

WPA

Western Pyrotechnic Association Newsletter

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Digital Fireworks Stand Reviewed.

By - Sean Hale

Fireworks on your computer desktop? You heard right. There is a new interactive CD out called "Digital Fireworks Stand" that allows computer geeks to play with cyber fireworks. It is a dual platform CD-ROM for Macintosh & Windows. Although not half as thrilling as the real thing, you won't get in as much trouble and the only injury risk is carpal tunnel syndrome. Digital Fireworks Stand has a few things you can do. The first is a fireworks stand where you have various fireworks lined up in front of you from rockets to fountains. Out of these fireworks, there are approximately 10 that are "live," meaning you can select them to go light. There is a little cartoon rocket that will talk to you from time to time. Cute little guy but I wish he had more to say. When you click on the firework of your choice, the screen changes and you are presented with the firework and a match. Light the match and touch it to the fuse and the firework does it's thing. You can light the selected item as many times as you wish, but you have to go back to the fireworks stand to get a different firework, this is a drag for pyro addicts who would just assume bring the big bang assortment to the shooting site and light them one after another. On the other hand going back to the stand means you get to visit the little rocket guy. There is a fireworks history section of the CD that is brief and to the point. In addition there are safety tips and a fireworks glossary of terminology. Playing with the CD left me wanting more. More fireworks, more history, and longer lasting fireworks. All in all the CD is fun and certainly a nice little novelty for the pyro enthusiast. The CD sells for \$19.95 +\$1.45 sales tax (CA residents only)+\$3.00 Shipping & Handling and may be purchased from:

SkyRocket Multimedia
29301 Breakwater St.
Lake Elsinore, CA 92530

E-mail questions to: SkyRocktMM@aol.com



Screenshots taken from Digital Fireworks Stand.

Writer Blast

Or Bust



Formula of the month - Firefly Willow

by - Sean Hale

A while back we made an 8" willow shell that came out quite spectacular. The shell was actually a round plastic ball shell with cut willow stars in it. While as a rule of thumb you don't normally put cut stars in a ball shell...When you don't have an 8" case former and you want to make an 8 with cut stars, you don't really have a choice. Besides, the shell was beautiful anyway. The comp was a slight variation of a charcoal willow mix taken from Shimuzu. The exact formulation is: KNO₃ - 38, Sulphur - 12, Charcoal (airfloat) - 45, Firefly Aluminum - 5, and Dextrin - 8. Firefly aluminum is a large flake aluminum that is about 10-12 mesh in size, Skylighter sells it and even provides a formula to use it. Originally I was going to just make willow comp for use in round stars. This requires one to granulate it, let it dry, and re-mill it until it's about 100m. Having done this, my willow comp was relatively dust free and ready for rolling. After all that preparation to make willow comp optimized for rolling, I decided I wanted "firefly willow" so I added the aluminum to the comp. Of course the aluminum flake was too large for star rolling.... so cut stars it is. I made a batch of 3/4" cut willow stars using the "I suck at this" cut star technique. I can't say for sure, but by the results I got from this shell I can almost assume that granulating the willow mix before cutting gives a better willow effect. The shell was awesome! It got just about the full 800 feet in the air and willowed almost all the way to the ground with beautiful delayed aluminum flashes throughout. The hang time was almost a minute.

Using the theory of granulating the willow mix first, I am going to try something new next time. I'll separate the willow mix into two batches. Next I will dampen the first batch and granulate through a screen to about 8-36 mesh. To the second batch I will add the firefly aluminum. Next I will mix the two batches together and dampen with just enough wheat paste to make the cut stars adhere. The theory is that the granulated willow particles will be left in the tail and thus having a better delay than just having the willow comp burn in a single mass. This leads me to a school of thought for getting interesting effects in the tail of a star. For instance, what if one were to put the firefly aluminum in a star rolling pan and then liberally coat willow mix on it. Next make some medium speed streamer mix with maybe ferro titanium. If you lightly pressed the granulated "willow aluminum" and streamer comp into a box star in the dry state, the streamer mix would eject the slow burning willow granules. After the willow granules burned to the center, you would get the firefly effect. The interesting part of this method would be that the firefly effect would be very delayed. The shell would first look like a regular streamer shell, then transition into a willow, and magically transform to firefly. Using this method you could just as easily coat willow mix on small color micro stars and achieve small color flashes in the tail of a willow shell.

