

# the Sunshine fire protection district newsletter

Sep02  
Vol. 02 Iss. 3



## Fire Readiness and Evacuation Tips

During this current fire season, homeowners need to be prepared for the possibility of evacuating their properties. The following are some tips from the *Sunshine Canyon Emergency Pre-plan*, published by SFPD, and *Living with Fire*, prepared by various state and federal agencies.

Advance preparation steps include:

- Make sure family members are aware of a prearranged meeting place
- Identify a "family contact" to whom you relay your plans and that family members can call if separated. Consider an out-of-state person as it's often easier to call long distance after a disaster.
- Familiarize yourself with two different escape routes

If fire threatens and you're anticipating an evacuation notice:


- Tune into a local radio or TV station and listen for instructions: KBCO 97.3 FM, KVBL 1490 AM, KCNC (Ch. 4), KMGH (Ch.7), KUSA (Ch.9)
- Place vehicles in the garage facing out. Roll up the windows and leave the keys in the ignition.
- Close the garage door but leave it unlocked. Disconnect an electric garage door opener so it can be opened manually.
- Place important documents, mementos, valuable items, medications and a change of clothes in the car.
- Shut off propane at the tank.
- Close all exterior vents.
- Prop a ladder against the house so firefighters have easy access to the roof.
- Make sure that all garden hoses are connected to faucets and attach a nozzle set on "spray".
- Confine pets in a room

If the order to evacuate is given:

- Comply immediately and proceed to your prearranged meeting place. Public shelters are the CU Events Center on campus and Casey Middle School at 2410 13th St.
- Depending on the time allowed, pack valuables, with priority given to irreplaceable items.
- Take small pets with you, but don't waste time searching for them if not immediately visible. Often, pets will sense danger and go into hiding. For

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Community Fest - Sept. 14th



## Calendar of events

### *Firefighter trainings:*

Trainings are now scheduled for the *second* Saturday of each month at 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at the fire station.

- Sep 14, CAFS/foam operation
- Oct 12, Burn Building
- Nov 29, Radio/Communications

No Dec. Training

### *Squad meetings:*

Squad meetings are held the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm at the fire station.

Sep 26, Oct 24, Nov 28, no Dec. meeting

### *Medical trainings:*

Medical trainings are held from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm.

Sept 11–Gold Hill, Oct 16–Four Mile, Nov 13–Gold Hill, No Dec. Medical Training

### *Board meetings:*

Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm at the fire station. Meetings are open to all residents.

Sep 10, Oct 8, Nov 12, No Dec. Meeting

### *Special Events:*

- September 11th Remembrance, 6:30 a.m., Sept. 11, Schoolhouse
- Sunshine Community Fest, 2:00 to 6:00 p.m., Sept. 14, fire station
- Halloween Carnival volunteer meeting, 10:30 a.m., Schoolhouse
- Sunshine Arts & Crafts Show, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Sept. 28-29, Schoolhouse
- Bear Talk, 7:00 p.m., Oct. 15, Schoolhouse
- Halloween Carnival, time tbd, Oct 26, Schoolhouse

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### Fire readiness (*cont. from p. 1*)

livestock, open gates and release animals. They have a good chance of surviving on their own.

- Close all interior and exterior doors and windows.
- Turn off all pilot lights.
- Leave a light on in each room.
- Leave your house unlocked. If there's time, leave a note on the door where/how you can be reached.
- If you need assistance or can't evacuate for any reason, call 911 or a neighbor.
- If overtaken by fire while in your car, park in an area free of vegetation, close all windows and vents, cover yourself with a blanket or jacket and lie down on the floor. Don't leave your car until the fire has passed you.
- If you are trapped on foot, seek an area clear of vegetation. Try to stay in one place that is visible to emergency personnel.

## Current board

- Pavel Bouska, Chairperson
- Bill Bender, Treasurer
- Mary Mesch, Member
- Jay Schumacher, Member
- David Wheeler, Member

- Steve Stratton, Fire Chief
- Tom Higbee, Asst. Fire Chief
- Bruce Honeyman, Fire Marshal

Board meetings are at 7:30 pm on the second Tuesday of every month at the fire station and are open to all property owners and residents (see schedule at left).



