

the Sunshine fire protection district newsletter

Apr 03
Vol. 03 Iss. 2



Lessons from the Big Snow

Ah, spring in the Rockies! One day it's 75°, the next day six inches of snow falls. Although the warm weather has long since melted the drifts and memories of our big March storm, it's a good time to plan ahead for future storms.

Car Survival Kits. The most dangerous situation is being caught on the road during blizzard conditions. "During snowstorms, due to the fact that I'm out there day and night, I pick up a lot of stranded people, whose cars broke down, got stuck in the snow or went off the road," states Michael Schmitt of Pine Mountain Contractors. "I have not yet taken a single person home that had simple things such as a blanket, gloves, handwarmer, hat, etc., in their car. I'm the only one out there late at night and during the night, and that is the case until the county starts plowing, which is typically around 5-6.30am." A search on the web shows many sites

with information on or products for blizzard survival kits, such as www.blizzardwizardkit.com.

Winter tires. Michael points out that many of the driving difficulties are tire-related. Your vehicle is only as good as its tires—four-wheel drive isn't effective with tires that are badly worn or designed for summer use. Studded snow tires or winter tires with a soft rubber mix may be switched to summer tires after the snow season ends and will be serviceable for a few seasons.

Stay put. If your vehicle is stuck, think twice before trying to complete your journey on foot. Michael reports picking up a person who had left his vehicle in a blizzard with only a thin jacket for protection. He was trying to walk more than two miles home and Michael worries about what could have hap-

pened. "During the blizzard, the Paramedics wouldn't have been able to come up," says Michael. "I carry one of the fire department radios with me, as I am just waiting for the day that there is someone hurt or suffering hypothermia, since cell phone won't work and direct communication would be needed."

According to NOAA, the best tip is **STAY WITH YOUR VEHICLE!** Do not attempt to walk in a blizzard, you
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Memorial Day Volleyball



Calendar of events

Training and meeting schedules are now available at the Sunshine Fire Department website: <http://www.sunshine-fpd.org/>

Firefighter trainings:

Trainings are scheduled for the second Saturday of each month at 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at the fire station.

May 10, Jun 14, Jul 12, Aug 9, Sep 13, Oct 11, Nov 8, Dec 13

Squad meetings:

Squad meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm at the fire station.

Apr 24, May 22, Jun 26, Jul 24, Aug 28, Sep 25, Oct 23, No November and December meetings due to holidays.

Medical trainings:

Medical trainings are held from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm.

May 21 Gold Hill, Jun 12 Four Mile, Jul 16 Gold Hill, Aug 14 Four Mile, Sep 17 Gold Hill, Oct 9 Four Mile, Nov 19 Gold Hill, Dec 11 Four Mile

Board meetings:

Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm at the fire station. Meetings are open to all residents.

May 13, Jun 10, Jul 8, Aug 12, Sep 9, Oct 14, Nov 11, Dec 9

Special Events:

Sunshine Potluck, July 18th, 6:30 p.m. schoolhouse

Memorial Day Volleyball Weekend, May 24-26th, see last page for details



Lessons from Big Snow (cont. from p. 1)

can lose your direction very easily and tire quickly. Run your engine 10 minutes per hour for warmth and make sure that the exhaust pipe is clear of snow build up so the exhaust can escape. While your engine is running, crack your window open for ventilation and ensure that the exhaust is blowing in a direction away from the window.

Keep the roads clear. Vehicles parked or stranded on the road shoulder hinder snowplows and create dangerous obstacles for motorists driving under already difficult conditions. Please do not park close to the road or try the drive if risky. Remember that discretion is the better part of valor. There are times it's just best not to attempt the mountain even in a well-equipped snow vehicle. Hole up at a friend's or at a hotel and wait out the storm.

Loss of electricity. In case of power loss, always have a ready supply of bottled water, flashlights and dry firewood inside as well as a basic phone. Your

Current board

Pavel Bouska, Chairperson

Bill Bender, Treasurer

Mary Mesch, Member

Jay Schumacher, Member

David Wheeler, Member

Steve Stratton, Fire Chief

Tom Higbee, Asst. Fire Chief

Bruce Honeyman, Fire Marshal

Board meetings are at 7:30 pm on the second Tuesday of every month at the fire station and are open to all property owners.



