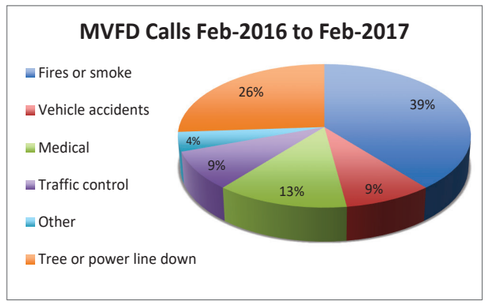
A Word from our Fire Chief

By WILL HORNE, MVFD CHIEF

With all the heavy rain we have had (52.75 inches since October) it is hard to believe that the wildland fire season will not be mild. According to CAL Fire and US Forestry, after five years of drought there will be major growth of new grasses coupled with the fact that 15-30% of all trees and underbrush are dead or in the process of dying. Because the grasses, once dry, are extremely flammable, it creates a large fire danger. Homeowners will need to keep the 100 ft. clearance around homes and outbuildings so firefighters can get close to your structures to defend them.

In the last four months in the Mayacamas area we have had three serious incidents. One situation was a downed live PG&E power line (12,000 to 20,000 volts). While we were monitoring traffic control, we had a car and bicycle drive right past, over and through the downed lines. Fortunately for them the line they rolled over was the neutral line.
Another incident involved a wire downed by a tree and the wind. The line was energized and set the power pole and an adjacent tree on fire, then the power line fell into a creek and electrified 600 ft. of creek area. If you see lines down, call 911. Do not approach the area or drive over the wires.

Mayacamas now has a Water Tender vehicle that weighs about 48,000 lbs. or 24 tons, and a new ISO engine (23 tons). Cavedale is extremely narrow and the size of these two vehicles makes it almost impossible to pull off the pavement onto the shoulder. Residents driving on Cavedale need to stop and then our Firefighters will help you get past our vehicles.



Social News and Events

Mark your calendar for two big MVFD events not to be missed this year:

MVFD Picnic and Annual Meeting - Saturday June 10th

Saturday, June 10th is our Picnic and Annual Meeting, to be held at the stunning Ledson property at 2988 Cavedale. Meet your Firefighters, Board, and neighbors. Chief Horne will give you the low-down on fire danger for this season. Vote for board members, give feedback, ask questions, and have a great time. Check our website or your invitation for more information in late spring.

Starlight Dinner & Auction – Saturday August 19th

Our Starlight Dinner & Auction will be held Saturday August 19th. Once again we have the gorgeous Gordenker Ranch oak grove on lower Trinity for this event. You will be assured of live music, a silent and live auction, a fabulous dinner (catered again this year by Catherine Venturini, the wonderful chef of Olive & Vine)... and you could be joined in song by Betty Ganaye or Bill Hawley! This is an exceptional event and provides a significant portion of our operating funds. More information will be available later this summer.

Thanks to all Donors

As a tribute to the amazing response we had from so many, the Board would like to personally thank the following individuals for their generous donations to our Annual Fund this year. We hit 106% of our $115,000 goal. Thanks to each of you!

