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JFD Issues Warning

Officials Give Tips To Stay Safe Around Holiday Season

By Andrew Carr
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With the coming of cold weather and winter holidays, many fires that occur can be easily prevented.

According to Shawn Tibbitts, Jamestown Fire Department fire prevention officer, calls during the holiday season tend to rise due to preventable mistakes. Many households engage in holiday activities that serve as some of the leading causes of U.S. home fires, including cooking, he said.

One of the biggest problems that

"By taking simple precautions, people can ... make this time of year a healthy and happy one."

• **Shawn Tibbitts**
JFD fire prevention officer

occurs is members of the public using naturally cut trees and not maintaining them properly, which can cause a fire that

can easily spread throughout a home, he said.

"A lot of times they don't put a fresh cut in the bottom, a lot of times they don't keep them watered properly," said Tibbitts. "As soon as those things dry up it is absolutely ridiculous how fast they can go up."

Tibbitts said the drying of the trees increases their flammability immensely.

"I don't think people realize how flammable those trees get when they do dry out like that," he said. "They can totally engulf a room in less than a minute."

See JFD, Page A3



HALEY SIGULAR

JHS Senior Focuses On, Off The Field

By Liz Skoczylas
lskozylas@post-journal.com

Haley Sigular is doing a fine job of balancing academics and athletics at Jamestown High School.

Haley is a senior at Jamestown High School, and is constantly on the move, whether participating in one of her many clubs and activities, or on the soccer field, defending her team's goal.

Barbi Price, ELA department chair for grades nine-12, is one of Haley's teachers at the high school. Mrs. Price has many positive things to say about Haley.

"Haley Sigular was a student in my English nine AT and is currently enrolled in my college-level 12 English class, in which she will receive three credits of college public speaking credit from Jamestown Community College. As a scholar, Haley is tenacious, bright, open to criticism and engaged. She is organized and thorough. In the classroom, she is a dynamo," Mrs. Price said.

Haley's grades are reinforced by her participation in Jamestown High School's National Honor Society. Additionally, Haley is a member of the Key Club at Jamestown High School.

While Haley focuses on her studies, she also is a standout athlete. "Considerate of other students, Haley listens actively and responds appropriately. Common sense, an outgoing personality and strong organizational skills make Haley an effective leader," Mrs. Price said.

See CROWD, Page A3

Standing
Out
In The
Crowd

"Haley is tenacious, bright, open to criticism and engaged. She is organized and thorough. In the classroom, she is a dynamo."

• **Barbi Price**
JHS ELA department chair

50 By 50



Joseph Lepkowski's family gathers around him at the conclusion of the Clymer native's 50th marathon in Harrisburg, Pa., recently. Twenty years ago, Lepkowski set out to complete 50 marathons by his 50th birthday. Submitted photo

Clymer Native Achieves Marathon Goal

By Scott Shelters
sshelters@post-journal.com

FOREST PARK, Ill. — On the coldest, most unpleasant days of the year, homeowners may notice everyday people jogging past. Dressed in four or five layers, they move along almost silently on sidewalks or country roads.

Regardless of weather or life's obligations, they crawl out of bed at the earliest of

hours, refusing skip out on what they love.

According to legend, the runners follow the steps of the Greek soldier Pheidippides, who supposedly ran non-stop from Marathon to Athens to deliver a message.

Today's marathon runners, such as Clymer native Joseph Lepkowski, have different goals in mind. Lepkowski set out to complete 50 marathons by age 50. "I sat and did the

math. I said, 'It's possible, but it's going to be tight. I think I can do it,'" he explained.

As an Illinois dentist, he is under no obligation to run, especially not grueling, 26.2-mile races. He doesn't have to spend weeks or months preparing for marathons, but he does so anyway.

For Lepkowski, running serves as an escape, but it wasn't always that way. With limited resources or experience at

his disposal, he ran his first marathon at age 30 in 1991.

"I just went out and ran it," he explained. "The only preparation I did was a 13-mile run. I said, 'Well, I'll try a marathon and see what happens.' I didn't know you could eat; I didn't know you could stop and walk. I was sore after it."

Throughout his 30s, Lepkowski competed in a couple races per year. See MARATHON, Page A3

Iraqis Celebrate U.S. Exit, But Worry For Future

By Sameer N. Yacoub
Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Even as Iraqis celebrated the departure of the last American troops Sunday, the dangers left behind after nearly nine years of war were on full display. Politicians feuded along the country's potentially explosive sectarian lines and the drumbeat of deadly violence went on.