Contact information

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Pager 303-441-3851 #4562

Higbeehomeinspection@netzero.net

Bruce Honeyman, Fire Marshal

ph. 303-786-7731

SFPD-FireMarshal@egroups.com

lifeline telephone service doesn't require electricity, but a cordless or electronic phone won't be supported. Another consideration is to invest in a backup generator system that can be used to power your well, refrigerator and furnace. (Also important, it can be used to provide water in case of a fire when electricity is shut off.)

Chief's Message

Have you noticed how wet it has been lately? It's springtime, and Colorado is enjoying normal spring weather for the first time in quite a few years. It is interesting that this extra moisture was actually predicted pretty far in advance. Combine this with the normal snowfall we received this year and it bodes well for a late fire season. I say "late" because even though humidity levels are up, the long-range forecast is for another dry, dry summer. This could be cause for some real concern. Our spring snows and rain are sorely needed, but with the rain comes significant growth. Grasses grow tall and then dry out leaving Sunshine Canyon with a higher fuel load than ever.

With all of this in mind, several agencies in Boulder and surrounding counties will be doing prescribed burning this spring, perhaps more than usual. This almost always leads to more calls to the fire department about smoke, and the general concern by the public of runaway fires. Prescribed fires are pretty important. They prepare the land for new growth, help certain plants and trees germinate, contribute to diversity needed by wildlife and most importantly, reduce the fire risk. Controlled burning is a good thing, and one that most Sunshine residents are well aware of. In fact, many of us practice our own controlled burns by reducing the slash around our homes. With the added moisture of the past few weeks, now has been a good time to get rid of some of that slash.

Remember that burning on your property requires a burn permit from the Boulder County Health Department, which you can easily get at their office, 3450 Broadway. You can pick up the form itself online at www.co.boulder.co.us/health/pdf/openburnpermit.pdf. The permit is basically for health reasons but does outline some safety measures. Copies of your permit are sent to my office, but it is very important to notify the county safety dispatch office (303-441-4444) on the days you're planning to burn. Before the snowstorm a few weeks ago SFPD got an emergency call on smoke in the canyon, only to discover it was a planned burn that never was reported to dispatch. Later that night, in two feet of snow, I had to put out the same fire because it was left burning at the end of the day. If you follow the guidelines in the permit, safety goes way up.

With all of that said, if you ever feel uncomfortable about smoke you see or smell, tell someone. Call 911. That

gets the fastest response, and it is appropriate even if you think it might not be a real emergency. You can also call dispatch (303-441-4444).

With the weather we have had, don't be alarmed if you see smoke. Investigate a little. Maybe it's just one of the prescribed burns. But if you don't know for sure...call someone.

Steve Stratton
Chief

Tax Deductible Donations
can always be sent to:

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Boulder, CO 80302

Anyone donating money to the fire department will get a letter from us thanking you for your donation and giving you a tax deductible record.

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Volunteer Profile

"In the summer of 1990, a small wildland fire erupted on the north side of Boulder Canyon where it meets Four Mile Canyon. A startled young man watched the fire burn up the opposite side of the ridge from his new home, and he sought out the nearest firefighters to ask them where he should go, to volunteer and join the ranks of these remarkable neighbors who turned out to fight the smoky churning monster drawing closer. They waved a hand up Sunshine Canyon Drive toward the old townsite of Sunshine, told me where to find the fire station, and thus began my 13-year tenure as a volunteer with the Sunshine Fire Protection District. Since then, I have trained a lot, fought some fires, helped a few sick and injured people, marveled at birth, strained against death, and above all enjoyed the company of some of the finest people you would ever want to get completely filthy and soaking wet with."
-- Doug Young

Thus describes Doug, in his predictably modest fashion, his dedicated service to SFPD. Doug served as fire chief from '93-'95, and since then has been a fire planner, fire medic, and battalion chief, meaning he can act in the capacity of chief at a fire scene if needed. The Master Plan evolved out of Doug's tenure as chief when he realized that he had no solid basis for making resource allocation decisions. In addition, large purchases would need to be planned and executed for a period longer than one chief's term. As a result of this Master Plan, Doug recently co-

chaired, with Bruce Honeyman, the Modernization Committee that specified and contracted our new engine, due this summer. (Engine is viewable on opposite page and our Sunshine website: www.sunshine-fpd.org/photos/new-truck/index.html)

The entire Young clan has been involved with SFPD with Pam Young acting as a past chairperson for the Community Fest. If you don't know Doug, he's easy to spot at our community gatherings—tall, red hair, and usually with one of his three children (Davis, Alex, Ellen) in tow. The Youngs have found that the benefits of their involvement extend beyond fire safety. Doug states that the fire department has created a social fabric here and the friendships they've made sustain them.

