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THE OVERLOOK

December, 2014

December Storms Bring Down Trees

By Steve Wynn



During the last series of storms, we had several trees and branches come down within Muir Beach. Luckily none of them caused any injury or damage to houses.

Large tree branches came down on Pacific Way, Sunset Way, Ahab and Seacape. One large pine came completely uprooted due to saturated ground, crashing onto an adjacent tree and just missing a garage. Two other large Cypress branches also came down, just missing structures.

With more storms on the way, now is the time to remove trees that are old and trim large branches that could threaten your home or the home of a neighbor.

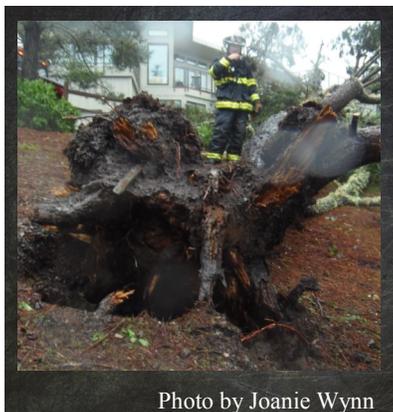


Photo by Joanie Wynn



Photo by Joanie Wynn



Photo by Joanie Wynn

Keep Christmas Safe



Facts & figures

- Between 2007-2011, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 230 home fires that started with Christmas trees per year. These fires caused an average of 6 deaths, 22 injuries, and \$18.3 million in direct property damage annually.
- On average, one of every 40 reported home fires that began with a Christmas tree resulted in a death, compared to an average of one death per 142 total reported home fires.
- Electrical problems were factors in one-third (32%) of home Christmas tree structure fires.
- Two of every five (39%) home Christmas tree fires started in the living room, family room, or den.



- Choose a tree with fresh, green needles that do not fall off when touched
- Cut 2" from the base of the trunk before placing tree in the stand
- Set-up tree at least three feet away from any heat source
- Make sure the tree does not block an exit
- Add water to the tree stand daily
- Use lights that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulbs
- Never use lit candles to decorate the tree
- Always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed

Holiday Giving

By Steve Wynn

A big heartfelt thanks to the Quilter for organizing such an incredible season of giving for Muir Beach.

As I was thinking about which organization to hold a food drive for, Tayeko Kauffman called me and said that the Quilters wanted to have a night where they could collect food and toys to give to those in need. She went on to say that maybe it would be a good idea to contribute all that was collected to the holiday giving efforts of the Marin County Fire Department. I thought it was a brilliant idea and I immediately got on the phone to Phoenicia Thompson, at MCFD, who runs their holiday giving program for kids in Child Protective Services.

These are kids that have been taken out of their homes due to dangerous situations with just a bag with a few belonging or nothing at all. Many of them have never had a real Christmas and have been moved from place to place, so the need is great. Phoenicia said, *"We treat these children as if they were our own with the intent that if they were at our homes on Christmas morning they would feel like one of the family. We all love our children and try to make their wishes and dreams come true, and make it magical. There are a few things we do that we have cherished about our own childhood Christmases. We get everyone a "MOM" gift, something that is super useful and that you end up using a lot but never asked for. For me, my mom, oops, Santa always gave me underwear and socks. It was a few years before I realized I had to replenish that supply. We don't get them underwear, but we have done things like warm blankets, hats and scarves, socks, toiletry bags, duffle bags, etc. We also get and stuff stockings with fun stuff. One year it was the glasses with noses and when we thought of them on Christmas it was of them wearing these at the dinner table. "*

It may surprise you to learn that, here in Marin, there are hundreds of children in this system. The people in charge select the children in the most dire situations and Marin County Fire goes to work filling their wish lists. There aren't any photos of the kids for confidentiality reasons and they often never hear back from them, but the MCFD are dedicated Santas for these children in need.

The Quilters were able to donate \$600 and the Volunteer Fire Association was able to give \$300. As a result of the \$900 donation, MCFD was able to fulfill the dreams of even more kids this year.