Another variation would be to granulate some lampblack mix and mix the lampblack granules and the charcoal granules with the streamer mix. This may produce a "multilayered" willow effect. I can't guarantee that any of these things would work exactly as planned, but I can say that even if you went through all this trouble the shell still wouldn't suck either. There are so many formulas out there that maybe new star effect could be achieved by the method of manufacture rather than just another variation on some already published formula. After all, we all know that the mesh size of metal particles and charcoal can make a huge difference in the effect of a star, so why not the mesh size of the star comp itself. Of course the major drawback to this method is that once you dampen the granules for cut or pumped stars they will probably just kind of mush in with the rest of the comp thus not "ejecting" the granules into the tail. It would therefore seem that you must dry (or very lightly dampen) press these mixes into box stars. Someone once told me that they tried to add multicolored micro stars into a comet to achieve multicolored flashes in the tail, but the stars just burned up in the head of the comet so the effect wasn't as desired. While pressing the micro stars into a tube might have produced better results, it could also be a safety hazard. Colored star comps are generally more sensitive to impact, thus making pressing these mixes unsafe. On the other hand coating the colored micro stars with enough black powder type mix may protect them from impact better. I suppose the safest way to do this would be to wear gloves and a safety mask, press very lightly, and only keep enough comp near you for a single pressing. Too much trouble? Stupid idea? I don't know, but why not. It is only by trying out new ideas that one can advance. In fact some of the greater inventions that science has discovered were actually accidental discoveries while trying to invent something else. Silly putty is one such example. If anyone tries (or has tried) any of these things, I would be interested in hearing the results. Drop me an E-mail and we can exchange ideas. My E-mail is: sean@pyro.org

A Letter From the President

- by Thomas Grace

Well it has been some time since I have put pen to paper and I bet many of you have been wondering what's been going on with the WPA. Actually a lot has been happening and I apologize for the delay in letting you know. I do however have a few valid excuses. The wrap up of WWB9 has taken a little longer than normal and then came the 4th of July. I hope everyone had as good of a 4th as I did. The crew I work with was back to its same venue for the 4th year in a row shooting a show for Fireworks America. The weather was warm as usual, but we had great show and great BBQ. Good friends, good food and great fireworks, that's what the 4th is all about. I have finally joined the ranks and purchased a computer thanks to WPA member Glenn Vodhanel, and am getting used to it along with cyberspace so that is making life and club communication much easier. We even had a claim on our event insurance for WWB9. A person in the city who lives about a mile from spectator point said that our late night bombing crack the stucco on their house. Of course there is no way this could have happened, the glass would of broken long before that. Needless to say the insurance company dismissed the claim.

I would like to commend our board of directors on the great job they are doing keeping the business part of the club running, dealing with mounds of paperwork that keep us busy all year long. there are so many things that must be dealt with each year such as tax issues and our many permits and licenses, contracts, and of course membership. As usual, I am happy to announce that WWB10 will thunder its way back to S.A.R.A. Park Raceway for our 10TH anniversary celebration. Our host hotel will again be the Nautical Inn and we have rooms blocked for WPA members there and at the Pioneer. So when making reservations please tell them you are a WPA member. The board of directors is working to make this anniversary celebration the biggest and the best ever. We are even thinking of starting a day early to get a jump on things, besides an extra day of shooting could not hurt. Right? We are thinking along the lines of a western theme this year, kind of a round-up at the of S.A.R.A. Park coral. I am hoping that a lot of past members who have not been to a blast for a few years will join us this year for our 10th anniversary celebration. So if you know someone, or a display company or distributor, call them now and have them get it on their calender for February.

