



La Honda Fire Brigade

Newsletter Summer 2010

FIRE CHIEF'S COLUMN

By Larry Whitney

The greatest asset the La Honda Fire Brigade has is its people. Their dedication, training and skills provide our community with a professional level of service and a high degree of protection.

Being a volunteer firefighter is not for everyone, but for those who chose this path there are many rewards. Perhaps the greatest reward is being able to do something to help people when they are truly having the worst day of their life.

We are always recruiting new firefighters and today we have as great a need for new personnel as we have had at any point in recent years. Besides the reward of helping people, our firefighters receive great benefits compared to similar programs. We offer and pay for an excellent training program, supply first class safety

equipment, offer a stipend to reimburse personnel for out of pocket expenses, and give a small retirement stipend for personnel who are with us for ten or more years. To help further with recruitment we recently received a FEMA grant that enhances our benefits. Some of our expanded benefits can include child care reimbursement while a parent is in training, tuition assistance for family members, and membership in the National Fire Volunteer Fire Council.

Now is a great time to consider becoming a volunteer firefighter. You can find out more about our program and how to join at www.lahondafire.org. Click on "Library" and then "Firefighter Application".

Through a funding partnership between the Brigade, the Mid-peninsula Open

For your calendar:

11 July 2010: LHFB Flea Market

LHFB now via Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/Chief5700>

Space District and the County of San Mateo our new rescue vehicle will be delivered by mid-summer. The design for this new unit was completed in April and it is currently being custom manufactured at a plant in Louisiana.

This new piece of fire apparatus will help us serve you better through its ability to carry additional equipment and personnel. It will also for the first time give us the ability to carry a patient on a gurney. Currently, we have to strip all of the equipment carried in the main compartment out of the rescue and leave it with a crew member on the side of the road whenever we move a patient from an incident location to a helicopter. We

La Honda Fire Brigade
P.O. Box 97
La Honda, CA 94020

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Serving the community and
all volunteer since 1953

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PERMIT NO. 9

Fire Department Personnel

Officers

- Larry Whitney - Chief
- Ari Delay - Assistant Chief
- Cathy Whitney - Captain

Firefighters

Station 57:

- Rory Doolin
- Jeff Dominici
- Paul Long
- Charles Marx
- Peter Panofsky
- Doug Woods
- Katie Johnson

Station 55:

- Chris Conner

Station 58:

- Matt Hanlon

Rookie

- Jamie Briggs

Board members

- Steve Krause – President
- Bob White – Vice President
- Julie Delay – Corporate Secretary
- Coleen Hackett – Treasurer
- Amy Johnson
- Sandi Ruiz-Poss
- Karel Schrijver

Newsletter

- Karel Schrijver

How to reach us

P.O. Box 97
8945 La Honda Road
La Honda, CA 94020
650-747-0381
info@lahondafire.org
http://www.lahondafire.org

Contacts

Larry Whitney, Volunteer Fire Chief
747-9447 x 103
chief@lahondafire.org

Steve Krause, Board President
president@lahondafire.org

Joe Kral, NEST coordinator
747-9693
jkral@lahondafire.org

* The LHFBC community room is available for use. Contact president@lahondafire.org.
* Look for the South Coast Community Directories at all LHFBC events.

want to thank all of the members of the community, the La Ducati Motorcycle Riders Club and others who donated to this much needed project.

Captain Cathy Whitney, my wife and a fixture of the La Honda Fire Brigade for over twenty two years, has announced her retirement effective June 30. During her time with the Brigade she has seen and done it all. Cathy has been the Brigade's top responder for most of her career and responded to thousands of emergency calls. There is hardly a street, area or corner of our response area that she has not been to. Her efforts will be missed by both the Brigade and Community.

••• — — — ••• **President's column**

By Steve Krause

This past year for me as the President of the La Honda Fire Brigade Board of Directors has been an interesting time. I have seen firsthand those in the community who have donated their time to assist us in our fundraising efforts, and those who assisted financially towards the purchase of our replacement Rescue truck. It also made me realize just how dependent we are on our membership, donors, volunteers and firefighter volunteers.

Having been in the fire service for over 34 years, I learned very quickly the importance of a short response time to an emergency. By arriving quickly to medical emergencies, structure fires and vehicle accidents with the proper equipment, most emergencies can be mitigated effectively. Without our volunteer firefighters, equipment and local fire station the response would be significantly slower because the next-closest fire companies are at Skyline and Hwy 84 or in Pescadero. A response from either of these companies varies from 20-40 minutes while the response time for our fire station 57 is only 5-10 minutes. Those minutes count when you are in trouble!

