

In Firefighting, They're No Dummies

CALL END 11/8/84
By GRACE DONATELLI

The 120-pound dummy, made of old fire hose and duct tape, flung over South County Fire Captain Chet McConville's shoulders mustered up some strange looks from people driving by the fire station on Laurel Street in San Carlos recently.

Toting the dummy was just one of seven physical agility tests developed by SC Fire Battalion Chief Carl St. Clair and started this year by SC Fire. The tests are an effort by SC Fire to keep both firefighters and captains in "the best possible shape," according to SC Fire Chief Gary Schmitz.

The testing included all 55 firefighters and captains at the five different stations within SC Fire's district — three in San Carlos and two in Belmont.

The physical testing began with a 55-foot-long 150-pound fire hose filled with water. The object was to pull the hose, without stopping,

from one white line and back to another. The two lines were about 70 feet apart.

"This tests the strength in the legs and lower back," Schmitz said. The method of pulling varied with each firefighter, but they all passed. Some walked and others made it look easy by jogging through it.

The next test included a 75-foot, free-standing ladder positioned at 75 degrees. The object was to ascend and descend the ladder with only one stop. All the firefighters had to wear their helmets, fire jackets and safety belts.

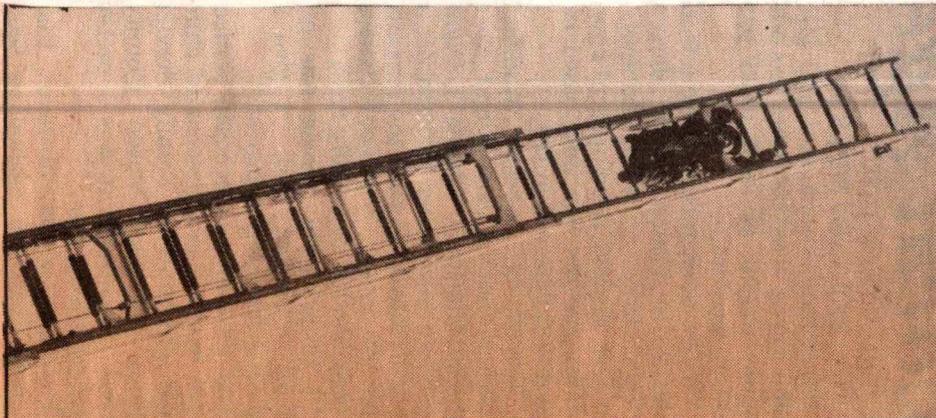
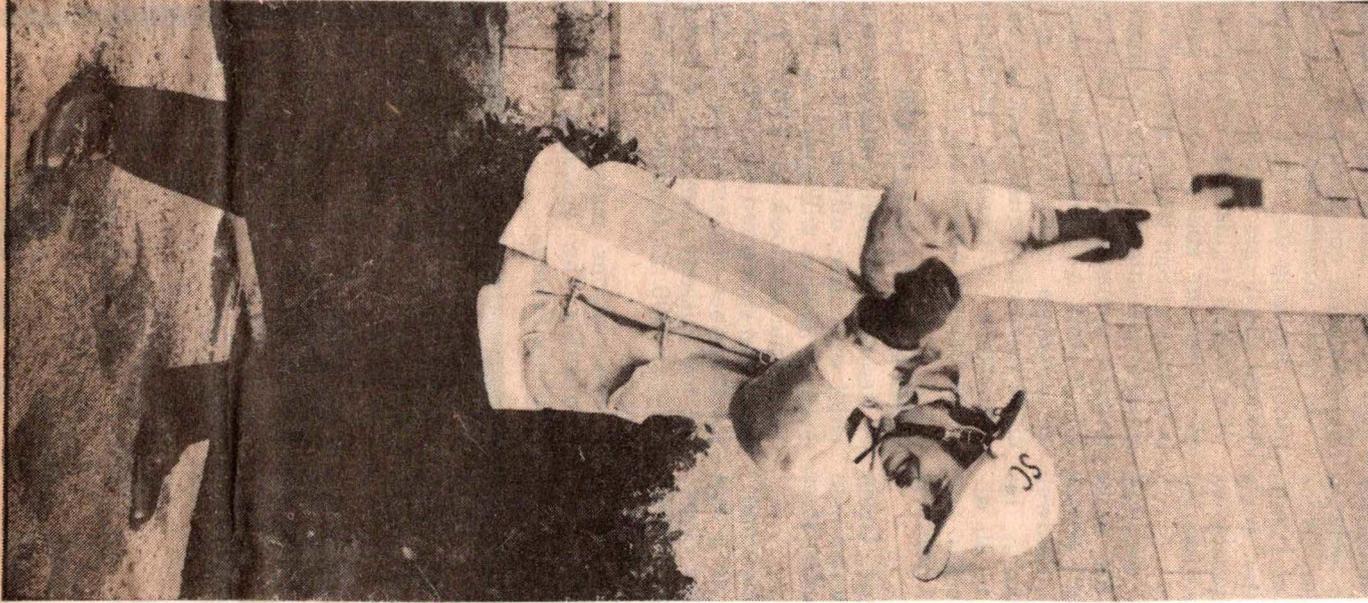
The third test simulated a forced entry. In a wooden box filled with sand, the firefighters grasped a 12-pound sledge hammer and tried to strike the ground 25 consecutive times within a one-minute time period. The hammer had to be raised above the head with each stroke.

The firefighters passed with flying colors and a lot of sand.

The next test presented a 35-foot ladder attached to a telephone pole with a pulley system. The object was to execute a hand-over-hand motion and extend the ladder to full height. This tests the upper arms and biceps, Schmitz said.