The last U.S. convoy rumbled out of Iraq across the border into Kuwait around sunrise under a shroud of secrecy to prevent attacks on the departing troops. When news reached a waking Iraqi public, there was joy at

"These politicians will lead the country into sedition and civil war. Iraq now is like a weak prey among neighboring beasts."

• **Karim al-Rubaie**
Shiite shopowner in Basra

the end of a presence that many Iraqis resented as a foreign occupation.

In the northern city of Mosul, pastry shop owner Muhammad Adnan said he had a swell of orders for cakes — up to 110 from the usual 70 or so a day — as families threw parties at

home. Some asked him to ice the cakes with inscriptions of "congratulations for the end of occupation," he said.

But the happiness was shot through with worries over the future. See IRAQIS, Page A3



In this Dec. 16 photo, a member of the Iraqi Army waves an Iraqi flag after a ceremony signing over Camp Adra, near Nasiriyah in Iraq, the last United States base in the country, to the Iraqi Air Force. AP photo

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QUESTION OF THE DAY

Should U.S. troops return to Iraq if the country falls back into civil war?

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AREA/INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Iraqis

From Page A1

"Nobody here wants occupation. This withdrawal marks a new stage in Iraq's history," said Karim al-Rubaie, a Shiite shopowner in the southern city of Basra. But, he said, "the politicians who are running this country are just a group of thieves."

"These politicians will lead the country into sedition and civil war. Iraq now is like a weak prey among neighboring beasts."

In the morning, a bomb hidden under a pile of trash exploded on a street of spare car parts stores in a mainly Shiite district of eastern Baghdad, killing two people and wounding four others. It was the latest in the near daily shootings and bombings — low-level but still deadly — that continue to bleed the country and that many fear will increase with the Americans gone.

Violence is far lower than it was at the worst of the Iraq War, in 2006 and 2007, when Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias preyed on Iraqis around the country in a vicious sectarian conflict that nearly turned into complete civil war. But those armed groups still remain, and there are deep concerns whether Iraqi security forces are capable of keeping them in check without the help of U.S. troops.

Iraq's military chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Babaker Zebari said Sunday that his troops were up to the task of uprooting militant groups.

"There are only scattered terrorists hiding here and there and we are seeking intelligence information to eliminate them," Zebari said. "We are confident that there will be no danger."

Equally worrying, the resentments and bitterness between the Shiite majority and Sunni minority in this country of 31 million remain unhealed. The fear is that without the hand of American forces, the fragile attempts to get the two sides to work together could collapse and even turn to greater violence.

In an escalation of the rivalry, the main Sunni-backed political bloc on Sunday announced it was boycotting parliament to protest what they called Shiite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's attempts to monopolize government positions — particularly those overseeing the powerful security forces. The bloc has complained of security forces' recent arrests of Sunnis that it says are "unjustified."

The Iraqiya bloc warned that it could take the further step of pulling its seven ministers out of al-Maliki's coalition government.

"We are against the con-

centration of security powers in the hands of one person, that is the prime minister," said Sunni lawmaker Hamid al-Mutlaq, a member of the bloc.

In particular, the bloc was angered by the arrest of several bodyguards of Sunni Vice President Tareq al-Hashimi several days ago on suspicion of involvement in terrorist acts. On Sunday, a senior security official said that judges investigating the bodyguards banned al-Hashimi from traveling outside of Iraq — a step that is likely to further anger the Iraqiya bloc, to which al-Hashimi belongs. The security official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the press.

Sunnis have long feared domination by the country's Shiites, who vaulted to power after the 2003 fall of Saddam Hussein at the hands of the Americans. The rivalry was exacerbated by the years of sectarian killing.

The Iraqiya bloc narrowly won the most seats in last year's parliamentary election. But its leader Ayad Allawi was unable to become prime minister, outmaneuvered by al-Maliki, who kept the premier's post after cobbling together key support from Shiite parties.

That has left al-Maliki

beholden to Shiite factions, including those led by radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, whose militiamen were blamed for sectarian killings during the worst of Iraq's violence. Since forming his new government, al-Maliki has effectively controlled the Interior and Defense Ministries, which oversee the police and military, while conflicts between Sunni and Shiite politicians have delayed the appointment of permanent ministers.

Many on both sides of the sectarian divide also worry that neighboring Shiite-led powerhouse Iran will now increase its influence in their country. Al-Maliki's party and other Shiite blocs have close ties to Tehran. But even some in the Shiite public resent the idea of Iranian domination.

