

Look who's reading the Gater

Take us with you on your next trip. Then send your favorite "Reading the Gater" photo to gater@applegater.org or mail to *Applegater*, PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530.



Photos, clockwise from top left:

- Diana Potts** was pleased to find a review in the *Gater* restaurant section of a hot tapas bar in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.
- Karen Giese**, stranded on Whidbey Island, searched the *Applegater* for rescue services.
- Annette Parsons and Jim Clover** checked the *Gater* events calendar to see who's on the bill at the Amargosa Opera House in Death Valley Junction, California.
- Kiana and Andres Raber** traveled safely to Cloud Gate, aka "The Bean," in Chicago's Millennium Park, thanks to the *Applegater's* updated GPS application.

Keep those articles, letters, opinions, and "Reading the Gater" photos coming in. You are the Gater!

■ THINK EMBERS

Continued from page 1

many new folks move to the Applegate each year, I'm thinking it's time to bring back those messages for a quick review. After all, with all the rain we got this winter, the fine fuels, grasses, and weeds are already tall and plentiful.

You may remember that statistically, most homes are destroyed in wildfires because embers or firebrands flying ahead of the fire land on fine fuels that catch and ignite the home. (A wildfire roaring through the forest is *not* the most common cause of homes burning—it moves too quickly.) However, if the home is covered with pine needles, has leaves in the gutters, or firewood stored underneath the deck, rest assured those flying embers will start ignitions everywhere. The photo on page 1 from the 2002 Missionary Ridge Fire in Colorado illustrates how a home with fine fuels on and around it can ignite, while the thinned mature trees are still standing.

Studies from large fires as far back as 1961 have shown a 95 percent survival rate in homes with two things: a (well-maintained) fire-resistant roof and 30-60 feet of vegetation clearance (Stanford Research Institute, Howard et al. 1973). However, a 30- to 60-foot vegetation clearance is not a hard and fast guarantee that your home will survive! There are other sources of burnable materials besides

vegetation. "Fire spreads as a continually propagating process, not as a moving mass" (*Reducing the Wildland Fire Threat to Homes: Where and How Much?* by Jack D. Cohen, PhD). If there are *any* fuels leading to your home, the fire can and will spread.

So think about things like your garage, carport, or a neighboring house, the old wooden fence around the yard, or even a wood mulch pathway to the front door. If you live in a neighborhood with homes close together, fire could spread from house to house. What if a neighbor is burning a slash pile on their property and your wood fence catches fire? Could it lead to your house? Or if the school bus stopped to drop off the kids and the exhaust pipe spewed embers onto your mulched pathway, leading right up to the front door?

Yes, I'm describing a "home ignition zone" or HIZ—the area surrounding your home that has fuels that could lead a fire to the house itself. Every HIZ is different, and it is possible (and common!) to share an HIZ with a neighbor. Break up the fuel lines, make them "discontinuous," and maintain this work over time. You'll be better prepared for fire season, and your local firefighters will thank you!

Sandy Shaffer

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For more information on the HIZ, contact me via email or check in with the Applegate Fire District. Free pamphlets are available!

Fire season is approaching: Be ready, be set, go!

The Applegate Valley Fire District No. 9 reminds us that every year homes in southwest Oregon are threatened by wildfire and other emergencies. Follow the Ready, Set, Go evacuation process provided by the Rogue Valley Fire Prevention Cooperative.

Ready...make copies of important papers, set aside a supply of water and food, designate a place to go, and plan a way for friends and family to find you.

Set...pack your emergency kit, water, and food; point your car so it's facing out the driveway; and monitor local news stations for updates.

Go...act quickly, close all windows and doors, and leave for your designated location in a safe manner. Do not return home until told to do so by incident officials.

You are responsible for your family's safety. Be prepared, stay informed, and remember: Ready, Set, Go! Visit the Rogue Valley Emergency Management website at rvem.org to learn more about the Ready, Set, Go evacuation process.



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