Next, the firefighters removed a 24-foot ladder attached to a truck and replaced it back on the poles.

Another test included walking along a ladder placed on the ground carrying a roll of fire hose weighing about 50 pounds.



South County Firefighter Bill Torre completes a test simulating a forced entry. He passed the test with good time.

Photo By Paul F. South County Fire Captain Chet McConville begins his descent from a 75-foot ladder. The ladder ascend and descend was one of seven physical agility tests created to keep the SC Firefighters

'Stop, Drop And Roll' Saves Life

CARL ENQ 3/21/84

By RONNI ROSS



Suzanne Moore of Belmont had a shocking experience recently when she attempted to light a match and her pajamas burst into flames.

"I was getting ready for bed and I had my pajamas on. I lit a match to light a cigarette and I burst into flames," she said.

The match never touched the material in her pajamas, but she burst into flames like a "blue flash fire," she said.

"It happened so fast it was unbelievable," she emphasized. "Thank God I had my hair up in a bun because I would have lost it."

Moore said the flame could have been caused by a spark, but she is not certain.

"There was a mirror near where I was, and I saw the fire spread." Moore said she saw the fire spread down her legs and up her arms. "My mother ran in and said all she could see was my rear end on fire," Moore said.

Moore's experience did not end up as serious as it could have, however, because she knew the "stop, drop and roll" method.

The National Fire Protection Association, (NFPA) implemented the "Learn Not to Burn" program in 1979 to make citizens aware of fire and fire safety. "Stop, drop and roll" is one of the NFPA devices taught by South County Fire employees, according to Kathie Sinclair, South County Fire inspector.

Moore learned this method in school and then again in her career as a flight attendant. She has been a flight attendant for 10 years, and

the method is re-taught every year, she said.

"It was ingrained in my head. On an airplane, you have to be able to think fast. It was a reflex for me," she explained. "I was almost angry about it — I was not going to let this fire get me."

The fire occurred March 9 about 8:45 p.m., and it took Moore until the next day to be able to light a cigarette, she said. She is not easily scared, but even then, she had to use a lighter instead of a match, she said.

"What scares me is that, what if this had happened to my infant son or to someone who couldn't get out of bed?" she questioned.

"A lot of people think the 'stop, drop and roll' method is a kiddie thing — but it's not. It works for everyone and is for adults too," she said.

For more information about fire protection, contact Sinclair at 593-8016.

Photo by Mary Reis-Bussmann
Suzanne Moore of Belmont holds up the pajamas that caught on fire when she tried to light a cigarette. The pajamas do not appear burned, however, because Moore extinguished the flame immediately by doing the "stop, drop and roll" protection maneuver.

PEN TIMES 4/22/84 TUESDAY
BELMONT: At 8 p.m. the board of directors of the Belmont Fire District will meet in the City Council chambers in Belmont City Hall, 1365 Fifth Ave., to discuss the proposed fiscal year 1984-85 fire district budget.
BELMONT: At 7:30 p.m. the Planning Commission will meet in the City Council chambers in City Hall, 1365 Fifth Ave., to discuss changing the land use designation of the former McDougal School site from school to private institution. The commission also will discuss how to create more on-street parking downtown.

Gas contaminates 5 Belmont wells

S. M. THIES & L21/84

BELMONT — Five private wells used for watering lawns and gardens in the Homeview subdivision south of Ralston Avenue and east of Old County Road are contaminated with gasoline, and inspectors of the South County Fire department are trying to find out why.

Samples have been taken from the five wells, said Fire Inspector Sally Ortega, and from two service stations located within a few blocks of the contamination.

A chemical analysis described as fingerprinting is now under way, she said.

Once the source of contamination is located, authorities will develop a plan and time schedule for eliminating the contamination.

Ortega said the technique is to sink monitoring wells nearer the source of contamination, and siphon the gasoline away from ground water wells.

"We should have a clean-up plan ready later this week," she said. She emphasized that none of the

contaminated wells discovered so far is used for domestic water.

"Some of these wells came into use about five years ago during the drought," she said. "The water table here is very high, so they don't have to be deep."

Residents drilling the wells to supply gardening water have never been required to notify any officials, she said, so fire inspectors don't know where to look for wells that may be contaminated.

"If there is anyone who wants a well sample, have them get in touch with us," she added.

The first report of contamination came earlier this week when a Homeview resident walked into South County Station Two on Ralston Avenue, with a container of water mixed with gasoline.

Since then, inspectors have found the five contaminated wells and have located three more to be tested today.

Local Firms Hit By

EPA On Water Law

APRIL ENO - 7/11/84

Two Belmont and two San Carlos companies received administrative orders by the Environmental Protection Agency last Thursday (July 5) for dumping toxic wastes into sewer systems.

Companies cited were Circraft, Inc., and Circuits Eleyen, Inc., both of Belmont, and Artec Electronics and Associated Circuits, both located on Old County Road, San Carlos.

The companies are among 32 Peninsula firms ordered to comply with a federal law which requires them to treat toxic wastes before draining them into sewers. The companies must comply with the law by July 27.

Johnson said final test results comparing gasoline from the Union 76 gas station and a nearby Arco station won't be completed until next week, but preliminary comparisons between the gas found in the three Belmont wells and that of Union 76 "Appears to be Union 76's."

In March, Union 76 reported an underground gasoline tank leak of 14,000 gallons. This tank has since been replaced and monitoring wells placed on Elmer Street originally showed no evidence of contamination, Johnson said. However, there appears to be a plume of gasoline from the station across Elmer Street.