After the gifts were all wrapped and delivered I received this letter from Phoenicia

"It's hard to see all the gifts, but every bin and box is packed tight with carefully wrapped gifts for 11 children that will be very happy on Christmas morning. A big thanks to everyone at MBVFD and the Quilters Guild for making this possible.

When we dropped the gifts off, it's always the little things that make the difference. One of the newer people asked if they had to get the bins back to us and we told them the kids get to keep them so they can keep everything organized if they have to move again and she teared up. She said that was wonderful and that it is hard for them when they have to move and sometimes lose the few belongings they have. I know it's not a lot, but the special steps we take to make sure these kids know people truly care is a huge part of the success of our program.

Thank you for your support, may everyone have a joyous holiday season!"



In addition to the \$600 donation to the MCFD's holiday giving program for the children in Marin's Child Protective Services, the Quilters also collected bags of food for Mill Valley Safeway's food drive and toys that we delivered to Sleep Train for their Toys for Tots program, which provides toys for foster kids. Thanks to the Muir Beachers who attended the wonderful event hosted by the Quilters on December 6th and contributed to these worthy efforts.



MBVFD and the Quilters hope to make this a Muir Beach holiday tradition. With your support and contributions, we can expand the program next year to reach even more kids in need.



MBVFD Shows Support for Injured 9/11 Paramedic

By Steve Wynn

I am often reminded of the sense of fellowship that exists among first responders and firefighters. At the last BBQ, Rebecca Lubin approached me to tell me about her brother Sam. Sam was one of the firefighters who responded to the Twin Towers tragedy of 9/11, spending nearly twenty-four hours at or near ground zero immediately following the devastation of that day. Sadly, Sam suffered a traumatic brain injury during a car accident in February. He is on a long road of recovery and Rebecca asked for a MBVFD hat to let her brother know that firefighters across the country are thinking of him and rooting for his recovery. Rebecca snapped this photo of Sam donning the MBVFD hat and shared his story below.



Sam lives in Westchester County, a northern suburb of NYC. He has two young daughters, 16 and 12. Sam has dedicated his life to the fire and EMS communities, starting his EMS career as a volunteer for his local ambulance corps at the age of 17. He also belonged to his local volunteer fire department for nearly 20 years. Sam is both a nationally certified fire fighter as well as a nationally registered paramedic.

Sam began his paid EMS career at the age of 18 in NYC and has never looked back. He furthered his career by elevating to the paramedic level and quickly was offered supervisory roles due to his extensive knowledge of both EMS and fire as well as his ability to manage people well. Sam was the Chief of the Ossining EMS system, a career he loved more than words can describe. Sam was 9 months away from earning his Doctorate in Public Health at the time of his accident, a dream we all hope he will be able to achieve one day.

In the early morning of February 3, 2014 Sam was involved in a single car accident after he fell asleep and went off the highway. The damage to the vehicle was severe and Sam was ejected from the vehicle sustaining a significant traumatic brain injury. The neurosurgeon taking care of Sam didn't think he would survive the first forty-eight hours and, if he did, was not hopeful of a meaningful recovery. Almost eight months later Sam is walking, is fully aware of his surroundings and is making significant strides toward a very meaningful recovery.

Due to the brain injury Sam is currently suffering from aphasia, he is making great attempts at speaking, and when he does it is within context, but he still needs many months of speech therapy. Sam lost his left eye and therefore has some depth perception issues which will require many months of occupational therapy. Sam also suffered nerve damage to the left shoulder/arm which has caused paralysis. He is currently awaiting two surgeries which may be able to give function back to the left arm.

Sam spent nearly every morning at the gym before heading to work, he loved to run and he loved spending time with his daughters and at the beach on Cape Cod. Just last summer he took up surfing and we hope he will be able to continue that hobby within the next two summers.

Sam has many, many months left in his recovery, some portions of it will be life-long, but his tenacious personality, family and friends will keep him motivated.

Unfortunately Sam's insurance will no longer pay for most of his therapy and they have stopped paying for his day to day care. The goal is to get Sam to a point where he can be at home surrounded by people who love him and will motivate him even further to continue on the long road ahead of him. Sam's birthday is October 30th and we would like to celebrate that at home.

