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The City of Tallahassee and The Tallahassee Fire Department Present:



# The Newsladder

Special Holiday Edition

### Special points of interest:

- Heating is second only to cooking as the leading cause of residential fires.
- TFD adopts families in need each holiday season through the Christmas Connection and Catholic Charities.
- Smoke detector batteries should be changed twice a year, "Change your Clock, Change your Batteries."

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## Make this Season a Safe One

As the holiday season nears, many people are preparing themselves for holiday fun as well as the cold weather. In anticipation of "old man winter," many people are purchasing space heaters, candles, and wood for the fireplace. However, there are quite a few dangers involved with the use of alternative heating sources in the home.

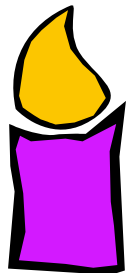
According to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), "heating is second only to cooking as the leading

cause of residential structure fires. Additionally, more than half of residential heating fires are due to mechanical failure. In one-and two-family residences, one-third of heating fires results from improper maintenance of heating equipment."

In most cases, the number of heating related fires are increased in the winter months due to cold weather, yet, the addition of holiday decorations in the home also

plays a major role in the increased amount of home fires during this time.

USFA stated, "in residential structure fires where the ignition point is a Christmas tree or other holiday decoration, the fire is typically more severe in every measurable way."



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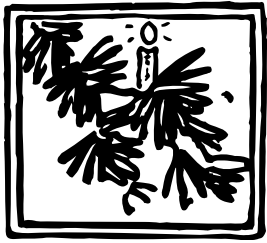
## TFD Receives Gift from RAA Middle School

The Tallahassee Fire Department would like to thank RAA Middle School's, eighth grade shop students for their hard work and donated gifts of sprinkler/door wedges. The class has provided the department with sprinkler/door

wedges for years and has always been gracious and excited about their gifts made from recycled scrap wood.

Thanks RAA for making our jobs a little easier!





Holiday decorations are pretty, but can be dangerous if not handled properly.

The USFA reported, “cooking fires cause up to 90% of all kitchen fires. The primary factor in the ignition of these fires was unattended equipment, and the leading type of material first ignited was oil, fat, or grease.”

## Make this Season a Safe One

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In addition to Christmas tree hazards, candles can also be very dangerous during the holiday season. As reported by the American Red Cross, “about 18,000 house fires started by candles were reported to fire departments in 2001 alone. Those fires killed 190 people, injured 1,450 and caused \$265 million in property damage.”

Furthermore, statistics presented by a collaboration of candle industries showed that nearly 96% of candle buyers are women. As a result, they have concluded that women are slightly more likely to be injured and are 13% more likely to die in residential candle fires than men.

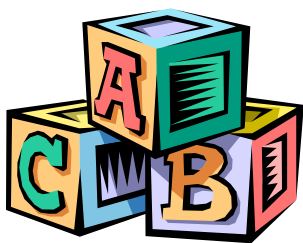
Cooking fires also present a huge risk to residents during the holiday season; but also happen frequently throughout the year.

The USFA reported, “cooking fires cause up to 90% of all kitchen fires. The primary factor in the ignition of these fires was unattended equipment, and the leading type of material first ignited was oil, fat, or grease.”

More than any other types of fires, cooking fires have the highest fatality and injury rates. “An estimated 156,500 kitchen fires in 2002 caused 331 fatalities, 4,914 injuries and \$876 million in property loss,” as stated by the USFA. Additionally, they also

reported, “on average, kitchen fires caused less property loss and were less fatal than structure fires in general, but resulted in more injuries.”

So as a word of advice, be alert, be aware and have a safety plan of action in preparation for the holiday season. Make sure to check the batteries in all fire detectors in your home and be as cautious as possible when holiday decorating.



## Meet a Firefighter: TFD Santa's Helpers

With the arrival of the holiday season, many families are in need of assistance. As a result, the Tallahassee Fire Department along with the Christmas Connection have tried to bring the gift of giving back to the community.

For the past eight years, TFD has joined the Christmas Connection and Catholic Charities to adopt three families. Three firefighters, one from each 24-hour shift, coordinate donation efforts for their shift for these families. In addition, TFD has also spon-

sored families that have been recommended to the fire department by various members of the community and many firefighters have been eager to assist in the process.

