I can't imagine how we would have made it through the winter without him."

Besides working for Como, Jim is a volunteer fire fighter for Chicog Township. He is the father of two grown children and enjoys spending time in the outdoors hunting and fishing with his wife.



**Jim Frasheski**  
Como's Cable Division

# Important Propane Safety Information

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SMELL GAS



### 1. NO FLAMES OR SPARKS!

Immediately put out all smoking materials and other open flames. Do not operate lights, appliances, telephones or cell phones. Flames or sparks from these sources can trigger an explosion or fire.



### 2. LEAVE THE AREA IMMEDIATELY!

Get everyone out of the building or area where you suspect gas is leaking.



### 3. SHUT OFF THE GAS.

Turn off the main gas supply valve on your propane tank if it is safe to do so. To close the valve, turn it to the right (clockwise).



### 4. REPORT THE LEAK.

From a neighbor's home or other nearby building away from the gas leak, call your propane retailer right away. If you can't reach your propane retailer, call 911 or your local fire department.



### 5. DO NOT RETURN TO THE BUILDING OR AREA

Until your propane retailer determines it is safe to do so.



### 6. GET YOUR SYSTEM CHECKED.

Before you attempt to use any of your propane appliances, your propane retailer or a qualified service technician must check your entire system to ensure that it is leak-free.

## WORKING ON PROPANE SYSTEMS IS NOT A DO-IT-YOURSELF JOB

Only a qualified service technician has the proper training to install, inspect, service, maintain and repair your appliances. Call your local Como office to have your appliances and propane system inspected each year by one of our qualified service technicians.

Clip and Save!

## CONGRATULATIONS

To our many contest winners!

### Doyle C. – Duluth, MN

Home Show Grand Prize winner of a new oil furnace

### Vicki M. – Saginaw, MN

See Pink photo contest winner of a free pink Como t-shirt

### June M. – Hayward, WI

Pink Truck raffle winner of a die-cast model of Como's pink truck



## Como Customer Profile

Dear Como,

This past winter while I was on a short vacation, my new boiler system stopped working. Thanks to the ComoWatch tank monitor I had installed, I received an instant alert to my email indicating my home temperature had dropped to a dangerous 47 degrees.

I called the plumber and the repairs were made immediately. If I hadn't been alerted like I was, the frigid temps in my home could have caused major destruction. The tank alert system saved my home.

Sincerely,

Don Summers  
Moose Lake, MN



# The Pros and Cons of owning your own propane tank.

The concept of owning your own propane tank has been around for decades but has not been a popular choice considered by many propane users until just recently. As a responsible propane provider, we feel it is our job to inform our propane customers about the pros and cons of owning your own tank.

## PROS

- Once you own your own tank, you are able to call on any propane provider to fill your tank. This may enable you to receive a cheaper price per gallon of propane. (Average savings of \$.10 per gallon.)

## CONS

- Each time you call a different fuel provider to fill your tank, they may require a full system safety check be performed. This could cost you up to \$100 each time you switch suppliers.

- Most tanks being sold to customers are used tanks. They are either old or damaged tanks that have been refurbished and normally sell for \$1,200. A brand new tank costs about 50% more or \$1,800.
- Some insurance companies may not insure a homeowner who owns their own propane tank due to safety concerns. If you choose to purchase a propane tank, it is recommended you call your insurance provider in advance and ask about their policy.
- If you own your own propane tank, you will be responsible for the safety of your entire propane system and appliances. You will also be responsible for all tank maintenance including repairing leaks.

*continued on next page*

## CALCULATE THE REWARDS

Typical tank cost: \$1,800

Avg. savings/gallon .10 x

Avg. gallons/year 800

**Avg. savings/year \$80**

**AVG. NUMBER OF YEARS TO RECEIVE PAYBACK: OVER 22 YEARS**



# COMO Kids Corner

\_ o m \_ M \_ d \_ e r \_ \_ s

\_ a f \_ t \_ c \_ e \_ k

\_ e l i \_ \_ r \_

G \_ i l \_ i \_ g

C \_ m \_ \_ i \_ & P \_ \_ p a \_ e

P \_ \_ k \_ r \_ p \_ n e \_ r u \_ \_



Answers: Como Mod Series, Safety check, Delivery, Grilling, Como Oil & Propane, Pink propane truck

## *continued from previous page*

Como cautions customers to seriously weigh the pros vs. the cons when deciding to purchase your own propane tank.