You can see Sam and read more about his life, accident and recovery at www.samsroadtorecovery.com.

The Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Association is presenting a free concert for the community featuring the acoustic sounds of Los Angeles-based artist Jesse Macht.

Event details:

Date: Friday, January 9

Location: MBCC

Time: 8:00 pm



Wine and cheese reception before and after the concert. Kids ages 10 and up are welcome to attend.

Please RSVP by Jan. 5 to joanie@baysideentertainment.com with # of guests so we can plan for refreshments

Information about the artist: Interlaced in Jesse Macht's melodies are stories overflowing with passion, vulnerability, empathy and honesty. His music has been featured in television & film and his current release, "Suitcase Heart", is now available for download on iTunes. To learn more, go to jessemachtmusic.com



EVERYTHING I NEEDED TO KNOW ABOUT DEPRESSION I LEARNED FROM MY CHICKENS

By Dr. David Taylor

This is the darkest weekend of the year. The sun is barely out before it sets. Many of us in this glorious place lament this unfair deprivation of our inalienable right as Californians to constant spotless sunshine. At least we can have a solstice party at the community center to help us get through it and I can celebrate the light with my menorah. Personally I have come to greatly appreciate this time of the year when I can get more sleep and not have 14 hours a day of sunshine drawing me into the yard to work.

Many of us however suffer from seasonal bouts of depression and for some people this may not just be related to an annual set of holiday traditions chock full of nostalgia, poignant reminiscence, missing loved ones and renewed conflict and scars. (Some people may actually enjoy the holidays but in a psychiatry practice this is frowned upon.)

Seasonal Affective Disorder is a subtype of Mood Disorder that is prevalent in northern regions and we are not immune at latitude 37. The cause is shortening day length and like many plants and animals our biology is impacted by the amount of daylight. Most people tend to associate seasonal mood change with bad weather, clouds, rain and cold but these are just coincidental wintertime challenges. Day length begins to rapidly shorten in the late summer and the down cycle terminates at the winter solstice. People who suffer from seasonal mood change typically start to feel depressed in the fall not the winter.

I came to fully appreciate this by hanging out with my hens. Every fall after their first year they drop their feathers, eat less, and quit laying eggs. They use all their available energy to grow new feathers. Then almost miraculously, usually on December 22, they tentatively start to lay eggs once again. Chickens are not encumbered by a conscious awareness of our calendar, holidays or weather complaints but they perfectly demonstrate the impact of shortening day length on biology, energy, and function.

A yoga teacher once inspired me by pointing out that the winter solstice was the most hopeful day of the year because every day afterward will be getting longer. So rather than feel blue and miserable at the darkest point of the year we could choose to feel optimistic and excited as the days rapidly start to increase in duration and for those with seasonal mood difficulties relief is around the corner.

Here are some things you can do if reflection on the wonders of nature are not sufficient to relieve your blues:

Use a light box every day for 30 minutes first thing in the morning. Light boxes provide 10,000 lux. Next year start using the light box on Labor Day. For comparison the sun produces 100,000 lux and indoor lighting about a few hundred lux. A great resource for help with SAD and lightboxes is www.cet.org.

Go outside every day for 60 minutes and don't wear sunglasses some of the time.

Exercise five times a week.

Take a Vitamin D supplement of 2000 IU/day.

Avoid over consumption of carbohydrates and alcohol.



MBVFD Makes an Impression

I received a letter from Fireman's Fund Insurance Company headquarters in St. Louis, the folks who paid for half of our brush truck, requesting a patch for a display of the departments who they have helped. Kris Nelder from their Novato office reported the reaction from St. Louis and I've shared her email below.