"At first (in March) we didn't think the leak would affect the private residents in the area," Johnson said.

"At this time, we don't feel there is an imminent threat to the drinking water in the area nor an immediate threat to the water table below" Johnson said.

SEEPAGE

Because gasoline tends to float to the top, Johnson said, seepage into the water table below the contamination will generally occur at a slower rate. This "percolation effect" where contaminants seep into the water table below, is affected by geological conditions as well. These geological conditions include cracks in the bedrock, distance of the water table to the contamination and sudden land shifts, according to a Union 76 geologist who asked not to be named.

"When the gasoline dissolves, then it can percolate down," the geologist said.

Johnson said there appears to be no threat to public safety at this time. Since the discovery of the first contaminated well in mid-

Belmont Blues Over Water Contamination

CARL ENO - 7/11/84
By Steven Stark

Although ultimate responsibility for gasoline found in three Belmont irrigation wells has not been determined, cleanup continues, according to South County Fire officials who are in charge.

A total of 13 wells in the Homeview area, bounded by O'Neil Street, Ralston Avenue and Elmer to Miller Street, have been tested, according to Sally Ortega, South County Fire inspector.

One contaminated well has been found on the 1000 block of Furlong Street while the other two are on Hiller Street, according to Ortega.

The remaining 10 wells are being monitored weekly for the presence of dissolved gasoline contamination. In addition, monitoring wells have been dug in the area to pinpoint the extent and travel route of the contamination, according to Regional Water Quality Control Board officials.

PETRO-PURGE

The Union 76 gas station has been pumping water from the area to separate the gasoline out of the water, according to Peter Johnson of the Regional Water Quality Control Board in Oakland. This cleanup process is called "petro purge" Johnson said. The separated water is then discharged into the sanitary sewer water treatment process, Johnson said.

Cont. Back

une, about 250 residents were and-delivered warnings against sing their water and advised to eport the presence of backyard wells in the area to South County fficials. Residents were also ad- ised to cap their wells to reduce ne chance of accidental fires, ac- cording to Ortega.

HEALTH CONCERNS

County health officials were con- cerned some of these wells were onnected to the municipal drink- ing water supply. Of the 13 wells identified in the area, none were onnected, according to Rex Goff of the San Mateo County Health Department.

Goff said residents in the area who wished to hook their house and well to the municipal water supply would have a difficult, if not mpossible, task because the water ressure in the neighborhood is usually high. The problem with nixing well water with domestic vater, Goff said, arises when the ressure inside the house is greater han that of city pressure. This reates a backflow, which can allow nything contained in the well vater to mix with the municipal vater, including any and all conta- ninants, Goff said.

Goff said the county health de- partment's concern is in identi-

fying all wells in the neighborhood should future need arise. None of the 13 wells in the neighborhood were known to the department prior to this incident, Goff said.

South County Fire officials con- tinue to request residents in the area notify them if they have a backyard well.

New Fire Captain Appointed

CALL. ENR 7/15/84
Paul Kroll has been promoted to the position of captain for South County Fire Authority. Captain Kroll began his career as a San Carlos firefighter in 1972 and has been with the fire department for a total of twelve years.

In addition to being a California State Certified Fire Officer, Cap- tain Kroll is a certified Emergency Medical Technician and has earned an AA degree in Fire Science from the College of San Mateo. He is an



CAPT. PAUL KROLL

instructor and coordinator for the department's Multi Media First Aid Program and was instrumental in establishing procedures for the Ele- vator Rescue Program.

His recent participation in a pro- gram to further communications and understanding between city agencies included such activities as riding along with police officers and dispatching police and fire emer- gency calls.

Kroll has been selected as a lead captain for the newly developed Hazardous Material Response Team and his interest in promoting qual- ity fire education is demonstrated by his participation as a teacher in South County's Fire Academy, an eight week training course for new firefighters.

South County Fire's new captain and his wife, Diane, have been mar- ried for fourteen years and are ac- tive in St. Charles Church and School. They enjoy sailing and fishing to- gether with their children, Julie age 11 and Matt, age 9. In years past, Kroll has been chairperson and co-chairperson for the San Ma- teo County Firefighters Association Muscular Dystrophy Drive. His latest interest is instructing a local Boy Scout Troop in first aid pro- cedures.

Officials warn on hazardous materials

S.F. TIMES 7/13/84
BELMONT — Officials warned today that the potential for a major disaster involving hazardous materials is "very high" in San Mateo County. They added that dozens of firefighters are attending an intense two-week training session here to develop a Hazardous Materials Response System.

Ironically, the classes are being held only a few blocks from where six Belmont firefighters were permanently disabled while battling a fire involving toxic materials 10 years ago.

"The potential for having a spill in this county is very high," San Mateo County Supervisor K. Jacqueline Speier told newsmen. "There are 3,000 companies in this county that deal with hazardous substances."

Ms. Speier noted that instructors from the National Fire Academy are teaching the first-ever pilot program to California firefighters who will "help make San Mateo County the best prepared county in the nation to respond to any hazardous materials incident."

She said the classes, being held at PG&E's regional office, demonstrate that "we are not prepared enough to respond (to disasters involving hazardous substances)." The training involving 28 San Mateo County firefighters and 15 firefighters from other Bay Area counties "is going to make it safer for everyone," according to the county supervisor.

During a press conference held at the training site, Ms. Speier told reporters that the classes are being made possible by dona-

tions of cash and materials from local companies, such as PG&E, and she said the training is also being made possible through the cooperation of several government agencies.

