



May 2, 2013
The Day our Mountain Burned but our Homes Were Saved
A Day We'll All Remember



SPECIAL NEWSLETTER EDITION from
 THE SPRINGS HOA and
 THE SPRINGS COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM



Photo by Cathy Scheir from their home looking up Lada towards Itamo/N. San Como Lane

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Note from the Editor

Robbie Dornick

Producing this newsletter turned out to be a larger task than I had imagined since almost 700 photos were submitted by residents and family members. THANK YOU! It was impossible to include all of them, so a separate “album” is being prepared to include more of the photos; be patient since it’s a big job. Only this newsletter will be printed and delivered to all residents and the “album” will be available for purchase for 30 cents per page; one hard copy will be available for viewing at the Clubhouse Office. Both the newsletter and album will be emailed in pdf format to all those who have provided their emails.

The Fire

President's Comment

Neal Blaney, President, The Springs HOA

I am pleased, relieved and grateful. I am pleased because our preparations met the challenge. Our fire resistant homes, our weed abatement areas, our trained CERT team members and our alert homeowners were up to the task of keeping our community safe from a sudden and roaring wild fire. I am relieved because we suffered so little damage. Two homeowners lost their RV vehicles, one of those also lost a boat, truck and trailer, and the RV lot sustained damage to the fence, to its power and water lines and to the asphalt where the RVs burned. There was some other, scattered and very minor damage, plus two homeowners lost wooden decks. We came out almost completely unscathed.

Mostly, I am grateful. Our CERT team members were right on the ball, alerting us and checking on us. Our fire fighters are the best. They were right here when we were threatened, and they kept on checking for nearly a week after the danger had passed. I extend a very heartfelt and grateful "Thank you" to all of them and to each of you for your part in helping to keep us safe.



*Looking up
San Como
Lane*



*Behind the
Clubhouse*

*3 photos by
Andy & Jolene
Johnson,
San Como Ln*



*Fire, what fire??
I've got a game to play!*



*Photos by Pierre
Forgette, Gitana*

*Mountain behind Gitana
& RV Lot*



*Photo
submitted
by Stan
Roberts,
Irena*



The Fire



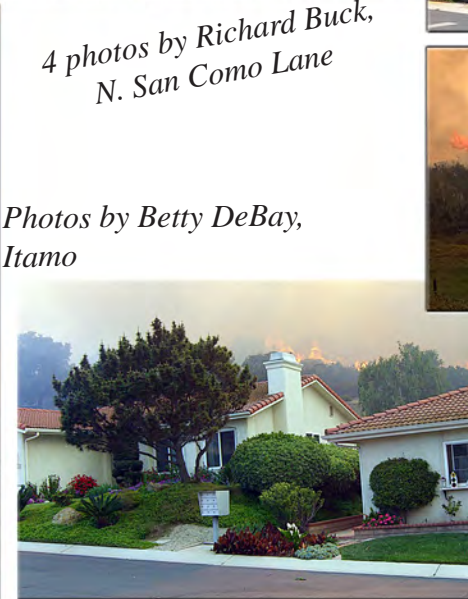
3 Photos by Ted Koupal,
Paquita ~ taken in area
of Paquita/Belleza



Photo at right by
Drake Van Camp,
Paquita ~ looking
across the street



4 photos by Richard Buck,
N. San Como Lane



Photos by Betty DeBay,
Itamo

The Fire



3 Photos by Marilyn Vail,
Irena



Photo by Carolyn Booth
(from the 101)



Photo by Bob & Joan Townley,
Lada
RV Lot burning behind Country
Club Village (CCV)



Photos by Nancy Phelps,
Belleza



The Fire

Photos from Carolyn Booth



*Photos by
Nancy Phelps,
Belleza*



*Photo by Karen
Long, San Dimas
Camarillo Springs
Rd towards RV Lot*

Photo by Pierre Forgette, Gitana ~ San Como Lane at Gitana



Our Heroes



Photo by
Ray Palmer,
Gitana

Photo by Ralph
Finch, San
Como Court ~
Police officer
on duty below
drain on San
Como Lane



Our Heartfelt Thanks to ~

- All of the fire fighters and their support staffs who worked tirelessly and always with a positive attitude to save our homes.
- The police officers who assisted them.
- The resident who had the foresight to encourage the firefighters to use our clubhouse for the nights they kept vigil.
- The many residents who provided food and drink to the firefighters in our clubhouse and elsewhere; they jokingly told Malisa that they “had to beat them off with a stick” but were most appreciative.
- Tom Pilcher who spent months removing all flammable plants and cleared the hillside on Gitana behind the clubhouse (fire personnel stated that whoever was responsible saved the nearby homes).

