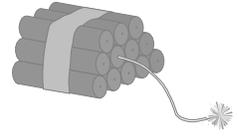


The Primer



Newsletter of the Golden West Chapter, International Society of Explosives Engineers
Alpha Explosives, P.O. Box 310, Lincoln, CA 95648

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Issue 1

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President's Message...

Hey Members & Supporters,

As I write this message today, a snow flurry is passing thru my neighborhood this first week of March. All of our reservoirs are overflowing and creating dangerous conditions for those downstream. Incredible! Even though we needed the water, it's been a challenge to interpret the weather reports to know exactly what the weather will be like day to day. I'm happy to report that all our team members and GWC members affected by the Oroville Dam failure made it thru the crazy evacuation and are safe. We called it just right on January 28th. The weather was absolutely beautiful for our annual business meeting and crab feed. That's right, after much anxious waiting, the crab were cleared to participate by Fish & Wildlife this year.. Mike & Sue Burneson delivered the tasty crustaceans to a thankful crowd. They had great help from the usual team of Ladd & Maggie Stephenson and Donna Chiurato serving a great dinner with all the trimmings including Mikes special Tri-tip and chicken. Thanks to Secretary Danniell Edwards and past secretary Bruce Townes, the popular raffle ticket sales went on with out a hitch. The prizes were swiftly presented to the winners by the Ocheltree sisters.

Continued on next page.

Presidents Message continued...

Our treasurer, Jerry Fulghum, made the announcement that dinner was on the house contributing to a successful raffle event. Once again, we held our annual elections. I will continue as your president, Mike Burneson continues as board member, head chef, Newsletter Editor and Jerry Fulghum your treasurer and Danniell will remain as our chapter secretary. To round out the board, welcome to Ladd Stephenson taking Wes Bender's spot on the board. Thank You Ladd! Wes will not be too far away. He still remains our webmaster and advisor to the direction of the chapter.

We also welcomed a few of our past presidents this year. Bill Reid, (1998) his wife Ann Marie and son Spencer. Spencer was the first recipient of our scholarship award. Bill Warfield, (2007-2009) a Life Member of the chapter. And all the way from Albuquerque New Mexico, Tim Hurley(2002). Along with past president and Life Member, Mike Burneson, we had some interesting conversations about the chapter's history. Following the business meeting we were treated to two very informative presentations. First, a History of Explosives Manufacturing in The Bay area by Angus McFarlane that took place in the 1800's . Second was Michael Miller of the Original 16-1 Mine. He gave us insight into the history and current challenges he faces mining the Original 16 to One Mine in Alleghany CA. Mike went above and beyond by actually trusting us to handle a couple of beautiful samples from the mine.

After our Chapter meeting my wife and I headed to Orlando for the ISEE conference. It was a rush to get there Sunday, but Donna and I made it. One of the changes that our board will be making is a change to the date of the chapter meeting for a celebration of our chapter's 30th year. That way anyone interested, can make next years ISEE trap shoot and Blasters weekend in San Antonio.

We will keep you posted.

Check out Mike's editorial page and enjoy this quarter's newsletter.

Be Safe!

Your President,
Mike Chiurato

The Primer

The Wesley L. Bender Scholarship Fund Call for Scholarship application Starting June 1, 2017

Scholarship Eligibility: Graduating high school seniors or students already enrolled in college who are sons or daughters of an employee of an Explosives or other industry employing explosives may apply for the scholarship.

Judging Committee: Scholarship applications will be reviewed and judged by a panel, including the Chapter Officers and Board and the past President of the GWC or their respective designees.

Application Deadline and Scholarship Presentation: The scholarship application process will be an Internet-based process. Starting June 1, 2017 applicants will be able to apply via GWC on-line application process at <http://iseegoldenwest.org>.

The deadline for applications is August 31, 2017. The winning applicant will be named by September 30, 2017. The Scholarship will be issued to the winner at five hundred dollars per semester provided the student is considered by the institution as a full time student and maintains a grade point average of 3.0.

For more information, contact Gerald Fulghum 916-481-1421 or at

GRFULGHUM@SBCGLOBAL.NET

To apply for the Scholarship please include these four items:

The completed application.

A letter of recommendation from your industry representative.

A 300 to 500 word statement of your plans for a career in the explosives or aggregate industry;

If you have work experience in the aggregate or explosives industry as a summer employee, an intern or through a cooperative work program, please include one or more recommendation letters from your employer(s).