So what do you think, does an extra day sound like a good idea? Do you have something you would like to do or see happen at this years Winter Blast? Please let us know, we are knee deep in the planning stages now so this is the time. The Winter Blast is only as good as you make it. We will need help in the usual areas, safety, sight coordination, seminars, public display, and exhibitions. So let us know what you can do to make this a most memorable event for everyone. For those of you out there who make T-shirts and would like to be considered to make our staff shirts, your artwork will also be used on all the conventions materials. So please request an information sheet this will give you details on design and theme. I would also like someone to chair a committee for the location of next years convention and to report their findings at the business meeting. Is it time to move, or do we stay in Lake Havasu? So think about all the topics, and send a note into Sean Hale for the newsletter, he is always happy to receive articles and text or even your favorite pyro photo. Well lots to do, many things to think about, lets hear from you!

Stay green-
Thomas Grace
WPA President
WWB 10 Convention Chairmen

Performance Comparison Between Old and New Obron German Dark Aluminum

K. L. and B. J. Kosanke

It was recently announced that Obron Atlantic was changing the source for their German dark aluminum. (Their product number in the past was simply 5413; the new material is designated as 5413 H Su-per.) We recently published the results of a series of sound output tests of various salute powders,[1] which included the effect of using various aluminums, including Obron's old German dark. Because of our past work, and in response to a recent query on the Internet, we decided to conduct a brief investigation comparing the sound output of these two aluminum powders when used in a common flash powder formulation. This article reports those results.

The sound produced by a salute or the forces developed by the break charge of a crossette, depends on the rapidity with which the salute (flash) powder burns. Many factors act collectively to control burn rates of pyrotechnic compositions; however, among the most important for salute powders is the particle size of the aluminum fuel. (For a more complete discussion of the factors controlling burn rates, see reference 2.) Accordingly, if the change in aluminums provided by Obron, altered the size distribution of the aluminum particles, it is highly likely that salutes made with the new aluminum would produce different sound levels.

The color of fine metal powders generally depends on particle size, with finer particles tending to appear darker. However, this does not apply for German dark aluminums, because they contain a small percentage of carbon as a result of the manufacturing process. The new German dark aluminum is noticeably lighter in color than the old material. It is unknown whether this is primarily an indication of less carbon being present. In simply handling the aluminums, it also seemed that the old German dark aluminum was slightly more free-flowing than the new material.

Bulk density of a powder can be an indication of particle size, with smaller particles tending to produce less dense (fluffier) powders because of an increased ability to entrap air between the particles. Another factor affecting bulk density of powders is the range of particle size, with wide distributions tending to pack more densely than powders of more nearly uniform particle size. (The smaller particles tend to fit into the otherwise wasted space between larger particles.) However, this seems to be less true for flakes than for granular particles. The bulk density of the two German dark aluminums were measured. This was accomplished by first violently shaking samples of the powders in a closed container to entrain as much air as possible. Then 5 grams of the powder was weighed into a graduated cylinder (chemistry glassware) and placed on a vibrating platform for 30 seconds, thus consolidating the powder to a somewhat standard condition. It was found that the new German dark aluminum had a bulk density of 0.74 g/cc, which is effectively the same as the old aluminum's bulk density of 0.75 g/cc.

An attempt was made to determine the aluminum's average particle size using light microscopy. This is a difficult task and the results are fairly subjective, not because it is difficult to measure individual particle sizes with a microscope, but because it is difficult to estimate which individual particles are of average size. The results suggest that the new German dark aluminum has an average particle size of approximately 9 microns, whereas the old material seems to be more like 6 microns in average size. (A micron is a millionth of a meter, or 0.00004 inch.) Although it is difficult to be certain, it seemed that the new material also has a wider range of particle sizes, than did the old German dark aluminum.

