

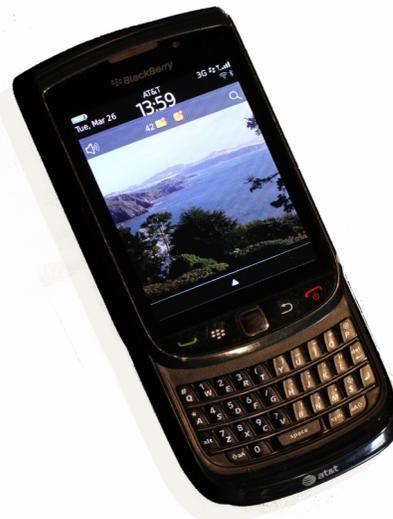


# THE OVERLOOK

April, 2013

## Calling **911** on your Cell Phone

By: Steve Wynn



If you use your cell phone to call 911 for an incident within the Muir Beach area, you will find that the dispatch operator will most likely not have a clue where Muir Beach is and probably has never even heard of the place. That's because when calling from a cell phone you will be connected to a dispatch operator somewhere in the Central Valley .

The number you want to call when using your cell phone for an incident within the Muir Beach area is **415-472-0911**. This is the number you should program into your cell phone and be sure to tell your guests, renters, friends and visitors.

**This issue only exists when calling 911 from a cell phone.** Calling 911 from a land line will connect you to the correct dispatch operator.



# O V E R L O O K T H E

## Protect your home against wildfires

As we move into our dry season, especially after such a dry winter, it's a good time to ask yourself : *How defensible is my home and property from wildland fires or even from a nearby house fire?*



The two main areas you need to look at are your home ignition zone, (your home plus 10 to 30ft distance depending on your lot size) and your defensible zone, (approximately 100ft around your home).

If your home is on a slope and is susceptible to high winds (that affect just about all of us), it is recommended to extend the two zones by a multiplication of 1.5.

Now, this doesn't mean you need to clear-cut your lot, but what it does mean is that there are a lot of things you can do to give your home a fighting chance if a fire should occur.

Things like:

- Clearing all dead grasses, branches and other fuels 100 ft. around your home.
- Clearing your rain gutters and roof from dead leaves and pine needles.
- Remove unnecessary fuels from decks and from around your house. Move woodpiles away from the house.
- Use metal screens (1/4" or less) to cover roof, eaves and foundation vents.
- Move flammable material 15 feet away from your propane tank.
- Clear any overhanging tree branches from your home and trim low hanging branches.

Burning embers landing on wood shake roofs are one of the leading risk factors for losing your home to a wildfire. (marinsafe.org)

Because of the efforts of Michael Kaufman, President of our Volunteer Fire Association (VFA), Muir Beach has made great strides towards protecting our community from fire through the fuel abatement program that eliminated over 200 dead and dying pine trees last year. Although this was a great improvement in making our community safer, as I walk our streets and trails, I can still see many areas that need to be addressed. If we all do our part and make our individual properties more resistant to fires we will help make our community safer as a whole.



# O V E R L O O K T H E

## Intriguing Product

By Steve Wynn

A few years ago, I came across an interesting story about a Palm Beach County firefighter, John Bartlett, who observed that disposable baby diapers didn't burn in a trash fire. Apparently the liquid absorbent polymers found in diapers can soak up hundreds of times their weight in water creating a gel that provides thermal protection from fire for extended periods of time, even at 3500° Fahrenheit.

According to FDNN-TV this gel is now a US Forest Service-approved fire retardant that homeowners can use for structure and exposure protection during wildfires.

The gel adheres to any kind of surface, even to vertical window panes and forms a protective layer of gel that cools and protects objects from heating, charring and flame impingement.

This gel is sunlight degradable and non-toxic. It is USDA-approved and has passed all mammalian and aquatic toxicity tests, making it environmentally friendly. It is also safe to apply to all types of vegetation. To remove it, property owners merely have to rinse the surfaces it has been applied to with water and the sun will

remove the rest.



There are now many companies that provide this product for home use as well as all the equipment you would need to spray it on your house.

As with everything, there are pros and cons and I am by no means saying you should run out and buy the stuff right away. However, I do find it an intriguing product that is worthy of public awareness and I'll leave it at that.

If you want to learn more, here are two companies that you can check out:

[Firegel.com](http://Firegel.com) and [thermo-gel.com](http://thermo-gel.com)



# O V E R L O O K

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Congratulations to Travis Troen,  
our newest volunteer.