Our fire station 57 is able to function largely by the support of those in the community who are annual members of



The Big Rain on January 20, 2010 brought a river to La Honda. The Brigade came into action many times, responding to flooding, mud slides, downed power lines. More pictures at <http://lahondafire.org/jan20storm.htm>.

the brigade. The membership dues are the single-largest asset in our budget. Our fundraising efforts throughout the year provide another important part of our budget. The County of San Mateo only contributes a small amount towards our overall budget.

This last year we were able to order the replacement for the hardest working piece of equipment on the South coast of the County, Rescue 57. If not for the continued support of the community through donations we would not have been able to replace this truck. Continued repairs to the fire station, grounds and specialized rescue equipment fall primarily on the Brigades budget.

This newsletter is one of our main outreaches to the community to become a dues paying member of the fire brigade. We need your help to continue to provide that quick response time, to maintain the fire station, the equipment in it, and to keep the emergency response personnel in our community.

We look forward to your continued support as a member, a fundraiser volunteer, or as a new member of the Brigade.

••• — — — ••• **On-line at www.lahondafire.org**

- ♦ Recent LHFBC calls.
- ♦ Home safety tips.
- ♦ Hot links to fire-related sites.
- ♦ Maps.
- ♦ How to receive training: CERT, CPR.
- ♦ Membership and donation links.
- ♦ New volunteer firefighter information.

Perspectives: Ari and Julie Delay

Interviewed by Iris Schrijver

IS: Ari, you are the Assistant Chief of the La Honda Fire Brigade. How did you first become a volunteer here?

AD: I have lived in La Honda my entire life and became a volunteer when I was 17. I had a friend in high school, whose father was a Captain with the San Bruno Fire Department. My friend volunteered there, and encouraged me to check it out, too. Initially, I just went to our Brigade to entertain him, but soon I became passionate about this work. Although you were not allowed to volunteer officially until you were 18, Bill Glass (the Assistant Chief at the time) allowed me to attend some training sessions and even to come along on some calls until I turned 18.

IS: When did you realize that this was a career you wanted to pursue?

AD: I liked science and technical topics in high school, and had a summer job in a laboratory. That, however, soon seemed very repetitive to me, whereas what I did at the Fire Brigade was quite the opposite. When I realized that I wanted to become a fire fighter, I first worked a summer with the U.S. Forest Service and two fire seasons with the CDF (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection). In order to differentiate myself from others who wanted to become fire fighters, I decided to become a Paramedic. I worked for the County Roads Department in La Honda to save money so that I could attend Paramedic School at Stanford / Foothill paramedic program. During that time, I was studying in the truck every day, then took one vacation day per week to attend classes, and left the job when my hospital rotations began. I successfully completed my training and right at that time (1997) the Fire Department in Half Moon Bay had a job opening for an aspiring fire fighter, who was required to be a paramedic. The timing was perfect. I landed the job and was sent to the county fire fighting academy for 16 weeks of training. I love my job and I now work as a Battalion Chief in half Moon Bay. My shift is three days in a row on duty and then have four days off. During my days off in La Honda, I volunteer for the La Honda Fire Brigade.

IS: Julie, did you know what the life of a rural fire fighter was like when you

first met Ari?

JD: Not at all! I am a human resource manager with a law firm in Palo Alto and because I never lived in a rural area before, I had a steep learning curve. When I first moved here in 2003, I remember asking Ari when the power went out how long this would take, and his response was “hopefully only a couple of days”! In addition, life with a fire fighter is unpredictable. It seems that just when dinner is ready or when you are ready to go to a party over the hill, the bell rings and he needs to respond to a call. Fortunately,



the volunteers here coordinate as much as possible and when there are enough fire fighters they can decide who will go on the call. Nevertheless, multiple times our daughter Lily (4^{1/2}) and I have also waited in our truck on the side of the road while Ari was the first responder and provided aid at accidents that we encountered. He always carries his first aid pack with him. The schedule of his work as a fire fighter in Half Moon Bay is also challenging, and work days can be consecutively added as need arises. I do like, however, that Ari and Lily have one “daddy-day” per week, when she does not go to pre-school and they have quality one-on-one time together.

IS: Were you ever tempted to become a fire fighter yourself?

JD: I have enjoyed riding along in the engine and Lily loves riding on the old fire engines in the Half Moon Bay parade, but whereas I can appreciate the

adrenaline rush that goes along with a response, I prefer volunteering at the many events. In addition, I have been the Secretary of the Board of Directors since 2006. Ari’s work has also allowed me to meet many people and to become part of a wonderful community.

IS: Ari, what are some of your most memorable moments at the Fire Brigade?