For the tests reported here, the salute powders were 7:3 Swedish potassium perchlorate and German dark aluminum. The compositions were well mixed, using a combination of

aluminum continued

sieving, diapering, and tum-bling. Each test device consisted of a 50 g (1.8 oz.) charge of salute powder, confined in a 3 ounce polyethylene bottle. This method of construction was chosen to achieve a fairly high degree of consistency in confinement of the salute powder. For each type of aluminum, 3 separate tests were performed and the results were averaged. The air blast output was measured using a free-field blast gauge at 4 feet from the center of the test salute. (For more information about the methods and equipment used, see reference 1.)

The average results from the three tests of each aluminum are reported in the table below. Peak pressure is the maximum pressure (in pounds per square inch) measured in the air blast when the test salute exploded. For the relative pressures reported in the table, the value for the old German dark aluminum was defined as 100%. The sound pressure level (SPL) produced was calculated from the peak pressure (P) using the equation:

$$\text{SPL (dB)} = 170.8 + 20 \log (P).$$

Loudness values (N, in phons) were calculated using the equation:

$$\log (N) = 0.03 \text{ SPL} - 1.2.$$

Again, in the table, the relative loudness for the old German dark aluminum was defined as 100%. (For more information and references regarding these calculations, see references 1 and 3)

Aluminum Type (Obron Atlantic)	Peak Pressure (psi)	Relative Pressure	Sound Pressure Level (dB)	Relative Loudness
5413	5.93	= 100%	186.3	= 100%
5413 H Super	5.32	90%	185.3	93%

As can be seen in the table, in this brief experiment, the new German dark aluminum was a little less effective than the traditional material. Peak pressures produced by salutes using the new aluminum were reduced by 10% and their loudness was reduced by 7%. While this difference is sufficient to be essentially certain there was a real difference (and not just a statistical accident), it is not certain that these results are universally applicable. Each of the two aluminum samples was taken from a single production lot of aluminum powder, and it is not known to what extent there is variation between production lots of the same aluminum powders. In addition, testing was only done under conditions of weak confinement, and these results may not apply to other degrees of confinement.

The authors gratefully acknowledge Obron Atlantic for providing the test sample of their 5413 H Super aluminum.

References

- 1) K. L. and B. J. Kosanke, "Flash Powder Output Testing: Weak Confinement", *Journal of Pyrotechnics*, Issue No. 4 (1996) pp 5-14.
- 2) B. J. and K. L. Kosanke, "Control of Pyrotechnic Burn Rate", *Proceedings of the 2nd International Symposium of Fireworks* (1994) pp 241-262.
- 3) K. L. Kosanke, "Correspondence", *Journal of Pyrotechnics*, Issue No. 5 (1997) pp 60-61.

\$500,000 blast

Pyrotechnic association shows off its best fireworks tonight

By DAVID BELL
Today's News-Herald

The president of the Western Pyrotechnic Association promises a show this evening that will be 10 times more spectacular than most Independence Day fireworks displays.

"If the people putting on a show like this were to pay, what we will do on Sunday would easily cost \$500,000," said Glen Vohlaner. "The typical 4th of July show costs \$40-\$50,000."

Vohlaner took time out of Friday evening's set-up to explain about the association.

"There is a misconception that the fireworks we set off are sponsored by the manufacturers. We're not sponsored, we're a private non-profit club of pyrotechnic experts and enthusiasts.

"Pyrotechnics is an ancient art, going all the way to the early Chinese. And this is one field that is very poorly automated. Whenever technology is involved, it tends to

blow things up," Vohlaner laughs. "So the skills learned are passed from one generation to another, from a master to an apprentice. Some of the most beautiful fireworks are handmade. So our convention is a chance for our members

*See related
'Hava Blast'
story on
back page*

to share their skills and tips that they have learned."