Battalion Chief Jim O'Donnell from the South County Fire District said local fire departments are much better prepared today to deal with accidents involving hazardous materials.

He told newsmen that 17 firemen from Belmont were hospitalized 10 years ago while responding to a fire involving containers of the poisonous gas methyl bromide. He noted that the accident occurred a short distance from the class.

"It was just over there," said O'Donnell, motioning toward an industrial area near the Pacific Railroad tracks. "Seventeen fire people went to the hospital and six (who were disabled after inhaling poisonous gas) were permanently retired because of that."

Had those firemen attended a training session such as the one currently being held, O'Donnell said that local firemen would have been better prepared to deal with the emergency.

"Not one fireman would have been injured," he claimed.

Firefighters to be trained to detect, handle

By Steve Taylor

Times Tribune staff

PENINSULA TIMES 7/13/84

Thirty-eight Peninsula firefighters will be among the first in the Bay Area to receive training on how to detect and contain hazardous-waste spills.

The program was outlined today at a press conference at the Belmont office of Pacific Gas and Electric Co., where the 80-hour course will be taught. It will mark the first time that such training is

offered by the National Fire Academy away from the academy's campus in Emmitsburg, Md.

Jim O'Donnell, a battalion chief with the South County Fire District in San Carlos and Belmont, will be the course coordinator. Nineteen of the 43 students in the class are employed by the South County Fire District.

The course also will include 10 firefighters from the Central Fire District, which serves Cupertino, six from the Redwood City Fire De-

partment, two from the South San Francisco Fire Department and one from the Millbrae Fire Department.

The other students are three firefighters from San Rafael, Castro Valley and Contra Costa County and two PG&E employees.

The training comes as Santa Clara and San Mateo counties await the delivery of \$80,000 vehicles that will be used by the specially trained firefighters to detect and contain toxic spills. The state-

funded vehicles will be equipped with monitors designed to identify hazardous materials and substances that will soak up the dangerous chemicals.

One of the vehicles will be given to the South County Fire District, and one will be given to the Central Fire District. In both cases, the vans will be available for use countywide.

The two vans are to be delivered within the next few months. Santa Clara and San Mateo counties were

hazardous-waste spills

among 11 California counties chosen by the state to receive the vans.

The training program was made possible by the efforts of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, the county's Fire Chiefs Association, the county's Industrial Emergency Council and the state Office of Emergency Services, according to county Supervisor Jackie Speier.

Speier praised the local and state governments and private industry

for teamwork that made the training possible. She said other observers at the training sessions will include representatives of the federal Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the state Health Department, the state Office of Emergency Services and the state Fire Marshal's office.

PG&E and several private companies are providing materials, personnel and facilities for the program.

Fourth of July enters new era with fireworks

Shirish Date

Times Tribune staff

REV. TIMES 7/12/84

Fireworks long have been associated with Fourth of July celebrations. If the pattern developing in recent years is an indication of the future, however, Californians can expect to see more pyrotechnics in the state Legislature and in city council chambers than in the streets.

On June 19, Gov. George Deukmejian signed legislation giving counties and cities the authority to ban the sale and use of fireworks, including "safe and sane" fireworks.

This law is the culmination of a three-year legal struggle sparked by San Jose's 1981 ban on the sale and use of fireworks. That ordinance was challenged in court by Anthony Ventura and other fireworks vendors. Ventura claimed San Jose's ordinance conflicted with the more lenient state fireworks law.

At that time, Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge John Longinotti upheld San Jose's law, ruling there was no conflict between it and the state law.

Ventura appealed the decision, and on Feb. 16 this year, the state Court of Appeal overturned Lon-

ginotti's ruling. It found that local ordinances that banned the sale of fireworks were pre-empted by the state fireworks law which, by licensing the sale of fireworks, implicitly allowed their sale and use statewide.

San Jose's fireworks ban, and by implication similar bans in 82 other cities, thus was ruled invalid. An appeal by San Jose to the California Supreme Court was summarily denied.

In response, opponents of fireworks in the Legislature began action. Sen. David Roberti, D-Hollywood, sponsored SB 2333, a bill giving local govern-

ban law

ment the power to prohibit the sale and use of fireworks. The bill breezed through both the Assembly and Senate and was enacted two weeks ago by Deukmejian.

Since the new law merely delegates fireworks control back to cities and counties, it is not likely to alter significantly the number of areas banning fireworks for this year. The practical effect of the law is to protect existing fireworks bans from court challenges.

Another effect of the law is to retain the wide

assortment of bans and penalties for fireworks sale and use. Aside from the uniformity found in state fireworks legislation (all propelled fireworks are illegal; possession or sale of fireworks over 7,500 grains is a felony), fireworks regulation in Peninsula cities resembles a patchwork of varying rules and enforcement policies.

Atherton

Does not permit the sale of fireworks but permits the use of "non-propelled" fireworks, including sparklers and snakes. Use of unauthorized fireworks is a misdemeanor, punishable by a \$500 fine, a year in county jail or both. This penalty for "illegal" fireworks — firecrackers, cherry bombs, M-80s — is uniform statewide.

Belmont

Prohibits both sale and use of fireworks. Safe and sane fireworks are confiscated and users are cited.

Foster City

Prohibits both use and sale. Violations are treated as misdemeanors.

Redwood City

Both sale and use of fireworks are permitted.

San Carlos

Prohibits both sale and use. Fireworks are confiscated and offenders are cited.

Sunnyvale

Bans both sale and use and violations are considered misdemeanors.

Woodside

While sale of fireworks is not disallowed, no permit applications were received this year and thus no vendor permits were issued. Permits the use of fireworks.

