

# Newsletter



## Southern California Association of Foresters & Fire Wardens

### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

2012-2013

#### OFFICERS

President Robert Michael—RRU  
First Vice President Frank Vidales—LAC  
Second Vice Pres.— Tom Plymale—LPF  
Secretary Gordon Martin—CNF  
Treasurer David Leininger—LAC retired

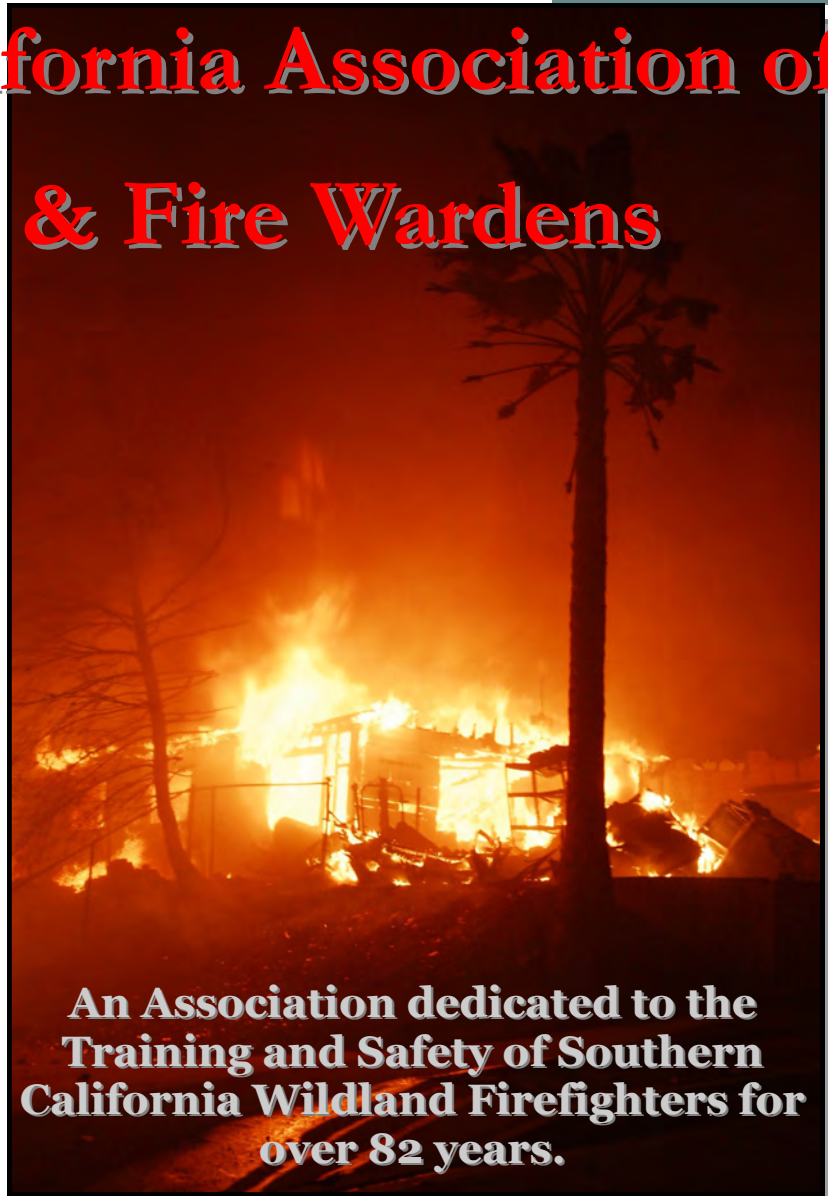
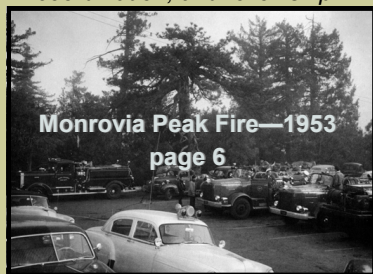
#### DIRECTORS

Troy Whitman—SCE  
Dan Snow—BDF  
Brian Skerston—ANF  
Bart Kicklighter—SNF  
David Allen—MVU  
Ken Cruz—ORC  
Dave Witt—KRN  
Rod Megli—VNC  
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Ron Janssen—BDU  
Chris Childers - SBC  
Abigail Srader—CSR  
Steve Reeder—SLU

Ed Shabro—Vendor Representative  
Paul H. Rippens—Newsletter Editor  
Doug Lannon—Arrangements  
Don Forsyth—Arrangements/Safety  
Vaughan Miller—Publicity