### Contact information

Steve Stratton, Fire Chief  
 Home & work ph. 303-786-8255  
 Pager 303-441-3851 #4561  
 steve@talksinc.com  
 SFPD-Chief@egroups.com

Tom Higbee, Asst. Fire Chief  
 Home ph. 303-541-9891  
 Mobile ph. 303-956-1507  
 Pager 303-441-3851 #4562  
 Higbeehomeinspection@netzero.net

Bruce Honeyman, Fire Marshal  
 ph. 303-786-7731  
 SFPD-FireMarshal@egroups.com

Graffiti Humor #1  
Make love, not war. Hell,  
do both. Get married.

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## Chief's Message

Three weeks ago, I was at a benefit barbecue for the 100 plus Boulder County fire fighters that worked the Wonderland Lake fire on July 20<sup>th</sup>. This was a fund raiser and appreciation affair put on by several home owners in Pinebrook Hills that witnessed first hand both the anxiety of maybe losing their homes late on a Friday evening and the elation of returning home safely early on a Saturday afternoon.

Smiles were everywhere. Everyone was having a wonderful time celebrating what didn't happen. I stood and watched bashful firefighters getting hugged and kissed. I even overheard one middle aged wife offer to birth a fire boss's child.

And while I stood there I couldn't help but wonder what both sides were feeling...what it must be like to stand and watch ten foot high flames marching up the mountain to the home that holds much of what is dear. The relief that all is well and life will return to

normal must be overwhelming. Why else would total strangers embrace, share a toast and dance the evening away.

And when the hot glow, wringing sweat and aching muscles are faded, how does the occasional firefighter justify hero status for doing what he feels anyone would do, given the same dilemma. How does he swallow his humility, let down his guard and accept the praise for what he loves to do and secretly prays for? These are men and women driven by the fire within, not by the heat of the crowd.

But here, on this night, all are getting what they need. I can't describe what the homeowner passing the champagne around is feeling. I've never had to deal with such potential loss. But, the lone firefighter is standing in the middle of the crowd receiving her paycheck. Weeks, months, perhaps years of training have added up to this, her only re-

ward. As a volunteer, it's all about doing something worthwhile, something different, something that might make a difference to someone, some day. It's about giving up a few weekends, sweating a few tears and preparing everyday to do what probably won't be needed. But on this day, with the band playing loudly, in this crowd with toasts held high...it's payday.

What happened on the other side of Lee Hill may someday happen in Sunshine. But somewhere on your road, maybe next door or around the corner, some volunteers are preparing. Further down the hill another group of firefighters are getting ready. And on the next mountain there are more. Everyday these people are thinking about what could happen. Getting ready should they be called on. And they do it not because you can't survive without them. Not because they get recognition or even a toast at a party. They do it because it makes them feel good. They do it because they simply want to help.

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## September 11th Remembrance at Sunshine Schoolhouse

In memory of the September 11th tragedy, a community gathering will be held on that morning at the Schoolhouse.

6:30 a.m. - Assembly at the Schoolhouse

6:45 - Ringing of the bells in memory of victims of WTC One

- Flag raising coordinated by David Wheeler

- Star Spangled Banner

- Pledge of Allegiance

7:03 a.m. - 2nd bell ringing in memory of victims of WTC Two, Pentagon and Flight 93

All residents are encouraged to attend. Donuts (courtesy of King Sooper and Safeway) and coffee and tea will be served after the ceremony. It would be appreciated if you contact Tony Luchangco at 303-413-1282 or [ljladl@aol.com](mailto:ljladl@aol.com) so he can estimate the amount of refreshments needed.

Steve Stratton

Sunshine Fire Chief

During the last few months, we've received almost \$1,000 in donations. Thank you for the incredible support! Tax deductible donations are always appreciated and can be sent to: Sunshine FPD

311 County Rd. 83  
Boulder, CO 80302

Also, there still are funds in the mitigation program available. Please call me at 303-786-8255 to participate.

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## SFPD Provides Critical Support at Big Elk and Wonderland Lake Fires

Recently, a decision was made to list SFPD as an available fire fighting resource with the forestry department. This means that we can be called to assist with fires outside our district and mutual aid territory. We felt that our volunteers needed more time fighting actual fires to strengthen their skills; also, this would be a source of additional revenue for the district. For the first time, we have enough fire fighters to cover our home front while others are away. Almost immediately, we received a call to assist at the Big Elk fire.

