I
t was October 26 – the first full day of Firestorm 2003. A day that no San Diegan will soon forget. Lori Bellante was awakened by the ring of her telephone. She answered but there was no one on the other end. She did a STAR 69 to see who placed the call, but the caller’s number was blocked. Now awake, and curious as to why someone would call so early, Lori made her way to the kitchen. As she glanced at the clock on her microwave, she noticed it was 3:00 a.m. Her eyes quickly changed focus to the kitchen window. She was stunned by what she saw. Her world was on fire. Flames nearly surrounded her rural Lakeside home.

With a quiver in her voice, Lori yelled for her husband Lonnie to wake up their two girls – Melanie (now 16 years old) and Lindi (now 14 years old). She instructed the girls to put on long pants and long sleeve shirts and to grab their school backpacks. Lori grabbed her cell phone and a box filled with family videos. In just minutes, all four family members, and their two beloved dogs, jumped into Lonnie’s Ford F150 and fled for their lives.

It was dark outside and the heavy smoke and flames made it impossible to see. Luckily, Lonnie knew the road well. He drove down their long dirt driveway. He needed to turn right to go to Wildcat Canyon Road, but suddenly a wall of flames hit the truck. There was no way out. With his adrenalin pumping, he backed up the truck and headed in the other direction toward a nearby pond. The pond was only the size of a football field but it was filled with water and hopefully could provide the family refuge from the firestorm.

As they made their way to the pond, the thick smoke choked the engine, causing it to die. Lonnie steered the vehicle and coasted as long as he could in the direction of the water. The truck stopped and the girls jumped out.

BI Restores Hopes and Home for Wildfire Victims

(continued on Page 2)
and headed toward the pond. However, before Lonnie and Lori could get out from the truck, Melanie and Lindi came running back saying it was too hot and they couldn’t get anywhere near the water.

The girls jumped back into the truck and Lonnie tried starting the engine again. He tried again and again but the engine would not turn over. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, the truck started, only to die a few moments later. They were able to coast down to a flat dirt area. The truck tires were now on fire.

Again, Melanie and Lindi jumped out from the truck. As Lori got out from the truck, she couldn’t see the girls. With her back to a ravine, she waved her hands high in the air to get the girls attention. It was so hot that the radiant heat just a few feet above her head burned Lori’s arms. The girls followed their dad’s voice and Lori followed their lead.

With conditions growing more desperate by the second, the Bellante family had no choice but to take refuge on a small, bare dirt patch. The family laid face down and prayed to God as they awaited their fate. They prayed the fire would burn past them. The air was so thick with smoke; Lonnie doubted they would survive the ordeal. Lori kept praying and never lost hope. The fire seemed to be moving away from them but it was whipping up the winds and hot embers pelleted their bodies. Lonnie thinks the wind helped keep them alive because with each gust came a breath of fresh air. Air they desperately needed to stay alive.

At 7:30 a.m. a neighbor named John came driving by. He found the burnt truck and the remains of two dogs inside. Fearful he would find more bodies, he kept driving until he couldn’t believe his eyes. There was the Bellante Family – alive!

John drove them to nearby Stetler Park where paramedics and fire crews were staged. Lonnie, Lori and the girls were all transported to the UCSD Regional Burn Center. Melanie and Lindi suffered minor burns to the tips of their ears and nose and Lonnie was not hurt. Lori suffered third degree burns mostly affecting her arms and hands. She was released two weeks later.

The Bellante’s later found out that a close friend had placed that early morning call trying to warn them about the fire. They were grateful to have received that call and grateful to be alive. However, they lost their home and everything inside. They also lost eight of their closest neighbors, who were not as lucky and all died in the fire.

Earlier this year, Habitat for Humanity built the Bellante’s a modest new home. The Burn Institute, through a special grant from the Cardinal Health Foundation, was able to provide furniture, gift certificates and go vouchers to help the family during Lori’s recovery. On September 5, the Burn Institute sponsored Lori and her daughter Lindi to attend the World Burn Conference in Sacramento. A very special thank you to Jerome’s Furniture who partnered with the Burn Institute in helping to furnish the Bellante’s new home.