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Crew from
Station 55,
putting out flare-
ups above the
top of San Como
Lane on 5/3



Photos by Robbie
Dornick, San
Como Lane



Station 54 Team “B” ~ Here for over 2 days

Help arriving
from Santa
Monica



Our Heroes



Photos by
Jan Cheveres,
Itamo



Photos by
John and Joan Adams

John Adams, our very
own retired LAFD Chief



Gitana at Del
Gada

Photos by
Richard Buck,
N. San Como Lane



N. San Como Lane/
Itamo

Mark Petrusson working on fire
across the street from him on Lada

After the Fire



Photos by
Ralph Finch,
San Como Ct.

Above San
Como Lane

CCV
RV Lot



Above N. San Como
Lane



Photos by Judy Cash,
N. San Como Lane

Springs RV lot



Photo by Ray Palmer,
Gitana



Springs RV Lot

Photos by Lee Brown, Paquita



Photos by Pierre Forgette,
San Dimas

CCV RV lot



After the Fire



Aerial shots from VCFD helicopter ~ submitted by Bill Nash (VCFD Public Information Officer & Springs resident)



3 aerial photos from VCFD helicopter ~ sent by Bill Nash



Photo by Sam Bernstein, N. San Como Lane ~ Wendell Harden, Gitana, holding a melted piece of his burned truck; etchings by Sam Bernstein say "Fire, May 2, 2013" and "Wendell's Truck"



Photo by Robbie Dornick, San Como Lane ~ above homes on N. San Como Lane



Photos by Jan Cheveres ~ from their backyard on Itamo



Wildlife After the Fire

Our local wildlife have suffered severe trauma but a few seem to be slowly bouncing back ~ some good, some not-so-good. Malisa has had lots of stories of rats, mice, raccoons, and even opossums being sighted. Numerous deer have been seen including at least one buck and two brand-new baby fawns. A wildlife rescue group said that water is the most important thing for the deer and, possibly, alfalfa hay. With the golf course and nature park available, food doesn't appear to be as big a problem as water. Several residents along the hillsides are now providing buckets of water for them.

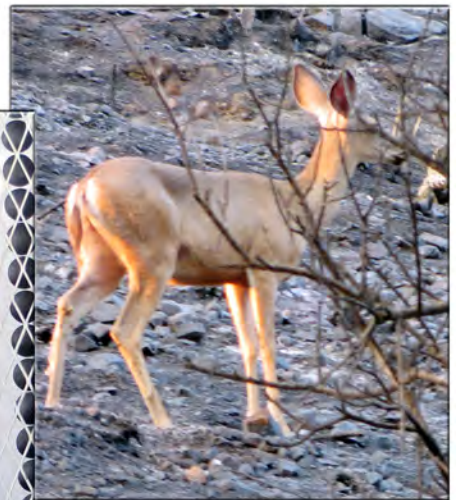
A female bobcat who appeared to be injured/sick was spotted on San Como Lane on May 15th and Animal Regulation arrived to pick her up and take her to an animal hospital (her photo is below). Unfortunately, she was very emaciated and her back legs had been badly burned. A follow up contact with Animal Regulation revealed that she was too ill and injured to save and she was euthanized.

