

Now is the time to get chimneys and woodstoves ready for winter

Oregonians will be turning to their woodstoves or fireplaces to keep warm now that cold weather is upon us. However, state and local fire safety officials urge you to take the necessary safety precautions. The Oregon Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association advises people to follow these steps for a safe fall and winter:

- Maintain your smoke alarm. Smoke alarm maintenance is one of the simple precautions that can prevent not only extensive property damage but the loss of lives as well. Change smoke alarm batteries twice a year and replace any older than ten years. Vacuum and test smoke alarms to ensure they are working properly.
- Clean and inspect the chimney. Fireplace inspection is perhaps the most essential precaution. Every year firefighters respond to chimney and flue fires that could have been easily prevented had the homeowner taken the time to clean and inspect their fireplace system. The most important step is to clean the stovepipe or chimney before lighting the first fire

in the fall. A chimney fire can occur in a dirty chimney if you do not clean the flue. You can clean it yourself but fire officials recommend hiring a professional chimney sweep.

The cleaning process involves special tools to clear away creosote, the sooty buildup made of tiny unburned particles of wood fuel. Creosote is very flammable. Flue fires start because accumulated creosote heats up until it turns bright red and ignites. As air rushes in to oxygenate the ignited creosote, temperatures inside the chimney can surpass 2000° Fahrenheit. The rushing air may sound like loud roaring inside the stovepipe and may shake loose sections of pipe, emitting burning particles and flames into the house. These intense fires can cause extensive damage, igniting the house inside and out, and create enough smoke to be fatal to indoor occupants. Should you experience a flue fire, shut off the air supply to the woodstove, get everyone out of the house and call 911.

- Dispose of ashes properly.

Another precaution includes disposing of ashes properly in a covered metal container. Keep the metal container outdoors and at least three feet from anything flammable.

- Keep combustibles away from heat sources. Combustible materials such as furniture, drapes, and decorations should be kept away from the fireplace or woodstove itself. Using a fireplace screen can also help prevent sparks and ashes from escaping the fire and landing on surrounding furniture and carpet.

- Do your part to preserve air quality. In Oregon, thousands of homes rely on outdated woodstoves or fireplace inserts installed during the energy crisis of the late 1970's. Many of these have not been installed or maintained properly. In addition, these old stoves produce far more smoke and burn less efficiently than modern emission certified woodstoves, pellet stoves or non-woodburning systems like natural gas.

Certified woodstoves have a certification label on the back of the stove from the Department

of Environmental Quality (DEQ) or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). If you own a woodstove that does not have this label on it, it is most likely an uncertified and high-polluting stove. Oregon law allows the use of uncertified woodstoves only if they were installed according to the building code prior to September 1992. Resale or reinstallation of an uncertified stove is prohibited. Homeowners who upgrade their woodstove should request that the installer recycle their

old stove.

For information about chimney sweeping and a list of professional chimney sweeps, check out <www.ocsa.com>. For more information on woodstoves and other fireplace products, call the Oregon Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association at 503-585-8254, or check out our website at <www.oregonfireplaces.com> or <www.hpba.org>. For information on wood smoke pollution, go to the Oregon DEQ site <www.deq.state.or.us>.

Welcome Addition

Seth Nikolaus Scheuerman

Seth Nikolaus Scheuerman was born August 25, 2005, to Christopher and Erin Scheuerman of Vernonia. He weighed 7 pounds, 3 ounces and was 20-1/2 inches long.

He joins his brothers, William and Jared, at the family home.

Grandparents are Karen Wilson of Beaverton and Judy and Mike Scheuerman of Beaverton.



Kidney Disease Awareness Walk will help kidney patients impacted by Hurricane Katrina

PeaceHealth's Dialysis Team will host a "Kidney Disease Awareness Walk" around Lake Sacajawea September 25. Walkers will meet at the Lion's Shelter at 2:00 p.m. The dialysis team will share information about the risks of kidney disease, and help raise awareness of risk factors.

Participation in the walk is free, and donations will be ac-

cepted for the American Kidney Fund. In light of the medical needs created by Hurricane Katrina, the American Kidney Fund has set up a special program to help patients impacted by Katrina. Those funds are being used for emergency transportation, clothing, prescription medications, and more. Donations to the American Kidney Fund are tax deductible.

Kidney Facts: Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is the slow progressive loss of kidney function over several years. CKD can create a need for dialysis or kidney transplantation. The goal of treatment is to slow or halt the progression of kidney damage.

U.S. Statistics: 20,000,000 Americans have kidney disease. 20,000,000 more are at

risk of developing chronic kidney/urinary tract disease. 370,000 have to take dialysis treatments or receive a transplant to stay alive. 60,000 will die this year because of kidney and urinary illnesses. 86,129 are currently awaiting life-saving organ transplants; only half will receive them.

High blood pressure and diabetes are the leading causes of kidney diseases. Sadly, over half of the people who will go on dialysis this year could have

avoided it if they had taken the proper steps. People at higher risk for developing kidney disease can benefit by paying greater attention to their level of kidney function. Because the early stages of kidney disease show few symptoms, it is important to begin regular monitoring through simple blood and urine tests. Many cases of kidney failure can be delayed or prevented through early diagnosis and intervention.

Jazzercise will perform for Cycle Oregon

A new fall schedule is now available for Vernonia Jazzercise classes. Instructors Penny Costley and Orissa Burghard will teach classes at the First Baptist Church, 359 A Street.

"Traditionally, we see an increase in enrollments this time of year as people settle back into a regular routine," said Costley. "So, I've designed my class schedule to make atten-

dance as convenient as possible for anyone interested in exercising."

The 60-minute Jazzercise class includes a warm-up, high-energy aerobic routines, muscle-toning and cool-down stretch segment.

Look for Jazzercisers at the Cycle Oregon entertainment stage on Friday, September 16, at 6:00 p.m. when they will be teaching a 30 minute live demonstration class followed by a performance routine at Hawkins Park.

For Jazzercise information call Costley at 503-429-0196.

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