Midday, Tom Higbee, Steve Stratton, and Eric Bader received the page for assistance and rendezvoused at the station to ready the truck. Working quickly, they modified a truck to meet Type 3 requirements for amount of hose, water velocity and volume. They drove out to Lyons and checked in around 3 p.m. A fire fighting effort of this magnitude is run like a paramilitary type operation; our team was processed and received ID numbers, supplies and an assignment to provide structure protection.

Their first task on Day 1 was to do property assessment. Eric, as a certified engine boss, took the lead position. As they reconnoitered the houses and terrain, they could see “fingering”, fingers of fire creeping down the nearby slope. Without intervention, the houses would certainly burn. The rest of their shift was devoted to devising their strategy and limbing trees to reduce potential fuel ladders.

They were headed in at 9:00 p.m. when they heard the call for Wonderland Lake. They were tired, but felt that the fire threat was too close to home to ignore. When they arrived the blaze was only 8-10 acres. Tom and Steve were placed on a hand crew where they used shovels, pulaskis and other hand tools to dig down to mineral soil. This type of work is very physically tiring and the super rocky and brushy terrain made it more so. Eric was put on a staging crew where his expertise could be exploited.

Meanwhile, the team that had been left in charge at Sunshine also responded. Doug Young, Michael Schmitt, Bruce Honeyman, Steve Waltman, and Dave Kabal formed an engine team and were assigned to protect nine structures. On a structure crew, you typically wait for the fire to come to you and then hit it hard to change its path. The crew needs to work quickly and as a team, each fighter knowing his part so they have confidence in each other.

About 45 minutes after arrival, the wind shifted quickly and fiercely down from the NW. It pushed the fire directly at our hand crew, causing them to retreat for safety “into the black” where it had already burned. The fire exploded from 10 acres to 300 acres in only eight minutes. For Tom Higbee, his fear was secondary to his complete awe of the fire and impact of the wind. When the fire grew to this size, the effort changed from putting out the fire to building

containment lines around it. Our crew performed a backburn operation and then kept watch till morning.

Eric, Steve and Tom left at 6:30 a.m. to return to Big Elk for Day 2. At this point, that fire had grown to 4,000 acres. Structures were clearly in danger and our team foamed houses while hand crews lit backfires of about 100 acres and dug a huge line around 40-60 houses. At 9:00 p.m. after forty hours of fire fighting, our team was relieved. They returned for Day 3 where they performed a mop up operation, i.e., laying hose, setting up pumps, putting out hotspots, and another burn out fire. Day 4 the team changed to Eric Bader, Scott Kohla, and Larry Campbell and similar efforts occurred.

Our assistance at these fires benefited us exceptionally. “Three days of fire fighting,” said Fire Chief Steve Stratton, “was better than three months of training.” Our team has learned techniques, strategies, and skills and works together more seamlessly. Even our engine benefited from its use and is operating better than ever. Our crew earned thousands of dollars in revenue for our district, too.

Most importantly, the SFPD saved homes and property. And that’s what it’s all about.

*Please see last page for the current list of active volunteers to whom we owe our thanks.*



# Sunshine Events

Sunshine Community Fest!  
Saturday, September 14th, 2-6pm, Station

Sunshine Schoolhouse Annual Arts and Crafts Show  
Saturday & Sunday, Sept. 29-30th, 10-4, Schoolhouse

Halloween Carnival  
Saturday, Oct. 26th, time tbd, Schoolhouse

Sunshine Community Fest! Mark your calendars for September 14th. Our annual bash boasts good food, great beer, interesting mountain folk, kids games and activities, an auction for crafts and fresh baked goods, and too many other things to mention. And all supporting a good cause—the Sunshine Fire Protection District.

Suggested donation is \$7 per person, with a \$20 maximum per family. Kids under 12 are free. Bring a dish to share or a baked item for raffle. Chili, beer (micro and macro) and soft drinks will be provided. Your donation gets you door prize tickets for some great items. You may buy raffle tickets good for valuable goods and services. And our auction offers the best in locally baked foods and local handicrafts.

Please call Stephen Hall at 303-444-0916 during the day if you'd like to volunteer your time. Better yet, email him at shall@skimoguls.com.