On the not-so-good side, many residents are seeing very large rats who have been driven down by the fire. Ron Busick has suggested that it would be a good idea to trim landscaping at individual homes so that hiding places (new homes) for the critters can be eliminated. He said that shrubs that have no ground clearance or ivy will be extremely enticing to these little critters. And where there are rats, the snakes will follow. The wildlife rescue group said **NO RAT POISON** should be used. California Department of Fish & Game also advises against rat poison. Some varieties can go up the food chain and kill the predators who eat the dead rats; all may be eaten by some other animal besides the rats. Snap rat traps should be placed in/under a box (with a hole) so protect other wildlife. So far, the crows seem to be doing a great job getting the rats but dumping them in unfortunate spots.



Photo above by Bill Nash, Gitana

Female bobcat picked up
by Animal Regulation on
May 15th



Photos by Robbie
Dornick, San Como Lane



Doe & young
buck in
Nature Park

Photo by Barbara
Williams, Belleza



Planning Ahead ~ Ready, Set, Go!

This Special Fire Edition of The Springs Times is being distributed inside a Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD) publication titled “Ready, Set, Go!” This publication is to assist you in preparing your home to be resistant to wildfires. There is much valuable information in the publication and we hope you’ll read it in its entirety and then keep it in a readily available location as a reference. The last two pages of this newsletter include a list of items to include in an Emergency Supply Kit and the Residential Safety Checklist (also in the publication but this will be easier for you to mark up).

Since the publication does not contain detailed information about landscaping, specifically which plants are the most flammable, that information from the VCFD web site is shown below.

Brush Clearance Guide Landscape (Ornamental)

- Remove all flammable vegetation and other combustible growth within 100 feet of any structure. Single trees, ornamental shrubbery or cultivated ground covers may be permitted provided they are maintained in a manner that they do not readily transmit fire from native vegetation to the structure.
- Special Attention should be given to the use and maintenance of ornamental plants known or thought to be high hazard combustible plants when used in close proximity to structures. ***Some of these known plants are, but not limited to Acacia, Cedar, Cypress, Eucalyptus, Juniper, Pine, and Pampas Grass.*** Planting of ornamentals should be properly maintained and should not be planted in mass plantings and groups. They should not be planted in such a manner that they could transmit fire from the native brush to the structure.
- The Ventura County Fire Department is strongly recommending you increase your brush clearance from 100’ to 200’ if any of the following apply to your property: House located on/or at the top of a slope, old brush not recently burned, east or south facing aspect, wood shake roof, limited access for Fire Department, ornamental shrubbery next to house, older construction, historical fire pattern in your area, heavy chaparral fuels, limited or private water supply, or more than 5 miles from a Fire Station.
- Space tree canopies and shrubs a minimum of 15’ from other shrubs or trees. All trees and shrubs need to be trimmed up off the ground 5 feet or 1/3 the height of the tree which ever is less. Maintain all plants by regularly removing all dead fall and litter.

Yard Maintenance

- Stack wood at least 30 feet from structures; remove flammable vegetation within 10 feet of woodpile.
- Remove all stacks of construction materials, pine needles, leaves and debris.
- Locate fixed butane/propane tanks at least 10 feet from any structure and give them 10 feet of brush clearance.

Roof Maintenance

- Remove dead branches overhanging your roof.
- Clean all dead leaves from your roof and rain gutters.
- Cover your chimney outlet with a spark arrestor consisting of a metal or non-flammable screen of ½ inch or smaller.

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Planning Ahead *continued from page 11*

Flammable Plant Guide

These plants are among those known for the amount of dead fuel that accumulates in them, and high oil, high resin, or low moisture content of their leaves and branches.

<u>Trees</u>	<u>Grasses, Shrubs, Ground Covers</u>
Acacia	California buckwheat
Arborvitae	California sagebrush
California bay	Chamise or greasewood
Cedar	Dry annual grasses
Cypress	Juniper
Douglas Fir	Laurel sumac
Eucalyptus globules	Manzanita
E. Viminalis	Pampas grass
E. Camaldulensis	Rosemary
E. Rudis	Scotch broom
Fir	Scrub oak
Juniper	Spanish broom
Palm Pine	Sugar bush
Spruce	Toyon
Yew	

All plants are flammable if not pruned periodically and the risk attached to any one plant can be greatly diminished with maintenance.



