

Yes, its fireworks season. Again.

This year the fireworks scofflaws have yet another excuse to violate various Countywide prohibitions of fireworks; that is, their need to celebrate their freedom from Shelter-In-Place (SIP) orders of the past three and a half months.

As a reminder, in unincorporated Santa Cruz County and the City of Santa Cruz, all fireworks, including the so-called "safe & sane," are illegal. No exceptions. The incorporated City of Watsonville does allow the sale of "safe and sane" fireworks but limits their use within Watsonville City limits. So they may **not** be purchased in Watsonville and taken home to use anywhere outside that city. This should include the incorporated City of Capitola, which unfortunately has an *antiquated* ordinance that allows "safe and sane" fireworks on private property. Where do those Capitola residents get their "safe and sane" fireworks? They are not allowed for sale in Capitola!

We had hoped to work to change that Capitola ordinance this year. And then along came the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

## Speaking of Health

We all know how difficult it is to breathe throughout Santa Cruz County on the 4th of July, due to fireworks toxic particulates in the air. Our lungs are compromised, as are the lungs of any living animal, wild or domestic. With public health already compromised by the coronavirus, do we need more health worries? No, we do not.

In Seattle, there will be an interesting experiment this year, because the city-sponsored fireworks display has been cancelled. Seattle monitors particulate spikes on July 4th. With their show cancelled, and only private fireworks in use, what will happen to the spike? To see charts of past spikes and read the news from Seattle, look at the first article on our web page: <http://freedomfromfireworks.weebly.com/news--articles.html>

The City of Scotts Valley should do the same thing as Seattle, in terms of particulate monitoring next Saturday, since Scotts Valley's July 4th fireworks show has been cancelled this year. Possession and use of fireworks by residents in Scotts Valley is also prohibited.

We had hoped the County would extend the SIP closure of beaches through the July 4th weekend. It did not, citing how law enforcement could no longer deal with all those who were gathering on the beaches now that summer is here. We think that part of that excuse is probably based on law enforcement not acting like ... law enforcement. At the very least, the signs on Hwy. 17 south that said something like Stay Home Beaches Closed, for two months, should be left in place.

One thing is for sure, we intend to request air quality monitoring by the County Health Department, in terms of the ongoing involvement of the Health Department with regard to SIP orders and Covid-19 cases. We expect our County Health officials to care greatly about our vulnerable lungs, as well as harm to immune systems due to stress, anxiety and noise of

fireworks that rattle our senses and well-being. Not just when there is a virus loose in the neighborhoods.

### Salinas Gets Tough

Salinas is an example of how Santa Cruz County could and should get tough on fireworks, one may read about Salinas (second article on the web page <http://freedomfromfireworks.weebly.com/news--articles.html>). Although Salinas still allows the sale and purchase of "safe and sane" fireworks, they are getting quite tough this year on illegal fireworks, which can result in up to a \$50,000 fine.

### More or Less Fireworks This Year?

In Santa Cruz County, the usual mid-June workup to July 4th fireworks activity seems to be about the same as last year. Illegal California fireworks' sales due to a huge bust in Modesto on March 19 last year seemed to tame things slightly throughout the year. It is anybody's guess as to what will happen this July 4th.

There are still many, many residents who do not want to jeopardize themselves by showing up at the beach with large gatherings. But the same may not be true of residential fireworks, where a few people can set off shows to be viewed blocks away. That could increase residential fireworks activity.

Only time will tell what happens this year.

There are still over 200 of you receiving these FFF newsletters. May each of you find some peace and quite and health on the 4th.

Jean Brocklebank

Michael Lewis

<http://freedomfromfireworks.weebly.com/>