WPA

Western Pyrotechnic Association

Newsletter

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President's Letter — Kief Adler

Welcome and a Happy New Year to you all! With the holiday's behind us, I am looking forward to another long, fireworks laden weekend in Lake Havasu with all of my pyro friends. Once again, many of your fellow members have spent much of the last year preparing for this year's Winter Blast and I can promise you one hell of a show. Don't miss Winter Blast 2003!

For those of you lucky enough to attend Do It #3, you were part of our biggest Do It ever. From the seminars to the Afterglows, everything went off as promised. We owe a world of thanks to Dimitri Timohovich and Joe Pfeffer, Do It's co-chairs, as well as a host of others who should be listed elsewhere in this newsletter. Yours truly was presented with a beautiful plaque for getting Do It off the ground, but I would be remiss in accepting it without acknowledging Greg Boyd for laying the groundwork for the event with his pre-Do It "Pow Wow. Hard to believe that three of these great events are already behind us! Add the third weekend in October to your vacation calendars and join us this year.

Elections are coming up, once again, in February. Kathy Baird, who stepped in upon the resignation of our last treasurer will not be running again. Kathy has done an incredible job over the past 3 years and will be missed by all of us on the Board. She is leaving tough shoes to fill but, I'm sure that one of you can fill them! The other open position this year is mine. Although many of you have asked me to run for another term as President, I can honestly say that I have not yet made up my mind. I appreciate the overwhelming support that I have enjoyed for the past two years, but it may be time for me to take a break. Although I have enjoyed my years as your President and love being part of the Board, I find myself torn on many issues that the club faces and need to see these resolved before making my decision. Regardless of my final decision, I welcome the challenge of another candidate for President and hope that there will be at least one!

One year ago I wrote "…I am amazed by the hours of time it takes to help run this organization. Not just my time, but the entire Board of Directors, the countless volunteers for Do It and Winter Blast , all come together with one goal in mind: the dedication to help make this one of the best pyro clubs in the world. Volunteering doesn't have to mean giving up your fun at WinterBlast or Do It either. Two hours of volunteering for safety duty helps us keep things running smoothly and places you on the front lines, smelling smoke with the rest of your friends. Remember this when you are asked to volunteer a few hours. You might be giving up two hours but the rest of us are giving up one hundred times that so that you can enjoy yourself. I'm happy to give of my time. All I ask in return is that you give a little of yours back to the club so that all of us can enjoy a good time." These words still ring true and is the primary problem that I see with our club: too few of us are willing to run the show. I want to remind all of you that it takes give and take to make any relationship work, and the relationship of the member to the club takes the same commitment. If each of you attending a club event were to give us two hours of your time, we would have more volunteers than shifts! This is YOUR club as well as mine. Give a little, get a lot more. Maybe this should be the theme for next year's Blast.

I look forward to seeing all of you in Lake Havasu! Meanwhile, stay green.
Kief

Vice Presidents Letter — Don Oesterle

It has been almost a year since the devastation and tragedies that occurred in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington DC last September. I noted, in a previous article, that the people in this country had "hopped on the bandwagon" and began openly displaying their patriotism through placing American flags on their homes,

Continued on next page...

Vice Presidents Letter *Cont from pg 5* Don Oesterle

businesses, and vehicles. I'm proud to see that this patriotism is still abundant in the country. I'm not seeing quite as many window flags as before, but I am seeing numerous decals on cars proclaiming that "United We Stand," all sizes of American flags on windows and bumpers of vehicles. American flags are being proudly displayed in businesses, people's homes, and on public streets. There are fewer vendors selling the window flags and decals on street corners than there were back in October of last year, but these have been replaced by retailers selling these items in their stores. I am proud to see that the newly rekindled patriotism was not just a passing fad, but has been engrained into our way of life. Two years ago, if a person had an American flag on the window of his vehicle, it was an oddity, but today it is a common sight. Recently I have been receiving E-Mails requesting me to observe a moment of silence, or stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance, or to light a candle on the anniversary of that great tragedy. Normally, I would just view these requests as a type of chain letter, and just delete them without much thought, but to help keep the patriotism alive in my thoughts, I will participate in these small rituals, and honor the people who lost so much on that dark day in American history. I challenge everybody reading this article to, also, pay tribute in some way.

Many people thought that American life would be drastically changed in response to those events. I agree that it has become more of a hassle to travel by airplane, but very few other activities in my life have changed. I was scared that the fireworks industry would be devastated, but for me, this has not been the case at all. I have shot more public display firework shows this year than any other year. So far, my crew and I have shot 24 shows this year, and we have at least 12 more on the schedule, not to mention an entire weekend of fireworks at Do-It this October!

I am looking forward to seeing many you at Do-It this year. Many of us have been working very hard building equipment, buying necessary supplies, and arranging for absolutely everything we will need for a successful weekend. Russ and I have, once again, taken on the responsibility for chairing next year's Winterblast. It will be hard, but we are working to make Winterblast 2003 even better than this year's was!

Until next time, please be safe.

VP of Communications' Letter Dimitri Timohovich

So here we are again, another post holiday season for all of us pyros. I hope everyone had a safe and happy 4th of July. I can tell you that mine was full of action and adventure and I'm looking forward to many more. Some of you will be joining me on my next adventure at this year's Burning Man festival. The cover photo was taken at last year's event, but trust me, this time it will be an even more spectacular burn. Post event notes to follow.

Now it is time for us to switch gears and start planning our future events. Plans for Do It are in full swing, and this year promises to be even better than previous years. Also, the Winterblast committee is working hard on making sure our next Blast will be the best ever. In this issue you will find info on both of these upcoming events.