*We, the members of the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens, do band together for the purpose of strengthening inter-agency cooperation, fire safety coordination, and fellowship.*



**An Association dedicated to the  
Training and Safety of Southern  
California Wildland Firefighters for  
over 82 years.**

Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Southern California  
Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens  
February 1, 2013, Orange County, California

Foresters & Fire Wardens contact information:

Mailing—SCAFFW, c/o Gordon P. Martin  
1147 E. 6th Street, Corona, CA 92879

E-mail: [SCAFFW@aol.com](mailto:SCAFFW@aol.com)

Web Site: [www.scaffw.org](http://www.scaffw.org)

## Fire Whirls

By President Robert Michael



For this newsletter, I thought I would continue with what I touched on in my last message, that is how much work your board puts in to present our annual conference to you and to ask for your help.

Like other professional firefighting organizations, the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens primary mission is to provide a venue where we can bring together members of various fire agencies not only to visit with old friends and meet new ones, but to provide speakers on various subjects relating to wildland firefighting so that you will be better prepared for your next assignment. This sounds so simple, but in fact, it is not.

First, the Board of Directors brought suggested programs and speakers to our December meeting. Many outstanding programs were suggested and the Directors returned home to make contacts with the speakers, confirm that they will be able to speak on the dates of the conference, determine the time needed for their program and any special audio visual needs. By the February meeting, the programs should have been pretty well finalized, but that can always change.

First-Vice President Frank Vidales is in charge of the program and will then have to lay out the speakers for each day of the conference along with coming up with the printed program for our members at the conference. I can attest that it is a lot of work, but well worth it. By the April meeting,

we hope that everything is set and we'll be ready for another successful conference.

Meanwhile, with the move to a new conference location, logistical functions are well under way to make sure everything is as perfect as possible for our 83rd Annual Conference. We want this to be a conference that you will talk about for many years.

Now it is time for you to do your part. We try to stay connected with our members through as many media functions as possible. We send out our newsletter via e-mails or snail mail, and we have a web site, Facebook page, and we're on Twitter. We want you to stay abreast of what's going on in our organization and what you can expect to find when you attend our conference. But we can't make you attend. That's something you must do on your own.

Last year we provided you the opportunity to register for the conference on PayPal. Many of you took advantage of this opportunity and it made it much easier on our registration people. This year, for the first time ever, you will be able to pay for your conference costs at the conference with a credit card!

So here's where you come in. During my years attending the conference, I see many of the same people. We greatly appreciate the fact that you enjoy the conference and attend year after year—but we need you to bring a new member with you. With the new conference site, we will have more room and this is a great opportunity for more firefighters to attend.

I have heard people say that *"I'm not a Forester or a Fire Warden—why do I want to attend?"* Well, that's a good question. If you look back at the history of many departments, they started out as Forestry Departments or at least had "forestry" in their names. Yes, times have changed but the mission remains the same and we must all be ready when duty calls. That's why we decided a few years ago to call our conference

the **Annual Wildland Fire Training & Safety Conference**.

We are here to give you the best possible training and safety conference we can at a price everyone should be able to afford. We hope you will attend and that you will introduce someone new to our organization. I don't think they will be disappointed and we will welcome them as new members.

As always, we enjoy hearing from our members. If you have concerns or suggestions, please contact your agency Director and make those concerns known. The directors names are printed on the cover of this newsletter.



**2013 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF FORESTERS AND FIRE WARDENS**

The Board of Directors has begun working on the **83rd Annual Wildland Fire Training and Safety Conference** that will be held on **May 2 & 3, 2013** at **The Irvine Ranch Outdoor Education Center** in Orange County, California. We're excited about the proposed programs and the new conference site. If you have any questions, please contact us through our e-mail address at [SCAFFW@aol.com](mailto:SCAFFW@aol.com)



You can now go directly to our web site by scanning the QRC (quick response code) with your smart phone.



**"Like" us on Facebook at Southern CA Foresters and Fire Wardens**

***Did you or are you thinking of changing your E-mail address? Please remember to contact the SCAFFW at [SCAFFW@aol.com](mailto:SCAFFW@aol.com) and let us know so we can send you your newsletters and other important information.***



**Cover Photo** Engine companies from LAC and LFD pulled up to an eerie scene of dense smoke and engulfed homes on the Buckweed incident of October 2007. Photo by Ken Morris.

