

Fire attack starts on the inside

by Sue Lafky
Post editor

Firemen usually teach people how to escape from burning homes.

But on Saturday morning, volunteers were learning how to go into the flames.

I was there too, learning what it takes to fight a blaze from the inside. I won't claim to be an expert. And frankly, I'm only prepared to go with a camera and take pictures from a distance if an alarm goes off at 2 a.m.

"It takes a special breed of cat," said Hoodland Fire Chief Don Armintrout. "We teach people to get out of fires when it's in their home. And what do we do? We go back in."

Fire, Armintrout tells his volunteers, is fought from the inside. And it takes more than a little nerve to feel your way up a flight of stairs, only to be greeted by searing heat and engulfing flames.

But it's work that needs to be done, and the first priority when going into a burning building is to save lives.

"In a fire like this they'd probably be dead," Armintrout soberly noted as we looked at the charred second story room of a house on South Bluff Road used for the drill.

Throughout the day,

Armintrout sent his men into the burning house to work on perfecting the initial attack—"the part of firefighting that decides whether it will be a save or not."

On this particular day, firemen had the unpleasant choice of standing in the mud and rain outside or going into the heat inside.

Firemen are equipped with a Scout pack full of oxygen, heavy protective clothing, hip boots and gloves. But what most people don't know is that you can feel the heat through the boots and that a face mask frequently becomes so fogged up that you can't see.

When smoke blocks the view, you move by feel.

It's a matter of survival to remember where you felt the door or stairs as you're crawling along the floor to stay out of the smoke and rising heat.

In a burning structure, firemen must remember to test each step to check the stability of the floor.

"My greatest fear is that when I put my foot down there won't be anything there," Armintrout said.

The chief says the first few times are the hardest in fighting fire—something like jumping out of an airplane for the first time with a parachute.

And once the fear is overcome, the fear must be put back.

"But instead of a panic, it's the kind of fear of fire that breeds a healthy respect," Armintrout said.

It may be only drill, but you can still get hurt.

A fireman needs presence of mind to watch for falling ceilings and still think about attacking the flames. If you panic, you use more oxygen from your life giving Scout pack. And it takes both skill and strength to use the hose.

The strength is needed most during the first ten minutes of the attack, Armintrout says. "Sometimes you'll be fighting with superstrength. And suddenly, your strength is gone."

There's no such thing as a coffee break when you're fighting fire. Just time out to regain enough strength to go in again.

After a fire, it's good to get home and rush to the shower—a welcome way for me to end the morning.

But if you're a fireman, there may be another call as soon as you step into the shower. Firefighting isn't by appointment only.

"How do you go to a fire when your strength is sapped out of you," Armintrout asked.

"You just do."



POST EDITOR Sue Lafky donned a fire hat and heavy coat to see the inside of a fire drill. The house for this drill was on

South Bluff Road and was tagged for destruction by its owners.

Nell's notes

Remember election

by Nell Howe

Don't forget that Tuesday the 23 is the election. If you have not registered, you can go to the Court house in Oregon City and get a certificate of registration.

When you do go in, if you have a box number as an address, be sure and take your tax lot number with you. It is in the upper right hand corner of your tax statement.

If you are renting be sure you have the name of the person or persons you are renting from.

One of the saddest jobs I have to do is to report the death of Mert Wheeler, Our deepest sympathy to Emma and the family for the loss of their husband and father.

Mert is a real loss to the community and will be missed by all who knew him.

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Democrats make a run for Hatfield's seat

Four candidates are in the running for the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate seat now held by Republican Mark Hatfield.

Steve Anderson is a former Republican turned Democrat who made the switch in 1952 to support presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson "as a protest against Nixon and McCarthy."

Anderson has been a Salem lawyer for 30 years. He was a candidate for the U.S.

Senate Democratic nomination in 1966 but withdrew to support Howard Morgan who was later defeated by Robert Duncan.

Anderson is an active opponent of nuclear power and supports the gubernatorial candidacy of Emily Ashworth.

Jack Alan Brown, Jr. is a saw filer by trade and a supporter of capital punishment.

Brown has no previous government experience, according to his campaign literature, but has served the past two years as an elected precinct chairman.

Brown favors the "careful" use of nuclear energy; supports the deregulation of natural gas; and encourages a policy of off-shore drilling.

Vern Cook is a state senator with 22 years experience in the legislature.

He graduated from Gresham High School, Reed College and the University of Oregon School of Law.

Cook has specialized in the field of revenue and taxation and is Chairman of the Interim Legislative Review Committee.

On energy matters, Cook states he will support the establishment of a new energy policy based on a philosophy of "plenty rather than scarcity."

Cook was elected delegate to the National Democratic Conventions in 1964 and 1968. He is a past-president of the Young Democrats of Oregon.

John Sweeney, an ordinance officer in the Oregon National Guard, is the vice-president of Municipal Employees Local Union No. 483 of the AFL-CIO.

Sweeney is a native Oregonian and attended Portland public schools. He is currently employed by the

Bureau of Parks of the City of Portland.

Sweeney strongly supports a blood labeling law identifying donors as having "paid" or "volunteer" status.

He also favors stronger rehabilitation programs for parolees from jail and supports welfare reform to the extent that federal and state agencies would oversee the operation of county program.

Three challengers try for GOP nomination

Two-term incumbent Mark Hatfield faces three challengers in the Republican primary for the seat he holds in the Senate.

Hatfield, 55, was a two-term governor of Oregon from 1959-1967. He is presently the 38th ranking member of the Senate and the 13th ranking Republican.

In the Senate, Hatfield holds seats on the Appropriations Committee, Energy and Natural

Resources, Rules and Administration and the Temporary Select Committee on Indian Affairs.

The incumbent was a professor of Political Science and Dean of Students at Willamette University from 1949-1957. He was born in The Dalles and graduated from Salem High School.

Bert W. Hawkins is a cattle rancher and businessman from Ontario. He is the president-elect of the U.S.

Animal Health Association and has served on several government advisory boards and committees.

Hawkins a retired Lieutenant Colonel from the Air Force, is seeking his first elective office.

Robert Douglas Maxwell is a Trader and Contract Administrator by profession. He spent five years with a newspaper syndication service and has spent the remainder of his professional

work in the logging industry.

Maxwell's government experience include contract sales to the federal government. He is seeking his first elective office.

Richard L. Schnepel is a life insurance underwriter and former Gladstone City

Councilmember for two years.

Schnepel has been an Oregon resident for 32 years. He was a delegate to the State Republican Central Committee from 1976-78 and was elected as alternate delegate for Ronald Reagan

to the Republican National Convention in 1976.

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Meier named to committee

A Boring man has been named to a 10-member advisory committee for the Oregon Department of Agriculture to work with the

department's weed control section, a spokesman announced this week.

Ken Meier will represent the dairy industry on the

committee which will meet to plan programs for the control of noxious weeds in the state.

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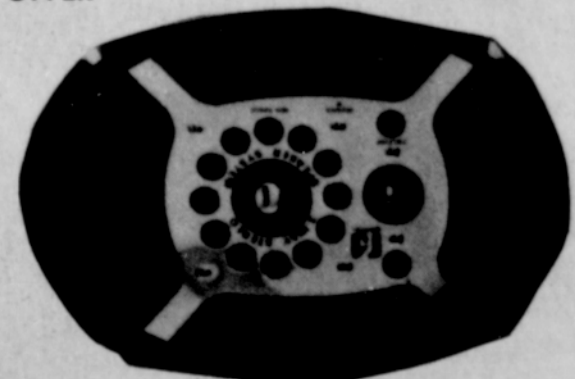
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