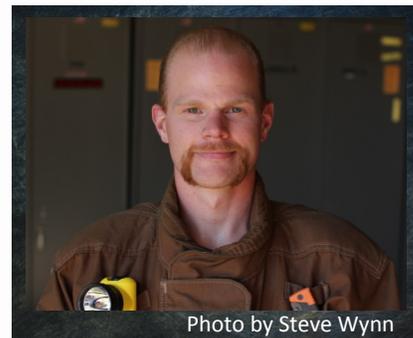


Photo by Steve Wynn

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## Local Firefighter Does Good

Our very own Graham Groneman was on the scene of what could have been a very sad day for one family. Luckily, because of his quick thinking and good training, a disaster was averted. West Marin Citizen reporter, Lynn Axelrod writes the story.

West  
Marin **Citizen**

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Photo by Steve Wynn

November 8, 2012

Three adults and four children were dramatically rescued Sunday afternoon after their 25-foot pleasure craft capsized into frigid waters at the mouth of Tomales Bay. Several units and agencies were dispatched after a call came in to the Marin County Fire Department in Woodacre just before 1:30p.m., Battalion Chief Mike Giannini advised.

The Sonoma County Sheriff's helicopter was in the area and arrived on scene to find five people out of the water and clinging to the boat hull. They were lifted off one by one and taken to the nearest beach where paramedics were waiting.

Two other children remained trapped in the boat cabin as it was filling with water. A coast Guard rescue swimmer and Tomales-based County Fire Captain Graham Groneman, who was dropped into the water by helicopter, quickly determined they were alive by calling to them and tapping on the hull.



# O V E R L O O K T H E

Groneman said they heard nothing at the first tap. A “we’re here” came out after the second one. As the two rescuers reassured the children and stayed on the capsized vessel, a National Park Service rescue boat hooked a line and towed it to the shore near Dillon Beach.

Fire fighters cut a hole through the hull to locate and talk to the children. They then enlarged the hole and extricated them. They were airlifted by a REACH helicopter to Petaluma Valley Hospital.

The captain said the two were five and seven years old. They were “very calm for being kids and the situation they were in.” All the boaters were from Elk Grove, he added.

Two adults and the other two children were taken by ground ambulance to the Petaluma hospital. One male adult had a minor injury. Everyone was evaluated for hypothermia. None were wearing life jackets.

Groneman said Monday that “the stars lined up” for the boaters. “The combined effort of all the agencies is a real testament to how they work together...I was at the station, I had the gear, I had the training.” He is a trained urban search-and-rescue, swift-water swimmer who grew up in Muir Beach.

Other agencies at the rescue included the Bodega Bay and Petaluma fire departments. The cause of the capsizing is unknown.

The mouth of the bay is “a very treacherous piece of water,” Groneman said. The sandbar builds up in the summer with small swells but its location is unknown. As winter moves in, the swells increase and react to where the bar is. This time of year there are a lot of boats and a lot of activity and the bar is unknown until the swells reveal it, he said.

“These folks are very lucky to be alive today,” Battalion Chief Giannini said. “This is an example of some incredible teamwork from a multitude of agencies.”

*-Lynn Axelrod*



# O V E R L O O K T H E

## 41st ANNUAL FIREMAN'S BBQ FUNDRAISER

### Take Part in the Largest Annual Event in Muir Beach



Photo by Steve Wynn

The Muir Beach Volunteer Fireman's Association is looking for volunteers to help out in:

- Pre- BBQ work parties. (May 11, 18 and 25—9am to 3pm).
- Set up and tear down.
- Help out during the BBQ.

For more information on how you can help, contact Volunteer Coordinator Deb Hurt at 388-4204.

Other ways you can help:

- Buy raffle tickets.
- Make a tax-deductible contribution to the department at [www.muirbeachfire.com](http://www.muirbeachfire.com) (just click on the donate button).
- Buy MBVFD merchandise.





# O V E R L O O K T H E

## NEW MEDICAL ALERT DEVICE

By Paul Jeschke

**M**uir Beach residents who want to maintain an independent lifestyle, but be able to summon appropriate help in an emergency, may be interested in a potentially life-saving device now available at a special, negotiated discount.

The Elderberries, working in cooperation with the CSD and the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department, have negotiated significant discounts on three medical alert systems that can summon help at the touch of a button on a pendant or wrist-watch-like device. Depending on the user's individual needs, trained agents at the monitoring center can, depending on the nature of the emergency, alert a neighbor, friend or family; or call Marin County emergency responders. Use of the equipment, which can work on landlines, VOIP or mobile service, is free and does not require long-term contract. A monitoring fee is required, starting at \$75 quarterly for the basic in-home device, a considerable savings over other systems.

Residents may choose from three systems that alert a professional call center at the touch of a button. A watch-like device that operates on the AT&T mobile network is also available for a higher monitoring fee. For further information, call Paul Jeschke at 388-2278 or email [paul.jeschke@gmail.com](mailto:paul.jeschke@gmail.com).

**For more information on  
the MBVFD, safety tips,  
MBVFD merchandise,  
how to make a donation, or  
to read these stories on line  
visit:**

**[muirbeachfire.com](http://muirbeachfire.com)**

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