- Peggy & Anthony Albano
- Michael Alcantar & Evelyn Kahl
- Lynn & Bennito Alva
- Juliette & Harry Andrews
- Allison Ash & Marc Schwager
- Julie & Tom Atwood
- Paul Barber
- Jeanne & Chester Beall
- Maryann & Paul Bensi
- Marc Benson & Charles Sullivan
- Doni Bird
- Kerry Bourdon
- Mary Clare & Norman Brown
- Stevie Hanson & Blair Calder
- David Carey
- Valerie Charlton & Devron Char
- Silvia Chloe
- Jennifer O'Mahoney & Ed Colby
- Mark & Suzanna Crebbin
- Kathleen & Barbra Daly
- Richard & Darcy DeNola
- Ashley & John Derr
- Marca Dickey
- Betsy & Rusty Dillon
- Alison & Michael Doherty
- Steve Dudley
- The Eagle Cycling Club
- Chris Fanini
- John Fernandes & Kevin McSpadden
- Clair & Eric Fisher-Vichare
- Larry Fishkin & Jonathan Zelnik
- Addie Flinn
- Joanne Fox
- Coleen & James Galvin
- Tom Gamble
- Betty & Claude Ganaye
- Karen Gardner
- Beatty & David Gleba
- The Glen Ellen Fair
- Margaret Gokey
- Barbara & David Graziani
- Connie Green
- Martha & Henry Griffin
- Helle Krarup Griffis
- Bruce Hamady
- Michael Hanna
- Edward Harrison
- Susan & Bill Hawley
- Janice & John Heide
- Geoff Herrick & Sean Kelley
- Albert Hom
- Martin Inn
- Cheryl Jilek
- Jonathan Kitchen
- Kathleen & Rolf Lamar
- John Larson
- Steve Ledson
- Michelle & Eric Lindstrom-Childers
- Marilyn & Darryl Lucia
- John Maib
- Jasper Malcolmson
- Anja & Greg Manuel
- Joyce & Alfred Marty
- Lyn & John Matejczyk
- Patti Paulson & Pat Matthews
- Claire McCulloch
- Noelle & Eric McGinty-Odonnel
- Penny & Michael Miller
- Suzi & Mark Molofsky
- Llinda & Jeff Morley-Mott
- Louise Noble
- Lisa & Sean O'Connor
- Skyla Olds
- Scott Palkowski
- The Parker Family
- Thomas Peterson
- Petroni Vineyards
- Barb Phelan & Janet Niehoff
- Carlos Plasman
- Marilyn Ponting
- Jessica & Luke Powel
- Dave Ramponi
- Jane & Chad Rodgers
- Carol & Harry Saal
- Ellen Scarr & Berta Acker
- Sally & Gary Simmons
- Michaela Terrio, Sky Farm
- Charles Smith
- Christopher Snyder
- Sonoma Land Trust
- Betsy & Peter Spann
- Kirsten & Pete Stewart
- Betsy & Herb Stone
- Brian Stubbs
- Lynne Svenning
- Maurine & Dan Swetlik
- Anne Teller
- John Thacher
- Monna Throop
- Sara Tillim
- Joe Wade
- Duane Wall
- Patrica Ward
- Alice & Barry Zacherle
- Robert Zemanek
- Elsa & David Zuckerman-Rosenberg

RESOURCES

We want to make sure everyone is aware of the information available online from the MVFD.

First, we have a web site with a LOT of information including: Burn Permits, Events, Contact information, a general Resources section and more. The website is www.MayacamasVFD.org and here are some of the things you can find there:

- Hydrant Design Details for new construction
- Earthquake Preparedness
- Local Fire Scanner frequencies
- A link to the Cal Fire website which includes fire incident information
- A link to the FireSafe Sonoma site and their excellent document called "Living with Fire in Sonoma County" which is required reading for all residents
- Drought tolerant landscaping and a fire-resistant plant list

Second, you can follow us on Twitter @MayacamasVFD. We regularly tweet weather and safety information for our area, including any local road closures. If we have a fire in the area we will be issuing regular updates on Twitter.

A third resource that we use is the Nextdoor application (www.nextdoor.com). Our neighborhood is Cavedale/Trinity. We regularly post information regarding safety and events. In the Dry Creek fire last year, this site was extremely helpful, as neighbors were able to share information in real time about the fire including photos showing the location!

Saving Lives, Saving Property

Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.
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Glen Ellen, CA 95442-0225

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VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

APRIL 2017

A Word from the President

By Allison Ash, MVFD Board President

All too often in life we fail to say "Thanks" loud enough for others to hear us, but I am very grateful to everyone in our community who donated this year. As you know, the MVFD financial situation was threatened because of an insurance industry change, which forced us to make an unplanned purchase of another fire engine. If we had chosen not to do this, each of us would have had our fire insurance rating downgraded... to a point that would make insurance very expensive or, for some, unobtainable.

With the help of the County, we found a used engine with the 750 GPM pumping capability required and we got a great deal on the cost. That engine was worth over $100K but we bought it for $85K. Our next challenge was that this type of engine was too big to fit in our stations, requiring us to make building modifications. All totaled, we would spend $115,000.

Now lets talk about what you did for us...a little history is helpful: Our Annual Fund Campaign usually raises an average $18K and, on average, 44 people make a donation (out of the 177 property owners that we serve). But this years numbers were exceptional:

- Raised $116,706 (102% of our goal!)
- 106 property owners donated (more than twice normal!)

Again, thank you... each and every donation mattered! We also had 10 members who donated over $5,000 and Steve Ledson who offered $12,500 in matching funds, which helped revitalize the last month of our fund raising.

We now have several activities underway: the modifications to Station II are completed, the more complex modifications to Station I should be completed by the end of the summer, and we have added a security system to our Stations. Sadly, we have experienced petty thefts from our stations over the last two years necessitating the need for professional security.

I also want to make you aware that there are several board seats that are open for election at this summer's picnic and annual meeting. Please contact me if you are interested. Serving on the board does not take a lot of time, and is a great way to keep abreast of what's happening in our community.