(continued from Page 1)

Greetings!

Dear Friends,

During National Fire Prevention Week, coming up this October, the national safety theme is “Watch What You Heat.” I would like to urge you to take a few minutes to think about fire and burn safety in your home.

Do you know what the leading cause of home fires and deaths is? If you guessed cooking you are correct. More home fires begin in the kitchen than anywhere else; and cooking equipment is involved in over 100,000 reported home fires annually.

October 8-14, 2006 is National Fire Prevention Week and there is no time like the present to begin practicing fire safety in your home — particularly in and around the kitchen. There are steps you can take to prevent a scale tragedy: Cook on rear burners and turn pot handles to the rear of the stove, never leave cooking food unattended, and never hold a child while handling a hot liquid.

During meal preparation you should keep children out of the kitchen and create a safe zone! Keep all hot items at a safe distance from a child and test all heated food before giving it to a child or placing it within their reach. When young children are present, avoid using tablecloths and place hot foods in the center of their reach. When young children are present, avoid items at a safe distance from a child and test all heated food. When young children are present, avoid items at a safe distance from a child and test all heated food.

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(continued from Page 1)
**Effectiveness of Residential Fire Sprinklers**

**BI Teamed Up with Santee Fire to Demonstrate**

In July, the Burn Institute and the Santee Fire Department staged several fire scenarios in a home that was scheduled to be torn down, to show how fast a fire can spread without a sprinkler system. The controlled fire demonstrated how effectively fire is contained when a home fire sprinkler system is in place. Several television stations covered this news story and the video footage and photos taken will be used for fire prevention education.

It is estimated that each year nearly 5,000 children and seniors are injured or killed in residential fires in the United States. Of that 5,000, an estimated 2,500 children age 14 or younger were injured or killed, and of those casualties, almost half were under the age of five. Seventy percent were under the age of ten. Studies have proven time after time, year after year, that automatic fire sprinklers could have saved some of those lives. In a house fire, it usually only takes one sprinkler to control a fire. Sprinklers provide the extra fire protection and time for families with young children, senior citizens and disabled persons to escape. In a fire situation, every minute counts. In addition to a home sprinkler system, smoke alarms and having a family fire escape plan in place also dramatically increase the chances to escape alive or uninjured.

The Burn Institute would like to thank Santee Fire Department and especially Chief Bob Pfhol, Division Chief David Miller, Captain Richard Smith, and Brent Sexton from Sexton Fire Protection.

Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems – A Value For Your Home and Family

Do you feel safe in your home? Most people do. However, home fires continue to be the number one cause of fire deaths in the United States. An estimated 3,675 people died in fires in the United States in 2005. This amounts to a death every 142 minutes! There were 17,925 fire injuries with a fire injury occurring every 29 minutes. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 78% of all structure fires occurred in residential properties and 82% of fire deaths occurred in home fires.

There is good news, however. The home fatality rate can be reduced by as much as 50% if homeowners have working smoke alarms, and prepare and practice home escape plans and fire drills. By taking these important precautions, families have a much better chance of escape from a burning home before they are injured or killed. Together with a residential fire sprinkler system, the risk of dying in a home fire is reduced by 82%. Residential fire sprinkler systems not only save lives, they can significantly reduce property loss by as much as two-thirds while controlling the fire in the early stages.

The San Miguel Consolidated Fire Protection District (the District) has had a residential fire sprinkler ordinance in place since 1989. During this time hundreds of homes have been built in the area with the installation of fire sprinkler systems. Since the Ordinance went into effect there has not been a single fire death in a sprinklered home in the District.

There are several common misconceptions about fire sprinklers. The most common is a sprinkler head will go off accidentally and cause excessive water damage to the home. However, industry statistics show the chance of a sprinkler head malfunctioning is 1 in 16 million. Another misconception is that during a fire, all sprinkler heads in the entire home will go off. Actually, most home fires are controlled, with a single sprinkler head using only ten to fifteen gallons of water per minute. Sprinklers are efficient at controlling and extinguishing fires with minimal damage as opposed to a fire hose, which delivers 250 gallons of water per minute, when used by the fire department to extinguish a fire. Another misconception is that sprinklers are expensive. Sprinklers cost an average of $2500-3500 per home. This is less than upgrades to the floor covering, and where floor-covering needs to be replaced in about 10 years, the sprinkler system is for the life of the home.