Describing the work of the pyrotechnic experts as equal parts "painters of pictures" and "night sky lighters," Vohlaner said that the technology of pyrotechnics is unlike any other explosive field.

"Making an explosive device is relatively easy. Anybody can look up plans on the internet. But if that person can understand, I could hope that their intellect could be stretched enough to be able to control every break of the explosive device.

continued

"That's what the pyrotechnic expert does. If you have ever seen perfect circle fireworks, you know what a break is, the detonation that begins the image. Now imagine a circle shell, it shoots up the sky, rotates and the break is when the explosion occurs and the circle appears perfectly.

"But what if the rotation goes a little over, then the circle becomes oblong, or flat. Imagine the skill to know how to time the detonation at just the right

moment in the rotation to get the perfect circle.

"Making explosives is simple compared to what we do."

Vohlaner said that the show will go off on Sunday evening, "weather permitting."

"But unless the rain is coming down in buckets, plan on seeing a sky show second to none.

"The guns are already loaded. They have to be unloaded, one way or another."

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Opinion

Editorial

Fireworks show is welcome back

What a show!

It was chilly and windy, but that didn't keep away the crowds for the annual Winter Blast of the Western Arizona Pyrotechnics Association on Sunday night.

And we think the show from Spectator Point was a win-win for everyone. More people could see the event, traffic was less of a nightmare than it used to be out at SARA Park, and no one had to worry about getting his car towed away because it was parked illegally on Highway 95.

If you didn't get to SARA Park by about 6 p.m. in years past, you were unlikely to get a seat in the raceway grandstands. Then it was a two-hour wait before showtime, and while fireworks fans are willing to wait, creature comforts are not that great.

This is a show the members of the association use to strut their stuff for fellow members. Fortunately, the association also wants to share what it does with the public — for free. Few communities can boast — or afford — the fireworks display we have enjoyed here over the past nine years.

There were rumblings in the association to move the show elsewhere after last year. The Nautical Inn entered the scene and worked hard to accommodate its needs and to provide an area to shoot the fireworks. We hope the association found the changes welcome ones and its board will vote to return next year.

From our vantage point near Rotary Community Park, the show was wonderful. The reflections off the lake were pretty. And we noticed that people could come and go freely — many did leave early, but whether that was due to the elements or the pauses in the show so that they could reload, is not certain.

We're sure our city government and city businesses understand this: The association spends money here, puts on a show for free, and we should do everything in our power to welcome them back.

Thanks for Winter Blast IV!

— Today's News-Herald



Another Awesome Desert Blast!

The Notorious Bob Lazar has done it again, another awesome Desert Blast Party held in an undisclosed location somewhere in the Nevada desert. As you can see by the photo on the left, these guys don't mess around. Some of the highlights of this DB included a mini air show complete with live machine guns and bombs blowing up cars, lots of great fireworks from rockets by Doc Barr, to large shells, to comets, special effects, and a giant falls. There was a parachute flare launch of over 200 units, big man-sized explosions like the giant wall of fire that left the crowd gasping in disbelief. Perhaps some of the more exiting sites was watching bra-less women fire fully automatic weapons. This is something you really gotta see to appreciate. In addition to all the exiting and manly toys, there was good food, and a live band. The people are very interesting too. How about a guy who shoots rockets off his ultralight aircraft. Or the fellow who brought a giant electric thingy and was holding this big stick that made visible bolts of electricity arc to it. My buddy Greg showed up in his all military hummer with awesome fireworks, pickled green beans, and Cuban cigars. Man it's hot, but a better time I haven't had all year. Getting back to the office after a weekend like that just leaves you in shell shock. I mean how do you (or even try) to explain to your co-workers what you just experienced. You can't, bottom line, so why bother. Most folks would just think your a whacked nut. In case some of you readers are interested in some DB specifics, Bob Lazar himself has graciously granted the WPA with an interview. We should really thanks folks like him for a great time and for contributing to the newsletter. The following are a few questions and answers from the WPA to Bob about Desert Blast.

