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THE OVERLOOK

August, 2014

Thank You Muir Beach

By Steve Wynn

The 2014 Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's BBQ was a tremendous success. I would like to thank all of the Muir Beachers who put their sweat equity into the planning and organization. From preparing the BBQ grounds to working the event, it could not have been done without you.

Our dedicated team of volunteer firefighters work hard to provide the best emergency services they can to Muir Beach and the surrounding areas. Having the right tools for the job increases our speed, efficiency and safety. The money raised during this event is critical for the operation of our department. This year we were in need of new structure fire turnouts for some of our firefighters which run about \$4,000 each. We also needed new high-tech helmet headlamps which can withstand high temperatures and impacts while producing a strong light beam that can pierce dense smoke. We also needed to replace some fire hoses, get an additional AED, two new battery-powered suction units, pulse oximeters, splints and other expendable medical equipment. In order to properly store our equipment and keep our hoses clean to prolong their lifespan, we needed to purchase a fire hose drying rack, oxygen and SCBA cylinder holding rack. Then, of course, we have the ongoing costs of maintaining and testing all of our equipment.

All who contributed to the BBQ fundraiser played an important and vital role in keeping the MBVFD ready to serve. It takes a village and we have an amazing village. Thank you all.



Photo by Joanie Wynn



Photo by Joanie Wynn



Photo by Joanie Wynn

Muir Beach Disaster Council

By Barbara Piotter

Propane Tank Inspection

The last issue of the Overlook outlined the dangers of improperly installed propane tanks. Tanks that are not sitting on cement slabs, are not anchored, and/or do not have an earthquake shutoff valve can move even during a small tremor and leak gas. During a larger quake tanks potentially could roll down the hill with explosive results. This endangers not only the homeowner but surrounding neighbors and the community as whole.

In the coming months, we will be conducting propane tank safety inspections throughout the community. The results of this inspection will be presented to each homeowner with recommendations on how to ensure your tank is safe.



Other Reminders

- Sign up for Alert Marin to receive emergency telephone notifications in the case of a community wide emergency. Visit: www.alertmarin.org
- We are still looking for volunteers to be involved with the Muir Beach Disaster Counsel. If you are interested please contact Muir Beach Disaster Council Coordinator, Barbara Piotter at aufkirchen@gmail.com or call 415-755-8524

Muir Beach Caring

By Steve Wynn

Recently, a Muir Beacher asked me who they should call if they need a little help during an illness or medical recovery. In the September 2013 issue of The Overlook, Paul Jeschke wrote about Muir Beach Caring as a resource for Muir Beach residents in need. Here's the information again to keep on hand:

Organized by the Elderberries, Muir Beach Caring provides assistance to residents by organizing volunteers to help with meals, at home, or with rides over the hill for doctor's visits, prescription pickup and grocery shopping. When a neighbor in need calls the help line, **320-6847 (320-MUIR)**, the caring coordinator contacts volunteers to take on the task.

For more information or if you would like to be a part of Muir Beach Caring call 320-6847 or email muir-beachelderberries@gmail.com

This article appeared recently in the New York Times and reflects the challenges of volunteer fire departments around the country.



The Disappearing Volunteer Firefighter

By ANDREW BROWN and IAN URBINA AUG. 16, 2014

IN most places in America, when a fire breaks out, a volunteer shows up to put it out.

But the ranks of volunteers are dwindling. What was once an iconic part of American life is losing its allure, in part because the work — some would say the calling — is a lot less fun than it used to be.

There are still more than twice as many volunteers as career firefighters. But the number of volunteers has dropped by around 11 percent since the mid-1980s, while the number of career firefighters has grown more than 50 percent, according to the National Fire Protection Association. The allure has diminished because fund-raising now takes up roughly half the time most volunteers spend on duty. It's also harder to fit in volunteer work. The rise in two-income households often means that there is no stay-at-home parent to run things so the other can dash off for an emergency. Urbanization and the aging of the rural population are taking their toll as fewer young people are available to replace firefighters who retire.

Federal, state and local officials would like to attract new volunteer recruits. The stakes are particularly high because volunteers save not only lives but money — more than \$139.8 billion annually for local governments, according to the fire protection association. The time and training needed to become a certified firefighter have also increased. Federal standards enacted to save firefighters' lives have unintentionally created a barrier for volunteer service: It now takes hundreds of hours to be certified, and new firefighters often must cover the cost of training.

Other costs are also contributing to the dwindling of the ranks. Since the 1980s, the price of a single self-contained breathing apparatus has jumped to over \$5,000, from \$900. A fire engine costs \$400,000 more than it did 30 years ago. In surveys, firefighters consistently cite the endless burden of fund-raising, which takes up to 60 percent of their work time, as one of the biggest deterrents to staying on the job.

For decades, departments relied on benefit auctions, raffles and community bingo events to cover overhead. In recent years, however, departments have had to resort to adding fire taxes onto local property-tax bills, or charging homeowners and insurance companies for individual response calls. Others have merged with neighboring departments to cut costs.

