



Ken Field

Owner of Slate
Belt Energy
Services

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Just Make it Work

Being inquisitive is part of human nature but having a question and having an answer can be separated by a lot of time. Repairing anything that is electrical and mechanical can be difficult but when a problem is intermittent it can be maddening. Replacing parts on a hunch is not the right way to do it and can get very expensive. Having a good understanding of the operation is crucial because some things are just not possibly the cause of the problem and narrowing down the ones that are is very helpful.

Electronics get blamed far too often because they are part of a circuit board and it seems like the problem originates there. Electronic problems usually aren't intermittent but it's not impossible for a bad connection to make it seem so. Labor is expensive and spending 3 or 4 hours with a problematic furnace is not a good value. They always seem to behave when a technician is on site but as soon as we leave, the problem reoccurs. I have a couple data loggers that can be connected to record operating parameters and hopefully pinpoint a problem but they also takes time to install and remove so I only use them on the systems that seem to be possessed by a demon.

Sometimes homeowners will get frustrated that they are inconvenienced by an intermittent problem but unless they are willing to spend several hundred dollars and replace multiple components, it just takes a little time to pinpoint the problem. Trust me when I say that the homeowners' frustration is probably not at the level of the technician since value is our goal and wasting time or money is not a good value. A structured troubleshooting technique is important and rules out things that cannot possibly be the cause. Modern equipment has modern problems and high efficiency furnaces vented through the wall can shut down at the slightest disruption of exhaust or intake.

I have repaired several systems by moving something (like a trash can) sitting near the exhaust pipe. Intake pipes blocked by snow or kids dropping toys and stones into them is also not an easy one to find but is common. A good installation can prevent these problems but a good troubleshooting method spots them before parts are condemned. There is no doubt that experience is the best teacher. Paying attention to each and every brand and their specific problems makes it possible to speed up the troubleshooting. Not that manufacturers ever admit their flaws but we learn them in the field and get a head start on troubleshooting.

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

Professors and Internship Opportunities Prepared ESU Political Science Student for Career in Harrisburg

By ESU

EAST STROUDSBURG - aurny Antoine didn't become interested in politics until high school when, she said, "It kind of happened progressively—I fell into it." The more she learned about feminism and critical race theory, the more her interest grew. Politics became her career path. "I got into political science and wanting to help stamp out bias and racism. I'm interested in bringing my feminism to policy. I'm trying to reach out and help people who are marginalized," she said.

Antoine graduated from ESU in May 2020 with a degree in political science. While at ESU, Antoine participated in the Osgood Center Program, a 2-week educational program that focuses on politics, domestic and foreign policy, media, and public policy. "Dr. [Kimberly] Adams took me and a couple of other students to this program in Washington, D.C. We participated in lectures and discussions and learned leadership skills from guest speakers," Antoine said. The roster of speakers included professors, authors, legislators, attorneys, analysts, and the founder of C-SPAN. The student group also visited the U.S. Capitol, Mount Vernon, and several museums.

As a student, Antoine completed fellowships with two nonprofits and worked as an intern for Representative Susan Wild (PA-07). These opportunities gave her firsthand experience with the world of politics. "I greeted visitors, picked up the phone and talked to constituents. If a person had an issue with a federal agency, we would reach out to our contacts at that agency and help figure out the issue. I tracked things in the database to see who was helped by our office. We tried to help them in any way possible," she said.

Now living in Harrisburg, Antoine started her job as a legislative assistant with the Pennsylvania House Democrats in June 2021. Her internship helped prepare her for the job. "I still help constituents. If they have issues with any state agencies, we help move the process forward. If someone has any issues with PennDOT—for instance, if they've applied for a handicapped placard, we help move that forward. We will go down to the house floor and introduce legislation. We track the representatives' travel expenses so they can be reimbursed. I help make sure things move more smoothly," Antoine explains. She stresses the importance of internships when it comes to gaining professional experience. "Many people may underestimate how much they mimic real job experience. With mine [for Rep. Wild], I was basically like a staff member. When I pick up phones here in Harrisburg, I'm doing the exact same thing that I did in my internship. There are the little things you're introduced to beforehand—you're familiar with it, you excel at it. You're ready to go when you're on the job."

Antoine works closely with legislative decision makers and influential figures. She met Governor Tom Wolf during her first week when she was shadowing a fellow legislative assistant. Antoine was asked if she wanted to go to an event for the Toni Morrison Society. While there, Representative Stephen Kinsey (D-Philadelphia) asked Antoine if she would like to meet the governor. Every day is different—that's what makes it exciting and interesting.

Antoine is well on her way to fulfilling her professional ambitions. Her future plans include earning a master's degree in public administration. "I can see myself working in a variety of departments or agencies in the government to learn more about policy in hands-on way," she said. "One day, I would like to take these experiences and knowledge of policy to lead a non-profit organization that advocates for women's rights."



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