CONTACT INFORMATION

BOARD MEMBERS
Allison Ash – *President*
Pete Stewart – *Vice President*
Marc Schwager – *Treasurer*
Ellen Scarr – *Secretary*
Michael Jablonowski – *Director*
Skyla Olds – *Director*
Pat Matthews – *Director*

To reach the MVFD for any emergency dial 9-1-1

To contact the MVFD for other reasons, visit www.mayacamasVFD.org or email to info@mayacamasVFD.org
Follow us on Twitter @mayacamasVFD

MVFD Board meetings are open to the public and occur on the second Monday of each month at 7pm at Station 1, located at the corner of Cavedale and Trinity.

INSIDE:

Thanks to Donors
Fire News
Picnic & Starlight Auction Date
History of MFVD
...and more!

The Historic Importance of the MVFD Community

By Skyla Olds

Our Mayacamas Mountains, ranked by Cal Fire as one of the most fire-prone areas in California and accessed through some of the most poorly-maintained and treacherous roads around, present unique challenges in confronting the dangers of wildland fires. Prior to the formation of the Mayacamas Volunteer Fire Department (MVFD), our area was serviced by a combination of the Glen Ellen Volunteer Fire Department, Santa Rosa Fire Department, and Cal Fire. In March 1980, Trinity Road resident Gene Reed convened a meeting with local residents to address the difficulties that our unique community faced in fire protection. Thirty residents met at the Grist Mill in Glen Ellen (now Aventine) and ultimately formed the MVFD with Reed as the first fire chief.

Reed himself bought the first fire truck and Ileen Fraiser donated land at the intersection of Cavedale and Trinity Roads for what is now MVFD Station 1. From those humble origins, the community came together over and over again to contribute funds, time, and effort to create and grow the vibrant all-volunteer department that we now have.

There were significant fires that burned through the Mayacamas Mountains in 1923, the 1930s, and 1964. The area was much less densely populated back then, but there were ranches, resorts and homesteads sprinkled throughout the hills. With no local volunteer fire department, residents had to fight fires and notify neighbors on their own. An account of the 1923 fire relayed the history of the Frazier's Resort, located adjacent to where MVFD Station 1 now sits, and how neighbors fought to protect their structures, their families, and their livestock – digging fire breaks with shovels and cutting down trees – while others spread word to neighbors, sought reinforcements, and rescued neighbors.

Fast forward to recent fire history on the hill, including the 1996 Cavedale fire, as well as 2008 and 2009 blazes that were quickly contained, and you see similar elements of bravery and commitment of members of the community to stand in the way of an incendiary Mother Nature in order to protect lives and homes. Only now, those community members are dedicated volunteers with our MVFD (working with Cal Fire and other local paid and volunteer departments) and are trained and organized. Yes, we have better technology to help fight fires, but also, undoubtedly, the presence of the MVFD on the hill is a hugely significant factor in the tremendous ways in which the recent history of fires has been quickly and effectively contained. All three of the fires in 1996, 2008 and 2009 could have swept through the mountains and caused devastation like the fires of 1923 and 1964 had they not been quickly contained. The 2100-acre 1996 fire involved the loss of only one structure – mostly burned before the firefighters arrived on scene – while the 1964 fire destroyed about 150 structures.

In old newspaper accounts, John Fouts reported that it was the Calistoga Volunteer Fire Department that saved his Mountain Home Ranch from fire in the 1930's, highlighting how crucial volunteer departments are to remote areas like ours. The commitment of our residents in the 1980s in forming the MVFD has made all of us safer, as have the efforts of our current community – highlighted throughout this newsletter - to ensure the vitality of the MVFD so that our volunteers can continue to keep us safe.

Personally, I feel keenly the importance of the MVFD to our lives in the Mayacamas Mountains. I was born and raised on Cavedale and the MVFD has always played an important role in the social fabric of life on the hill. My grandmother, Bette Apgar, did the artwork for the MVFD logo while my grandfather, Charles, was an early board member. My uncle Jerry Apgar joined the department as a volunteer firefighter soon after his father's death, because he felt it was important to continue the family's involvement with the department. Jerry's son, Jesse, signed up as a volunteer shortly after he graduated high school. I joined the Board when I moved back to the area a few years ago. Many of the neighbors I grew up surrounded by, the adults on the periphery of my awareness at neighborhood gatherings and who were part of the tight community that made me feel secure and protected growing up on the hill, were or are firefighters: Michael Jablonowski, Ted Meyers, Aaron Jean, and Bill Hawley. As a child, I loved the special outing off the hill to attend the annual firefighter appreciation dinner, the one event where so many of the hill neighbors gathered on the valley floor.

As our society has become increasingly polarized and acrimonious, it becomes ever more important to strengthen our local community ties. If disaster strikes, I feel reassured that it is our volunteer firefighters on the front lines of defense for all of us, and that we as community will support them and each other.