AD: There are many. First, there are the calls themselves: always different, often challenging. I recall a man crushed by his tractor, a tragic house fire, calls involving animals, many high-speed accidents on highway 1 and state route 84, pulling a man out of a burning car just in time, and successfully resuscitating a man with our CPR board in front of the La Honda market. Second, I am very proud of the fact that we have been able to maintain an all-volunteer fire department in modern times. Very few of these are left now, because most people do not work where they live and are not available to respond to calls during the day. The La Honda Fire Department is a leader in the level of training it provides to its all-volunteer personnel, as well as in its response capabilities and equipment. I am very proud of what we have been able to accomplish over the years with such limited funding. Chief Whitney and all fire fighters work together to make this department the best it can be. We may be volunteers but we are very dedicated and consider ourselves professionals. After all, being a professional does not depend on what you do, but on how you do it. We have great synergy and provide professional service in a timely manner. Over the years, we have modernized the fleet of engines, improved training and education of the fire fighters, all of whom are EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians) or paramedics, and remodeled the fire station. The station has become a focal point for Fire Brigade events such as lessons in fire prevention for elementary school kids, as well as for other community events such as CERT (Community Emergency Response Teams) training. The days of a gravel driveway and pulling up the bay doors with ropes are long gone....

IS: What do you see as the most critical need to the La Honda Fire brigade today?

AD: We need people who want to become fire fighters. We can only maintain our service with our volunteers. As our recruitment sign says “volunteers wanted and needed”.

BILL GLASS ANNUAL CRAB CIOPPINO DINNER AND FUNDRAISER

By Sandi Ruiz-Poss

Tickets for the Bill Glass Crab Cioppino Dinner and Dance were sold out the week before the event. Please remember to purchase your tickets early next year so you will not miss out on all the fun!

Our volunteers this year really stepped up to the plate. We had barely enough people to put this event together this year, which was cause for some concern. On top of that was the worry that Julie

Delay, our ticket master, would have her baby before the event and not be able to handle ticket sales, seating arrangements, and checking in guests at the door.

The day started early with the firefighters removing equipment from the fire station bays. Next, some volunteers

helped set up the tables and benches, and the Dooley / Glass family and friends arrived to prepare the dinner.

The board of directors set up tables displaying the donated items for the raffle and silent auction. We spent weeks sending out letters and pounding the pavement asking local artists and businesses for goods and



services that could be raffled off at the Cioppino Dinner.

When guests started arriving, our volunteers ramped it up. Out front, Jeanie Graham and Terry Smith were taking donations for premium wines from the Rorden-Graham Winery and Smith Vineyards. Others were selling raffle and drink tickets, and Julie checked in the guests.

After everyone was seated, the volunteer servers brought out the salad and garlic bread, soon to be followed by the hot, savory cioppino. Dinner was completed with chocolate, lemon, and carrot cakes donated by Moonside Bakery.

After dinner the raffle and silent auction winners were announced. Our Cioppino event would not be over till after the guests danced to music played by our favorite deejay, Johnny Midnight.

It really takes a lot of volunteer hours to put this event together. If you can help at this event or any other LHFB event, please contact us (see our website: www.lahondafire.org) or leave a message on the fire station answering machine at 747-0381. Come on, what have you got to lose? It's fun and it's for a good cause!

Speaking of super volunteers, Julie went home that night, went into labor, and had a healthy baby boy the next day. Now that is what I call a devoted volunteer!



THINK OF FIRE SAFETY

By Steve Krause, LHFB Board President

“This is going to be the worst fire season ever”. A topic that you are about to hear on the news. Well, they might not be too far off. With the amount of rain that we had this season the grass is very tall. I was out mowing down my grass and it was 4 feet tall. Just imagine if you don't mow this mess down and allow it to dry out and become highly flammable. Some people will do just that and wonder why their property burns so quickly during a wildfire. So this is the time to create a defensible space, 30 feet from your house if located on flat land and 70 feet if you are on a slope. Trim your trees so they are not hanging over your roof and clean the debris out of your gutters.

During a major wildfire, it is unlikely there will be enough firefighting resources available to defend every home. In these instances, firefighters will likely select homes they can safely and effectively protect. By creating the defensible space you have greatly increased the survival of your property.

Now let's consider a few other items that should be taken care of.

1. Why clean all debris from your roof and gutters? Even if the fire never

reaches your property, fire brans could land on your roof and catch the debris in your gutters on fire which could burn up into your attic.

2. Your stacked firewood should be at least 30 feet from your house.
3. Maintain access to your water supply for firefighters.

If you are evacuating, shut off your LPG or natural gas supply.

More detailed information is available online at www.smcfiresafe.org.

Remember, dial 911 for any emergency or if you are unsure about your problem. Let the professionals decide whether your issue is really a problem.

Have a safe summer and thanks for supporting the La Honda Fire Brigade.

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If you are not currently a member of the La Honda Fire Brigade but would like to be, go to

<http://lahondafire.org/>

to join. It's easy! We need your support!

