We’re NOT FPSI!!

By Mike Esnard

Those of you who read the Town Crier will know that a certain fire prevention company has been in the news around here recently, and whether you read the TC or not, I want to clear up a bit of confusion. We, as I hope you all know, are the Mountain Communities Fire Safe Council, a non-profit organization whose mission is to keep our communities safe from wildfire. We are not Fire Prevention Services, Inc., (FPSI) which is a profit-oriented company out of San Diego that has a contract this year with the Idyllwild Fire Protection District to carry out inspections and forced abatements in the district.

This will seem like an obvious point to most of you but we have gotten quite a few calls from Idyllwild residents believing we had control over their inspection process. We do not. Some residents believed that the letter they received from Fire Prevention Services telling them of code violations on their property meant that they must use FPSI to do the work. This was a mistake, though it is easy to see why some made it. Let me just say that property owners in Idyllwild are not required to use FPSI for abatement work. They are required to meet the safety codes of the district, but how they do that is entirely up to them.

Regarding forced abatement (abatement work done after repeated inspection failures and without the owner’s agreement) IFPD’s Chief Kunkle has emphasized that if it is apparent that abatement work is taking place, he will postpone any forced action. So if you do get a letter that appears to be a final notice, call the IFPD to let them know you are going to handle it, and take care of it. If you need help with contractors give us a call. We have grant money to assist abatement in Idyllwild and we are happy to help.

As I write this, various people are working on fixing the problems that Idyllwild residents encountered this year. I think next year will be better.

Pay Only 25%-Not 100%

We still have funds available for fuel abatement in Idyllwild and Pine Cove, but only limited funds for other areas. This has been made possible, in part, by the cooperative agreement between Riverside County and MCFSC thanks to the efforts of Kevin Turner of CAL FIRE. Under this agreement, 103 fuel reduction projects have been submitted for competitive bidding. Even though currently limited, the abatement program is alive and thriving.

Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation’s compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain loving one another.

-- Erma Bombeck
Proper Pruning
By Megan Foucht

For several months now landowners across the mountain have been focusing on removing weeds, grasses and needles. However, it’s important to go one rung higher on the fuel ladder to keep the area around your home fire safe. While working with shrubs, bushes and trees keep in mind proper pruning techniques and practices. Proper pruning has been proven to reduce the impact of stress, disease and insect entry of your plants. It will also reduce the amount of flammable material around your home. Even the threat of highly flammable shrubs like manzanita can be significantly reduced through appropriate pruning.

Here are some tips for decreasing the fire hazards on your property where bushes and shrubs and trees are concerned:

— Prune branches from the ground and clear dead leaves and branches from within the bush or shrub.
— Make sure spacing is at least two times the height of the shrubs to ensure fire doesn’t spread from plant to plant.
— Remove shrubs or bushes that are completely dead.
— When landscaping with shrubs and bushes choose drought tolerant or resistant varieties.
— Use well maintained tools such as sharp loppers, hand shears or pruning saws to ease your workload.
— Prune large branches using a saw and a three-cut method. The first cut should be made on the under-side of the branch a few inches from the trunk. The second cut will be made on the top of the branch an inch closer to the trunk than the first cut was made. After these cuts are made the branch will fall off naturally, not harming the integrity of the bark. The third cut should be made at the branch bark collar and will take off the remainder of the branch.

(continued on page 4)
Is It Possible to Prepare For A 7.8 Earthquake?
By Nancy Layton, President, Mountain Disaster Preparedness

When the San Andreas does its next big shake, rattle, and roll, Southern California will look very different than it does today. The scenes painted in The Great Southern California ShakeOut by Dr. Lucy Jones and her colleagues is truly terrifying. Property damage, injuries, and deaths will be widespread and horrendous. The projections for long-term devastation are almost impossible to fathom.