Officials fear fire danger

Logistics of firefighting on Winding Way at issue

By Phyllis Brown

Times Tribune staff

Dev. Times 7/19/84

The difficulties of battling two recent fires on a narrow, twisting street in the hills west of San Carlos have fire officials worried that the residents of Devonshire Canyon are in danger from fire.

The street, Winding Way, is in an unincorporated area of San Mateo County and has about 50 addresses.

There are a number of ways fire safety on the street could be improved, according to Gary Schmitz, chief of the South County Fire Authority. He said they include continuing Winding Way to Chesham Avenue, restricting parking to provide turnaround room, developing a weed abatement program, and eliminating combustible roofing materials on all new construction, remodeling and re-roofing.

Those suggestions, and the concerns of the commission of the South County Fire Authority, composed of members of the San Carlos and Belmont city councils, will be addressed in a letter to the Board of Supervisors, Schmitz said.

A June 20 fire destroyed a two-story house at 400 Winding Way, spread to adjacent grassland and blackened about 15 acres before it was brought under control.

Fire broke out June 26 in the two-car garage of a second Winding Way home. The garage was destroyed, but the fire did not spread to the home itself.

The cause of the fires has not been determined.

Fire protection for the Devonshire Canyon area is the responsibility of the California Department of Forestry, but because of a mutual aid agreement, the South County Fire Authority is the first to respond to Winding Way fires.

Schmitz said that, when firefighters arrived at the two June fires they found a narrow, winding, dead-end street, with no cross streets. For most of its length it can handle only one-way traffic, Schmitz said.

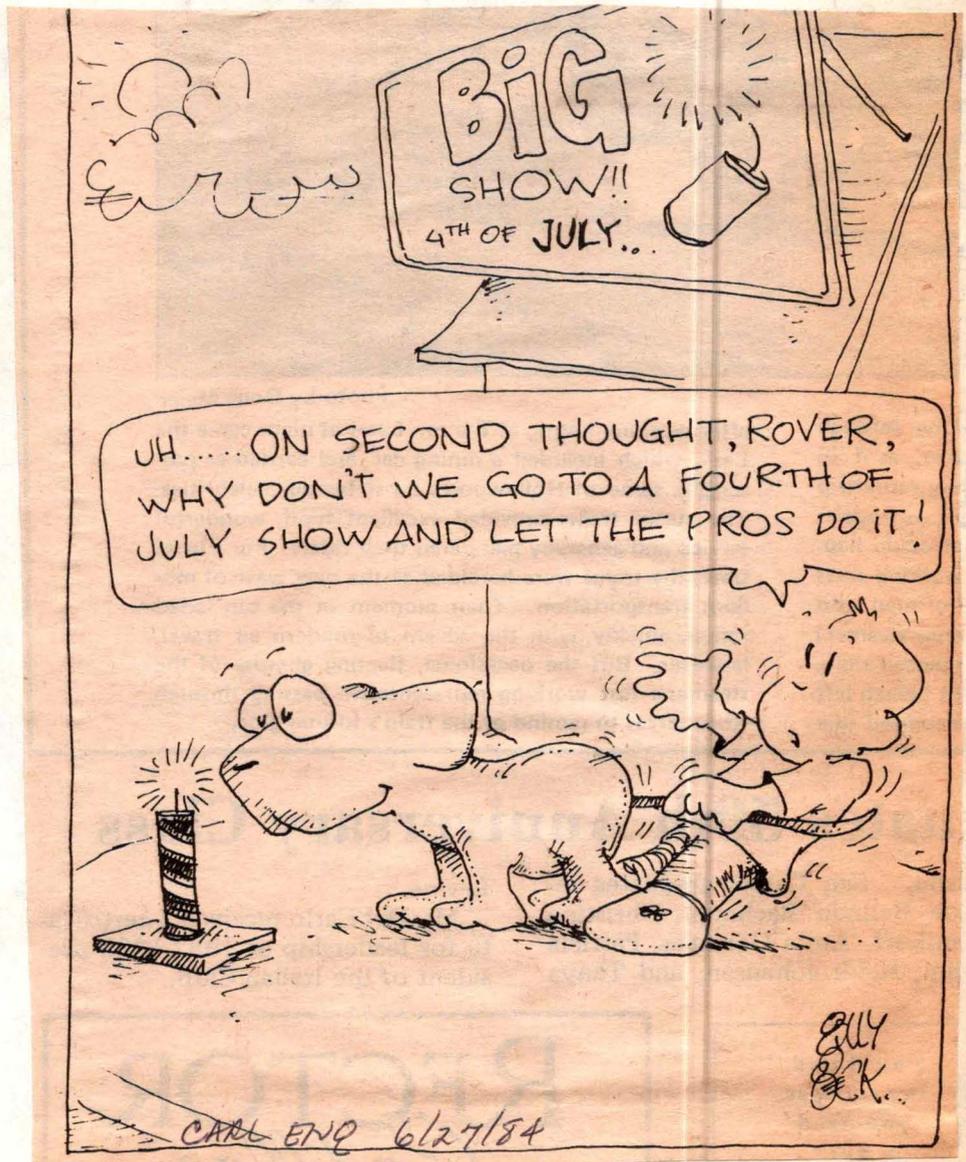
The majority of winding way is so narrow that, when an engine is fighting a fire, access to the remainder of the street is cut off.

Because the street is a dead-end, the need for a place for fire engines to turn around is critical. There are only three such places on Winding Way, and even they could be eliminated, if cars were parked in the areas.