Sunshine Schoolhouse Annual Arts and Crafts Show, Featuring the work of local residents: books on local history, paintings, Halloween decors, holiday table linens, crafts, soft sculpture, cards, jewelry, specialty foods and more! Free admission and refreshments.

Halloween Carnival. Sunshine kids' favorite event of the year, with Halloween Carnival, Spirits of Sunshine Walk, Haunted Hayride. Requested donations are \$7.50/person, maximum of \$15/family. Followed by the Adult Halloween Party.

Arts & Crafts Show and Halloween Carnival proceeds benefit the Schoolhouse and Cemetery Association.

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## Volunteer Profile

Two and a half years ago, Tom Higbee moved to Sunshine to fulfill a lifelong desire to live in the mountains. Soon after moving here, Tom provided shelter to friends who had been evacuated from the Walker fire area. It brought home to him the importance of fire fighting and spurred him to join the department a week later. Fire fighting is a perfect fit for his personality and talents. Tom is an outdoorsman who loves physical challenge and the adrenaline rush that goes with risk.

Although he appears to be the quintessential mountain man, he grew up outside New York City and received a degree in art. Finding it difficult to make a living as an artist, he turned his creativity to fine finish carpentry. His work requires hands-on mechanical skills and a head for detail, characteristics that are appreciated within the fire department.

Tom was recently recruited by Steve Stratton to fill the assistant fire chief position. According to Steve, he chose him because it was obvious that he has a great work ethic and enthusiasm. In Steve's words, "He's a no nonsense guy, who finds out the details, gets the job

done and moves on to the next job." He's also known as being easy to get along with and a team player. Within the department, his teammates have nicknamed him "Hollywood Tom" for the half page pictures of him in the *Rocky Mountain News* and *Daily Camera* fighting the Big Elk and Wonderland Lake fires. (For full story, see p. 4.)

In addition to fire fighting, Tom has administered the mitigation grant program along with Steve Stratton and Henry Ballard. He's enjoyed the chance to meet more of his neighbors and support a very beneficial program. Tom is also responsible for training and is revising the current plan to reflect the growth of new volunteers in the department.

He and wife Dorrie have a five year old son named Mazlin, an old French name for "little Thomas". Tom describes himself as an avid

fly fisherman and mountain biker, with emphasis on "avid".

Tom enjoys the team's camaraderie and says that his involvement has helped him grow as a person and given him opportunity to do things he never would have done.

Thank you, Tom.



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## Wildlife Watch (cont. from p. 7)

cussion and slides will include bear characteristics and behavior and what is needed to get our bear population back in proper balance.

The best way to keep bears alive is to keep them out of trouble.

- Do not feed bears.
- Eliminate bird feeders except when bears are in den (Thanksgiving to Easter as a rule of thumb)

- Keep garbage in bear proof containers or inside until pickup. Containers are available at: McGuckins; Western Container (888.424.0244); Solid Waste Systems (303.840.3390); May Mfg (dumpsters) (303.423.6200).
- Store and feed pet food indoors only.

For more info:

[http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/openspace/nature/lions\\_bears.htm#living%20with%20bears](http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/openspace/nature/lions_bears.htm#living%20with%20bears)

<http://wildlife.state.co.us/education/livingwithwildlife/bearcountry.asp>

<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/eeb/bears/tolerant.htm>

<http://www.bearsmart.com/bearsBackyard/alternatives.html>

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## Sunshine Schoolhouse and Cemetery News



### Sunshine Cemetery Mitigation

Thanks to Jeanine Van Etten, Gary Townsend, and Tony Luchangco for their volunteer efforts in mitigating the Sunshine Cemetery. Professional services were rendered by Sunshine residents Bryan Douglas and Casey Neill.

### Halloween Carnival

The Halloween Carnival is scheduled for Oct. 26th, with a start time tbd. Organization for the event will begin at a kick off meeting on Sept. 15th, 10:30 a.m. at the Schoolhouse. If you would like to volunteer or offer suggestions, please attend. If unable, please contact a neighbor to share notes and represent you at the meeting. Committees include Carnival, Adult Party, Spirits of Sunshine Walk, Haunted Hayride, and Childcare.



### Arts & Crafts Show

The Arts & Crafts Fair will be held Sept. 28-29th, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Schoolhouse. The fair is a great showcase for the talents of many Sunshine artists and benefits the school. If you would like to be a vendor or need info, please call Linda Luchangco at 303.444.6589.