Doug recently announced his decision to step down from his volunteer position due to other obligations. Chief Stratton best sums up our feelings:

"I received a letter from Doug Young expressing his need to retire from all of his activities with SFPD. With a growing family and business he finds it just not possible to put his energy where it needs to go and still meet his obligations to SFPD. I am sure we all are familiar with this

dilemma.

For 13 years "Doug" has dedicated himself to SFPD. As fire chief, training officer, mentor and friend, Doug has poured more energy into this department than any of the rest of us. He was the initiator/co-designer of the 10 Year Modernization Plan for Sunshine, the result of which will be our new pumper scheduled to arrive this summer. He has worked tirelessly dealing with all the niggly details that the rest of us try so hard to avoid. He has made our presence known among the other Boulder County safety agencies. And helped carry SFPD from a small struggling mountain department, to one that is able to stand the fire ground with *any* comrade. As chief, I have counted on his help and advice. As a district, we have depended on him to solve the difficult problems.

I know I speak for everyone in saying that, "Doug, you will be greatly, greatly missed". Your shoes can, probably, not be filled. But you have shown us the way and we will carry forth on the path you started. Thank you for your time, your energy and your heart. Of course, you will still be part of us, and we hope you'll show your face once-in-a-while. You at least need to drive the new truck when it arrives. Thank you Doug, from all of us!"

Airline Humor: After our passengers disembarked, the other flight attendants and I checked for items left behind. In a seat pocket, I found a bag of homemade cookies with a note saying, "Much love, Mom." Quickly, I gave the bag to our gate agent in hopes it would be reunited with its owner. A few minutes later, an announcement came over the public-address system: "Would the passenger who lost his cookies on Flight 502, please return to the gate?"

Modernization Plan

Several months ago, the SFPD board approved the purchase of a new fire engine as a key element of our Modernization Plan. The engine is being built by W. S. Darley, a Chicago-based company, with delivery expected early this summer. Doug Young and Bruce Honeyman headed up the extensive

project to research engine requirements, draft specifications, identify and qualify potential vendors, and work with the selected contractor through completion.

The addition of the engine creates the need for either a new fire barn

or significant expansion of our existing facility. Both of these options require some time to achieve. In the meantime, minor modification to the current fire barn plus offsite garaging will allow us to accommodate our four fire vehicles.

New Fire Engine under Construction, as of March 2003



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Water Issues

Dry wells were a frequent complaint last summer, creating tensions between neighbors and the need for many residents to truck in water. In discussing the problem with Bill Bellis, ground water consultant, he explained that it's both a supply and demand issue: consecutive dry years have decreased supply while increased population density has increased demand. In an average year, we receive about 18" of precipitation, but less than a few inches of this migrates to the water table through aquifers. With several years of below normal precipitation even before last year's dry spell, this process suffered. Add an increasing mountain population "mining the water" and aquifer discharge has outpaced aquifer recharge.

When asked what residents can do, Bellis was quick to reply, "Conserve." Wells can sometimes be drilled deeper to compensate for lower water levels, but it's an expensive, disruptive option. Restricting water usage is an unavoidable fact of life and not just a temporary measure until drought relief occurs. Neighboring wells can often be drilled into different fractures in the aquifer and so tap into different qualities and quantities of water. Your neighbor can experience a dry well while you have a gusher—but it's all connected, so respect your neighbors and conserve.

