



ANNUAL CHICKEN BBQ SUNDAY JULY 27

at the Holy Ghost Hall
Bodega Ave. at
Eucalyptus

11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Adults \$10
Children age 10
and under \$6

July 2008. A free community
newsletter. Volume M/VIII, Issue 2,
published twice a year.

3825 Bodega Avenue
Petaluma, CA 94952

Chief's

In the early spring of 1981, I was working for Jim Mickelson and was based out of his father's, Chief Bob Mickelson, garage. I knew about Wilmar VFD having grown up in the area and been a friend of the Mickelson boys. Once in awhile while working there in the shop the siren above me would go off and if Jim was around he would take me down the street to the firehouse and out on the call. Nothing too exciting, but enough to peak my interest. I started going to the fire training drills that Wilmar had and found a lot of people I knew were volunteering. In April, Jean Elkin asked if I was just hanging around or if I was really going to become a firefighter. The first week of May 1981 I was on the Wilmar VFD's insurance roster. A short time later I changed jobs but still lived and worked close by. I found that I was able to respond most of the time when the siren went off, so when the first three pagers were handed out I received one and was hooked on helping the community. I always looked at volunteering with Wilmar as my way of giving back in life, showing my daughter that you can't just take from society, you have to participate. A few years later when Bob Mickelson retired as chief and his son Mike took over I became the assistant chief. Thirteen years later, in the fall of 2000, when Mike retired as chief I was asked by the Wilmar Board of Directors to take the position. I was honored and proud to take over the reins following in the big shoes of both Bob and Mike Mickelson. Twenty seven years

after becoming a volunteer firefighter, seven and one half after becoming the chief I have decided to retire. I have notified the Wilmar Board of Directors that I would like to retire at the end of 2008. Many people have asked what I will do with my time and I remind them that I still have an everyday job that keeps me fairly busy. Also I hope to stay on the roster as a support volunteer working on special projects as needed. I plan on taking more trips on the weekends and relaxing since I will no longer be wearing two pagers for the department. I have had a great experience over the last twenty seven years. I have seen many volunteers come and go with the one constant factor that everyone who becomes a volunteer with Wilmar is dedicated to the community. When meeting with other fire agencies I can always be proud of the department. This is not due to who is chief or any other individual but to who **we** are as a department team. The support from the department and the community as always been extraordinary and I am sure the new chief will receive the same. I thank each and every community member, volunteer firefighter, and board member for all the support and assistance during my tenure. I look forward to the chance to speak with many of you the day of the BBQ.

Directors'

We had a great turnout at the annual Dinner Meeting at the Holy Ghost Hall in March. It's always good to see our friends and neighbors there enjoying a delicious pasta dinner while getting an update on the Wilmar Volunteer Fire Department's activities and

accomplishments over the past year. The Community member of the year award was presented to Mollie Lewitter in memory of her husband Ed Lewitter. Ed was a cornerstone of the department from the early years and helped to lay the groundwork that has made the Wilmar Fire Department the respected and top quality organization that it is today.

At the Annual Meeting Fire Chief Don Reid announced that he will be retiring as chief at the end of this year. Fortunately Don will still be around to help the new Chief along and to work on special projects, and in the meantime the Department has a big job ahead trying to fill his shoes. Thank you Don for your many years of hard work and service.

You may have seen advertisements in the newspaper or heard spots on the radio recently promoting volunteer firefighters in the County. This campaign is the product of a Federal grant awarded to the Sonoma County Fire Services 40 (CSA-40) volunteer fire departments – including Wilmar – and aimed at attracting and retaining volunteer firefighters. In our Wilmar Community we are fortunate to have such a solid group of hardworking and dependable firefighters, but we are always looking for people to become involved. Even if firefighting is not your bag we can always use members of the community to help out at the annual BBQ or to assist with administrative projects for the Department. If you'd like to help out we'd like to hear from you!

Speaking of the news, you may have read in the paper recently that the Petaluma City Council approved extending a water line from the City limits to supply Wilson School and the Wilmar Fire Station with city water. The new water line will be paid for with

funds earmarked to provide quality drinking water to our school kids. Our very own Board Vice President Bob Green played an instrumental role in getting us to this point by coordinating the efforts of and following through with all the different players and agencies involved in this project.

It's shaping up to be another long, dry wildland fire season. Wilmar and Lakeville Volunteer Firefighters responded on one of Wilmar's fire engines to the recent fires in the Santa Cruz mountains, and spent about five days there helping to battle the flames. It's a good feeling to know that we can lend a hand to other fire departments in their time of need, but just as important it's good to know that we can count on these other agencies to come to our assistance if we were ever to suffer a devastating fire like this in our area.