“It’s a matter of safety,” says Bob Timmons, Como’s Safety and Operations Manager. “Propane work is not a do-it-yourself kind of job. Too often we come upon situations where a customer has taken the liberty to switch out tanks or appliances and failed to secure the system. This could cause a potentially dangerous accident.”

In an effort to exceed all propane industry regulations and mandates, Como offers propane system safety checks free of charge to all Como customers who lease a propane tank from Como. These checks

are completed every 2 – 5 years and include the following procedures:

- Tank Inspection
- System Leak Check
- Pressure Testing – all lines from the propane tank to the appliances are tested
- Regulator Performance Testing
- Appliance Control Valve Testing
- Gas Shut-off Testing
- Odor Testing

The propane system safety checks last about an hour and we encourage the homeowner to be involved in the process whenever possible. There are many questions to be answered and

the information you will gain about your propane system will be very valuable.

Sometimes during a routine system safety check, we discover parts are old or damaged and need to be replaced. Please know that you will be given a service repair estimate to review before any repair work will be performed on your system.

If you are a Como propane customer and have not received a system safety check in the past five years, please call your local Como office to schedule this service. Safety is Como’s top priority and we want to give you the peace of mind knowing a professional has checked your propane system and has verified it safe for operation.

# GRILLING

## THE OFFICIAL TASTE OF SUMMER



### **NOTHING QUITE SIGNALS THE BEGINNING OF SUMMER LIKE THE SMELL OF A BARBEQUE.**

To help our customers better enjoy this great summer pastime and stay safe, Como offers some helpful safety advice and grill specials, along with a recipe sure to make your mouth water.

### **IMPORTANT PROPANE SAFETY INFORMATION FOR USERS OF SMALL CYLINDERS**

Please read and share these safety rules with your family to help keep everyone safe and to reduce the risk of serious and potentially fatal injury, fire or explosion.

### **TRANSPORTING SMALL CYLINDERS**

- **ALWAYS** transport and store a cylinder in a secure and upright position so it will not fall, shift or roll
- **ALWAYS** close the cylinder valve and, if required, seal with a plug, even if the cylinder is empty. Ask your propane retailer if a plug is required
- **NEVER** keep a filled cylinder inside a hot vehicle or transport it inside a closed trunk
- **ALWAYS** place the cylinder in a well-ventilated area of the vehicle
- **ALWAYS** proceed directly to your destination and immediately remove the cylinder from your vehicle
- The law places limits on the number of cylinders and the amount of propane that can be transported in closed-bodied vehicles such as passenger cars and vans. Ask your propane retailer for more information on state and local codes that apply to you



### **WHAT DOES PROPANE SMELL LIKE?**

**PROPANE SMELLS LIKE ROTTEN EGGS, A SKUNK'S SPRAY OR A DEAD ANIMAL. PROPANE MANUFACTURERS ADD THIS SMELL TO HELP ALERT CUSTOMERS TO PROPANE LEAKS.**

### **STORING SMALL CYLINDERS**

- **NEVER** store or place a propane cylinder indoors or in an enclosed area such as a basement, garage, shed or tent
- **NEVER** store or place a propane cylinder in an area of excessive heat (120 degrees or higher) or near a stove, fireplace or other heat source. The heat builds up pressure inside the cylinder, which may cause the pressure relief valve to release propane. Flash fires or explosions can result from exposing cylinders to heat
- **NEVER** store or place a spare cylinder under or near a barbecue grill
- **DO NOT** smoke or have any ignition sources such as flames or spark-producing electrical tools in the area while handling or transporting cylinders



### TAMPERING WITH/REPAIR OF SMALL CYLINDERS OR OUTDOOR APPLIANCES

**DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES TRY TO MODIFY OR REPAIR VALVES, REGULATORS, OR OTHER CYLINDER OR APPLIANCE PARTS.**



Propane cylinders incorporate special components such as valves, connectors and other parts to keep them safe for use with grills and other propane appliances. Damage to any component can cause a gas leak.

**DON'T RISK IT!** Call your propane retailer or a qualified service technician for assistance.



### TESTING FOR PROPANE LEAKS

It is important to inspect your cylinder and outdoor gas appliances for leaks. Do this before using them for the first time each season, as well as on a regular basis. This can be accomplished with a simple "bubble" test:



- 1) Apply leak detector solution or thick soapy water to the connections(s) between the cylinder valve and the regulator outlet. These connections are marked with an "x" on the diagram below.
- 2) Slowly open the cylinder valve and watch for bubbles.
- 3) If bubbles appear, close the cylinder valve, tighten the connection, and repeat the process. If bubbles still appear, call your propane retailer immediately.

