

Hello all (163 recipients) ~

There is no way to say this politely.

Almost as intolerable as the night of the 4th of July is that SC County law enforcement really let us down. As with last year, the SC City police department did a much better job issuing citations for fireworks. Even the Watsonville police wrote 16 citations for illegal fireworks! Having fewer law enforcement officers in the County can no longer be an *excuse* for this discrepancy.

Residents gave the County Sheriff Dept. everything they needed in terms of hot spots pre-4th and locations via Citizen Connect. We handed them the areas where all they had to do was sit in their patrol cars and watch people with fireworks, lighted or not, then get out, confiscate and write citations. What did they do? They confiscated fireworks from 40 people and issued one lousy citation (see attached report from the Sheriff's office). There should have been 40 citations. *Possession* of fireworks is as illegal under the ordinance as is using them.

We were told that they would respond to calls from the neighborhoods. "Response" to us meant they would be there and ticket, not warn, those illegally possessing and using fireworks. Instead of citations, people got warnings, which will not mean anything to them for next year, when they will certainly risk another confiscation and warning.

For those of you able to access the online Sentinel, read about the difference in reporter Stephen Baxter's news story: <http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/lifestyle/20160705/less-sun-fewer-problems-during-independence-day-weekend-in-santa-cruz-county>

FFF must and will regroup, sometime very soon. We will make one essential point the framework of what to do next -- *education does not work*. Tickets are the only thing people are going to understand.

It is time for County officers to start issuing citations or tell us honestly exactly why they will not. I am going to call for a meeting with Sheriff Hart so residents can ask him why his deputies did not issue citations. I want him to tell us to our faces. I intend to do so after I cool off a bit and can speak with Sheriff Hart without shooting myself in the foot.

To all of you who reported your particular neighborhood's dismal news, via email, on the Next Door forums or in LTEs to the Sentinel, thank you for speaking out. Your writings will form the basis of the ongoing FFF campaign.

Clearly we have to have more policy direction from the Board of Supervisors directly to law enforcement, to force them to quit the warnings and issue citations, on the 4th and throughout the year. Then we have to have County support for a statewide massive fireworks embargo, to keep materials from getting into California and into Santa Cruz. We'll strategize on how to go forward and all of you will be asked for your ideas.

I had hoped that we might see even a tiny difference on July 4th. Not so. I feel like my optimism may have let some of you down. If so, I apologize. The only good news, if there is

any to report, is that the three weeks prior to the 4th and the last couple of nights have been quieter than this time last year. Also, there was one [LTE](#) from the westside of Santa Cruz, about police making a difference in their neighborhood. I suppose we can be somewhat grateful for that. But it is not enough. I hope all of you receiving this newsletter are ready to keep going with our campaign.

Jean

[Freedom From Fireworks](#)