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF FORESTERS AND FIRE WARDENS  
83rd ANNUAL WILDLAND TRAINING AND SAFETY CONFERENCE.**

**May 2 & 3, 2013**

Check our web site for further information [www.scaffw.org](http://www.scaffw.org)

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION  
of FORESTERS & FIRE WARDENS-  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
February 1, 2013**

The meeting of the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens was called to order by President Robert Michael at 0910 hours at Orange County's, Irvine Ranch Outdoor Education Center Orange, CA. on February 1, 2013. Chief Richter from the OCFA welcomed the group to Orange County.

**Officers and Directors Present:**

Robert Michael – CAL FIRE – Riverside County  
 Frank Vidales – Los Angeles County Fire Dept.  
 Tom Plymale – Los Padres National Forest  
 Gordon Martin – Cleveland National Forest  
 David Leininger – Treasurer  
 Dave Allen – CAL FIRE – San Diego County  
 Steve Reeder – CAL FIRE – San Luis Obispo Co.  
 Abigail Srader – CAL FIRE – Southern Region  
 Tim Ernst – Los Angeles Fire Dept.  
 Ken Cruz – Orange County Fire Authority  
 Chris Childers – Santa Barbara County Fire Dept  
 Bart Kicklighter – Sequoia National Forest  
 Troy Whitman – Southern California Edison  
 Rod Megli – Ventura County Fire Dept.  
 Ed Shabro – Vendor Representative

**Officers and Directors Absent:**

Dan Snow – San Bernardino National Forest  
 Ron Jansen – CAL FIRE – San Bernardino Co.  
 Paul H. Rippens – Newsletter Editor  
 David Witt – Kern County Fire Dept.  
 Brian Skerston – Angeles National Forest

**Guests:**

Anthony Caezza – Life Member  
 Don Forsyth – Co-Arrangements/Safety  
 Marc Hawkins – OCFA, Retired  
 Doug Lannon – Arrangements Chair  
 Vaughan Miller – Publicity  
 Kurt Zingheim – CAL FIRE – San Diego County

**Minutes:** President Michael presented the minutes of the December 7, 2012 meeting. Motion by Director Whitman, seconded by Treasurer Leininger to approve the minutes. The motion was approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Leininger presented his report covering December 7, 2012 to February 1, 2013.

Balance as of 12-7-12	\$26,771.50
Receipts: Dues and Conference Registration:	\$110.00
Total Receipts:	\$110.00
Disbursements:	
Paul Rippens (Web Hosting Subscription)	\$83.40
Total Disbursements:	\$83.40
Balance on hand:	\$26,798.10
Last year at this time:	\$24,121.27

Motion by Director Whitman, second by Director Megli to approve the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was approved.

**Committee Reports:**

**Arrangements:** Chairman Lannon reported that Co-Chairman Forsyth, Treasurer Leininger and he had toured the facility and Director Ernst had flown the area in a helicopter to determine the suitability of the site for helicopters. They suggested reserving all 5 bunkhouses for the conference and the Trading Post for registration. President Michael stated that the direction signs will need some restoration work and that they will be delivered to the new site in time for the conference. A site map will be included in the program this year that will be color coded as to the various areas at the facility. Co-Chairman Forsyth reported that he had met with both the center staff and the park staff regarding access to the facility after the gates are locked at 9 pm. He also reported that the OCFA hand crew is available to help with the conference and camp cleanup. There is parking for 275 vehicles; Co-Chairman Forsyth will check with the center regarding additional parking.

**Program:** First Vice President Vidales led a discussion on the proposed programs for the 2013 conference. The emphasis this year is on quality over quantity.

**Color Guard:** The OCFA Color Guard and Pipes and Drums.

**Keynote Speaker:** Will Metz, Forest Supervisor, Cleveland National Forest.

**Emcee:** Steve Martin – LAC.

The following are the speakers and topics for the Conference:

Smoke Impacts on Firefighter Health George Broyles, USFS, SDTDC

Advanced Fire Technology - Drew Smith, Captain,  
LACFD & Don Boursier, Captain, OCFA

The Esperanza Fire- Arson, Murder and the Agony of  
Engine 57 - John Maclean, Author

Demonstrations: Helicopter Hoist Rescue and Fire  
Block Gel

Fireline Factors - Brad Mayhew, Author and Instructor,  
Fireline Factors Consulting

Fuels and Weather Update - Drew Smith, Fire Captain,  
County of Los Angeles Fire Department

Ten Families of Risk and The Impact of Transparency  
on Public Safety Operations - Gordon Graham,  
Graham Research Consultants

**Exhibits and Demonstrations:** The cost to the vendors will \$110 for the first person and \$55/person/day for any additional people. Representative Shabro would be getting a letter out to all prospective vendors as soon as the conference flyer was ready. Chairman Forsyth will look into getting in several antique fire engines for display. Representative Shabro stated that he would be approaching apparatus manufacturers to see if they might be willing to bring equipment to display.