### REFILLING SMALL CYLINDERS MAKE SURE YOUR CYLINDER IS EQUIPPED WITH AN OVERFILL PREVENTION DEVICE (OPD)



An OPD is a safety feature that helps prevent small propane cylinders from being overfilled. An overfilled cylinder doesn't have enough space left if the liquid expands when exposed to warmer temperatures. This can cause an increase in cylinder pressure and create potentially hazardous conditions.

Most cylinders with OPDs have special triangular handwheels with the letters "OPD" on them. In many states, cylinders without OPDs cannot be refilled. If you are uncertain as to whether your cylinder has an OPD valve on it, ask your propane retailer.

### OLD OR DAMAGED CYLINDERS

**NEVER** use a damaged cylinder or a cylinder that has been in a fire. All cylinders must be inspected before they are refilled. The law requires periodic inspection of cylinders, and it is against the law to refill out-of-date cylinders. The last inspection date is stamped on the cylinder.

### DISPOSAL OF CYLINDERS

**NEVER** dispose of your propane cylinder by throwing it in the trash. Check to see if there are municipal programs for collection in your area or contact your propane retailer for guidance on disposal of the cylinder.



## IF YOU SMELL GAS



1) Immediately put out all smoking materials and other open flames



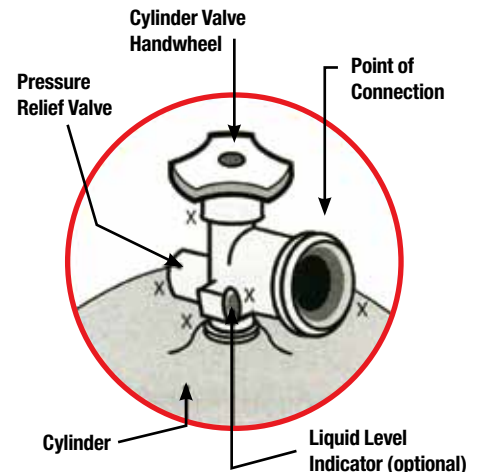
2) If you are able to, safely turn off the cylinder valve. To close the valve, turn it to the right (clockwise)



3) Immediately leave the area and call 911 or your local fire department



4) Before you restart the appliance, have a qualified service technician inspect your cylinder and appliance



## From the recipe book

Here's a simple recipe from Como's grilling specialist, Mike McManus.



### Brad's Pork Loin

Grilling time: 2 – 3 hours

- 5 lb. whole boneless pork loin
- 2 tbsp. Grey Poupon dijon mustard
- 1 cup soy sauce
- ½ cup white vinegar
- ¼ cup cooking sherry
- 2 tbsp. brown sugar

### Directions

For the marinade: Mix all the ingredients listed above (except the loin of course) in a sauce pan and bring to a boil. Allow to cool. Place loin in container and pour marinade over loin, turning to cover. Refrigerate for 24 hours, turning occasionally.

Close drain valve on drip pan. Be sure grill is level. Pour one gallon of hot water into drip pan. Light the grill and preheat. Place the loin directly on the main cooking grid. Use a digital meat thermometer and set it for 165 degrees. (Note: place the tip of the thermometer's probe into the thickest part of the meat.) You will need to add more water about half way through the grilling time. Remove loin from grill and allow to stand for ten minutes before serving.

# SIGN UP FOR BUDGET PAY!

Take the guesswork out of knowing how much your heating bill will be each month by signing up for Como's convenient Budget Pay program.

With the Budget Pay program, our customers enjoy these benefits:

- No surprises – your heating bill will be the same each month\*
- Flexibility – you choose a plan to spread your equal payments over a period of 8 – 12 months, similar to other monthly payments, such as mortgage, phone and electric bills
- No finance charges
- A more convenient way to manage your household budget

\*Budget payments may be modified during the heating season if temperatures or market conditions are significantly different than normal. There are restrictions to qualify. For full details on the Como Budget Pay program, call your local Como office.

Como's Budget Pay program is simple. You choose a plan from 8 – 12 months. Next, Como will calculate a fixed monthly payment for you based on your usage history. Then, you decide if you would like to be invoiced each month or have your payments made automatically from your checking or savings account or your debit or credit card. It's that easy!

For more information or to sign up, call your local Como office today or visit us online at [www.comoilandpropane.com!](http://www.comoilandpropane.com!)