If you plan on attending Do It, please read the related articles. They will supply you with the necessary information from registration all the way up to how to help with clean up on Sunday morning.

So enjoy this newsletter and I look forward to seeing old friends and making new ones at Do It and Winterblast.

Secretaries Letter Jill Salverson

I don't really have much to say from the secretary standpoint, it's business as usual. I am in the constant state of trying to keep up, keeps me off the streets.

I would like to, however, don my Do-It Registration hat for a minute. If you are reading this, you are a current member and have received at least one registration form, probably two. No more will be mailed out. If for some reason, you loose both, you can download it from the website. PLEASE… if you download it, do not forget to download the waiver and sign and mail it in with the registration form. When you come to registration, you will receive your name tag and t-shirt. We will be working hard to make sure you do not have to wait in too long of a line. If you do, please be patient, we work cheap.

I am SOOO looking forward to Do-It and seeing each and every one of you.

Treasurers report Russ Laurie

Well folks. Here's the latest and greatest about our financial situation. As of the August board meeting we had $ 31,575.08 in the account. After writing the shocking check for the increase in liability insurance of $13,987.37, and this is just a down payment, our new balance is $17,587.71. We, of course, are looking into other avenues regarding this insurance. We have some recent deposits for Do-It that total approx. $1700.00, that leaves us with $19,287.71.

We want to encourage you all to attend Do-It and show your support.

Calling all Northwest area members Bill Zuber

We pyros of the Pacific Northwest love and support the fireworks industry. We buy the tools, study the methods and the rules, drive long hours and fly far distances to support the cause (fireworks!). As Northwest Vice President of the Western Pyrotechnic Association, I need help from other pyrotechnicians in our area to help us become better organized. No matter who you shoot for, we will all benefit by communicating with each other: we share a love the bright colors, the smell of the smoke and loud noises, and we care about doing safe, technically competent and creative work so that each show becomes an expression of that care. We'd like all fireworks companies, all sponsors, all communities to benefit by our sharing of professional expertise and our ideas with each other. The Western Pyrotechnic Association can be our professional organization, bolstered by our own efforts to improve and sustain our work.

I am trying to put together a list of pyrotechnicians who live and work in the northwestern states. My email address is zuberb@bctonline.com. Email me with your email or mailing address; if you have a pyro friend who is not in the W.P.A., have them join our N.W. group and give them information about the W.P.A. The more members we have from the Pacific Northwest, the stronger our voice and our mutual support will be.

A group of us have started an Internet site named "allpyro.com" (an old site with a new reason for being). The site is being set up as an informational and communications site. We are going to post current regulatory information, including N.F.P.A., Coast Guard, B.A.T.F., and state administrative rules. Please contribute pyro lore and ideas and ask questions some other pyro might be able to answer. We want this site to be helpful to everyone, so we'd also like your input on ideas for the site itself. We are trying to put together an end-of-summer BBQ for any pyro who wants to come. We will be trying to find an area where we can also have a fireworks display, probably somewhere around I-5 and Southern Washington. If I can get your email or mailing address, I can keep everyone informed. Also, of course, we'll see each other at W.P.A. events.

Let's communicate!

Club Insurance Emergency — Kief Adler, for the Board

As many of you know, the fireworks liability insurance industry was rocked recently by the actions of an agent in Texas who was arrested for fraud. This agent had been illegally wholesaling fireworks liability policies to various brokers, ours included. The result has been the cancellation of our policy by the carrier and the frantic search for a new one.

Only one company has been found, Lloyd's, that is willing to insure fireworks clubs for liability issues. Naturally, the cost is astronomical! The cost to the club for this insurance is MORE THAN DOUBLE our previous insurance or about $36,000/year! This is devastating news for all of us. With a membership base of around 750, this cost represents around $50 per member (compared to the $24 that we were paying). What this means to all of us is that membership fees will need to be increased significantly in order to cover this cost…. UNLESS alternative insurance is found.

It is important for all of you to know that your Board is not taking this situation lightly. As the cancellation notice that we received gave us only 30 days to find new insurance, and the Lloyd's policy was all that was found during this time, your Board has resolved to do the following:

1. Per the minutes of the Board of Director's meeting held on July 30th, 2002, we have decided to renew our policy at the new rate, but to finance the premium over 9 months in order to have the membership money, and Winter Blast money, available to pay off the premium.
2. We have asked our attorney to look into the cancellation by our present carrier to see if any legal action is open to us and to secure a return of payment for the policy period that was not used.

NO ONE wants to see our fees increased, especially when an increase in Winter Blast fees is a necessity for 2003 as well. As your president, it is my duty to inform you that, if alternative coverage is not found, a stipend of $25 will be charged to all new and returning members for 2003. Our hope is that this will be a temporary charge IF more companies start offering fireworks coverage and competition in the marketplace lowers costs.

September 11th changed our world forever. It devastated the insurance industry and the stock market (which dealt a second blow to the insurance industry) and the ripples from this are still being felt by all of us. Those of you who own homes or businesses have already seen your insurance rates soar. I am not trying to apologize for the insurance industry, nor am I trying to improve their public relations. I am simply trying to state that our new reality could very well be permanently higher insurance costs.

This news is regrettable and disheartening to all of us. It affects the entire industry, not just the clubs. It will make the pyrotechnics that we all love even more expensive, and makes our gatherings costlier still. I, and the rest of the Board, hope that you will understand that we have agonized over these decisions and hope that we will all be able to dig a little deeper into our pockets and keep our club, and our hobby, alive.