A professional typically measures

both the static water level and the pumping water level of a well to determine its viability. When a well is being pumped, water is drawn downward in a cone shape to a level significantly lower than its natural (static) level. For instance, a 150 ft. deep well may have a static water level of 30 ft. and a pumping water level of 120 ft.; this variation may be accentuated if drilled in a fracture. Taking these measurements is tricky even for professionals, though, unless a draw down tube was installed with the well. One sign that you can watch to detect a low water level is a surging flow and higher sediment level. If water becomes too low, your pump's automatic cut-off feature will activate
(Cont. on opposite page)

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Sunshine Schoolhouse and Cemetery News



Sunshine Cemetery Association Annual Board Meeting

The annual Board Meeting was held on April 22nd. The treasurer reported a positive income statement with funds raised exceeding expenses.

The annual Sunshine Potluck date was set for July 18th at 6:30 p.m. Please bring a dish to share with 8-10 people and your own table service and beverage.

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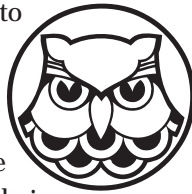
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Wildlife Watch

Coyote—Hero, Fool and Trickster
In the legends and folklore of Native American peoples throughout the West, from Canada to Mexico, the coyote is more than just an animal. Coyote is an important culture figure, playing a role in countless myths. He is a special being, a spirit, both human and animal at the same time. Coyote has three faces. At times he is the hero, helping create humans, bringing them food, putting the sun and moon in the sky and performing magical deeds. Sometimes he is the trickster, a mischief maker and a scoundrel trying to manipulate situations to his benefit. Coyote the trickster is an imp and a rebel who the listener admires for his cleverness and independence. Coyote's third persona is that of the fool - silly, arrogant, vain, the trickster who ends up tricked, thereby teaching a moral lesson.



Sometimes Coyote appears in human form, yet he is always Coyote, and recognized as such. Coyote is a symbol, reflecting the many sides of human nature. He is good and bad together; his antics present the many ways of dealing with life. Some of his choices are wise and self-sacrificing; some are foolish and get him in trouble; some are down right mean, and he gets away with it, because that's the way life is sometimes. So Coyote is at times a role model, at others an example of what not to do. And often he is a metaphor for the fortunes of life. And sometimes Coyote legends just entertain.

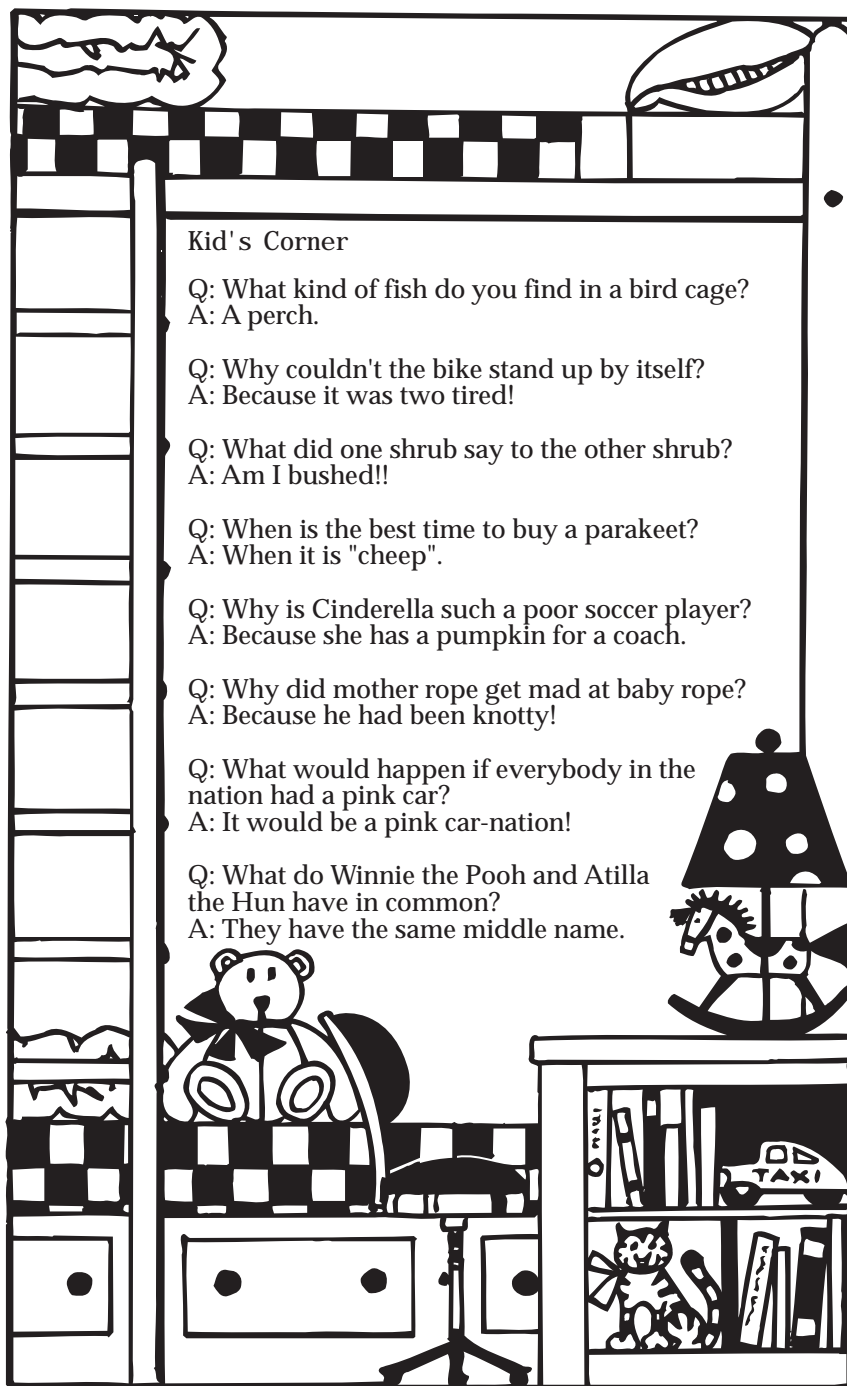
With its intelligence and adaptable nature, the coyote seems a natural choice as the model for the complex character, Coyote. Native Americans knew this animal well. They had seen its cleverness, its ability to solve problems, its readiness to steal food or to seemingly play tricks on people and other animals. They had laughed at, and been the victim of, its antics. The coyote taught lessons, showed how to live and revealed some of life's truths. And so the coyote became Coyote.