"I am afraid that this occupation will be replaced by indirect occupation by some neighboring countries," said Ali Rahim, a 40-year-old Shiite who works for the Electricity Ministry.

Omar Waadalla Younis, a senior at Mosul University, said at first he was happy to hear the last Americans were gone and thought the city government should hold celebrations in the streets. Then he thought of the possible threat from Iran.

AREA POLICE REPORTS

JAMESTOWN POLICE

• Charles D. Colley, 41, of Jamestown was charged with third-degree assault and criminal obstruction of breathing or blood circulation Saturday at 11:50 p.m. Officers responded to an address on McKinley Avenue for a reported domestic incident. Police gained access to the apartment and interviewed Colley, a female victim and another witness. According to police, Colley assaulted the woman and attempted to strangle her. He was taken into custody and held in the city jail pending arraignment.

• Matthew R. Mosier, 22, of Panama was charged with driving while intoxicated and aggravated DWI on Sunday at 3:11 a.m. Officers responded to an accident on Colfax and Grandin streets that stemmed from an incident officers were investigating. Officers found a vehicle that was on the terrace of the street. According to police, Mosier was found to be driving and intoxicated. He was taken into custody and taken to the city jail pending arraignment.

LAKEWOOD-BUSTI POLICE

• Steven A. Laska, 22, of Park Street, Jamestown, was charged with DWI, aggravated DWI, failure to maintain lane and broken windshield Friday at 5:44 p.m. Officers pulled over a vehicle on Hunt Road in Busti for allegedly crossing the white fog line multiple times. According to police, Laska was found to be driving and intoxicated. He was taken into custody and later released on appearance tickets to Busti Town Court.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

• CHAUTAUQUA — Clifford C. Latta, 37, of Potter Road, Mayville, was charged with second-degree harassment and three counts of first-degree criminal contempt Wednesday at 6:45 p.m. After an investigation by Chautauqua County Sheriff's deputies, Latta was charged after three separate alleged incidents that took place on Dec. 7 and Dec. 14 in Chautauqua. An arrest warrant was issued from Chautauqua Town Court and Latta was found and taken into custody. He was taken to the Chautauqua County Jail on bail.

• RIPLEY — Brianna L. Sosnowski, 23, of 2501 N. Mill St., Northeast, Pa., was charged with speeding and third-degree aggravated unlicensed operation Saturday at 8:43 p.m. Deputies pulled over a vehicle on East Sidehill Road in Ripley for allegedly speeding. According to police, Sosnowski was found to be driving on a suspended license. She was taken into custody and later released with appearance tickets to Ripley Town Court.

CATTARAUGUS COUNTY

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

• EAST OTTO — Edward A. Neal, 45, of 7775 E. Flats Road, East Otto, was charged with felony DWI, felony DWI per se and failure to keep right Saturday at 2:41 a.m. after an investigation into a crash on Reed Hill Road in East Otto. Neal was arraigned in Elliptown Town Court and taken to the Cattaraugus County Jail on \$500 bail. He is to be in East Otto Town Court later.

• COLDSRING — Erin M. Lobb, 31, of 119 Pearl St., Frewsburg, was charged with DWI, aggravated DWI and parked on pavement Friday at 11:25 p.m. Deputies pulled over the vehicle on Route 394 in Coldspring after receiving complaints of a dark blue minivan heading east on Route 394 in Randolph. According to police, Lobb was found to be driving and intoxicated. He was taken into custody and issued tickets to be in Coldspring Town Court later.

SALAMANCA POLICE

• Thomas L. Karnuth, 43, of 638 Gleason Hollow Road, Portville, was charged with being a prohibited pedestrian on a controlled highway on Saturday. According to police, Karnuth was walking on Interstate 86 near exit 21 in Salamanca. He will be in Salamanca City Court on Dec. 23 at 9 a.m.

• Kaleb E. Linville, 23, of 6504 Mutton Hollow Road, Great Valley, was charged

with failure to signal turn, aggravated DWI and DWI per se Saturday at 1:20 a.m. He was later released to a third party and will be in Salamanca City Court on Dec. 23 at 9 a.m.

NEW YORK STATE POLICE

• POLAND — Frank M. Dale, 63, of Jamestown was charged with fourth-degree grand larceny Wednesday at 5:15 p.m. at the Jamestown barracks after an incident that allegedly occurred on Sept. 12 at 2:05 p.m. in Poland. Troopers received a complaint alleging that Dale was given \$1,700 to repair a person's roof, but never completed the work. He was issued an appearance ticket to Poland Town Court later.