Do It by the River IV — Russ Laurie

Well it's that time of the year again and Do It by the River is only 10 weeks away by the time you read this article, so if you haven't registered by now, times a wasting, get your registration form and money together and send it in! Rooms are still available at the host hotel, the AVI. Call 1 800-284 –2946 and use booking number 7253 for the special club price. Rates are $19.00 during the week and $40.00 on the weekend. The hotel has gone thru some upgrades in the restaurant areas and for the price the food's pretty good. So all in all a pretty good deal for all the fun and enjoyment of shootin', makin', watchin' and god knows what else people are doing with pyrotechnics over a four day spread.

Once again, and back by popular demand, is the Official WPA Grill and Snack Bar headed up by Anne Houghman AKA " Pyro Annie", grilling up some good old favorites and maybe something new! Afterglows will be a happening thing as they usually are. Jay Brown is in charge and he already has some micro brew and wines lined up thanks to some of our members!!! If you would like to participate in sharing a little something at the afterglows contact Jay.

We've got hands on seminars for the members who want to learn how from the people that know best. Student's mines and shells have been great in the past and some have even been donated to Armageddon. I'm sure Greg Adler wouldn't mind a few more of the students donating this year as well. Also as a reminder we are looking for monetary donations to help out with Armageddon IV as well. You'll find a spot on your registration form for you to make a donation. In the past people have donated pyro and money on the side but this year we are asking for as much help as possible so it won't be a burden on just a few, so give a little extra if you can.

What's new for Do It this year you might ask? Well we, the event people, have asked the BOD to consider shooting 10's and 12's at this years event with the BOD voting unanimously in favor of it! WE WILL BE SHOOTIN' THEM BAD BOYS every night 'til the fish complain! While the shells will be commercial shells sold by our on site vendor, Kellner's West Fireworks, this year, if all goes well, the BOD is considering opening it up next year to hobbiest shells as well. Kellner's is also taking advance orders and giving a further discount on class "C" so get your order in soon. I hear the truck is getting full! FireFox will be on site filling all your chemical needs as well. Again, advance orders are suggested.

Please remember to bring long sleeves shirts, pants goggles and hard hats with you! Proper shooting attire is essential and required. There are NO on site sign ups and NO comps for anyone at this event. Pitch in, help out and let's have a booming good time!

We'll hope to see you out there at DO IT by The River IV!

Get On The Email List !

If you have email and aren't on the list you are missing out!
Meeting announcements, get togethers, pyro shows, advice,
ideas and much more are coming across the list daily.
Send an email to: list-admin@wpa.pyro.org
In subject line specify if want the "list" or the "digest"
and your email address you want to receive it at.

What is the difference between the two?

- If you want to receive the email as it is sent out, one at a time go for the list.
- If you would prefer to receive one email at the end of each day with all of the emails in one then you'll want the digest.

ATTENTION DO-IT SEMINAR ATTENDEES

If you are planning on attending seminars at Do It, please bring your own tools. Suggested tools to bring:

- Makita or DeWalt drill/screwdriver
- Portable (battery) circular saw
- Hot glue guns or caulking gun
- End nippers/diagonals (something to cut fuse)
- Masking tape (3/4" & 2")
- Possibly duct tape or 2" glass tape
- Anything else that you feel will make these assemblies run that much smoother.

Are you planning to manufacture at DO IT?

If you are planning to manufacture anything while attending DO IT by The River IV then you must bring the following items (in addition to those listed above):

1. Some sort of shade--- pop up tent, tarps etc.
2. A table of some sort --- TABLES WILL NOT BE PROVIDED!
3.Clean up equipment to clean up your area
4. All tools needed to build what ever it is that you're building

This is a self contained event and we (The WPA) are only providing the chemical vendor… you are to bring the rest.

See you at Do-It

⇒ One final note, those of you that have not attended in the past years, a folding chair will come in handy as there are no bleachers available.

BIG shells at Do It — Kief for the Board

Whereas the skies cracked and the rains came and a thunderous whine was heard from above and, behold, the whine was Paul Salverson's and the whine began: "I wanna shoot bigger shells at Do It... like 10's and 12's." and the Board heard the whine, and the whine was good. So the Board pondered and debated this issue and, in less than a fortnight came Forth and change the 11 commandments of Do It so that, thus, the 10th commandment is now changed to read: "and we will allow shells up to 12", but only (and we mean it) if these shells are purchased from the on site vendor, are commercially manufactured, and NOT brought in from the outside."

See you at Do It. Purchase your 10's and 12's from Kellners and you will be able to fire them. A separate, electric, firing range will be set up for the big babies and you must arrange the use of this range with one of the safety chairs BEFORE heading out there or bringing product out there. We are trying this on an experimental basis this year and, if it works, we may open things up to manufactured shells Next year.

"Just 'Do It'" — Marty Rosenstock



I don't use this slogan frivolously. It's not often that I give glowing endorsements. HOWEVER, if you've never been to "Do It By The River," and you've thought about it time and again, then you owe it to yourself to go this year.

For those of you who have never been to this fireworks mini-convention in the lower Mojave Desert, I offer these reflections, from my first "Do It," last year.

Now, I should point out that I'm relatively new to the pyro world. I've only been doing fireworks shows since 1998. And, until last October, I was content with learning about pyro on location, through the various experiences of helping to "install" shows.



Then, last summer, my friends Paul Salverson and Dimitri Timohovich told me about "Do It." They told me of the fun, and the education, and the camaraderie, and they urged me to go. In short, they "lit a spark" of curiosity in me. Now, a year later, I'm not sure which impulse is stronger; to kill them or to thank them.