In addition, the homes on Winding Way are surrounded by heavy brush on steep banks, so that fires can spread rapidly, Schmitz said.

Further, there are only three fire hydrants on Winding Way, not enough for the number of homes on the street, Schmitz said.

"Fires starting in that area could come up the back hills and into the homes in the area. We are concerned for the people who are living there, because, once we set up a fire engine in the area, they won't be able to drive out if we need to."



(cont. on back)

The End Of An Era— And About Time!

CAL. ENQ. 6/27/84

When it comes to fireworks, the words "safe and sane" do not apply. Each year, Fourth of July Celebrations inevitably result in dreadful maiming as well as fires causing injuries, death and destruction. The cause of many of these are fireworks lit by careless or unsupervised hands.

According to a report of the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, 8300 people were treated for fireworks-related injuries in 1983. Seventy-three percent of those treated were under 25 years of age.

Additionally, according to the State Fire Marshall's office, there were 1,319 fires caused by fireworks in California during that same time period.

Enough.

California legislators and Governor George Deukmajian have reinforced the effort to stop the growth of these statistics by passing a bill SB2333, allowing cities and counties to ban or restrict the sale of fireworks.

Local city and county officials should ban fireworks from their communities. One fire or one injury caused by fireworks is one too many.

Senate Bill 2334, introduced by Sen. Jim Ellis, R-San Diego, gives fire districts the same privilege as the cities and counties.

Since the South County Fire Authority issued a ban three years ago on both the sale and use of fireworks in Belmont and San Carlos, incidents of fireworks-related fires have dropped dramatically - from 39 in 1981, to six in 1983.

SB 2334 passed the Senate and is currently awaiting a final vote in the Assembly.

Although a few non-profit organizations will lose a major fundraiser by not being able to sell "safe and sane" fireworks, the chance of such a sale ringin-up a fireball is not a risk worth taking.

Non-profit organizations in our area have exhibited a proven track record of creative money-making. This ban will not inconvenience them for long. During the past several years, when all over the state communities have individually banned fireworks, they must have been thinking of new ways.

This is not to put a damper on Fourth of July festivities. This year, glorious, loud and patriotic fireworks displays will be held at Marine World, Marriott's Great America and at Redwood City, near Whipple Avenue and Bayshore Freeway.

Independence Day is a time of celebration. The continued unsupervised use of fireworks poses a danger to both people and property and can result in an explosive and tragic Fourth of July.

Fireworks Ban Reduces County Fires

CARL ENQ 6/27/84

South County Fire Authority officials announced recently that all fireworks, including the so called "safe and sane," are illegal in the cities of Belmont and San Carlos. Anyone discharging fireworks in either city could receive a citation and a fine up to \$500.

The fireworks ban was implemented three years ago and since that time the two cities have experienced a drastic reduction in fireworks - related fires, according to Fire Inspector Kathie Sinclair.

In 1981, we had 39 fireworks - related fires, with a total loss of \$90,000," said Sinclair.

"In 1982 that figure dropped to eight fires, with a loss of \$2100,

and in 1983, there were six fires with a loss estimate of \$250," she added.

According to a 1984 report of the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, 8300 people were treated for fireworks - related injuries in 1983. Seventy-three percent of those treated were under 25 years of age, receiving injuries most frequently to the eyes, face, hands, and fingers.

Since the South County ban on fireworks, Sinclair said there have been no fireworks - related injuries reported to the Fire Authority.

Rather than discharging fireworks illegally, Sinclair said the Fire Authority is encouraging everyone to

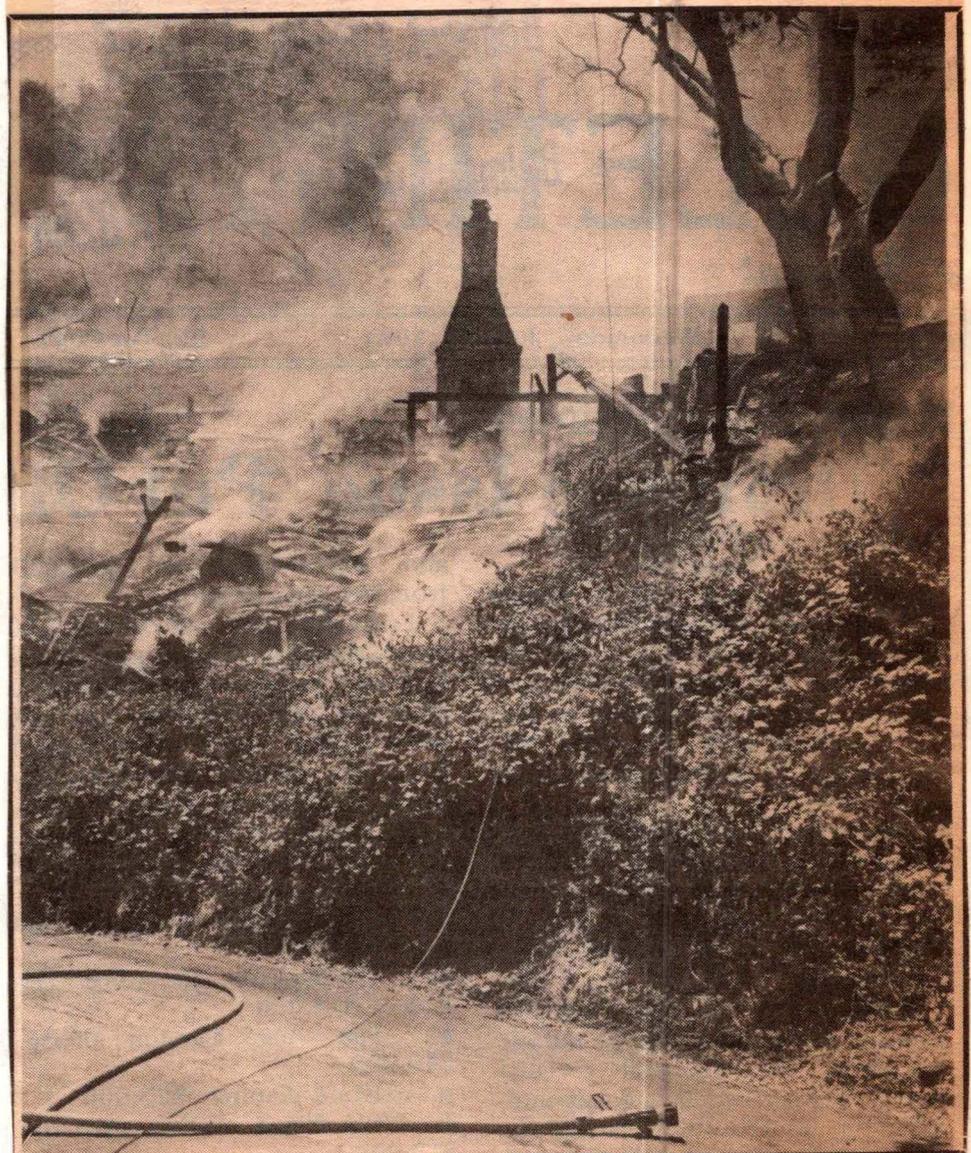
enjoy one of the public displays offered by Redwood City, Foster City, Marine World, and Great America.