Many businesses will be damaged beyond their ability to re-open. Many others may appear to ride it out, but will experience catastrophic losses that eventually force them to close. Jobs will disappear – virtually overnight. Transportation of all types will be slow to recover. Communication, banking, insurance, and real estate will take major hits as systems fail and people can’t make payments on damaged or destroyed homes and commercial properties. The losses will continue cascading into failure for many months, perhaps even years.

What can any individual do to prepare for such an almost unimaginable situation? In this article, I’ll list a few things you can do NOW to prepare for what is sure to happen somewhere down the road – maybe even in your lifetime. In future articles, I’ll go into a bit more detail about specific things you can do to prepare for the long-haul following this devastating disaster the Quake folks have laid out for us to consider.

♦ Take a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) course.
♦ Lay in your own supply of emergency food, clothing, and water, water, WATER!
♦ Get to know your neighbors and find out what they’re doing to prepare. Help them, remembering that each person you help now to be better prepared may be one less person you’ll have to help when it all hits the fan.

Then, take your planning to the next level. Consider what you can do now to prepare for sustaining your own and your loved ones’ lives when we’re all thrown back on our own resources without access to many of the modern facilities and conveniences we all take very much for granted.

♦ What if your house is damaged beyond habitability and we’re isolated up here? Hopefully, you aren’t seriously injured, but you most likely can’t get out of town and, given the scenario for the rest of Southern California, where would you go, anyway? Are you prepared to literally camp out in your own backyard for a couple weeks or longer?

♦ While it may seem ludicrous right now, having an emergency stash of cash (buried in a coffee can in the backyard, perhaps?) suddenly looks more appealing when you consider the very real possibility that the stores that can open and still have goods to sell will have no way to process your credit or debit card or even be willing to take a check, given the precarious state of the banking industry in the first few weeks after the Big One. Cash or barter may become our primary means for obtaining what we need.

Next quarter, I’ll address a few more ideas on how to prepare for “The BIG One!” In the meantime, here’s a few things to get started on today!

♦ Look around your house and think about everything that poses a threat when the shaking, rattling, and rolling begins. Start now to secure things from falling or becoming airborne missiles aimed straight at your head.

♦ As much as you love it there, please, take that heavy picture of Aunt Bessie off the wall over your bed and put it somewhere Aunt Bessie can’t kill you by falling on your head in the middle of a nighttime earthquake!

♦ Even if you no longer have wee ones toddling around your kitchen or dining room, put child-safety latches on your cabinets.

♦ Keep a pair of sturdy shoes under the edge of your bed where you can easily find them right away once the shaking stops. Socks, too. And, stick a flashlight inside one of them. Think that’s silly? Look seriously at all the things that will bury your shoes inside your closet, making getting to them a challenge when you’re already in panic mode from the shaker. And how much broken glass or ceramic will you have to tread just getting to them?

♦ While it may sound REALLY strange, think about what you wear when you sleep. Nothing? Gee, how will you find something suitable for the occasion when your bedroom is a complete shambles? Might want to keep a sweat-suit or similar clothing tucked under the edge of the bed in a drawstring trash bag, too.

♦ Mount several battery-operated emergency lights (small, round “puck” lights work well) in places your hands can easily find should the quake happen in the darkness and the power is out when you are able to move about. Test these lights frequently and replace the batteries as needed.

Okay, that’s enough for now. Get to work! Look for more disaster preparedness tips in the next newsletter. (Including my own recipe for “Earthquake Stew.”)
Margaret Grayson (CFSC) chats with Tom McCullough and Jerry Holdibber, directors (MCFSC) during recent filming of Woodies at work for upcoming FOX Channel 11 segment on volunteerism by Bob Tarlau. Reba Coulter points out areas of interest to photographer Julio as Jim Taylor, Janice Fast and Mike Esnard confer.

This newsletter is sponsored by the contractors below.

Margaret Grayson (CFSC) chats with Tom McCullough and Jerry Holdibber, directors (MCFSC) during recent filming of Woodies at work for upcoming FOX Channel 11 segment on volunteerism by Bob Tarlau. Reba Coulter points out areas of interest to photographer Julio as Jim Taylor, Janice Fast and Mike Esnard confer.