From what they had told me, I knew that "Do It" would be a good time. What I didn't know was that there was a whole new universe awaiting me! I hadn't realized how much I would enjoy learning about the inner workings of a "tourbillion." Nor did I know just how much I would be turned on by learning how to build one. And then, that night, I got the added thrill of watching it spin into the air!

That's the best thing about "Do It" - those attending get to do it !! It's a very hands-on experience, with some seminars that focus on theory, and others which make you want to "dive in" to the process of manufacturing.

Have you ever wondered how a comet is made? Well, you'll find out here, first hand. You'll learn how they work, and you'll be supplied with the materials to make your own. And, that night, you'll get to see how it looks!

If you're still not sure, just ask some of the people who got to create their own shells. Pun intended; this seminar blew me away! I probably would have been impressed just to learn how a ball shell works. BUT, imagine how exciting it is to make one, and watch it "break" that night!

As if that wasn't enough to convince you, there's more. Some people at "Do It" are launching rockets; some work on the "Armageddon" display; and some like to shop. There are vendors on site. So if you don't want to make your own, you can just buy some, and send them skyward.



Each night, there are "afterglow" gatherings, complete with beer and wine. And, if you still have the energy, you can go into the Avi Hotel and gamble in the casino! So, why do I have the impulse to thank and/or kill my friends? Because, thanks to them, I went to "Do It" last year, and the pyro bug bit me. It's a great way to spend a few days and nights in October. So, if you're thinking about going, get your reservations in soon.

You'll be glad you did!

















Opinion — John Steinberg

In keeping with Kiel's request for comments and comments by Don Oesterle, Steve Wilson, Ron Dixon, and others in the last newsletter, I would like to add my two (or, should I say, three?) cents worth to the Sara Saturday Shoot debate:

1) I'm basically a happy camper. I think the folks who produce and run Winterblast do a fine job and if nothing changes, I'll still be happy. I know what it takes to run a pyro festival and I admire anyone else who runs one.

2) I don't think it is disrespectful of anyone else's pyro to want to go off and do your own. After all, aren't vacations for fun? If someone prefers to do open shooting, I do not see that as disrespectful of the display operators. I figure if you want to watch the display, shoot Class "C", or shoot at the open "B" lines, well, that's your choice; so long as the area can be staffed. Why make folks do things if they'd rather be doing something else?

3) Volunteers are what makes things work. IF the Board of Directors decides to keep shooting open at Sara on Saturday night, I will volunteer to stay there and serve as both a safety and medical person on duty.

Thoughts — Keith Medora

I wanted to share "one man's thoughts" with you. Hopefully as a facet of life -- that we may often forget to open our minds to see through "another man's eyes."

Warm regards to you,

Keith

"Memorial Day"

Memorial Day is their day, isn't it? It is supposed to be the day a grateful nation pauses to quietly thank the more than one million men and women who have died in military service to their country since the Revolutionary War. Or is it the day the beach resorts kick into high gear for the summer season, the day the strand is covered by fish-belly white people basting themselves in coconut oil, the day the off-season rates end and the weekend you can't get in a seaside seafood restaurant with anything less than a one hour wait. Or is it one of the biggest shopping center sales days of the year, a day when hunting for a parking space is the prime sport for the holiday stay-at-homers? Or is it the weekend when more people will kill themselves on the highways than any other weekend and Highway Patrol troopers work overtime picking up the pieces? I think the men and women who died for us would understand what we do with their day. I hope they would, because if they wouldn't, if they would have insisted that it be a somber, respectful day of remembrance, then we have blown it and dishonored their sacrifice. I knew some of those who died, and the guys I knew would have understood. They liked a sunny beach and a cold beer and a hot babe in a black bikini, too. They would have enjoyed packing the kids, the inflatable rafts, the coolers, and the suntan lotion in the car and heading for the lake. They would have enjoyed staying at home and cutting the grass and getting together with some friends and cooking some steaks on the grill, too. But they didn't get the chance. They blew up in the Marine Barracks in Beirut and died in the oily waters of the Persian Gulf. They caught theirs at the airstrip in Grenada in the little war everyone laughed at. They bought the farm in the I. Drang Valley and on Heartbreak Ridge, Phu Tai And at Hue. They froze at the Chosin Reservoir and were shot at the Pusan Perimeter. They drowned in the surf at Omaha Beach or fell in the fetid jungles of Guadalcanal. They were at the Soame and at San Juan Hill and at Gettysburg and at Cerro Gordo and at Valley Forge.

They couldn't be here with us this weekend, but I think they would understand that we don't spend the day in tears and heart-wrenching memorials. They wouldn't want that. Grief is not

Continued on the next page...

Thoughts *Continued from pg 13* Keith Medora

why they died. They died so we could go fishing. They died so another father could hold his laughing little girl over the waves. They died so another father could toss a baseball to his son in the backyard while the charcoal is getting white. They died so another buddy could drink a beer on his day off. They died so a family could get in the station wagon and go shopping and maybe get some ice cream on the way home.
They won't mind that we have chosen their day to have our fist big outdoor party of the year. But they wouldn't mind, either, if we took just a second and thought about them.
Some will think of them formally, of course. Wreaths will be laid in small, sparsely attended ceremonies in military cemeteries and at monuments at state capitols and in small town's squares. Flags will fly over the graves, patriotic words will be spoken and a few people there will probably feel a little anger that no more people showed up. They'll think no one else remembers. But we do remember. We remember Smitty and Chico and Davey and the guys who died. We remember the deal we made: If we buy it, we said,
drink a beer for me. I'll do it for you, guys. I'll drink that beer for you today, and I'll sit on that beach for you, and I'll check out the girls for you and, just briefly, I'll think of you. I won't let your memory spoil the trip but you'll be on that sunny beach with me today.
I will not mourn your deaths this Memorial Day, my friends. Rather, I'll celebrate the life you gave me.
This Bud's for you, brother!
Al Levine
101st Airborne, Hue, Vietnam 1965-1967