## Mountain Gardening: Mitigation

Well done, Sunshine! There's a tremendous fire mitigation effort underway benefiting the entire community. Several factors are motivating property owners to undertake mitigation projects: a record-setting fire season that struck close to home, pine beetle kill, mistletoe infestation, and financial relief from a matching funds grant.

Special recognition should be given to Steve Stratton, Henry Ballard and Tom Higbee for administering the matching funds grant program. Based on our solid participation this year, Stratton anticipates receiving a similar grant next year. There's still funds available, so it's not too late to apply.

Tree removal, thinning and chipping have been the recent focus, but are just one aspect of "firescaping", landscaping that reduces vulnerability to wildfire. Select plants that are low growing with high moisture content to create a 30 foot green zone around your home. Stay away from evergreen trees and shrubs, including junipers, because they contain oils, resins and waxes that burn with great intensity.

An important element of firescaping is fuel breaks such as driveways, lawns, walkways, patios, parking areas, gravel mulch and nonflammable fences. Be creative with boulders, dry streambeds and sculptural inorganic elements—and spend less time weeding. Water features, such as pools or ponds, can function as both fuel breaks and, if needed, water sources for fire fighting.

From Living with Fire, CO St Forest Service

## Wildlife Watch

The DOW reports that there were 1,100 bear/person conflicts last year. With drought affecting bear food supply in the western states, that number will increase.



We have an unusually high concentration of bears in our neighborhood, with reports of between 5-8 bears in an area that would naturally support only two. The resultant increased interaction between local bears and humans works to lessen their natural timidity toward us.

Although the drought has curtailed the abundance of bears' favorite foods, the DOW discourages feeding bears for these reasons:

- Bears will associate people and structures with food, increasing potentially dangerous interactions
- A sow will not produce cubs during a lean year, an important step in reducing overpopulation
- Bears will choose easy handouts over foraging for their own food.

A "nuisance" bear, one that comes into an urban area or breaks into a home, will be ear-tagged and its lip tattooed. If caught a second time, the DOW is mandated to kill the bear.

Concerned about the dangers posed by increased interaction, Haydee Kuner has arranged for Wendy Keefer-Ring, director of the Carnivore Protection Program, Sinapu, to give a presentation on Oct. 15th, 7:00 p.m., at the Schoolhouse. The dis-

(cont. p. 6)

SFPD Active Firefighters and EMR Team Members

Steve Stratton—*Fire Chief*

Tom Higbee—*Asst. Fire Chief*

Bruce Honeyman—*Fire Marshal*

Eric Bader—*past chief*

Luke Bagaason

Henry Ballard

Lin Ballard

Paul Berger

Larry Campbell

John Clark

Don Dick

Tim Farrell

Lisa van Leeuwen-Hall

Wayne Harrington

Dave Kabal

Wil Kingston

Scott Kohla

Rick Lansky

Frank McGuire

John Metzger—*past asst. chief*

Pat Noyes

Michael Schmitt

Steve Waltman—*past chief*

Doug Young—*past chief*

From the editor

Remember, this is your newsletter! If you have any feedback, ideas, letters or would like to submit materials, please contact me.

Mary Mesch  
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ph. 447-1471 fax 447-2739  
mmesch@ionsky.com

Higbee Construction  
88 Misty Vale Court  
Sunshine

Your neighborhood contractor  
Quality service since 1988  
Licensed & Insured

General Contracting  
Fine Carpentry  
Additions  
Remodels  
Decks  
Kitchens  
Basement finish

Specializing in  
Custom Woodwork  
Interior finish  
Libraries  
Cabinetry  
Stair cases  
Furniture

303 541 9891  
303 956 1507 Mbl.  
303 245 8125 Fax

Classified Ads

Mother's helper - Part-time position with Sunshine Canyon family. Help out mother with two toddlers, housekeeping & errands. Pleasant environment. Competitive hourly rate. Approximately 20 hours/week. Mornings especially helpful. Must have reliable transportation. Call Carol @ 303-442-8807.

Classified ads are \$1/line. Business ads are \$10. Deadline for the next issue is Nov. 15th.

Graffiti Humor #2  
Please don't throw your cigarette butts in the urinal. It makes them soggy and hard to light.  
---The Janitor