

## Fire damages Hillside Drive home

South Lane County Fire and Rescue was alerted of a structure fire on Monday, Dec. 28 at the 2200 block of Hillside Drive at 1 p.m. The structure was an abandoned house covered in blackberry bushes. Division Chief Joe Raade was in command of the responders and said that when they arrived the building was "engulfed in flames."

Neighbors reported that there were

several transients living in the abandoned house, but they were not present during the fire and were later found in downtown Cottage Grove that day. SLCFR reports that the structure was heavily damaged and is not inhabitable. The responders arrived with two engine companies, one medic unit and three water tenders. No injuries were reported.



photo by Sam Wright

Neighbors reported several transients living in a house that caught fire Monday afternoon.

## HARRIS

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Deatherage says with no small amount of pride. "If he could only tell you about all of the cool projects he's worked on over the years."

To hear Harris tell it, he's been working on 'cool projects' since his boyhood.

"My dad was a beekeeper," he said, "and we always had a shop. This was during the Depression. Nobody had any money, so we would make our own toys. If you wanted a toy boat, you went and made one. It's just the way we did things in those days."

Later on, his ability to design and manufacture equipment in response to new challenges served Harris well at the Boeing Company, one of the world's premier aerospace manufacturers. He spent 15 years there, designing and building aircraft engines, missile hardware and working on the power supply for the international space station.

In 1970, though, with staffing down at Boeing and in the market for a new endeavor, Harris took up an offer from Carlton Woodard to design machinery for his Kimwood Corporation, manufacturer of state-of-the-art equipment for the timber industry. The

move brought Harris to Cottage Grove and began a long and productive relationship between the engineer and the area's business community that has continued for decades.

Harris moved on from Kimwood after seven years, taking a position as a consultant with a Eugene-based engineering firm, which he held for 13 years.

Harris operated out of a shop at his home for four years, but the desire to expand and produce a machine of his own invention, a machine that could cut eight to 10 cords of firewood an hour, led him to purchase his 10th Street shop. Instead, he and his son, Ron, saw other area businesses lining up to solicit his expertise to help solve their own dilemmas.

"We found our niche," Harris said. "We design things and we often wind up making them. Because we can design these machines, we keep busy. People come to us with problems, and we make things to solve them."

Among the many designs to emanate from Harris' shop was a packing line for Emerald Valley Kitchen, a machine capable of packing 60 small salsa cups per minute that Harris called "one of the nicest machines we ever

built."

He's also designed and manufactured drills and other equipment for Cottage Grove-based innovators Pacific Yurts.

"We always enjoyed working on a project with Harry," said Pacific Yurts President and Founder Alan Bair. "He designed and built multiple one-of-a-kind production equipment for us. They worked well the first time and still do to this day many years later. I was always impressed that someone of his caliber and professional expertise was available in Cottage Grove."

A few years back, the Harrises also built a cocoa bean grinder/winnower for the Grenada Chocolate Company, which they believed to be the only machine of its kind in existence. It wasn't the only machine they brought to life for the company's founders, Cottage Grove residents Doug Brown and Mott Green. There was also a hydraulic press to take chocolate slurry and separate the fat from the fiber before the mixture is rebalanced and sugar carefully added to create a finished product. Harris also manufactured a sugar dryer to deal with the moisture in the Grenadian air.

"Being able to sit down and

lay out a design on a computer, then design and build the machine is big," Harris said. "A lot of people won't do it. There's a lot of risk. It has to work, and you can't afford to fail."

Deatherage added that Harris' ability to concentrate on the problem he's hoping to solve has served him well.

"Harry has a wide range of problem-solving abilities," he said. "He's been pretty creative over the years, but his designs are always functional instead of fancy."

Now, Harris hopes to offer vocational training to a new generation of young people, to teach a practical, tactical form of problem-solving that he feels is dying out these days, a usefulness he was careful to pass down to his own children.

"It's fun to have a group of kids and teach them how to do these things," he said. "I always let my kids get involved. That's really all you have to do, to show them once and then let them learn how."

Still, Harris said he'll miss the relationships he's fostered over the years in Cottage Grove.

"I have a town full of friends," he said. "There are great people here, and I just hate to leave."