Q: What inspired you to create DB?

A: In the middle 70's friends & I used to attend a similar fireworks / dry lake get-togethers at the El Mirage dry lake in California, as did some of the people involved with Winter Blast (Richard Cole for instance). After the oppressing laws & the powers that be in California shut the event down, it left a pyro gap. Almost a decade went by and unknown to us some of those who attended the El Mirage event formed Winterblast & the WPA, while unknown to them, we started Desert Blast. The Desert Blast group & Richard bumped into one another at Winterblast 5 and were shocked to see what had happened, we both had the same roots. Kind of an El Mirage reunion.

Q: Do you like fireworks and would you rather see shells created by craftsman attending DB or a professional fireworks show?

A: I love a well-done professional firework show, although I also enjoy the ingenuity and new effects you see with amateur shells.

Q: What do you see as the main differences between Winter Blast and DB?

A: I view Winterblast as a "family" event. Legal, licensed and strictly controlled. Desert blast is the antithesis of Winterblast, illegal, unlicensed and certainly not for your family.

Q: Is DB safe?

A: No event with large fireworks and explosions, not to mention helicopters & machine guns can be completely safe. No one has been hurt in the 12 years of Desert Blast. Because we hand pick those who attend, it eliminates those unfamiliar with pyrotechnics & high energy materials as well as the "party animals" who get a bit out of hand. The remaining, is a knowledgeable group that knows their way around fireworks and what to expect from them.

Q: On the rules and regulations sheet for DB, there is a clause about NOT being allowed to talk with you about UFO's. Why is this?

A: In the late 1980's I was involved with some classified work at a remote facility in Nevada dealing with the banned topic mentioned. There has been much publicity (most of it incorrect) dealing with my involvement (read "Alien Agenda" by Jim Marrs if you feel the need to know the entire story), so much so, there is now a feature movie in production about my life. I truly hate the topic & wish they had chosen someone else for the project back then. People see Desert Blast as the perfect time to bombard me with questions about it which I have little or no time to answer during the event. Constant interruptions with silly questions leave me little time for the Desert Blast matters at hand, so talk of UFO's (to me) was banned under penalty of death.

Q: How do you find such a colorful crowd to attend DB?

A: They find us. As word spread, those that had something to contribute became part of the group and help it grow.

(continued on page 14)



This most awesome "Wall of Fire" explosion had to be the ultimate highlight of the event. We're talkin' high order and gasoline baby. Whoever did this, (and you know who you are) Thanks for a great thrill.

2000 Pounds of rocket fuel being burned off!!!



Greg's Hummer can be seen in many movies as he rents it out to the studios for a pretty penny. I want one.



One of the fun things I did for WWB 9 was assemble and pass around the first edition of the WPA Trivia Test. I wrote most of the questions in the test, Ron Dixon wrote about a third of them and my wife, Karen, and other wife, Chuck Branch, wrote a couple more. Many of the questions were nostalgic in nature, some were technical, some were meant to be humorous, some had trick answers and some were very trivial. I gave more points to questions that had significance to WPA members who 1) had been around since the first Winter Blast, 2) read their newsletters diligently and, 3) paid attention to the products brought to our conventions over the years. Some of the questions even I didn't know the answer to causing me to do some research during the convention. After I got home and looked carefully through my archives I discovered that at least two questions were incorrectly worded. I'll touch on those as we get to them.

Of about 200 tests passed out, only 9 came back. The first place winner was Nicole Dixon, second place was Paul Salverson and Kirby Nellis came in third. First place prize was a case of Sticky Match™ and second place was 100 Daveyfire electric matches. Since we never finished announcing the answers during the public display, we thought we'd print them here in the newsletter in 4 parts. I hope you find this informative and/or amusing.

