



Why not start your day with a flaming Pop-Tart?

Ned Hickson

Cooking can be dangerous, especially when it includes all three components of what experts call the Triangle of Fire:

- 1) A heat source
- 2) Combustible material
- 3) Our son.

While I can vouch for him having absolutely nothing to do with any wildfires, he was in fact responsible for the 2015 Oak Street popcorn smoke-out. It only took that one experience for us to real-

ize just how dangerous popcorn kernels can be once their internal temperature exceeds 6,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

Let me just say that if your microwavable popcorn bag is ever allowed to expand to the size of your favorite pillow, DO NOT open it.

Ever. Our government has special underground dump sights specifically designed for this kind of toxic material; please use them.

However, even with all of the precautions we've taken, it would seem that our family has been overlooking another potentially dangerous compo-

nent in the Triangle of Fire: The Flaming Pop-Tart.

According to a Philadelphia newspaper, that's exactly what happened to an unsuspecting New Jersey woman who said her kitchen caught fire after her cherry-flavored Pop-Tart "burst into flames like a blow torch!"

I'll be the first to admit that a fiery breakfast treat spewing artificial fruit filling would be a scary thing. In fact, aside from finding the real "Cap'n Crunch" floating around in my cereal bowl, I can't think of a more frightening breakfast experience. However, there are a couple of things

worth noting about the flaming Pop-Tart incident — the first of which is that my son had nothing to do with it.

He doesn't even know anyone in New Jersey.

Secondly, the Pop-Tart in question had been left unattended for 20 minutes while Brenda Hurff took her children to school. It was during this time that investigators believe the Pop-Tart "freakishly ignited" as a result of either a) the toaster malfunctioning, b) the pastry malfunctioning, or c) the surprisingly combustible nature of artificial fruit filling.

To ensure the safety of the

general public, investigators called in agents from both the FBI and CIA to make sure that the burning Pop-Tart was, indeed, an isolated incident with absolutely no links to any terrorist channels.

In addition, they also ruled out my son, and any links to him watching The Food Channel.

In case you were wondering, investigators have also decided against the possibility of spontaneous combustion as a cause for the blaze. This conclusion was reached after days of around-the-clock observation of assorted Pop-Tarts in a controlled environ-

ment, after which the following joint statement was released by the agents involved in the study:

"We quit."

In any case, the fact that we don't have to worry about living in a world of spontaneously combusting Pop-Tarts is something that should help us all rest a little easier.

But I'd still suggest keeping them away from the popcorn, though.

Just to be safe.

Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His books "Humor at the Speed of Life" and "Pearls of Writing Wisdom" are available online at Port Hole Publications.

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Old Town Inn announces new innkeepers

Hoagland Properties, owners of Florence's award-winning Old Town Inn and River House Inn, announced the hiring of new innkeepers for The Old Town Inn.

Aaron Stone and Kelsi Snook were hired this summer to lead the nationally-recognized property.

Stone has family ties to the area and has worked at Old Town Inn as night supervisor and in other capacities for more than a year.

He and Snook have been together for seven years and share a love for the many outdoors pursuits available on the Oregon coast.

Old Town Inn won TripAdvisor's 2015 Travelers' Choice Award, ranking number 11 for "Best Bargain Hotels in the United States."

Stone was a key member of the team.

This year, the inn achieved its fifth consecutive TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence, a hard-earned and prestigious designation.

"We will continue to uphold and strive to exceed the high standards already in place at the Old Town Inn," said Stone. "We have undergone a lot of upgrades, internally and externally, and guests notice them. Many are surprised at the quality and cleanliness of our rooms since we are an older property. Our online reviews reinforce that and reflect the team's hard work."

"We love talking to our guests, finding out where they're from and helping them find the most fun things they can do that fit with their interests," said Snook. "We give directions to a lot of the area's hidden gems, direct guests to the kind of food they like and genuinely like helping people — like the French couple who spoke no English, and had rented motorcycles in Seattle that broke down here."

"With Google Translator, we got them the parts and service they needed."

"We are delighted to announce that Aaron and Kelsi have earned this new responsibility through their hard work and dedication," said Hoagland Properties president Craig Sanders. "This is only the second time we have been able to promote staff into management from within the company. Their customer relations, problem solving and management skills are top-notch."

"Our guests really appreciate them as our comment cards and online reviews demonstrate."

A recent check of TripAdvisor, the world's largest travel website, also shows The Old Town Inn as the top-rated Florence-area lodging and in the top 10 percent of 226 lodgings on the Oregon Coast.

Stone and Snook continue the long-standing practice of not releasing a room for use until it has been thoroughly inspected, even to the extent of staff getting down on their hands and knees with a flashlight to check under beds and chairs and behind dressers and armoires.

They also help guests find what local restaurants have on special; printing maps, menus and tide charts; coordinating dune buggy, horseback or airplane rides; and even organizing golf foursomes if the opportunity presents itself.

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