Do It by the River IV

October 17th, 18th and 19th at the Avi Hotel and Casino, Laughlin, Nevada
OPEN TO WPA MEMBERS AND THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS ONLY!!!
NO ON SITE REGISTRATIONS!!!!
That's right, Do It is back! The second annual event hosted by the Western Pyrotechnic Association is Do It by the River and this, our third Do It, promises to rattle the windows and scare the fish even more than before! Come smell the smoke and swap lies with your pyro buds in sunny Laughlin, Nevada. Hands on seminars for your amusement, open shooting every night and wholesale fireworks for sale! With the success of last years experiment, we will again be opening class B sales to ALL REGISTERED ATTENDEES (OVER 18 YEARS OLD)! You will be able to buy, and shoot, class B product under the club's ATF license 'til the cows come home (or 10pm, whichever comes first…). Afterglows on site following open shooting each night! Beer, soda and snacks will be available! Don't forget that free, classy and collectable Do It T shirt with each member registrant! Spouse and kids' shirt available for an additional $17 each.Looking for non-pyro activities? Can't imagine why, but Laughlin has movies, outlet shopping, bowling and, of course, CASINOS. You will find 24 hour food as well as a giant pool, spa, watercraft for rent, kids playground, etc. at the Avi. Registration for Do It will close on September 20th. NO exceptions!
QUESTIONS? Want to help out? Contact Chairman Russ Laurie at Russ@pyro.org or co-chair Tim O'Neil at Timo@ctaz.com.
Fee Schedule:
Members--$50 Spouse--$20 Children (under 18)--$20 each
Spouse Seminar--$10 Additional T-shirts are available for $17 each
NO children will be allowed to attend any hands on workshop, except non-pyro or class C types.
Call the Avi Hotel and Casino for room reservations, 800-284-2946
Mention booking number 7253 for club rates ($40/room on the weekend and $19 during the week)
Don't miss out: DO IT!!!

A VERY GOOD LETTER

As you know, if you can't meet the other qualifications of membership, we allow a very good letter to be written to express your love of pyrotechnics. All the letters excepted are good, and have similar themes. But, this one struck a chord and brought a giggle while reading it. It also sounded very familiar. So, I thought I would share this very good letter.

Submitted by Jill Salverson.
Reprinted with permission.
To Those in the WPA Whom It May Concern,
I am writing this letter because: I would like to join the Western Pyrotechnics Association. I am not a 'licensed pyrotechnician'. I only know of one person that is, or may still be, a WPA member, and I am out of touch with him at this point in time. Thus I must write what I hope to be The VERY Good Letter, and lay everything out on the table in the sincere hope that you may find me worthy of admission to your ranks, so that I might find kindred souls and maybe be of use. Here is the short version, if you are pressed for time.
My name is David McNamee. At 43 years, I may even be old enough. I own a neon sign business with my sister in Bakersfield, California, where I live. I have a clean record. I have a clean DMV. I don't smoke (doh!) or use drugs. I love fireworks, and high voltage. I love fireworks so much that I started making my own. I've been doing that off and on as a happy for 25 years. I would like to learn, and contribute if possible. I realize I am very much hindered by being 'outside'. I am tired of constantly living under the heavy shadow of the unforgiving and ignorant hammer of law enforcement.
I have the Internet domains Pyronews.com, net and org, which may be of use someday.
And here is the longer version, to read at your leisure. The chronology is a little blurry since a lot has happened in the last two plus decades, getting a timeline would require much digging through scattered notes, and I don't want to bore you with minutiae.
At age 16, I started playing with chemicals in the pyrotechnic sense, and my parents were none too thrilled. Nevertheless, one day my father walked into my room and handed me a small blue book he had purchased at a second hand store for a quarter. He said tome, "I found this while I was 'shopping' (he liked to buy used electronics and things for parts, being a tinkerer). If you're going to play with fire, you might want to see if there's anything useful in there, so you don't blow yourself up." The word 'PYROTECHNICS' was written in silver on the spine. It was by someone named Weingart. It was like having a wish granted by a genie. I am sure you can imagine how I felt as I read it. Time and again. That little book changed my life forever, and is the reason I still have all my fingers, though I realize the potential for disaster is ever present in this hobby. My father is gone now, but I still thank him for changing the course of my life by pointing me in the right direction rather than forbidding me. I sometimes wonder now, who had that book before it came to me? I still have it. It is quite worn. I could not get most of the chemicals, of course, and I went through the phase most new pyros go through, of buying them at the drugstore, of extracting them from other things, grinding my own charcoal, filing metals, rolling my own cases, ordering with trepidation from science suppliers that I feared would not sell to me, buying aluminum powder from the paint store while it was still available. When you're a teenager you're pretty paranoid. At least I was. It is unfortunate that information that would save so many so much grief is essentially unavailable because of the hidden nature of the fireworks industry and the regulations. Lately the Internet seems to be changing that somewhat.
So as the years passed, I made stars, fountains, wheels and tiny shells that I would light and throw. I was doing model rocketry also, and having no way to make the required tooling, my first skyrockets were Estes powered. Apologies to them and to NAR – but I wonder

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treasures Weingart had waiting for me. I found I liked testing star mixtures, and I have spent many hours tossing stars with friends. I developed a color range of chlorate stars, and 'discovered' glitter quite by accident. Started making end-burning motors to replace the Estes jobs, and designed several fuels for those motors. My friends and I would take our creations out to some remote location to try them out, and take notes on burn rates and performance for future ideas and improvement. (Jill's note: Is this how Ron Dixon got started?) Had trouble getting a good delay mix, though, and I set homemade engines aside for a while. Small shells were more reliable, and by that time I was not throwing them, but using small cardboard mortars.