• NORTH HARMONY — Thomas A. Eggleston, 44, of Jamestown was charged with DWI and DWI per se Thursday at 1:53 p.m. on Interstate 86 in North Harmony. Troopers pulled over the vehicle for allegedly driving west in the eastbound lanes. According to police, Eggleston was found to be driving and intoxicated. He was taken into custody and taken to the Jamestown barracks where for provided a breath sample of .15 percent. A check of his driving record also allegedly showed a DWI conviction within the last 10 years, making the current charge a felony. He was issued appearance tickets to North Harmony Town Court and was later released to a third party.

• POMFRET — Donna M. Lattuca, 48, of Stone Quarry Road, Fredonia, was charged with controlled substance in non-original container, inadequate mirrors, failure to notify address change, driving on the left of pavement markings, illegal signal, DWI and DWI per se Thursday at 9:15 p.m. at the intersection of Routes 20 and 60 in Pomfret. Troopers pulled over the vehicle for allegedly crossing the yellow solid line on Route 60 after making an improper right turn from Lakeview Road in Pomfret. The vehicle was also seen without a left mirror and signaling a turn less than 100 feet. According to police, Lattuca was found to be driving and intoxicated. She was taken into custody and taken to the Fredonia barracks where she provided a breath sample of .17 percent. She was issued an appearance ticket to Pomfret Town Court on Jan. 3 at 6 p.m.

• FRENCH CREEK — A 16-year-old female of Findley Lake was charged with second-degree harassment Friday at 8:19 p.m. at 2488 Sunnyside Road in Mina after an incident that allegedly occurred on Nov. 29 at 3:26 p.m. in French Creek. She was issued an appearance ticket.

• ELLINGTON — Joseph A. Goodwill, 49, of Falconer and Charles R. Legg, 38, of Conewango were charged with third-degree burglary and third-degree criminal possession of stolen property on Saturday after an incident that allegedly occurred on Dec. 12 at 5:30 p.m. in Ellington. Goodwill was charged at 11:30 a.m. at the Jamestown barracks in Ellicott. He was held on cash bail. Legg was charged at 2:45 p.m. at 11753 Eldredge Road in Leon. He was held.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE

• SUGAR GROVE — Mick D. Peterson, 19, of Jamestown was involved in a hit-and-run accident on Rowley Road in Sugar Grove on Sunday at 7:30 a.m. According to police, Peterson was driving a 2000 Subaru Forester south on Rowley Road when he lost control on the icy road and began to slide sideways. The vehicle then rolled over onto its roof. Peterson then allegedly left the scene. The vehicle was towed from the scene.

JFD

From Page A1

"There is nothing wrong with natural trees as long as they are cared for properly, but it is when people neglect them is when they become such a huge fire hazard," Tibbitts continued.

In order to ensure getting a good tree, the Firemen's Association of the State of New York suggests shaking it at the seller's lot and looking for falling needles. If too many fall off, choose a fresher tree. Have the seller make a fresh cut to the bottom of the tree, which will help with water retention and reduce drying.

If using an artificial tree, make sure it is labeled, certified or identified by the manufacturer as fire-retardant. Making sure a tree is not blocking an exit is also important, said Tibbitts.

When disposing of a tree, take it to a proper location, such as one designated by the city as a drop-off point.

"After Christmas, get rid of the tree," he said "Dried-out trees are a fire hazard and should not be left in the home or garage. Check for local Christmas tree recycling drop-off points or programs."

Another problem the fire department sees is people using old, frayed lights, which can easily set a tree ablaze.

"On top of that, half the time it seems they will overload the electrical circuits too, which is a recipe for disaster," he said.

FASNY suggests that when shopping for and using lights, choose flame-resistant or non-combustible

materials; always follow the manufacturer's directions for usage; look for frayed wires or broken lights; do not overload extension cords or power strips; and when using lights outdoors, make sure they are labeled for external use.

"Lighting that is bad is usually the match that is going to light the fire," said Tibbitts.

Turning off all lights when going to bed or leaving the home is also suggested.

"As everyone gets busier during the holidays, we often become rushed, distracted or tired," said Tibbitts. "That's when home fires are more likely to occur."

If possible, use a timer device to turn your lights off automatically. This not only lessens the risk of fire, but saves on your energy bills as well, said the FASNY.

