

MID-COAST FIRE BRIGADE

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2011

From The Chief

This year has been one of reflection for me personally. I decided to retire as a Captain from Cal Fire, the time had come. Not as easy as I first thought to make that decision but once it was made and official the stress seemed to melt away. What would I do with all my time? Now I am wondering what time I was wondering about as my days are full and I feel that I now have more quality time to devote to the Fire Brigade.

With six new firefighters since January of this year the Brigade is currently thirteen firefighters strong and dedicated. This is the strongest the Brigade has been in a long while and their interest and excitement has invigorated the rest of us. We certainly have come a long way in the twelve years that I have been Chief, our accomplishments plentiful and I couldn't be prouder of your Mid-Coast Firefighters.

On October 8th we dedicated a plaque that will be placed at the fire station to honor Matt Will who gave his life while battling the Colorado Fire in 2007. It has been four years since the Colorado Fire and while the scar on the hillside is beginning to fade the scar for Matt's family still seems so raw and fresh. I want to thank those in our community who took the time to come to the station and pay their respects for the ultimate sacrifice that was made that day as Matt's family was touched by your presence and kind words.

It has been three years since the Basin Fire and the fire scars on the landscape have been replaced by new growth everywhere while those that lost their homes still toil through red tape and construction as they go about rebuilding their lives. The sounds of chainsaws and weed eaters were replaced this summer with the sound of silence as rain continued to pound the coast well into our summer. Memory is a funny thing but I beg you to not forget the lessons we learned during the Colorado Fire and the Basin Fire and become complacent with your clearance and preparedness planning. We were so very fortunate that the Fires did not devastate our community and with the Basin Fire we had plenty of warning and time to prepare but we may not be so fortunate next time. Be prepared, be fire ready and have a plan!

A prime example of this is the recent structure fire on Greenridge on September 25th that took the life of Robert Coakley. The recipe for disaster started with the eucalyptus tree that took out phone service to the community for several days, and then the smell of smoke in the air in the early morning hours that no one could pinpoint or communicate their concerns to. The fire started in the trailer and spread to the vegetation. Just two days before the temperatures were high and fog that brings high humidity nowhere to be seen. On the morning of the fire the

fog had wrapped a thick blanket around the canyon which was both a blessing and a curse. Because of the fog nobody was able to tell where the smell of smoke was coming from or place that 9-1-1 call because the phones were out so the fire went undetected for hours. Yet because of the fog the fire spread into the vegetation was minimal due to the high humidity and damp conditions. Yes a potential disaster was averted that day for our community. Clearance around your home will provide a defensible cushion in the event of an advancing fire as well as protect your neighbors home in the event the fire starts on your property and spreads towards theirs.

Depending on what news source you are listening to, it seems like we might be in for another very wet winter. Let us not ever forget the lessons of El Nino so be prepared, be ready, and have a plan!

Cheryl Goetz

Burn Season

Burn season will begin December 1st. Last year there was much said over notifying your neighbors that you are burning via the neighbors list. Although this is very neighborly of you what everyone forgot to do was to call the Fire Brigade. I personally am not much of an email junkie and do not spend much time in front of my computer. I do however answer the phone and/or check messages frequently as I walk by. In the event of a 9-1-1 call for a smoke check, and yes this happens a lot! I would rather know via telephone that you are burning. Not take the time to stop, log onto my e-mail account, filter through the 40 awaiting e-mail messages to check to see if there is a planned burn. I may not always answer the phone during burn season but I always hear your message. In a true emergency seconds count and checking e-mail would be completely impractical. We have avoided the permit process with the understanding of the community that you need to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Call 1-800-225-BURN (2876) and check and see if it is a permissive burn day. If it is a permissive burn day then:
2. Call the Fire Brigade at 625-8175 and leave your name, contact phone number and address of the burn before you light your burn pile. I will notify all Brigade members via radio.
3. If you so desire then send a message to the neighbors list to inform your neighbors (that is if you have internet and e-mail), it is after all a neighborly thing to do.

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Burn Season Continued

Please remember that you must adhere to the burning guidelines set forth by the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District:

1. Piles cannot be larger than 4 x 6
2. Burning is allowed until 4pm only. All fires need to be out before dark.
3. A line to bare mineral earth a minimum of 18" wide must be cut around the burn pile.
4. Water must be readily available at the burn pile with sufficient quantity to extinguish the fire should your fire escape.
5. You must be in attendance of your fire at all times.
6. You can only burn natural vegetation grown on your property that is properly dried.
7. Vegetation must be free from waste such as garbage, plastic, treated or painted wood, tires, tar paper, demolition debris, etc.

Remember if your fire escapes you can be held responsible for all costs associated with suppression of the fire, and burning outside of the regulations set forth by MBUAPCD can result in large fines. Burning household waster/trash is no longer legal!

Fire Station Update

The constant pounding of hammers and the sounds of construction are all but a thing of the past. There are still a few things left to be done as we await funds to accomplish these last tasks. The biggest cost will be purchasing and installing the pavers to finish the top driveway. We also need to install the retaining walls for the fire resistive garden in the front of the station. If all goes well we shall have the retaining walls up and finished by May and intend to have a community planting day. The idea is to showcase plants that are drought resistant, fire resistant, deer resistant and native that can replace the flammable vegetation in your yard. More to follow as we get closer to May!

