

Fire and Forest

MCFSC Changes

by Mike Esnard

(from The Town Crier - February 2015)

My wife and I will be moving off the Hill this summer to live closer to family, so change is in order.

At our January meeting, the board elected Chris Kramer as the new president of the Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council, and Norm Walker as the new first vice president. Both Chris and Norm bring great experience to their new roles –both are career firefighters, MCFSC board members and active members of the Woodies. I am sure they will bring fresh and skillful energy to the board.

Since this column was given to me in my role as president of the council, it is time for me to pass it on, so this will be my last column.

Starting in March, the column will be either written or guided by Doris Lombard and Chris. Doris and Chris will make sure the column is written to reflect the council's perspective and message on community fire safety.

Doris will surely write at times on biological issues of interest to her. For years she has been an important voice within our board on topics such as soil health and various aspects of plant and animal biology. Readers of the Town Crier who appreciate photography also will know that her exquisite pictures of birds often appear in this paper.

Chris will write on how certain issues look through his lens as an experienced firefighter. Doris and Chris also will arrange for other members of our board to share their views on matters of interest for the column.

I think readers will find the greater variety very interesting in the months to come and will enjoy different voices on fire-related topics.

Meanwhile, the essential work of the staff continues with abatement grants to help homeowners firesafe their properties. The extraordinarily valuable roof replacement grant for owners of wood shake or shingle roofs also continues and should be completed this year.

Public education and discussion continue to be essential goals for the council. During 2015, we will set at least two public meetings. The first meeting, to be held sometime in the spring, will make available the latest information from experts regarding the Goldspotted Oak Borer.

Another public meeting, later in the year, will be for updating the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This is an important document for fire protection on the Hill and is essential to federal funding. The public meeting will give agencies a chance to discuss both past and future projects, and will facilitate dialogue between the agencies and the public.

I leave this column very happy that it will continue as a strong voice on community fire safety. I am also grateful that the Town Crier has shared our basic view that fire safety is worth devoting a column to on a regular basis. In addition to this column, I have always appreciated the coverage that fire issues receive in this paper. I am a particular fan of J.P. Crumrine's reporting, which I have always thought was excellent on all matters of public safety.

Lastly, I would like to reemphasize my view of the Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council as a truly great community-based organization. If you have any interest at all in fire issues, I hope you will drop by the office or call and chat with Edwina, Don or Pat. They, together with the board and the Woodies, do terrific work.