

# Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade

Fire Brigade News – February 2015

We get the wonderful drenching rains, this time no damage I am aware of, and then a long stretch of hot weather. Great for making the weeds grow... maybe some wild flowers, we shall see. At least the hills are staying green. Which leads right into my next topic, we had a vegetation fire of all things. This time of year it just shouldn't be, kind of like we shouldn't have to be watering. It started on that very windy day that was supposed to be rainy. (it did eventually rain, not enough to put the fire out, just enough to get us wet). Please, if you must burn on a windy day, be extra careful! So we were fortunate that in spite of the wind the day was somewhat damp and the fire didn't go far and no structures were threatened. Along with the Brigade, USFS and Cal Fire responded and even sent a Gabilan crew. We were there all day, about 8 hours, and by the time we got back and restocked the engines it was another hour or so, a long day. It was not quite an acre in size. At the same time there was another fire up by Rocky Point so some of the other Gabilan crews that were headed our direction got diverted. You may have read about the fire down south along 395 that just burned almost 40 homes. Like the Pfeiffer fire, it is just not what you expect in the "winter". Just devastating for those poor people. We, like southern California, seem to be having a year round fire season.

Some of our FF's made the extra effort and drove to town to take a three day rescue training, a LARRO or Low Angle Rope Rescue Operational class. Congratulations to Jon Knight, Thomas Leahy, Christopher Newell and John Coombs for passing the class and literally going the extra mile(s)!

We also have Christopher Newell, Thomas Leahy and Chris Bangham making the twice weekly journey to MPC to take a semester long EMT class. What dedication and enthusiasm!!

We had our community meeting with the new Sheriff. We met at the Grange hall, thank you Grange members for not charging us, with Sheriff Bernal, the Under Sheriff and two of his Commanders. I was sorry to see such a poor turnout from the community, only about 25 people there. We explained that Big Sur has changed a lot over the past few years; we are inundated with thousands of people and have many more absentee homeowners. Those of us that were there asked about when we might get a Deputy down here and the answer was no time soon. There was talk about trying to get a Resident Deputy program going again which the State Parks has been helping with by offering to provide housing. We discussed the problems with people camping in all the turnouts during the summer when the parks are full and leaving all their trash and human waste behind, long term camping in vehicles with the same issues as short term, illegal campfires, trespassing, loud events/parties, vending along the highway, parking vehicles for sale on the road and the dumping of derelict vehicles. The message that came across loud and clear was that we would all like to have a Deputy down here on a regular basis. We also wanted these Deputies to be familiar with Big Sur especially our "enclaves" like Pfeiffer, Clear and Partington Ridge. This would require a Deputy to be welcome for area familiarization. If you expect someone to respond to your emergency then you need to do your part by helping them know and have access to your area. Also discussed was the Sheriff department's response when we have our next large fire. We were assured that we would receive the same great participation as during the Pfeiffer fire with the Deputies working with the CERT group and attending all the meetings with the Incident Command staff.

A late news flash!! I was contacted today (the day after the meeting) by the Sheriff's office and something we said must have made a difference! They are going to start right away working on a three to five year program for a year round Resident Deputy!! Wow! State Parks will be working with them to try and provide housing.

We had a busy weekend with the holiday, Valentine's Day and AT&T all rolled into one. We had an accident up by Little Sur and I as I drove out there I could not believe the number of cars alongside the road. Every turnout from right below the Deli and the State park was overflowing with cars lining both sides of the road as well. The road to the beach was closed off because it was full. I guess it was mostly beach people and back country people, just incredible. Many of them parked in the roadway got tickets.....

Martha Karstens  
Chief