

# COLESTIN VALLEY BUZZ

Nov/Dec 2004

## COMMUNITY FIRE PLAN MEETING

by Elaine Shanafelt

**In the true sense of "community spirit"**, about fifty Colestin and Hilt Rural Fire District residents (representing 30 families and all geographic areas of the District) met at the Hilt Community Church, October 14, to start the process of developing a Community Fire Plan for our area.

The purpose of the meeting was to identify values held by residents, to identify fire hazards, and to identify ways to reduce the hazards. Lists of values, hazards and solutions were developed from the questionnaires returned by residents and input from those attending the meeting. After brainstorming each area, those attending were asked to select five items from each list that were most important to them, ranking their selections from 5 points for most important to 1 point for least important. The results of those rankings are described elsewhere in this newsletter.

An outline of the proposed Fire Plan was also presented. Volunteers were solicited to help compile data and write different aspects of the plan. These great volunteers are already putting pen to paper!

Attendees also graciously volunteered for various Task Groups. Task Groups have a specific focus and include: Plan and Grant Writers, Water Supply, Home Addresses, Phone Tree, Inspections, Signage, Evacuation Plan, and Work Parties. Already two task groups are being convened: the Signage and Inspections Groups. Any folks unable to attend the meeting, but interested in lending a hand can call the Committee.

Thanks to Lisa Buttrey for leading the meeting, to those who brought the wonderful snacks, to those who attended and to all who returned their questionnaires.

CRFD Fire Plan Committee: John Ames Lisa Buttrey Nancy Carlson Elaine Shanafelt

### Facts you probably didn't need to know...

- **The flea can jump 350 times its body length. It's like a human jumping the length of a football field.**
- **A cat's urine glows under a black light.**
- **If you farted consistently for 6 years and 9 months, enough gas is produced to create the energy of an atomic bomb.**

## My Recollection of the Center at Hilt

**I remember this one incident that comes to me of playing my Harmonica in the bathroom. The acoustics always fascinated me while playing my harmonica at the bathroom. The walls were of plaster with concrete floor, thus making a good acoustics. The sound would bounce back to me - very enjoyable. Our yearly Firemen's Ball was always a success. Everybody enjoyed this yearly event. But "oh", the next morning was payback time. "Headaches", and to top it all, clean up time the next morning was dreaded by all.**

**That day I drove to Hilt to see the destruction, a few tears were shed.**

**I forgot to say my age at the Harmonica playing in the bathroom. In about 1934 or 1935 – about 9 to 10 years of age. I went on to playing the accordion for many years - played dances at the center with our band the Tip Toppers. Also played dances all over Siskiyou County, very enjoyable music and hometown baseball. Every Sunday afternoon baseball, our people enjoyed watching us play different Teams. We were champions two years in a row. Quite an accomplishment for a small company town.**

**Yours Truly,  
Tony Marin**

### **THANK YOU CRFD !**

In September, the Colestin Rural Fire Department saved our house for the SECOND time, and Alex and I have to thank all concerned loudly and publicly.

We were having dinner when a flue fire that had spilled onto the roof burned through our ceiling. I got on the phone and called Fire Chief Steve Avgeris, who answered right away. I don't think I even said who I was, just, "Steve, my roof's on fire."

"Get a hose on it, we'll be right there," Steve said.

And they were. It wasn't even five minutes before Steve was barreling up the drive in the fire truck, and not five minutes after that, the fire was out. And when Steve came in the house to make sure there weren't any hot spots lurking, he politely took off his boots ~ and my husband noticed he wasn't wearing socks. That's how fast he got out of his house and down to ours!

This is the second time that Steve and the Colestin Fire Department have saved our house ~ the last time they bulldozed a grass fire before it could get onto our property.

There isn't a fire district in the world that could have responded more quickly and effectively than ours, both times. Alex and I can't imagine a better fire department -or a better place to live.

And by the way, the night of the fire was also Steve's birthday. We were lucky he was celebrating it at home.

Happy birthday, Steve! And all our thanks to every volunteer in the Colestin Rural Fire Department.

Tod Davies

## **Ballot Results**

On the next two pages are the tallies of the ballots submitted by the folks at the recent Community Meeting to kickoff the Fire Plan. The lists that follow have been edited for clarity and brevity and combined into groups that mirror the structure of the Fire Plan Outline. The numbers are the points garnered for each entry or group. We know that some residents weren't able to attend the meeting but may have input they'd like included. Please call, email or mail any suggestions or questions to Lisa Buttrey (contact info last page).

### **VALUES**

Homes **141**  
People **107**  
Watershed Health & Management **61**  
Pets & Livestock **53**  
Fish & Wildlife Habitat **41**  
Tranquility **40**  
Timber **34**  
Viewshed Aesthetics **33**  
Unique Ecosystem **32**  
Air Quality **30**  
Recreation Hiking, Biking **18**  
United Community **14**  
Structures **12**  
Fishing, Hunting **6**  
Vehicles **5**  
Farming **3**  
Range **1**  
Cultural Heritage **1**

“Values” were not rated strictly within the framework of Fire Planning, but rather on the broader basis of what we love about living here. Our goal was to get a sense of what is dear to the hearts of community members in order to best reflect these core ideas in our planning, our projects, and even case of emergency.