Fire personnel will be on patrol from June 30 to July 4, according to Patrol Coordinator Sally Ortega. "We will have at least one mobile unit in each city to watch for fireworks and alert residents," she added.

Anyone witnessing the use or discharge of fireworks is asked by Sinclair to report the violation to South County Authority. Between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., call 593-8016; after p.m. call 592-2222 to report violations.

2 - The Carlmont Enquirer-Bulletin

Wednesday, June 27, 1984



CARL ENQ 6/27/84

-Photo by Mark Sweeny

SIXTY PENINSULA FIREFIGHTERS battled a blaze in Devonshire Canyon last Wednesday which destroyed a home and spread to surrounding grass and brush, threatening apartments on Torino Drive and homes on Portofino Court.

Firefighters Battle Blaze In Carlmont

CARL ENT. 6/27/84

By Roberta Furger

Crew members from five different peninsula fire agencies helped battle a blaze in Devonshire Canyon east Wednesday after a house fire spread to surrounding grass and brush.

Fifteen units and 60 firefighters responded to the fire which was reported at 10:42 a.m. South County Fire Authority was the first-in-responder and Battalion Chief Dick Latreille described the vacant home at 400 Winding Way as "halfway gone" when the first unit arrived.

Homes on Portofino Court and apartment buildings on Torino Drive were threatened at times, said Latreille, as the fire "jumped across the road and toward the apartments."

With damage estimated at \$165,000, the home was completely destroyed in the fire. Only an old brick chimney was left standing after the fire was extinguished.

Because the home was located in the unincorporated area of the

county, the State Department of Forestry is responsible for investigating the cause of fire. Investigator Carl Kent said the home was built in the early 1930's out of redwood or pine. "After all this time, the wood dries out and burns just like gasoline had been poured on it."

The home, owned by David Hellewell of San Carlos, had been vacant since a 1983 landslide in the area.

The extent of the damage makes investigation into the origin of the fire difficult, said Kent. An eye witness, however, has helped pinpoint where the fire started.

Because both gas and electric power had been turned off in the house, Kent said the fire "seems to have suspicious origins." He em-

phasized, however, that investigators haven't determined if the fire was started intentionally.

"There is a big difference between arson and a fire started by kids playing with matches," said Kent. "One is a felony, and the other a misdemeanor. "If it was an accident, we don't want to scare anyone from reporting information because they're afraid of being imprisoned for the next 50 years," he added.

The fire was under control by 12:30 p.m. with the final unit leaving the scene at 4:30 p.m., said Kent. Changing winds slowed the firefighters effort to contain the blaze, as did the scarcity of hydrant in the area. Kent said firefighters overlooked a hydrant closer to the blaze because it had been overgrown by trees.

'SF or bust'

New fire truck's here

S.M. TIMES
12/12/84

By STEVEN SHELBY
Times Staff Writer

BELMONT — It came cross country from Wisconsin with a low-diesel roar, bearing a sign stating "San Francisco or Bust," and now prowls the hills of Belmont and San Carlos.

It is the South County Fire District's newest acquisition, officially a Seagrave triple combination pumper — a hose truck with ladders and pump.

Powered by a turbo-charged Detroit Diesel V-8, with an Allison automatic transmission, the new "Engine 3" can deal with the district's hilly terrain — where there are grades of 10 and 12 percent — just fine, according to Capt. Doug Fry.

Fry and Fireman Dan Bellville picked up the truck from the Seagrave plant in Clintonville, Wis., hard by Green Bay, Oct. 28. It took a week to drive it back to Belmont, averaging 6.3 miles per gallon and attracting attention all along the way.

"We got a lot of looks; a lot of questions," Fry said. He and Bellville helped out the curious by draping a sign on Engine 3 stating, "San Francisco or Bust!"

Engine 3 replaces a 1973 Seagrave, which will remain in reserve at the station at Cipriani and Ralston Avenue.