My first 3" shell was straight Weingart – red chlorate stars and black powder, complete with hand-rammed fuse and homemade match. Having never launched something that big, it was quite a thrill, especially when it actually worked, just like 'the big guys'!

At times during this period I would talk to people at firework displays, and I found out what it would take to get into 'the business', and I attended a Pyro spectaculars seminar, but most of those I met seemed preoccupied with working with manufactured material, and there did not seem to be a place for those that just wanted to make and shot things for fun. The list of hoops one had to jump through seemed too much. I got a copy of title 19, and again there was no place for 'amateur or hobby pyrotechnist' (like there is for model rockets), only for professional and manufacturing. I became disenchanted with what I saw as the 'corporate' end of it all, and went back to being a firework hermit. Sigh.

In my twenties, trying to find more literature (difficult), I managed to get McLain's book 'Pyrotechnics', and much later the excellent Pyrotechnica series of magazines (so much for my glitter!). Then I obtained Shimizu's book, 'Fireworks: the Art, Science and Technique'. Wow. Here was someone who appreciated the artistic side of fireworks enough to write a chapter on it, and technical enough to stimulate thought. I also found Firefox. With these, and the occasional friend that I would come across that also liked to do this stuff, I expanded my knowledge and tried new things. Some time in this period, I obtained a small lathe and could now make the tools I needed for projects.

In my third decade, after getting Gary Purrington's 'Composite Rocket Motor Construction' book, I made endless test of resin/AP fuels. I did not have as much luck making motors – that stuff is a different animal than black powder. Cardboard tubes don't stand chance, and unfired clay nozzles washed away like sugar in water. But I made some great high output colored flares with it. And once more, I laid rockets aside. Since that time I have collected more information, and am ready to take that up again. There is just too much to do, so many things to try, and so little time! I would be so much farther along today if I had a ready place to test things. If on there were, somewhere, a permanent site that we 'amateur' pyros could go to do that. Is there such a place?

Roman candles are on of my favorite kinds of fireworks. After reading the Rev. Lancaster's book, my candles improved. Also, no one had ever told me that sporting grade black powder was different than the fireworks grade, which I cannot obtain. The first candles built according to Lancaster, using a lot more lift than I was used to, shot stars like bullets! Now I was getting somewhere!

The Fourth of July and New Year's came to be preferred times for testing things not quite class C, since everyone else would be lighting stuff as well, and the fact that things pyrotechnic that leave the ground here in California are frowned upon by those who have not 'smelt the smoke'. New Year's is best because everyone does this essentially all at the same time, and the authorities are preoccupied looking for drunks, fights, and idiots with guns (I wonder if any of them actually saw any of those salutes or shells). I learned the wisdom of multiple fusing, that familiarity can be dangerous, and reliability can be maximized but is never truly

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nor have I had any accidents or incidents that resulted in property damage. I have never used plastic or metal pipe for cases, only paper, cardboard, or the plastic shell cases made for the purpose. I am proud to say that I have brought much enjoyment to my friends, and that especially makes it all worthwhile.

Over the last several years, I have been going to Montana on vacation, which always includes the Fourth. I have land and friends there, and can buy and shoot what I can't get here. It seems odd that in a supposedly 'united' United States of America, fireworks are allowed in some states and banned in others.

A friend of mine had an uncle that shot fireworks shows in Reedley, California every Fourth. She got a couple older copies of American Fireworks News and PGI bulletins from him for me. Here at last, there were kindred spirits, making things. I should have subscribed then, but I didn't. But with new suppliers like Skylighter, and The Best of AFN II and III (and soon IV), I was off on new paths. After learning how round stars are made, and doing it, I have even more appreciation for the work that goes into what I see in the sky at shows Chemicals that were unavailable I made from what I had. I finally made whistles just a year ago, and 'stingers', the spin-stabilized rockets. So much to do.

I have never been to a Winter Blast, or a PGI convention, and from the literature and what I get on the Internet, what I have accomplished so far seems pretty mediocre in comparison to what goes on there. But one can always hope. I just like dong it. And as time passes the chances increase that knowledge of my doings will eventually reach unsympathetic ears, with consequences which I tire of thinking about after over twenty years. I value my freedoms VERY highly. There just HAS to be some way that people who know how to make and/or use fireworks without being a problem could get a clearance of something, for example to use class C items that normally would not be allowed, and to make certain fireworks for one's own personal use, much like the ATF regulations for making limited amounts of beer or wine. I know two others that are 'taking up the torch' also, because of me, and I want to see them on the right path also.

I have an Internet domain, Pyronews that I would like to use to further the cause of all of us that have smelt the smoke and must do what we love to do., even in the face of danger and loss of like and liberty. I would like to be a serious information resource and forum, for networking, maybe even organizing.

Well...that's what's been happening on my side of the fence...what do you think?

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions; I know I do.

Salutations,

David McNamee

dave@pyronews.com

Welcome to our little club, David...

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Winter Blast, an Early Preview — Russ Laurie and Don Oesterle

As we're all, hopefully, getting ready for Do It, some of us have been working on getting things together for Winter Blast!