Vincent P. McNally, a volunteer firefighter and an emeritus associate professor of political science at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, who has studied the decline of volunteer firefighters, said that too much is being asked.

"I fund-raise, I train and I go to fires," he recounted being told by one fire chief. "I can do two out of the three. You tell me which two out of the three you want me to do."

Firefighters' duties have also shifted. In many departments, a vast majority of calls are for medical emergencies, not fires. Much like emergency room doctors, volunteer firefighters are increasingly serving as primary care providers. They are also routinely dispatched for water rescues, vehicle entrapments, hazardous material spills and drug overdoses.

Since 1986, the number of fire-related calls for all firefighters, volunteer and paid, has dropped by more than 3.6 million. In 2012, only 5 percent of calls were for actual fires. But the total number of fire department responses has jumped by 167 percent in 26 years, largely because medical responses have gone up by 15.2 million.

Still, the work is dangerous. Last year, 97 firefighters died, according to the National Fire Protection Association, including nine who died when a fertilizer plant exploded in West, Tex. Thousands more are injured every year.

Meanwhile, state and municipal governments are trying different tactics to entice new recruits.

Municipalities in Florida, New Mexico, Minnesota and many other states offer stipends to volunteers to cover time spent training, the cost of travel and overnight or on-call service. Others have provided some pay for volunteers based on the number of calls they respond to, their level of training or the years they've served — or simply by the hour.

New York State grants volunteer firefighters property tax abatements, income tax credits and \$50,000 in death benefits if they die in the line of duty. Most states allow volunteer departments to provide workers' compensation, often through state-run programs.

"Benefits are important — yes, to compensate volunteers for their time, but also to show that the community values their service," said David Finger, the government relations director for the National Volunteer Fire Council.

Underlying many such recruitment efforts is an elemental question: Should volunteer firefighters be defined as public employees and afforded all the accompanying benefits and protections?

Some states like California, Missouri and New Jersey have said yes, granting them things like taxpayer-subsidized pensions, college tuition assistance and life insurance benefits. And in a decision that could markedly increase the number of unionized firefighters in the state, Pennsylvania labor officials have granted many volunteer firefighters the right to organize.

After some volunteers argued that they should not be categorized as public employees because requirements of the new health care act could bankrupt small firehouses, the Internal Revenue Service ruled this year that volunteer departments are exempt from the mandate.

In the meantime, the burdens on firefighters continue to grow. Edward A. Mann, a volunteer chief in Pennsylvania, said that training requirements keep increasing partly because volunteers are now being called to do much more than just "putting water on fire." Terrorist attacks and improvised explosive devices, malfunctioning solar panels and wind turbines, ethanol and natural gas fires, and electric- and hydrogen-powered vehicle accidents — these are just some of the emergencies for which training is needed, said Mr. Mann, who is also the Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner.

"Every time something goes wrong with that stuff, someone dials 911," he said, "and guess who gets sent?"



TIME IS BRAIN

By Dr. David Taylor

We live in a beautiful spot that is at least 30-40 minutes from a hospital on a weekday morning. In recent years the medical community has been actively promoting the idea that strokes are “brain attacks” and should be treated with the same rapid and aggressive interventions as heart attacks. Often the same medications can be used. The consequences of not rapidly reacting to early symptoms of a stroke can be devastating. Stroke is the third leading cause of death and the leading cause of disability in adults. Twice as many women die of stroke than breast cancer every year. Two thirds of all strokes occur in people over the age of 65. While we live far from the “stroke belt” that consists of the twelve contiguous southern and Midwestern states where the death rates from stroke are 10% above the national average -- a new “stroke belt” may be developing in the Pacific Northwest and it could spread!

To help ourselves be a healthier community the MBVFD encourages you to think of the three R's:

- REDUCE RISK
- RECOGNIZE SYMPTOMS
- RESPOND BY CALLING 911

You can reduce your risk of stroke by regular exercise, eating a healthy diet, monitoring your blood pressure and cholesterol and getting treatment of associated conditions like atrial fibrillation (a type of irregular heart rhythm).

The most important symptoms to recognize are:

- SUDDEN NUMBNESS OR WEAKNESS OF FACE, ARM OR LEG ESPECIALLY ON ONE SIDE OF THE BODY
- SUDDEN SEVERE HEADACHE WITH NO KNOWN CAUSE
- SUDDEN TROUBLE SEEING IN ONE OR BOTH EYES
- SUDDEN CONFUSION, TROUBLE SPEAKING OR UNDERSTANDING
- SUDDEN TROUBLE WALKING, DIZZINESS, LOSS OF BALANCE OR COORDINATION
- BRIEF LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS OR DECREASED AWARENESS
- SUDDEN NAUSEA, FEVER OR VOMITING WITH RAPID ONSET

Please call 911 and the MBVFD will come over and assist you so that if you need further medical attention we can help you along with our professional colleagues in the Marin County Fire Department.