1. Who invented gunpowder?
A) Berthold Schwartz
B) Dennis Manochio
C) Larry Homan's Dad
D) Some guy that Paul Bregel knows
E) A Chinese monk 1 point

The answer to this question was suppose to be "A", but Paul Bregel informs me that Berthold Schwartz only rediscovered gunpowder, not to mention the spelling of his named here is incorrect even though I copied it out of Pyrotechnica XVII. I made up the bit about the monk (I hope that makes it wrong). All in all it's a terrible question. Luckily it wasn't worth many points. We accepted "A" or "none" even though Paul says "D" is the best answer!

2. Who coined the name "Western Winter Blast"?
A) Steve Wilson
B) Steve Haller
C) Steve Majdali
D) Mark Wray
E) Richard Cole 5 points

Our first VP, Steve Haller, came up with the name. A very good question of historical value since Steve hasn't been to a WPA function in about 8 years.

3. The first WPA Newsletter was produced on a...
A) Typewriter
B) Commodore 64
C) Commodore 128
D) Mac Plus
E) Tandy TRS 80 1 point

"C" is the correct answer. I had to dig through my archives and find the original master to determine this. (Do you suppose it's worth any money yet? Also, I have a Commodore 128 for sale.)

4. How many people came to the first Winter Blast (within 5, including spouses, children and guests)
_____ (write in number) 10 points

Records of this are a bit sketchy but consensus puts the actual number at 127 or 128 so we accepted 122-133. Nobody got this one right.

(WPA trivia continued)

5. Who invented Sticky Match™
A) Two Australian guys
B) Ron Dixon
C) Garry Hanson
D) Larry Homan's dad 2 points

While Larry Homan claims to have invented a similar product with his Dad to help end the Vietnam War, and Ron Dixon owns the patent, Sticky Match™ was actually invented by Australian citizens Clive Featherby and Bob Dossin.

6. The largest shell (by weight) ever successfully fired at a Winter Blast was built by:
A) Jim Widmann
B) Devon Dickenson
C) Bill Page
D) Noye Balmer
E) Garry Hanson
F) Noye Balmer 2 points

Here's a question that we may never know the answer to since the evidence was all destroyed; especially in Jim Widmann's case. Both Noye Balmer and Bill Page brought (and successfully fired) large cylinder shells at different Winter Blasts. Rudy Schaffner was suppose to be the "D" choice, but I made a typo on the master test. The best answer, however, is B for Devon's mammoth 24" shell which worked just fine back at WWB II.

7. Who among the following did not speak at the first Winter Blast?
A) Ken Kosanke
B) Bob Winokur
C) Jim Farrell
D) Jack Drewes
E) Dennis Manochio 5 points

One of my best trick questions. The answer is "E". Although American Fireworks News publisher Jack Drewes has never been to a Winter Blast, he did indeed speak at the first kickoff meeting in Mesquite by way of a special telephone speaker hookup. The late Dennis Manochio was scheduled to speak, but could not attend due to a family illness. Anyone who knew Dennis well would agree that had he actually attended, he certainly would have spoken!

8. A generous donation of product at the first Winter Blast from Boom Boom Productions consisted primarily of 4" canister shells hand crafted out of Kraft paper cans and...
A) pasted hemp fibers
B) fiber tape
C) masking tape
D) gummed tape
E) Gum Arabic 1 point

Freddy "Boom Boom" May put a tremendous effort into his exhibition in Mesquite utilizing some very nice star formulas. Unfortunately, the breaks of his shells were poo-pooed by several pyro-snobs in attendance when they learned that "C", masking tape was the finish wrap.

9. The first blue strobe was demonstrated...
A) at the first Winter Blast by Clive Jennings-White
B) at Winter Blast V by Eric McCaskie
C) in Larry Homan's driveway in 1969
D) by placing Copper Benzoate in a microwave oven 2 points

While Eric McCaskie did indeed demonstrate blue strobe falling leaves in a shell at WWB IV, it was Dr. Jennings-White who showed us a blue strobe pot at the first Winter Blast; he was wearing a trenchcoat at the time. I only mention that because rumor has it that someone wearing only women's underwear and a trenchcoat was seen in Larry Homan's driveway on numerous occasions during the sixties lighting fireworks that merely sputtered.