Smoke Alarms vs. Carbon Monoxide Detectors

A Carbon Monoxide detector and a Smoke detector are not the same animal and perform two completely separate functions. A smoke detector will provide the earliest possible warning of a fire in your home. Carbon Monoxide is a late by-product of fire so this type of detector would not alert you early enough for you to escape a fire and in fact may never alert at all. A working carbon monoxide detector will alert you to any type of malfunctioning fuel burning device such as space heaters, water heaters and blocked chimneys. Carbon monoxide is colorless, odorless compound produced by incomplete combustion and will alert early allowing you to escape before your cognitive senses are so altered from the gas that you cannot think or walk. Answer is you need both. Make sure they are working by checking the batteries once a year.

Donations

What would a newsletter be without the annual plea for donations? So it must be said, please send in your annual donation. The annual donation mailer was recently sent. Your annual donations are the reason we have a Fire Brigade and without your continued support we would cease to exist. We generally ask for a donation of \$200 per family and because of the current economy we also understand times are very tough. If you cannot afford the \$200 then any amount you can afford will be greatly appreciated and will be used to purchase equipment and provide training for your firefighters. You can mail your donations to:

Mid-Coast Fire Brigade
38000 Palo Colorado Road
Carmel, CA 93923

Labor Day BBQ

The annual Labor Day BBQ was once again a huge success and I would personally like to thank everyone who donated to our much anticipated raffle. There were some great prizes. It is always such a nice time to visit with neighbors and catch up on the happenings around the canyon. Great food, weather and good friends made for a wonderful celebration this year. I would like to apologize for the incorrect date on the banner this year. I didn't realize that the date was incorrect until after the banner was up (never an easy feat) and voted to leave it up until after the event. The banner has been corrected for next year's event but remember that we have decided to hold the Annual event every year ***on Saturday of Labor Day Weekend***. Please remember that even if you do not have the time to devote to become a firefighter you can always help in many other ways. It took many community members to seek and secure this year's raffle prizes. So if you know of anyone who would donate you can secure the prize at anytime and give Ondine Gorton a call (831-620-1111) and she will be happy to collect your prize for the annual BBQ raffle or let you know other ways you can assist the Brigade.

Annual Newsletter

As we try to embrace the 21st century and social media we are trying to get away from the annual newsletter mailing. The costs of printing and mailing are becoming prohibitive, especially when we have numerous returns. This year we asked for a simple insert to accompany the annual donation request to check our website for our new newsletter. We will continue to print and distribute to mailboxes in the community for a couple more years but hope

through our website and Facebook and the neighbors list that we can inform you and keep you up to date and save valuable dollars that can be used to purchase new equipment.

Get To Know Your Firefighters

For years I have stood on my soapbox and asked that you please do not contact your neighborhood fire brigade firefighter in the event of an emergency that you simply dial 9-1-1. Dialing 9-1-1 is the fastest way to get help on the way in the event of an emergency. If you call your neighborhood firefighter, they must in turn hang up and dial 9-1-1 to report the emergency and get the proper response coming and what if your neighborhood firefighter is not home? You are losing valuable time in reporting an emergency. This still holds true and I still support this 100% , however, as in the case of the structure fire on Greenridge when phone service was out it was hours before someone reported the emergency to Norm Cotton. A 9-1-1 call was eventually place via cell phone from Highway 1 but the location recorded for the emergency was incorrect and fire units from Mid-Coast and Cal Fire were looking for the emergency on Highway 1. Someone finally went to Norms house and reported the incident and Norm was able to radio the correct location to the responding fire units. Now understand that your neighborhood firefighter may not be home or you may not have a firefighter close to you but never the less you should have a backup plan! This very incident has and will continue to be a real fear of mine when the phones are not working. Not only for fires but for medical aids as well. So I ask that you get to know your Mid-Coast Fire Brigade Firefighters. We hope to have this information up on our website soon but until then they are as follows:

Kerri Frangioso - Botchers Gap

Theo Maehr - Upper Longridge

Scott Rainer - Upper Longridge

Leonard Lazarus - Mid Longridge

Cheryl Goetz - Palo Colorado Road @ the Hoist

Jake Goetz - Palo Colorado Road @ the Hoist

Travis Trapkus - Palo Colorado Road - between the Fire Station and the Hoist

Giau Nguyen - Palo Colorado Road - between the Fire Station and the Hoist

Brent Bispo - Palo Colorado Road - between the Fire Station and the Hoist

Norm Cotton - Lower Greenridge

Andreas Baer - Palo Colorado Road 1.3 mile marker

Richard Gorton - Garrapatos Road between Palo Colorado Road & the Mailboxes

Brian Gorrell - Garrapatos Road between Palo Colorado Road & the Mailboxes

Bryce Hall - Glen Deven Ranch

Scott Bogen - King Road

If you live in one of these areas and are not familiar with your neighborhood firefighter then contact your neighborhood coordinator. If you do not know who your neighborhood

coordinator is then contact: Jerri Hansen Community Board Member 831-624-6217 and she will be happy to assist you.

Fire Brigade Responses to Date January 1, 2011 to October 19, 2011

Medical Aids - 20
Vehicle Accidents - 6
Structure Fires - 4
Debris Fires -2
Vegetation Fires - 1
Vehicle Fire - 1
Smoke Check - 1
Hazardous Conditions - 3
Public Assist - 1
Other - 1
Total: 40

Important Phone Numbers

Emergency : 9-1-1
Burn Day Status: 1-800-225-BURN (2876)
Mid-Coast Fire Brigade *Primary Number*: 625-8175
Mid-Coast Fire Station: 626-1961
Fire Chief Cheryl Goetz: 624-8287

Important Dates

Big Sur International Marathon - Last Sunday of April
Saturday of Labor Day Weekend Annual BBQ 11am - 4pm
Halloween Trick or Treat Ride - Halloween night departs Highway 1 and Palo Colorado Road at 6:30 pm