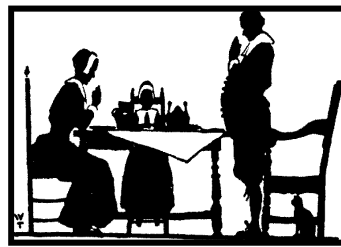


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Happy Thanksgiving!

Biscuit aftermath recipe sought by forest service

Public thoughts on how to manage Siskiyou National Forest land affected by the Biscuit Fire are sought by the U.S. Forest Service, which is planning public meetings.

Community workshops focusing on the Biscuit Fire Integrated Assessment are scheduled in four locations; two in Josephine County:

*Monday, Dec. 9 at the Josephine County Fairgrounds Floral Bldg. in Grants Pass.

*Tuesday, Dec. 10 at the county building, 102 S. Redwood Hwy., Cave Junction.

Meetings in both cases will run from 2 to 4:30 p.m., and 6:30 to 9 p.m.

In January more sessions will be held to share the outcome and recommendations resulting from the Biscuit Fire Integrated Assessment.

The assessment will design a framework for future planning efforts and ideas from the public will help identify

fire recovery needs and potential management activities, said the forest service.

Workshops will consist of small discussion groups to provide opportunities for community members to share ideas and thoughts with the forest service.

For more information on the workshops phone Sandra McGinnis at (541) 471-6500 or Skye Sieber at 247-3600.

The 500,000-acre Biscuit Fire, which for some time nearly caused evacuation of the entire Illinois Valley, involved trees, brush and other vegetation. The cost of containment and control is in the neighborhood of \$155 million.

It was the largest wildfire in Oregon in more than 100 years. It is believed to be the most expensive to fight in U.S. history.

The fire began in mid-July from a lighting strike, and was declared controlled on Nov. 8.

Kathy Mechling 'doctors up' responding as I.V. firefighter

Kathy Mechling, M.D. didn't intend to become a volunteer firefighter for Illinois Valley Fire District.

But once she got behind a fire hose, she was hooked.



A certified firefighter since 1998, Mechling's involvement with the district began a few years earlier. She'd listen to the scanner when her volunteer firefighter husband, Jim Gurley, responded to calls.

"It made me very nervous about what was going down," she said.

So Mechling pitched in by becoming a medical instructor. As first-responders to motor vehicle accidents, the district needs EMTs on its mostly volunteer force.

"I also drafted some doctors from up north to be instructors," she said. "Now I think we have the best classes in the state."

I.V. Fire receives approximately 900 calls a year, most of them car accidents.

"I don't answer calls when I'm working; unless it's close and an unusually horrendous thing," Mechling said.

Even when there is nothing Mechling can do for an accident victim, it helps to have a physician on-scene.

"When the best service I provide is pronouncing --

rather than taking the body to an ER doctor -- sometimes, that's more peaceful for people," she said.

Firefighting is "unexpectedly rewarding," she said. "When people are in crisis, even if you're not doing anything, they feel better. My being there also calms a lot of firefighters."

Mechling enjoys battling fires -- and the adrenaline rush. In fact, the night Mechling was sworn in, "was the night Cave Junction had its biggest fire," she said. "I had just put my hat on."

She was referring to the former Mr. B's Restaurant fire that involved propane tanks and several businesses.

When the Biscuit forest fire blew up in late July, Mechling and the other I.V. firefighters did not respond, as wildland fire crews were called in. "They had us doing business as usual," she said of the I.V. volunteers.

That was fine with Mechling, because "several of us had homes threatened, and we would rather have somebody else fighting those fires."

Mechling put her patient charts and back-up disks in storage when the 30-minute evacuation notice went into effect for two weeks. She continued to see patients, making do with electronic charts.

The smoke caused a few sore throats, and the fire triggered some special problems.

"Anxiety was a bigger factor," she said. "People react to stress in different ways."

(Editor's Note: The preceding article and photo were provided courtesy of Illinois Valley Rural Fire Protection District.)