The Springs Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Robbie Dornick, Newsletter Editor and CERT Co-Leader

Thanks to those CERT members who notified their neighbors about the fire and the need to evacuate; many were told long before the Sheriff’s Department phoned. Feedback revealed that those residents who were contacted said it made them feel that someone cared and was watching out for them. Thanks also to those non-CERT residents who contacted them simply because they did care. I also heard about many other folks who helped out but didn’t have names to list in our Heroes article.

Our Apologies to those residents who were not contacted by a CERT member; our primary focus has been on earthquakes so we have some progress to make. Since the First Responders arrived *before* any CERT members, our role was simply to assist. Our Disaster Plan did not address that clearly. We’ll fix that.

We sincerely hope that this fire may motivate others to sign up for the training and join our group. Please contact Robbie Dornick (987-5779) or Jan Cheveres (482-3678) if interested.

Our Heroes ~ Heartfelt Thanks *continued from page 6*

- Ed LeClaire, son of Margaret on Belleza, who put out a fire on a bush and wooden patio cover at the home of Dick Peters, Belleza.
- Steve Polley, Gitana, who charged uphill with his hose behind 6330 Gitana after the fire fighters had left and there was a flare-up; others joined in with him.
- Ted and Kay Koupal who opened up their home to fire fighters for restroom/iced tea/wifi breaks.
- Mark Petrusson, Lada, who connected hoses to help with the fire across the street from him.
- Phil Amantia, Jr, son of Phil Amantia and son-in-law of David & Patricia Larkin who helped control the fire in the open space next to the home of Dick & Judy Cash, N. San Como Lane.

EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT

At a minimum, you should have the basic supplies listed below:

Water - one gallon per person, per day (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home)
Food - non-perishable, easy-to-prepare items (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home)
Flashlight
Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
Extra batteries
First aid kit – Anatomy of a First Aid Kit
Medications (7-day supply) and medical items
Multi-purpose tool
Sanitation and personal hygiene items
Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies)
Cell phone with chargers
Family and emergency contact information
Extra cash
Emergency blanket
Map(s) of the area

Consider the needs of all family members and add supplies to your kit. Suggested items to help meet additional needs are:

Medical supplies (hearing aids with extra batteries, glasses, contact lenses, syringes, etc)
Pet supplies (collar, leash, ID, food, carrier, bowl)
Two-way radios
Extra set of car keys and house keys
Manual can opener

Additional supplies to keep at home or in your kit based on the types of disasters common to your area:

Whistle
N95 or surgical masks
Matches
Rain gear
Towels
Work gloves
Tools/supplies for securing your home
Extra clothing, hat and sturdy shoes
Plastic sheeting
Duct tape
Scissors
Household liquid bleach
Entertainment items
Blankets or sleeping bags

READY, SET, GO!

Residential Safety Checklist

Tips To Improve Family and Property Survival During A Wildfire

Home

1. Does your home have a metal, composition, or tile (or other non-combustible) roof with capped ends and covered fascia?
2. Are the rain gutters and roof free of leaves, needles and branches?
3. Are all vent openings screened with 1/8 inch (or smaller) mesh metal screen?
4. Are approved spark arrestors on chimneys?
5. Does the house have non-combustible siding material?
6. Are the eaves “boxed in” and the decks enclosed?
7. Are the windows made of at least double-paned or tempered glass?
8. Are the decks, porches and other similar areas made of non-combustible material and free of easily combustible material (e.g. plastic furniture)?
9. Is all firewood at least 30 feet from the house?

Defensible Space

1. Is dead vegetation cleared to the recommended defensible space area?
(Consider adding distance due to slope of property.)
2. Is there separation between shrubs?
3. Are ladder fuels removed?
4. Is there a clean and green area extending at least 30 feet from the house?
5. Is there a non-combustible area within five feet of the house?
6. Is there separation between trees and crowns?

Emergency Access

1. Is the home address visible from the street?
2. Is the home address made of fire-resistant materials?
3. Are street signs present at every intersection leading to the house?
4. Are street signs made of fire-resistant materials?
5. Is flammable vegetation within 10 feet of the driveway cleared and are overhanging obstructions removed?
6. If a long driveway is present, does it have a suitable turnaround area?