If you had the good luck to attend Winter Blast 2002, then you were part of one of the best Blasts ever! It wasn't just the great pyrotechnics and the new Trade Show location, but the layout of the shooting site, the hospitality tent, staff tent, seminar locations, sound, etc. that helped to make this event even better this year. From our point of view, as organizers, having the Mules that we rented to run around in helped us to run things smoothly and, relatively, effortlessly. OK, that and a cast of solid volunteers! At any rate, after keeping fees in line for the past couple of years, we will have to raise registration fees for 2003 in order to maintain our level of service to you, our members. We hope to hold this to a $10 increase… but certainly no more than $15. The rate for kids and your spouse will remain the same.

The good news, cost wise, is that our president has been busy at work with the Tourism Bureau and the hotels and has persuaded the Ramada Inn to maintain their $65 room rate (for the third year now) and has negotiated an $89 rate at the Nautical Inn! The Nautical, our former host hotel, has been busily constructing new rooms and these will be long finished by the time the WPA rolls into town. In the past, even the old rooms were $99 so this is quite a deal for the members and we've heard the new rooms are great so, request them!

Most of our staff positions have been filled but we are always looking for eager volunteers. Final details on next year's Public Display are still being worked out and Premier Pyrotechnics will be back to handle our sound once again.

More news as we get closer…

Club Shoot at Winter Blast — Joe Madziarczyk

I would like to hold my third Area meeting August 24th. The main topic that I would like to discuss with the area membership is whether as a group we will put on a Club Display at Winter Blast. We put on a display like this a few years back where Ron Dixon had choreographed the product that we had made to music. The show was better than we had all expected.

We have enough time to start working on a show for WWB 2003 from start to finish done completely by members. With the diverse interests that we have in the group there is something for everyone: Plan the show and product, construct the product, test the product, choreograph the show, set up the show, document the show in photos and video, and lastly tear down the show and party our brains out for a job well done.

This is not a clandestine operation. Everything will be done legally and by the book. The show that we put on last time was 100% legal from beginning to end. We intend on keeping this model. For those members that would like to build, but are reluctant due to lack of experience, the experienced builders will take you under their wing and show you the right way.

If you would like to get involved in participating, drop me a line a jtmadziar@aol.com. If members from other regions of the WPA want to get involved we welcome you with open arms. I will post details on the meeting on the internet in the WPA digest.

Minutes of WPA Board Meeting — June 3, 2002

In attendance via phone conference: Kief Adler, Don Oesterle, Dimitri Timohovich, Russ Laurie, Jill Salverson

Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 8:10 pm.

1. Approval of previous meeting's minutes. Kief moved to approve minutes, Don seconded the motion. Minutes approved.
2. Treasurer's Report - Russ
   Balance = $25,243.
   We are waiting for final stuff from Washington Mutual.
   WWB final tally still pending.
3. (Off Record)
4. Discussion re: the Publications VP being in charge of the WinterBlast program.
   The Publications VP will now be responsible for gathering information for the WinterBlast program and turn it over to the Publications Chair for layout. The company in Lake Havasu that has been doing the program is set up for next year's program.
5. Donations for WinterBlast: a new approach?
   Kief would like to have donations in 3 different forms:
   1. Provide segment of public display w/their own equipment and personnel
   2. Provide a demo on a different night
   3. Cash donation
6. Do-It
   a. Progress report
      Kurt Medlin – seminar chair
      Kevin Ballinger – site chair
      Richard Haase/Don Oesterle – safety chairs
      We need to post on the list a request for seminars. Kief suggest a hand-lighting seminar.
      Do we need a $5 seminar fee? There is a $500 budget for seminars already, no fee necessary.
      We're looking for 2" guns. Dimitri can get guns and racks for a comet wall Kurt wants to make.
      Gate security – Kief to hire paid security guards.
   b. We still need to make arrangements for HDPE guns – Kief spoke Kevin Bruckner about buying guns from Fireworks America after 7/4.
   c. Food & afterglows – Bill McGregor will donate more Microbrew. It's possible to get kegs through Tim O'Neil.
   d. Easy ups & coolers – Kief will get a couple of coolers. Kief will pick up 3 ea. 10'x20' & 10'x10' Easy ups.
   e. Armageddon 4 – We will ask for donations to help pay for Armageddon.

Bluebook films – VHS copies of the program will be for sale after it is aired.

Adjourn – meeting adjourned at 8:51 pm.

Minutes of Board meeting – July 31, 2002

Attendance by conference call: Kief Adler, Don Oesterle, Dimitri Timohovich, Russ Laurie, Jill Salverson

Call to order: 8:05

Previous meeting's minutes approved at Blue Book film viewing.

A. Insurance – Kief: overview of problem - very few companies are willing to write fireworks policies, only 1 will write club insurance, Lloyd's of London.
Several issues: 1 – We owe members diligence to find alternatives before raising rates and fees. Our policy - $1 million policy w/$4 million umbrella. Kief received a breakdown for different values of policies. He asked our agent, John Allen, if we could get a lesser policy and add to it when it's time for an event. There is a legitimate concern, since Do-It is primarily a manufacturing event. Lloyd's does not provide re-insurance.
Jill asked for a history of what started this problem. John Tessyman put together a deal with royal Insurance for fireworks. Tessyman turned out to not be licensed for this and absconded with some of the money. When Royal Insurance found out, their legal dept. decided to dump all policies of this nature, leaving us and other pyrotechnic companies and clubs uninsured.
Dimitri asked if we could open-end finance. How much interest to finance?
Kief – we would need to pay 25%.
Kief will call John Allen tomorrow for information on financing. We will vote via e-mail during the week. Kief will ask if we can cancel a policy with out penalty, incase we find something better during this policy term.
Kief will write an article for Newsletter explaining to membership our dilemma.
(Secretary note: it was decided via e-mail to buy above mentioned policy and finance with contingency we would be able to cancel if a better policy is found.)

