

Season change: More than just the color of the leaves

BY SANDY SHAFFER

Fall has always been my favorite season of the year. As a redhead, I've never enjoyed the heat (and sunburn) of hot summers, nor the melanoma diagnosis that hit me as an adult. So I definitely welcome the autumn and its cooling invigoration.

Whether living in Massachusetts, California, or Oregon, I love watching the different species of trees change their colors. (Fortunately, I don't really hate raking leaves each fall, either.) Living here in the Applegate the past 20 years, I've always been glad to see the summer heat finally letting up; then the fire season can taper off, and we don't have to worry about wildfires, our home, and the safety of our firefighters.

However, as an Applegate resident who's actively involved with our fire district, I've found there's more to a season's change than just temperatures and weather! As autumn weather takes over, our Applegate firefighters turn to new tasks—some similar to what we rural residents have to address around our homes.

With seven Applegate fire stations and several other district buildings across the valley, maintenance and repairs of

equipment and buildings keep everyone occupied for a while. No worries, though—the Applegate Valley Fire District (AVFD) has recently hired a new equipment/facilities supervisor! As I'm writing this, Chief Brad Barnes is finishing up training his replacement, McKenzie Turnbull, who comes to us after 18 years with Rural Metro Fire District. (I suspect Chief Barnes is headed out for a long hunting vacation soon. We all wish him well.)

Our Fire Chief McLaughlin also told me that the fire district doesn't have much to do as far as winterization; they are always ready for anything. However, they have started turning on block heaters and station bay heaters so that the equipment and apparatus are always ready for any response. (Did you know that our fire district's average response time—from the first "tone" is heard until an engine rolls out of the fire bay at headquarters—is a quick two to three minutes?)

Locally, some good news was announced for the Jacksonville Fire Department last month that will benefit our AVFD in the long run. Jacksonville was the recipient of a generous grant that allows them to



At AVFD, new equipment/facilities supervisor McKenzie Turnbull, left, is replacing outgoing chief Brad Barnes (right).

hire several more firefighters. This will add "more hands on deck" for emergency calls in the Jacksonville hill area of Highway 238. (AVFD's Station No. 5, at the top of that hill, is covered by two volunteers, and both of them have day jobs.)

So, how about you—our AVFD constituents? Any new changes or needs in your own prevention chores around your property and home? We recently had our wood stove cleaned and inspected and in

the process found we needed some repairs to our roof ridges. After 20 years on top of our hill, those top covers were starting to wear thin. Next on our list was to clean out the gutters before the rains start up, and we checked off that task too.

Are you starting some much-needed thinning or removal of Douglas firs that have died this past year, like we are? (Boy, are we going to be set for firewood for a few years!) If you need help assessing your home and property and/or planning the workload around your property, don't despair! You can call either our fire chief or the Oregon Department of Forestry for advice.

The Oregon Department of Forestry is in Central Point. Call them at 541-664-3328. Sometimes they have grant dollars available to help with the cost of the work. And, our Fire Chief McLaughlin will be happy to come out to your property and walk around with you to figure out what needs doing and what doesn't. The phone number at headquarters is 541-899-1050.

My husband and I find these seasonal outdoor chores invigorating and rewarding, but also sometimes wearing as we age. I think it does help keep us "younger" and perhaps healthier than if we hired a crew each fall to get the work done. Working for our winter warmth makes it even more appreciated, so we'll continue to cut/split/stack for as long as we can!

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Pacifica in pictures

BY PEG PRAG

Restrooms. After 20 years of trying, Pacifica's restrooms are *finally* finished... whoo-hoo!

Winter Fest. Come to the Winter Art & Music Fest on Saturday, December 7, from 10 am - 4 pm to support our local artists and have a good time (and to give the new restrooms a try!). There will be over 35 artisans, live music all day in two venues, and home-cooked chicken and vegan enchiladas, salads, soups, and goodies! Rain or shine, it's always a special day.

Harvest Faire. Thanks to Ohana Martin, his fine crew, and the community, Pacifica's first Harvest Faire in October was a great success. There were interesting workshops, vendors, wonderful music all day and into the night, and good times... the perfect start to a wonderful tradition!

Old Williams Post Office. A piece of Williams history, the old post office building, was moved to Pacifica in October. This post office, used from the 1940s through the 1970s, is a little 14' x 16' building, hand-built, with rough-cut lumber and blue-and-red doors hand-lettered with "Post Office Williams 97544." Until its recent removal, even people who had never used the old post office loved its being there as a vivid reminder of Williams's past. As such iconic buildings disappear, so does the feeling of heritage and roots, and even the very feeling of community. When asked about it, everyone says something similar to "I love that building!" and invariably smiles.

Our thanks to Claudia Pratt for temporarily saving the building from demolition. Because the old post office



Photo, left: Leaf headdress at Harvest Faire. Photo: Peg Prag.
Photo above: The historic Williams post office is now on display at the entrance to Pacifica. Photo: Ray Prag.

needed a new permanent home, Pacifica obtained a small grant from the Kinsman Foundation to get it moved to just inside Pacifica's gate. Now it can be enjoyed by everyone passing by and hopefully become a place to preserve some history of this area.

Fall Outdoor School. Pacifica held its first fall Outdoor School sessions in October with an exciting new curriculum dealing primarily with trees and fungi (spring's sessions will mainly focus on birds and animals). The fall "tree" program included a multitude of games, hikes, and labs, including tree identification, rotting stumps, mycorrhizal communication, lichen, and bark beetles. It also explored how people grow and change like trees do, as well as how trees and all

things and all people are interconnected. This session's electives were carving wood, sewing a backpack, felting an owl, and making survival tools.

Because this session at Pacifica is the only state pre-pilot program with kids having to go to both fall and spring sessions, we also have an ongoing project to tie the two sessions together. I wish I were in sixth grade!

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Kudos to Pacifica for the fall Outdoor School session

"I wanted to send you a 'thank-you' for providing our students at Ruch Outdoor Community School an amazing, memorable experience. Mrs. Drane could not say enough positive things about the overnighter, and the kids have expressed that it was one of the best trips they have taken...ever!"

—Julie Barry, Principal,
Ruch Outdoor Community School

Photo, left: Pacifica's restrooms are finished! Photo: Ray Prag.
Photo, right: In October, Pacifica held its first Harvest Faire, which was a great success, drawing a wide variety of vendors and sizeable crowds. Photo: Peg Prag.



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