

M o v i e s , B o o k s , S h o w s

Keep your home warm, safe as the temperature drops

Special to The Gold Country Times

As the weather cools down, most of us will be reaching for the thermostat to turn up the heat. Unfortunately, many people don't think about maintaining their home's furnace until something goes wrong and they are left in the cold. Your furnace is the largest gas-fired appliance in your home and requires regular maintenance to run safely and efficiently.

The easiest and most cost-effective step a homeowner can take to improve efficiency is to change the air filters in the furnace regularly. Replacing dirty filters will save money on your energy bill and will lengthen the lifespan of the equipment. When filters become clogged with dirt and debris airflow is restricted, meaning the furnace has to work extra hard to produce the same amount of heat.

Another way to save money is to install a programmable thermostat which can be set to raise the temperature at certain times, like when you get out of bed in the morning, and lower the temperature while you are away at work. Using a programmable thermostat helps ensure that your system is not running more than needed.

When firing up the heater for the first time, it is normal to notice a slight burning smell. What you smell is burning dust that settled on the heat exchanger over the spring and summer months. The smell should dissipate after about 30 minutes of use. However, if you smell paper, wiring, or plastic burning, turn off your system immediately and call a professional.

To avoid any problems, it is a good idea to have a professional inspect your system once per year. The furnace is usually tucked away in a garage, attic, or closet of a home, so a small problem can grow into a large one before it is discovered. That is why it's so important to perform regular preventative maintenance.

Last year, Beutler replaced the 16-year-old furnace and air conditioner in the home of Gordon Hanson in Gold River, CA. He has his new system inspected every six months. "I like not having to worry about staying on top of maintenance," Mr. Hanson said. "They call me when it's time for an appointment and come out to make sure everything is working properly."

A professional technician will check wiring, control boards, heat exchangers, and safety devices to make sure they are all working properly. He or she will also test the system's motor to make sure it is using

Robin: Lady of Legend --- Just released!

Robin Hood is not the man you thought he was.... ROBIN HOOD IS A GIRL! Calaveras County author R.M. ArceJaeger has just released her eBook *Robin: Lady of Legend*, a remarkable reinvention of the mythos of Robin Hood.

What if Robin Hood isn't the man you thought him to be? What if Robin Hood isn't a man at all? In her revolutionary new book, *Robin: Lady of Legend*, author R.M. ArceJaeger transforms 800 years of legends and myths into a powerful and credible tale that features a lady as Robin Hood.

From the very start of this historical adventure, *Robin: Lady of Legend* provides a unique portrayal of the classic hero. ArceJaeger's Robin is both relatable and intriguing as she struggles to circumvent society's expectations of her life, only to find herself in a situation where its limitations and structures no longer apply.

Faced with the terrific responsibility of keeping herself and scores of others alive, Robin discovers that much of what she has disdained in the past is useful and needful now. Her endeavors to provide a life of honor and purpose for her people while aiding the land's downtrodden win her high esteem, but enrage the Sheriff of Nottingham, who plots a deadly fate for her and her band.

As the Sheriff's traps close in around her and assassins seek to bring her down, Robin must face the secrets and fears that threaten to destroy her if she is to find the courage and cunning to save her people and fulfill her destiny as one of history's greatest heroes. *Robin: Lady of Legend* is available for \$2.99 from Amazon Kindle, Barnes & Noble Nook, or from the book's website: www.ladyoflegend.com. R.M. ArceJaeger is an author, publisher, and computer scientist. In 2005, she was named a California Arts



R.M. ArceJaeger, a Calaveras County author has just released her first eBook. *Courtesy Photo*

Scholar for excellence in Creative Writing, and she possesses a Bachelor of Science Computer Science degree from Harvey Mudd College, where she graduated with distinction. ArceJaeger provides freelance eBook formatting, editing, publishing, and web design services, and can be contacted via her website: www.rmarcejaeger.com, or by email at contact@rmarcejaeger.com

Mentors

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...mission of the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program is to connect Calaveras County young people in first through twelfth grades with safe, positive, adult role models who will offer support, guidance, friendship, and help the youth make healthy life decisions. Potential mentors are thoroughly screened to ensure the safety of everyone in the program.

Once matched, mentors and mentees spend a couple of hours a week together for at least a year doing things they both enjoy—sports, crafts, cooking a meal together, or working on a project. Mentors receive extensive pre-match training and then additional training throughout the year, plus regular monitoring of the friendship, as-needed support, and invitations to group field trips and events.

the correct amount of power. Pulling too much power is an early warning sign that a motor is about to fail. Finally, the technician will make sure the exhaust is venting properly. Your furnace is set up so the gas burned off by the flames that keep you warm is routed outside. But if there are any holes in the system or if something is not functioning properly, dangerous carbon monoxide could enter your home.

By keeping up with maintenance on your home's heating system and enlisting the help of a professional once per year, you will keep your family warm and safe during the cold winter months.

Jim Anderberg is general manager of Beutler Air Conditioning Service in Sacramento. For more information, visit www.beutler.com

This year's National Mentoring Month theme, "Invest in the Future, Mentor a Child," highlights the ability of an individual volunteer mentor to influence the next generation. The Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program will focus its National Mentoring Month efforts on a public awareness campaign to recruit mentors for local young people.

Mentor Holly Orman is organizing a county-wide effort to spread the word about the Mentoring Program. Every Saturday in January, mentors and mentees staffed an information table in front of a local grocery store somewhere in the county. If you see them, please stop by

to say hello and ask them about their experience in the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program. A highlight of the NMM campaign is Thank Your Mentor Day celebrated on January 26, 2012. On that day, many Americans will reach out to thank or honor those individuals who encouraged and guided them and had a lasting impact on their lives.

Thank Your Mentor Day promotes "Four Ways to Honor Your Mentor": 1) contact your mentor directly to express your appreciation; 2) pass on what you received by becoming a mentor to a young person in your community; 3) make a financial contribution to a local mentoring program; and, 4) write a tribute to your mentor for posting on www.WhoMentoredYou.org.

For more information about the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program or the new Calaveras Mentoring Foundation, the public may call (209) 736-6078 or visit www.calaverasmentoring.org.

VALENTINE'S DAY MASSAGE SPECIAL @ New York Fitness During the entire month of February all one-hour, massage therapy sessions are **ONLY \$49!** Call 209-223-3236 to schedule an appointment or purchase a gift certificate today!

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