Hi Steve,

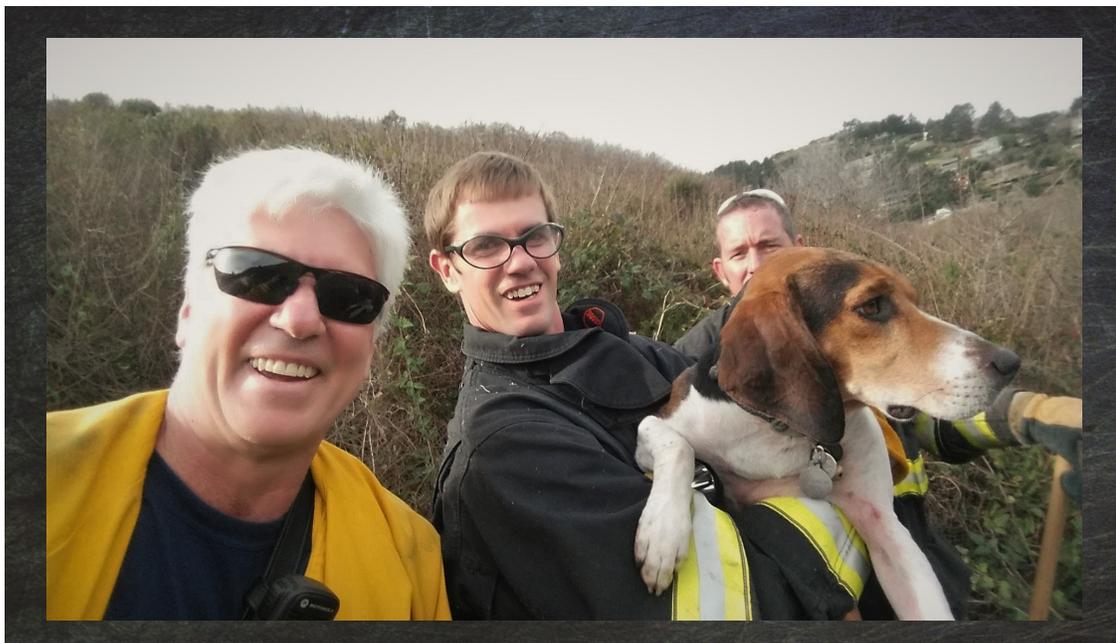
I was in a meeting today with the folks in St Louis that received a couple MBVFD patches from you. They did not know that I had worked with Muir Beach on the truck grant and I was delighted when they called out the Muir Beach patch as the **greatest patch they had received!** And this was FD patches from across the country!

Kris

Kristin Nelder | Corporate Communications | Marketing | Fireman's Fund Insurance Company
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Shot of the Month



Rosie the hound found herself stuck deep in the thickets while heading up the coastal trail south of Muir Beach. With a lot of bushwhacking, Muir Beach firefighters and Marin County firefighters from the Throckmorton station rescued Rosie. We all ended up getting poison oak.



As 2014 comes to a close, I'd like to thank all of the volunteers in the VFA and throughout our community who support our efforts each year.

Congratulations to Assistant Chief Chris Gove and Barbara Piotter who won the annual Muir Beach Firefighter and VFA member of the year awards respectively.

I would like to wish everyone in Muir Beach a happy, fun and safe holiday.



MBVFD Incident Report

August 14 to December 22, 2014

8-14 Fall, head injury. Overlook	10-4 Dog bite. Big beach	11-16 Dog rescue. Hillside by Big Beach
8-15 Cliff rescue. Pirates Cove	10-6 Fall, head injury. Muir Woods	12-2 Fall, dislocated shoulder. Muir Woods
8-15 Cardiac patient. MB Parking lot	10-11 Illegal fire. Big beach	12-12 Tree down. Muir Woods
8-23 Fall on trail. Pirates Cove	10-12 Dog bite. Little beach	12-12 Multiple trees down. Muir Beach
8-24 Assaulted victim. MB parking lot	10-19 Vehicle accident. Hwy 1	12-12 Tree down. Muir Beach, Seacape
8-29 Bike down. Dear Park trail	10-24 Ankle injury. Muir Woods	12-17 Locked vehicle. Sunset Way
8-29 Cliff rescue. South of Big beach	11-2 Vehicle over cliff. Overlook	
9-5 Fall, head injury. Slide Ranch	11-7 Fire alarm. False alarm. Muir Woods	
9-20 Bike vs car. Hwy 1	11-10 Broken ankle. Sunset Way	
10-4 difficulty breathing. Muir Woods	11-14 Vehicle accident. Hwy 1	

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