South County Fire Protection District "piggybacked" on the purchase of the \$126,000 triple combination pumper — hose, ladder and pump truck — with the Los Angeles Fire Department, which bought 42 of them. The truck came with the following equipment:

- A 500-gallon water tank and 50-gallon fuel tank.

- A separate electric generator to power lights and fans used in cleaning up burned buildings and two portable fire extinguishers, dry powder and CO₂.

- A 24-foot extension ladder, a 12-foot roof ladder, 1,000 feet of 4-inch hose, 600 feet of 2-1/2-inch hose and two 200-foot 1-3/4-inch "live lines," which are connected directly to the truck.

- A complete resuscitation pack, first aid kit, four smoke masks and forcible-entry-salvage-and-rescue equipment, such as axes and picks.

- Portable lights and, early next year, a 48-channel radio.

- A pump which blasts out 1,000 gallons per minute.

- A Stang, a deck gun-type nozzle mounted on a turret, used in fighting large industrial fires.

- Standard fire engine emergency lights.

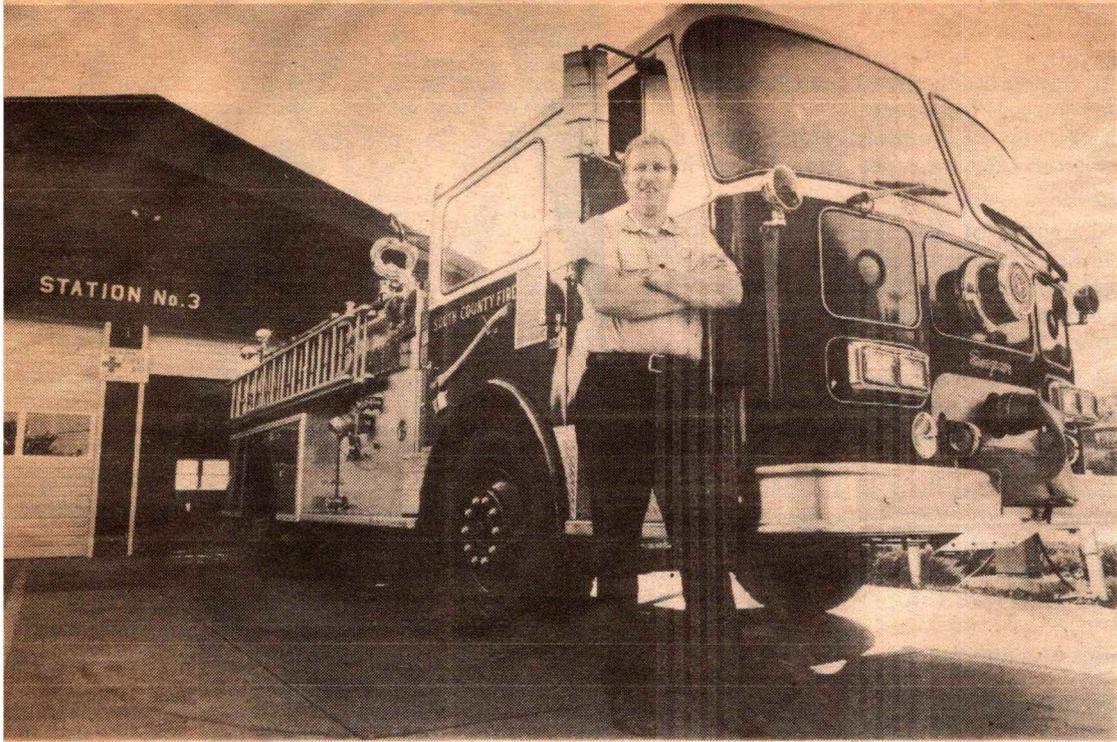
- And a conventional siren, one which emits a steady wail instead of going whoop-whoop.



Capt. Doug Fry sits tall in the new pumper.

(Times Photo)

A shiny new fire engine!



SOUTH COUNTY FIRE CAPTAIN Doug Fry displays the new pumper which he and firefighter Dan Belville drove here from Clintonville, Wisc. The firemen flew to Wisconsin and then spent five days driving back. The engine arrived here in November. South County firefighters spent four weeks

outfitting the engine with equipment from a recently decommissioned engine and put the new one into service at Station Three in Belmont. The bells for the new engine are being chromed before installation.

CAL. ENR 12/12/84

Photo by Paul Fry

South County Fire District to protect Redwood Shores

S. M. TIMES 12/18/84
REDWOOD CITY — The South County Fire District will assume total responsibility for answering emergency calls in Redwood Shores — at a cost to the city of \$1,050 per call.

The City Council on Monday approved an agreement reimbursing the South County department at that rate, which is fixed for the five-year length of the contract. Only emergency life- and property-threatening calls are covered. The Redwood City Fire Department would continue to respond to non-emergency situations.

City Manager James Smith said Redwood Shores had been covered by an agreement with the Belmont Fire Protection District. In return, Redwood City provided dispatch services for Belmont. With the merger of Belmont and San Carlos fire ser-

vices, South County took over Redwood Shores in return for Redwood City's receiving its radio alarm box calls. South County has since removed all radio alarms and asked for money instead.

Smith said an analysis indicated the Shores won't need its own fire station for the next three to five years. A station would cost \$775,000 to build and \$500,000 annually to operate.

The council agreed to transfer \$105,000 from reserves to pay for services this fiscal year (retroactive to July) based on an estimated 100 calls a year.

Smith said that by putting the agreement on a per-call basis, the city can benefit from fire prevention efforts that have resulted in declining call rates in the last two years despite on-going construction.