**Registration and Membership:** Director Srader reported that she may not be able to attend the conference because of training. Members Kurtz and Penfold should be available to staff the registration desk. Membership and registration will be sent to Treasurer Leininger. Treasurer Leininger reported that he has acquired the Square and that it is connected with our bank account, so, we will be able to take credit cards at registration this year.

**Entertainment and Raffle:** Director Ernst had four possible bands at various prices he has samples of their music that the Directors should listen to before making a selection. He has sent out letters and emails to a large number of prospective donors for raffle. He is hopeful that contacting them early in the year will help to get donations. Director Ernst will set up categories of prizes that Directors could sign up to bring so that we would have a wide variety. Full House was selected as the band for this year's conference.

**Publicity:** Chairman Miller reported that he will be taking advantage of social media to spread the word on the conference. He will be including information on the

program content, the band, the vendors, etc. He needs the Directors to push the conference with their departments. He asked that he be able to remove the list of Directors from the flyer to use the space for information on the conference and how to register.

**Historian:** Historian Whitman had nothing to report.

**Safety:** Chairman Forsyth reported that we will have a CHP officer to give the safety speech. There will not be any standby paramedics this year due to the availability of 911 service in the area.

**Golf:** The golf tournament will be held at the Green River Golf Course this year.

**Newsletter:** Chairman Miller reported for Editor Rippens that the newsletter is ready to go except for the meeting minutes.

**Old Business:** There was a discussion on the gift for this year that will be continued via email. It was the consensus of the Board that we should go with wooden plaques for our presenters this year. Director Snow and President Michael will look into options for plaques and bring the information to the next meeting. There was a discussion on Director wear. Director Snow will look into options for a long sleeve button down and Director Allen will look into a short sleeve polo. Directors will wear tan pants to go with the selected shirt.

**Life Membership Recommendations:** There were no Life Member nominations.

**New Business:** There was a motion by Treasurer Leininger seconded by Director Childers to we authorize \$800 for the development of a new website. The motion passed.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the Board of Directors of the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens will be held April 5, 2013 in Orange County, CA.

President Michael thanked Chairman Forsyth for making the arrangements for the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 1445 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordon P. Martin,

Association Secretary



## The Monrovia Peak Fire—1953

*By Los Angeles County Fire Department  
Historian David Boucher from his book  
"Ride The Devil Wind."*

Chief Klinger (LAC) did not have to wait long to come face to face with his first major incident as chief engineer. It happened almost in his own back yard give or take a few miles. The incident would fully occupy his time, and that of his newly-appointed staff, for a full seven days.

The 27th of December, 1953 was the sixth continuous day of Santa Ana wind conditions. A light rain measuring 0.31 inches had fallen at Mount Wilson 23 days earlier. The rainy season, to date, had certainly not been very productive.

On Sunday, December 27, northeasterly winds over the mountain ridges and passes increased in velocity, with 70 mile-per-hour gusts recorded.

At 3:59 p.m., U.S. Forest Service Patrolman Don Starr was proceeding south along the Mount Wilson Road, which led from Red Box to Mount Wilson. Off to his left he spotted a smoke column looming up from the next large mountain to the east, Monrovia Peak. He immediately notified his dispatcher in Arcadia by radio. The dispatcher initiated a response composed of the few winter fire crews commonly found in the Angeles National Forest at that time of the year. Forest Supervisor William V. Mendenhall and Fire Control Officer Harry Grace were informed of the incident. A short time later, the Los Angeles County Fire Department dispatched a full brush assignment of six engines, one bulldozer, four camp crews and the local battalion chief. This assignment was rapidly increased over the next three days to a force of 61 engine companies from all agencies. The bulk of these were utilized along the south and west flanks along the foothills and in the Mount Wilson area.

Chief Klinger had seen the initial smoke

column rising up from Monrovia Peak while he was working in the garden of his home in Arcadia. After calling and conferring with First Assistant Chief Roland Percey at the USFS Headquarters on Santa Anita Avenue in Arcadia, mutual concern was directed toward saving the hundreds of homes located in the foothills in the towns of Monrovia, Arcadia, Sierra Madre, Pasadena and Altadena. The fire was moving rapidly toward these heavily-populated areas.