Residential sprinkler systems are a great value and investment for your home and give you a secure sense of well-being that your home and family can withstand a fire and survive.

For as little as $83 per month you can become a member of the President’s Circle – special benefits come with this prestigious membership.

$83
President’s Circle Members

President’s Circle members are individual donors who support the Burn Institute with an annual gift of $1,000 or more. This annual gift can be made in the form of cash, check, credit card or appreciated stock. You can become a member for only $83 a month. For more information on becoming a President’s Circle member and the benefits of membership, please contact Diane Sutherland, at (858) 541-2277 x19 or dsutherland@burninstitute.org.

New Members of the President’s Circle
Chief & Mrs. Ken Miller, (ret.)

Donors

The Burn Institute is grateful to the following individuals, corporations, foundations and community groups for their generous gifts. Listed below are donations of $250 and above made from June 3, 2006 through August 7, 2006.

Action Donation Services
Arrowhead Regional Medical Center Foundation
Chief & Mrs. James Boland
Ms. Sabrina Boone
Carlsbad Hi Noon Rotary
Change a Life Foundation
City of San Diego
Combined Health Agencies
Mrs. Valerie Craig
Cutters Edge
El Cajon Elk Lodge #1312
Encinitas Firefighters Association
Mr. Michael Feter
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La Jolla Debutante Ball Committee
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Medifast San Diego, Inc.
Chief & Mrs. Ken Miller, (ret.)
PaciﬁcCare Foundation
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Penniall
The Rock Bottom Foundation
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Solar Turbines
Southern California Fire Mechanics Association
Symons Fire Protection, Inc.
Telecom Pioneers
United Way of Los Angeles
United Way of Imperial County
Veja’s Enterprises
Mr. & Mrs. Scott Waage
VD-40 Company
Yorba’s Orthwood Inn

Memorial/Tribute Gifts

In Memory
Medifast, Inc.
In Memory of Elva Cole
Mr. & Mrs. Ed Parrish
In Memory of David Swagel

In Honor
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Penniall
In Honor of Chief Jim Geering’s Golf Game

Rancho Santa Fe Insurance and Fireman’s Fund Insurance Company Award Grant to Burn Institute for Public Safety Education Program

Through a grant program sponsored by Fireman’s Fund Insurance Co., Craig Edwards’ Rancho Santa Fe Insurance has donated $5,000 to the Burn Institute.

“This gift will support the juvenile Firesetter Program, which educates children about the dangerous consequences of playing with fire and helps prevent children from repeating their firesetting behavior,” said James Floros, Executive Director/Chief Executive Ofﬁcer for the Burn Institute. “Fires started by juveniles has been identified as the fastest-growing ﬁre threat in the U.S.,” added Floros.

WHY PLAN NOW?

Why do so many of us put off estate planning?

Many people think that “estate” planning means they must have millions of dollars before they need to start thinking about it. The truth is, estate simply means “all of a person’s possessions, especially those left after death.” Surprisingly, many people die intestate, which means not having made a legal will. Not planning, of course, means letting someone else plan for you. And, in estate planning, that means the government’s plan. And the government’s plan will probably be very different from what you would have wanted.

HOW CAN YOU GIVE?

There are several ways for you to make a planned gift that provide for loved ones – and your community. These are the most common:

- Living Trusts and Wills
- Retirement Plans
- Life Insurance
- Securities
- Real Estate
- Charitable Trusts

HOW SHOULD YOU BEGIN?

- Make a preliminary plan on what you would like your bequest to accomplish.
- Take an inventory of your possessions.
- Get an attorney.
- Consider including the Burn Institute in your plans.
- Let the Burn Institute know about your gift so we can say Thank You!