Top photo shows fire in Kerby on Wednesday, Nov. 20. Bottom photo shows Illinois Valley volunteer firefighters working to extinguish a blaze on Saturday, Nov. 23, reported at 6:36 p.m. the home of Wendell and Artis Owens, 987 Caves Hwy., behind Day Oil Co. An extensive collection of items was reported by firefighters, who worked to protect and save as much as possible. An estimate of damage to the split-level structure and contents was unavailable for this issue, but the home, built in 1968, has an assessed value of \$91,000. No injuries were listed. I.V. Fire District responded with 17 firefighters and eight pieces of equipment, including two engines and three water tenders. Deputy Cory Krauss and AMR also responded to help. The cause of the fire is believed related to a woodstove, said the fire district.

Avoid tainted turkey, nauseating eggnog

(Editor's Note: The following is by Grant Higginson, MD, state public health officer in the Oregon Dept. of Human Services).

Salmonella and listeria are not on anyone's holiday menu.

But mishandling food can leave your turkey tainted and your eggnog nauseating.

Whether you are cooking a family meal, preparing a dish for the office party or ordering perishable items on the Internet, you can take precautions to ensure that your food arrives safely and your holiday remains healthy.

Some people may become ill after ingesting only a few harmful bacteria, while others may remain symptom-free after ingesting thousands. Very young children, the elderly, pregnant women and people with compromised immune systems are at greatest risk from bacteria that can cause foodborne illness.

Most cases of foodborne illness can be prevented just by following two important rules: Keep hot food hot and cold food cold, and keep everything in kitchens clean.

Sound easy?

As consumers, we often break the food safety rules.

*When you last traveled to a friend's or relative's home that was more than two hours away, did you keep the food you were taking at the recommended temperature?

*Have you gone to a holiday gathering where food has been left out longer than two hours?

*Do you have designated cutting boards for preparing raw meat and vegetables?

*How often do you use a thermometer when you are cooking?

Follow the "Four Cs" for safety: clean, chill, cook and don't cross-contaminate. Most

(Continued on page 8)

Fire strikes two homes in valley

I.V. volunteers respond to handle emergencies

Eight people living in a Kerby mobilehome escaped from an early morning fire, but one suffered burns.

Fourteen Illinois Valley firefighters with seven pieces of apparatus responded to the 6:03 a.m. alarm, said Chief Kyle Kirchner.

Because of an unsafe bridge over Kerby Ditch at 24384 Redwood Hwy., adjacent to Casper's, firefighters had to lay some 250 feet of supply line, and two attack lines of 150 feet each, said the chief.

Damage was estimated at \$16,000. The dwelling, believed to be a total loss, is owned by James T. Middleton, of California.

The cause of the blaze is undetermined, said Kirchner, but it possibly started in a wooden, small storage shed next to the double-wide mobilehome on the east side. One resident told the chief that he heard crackling noises outside, and when he went outside he found the place on fire.

The injured person was identified as Brian Box, 16. He was taken by American Medical Response (AMR) to Three Rivers Community Hospital for treatment of second- and third-degree burns on his shoulders and one arm.

Others in the residence were identified as Judd and Brandie Wood, 8-month-old Alice Wood, 2-year-old Cassie Wood, Christopher and Ashley Box; Brian Box, 16; and Josh Burns, 20.

A dog, whose name was not available, was unchained from a tree near the blaze by volunteer Lt. Bill Hickerson. Three cats apparently are missing.

The dwelling was fully involved in flames as firefighters arrived. The alarm was sounded by an unidentified girl, waiting for a school bus, who used a nearby public telephone.

Those displaced by the fire are living in an adjacent double-wide mobilehome, said Kirchner.

Besides I.V. volunteer and staff firefighters, those responding to the alarm were AMR, Oregon State Police and Josephine County Sheriff's Office.

Shoe mystery

Reports continue to come in regarding the mysterious appearance of athletic shoes hanging from overhead utility lines in Cave Junction.

At last report two pairs each of such shoes were seen hanging around at two locations: the intersection of Watkins Street and Junction Avenue, and on Caves Avenue between Watkins and Lister.