

Hello All ~

Apologies for the lateness of this e-newsletter. Lots of reasons, none important. I'll begin by noting that it is almost one year ago exactly that a discussion on Next Door led to the formation of [Freedom From Fireworks](#).

Newsletter #13 contains all good news.

The theme of the newsletter is that *FFF has made a difference* - both in how the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) responded to our recommendations by establishing specific policies to try to solve the problems of fireworks in our neighborhoods and in how law enforcement now views the issue of fireworks and has planned a completely different approach for this coming July 4th weekend.

To learn the specific policies and directives the BOS passed (all based on our recommendations), go [HERE](#).

We haven't yet spoken before the SC City Council (more on this later) - but we did meet with SCPD and they heard us! As an example, I received an email from FFF supporter Kaycee on May 13, in which she reported the following from the Seabright area:

*"This last weekend neighbors lit off some fireworks and the police were quick to respond. Yesterday night a fireworks bomb went off and I got on the phone with a dispatcher, running out to pinpoint location, when two police cars whizzed past me toward what I guessed was the culprit. I had to tell the dispatcher, 'Oh, the police are already here and on it.' It was awesome!"*

I also received an email from a resident of inland Live Oak (away from the beaches) that things were quiet in her neighborhood over the Memorial Day weekend. While this may not be representative of all neighborhoods for Memorial Day weekend, the [article in the Sentinel](#) (about triple fines for fireworks) may have dissuaded some local residents from setting off bombs. Yes, there will be explosions, but I am anxious to see if our hard work will make a difference between now and the 4th. Recall that last year the entire month of June was intolerable.

For those of you who subscribe to the Next Door neighborhood forums, you will be reading a post from a Sheriff Community Officer that is more good news. We were told that the Citizen Connect App was not appropriate to report fireworks, because it was never meant to take the place of 9-1-1. Well, the Sheriff has recently decided otherwise! Here is the text of today's Next Door post for all of you:

During June 2015, the County of Santa Cruz developed the Citizen Connect App. This application provided residents in Santa Cruz County with an additional method to report potholes, trash and other quality-of-life problems to local officials. **The Sheriff recently asked to have fireworks activity added to Citizen Connect to better assist the Sheriff's Office with 4th of July reporting.** This additional reporting method will allow

residents to report fireworks activity that may not warrant a call to 911, or otherwise may not be relayed to field units during peak overloads of the 911 system. **Reporting of fireworks through the Citizen Connect App will allow the location of the fireworks activity to be posted on an interactive map that is viewable by other citizens and Sheriff's Office personnel.** Sheriff's Office personnel will monitor fireworks activity reported through Citizen Connect and respond appropriately. Once locations are reported to Citizen Connect, other residents can view reported fireworks activity. Citizen Connect reporting will not replace traditional crime reporting for dangerous fireworks, but simply add an additional method for residents to report and follow reported activity. The Citizen Connect application can be downloaded from the iTunes App Store (Apple) or for Google Play Store (Android). [Editor's note: To get started with Citizen Connect, go [HERE](#).]

### **Report of the May 16 Meeting at the Sheriff**

#### **Center**

For those of you who were unable to attend to meeting last month, apologies also for this late report.

There were about 40 in attendance. We heard from the three officers who will be doing the real work to coordinate their efforts this 4th of July (Craig Wilson, Stephan Fish and Steve Carney). They have a system in place that will see separate deputies assigned to individual quadrants -- the goal is to get into the neighborhoods as soon as reports come in. There will be a deputy assigned to the 9-1-1 call center who will route the individual deputies to the quadrant.

They are not going to have road closures this year. This will result in having more deputies available to respond to fireworks reports and should also reduce the amount of congestion on our local streets.

For the first time, a law enforcement officer added "quality of life (noise)" to the other two reasons (public safety and fire hazard) for enforcing the fireworks prohibition. He also mentioned pets.

The only disappointment, for many, is that Sheriff Jim Hart introduced the topic of the evening, by stating that "*about half the people are angry at us*" for enforcing the law. Well, excuse me. That's your job! The other officers are hired. The Sheriff is the only one elected. We think it will be a good idea to have a special one-on-one meeting with Sheriff Hart to explain why such a public statement regarding fireworks can have the unintended consequence of undermining the enforcement efforts of his deputies!

Last but not least, here is a story from FFF supporter Howard. He lives in the First District. In May, Howard emailed Supervisor Leopold asking if he could add a "*Fireworks Are Illegal*" sign to his Leopold yard sign. "Sure," replied Leopold. Here is the result:



In closing, let's hold positive thoughts for what is surely ahead of us. Law enforcement has our backs this time in a way they have not in years past. Let's give them some help by providing as much specific information as possible whenever there is fireworks activity in our neighborhoods.

There will be another newsletter published within a week - about another fireworks issue.

Stay tuned...

All the best,  
Jean