Burn Institute’s Heritage Society

We are pleased to announce the Burn Institute’s Heritage Society for those who have included the Burn Institute in their estate plans. Members of the Heritage Society will be invited to an annual luncheon as our special thank you. For more information about the Burn Institute’s Heritage Society, or to let us know if you already qualify for membership, please contact Diane Sutherland at dsutherland@burninstitute.org or 858-541-2277 ext. 19.
Camp Beyond the Scars Offers Special Experience for Children Living with Burn Injuries

On August 7, nearly 50 burn-injured children, with duffle bags in tow, arrived at Camp Cuyamaca for a weekend adventure. As with any summer camp, it was a typical first day of getting to know everyone and the surroundings. But many of these children would not feel at home at any other camp. Some children arrived wearing pressure garments, some walk slower than others, some have special needs, many have fragile self-esteem, but they all have something in common... they have all endured some type of painful burn injury, visible or not. This is the tie that binds them, and what makes Camp Beyond the Scars a unique and special experience for each child.

By the end of the first day, you would have thought everyone had been lifelong friends. Happy times and a breakneck pace of activities keeps everyone going – especially the counselors. Activities included: golf, horseback riding, archery, and swimming to name a few. Those who wanted a break from the outdoors relaxed and spent the afternoon making crafts. Later in the week, all the campers visited La Jolla Shores for some beach and surfing fun. On the last night of camp, everyone enjoyed the traditional camp dance. It was like any other final night at camp, exchanging of phone numbers, hugs, and packing up their bags filled with precious summer memories. Memories they will keep near and dear to their hearts until they again see their friends at Winter Camp Beyond the Scars to be held in January.

Most of the counselors, who return year after year, are off-duty firefighters or adult burn survivors. Older burn survivors pass down what they have learned. Campers participate in weekend support sessions as well – a forum where young burn survivors can talk openly about issues that they may be facing as a result of their injuries.

For some of these kids, showing their scars at camp is one of the few places on earth where they’re not made to feel like outcasts,” said Volunteer Camp Director and burn survivor Arnell Garcia, a Fire Captain for the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.

Camp Beyond the Scars is the Burn Institute’s most notable support program and is offered twice a year – a 3-day winter camp and a weeklong summer camp. Any burn-injured child from throughout San Diego, Imperial, Riverside or San Bernardino counties may attend at no charge. For more information about how you can support this special camp, call the Burn Institute at 858.541.2277.

Your gift of $300 will sponsor a burn-injured child to attend winter Camp Beyond the Scars for a week.
Firefighters from throughout San Diego County braved the record breaking heat at the 16th annual Modern Postcard FIRE EXPO presented by Sycuan.

Thousands of guests attended, despite the sweltering heat, on July 22, to watch 100 fire trucks and fire engines arrive – code 3 – with sirens and lights blazing to kick-off this year’s event at Qualcomm Stadium.

Southern California’s largest firefighting event was filled with fun for everyone. Attendees were able to watch live demonstrations, tour emergency vehicles, rescue helicopters, and interact with men and women of the fire service.

The Expo treated kids to fire truck rides and a little firefighter obstacle course. The popular kiddie-karnival area included face-painting, fun and games, and educational trailers filled with interactive games to promote fire safety. Attendees were able to find some shade and enjoy live music from Hill Country, Flock of 80s, and Stage 4. The highlight of the afternoon was when firefighters sprayed the crowd with water – a welcome addition to the afternoon.

The Burn Institute would like to extend a very special thank you to Modern Postcard for serving as the Title Sponsor and to Sycuan who served as the Presenting Sponsor. A big thank you also goes out to members of the San Diego – Imperial County Fire Fighters Advisory Council and especially those who volunteered for grill duty, where the temperatures reached 125 degrees!

Commemorative FIRE EXPO 2006 t-shirts are still available! Shirts come in two colors – white and navy. To purchase your shirt, call the Burn Institute at (858) 541-2277. All shirts are $15 each.

Sun, Sweat and Smiles Result in Another Fire Expo Success!

For further event information, call the Burn Institute at (858) 541-2277 or visit us online at www.burninstitute.org.
Volunteers Needed for Fire Prevention Month

Fire Prevention Week, October 8-14, 2006, is always a busy week for Burn Institute staff and often lasts the entire month of October. There are lots of opportunities during this busy month for people to volunteer their time. From giving puppet show presentations at local area schools to providing fire and burn prevention information materials during fire department open houses, the Burn Institute is in full gear before, during and after Fire Prevention Week. If you would like to assist with a variety of fun Fire Prevention Month activities, contact Kathleen at (858) 541-2277 x11 or kframpton@burninstitute.org.