Chiefs Harvey Anderson, Roland Percey, Keith Klinger and Ch. Newcombe talk over strategy at Mt. Wilson during the Monrovia Peak Fire, Dec. 1953

As darkness fell this first night, spectators by the hundreds lined Foothill Boulevard in the San Gabriel Valley to watch the flames sweeping across the foothills toward the west. Since there were practically no paved roads leading into the mountains in this area, and the terrain was very steep and covered with heavy brush, it was considered far too dangerous for personnel to attempt any entry into the narrow canyons leading into the fire area. The only paved roads allowing ingress were the Chantry Flats Road, which lead into Big Santa Anita Canyon, and the road up Sierra Madre Canyon. This historic area of the San Gabriels was crowded with dozen of original Forest Service-leased cabins and a store. It was during this first night that 33 of these rustic homes in Santa Anita Canyon burned to the ground. All residents had been evacuated, and no one was

injured.

The perimeter of the fire eventually reached 36 miles. Almost all of it was in rugged canyon country, necessitating very heavy emphasis on the use of hand crews. The crews, called in by the USFS from as far away as Arizona and New Mexico, were comprised of specially-trained Zuni Indians, masters of the brush hook and Pulaski tool. Also responding were local paid fire crews, juvenile probation camp crews, 400 paid volunteers and dozens of unpaid volunteers. To assist the hand crews, 16 bulldozers were utilized, 12 of them from seven private construction firms in the San Gabriel Valley region and one from the Los Angeles City Fire Department.

On the fifth and sixth days, the fire crept toward 5,700-foot Mount Wilson, the location of one of the famous Hale Observatories—and seven television transmitters. By this time, the wind had died down and shifted to the southwest, giving all crews along that flank of the fire some relief, since the fire in this sector was now burning into the wind. The Mount Wilson facilities were saved, as was the fire camp that had been established there. Additional fire camps were set up at Henninger Flats, Spring Camp, Deer Park, Arcadia County

Park and the USFS warehouse and headquarters in Arcadia.

The Monrovia Peak Fire was declared controlled on January 3, 1954, after it had consumed 16,135 acres of watershed located above hundreds of homes in six cities. There would most assuredly be flooding if heavy rains fell within the next three months.

As it happened, heavy winter rains began shortly after the fire was controlled. The dreaded fire-flood sequence was set in motion. Debris-laden waters cascaded down the hillsides and into the canyons, carrying mud, rock and ash through streets and yards and into dwellings in the northern sections of Sierra Madre and Arcadia. Property damage was extensive.

A secondary, less visible, aspect of the fire-flood sequence was also taking place: the water lost down storm drains and concrete washes eventually found its way to the sea, rather than to percolating slowly into the ground to replenish the water tables under the San Gabriel Valley.



Fire equipment from Kern Co., Los Angeles Co., and the USFS stages in the parking lot near the Mt. Wilson Observatory on Jan. 2, 1954, at the end of operations for the Monrovia Peak Fire. A substantial rain fell a few days later, help complete extinguishment.



USFS Rincon Tanker 311 in front of the Rincon Station, San Gabriel Canyon, Angeles National Forest.





# WE'RE MOVING!

As we have mentioned in our last two newsletters, the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens has decided to move the location of our annual conference to **The Irvine Ranch Outdoor Education Center** near Irvine Park in Orange County. We're looking forward to meeting at the new site and hope that you will all enjoy the new surroundings.

At the February Board of Directors meeting, First Vice President Frank Vidales—LAC—confirmed that several of the speakers suggested at the December meeting will be presenting their talks at the conference. They are:

- ◆ "Smoke Impacts on Firefighter Health" by George Broyles—USFS
- ◆ "Advanced Fire Technology" by Captain Drew Smith, LAC and Captain Don Boursier, ORC
- ◆ "The Esperanza Fire—Arson, Murder, and the Agony of Engine 57" by Author John N. Maclean
- ◆ "Fireline Factors" by Brad Mayhew, Fireline Factors Consulting
- ◆ "Fuels and Weather Update" by Captain Drew Smith, LAC
- ◆ "The Ten Families of Risk and The Impact of Transparency on Public Safety Operations" by Gordon Graham, Graham Research Consultants

Join us for this exciting and informative conference and much more.

**NEW CONFERENCE LOCATION  
FOR May 2 & 3, 2013**