For more information please visit www.stroke.org and view their Complete Guide to stroke at:
http://www.stroke.org/site/DocServer/NSA_complete_guide.pdf



Cliff rescue, Hwy 1. Photo by: Steve Wynn

MBVFD Seeks New Recruits

Being a Muir Beach firefighter is an exciting and extremely rewarding pursuit. As a firefighter and first responder, your efforts are essential in protecting the lives and property of the residents and visitors in Muir Beach and its surrounding areas. We are a tight knit group of dedicated volunteers and we are looking for a few new members.

If you think you have what it takes to become a part of a proud tradition and to perform the duties of a volunteer firefighter please contact me at steve@muirbeachfire.com



Car over the side, Hwy 1
Photo by Steve Wynn



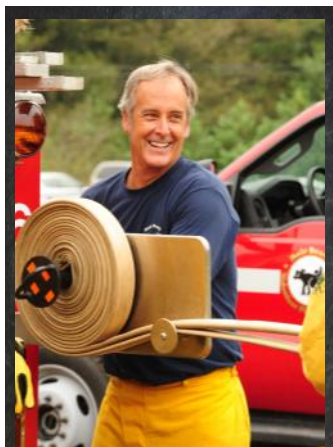
Brad and Chris, wild land drill
Photo by Elizabeth Sutcliff



Maurice Conti works a car fire
Photo by Don Keylon



Helicopter cliff rescue, Hwy 1
Photo by Steve Wynn



Matt Silva, wild land drill
Photo by Elizabeth Sutcliff



Helicopter rescue, Hwy 1
Photo by Steve Wynn



Wild land training
Photo by Elizabeth Sutcliff



Safety Tips and S'mores

In June, MBVFD held the third annual Muir Beach Water Safety Day in an effort to keep our kids safe in the water and along our coast. This has become a wonderful tradition started by firefighter Maurice Conti and his wife Sophie. As always, the kids learned important safety tips then got a chance to play in the water. The day ended with a beach BBQ complete with S'mores.



Photo by: Brad Eigsti

Humor shot of the month



Photo by Joe Rosenthal

From the sands of
Iwo Jima....

After a vehicle accident that took out the White Way street sign, David Taylor took this shot of Robert Allen, Maurice Conti and me trying to straighten it out...I couldn't resist pairing it with the most famous WWII shot from Joe Rosenthal.



Photo by David Taylor

....to the sands of
Muir Beach



MBVFD Incident Report

April 22, to August 14, 2014

4-22 Vehicle fire, Muir Woods	5-27 Vehicle accident, Hwy 1	6-29 Loss of consciousness, Muir Woods
4-27 Bicycle down, Hwy 1	5-28 Back injury, Muir Beach	6-29 Trash fire, Big Beach
5-3 Vehicle accident, Hwy 1	6-1 Bicycle down, Dias ridge trail	6-30 Fall, Muir Beach
5-5 Helicopter trail rescue	6-10 Motorcycle down, Hwy 1	7-4 Broken ankle, Ben Johnson trail
5-6 Vehicle over edge, Hwy 1 (fatality)	6-14 Loss of consciousness, Dear Park trail	7-14 Bicycle down, Coyote Ridge
5-8 Drunk driver accident, Hwy 1	6-14 Illegal camp fire, Banducci Ranch	7-24 Bicycle down, Muir Woods Rd.
5-10 Vehicle over edge, Hwy 1	6-22 Loss of consciousness, Big Beach	7-27 Vehicle accident, Hwy 1
5-24 Bicycle down, Coastal view trail	6-28 Bicycle down, Hwy 1	7-27 Public assist, White way
5-26 Trash fire, Muir Beach parking lot	6-28 Psychotic episode, Big Beach	8-4 Sick person, Muir Woods
		8-4 Head injury, Overlook

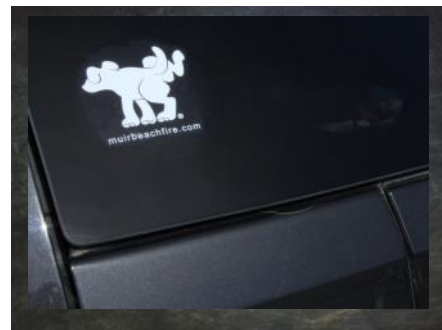
Reminders

Amazon Smile will make a donation to an organization of your choice. To have the MBVFD be your selected charity, simply type <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0330764> into your browser and shop as you usually do or you can go to our site www.muirbeachfire.com and click on the Amazon Smile link on our home page. Then, every time you make a purchase on Amazon, Amazon Smile will give 0.5% of your purchase to MBVFD!!



**SHOW YOUR SUPPORT
PLACE A MBVFD
STICKER ON YOUR CAR WINDOW**

To get your free MBVFD sticker contact
Steve Wynn at :
steve@muirbeachfire.com



**STICKER GOES ON THE OUTSIDE OF
WINDOW**