Promote the Gift of Giving by Volunteering as a Family

National Family Volunteer Day – November 20

Raising a giving child starts with a giving family. During gift-giving seasons, volunteering as a family to help groups or individuals in need can help kids learn the joy of giving and sharing. Thanksgiving and Christmas as well as Hanukkah and Kwanzaa are ideal occasions to emphasize the spirit of philanthropy with your children. Birthdays are also a memorable way to celebrate turning a year older through volunteerism. Charitable giving and volunteering as a family extend the gift of giving of personal time as well as a loving contribution of helping hands and hearts. As the holiday season of “I wants” and “gimmies” creeps up on us, here are some ideas for discovering the joys of volunteering together this upcoming holiday season and throughout the year.

GARAGE SALE

Ask your children to go through their things and pick out 10 items in good condition. In addition to what your kids will find, you’ll be surprised at all the stuff you can sell as well. Not only will this help you to reduce clutter around your house and emphasize the spirit of giving in your children, but the garage sale money you earn will benefit those in need.

NEIGHBORHOOD

Organize a neighborhood garage sale and have all proceeds benefit a charity. The Burn Institute can provide you with educational give-a-ways, such as fire and burn prevention coloring books and Stop, Drop and Roll stickers, for you to hand out to your customers as an added bonus!

RECRUIT

You may have family and friends that want to volunteer but don’t know how or where to get started. Volunteer as a group and have twice as much fun!

Have Fun and Make New Friends! Join the Auxiliary Today!

Established in 1994, the Burn Institute Auxiliary is a group of dedicated volunteers who play an integral role in the ongoing success of the Burn Institute.

One thing that the Auxiliary is responsible for is planning the annual Share Your Heart Auction Wine Tasting and Casino Night, held each February. This event raises thousands of dollars to support the important work of the Burn Institute. The Auxiliary is currently looking for new people to join the Share Your Heart Committee. You can share your talents in a number of ways including gathering auction items, recruiting top restaurants and wineries and packaging auction items and decorating the venue.

Auxiliary meetings are held once a month. For more information on how you can be a part of something great, contact Kathleen at (858) 541-2277 x11 or kframpton@burninstitute.org.

Pay tribute to someone special: make a gift to the Burn Institute “In Honor” of a friend, family member or to recognize a special occasion.

The Burn Institute wishes to extend a warm (no pun intended) thank you to all of our fire expo volunteers who braved the sweltering heat and humidity on July 22. It was the hottest day of the year and we appreciate everyone’s efforts!
Beacon Bits

Kudos to The Vista Fire Protection District for participating in the Burn Institute’s First Responder Program. Their efforts in installing smoke alarms in Vista have made a positive impact in the community in which they serve.

The Burn Institute staff wishes to bid a fond farewell to Tally Innes and wishes her the best of luck in her teaching endeavors.

It is with great pleasure the Burn Institute welcomes new Community Outreach Specialist Dana Carnduff.

SAVE THE DATE!

2nd Annual Poker Tournament To benefit the Burn Institute

Wednesday, November 15, 2006
Viejas Dream Catcher Showroom
Cost: $100 per player

For more information call (858) 541-2277.

Do You Have an Auto, Boat or RV That You No Longer Need?

By donating your auto, boat or RV you can directly support the important work of the Burn Institute. In addition, you will also receive the maximum legal tax deduction and potentially earn a cash payment. FREE towing and pick-up anywhere in the United States.

Call toll free, and remember to designate the Burn Institute as the beneficiary.
(866) 244-8464

The Cost of Caring

Where Your Dollars Go.

- 84% Program Services
- 13% Fundraising
- 3% Management & General Costs

You are reading the Fall 2006 issue of the Burn Institute Beacon. Please don’t throw this newsletter away! Pass it along to a friend. If you know someone who would like to receive this quarterly publication, or if you would like to be removed from our mailing list, or if you have an address change, please e-mail kframpton@burninstitute.org.