

Fire Brigade News

September 2013

For a brief time our relatively quiet summer disappeared and we got slammed with calls! All in the space of about 12 hours we got hit with two fires and a serious medical call. It started with a page for a vegetation fire about 1:30 on a Friday afternoon. Really?? A veg fire...? My first thoughts, and quickly followed up by why... My pager continued on with the updated info of wires down, well that would explain it I thought as I ran out the door. As I drove toward the fire we continued to get multiple reports, never a good sign. Apparently Nepenthe's terrace had a bird's eye view, and in fact one customer heard/saw a limb fall and moments later smoke coming up. More info coming in on the radio said two fires now, I hear our volunteers that were close by give a size up. Best access up Stone ridge, trying to get the combo out and figure out a way to keep the gate open are among some of the many thoughts. (For those of you who have gates we really appreciate having the combo and there is a way to do a hold open combo which is very helpful) Fortunately, although the weather is warm, it is not stink'in hot nor is there any wind. Cal Fire is responding with a full wildland response including air attack and USFS is on the way as well. The fire is not moving too fast, Kevin Riders crew is helpful with the gate and giving rides in their small 4x4s. We try to track down the homeowners to give them a heads up. Water is always a big consideration and Barbara Sexton helps me with the info on what there is available up there. We ended up for the first few hours making good use of the stand pipe in the Coastlands turn out, thank you Coastlands!

With any report of wires down on any incident it is protocol for all responding units to acknowledge back to dispatch "possible life hazard, wires down" so they are assured everyone gets the word. In reviewing the incident we reminded ourselves that it might have been appropriate to have just stood by until PG&E was able to de-energize the lines. While this goes against the grain, if it prevents me from having to make that call to someone that their husband has just been electrocuted, it is obviously the better way to go.

The air attack was as always a huge help, literally putting a damper on the fire, and thereby giving us a sense of relief that it wasn't going to spread up the hill and burn down the homes above it, and maybe continue on up to the back country. I really wanted to get a picture of the helicopter dipping in the pond at Packard's with two whales breaching in the ocean in the background. But all my radios needed attention so I was never able to get that shot.

Everything was in the mop up stage when we got a call for a medical at Esalen for an unconscious male. I decide to pull the South Coast Center's station #2 engine with Captain Jon Knight off the fire to respond. It turned out to be a good call as the patient remained unconscious and had to be helicoptered out. By 7:00 PM we had all the engines cleaned up and reloaded and headed home.

At 12:14 AM we were paged out for a vehicle fire in the area of Partington, what in the world is going on I'm thinking as I head back out the door. Upon arrival the vehicle, later determined to be a Ford Explorer, is fully involved and Jon is trying to keep it from going up into the pine trees. We had the highway completely shut down for close to an hour, and AMR was UTL, (unable to locate) any patient in the area. With the fire so hot it melted the license plates I still have not heard if they have identified the owner. We finally got back home from that incident about 4:00 AM.

When it rains, it pours as they say... and speaking of, I guess we had a slight chance of rain but it headed north of us, at least the word rain was in the forecast for a short time! I am really ready for some rain! I went by the Post Office on the way home from the first fire and had several people, total strangers, express their thanks for our work on the fire. In addition, on my answering machine at home there were several more messages from locals expressing their thanks, how very nice:)

In addition to all this we held an all-day auto extrication class for Brigade members this month. Matt Harris brought down 3 cars for us to cut up and practice our skills on. The third one was placed "over the side" to simulate a rescue with the use of the "Jaws". While fortunately we don't get many calls where we need to use the tools, it is always good to do a training refresher.

We would like to offer a First Responder (medical) class probably in the next month. You do not have to be a Brigade member to take it but we would like anyone who does take it give serious consideration to joining the Fire Brigade. It is a 56 hour course and in addition you will need a CPR card. We do not have any dates scheduled as of yet. Perhaps some of the new CERT members would like to take it. Please call, 667-2113, or email, Bigsurfire@gmail.com if you are interested.

Our Board member John Handy took it upon himself to make a Fire Brigade calendar to offer for sale this year. It will have pics of the Fire Brigade members both past and present and some of the incidents we have had in Big Sur. The cost will be \$20 and hopefully we will be able to put on our web site a way to purchase them! They go to print shortly and will be available soon, thank you John! They would be great stocking stuffers! (And yes it pains me to even mention anything about Christmas at this time) Lastly, it is already time for the annual Nepenthe Halloween Party!! See the front page for all the info! There will be live music and a DJ!!

Martha Karstens
Chief

Nepenthe's Bal Masque Thursday October 31, 2013

6:00 PM to midnight

Adults \$35.00 children 12 and under \$12.00

Benefitting the Big Sur Fire Brigade

(advance tickets may be purchased at the Phoenix 667-2347)