APPLICATION FORM
($10 per person or $20 for family)

(Name)
________________________________________
________________________________________
(Mailing AND Street Address) (Circle-Anza, Idyllwild, Mtn. Center, Pine Cove, Pinyon)
________________________________________
________________________________________
(City State and Zip)
________________________________________
________________________________________
(Phone)
________________________________________
________________________________________
(Email address)
________________________________________
________________________________________

If you would like to receive a newsletter via email, please send your email address to exec-dir@MCFSC.org
Please remember that your contributions are tax deductible.

The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the California Fire Safe Council or the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the California Fire Safe Council or the U.S. Government.

Success in life has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It's what you do for others. - Danny Thomas

As always, remember to call Forest Care at 1-888-883-8446 for help thinning and pruning trees less than 12" in diameter as well as treatment or removal of brush. Have a fire safe fall.

Visit MCFSC's Website at www.mcfsc.org or call (951) 659-6208

Margaret Grayson (CFSC) chats with Tom McCullough and Jerry Holdibber, directors (MCFSC) during recent filming of Woodies at work for upcoming FOX Channel 11 segment on volunteerism by Bob Tarlau. Reba Coulter points out areas of interest to photographer Julio as Jim Taylor, Janice Fast and Mike Esnard confer.

This newsletter is sponsored by the contractors below.

Margaret Grayson (CFSC) chats with Tom McCullough and Jerry Holdibber, directors (MCFSC) during recent filming of Woodies at work for upcoming FOX Channel 11 segment on volunteerism by Bob Tarlau. Reba Coulter points out areas of interest to photographer Julio as Jim Taylor, Janice Fast and Mike Esnard confer.

APPLICATION FORM
($10 per person or $20 for family)

(Name)
________________________________________
________________________________________
(Mailing AND Street Address) (Circle-Anza, Idyllwild, Mtn. Center, Pine Cove, Pinyon)
________________________________________
________________________________________
(City State and Zip)
________________________________________
________________________________________
(Phone)
________________________________________
________________________________________
(Email address)
________________________________________
________________________________________

If you would like to receive a newsletter via email, please send your email address to exec-dir@MCFSC.org
Please remember that your contributions are tax deductible.

The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the California Fire Safe Council or the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the California Fire Safe Council or the U.S. Government.

Success in life has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It's what you do for others. - Danny Thomas

As always, remember to call Forest Care at 1-888-883-8446 for help thinning and pruning trees less than 12" in diameter as well as treatment or removal of brush. Have a fire safe fall.

Visit MCFSC's Website at www.mcfsc.org or call (951) 659-6208

Margaret Grayson (CFSC) chats with Tom McCullough and Jerry Holdibber, directors (MCFSC) during recent filming of Woodies at work for upcoming FOX Channel 11 segment on volunteerism by Bob Tarlau. Reba Coulter points out areas of interest to photographer Julio as Jim Taylor, Janice Fast and Mike Esnard confer.

This newsletter is sponsored by the contractors below.

Margaret Grayson (CFSC) chats with Tom McCullough and Jerry Holdibber, directors (MCFSC) during recent filming of Woodies at work for upcoming FOX Channel 11 segment on volunteerism by Bob Tarlau. Reba Coulter points out areas of interest to photographer Julio as Jim Taylor, Janice Fast and Mike Esnard confer.

APPLICATION FORM
($10 per person or $20 for family)

(Name)
________________________________________
________________________________________
(Mailing AND Street Address) (Circle-Anza, Idyllwild, Mtn. Center, Pine Cove, Pinyon)
________________________________________
________________________________________
(City State and Zip)
________________________________________
________________________________________
(Phone)
________________________________________
________________________________________
(Email address)
________________________________________
________________________________________

If you would like to receive a newsletter via email, please send your email address to exec-dir@MCFSC.org
Please remember that your contributions are tax deductible.