From the CO Div. of Wildlife website

Wells (cont. from p. 6)

to eliminate the risk of pump burn out. Another common water problem Bellis encounters is when a homeowner expands his water use, e.g., adding a new bathroom, and his existing pressure tank is no longer adequate, leading to excessive use of the well pump.

Bellis recommends checking water quality and water levels about every 1-2 years. Analysis can determine if your water quality is affected by pollution from septic systems or other sources, such as livestock manure. At the very least, he recommends accessing the free (or nominal charge) service offered by the county health department to measure bacteria. When monitoring your static water level, he suggests doing the measurement close to the same day each year to eliminate seasonal variations.



Kid's Corner

Q: What kind of fish do you find in a bird cage?
A: A perch.

Q: Why couldn't the bike stand up by itself?
A: Because it was two tired!

Q: What did one shrub say to the other shrub?
A: Am I bushed!!

Q: When is the best time to buy a parakeet?
A: When it is "cheep".

Q: Why is Cinderella such a poor soccer player?
A: Because she has a pumpkin for a coach.

Q: Why did mother rope get mad at baby rope?
A: Because he had been knotty!

Q: What would happen if everybody in the nation had a pink car?
A: It would be a pink car-nation!

Q: What do Winnie the Pooh and Atilla the Hun have in common?
A: They have the same middle name.

From the editor

Remember, this is your newsletter! If you have any feedback, ideas, letters or would like to submit materials, please contact me.

Mary Mesch
5188 Sunshine Canyon
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Local Sunshine Classes
1254 County Rd. 83
Instructor: Dee Spencer

Yoga
All levels welcome.
Monday evenings, 6:30-7:45

Children's
Art & Nature Class
For ages 3-5 yrs
Mon. or Weds. mornings

For more info, call Dee
at 303-443-0121

Memorial Day
Volleyball Weekend

Can we Housesit for you this summer? We (Paul Berger, Robin and Asa) are renovating our house and will need to be out of it for 2 or three months this summer: June, July and August. Will you be gone for any or parts of those months? Please call 303/448-1077.

Classified ads are \$1/line. Business ads are \$10. The deadline for the next issue is June 15th.

Saturday and Sunday, volunteer
workdays to complete
community volleyball court

Monday, 11:00 volleyball game
and picnic

Call Nathan at 303-442-0657
for more details.