## SKI

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the ski trail, though it's also wonderful to exchange a knowing glance and a smile with strangers out enjoying the snow. On this particular weekend, it appeared that not one person we crossed paths with could have been even one percent happier, and there was little to hinder our own good mood, what with perfect weather and powdery snow to be had in all directions.

Each time we head to Gold Lake, we invariably take a left

turn from the main trail and head uphill. It's hard work to climb hills in cross country skis, but after a couple miles of hoisting ourselves up and up, we arrive at a glorious payoff — Eagle Point, a promontory offering a stunning view of Odell Lake from what feels like hundreds of feet above the lake surface. During particularly lucky visits, we've been fortunate enough to watch the bald eagles themselves perch high in the treetops a few feet from us, then noiselessly leave the trees to rocket downward and pluck a

fish from the lake's frigid waters. On this day, though, there were no eagles, only other skiers convinced that they had discovered a secret known only to a precious few.

Of course, all that uphill climbing leads to a glorious descent, and it was work to keep Jack running at a speed adequate to keep us from skiing into his backside. (On one occasion, sure that he wouldn't be leaving the trail or speeding up any time soon, I opted to spread my skis far apart and ski over the top of him just

in time.) There were a few falls as we made it back down the mountain, though a dark, sudsy beer at the end of our journey served as the perfect salve for sore muscles.

Back on level ground, the scenery we've witnessed on such days seems a dream or a distant memory, though a whiff of icy air from the north brings the memories — and the itch to lace up the boots once again — flooding right back.

## Helpful tips for dealing with your fruitcake anxiety

BY NED HICKSON  
News Media Corporation

Recent studies show that mild depression after the holidays is not only common but, in many cases, is the result of FDAD — Fruitcake Disposal Anxiety Disorder. On one hand, your fruitcake was a gift and therefore deserving of some measure of appreciation. On the other hand, it has already become a chew toy for the neighbor's pit bull. This often leads to feelings of anxiety long after the holidays have ended, particularly when you see "Buster," still intoxicated with rum, struggling to dislodge the sugar loaf from his tightly-clenched jaws.

So, as a service to our readers, we assembled a group of psychiatrists to help provide insight into dealing with FDAD. At a cost of more than \$200 an hour, we held an informative, three-minute discussion to create the following self-help guide:

I'm OK — You're OK. But Give Me a Fruitcake and I'll Kill You.

According to our experts, the first step in dealing with this anxiety is understanding where it comes from. To do that, we must go back to the very first fruitcake, which historians agree was baked by Betsy Ross who, for obvious reasons, was noted for her sewing. Subsequently, this same cake was dropped from a tall building by Dick Clark each New Year's Eve until 1972, when it developed a crack and, as a safety precaution, was launched into space.

This was done despite protests from scientists, who warned that the loaf could eventually come crashing back to earth and lead to mass extinction.

Experts say this has led to a new generation of people who not only distrust fruitcake but see it as a genuine threat to humanity. For these people, we offer the following four-step

guide to controlling their fruitcake anxiety.

Step one: Make a list of your fruitcake's good qualities. The key is to start with what makes fruitcake unique. For example: Its indestructibility. You may not like fruitcake, but you have to respect the fact that cockroaches will be eating it long after humans are being imported to other galaxies on alien party platters.

Step two: Incorporate fruitcake into your daily activities. This is easy once you stop thinking of fruitcake as food. In the same way that Tofurkey is slowly gaining acceptance as an environmentally safe mulch, fruitcake doesn't seem so bad once you've started using it to block open the garage door.

Step three: Consider turning your fruitcake into a treasured heirloom by getting it engraved and then giving it to someone. Just add your name and date, and you can pass this special keepsake on to someone else at the next available birthday party, wedding, house warming, bat mitzvah, Earth Day celebration, etc.

And finally, if after following these first three steps you're still unable to control your symptoms, go directly to Step four: Investing in a ticket to Mantiou Springs, Colo., for the annual Great Fruitcake Toss.

Each January, this event draws hundreds of people from around the world for the sole purpose of showing off their fruitcakes and then catapulting them as far as possible.

Sure, this may sound stupid. But some day this might be our last defense against invading aliens.

(Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, *Humor at the Speed of Life*, is available online at *Port Hole Publications*, *Amazon Books* and *Barnes & Noble*. Write to him at [nedhickson@icloud.com](mailto:nedhickson@icloud.com))

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