

Shades of responsibility?

BY SANDY SHAFFER

My husband and I recently took a road trip, and during the driving hours we talked about the new “responsibility” that we would be picking up after our vacation. Meet Maggie, our new three-month-old Akita pup! We talked about feeding schedules, regular walks, brushing, training, vet visits. So much responsibility! We’ve been pet-free for well over a year, and at times I wondered if I was ready for this lively ball of fur.

On our vacation we saw new places, visited another country, read different newspapers, and heard the world’s issues broadcast from big cities. Being outside of my Applegate life, I found myself listening to the goings-on of the world in a different way. And the word *responsibility* kept popping into my head.

California’s water issue was big news. Having been raised there, my hubby and I couldn’t understand why restrictions are just now being put in place. Governor Jerry should know better! Do rich folks really deserve to be allowed to buy their way to more water? We’re all on this planet together and no one controls Mother Nature, so we should all have to live with what she gives us, right?

I also read where erratic weather in the Midwest caused a wildfire to blow up with very little warning. People complained that “no one told us to evacuate,” so they didn’t. Fortunately no one died, but why weren’t they aware of their local fire-weather forecasts and prepared?

Then, the news story about four 10- to 12-year-old kids starting a fire in Eugene that destroyed an historic stadium! Such a loss! They were charged with arson, reckless endangerment and more, but I have to ask: where were the parents? And, just this morning I read that a toddler was burned after climbing into a fire pit on a California beach! Huh? I was glad that the local fire chief had the gumption to say, “If you’re not going to watch your children, don’t go to the beach.”

I also read that there have been more than several fire starts recently along the Pacific Crest Trail, caused by nature-loving hikers who sometimes don’t put their warming fires “dead out.” This is so important—to do what Smokey started telling us decades ago: make sure your fires are “dead-out”! This means pouring water on them until you can run your

hands through the ashes and not feel any heat.

And further validation for “dead-out”: in mid-June there was a grass fire out here in the Applegate, caused by the hot, dry winds stirring up old burned slash piles from last winter. Mother Nature’s summer winds played around with them and bingo, a fire began! But this was not an isolated incident; a few days ago I heard a call on the scanner of another Applegate landowner whose April-burned slash piles rekindled on a hot, windy day.

Many of us moved to the Applegate without being fully aware of the environment or the differences between wet and dry forests. Living out here presents as much peace and pleasure as it does hard work and worry. It’s up to us to be aware of the weather, the forest conditions, and the wind and rainfall (or lack thereof). Know the current activity restrictions, and understand why, for example, we can’t mow in the afternoon.

It’s also up to us as responsible rural residents to have and follow family evacuation plans—plans that include any toddlers,



Meet the author’s new owner, three-month-old Maggie.

children, teens, grandparents, pets and/or livestock. And, everyone signs up to adhere to *their* role in the plan.

Whether we’re dealing with kids, a new puppy, or Mother Nature and the weather, we can’t assume anything. We need to think and act *responsibly*. Because, as Klamath National Forest Supervisor Patricia Grantham recently said, “There is zero risk to homes, firefighters, citizens, natural resources and communities from the fire that never starts.”

Sandy Shaffer
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Our deepest appreciation goes out to firefighters everywhere.

Fire district training building to open its doors

BY CAREY CHAPUT

The time has finally come to open the doors of our new training-multipurpose building that will handle the fire district’s expanding training requirements and serve our community. You have trusted this fire district to serve you in times of need, and we feel honored to fulfill your request for a community building that can serve all of us.

Come join us for the grand opening on Saturday, October 10, from 10 am to 3 pm. During the open house, visitors will be able to walk through the large meeting room designed to facilitate community groups and our regional training needs. The training-meeting room has been outfitted with audiovisual equipment

designed to engage an audience.

Visitors will also want to check out the commercial kitchen and spacious bathrooms. And be sure to see the new room outfitted with state-of-the-art exercise equipment designed to increase the stamina and physical ability of our volunteer firefighters while on emergency scenes. Special training events will also be in place for visitors to witness the skills and equipment required to assist our patrons out of tight situations.

Come see all that we have accomplished together!

Carey Chaput • 541-899-1050
Applegate Fire District
Office Manager

Come celebrate the opening of your new training/multipurpose building



Saturday, October 10, 10 am - 3 pm

Live training events • Lion’s Club BBQ
Join in on all the fun and opportunities available.
Learn life skills while serving your community.

Applegate Valley Fire Department • 1095 Upper Applegate Road

Be a volunteer firefighter—join our team now!

Applegate Valley Fire Department is seeking new volunteers for all stations. Volunteer Academy starts soon. Deadline to apply: November 1. 541-899-1050 • 1095 Upper Applegate Road • www.applegatefd.com

Birding and fungi highlight Siskiyou Field Institute’s fall fare

BY KATHLEEN PYLE

Siskiyou Field Institute (SFI) invites you to engage in a harvest of fall science learning. Fall classes will take place at SFI’s Selma headquarters and out in the field. First are two birding classes just in time to catch fall migration. Arcata naturalist and artist Gary Bloomfield will teach “Birding by Phone,” a class that will help you turn your smart phone into a handy birding tool. Gary has put together a class video viewable on Facebook. Just search “Birding by Phone” to find it. The class, on Saturday, September 12, will meet in Arcata and move to higher-elevation spots to find rarer migrants, including songbird species.

SFI will again offer “Birding Upper Klamath Lake by Canoe.” Canoe rentals at Rocky Point Resort are included in the class tuition. Early fall is a great time for bird watching on Klamath Lake, especially for marsh birds that can be observed quietly from a canoe.

Botanist Scot Loring will lead a class on “The Cryptic World of Red Buttes Wilderness” from September 28 to 30. *Cryptic* refers to cryptogams, the unique mosses and lichens that inhabit the rugged Red Buttes landscape. The botanist Linnaeus coined the term, which means “secret marriage.” He wasn’t clear on how these fascinating plants reproduced, thus the secret. The class will examine plant structure and reproduction in a lab and also investigate other plants growing in the volcanic terrain during a daylong field trip.

Lichens can be at their most vibrant after autumn rains. Lichenologist Daphne



Mushroomer shows off a king bolete. Photo: Mike Potts.

Stone will lead a class on the colorful partners of lichens: algae and cyanobacteria. “Lichens and their Photobionts” is scheduled for October 17 to 18.

Two SFI fall classes focus on mushrooms. One is geared to the edible mushroom hobbyist who

wants to learn to distinguish between edible, inedible, and toxic species. “Edible Mushrooms of the Siskiyou” will meet on Sunday, October 24, at SFI. For those who want an in-depth look at the entire fungal kingdom, SFI offers the three-day “Forest Mushrooms of Southwest Oregon/Northwest California” taught by US Forest Service botanist David Lebo. Class begins Friday afternoon, November 6, at Deer Creek Center. On Saturday, November 7, students will explore mushrooms and other fungi in the Smith River Canyon of northern California and end up in Brookings for the night. Sunday morning’s foray takes place along the southern Oregon coast. Class tuition is \$155.

Scholarships are available for Jackson and Josephine County educators (from public and charter schools and outdoor education nonprofits) thanks to the Rogue Valley and Siskiyou Audubon Societies. Email program coordinator Kathleen Pyle at programcoord@thesfi.org for details.

Find out more about these and other fall Siskiyou Field Institute classes by visiting www.thesfi.org or calling 541-597-8530.

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