HOLLAND  
**GRILL**  
SPECIALS

**Epic Grill \$799**

**Apex Grill \$999**

Receive \$75 in free accessories including a grill cover and a grill cleaning kit with the purchase of any new Holland Grill, while supplies last! For more information call Mike McManus at 218-722-6666.

# Delivering more than a great price.

Everyone wants the best price on heating fuel and at Como, we strive to give our customers the best price while maintaining our high standards of safety, service and reliability. Price discounters in the heating fuel business cannot match the experience, reliability, service or safety track record of Como, so they offer the only thing they can: a cheaper price.

**If you are approached with an offer from another fuel company that sounds too good to be true, Como encourages you to consider the following:**

- How long have they been in business? Como has been in business more than 63 years.
- Can this company guarantee fuel supply during the coldest days and during product shortages?
- Does this company have a local office? How far are their delivery people from your home? How quickly can you get fuel if you need it?
- How long will they honor the low price they quoted you? Can they provide you a written price guarantee?

---

**Lower prices and special deals always look tempting. They're meant to. But, if a deal sounds too good to be true, it usually is. All too often, when customers switch heating fuel suppliers based only on price, they unfortunately find out later that they gave up something in return.**

---

During the 2007 – 2008 heating season, Jack Lakoskey switched from Como to take advantage of a competitor's first fill incentive and \$.05 per gallon new customer discount. Jack figured his new supplier would continue to be less expensive until the following season when his rate took a step increase.

"I switched back to Como right away," said Jack. "Basing my decision solely on price was a mistake. For the few dollars I saved, I gave up the local service I relied upon. Como is a company committed to service and is active in the community I live and work in. I know they appreciate my business and I am happy to be a Como customer once again."



# FUEL THE THUNDER

*The fourth annual Como Modified Series is underway and we hope to see you in the stands!*

Presented this year by the Lake Country Chevy Dealers, Como's modified dirt-track racing series lives up to its promise to be the premier racing series of northern MN and WI. Along with our many sponsors, Como has raised the total series purse to \$42,000 making it the highest-paying dirt-track racing series in the country.

"Our goal is to continue to improve the racing experience for fans and drivers every year," said Como Mod Series founder and Sr. Vice President and CFO of Como Oil and Propane, Joe Stariha. "Offering large payouts for drivers and more prizes for fans is just one of the ways we've been successful."

Another way Como is bringing more to racing fans and drivers this year is with the redesign of comomodseries.com. The new dynamic, multimedia-backed website keeps drivers and fans connected with on-demand viewing, audio interviews, fan contests and more!

## 2009 COMO MODIFIED SERIES SCHEDULE

Proctor: Sun., May 24th  
Hibbing: Fri., June 19th & Sat., June 20th  
Superior: Tues., July 21st  
Ashland: Sat., August 1st  
Proctor: Thurs., September 3rd  
Hibbing: Sat., September 5th  
Superior: Sat., September 12th  
Ashland: Fri., October 2nd & Sat., October 3rd