B. Treasurer's report - $31,577.08 total balance. $26,325.63 in B of A account, $5251.45 left in Washington Mutual account.
Profit and loss for April through June: -$3465.61. Negative number is due to bills being paid w/little cash coming in during spring.
WWB totals – received: $85339.69
Expenses: $75644.92
Total: $9694.77 profit

C. Sara Park open during public display – Kief received 2 e-mails on this topic and nothing in the mail. Probably 5 or 6 people are really pushing for Sara to remain open, but no real great interest from the general membership. Russ moved we close the debate and keep Sara closed for public display. Motion passed.

D. Do-It IV – Joe Pfeffer resigned as chair and Tim O'Neil will co-chair with Russ. Russ feels we need to have someone oversee manufacturing, Kief suggested names for him to talk to about the position. We need to make small quantities of product are made at a time in each area and more space between each manufacturing area. 10ft. minimum. Last year was way too close. Kief wants a prep table set up farther down the road away from everyone else. Do we have any manufacturing guidelines to post? Don to send WWB manufacturing document to Board for approval. We still need guns. Especially since we approved to try larger sizes (10's and 12's). Kief to get easy-ups and squibs. Equipment already purchased: coolers, 3 – 10x10 canopies, torch for burning off firecracker paper (it's fun!). We still need to make ready boxes and rocket racks. Armageddon donations to date: $368.73.

E. Blue Book films - agreed to our requested changes.

F. Motion to adjourn: Dimitri moved to adjourn, Russ 2nd, adjourn 9:07 pm.

WPA Gate Policy

While having a 'gate policy' has not always been a popular practice, it has served us well in terms of keeping the WPA in good standing with both the authorities and the community in general. In the interest of avoiding any misunderstandings regarding exactly what will and won't be allowed out of Do It (and hopefully avoiding disappointment on anyone's part), this article will present the "gate policy" with regard to what is sold in the class C vending tent at Do It.

Before I continue, I should make it clear that it is not the WPA's intent to stop anyone from legally purchasing live product on site and legally transporting it off site. The key word here is, "legally" and anyone in possession of the proper permits, licenses, and transportation papers appropriate for the material in question, will be allowed to leave with their live product.

To get right down to it, the items allowed out of Do It without any paperwork are:

- Black powder in the manufacturer's 1lb. cans labeled for retail sale
- Visco fuse (all diameters)
- Time fuse
- StickyMatch
- Electric matches
- All non-mixed chemicals
- Pyrotechnic comps/mixtures available via mail order without a permit or sold over the counter for consumer use in Arizona.
- All inert materials (i.e., paper and plastic products; all printed materials, etc.)

The items not allowed through the gate without proper paperwork are:

- Any class C/1.4G or class B/1.3G firework items. This includes live antique fireworks sold as collectibles.
- Bulk packaged black powder
- Quick match
- Stars and live pyrotechnic inserts (whistles, serpents, small insert shells, lance etc.)
- Pyrotechnic comps/mixtures not available via mail order without a permit or sold over the counter for consumer use in Arizona.

The basic reasoning used behind the above list is this: Any pyrotechnic thing that normally requires paperwork to purchase and transport outside of Do It, will also require the same paperwork to leave Do It.

One of the above items likely to raise eyebrows and cause disappointment is the inclusion of live antique fireworks sold as collectibles. While this may seem a bit harsh when it comes down to a 60 year old pack of 16 ladyfingers, as long as the local, state and federal authorities make no legal and enforcement distinction between these items and other class B and C items, we cannot make the distinction either.

Like wise, the inclusion of quick match may seem a bit harsh, especially considering Sticky Match is allowed. The distinction basically comes down to whether an item is 1.4g ('Class C' fireworks, quick match, shell inserts, etc.) or 1.4s (visco, time fuse, electric matches, Sticky Match).

Rest assured that the Do It organizers and the WPA Board of Directors are aware that this policy will not prove popular with a number of members and even some vendors. But given the legal problems and associated expenses the WPA has experienced these last few years, we can't responsibly conduct Do Its with policies that aren't grounded in legal compliance. Our past legal problems may not have been associated with what was officially allowed through the gate, but no good purpose would be served by adopting an official-in-writing gate policy containing exceptions allowing the above 1.3g and 1.4g items to leave without the same licenses and permits they require for purchase outside the Do It.

Newsletter Article Submission — Dimitri and Beckie Timohovich

Hello all aspiring writers out there. Have you ever wanted to write an article for the newsletter? Now is your chance. Its simple, painless, and when your done, hundreds of your fellow pyros will be able to read your words of appreciation, wisdom, thoughts, or just your opinion.

Here is how you should submit your article… Please send it typed in a Microsoft Word document. And keep in mind...

Please try…

1. Not to do any special formatting as it has to be redone once it gets to us, and tends to add considerable amounts of time to the process.
2. Try to use one size of font only…
3. Remember that your name will be placed at the top of the article so there is no need to sign it at the end as most times it needs to be removed for spatial issues.
4. Please try to remember that all articles must be appropriate for WPA print.

Please send all articles to Dimitri@pyro.org to be included in the next newsletter.

Help support your club!

Come Join us for Do It By The River.

Play in the Colorado river, light some fuses, learn some new pyro techniques, and chemistry.

Just remember to play safely, and have a good time, and join us for the nightly afterglows!

Send in the enclosed registration form as soon as possible!!!

DO IT in Laughlin Nevada