Many holiday traditions also include candles or other heat sources, and keeping them away from flammable items is important, said Tibbitts.

As colder months go on, the department also deals with many fires that occur due to space-heater usage, he said.

"Getting into the colder months, a lot of the fires we go to this time of year are people running space heaters off of extension cords, which is a huge no-no because they are overloading that one socket with the extension cord," he said.

With unattended cooking as the leading cause of U.S. home fires and

home-fire injuries it's important to stay in the kitchen while you're frying, grilling or broiling food. Most cooking fires involve the stovetop, so keep anything that can catch fire away from it, and turn off the stove when you leave the kitchen, even if it's for a short period of time. If you're simmering, boiling, baking or roasting food, check it regularly and use a timer to remind you that you're cooking. The Jamestown Fire Department also suggests creating a "kid-free zone" of at least three feet around the stove and areas where hot food and drinks are prepared and carried.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, fires occurring during the holiday season claim 400 lives, injure more than 1,600 people, and cause more \$990 million in fire damage each year.

"The best gift you can give yourself and your family is the gift of safety, and these tips should be at the top of any holiday list," said FASNY President David Jacobowitz

By following these fire-prevention tips and measures, the Jamestown Fire Department says you can greatly reduce the risk of fire in your home, and enjoy a safe holiday season.

"The holidays can quickly turn from joyful to tragic when a fire occurs," said Tibbitts. "By taking simple precautions, people can avoid potential fire hazards, and make this time of year a healthy and happy one."

Marathon

From Page A1

At times he ran for enjoyment, but he'd often compete in support of charitable initiatives, something he has continued to do. Along the way, Lepkowski set his 50-marathon goal.

Sixteen races and more than 400 miles stood between him and the accomplishment at the beginning of the year. In mid-October he finished No. 49 in Illinois. Lepkowski scheduled a November race in Harrisburg, Pa. as his 50th marathon.

"There's a marathon every weekend some place

in the United States," said Lepkowski, who has run marathons in 23 states. "As I got closer, I planned it out. My family lives in Pennsylvania. I thought, 'Why don't I run it out there?'"

Since the race took place one month after his Oct. 15 birthday, Lepkowski said he gave himself until the end of the year to reach his goal. More than 30 relatives gathered to watch his four-hour trot through Harrisburg.

"Words can't describe how long I've waited to cross the finish line on No. 50. When I finally got there, I couldn't believe it," he said. "It was quite a journey."

Lepkowski and his fami-

ly made a weekend event out of the marathon, having family dinners and a party afterwards.

Not counting the thousands of miles he ran in race preparation, Lepkowski has completed more than 1,300 marathon miles. He decided he needed a break from the running, but he won't be off the roadways for long. Lepkowski plans to hit the pavement in January or February.

As always, he'll have a lofty goal in mind.

"I'm going to try to get all of the 50 states," he said. "I'm not going to put a time limit on this one."

He has put more than a few mile markers behind him, but Lepkowski doesn't

feel much different than when he launched off the starting line at age 30. He knows how to make it through the races without pain and has stayed in shape in the process.

"I'm not as young as I used to be, but I feel pretty healthy for being 50 years old," he said.

With thousands of other marathon runners living throughout the nation, a homeowner shouldn't feel alarmed when a jogger strolls past through inches of snow in the midst of winter.

It will just be a marathon runner, like Joseph Lepkowski, who couldn't find an excuse to stay in bed that morning.

Crowd

From Page A1

"She has been instrumental in the success of the JHS girls' soccer team," Mrs. Price continued.

Haley has been playing soccer for Jamestown High School since she was in eighth grade. She plays goalie for the team and has served as the team's captain as well.

Additionally, Haley has been playing soccer through the Lakewood YMCA for several years. Plus, she is a part of Jamestown High School's ski club.

Within school hours, Haley said that she most enjoys being in her English

classes.

"I like to write," Haley said.

Recently, Haley led her "Art Born of Art," college level 12 English class in a demonstrative speech, where she lead her peers in creating a Jackson Pollock-style splatter painting.

"He used a lot of blacks, browns and whites. He used splatter and had a lot of action throughout his paintings," Haley said.

When it comes to thinking about college plans, Haley would like to attend Daemen College in Amherst. She would like to someday become a physi-

cian's assistant.

"Regardless of her major at college, I guarantee that Haley Sigular will be running that program before long," Mrs. Price said.

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