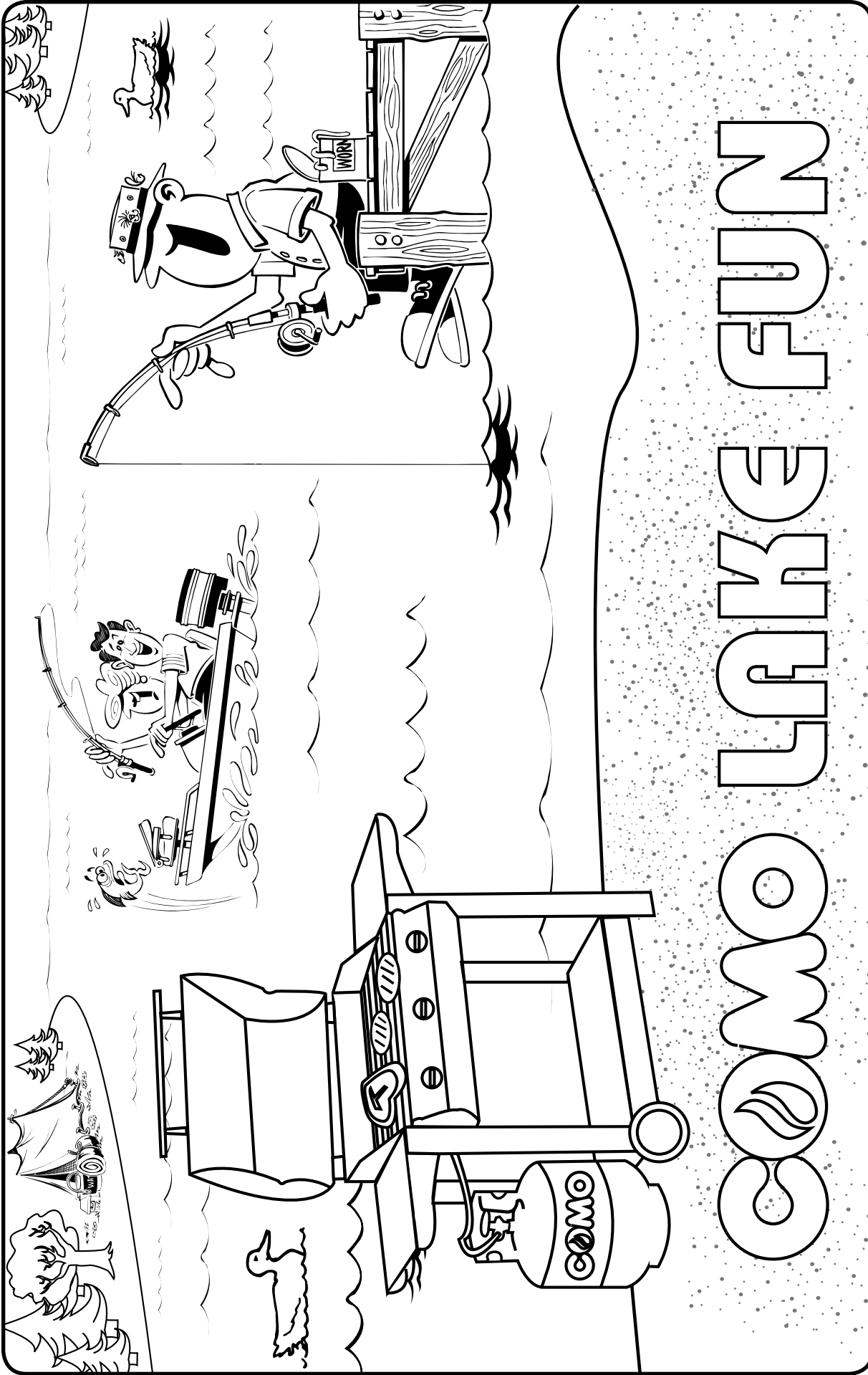
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

[www.comomodseries.com](http://www.comomodseries.com)

Joe Stariha: 218-349-7367 or [jstariha@comolp.com](mailto:jstariha@comolp.com)



[WWW.COMOMODSERIES.COM](http://WWW.COMOMODSERIES.COM)



**Como Coloring Contest**

Ages 0 – 5 – \$100 savings bond

Ages 6 – 10 – \$100 savings bond

Ages 11 – 15 – \$100 savings bond

One winner will be chosen out of each age group.

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

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail to:**

Como Coloring Contest

P.O. Box 16108

Duluth, MN 55816

Entries are due by August 31, 2009

# COMO

---

## OIL & PROPANE

### ASHLAND

3700 East Lake Shore Drive  
Ashland, WI 54806  
715-682-8880

### BARNUM

3636 County Road 61  
Barnum, MN 55707  
218-389-6578 or  
800-777-4642

### CABLE

42835 US Highway 63  
Cable, WI 54821  
715-798-3566 or  
800-777-8566

### DULUTH/SUPERIOR

4330 West 1st Street, Suite A  
Duluth, MN 55807  
218-722-6666

### GRAND MARAIS

2 Highway 61 East  
Grand Marais, MN 55604  
218-387-1165

### HIBBING

11419 Highway 37  
Hibbing, MN 55746  
218-262-0855 or  
218-262-1343

### MINONG

809 West Limits Road  
Minong, WI 54859  
715-466-4115

### TOWER

6403 Highway 169  
Tower, MN 55790  
218-753-2482 or  
888-891-2666

### TWO HARBORS

614 10th Street  
Two Harbors, MN 55616  
218-834-2666 or  
800-737-9351

## THE COMO CUSTOMER *Guarantee*



*This symbol was created to remind you about the added value Como brings to you as a customer. 24/7/365 you can trust Como will be there for you, in person, to handle any need you have with great care and attention.*

[www.comoilandpropane.com](http://www.comoilandpropane.com)

4330 West 1st Street, Suite A  
Duluth, MN 55807  
COMO OIL AND PROPANE



PRSR STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 705  
Duluth, MN