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## From our House to Yours -

### Fruit Cake Cookies

Contributed by Driver/  
Operator Randy Rafnel  
Station 1, B Shift

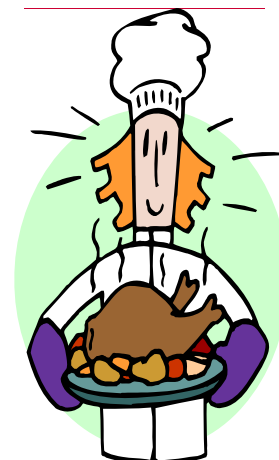
2 sticks butter or margarine  
3 cups light brown sugar  
(1 box)  
4 eggs  
4 tablespoons buttermilk  
6 cups plain flour

2 teaspoons baking soda  
1 pound candied cherries,  
chopped  
1 pound candied pineapple,  
chopped  
8 cups pecans, chopped

Cream margarine and brown sugar adding in eggs one at a time. Next add buttermilk, then add flour and soda mixture. Reserve one cup of mixture

for fruit. Pour the reserved cup of mixture over fruit and chopped pecans and mix, then add to rest of mixture and mix well. Chill dough overnight.

Drop by spoonful on a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes or until brown.



## Meet a Firefighter: TFD Santa Helpers

(continued from page 2)

“People come to us with families in need periodically and we try to accommodate,” said Driver/Operator Troy Anzalone.

Anzalone has participated in the family adoption program for several years and believes that giving to those in need is not only his God given duty, but also is a way to show his true character. “Being a good steward involves doing for others,” Anzalone said.

Anzalone is one of the main participants in the adoption program, along with other firefighters such as Sarah Cooksey and Kathy Gohlke, who are also highly involved and dedicated. The success of the adoption program is dependant however on many TFD members. “Our family adoption process is a group effort by TFD and it involves all of us coming together to give,” Anzalone said.

During the adoption program, many firefighters have

been exposed to variety of situations and scenarios. As a result, some of them have brought their younger children along with them on the day that they drop off their gifts to their adopted family. “I brought my four year old daughter last year on our delivery day. I brought her along so she could have an early lesson on the importance of giving and being grateful for the things she has,” Anzalone said.

At the end of the program, the firefighters at TFD say

they are fulfilled and grateful to be able to give.

“It’s inspiring and enjoyable to show up to a home with a fire truck full of gifts,” Anzalone said. “To see the surprised and grateful look on peoples’ faces is the most fulfilling and rewarding feeling.”



## Poinsettias: Myth Uncovered

In the past, there have been many rumors about the toxicity levels of poinsettias. According to the doctors on Medicine.net, some sources attribute the rumor about the dangers of poinsettia leaves to a poisoning in 1919 that led to the death of a two year-old child, which was incorrectly determined to be

a poinsettia leaf.

Doctors at the Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Poison Center conducted a review of 22,793 reported cases of poinsettia exposures, the majority (93%) of which occurred in children and found that 92% of those exposed

did not develop any symptoms at all. Furthermore, no deaths resulting from poinsettia ingestion have ever been documented.

Though poinsettias have not caused any known fatalities, it is still important to avoid ingestion of the plant. If the plant is accidentally

eaten, Medicine.net stated, “usually, the most harm that a poinsettia can do after ingestion (in rare cases) is cause nausea and vomiting.” However, because of the unpleasant and bitter taste, doctors say that people, especially children, would not eat enough of the poinsettia to cause major symptoms.

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## Reader Questions

In this issue we address questions concerning the use of smoke detectors and precautions regarding matches and children.

### **What is the proper way to use and maintain smoke detectors?**

Working smoke detectors alert you to a fire in your home in time for you to escape, even if you are sleeping. Install smoke detectors on every level of your home, including the basement, and outside each sleeping area. If you sleep with the door closed, install one inside your

sleeping area as well. Test detectors every month, following the manufacturer's directions, and replace batteries twice a year, or whenever a detector "chirps" to signal low battery power. Remember "Change your Clocks, Change your Batteries." Never "borrow" a smoke detector's battery for another use—a disabled detector can't save your life. Replace detectors that are more than 10 years old.

### **What safety precautions should I take regarding children and lighters/matches?**

In a child's hands matches

and lighters can be deadly. Use only child-resistant lighters and store all matches and lighters up high, where small children can't see or reach them, preferably in a locked cabinet. Teach your children that matches and lighters are tools, not toys, and should be used only by adults or with adult supervision. Teach young children to tell a grown-up if they find matches or lighters; older children should bring matches and lighters to an adult immediately.

(<http://cityofgainesville.org/gfr>)

