



Ken Field

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Mutual Frustration

I'm not sure if there is any wisdom to take away from this week's column but I feel the need to let out some frustration. When someone calls me for a recommendation on replacement of heating or air conditioning equipment I start with a clean slate. We always discuss the possibilities that are available and the range of efficiencies that are possible today. Gas heating equipment has changed more over the last 20 years than oil systems or heat pumps have so there are more choices. As far as the new tankless gas systems are concerned, the best of them have efficiencies near 97% which is very attractive. There are several brands and it is rare for a homeowner to ask for any particular one of them. I have taken factory training from a few different manufacturers but that doesn't necessarily lead me to recommend or install their systems. I look for someone with a proven track record and good feedback from others in the industry I communicate with. I have learned from the failure of other contractors not to use a few brands because the manufacturers of some have just disappeared leaving no support for their customers. Takagi and Quietside are a couple brands with no support whatsoever and no parts availability. When they break down, they need to be replaced. I have typically used Bosch, Rinnai and Utica for their quality, warranty and product support. Unfortunately what has happened in the last couple years is supply chain disruption and complete realignment with the market for all manufacturers.

A gas boiler I installed in 2018 was discontinued in 2020 and the part I need for my customer is probably going to take 3-4 weeks to get. Not because the parts are discontinued, but because the supply chain is broken. None of these products are made in the US so I feel like in order to use what is most efficient, we are forced to use equipment made overseas. I do my homework before I decide where to buy but the last 2 years have changed everything. Even the distributors who had a good stock of parts are currently depleted and waiting for more. Now I had to search the market and purchase an entire boiler left in stock at a wholesaler I don't even know to pull out a part for my customer. I do this because I can't just say "I'm sorry, you won't have hot water for a month". I sure hope the supply chain gets fixed soon because this is becoming a common occurrence.

Ken Field is the owner of Slate Belt Energy and Field's Service, Inc. As a certified energy rater and contractor, he is qualified to assess every aspect of energy usage and prescribe solutions to save energy. He can be reached at 610-759-6306 or email Ken@FieldsService.com





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All that was left to do was decide who was right for the position.

Oddly enough, that perfect person almost hadn't applied. Sandy Jameson, an English teacher at NAHS, had always had an interest in directing high school theater. Unfortunately, when the opportunity presented itself, Jameson found herself trying to balance work and caring for an 8 month old baby. Her initial instinct was to accept that the circumstances just weren't right and pass on the opportunity.

But Jameson just couldn't shake the nagging feeling that she was making a mistake. She explained, "I kept tossing it around, and tossing it around, and finally I said to myself: I have to write a letter of interest. I might not send it. I am not sure if I even want this job, but I am going to apply for it."

Jameson went ahead, wrote her letter of interest and filled out the application, still unsure if the position would be right for her. By the end of the process, she had convinced herself that she wanted to be the NAHS theater director.

Not only did Jameson convince herself that she would work well in the position, she managed to convince Davis of it too. Jameson recalled what Davis said to her during the interview: "He came into my classroom, and he said when he read my letter basically outlining my vision for the program, he said it was like someone had been spying on [him] because everything that [I] said is what [he] always thought it should be...He basically offered me the job right there."

Jameson gladly accepted the position and got started right away. After a year away from the stage due to COVID-19, she was adamant that the students put on a spring production. There was no time to waste. The lights on the marquee were starting to flicker back on and faint whispers of music hung in the air.

The first thing Jameson did was hold a meeting to gauge student interest. She was a little bit worried that students might not have the desire to get back on the stage after COVID-19. She was pleasantly surprised when 80 students showed up to that meeting.

Jameson found herself with a group of eager students ready to start working. Now she just needed to pick a show. What could she pick that would excite the students, the staff, and the Nazareth community? What show could provide the proper welcome for the revival of the theater program?

Little Shop of Horrors could. Jameson said, "I wanted to do it because it is not a very serious show. It is not like heavy social commentary, the music is catchy. It definitely has a dark humor and satire element to it, but it is nothing that is super dramatic or serious. I felt that we needed something kind of fun after 2 years of not a lot happening."

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