### **HAZARDS**

#### **Overburden of Fuels 248**

Large areas of overdense vegetation **152**  
Land not being managed **42**  
Dangerous standing dead trees **32**  
Hazardous tall dry grass **11**  
Flammable non-native vegetation **8**  
RR ties along tracks **3**

#### **Ignition Sources 150**

Train **49**  
Lightning **32**  
Freeway **19**  
Parking in dry grass **14**  
Arson **14**  
Careless people **10**  
Illegal activities **7**  
Smoking **5**

#### **Home Site Issues 136**

Limited water supply near homes **37**  
Addresses not rational **35**  
Lack of defensible space **34**  
Home issues: dirty chimneys,  
flammable roofs etc **17**  
Chemical stores **13**

#### **Access 94**

Access roads & driveways not cleared of  
vegetation, too narrow, no turn-  
arounds etc. **30**  
Steep terrain **20**  
Roads and homes not signed **19**  
“Bottle neck” nature of roads **19**  
Tertiary roads unusable **3**  
Limited Accessibility **2**  
Hazard sign placement **1**

Narrow steep stretch of Colestin Rd at  
mile marker 6

## **SOLUTIONS**

### **Methods 191**

- Get grant money for projects **69**
- Support individual landowners, with financial or other assistance, to take responsibility for fire hazard reduction on their own land **33.5**
- Have qualified persons review and recommend what needs to be done **32**
- Creative matchmaking: offer resources free to willing users, i.e., access to fire wood, small diameter wood for posts, logging etc. **22.5**
- Work parties **14**
- Fire Safe Home Competition with reward, i.e., a vacation ☺ **10**
- Mediation **8**
- RR and Freeway (ODOT & CalTrans) participation **2**

### **Defensible Space and Fuels Management 193.5**

- Remove ladder fuels and thin trees along driveways, homes and out-buildings **63.5**
- Create Fuel Breaks between managed and unmanaged land **46**
- Mow tall grass where threat to homes **25**
- Remove dangerous standing dead **23**
- Prescribed burns **18.5**
- Fuels Management **11**
- Fuel reduction on unmanaged land **6.5**

### **Proactive Measures 99**

- Education **30.5**
- Monitor ORV's esp. during Fire and Hunting Seasons **18**
- Lightning lookouts **17**
- Monitor RR **14**
- Prohibit parking in tall grass **7**
- Enforcement **6.5**
- Support of local Fire Depts. **2**
- Hire a Fire Prevention Officer offset by fines/grants/fees **1**
- Limit expansion of private dwellings **1**
- Public flogging **1 ☺**
- Awareness and prevention **1**
- Remove piles of RR ties

### **Infrastructure Improvements:**

- ACCESS 63.5
  - Remove ladder fuels and thin along main access roads **39.5**
  - Correct address incongruities and work with County to prevent further mix-ups **16**
  - Signage **4**
  - Driveway improvement **3**
  - Improvements of road systems **1**

### **WATER 45**

- Increase number of holding tanks/ponds throughout valley **32**
- Ease permitting process for building ponds **8**
- Series of high (>6000') ponds along small creeks **5**

### **Emergency Response 53**

- Develop Evacuation Plan **35**
- Safety Zones **18**

The ballot results led the Fire Plan Committee to add two new categories to the "Mitigation Strategy" section of the Colestin Hilt Fire Plan Outline, in order to better reflect local priorities. While all these ideas come under the broad heading of "Solutions", some represent philosophical underpinnings while others are on-the-ground strategies for hazard reduction. The "Methods" category has been added to describe matters of philosophical approach or policy. There was also strong interest in what we have collectively called "Proactive Measures". Anyone interested in a copy of the newly amended Outline can call Lisa Buttrey at 821-5479.

# Wanted

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- **Housekeeper** wanted 4 hours weekly. Call Martha at 530-475-0314.
- Country living on large acreage – **Housemate** Wanted – woman, non-smoker; mobile and art studio 350\$/mo. Garden paradise; Dogs, cats, horses welcome; 4 wheel drive helpful in winter; 4000' altitude; 35 minutes to Ashland. Call 541-482-4939

# For Sale

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- FISHER WOODSTOVE. Heats 1200 square feet easily. Available November 29. \$50. Call 541-482-5106

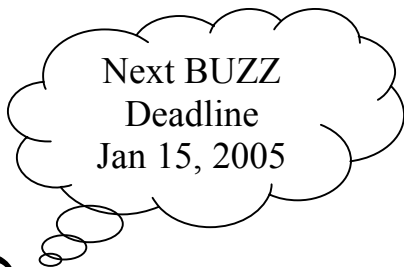
# F.Y.I.

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The **National Pain Foundation** provides information on traditional and complementary therapies for managing arthritis pain, backache, fibromyalgia and other debilitating conditions.  
[www.painconnection.org](http://www.painconnection.org).

# **Colestin Valley Buzz**

**Lisa Buttrey  
1211 Colestin Rd  
Ashland, OR 97520**



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Lisa Buttrey  
(not "The Buzz" per "The Bank")  
1211 Colestin Rd  
Ashland, OR 97520  
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541-821-5479, [lbuttrey@starband.net](mailto:lbuttrey@starband.net)

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