(continued on pg. 15)



(interview with Bob Continued)

Q: Can anyone attend?

A: No. With few exceptions, we only allow people who are participating to attend. We don't like idle spectators. Generally all we ask is that you bring some fireworks with you and that we can verify that you know what your doing. If a guy wants to attend and he's bringing an armful of 6" shells & home built rockets, he's our kind of guy. Conversely, if someone applies that "just wants to hang out and see what goes on", he doesn't get invited.

Q: How can one get invited?

A: The easiest (and quite possibly the only way unless you know someone) is the internet. Go to the Desert Blast home page, <http://www.banzal-net.com/tridot/db.htm> and click on the application icon.

Q: How much effort and coordination does it take to put on a bash like this?

A: A tremendous amount of time, effort, and money too. For the first 10 years I paid for all of Desert Blast myself. Spending tens of thousands of dollars on a single night's party got old after a decade and now we charge a basic \$25 admission fee to help with the expenses. The majority of people donate more and that's what keeps the event going.

Q: Obviously it is very hot at DB and a lot of work to put on. Why is it that you continue to hold Desert Blasts when you could just as well just go do these activities in the desert by yourself, and with a little less effort and risk I might add.

A: Actually, about once every few years or so, we do. We have a "Desert Blast" for just the 20 or so people that do the most work to make it happen. We're considering that for DB13. Generally though, the more the merrier. The more at the event (up to a point) the more strange an unusual things you'll see: WW2 bombers dropping watermelons, fantastic fireworks, flame-throwers, high power rockets, strange jet powered things, weird flying machines etc., etc.

Q: OK you'll kill me for this question but I gotta know. Do you think extraterrestrial beings are capable of enjoying fireworks, or is their mentality so different that they wouldn't appreciate artistic beauty? Please elaborate.

A: A perfect example of one of those "really smart" questions I was talking about. I wish you would have asked me it at Desert Blast :) And no, I'm not going to answer it.

--End



A couple of 8's being prepared for DB.



The falls really was big. I wasn't lying was I?

What party would be complete without a gunner firing full auto out of a huey helicopter.

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WPA Mailing List Status and Stats

We are proud to announce that the WPA mailing list is up and running. The mailing list I am referring to is an electronic mailing list. Basically that means that anybody in the WPA who as something to say can post it to the list via E-Mail. At the end of the day you will receive an E-mail that is a compilation of everyone's posts. You can then respond by maybe answering someone's question or expressing your opinion... etc etc. Chances are, if you put your current E-mail address on your WPA membership application, then you have already received a notice via E-mail about the list. If you did not receive this notice, then E-mail a request to join the list to: sean@pyrotechnics.org. The mailing list will be open to WPA members and a few representatives from other pyrotechnic organizations. Unless you already received a notice by E-Mail, your WPA membership status will be checked before you can join the mailing list.

(WPA trivia continued)

10. The first woman to ever hold a WPA office was:
A) Arlene Dixon
B) Jean Starr
C) Collie Revak
D) none of the above 10 points

This was by far the most missed question of them all. (Even Jean and Arlene answered this question wrong!) Although it is true that Arlene, Collie and Jean have all put in their lionsess share for the WPA as officers and/or chairpersons, it was our first Treasurer, Lynn Mathias, who served the WPA as our first female officer. Shortly thereafter, she divorced out of the WPA and hasn't been seen since by our members. "D", none of the above, was the only correct answer.

In the next WPA Newsletter, I will go over the answers to questions 11 through 20. Anyone who wants a fresh copy the whole test can get one by contacting me (see officers on inside cover). I hope we can come up with many more new WPA trivia questions for our ten-year anniversary next year. Let me know if you've got any good ones to add.

SWW