Fire Department

Did you know that Wilmar Volunteer Fire Department is one of 14 Volunteer Fire Companies located throughout Sonoma County that is administered to by the County Department of Emergency Services? Also known as "DES", the Department of Emergency Services provides these 14 departments with a variety of required components such as, state mandated training, personnel firefighting gear, as well as background checks and physicals for all newly hired firefighters. DES is set up to run just like a normal paid fire department, but the difference is that the firefighters are all volunteers. The DES paid staff includes 2 Chief Officers, a Fire Division which includes a Training Officer and Fire Inspectors, an Emergency Management Division, a Hazardous Materials Division, and an Administration Division.

With current DES Chief Vern Losh set to retire this summer, the County has begun the recruitment process to seek his replacement. Also underway is a Strategic Plan Study which is intended to collect facts, figures, history and data from the various volunteer departments and then make recommendations on how these organizations could improve the services and fire protection they each provide to their respective communities. The consultant company chosen, Emergency Services Consulting Inc., is currently compiling their findings and will begin assembling their report which is to be presented to the Board of Supervisors in early September. We will provide you

with the highlights of this study along with any resulting changes in our next newsletter published in February.

Annual BBQ

The 42nd annual Chicken BBQ/Fund Raiser is just around the corner both literally and figuratively. It will be held from 11 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. on Sunday July 27th at the Holy Ghost Hall. We hope to see all of those people who have been supporting this event for many years and we ask you personally to extend an invitation to your neighbors who are new to our community. For those of us who are relative "newcomers", it is all too easy to take our Volunteer Firefighters and the service they provide for granted. This is our annual opportunity to show our appreciation for this dedicated group who deserve and need our financial support to continue to provide the emergency services and fire protection for our community.

Bill De Martin and his crew will be out early preparing to grill some 750 chicken to perfection and the kitchen staff, under the direction of Renee Rivera, will be insuring that lots of delicious beans, salad and desserts will be available. There will be no shortage of beverages and snow cones for purchase to keep us cooled down. The BBQ will feature the full complement of Raffles, a Silent Auction and kid's games. Lisa Gravesen is handling the kid's game and is planning on keeping them well entertained. The Raffle Grand Prize will be a Hawaiian Vacation for Two and \$500 cash for total value of \$2,500.

We are now soliciting items and services for either the Raffle or the Silent Auction. Although we have many fine local companies who always come through for this fundraiser, many of the most popular items are contributed by individuals from the community. If you would like to contribute, please contact either Debby or Pat McLaughlin at 781-7181 and of course, if you want to help serve food, staff the ticket booths, or serve beverages, please give us a call. The success of the "Volunteer" Fire Department is dependent on the many contributions of all the community members.

Below is a list of all the personnel who volunteer their time to serve the Wilmar community:

Name	Title
Don Reid	Chief
Mike Mickelson	Battalion Chief
Mark Horn	Captain
Alex Bunker	Captain
Justin Fox	Captain
Brian Mickelson	Captain
Devon Ayers	Engineer
Marco Barros	Firefighter
Chris Bonill	Engineer
Kenderic Braal	Firefighter
Doug Cole	Support
Chris Foss	Firefighter
Garrett Green	Engineer
Tim Henry	Engineer
Kyle Kidder	Engineer
Brian LaVette	Firefighter
Carlos Lopez	Firefighter
Jonathan Lucchesi	Firefighter
Kevin Nielsen	Firefighter
Fabio Pereira	Firefighter
Bryce Smith	Engineer
Bryan Tarrant	Firefighter
Sean Torres	Firefighter
David Tuttle	Firefighter
Sean Walling	Firefighter
Seth Willis	Firefighter

BOARD MEMBERS:

Jim Eckhoff	President
Bob Green	Vice President
Al Mello	Treasurer
Pat McLaughlin	Secretary
Lisa Gravesen	Member
Rich Casarotti	CSA40
Joe West	CSA40

EXPLORERS:

Jesse Cole
Marc Dessel
Josh Hartlieb
Nathan Hayden
Pablo Jimenez
Matt Moullyn
Mike Nielsen
Hannah Powell

ADVISORS:

Alex Bunker
Doug Cole
Garrett Green
Seth Willis

Explorers'

Wanted:

Individuals between the ages of 15 & 20 who desire a "hands-on" fire department experience. Join the Wilmar Fire Explorer Program! Call Captain Alex Bunker for info @ 765-1995.