Unexpected Blast Results

by Wes Bender

Sometimes the best laid plans of mice, men and blasters (and even blasting consultants) do not turn out exactly as expected. Here are a few instances where things turned out differently or were otherwise unusual.

A contractor from Redding was working on a project on Highway 36 near Fredonyer Pass west of Susanville. He called me and asked if I would come review some of the blasting that he was undertaking. I had sent blasting estimates to most of the bidders on the job and he knew I was somewhat familiar with the project. One of the sliver cuts was in cemented cobbles on a slope above the existing right of way. The first blast was intended to remove only a small amount of these cobbles to provide a catch bench. Those of you who have blasted cemented cobbles know that the results can vary considerably. Even using the same powder factor it can range from just barely breaking the material into large blocks to having all of the binder material fail, letting the cobbles run free. It all depends upon the strength of the binder material and, unless you conduct a test blast first, you can't really predict the outcome.

After the blast was loaded, traffic was stopped, signals were sounded and the shot detonated. Equipment was standing by to muck out the blast so that traffic could resume. Only about a 15 minute delay was anticipated. You can guess what happened next. Yup, the binder material all went to sand and down came the cobbles, extending nearly to the top of the slope. Instead of the 15 minute delay, traffic couldn't proceed through the blasting zone for nearly 7 hours. I had been lucky enough to park my car where I could head back toward Susanville and home. Later, in a conversation with a CalTrans employee, he indicated that they were pretty happy with the outcome. They had figured the highway would have to be closed 6 or 7 times for blasting along that slope. Now it had all been removed in one blast. The only folks who were upset were the logging trucks and others who were caught in the closure all day.

Another situation occurred at Donner Summit on I-80. A contractor had to shoot a long trimming blast to extend the truck passing lane westbound where it crossed the summit so that trucks could accelerate before having to merge back into traffic. There were rock outcrops that needed to be removed along a stretch of about a quarter mile. Everything was tied in to a long detonating cord trunkline. I was at the west end of the trunkline and the contractor's blaster was at the east end. For redundancy, we each had two pull-wire fuse lighters and two short lengths of cap and fuse to initiate the shot. The CHP wouldn't allow the closing of westbound I-80, but agreed to use a "rolling roadblock" to provide a short break in traffic wherein we could set off the shot. Two CHP cars started slowing westbound traffic coming up Donner Summit while a CalTrans truck chased the faster cars ahead. The blasting signals were sounded.

After the Caltrans truck went by, we attached the pull-wire fuse lighters and the blaster gave the signal to fire over the radio. I pulled my two fuse lighters at my end and the blaster pulled his at the other and we scampered off. We never knew which one of us actually fired the shot. After a short wait (probably not the full 2 minutes that CalOSHA would have liked for cap and fuse, but this was an unusual situation and we didn't have that much time), the shot detonated, sending quite a bit of rock well into both westbound lanes. The contractor had several front end loaders standing by, but they weren't able to get both lanes open before the CHP showed up leading their convoy. My participation wasn't needed any longer, so after we checked for misfires I headed west to Nevada City, having been smart enough to park at that end of the shot. I can't really fault the blaster for the results. The blast was too long to reasonably cover and there wasn't much that could have been done to keep some of the rock from getting onto the highway. He was blasting granite that had already been badly fractured from the original heavy blasting to put I-80 over the summit. Had it been good solid, intact rock, the results probably would have been a lot different.

While I was doing some blast consulting at Sweetwater Dam east of San Diego, the prime contractor there was also doing some minor road work in the town of Ramona. He had a boulder at the edge of the road that he needed to blast and wanted me to bring my seismograph up and record vibration and airblast at the nearest residence. I drove up to Ramona on the morning of the blast and set up one of my machines near the front porch of the nearest house and then backed my car down the street about a half block. The blaster, who was a good friend of mine, backed his truck down the street too and parked it behind my car, jokingly telling me that he felt it was safer there.

You guessed it. When the shot went off, one single chunk of flyrock launched off down the street, arcing over the top of my car, landing on his hood and smashing his windshield. I told him later that it's not a good idea to tweak the noses of the blasting gods. They know, and they will surely get even.

The Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad (NCNG, or "Never Come, Never Go") was in existence from 1874 until 1942 and ran between Nevada City and Colfax, where it connected to the Central Pacific RR. After shutting down in 1942, all the rails were pulled up and most everything was converted to scrap steel for the war effort. Some of the better rolling stock found further use elsewhere, but most was scrapped. A contract was let at the time to remove the steel trestle bridge over the Bear River. The effort was abandoned when it was determined that the cost of dismantling the bridge, coupled with the building of a temporary road down to the river bottom, was more than the scrap value of the bridge. It was an impressive sight, with the top of the bridge (the track level) standing a little over 173 feet above the river below. In the early '60s you could still see the abandoned railroad bridge just upstream from the Bear River bridge on Highway 174 (the Colfax Highway).

In 1963, when the Nevada Irrigation District was preparing to build the dam for Rollins Reservoir on the Bear River, the bridge needed to be removed. A contractor was hired and on August 23, 1963, with a large crowd on hand and the explosive charges all set, the plunger was pushed. After the smoke and dust had cleared, the old railroad bridge was still standing. A bit bent out of shape perhaps, but standing nonetheless. To add insult to injury, when they attempted to pull it over by cable with a Cat, it maybe shuddered a bit and the cable snapped. A short time later, after doing considerably more work with acetylene torches, it was finally pulled down. It didn't give up without a fight though.

Although the following story isn't particularly about an unusual blasting occurrence, there is still probably a moral there someplace. Blyth Memorial Arena was built in Squaw Valley for the 1960 Olympics. It was used for hockey and other Olympic skating events. It was an unusual structure in a couple of ways. One end of the building was left open so crowds could see the skating events that were mandated to be held outdoors. The other unusual thing was the construction. It was not designed to support the heavy snow loads that are typical of the Sierra. Instead, the roof was left un-insulated and heat from the ice making equipment and other sources inside the building rose to the ceiling and kept the snow slowly melting off of the roof. That this had been successful for over 20 years spoke well of the concept.

In 1982, the US Forest Service, who owned the building, was trying to comply with federal government mandates for energy conservation. They had money available and put a fiberglass coating on the roof and added insulation. While their attempts might have been plausible in some instances, what they actually accomplished was to defeat the original concept of the interior heat melting the snow. The USFS sold the building to the Squaw Valley Ski resort. In spite of their attempts to keep the snow load minimized, in 1983, with fairly heavy snow on the roof, it partially collapsed. Demolition of the building was now necessary. Rather than hiring a demolition company to take the building down, it was felt that local blasters, possibly from the Ski Patrol at Squaw Valley, could accomplish the job. They knew how to handle explosives and were readily available.

They performed the job admirably, but in an effort to add to the effect, they counted down to the detonation over the radio, which was carried on live television. After the blasting signals had been given and the proper amount of time had passed, the countdown over the radio commenced, "10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, **BOOM!!**, 2, 1, zero." Oops. The blast was successful enough, but their attempt at increasing the excitement factor backfired. I guess there's a moral there for you blasters. If you're going to try something different, maybe it would be best not to call attention to what you're doing until after you're finished.... and don't try to make it any more spectacular than absolutely necessary.

A consulting firm from Tucson rented a seismograph from me to do some blast vibration analysis at a mining operation in the Mojave Desert. The consulting group owned one seismograph and the mining company also had one.

For one of the larger blasts, the technician set up an array of instruments so he could develop some vibration regression numbers. He set my rental seismograph 100 feet from the blast. He placed the mining company's seismograph 400 feet from the blast. Feeling a bit smug, he then placed HIS seismograph at a safe point 800 feet from the blast. I told you earlier about tweaking the blasting gods' noses. You don't have to be a blaster to do so and just because you aren't the blaster in charge, doesn't mean you'll escape their wrath. When they set off the blast, as you have probably already guessed, a large chunk of flyrock lifted up out of the blast, sailed nicely over my seismograph, cleared the mining company's seismograph and landed squarely on the consultant's seismograph, converting it into a pile of smashed electronics and fiberglass.

I later suggested that he not throw it out. I told him to sweep up the remains and hang onto them. At the time InstanTel would occasionally offer a rebate against the purchase price of a new unit for any traded-in seismograph, regardless of condition. I don't recall if he ever followed my advice. I rented them instruments for several other projects later and it was probably cheaper for them to do that anyway. At least they wouldn't lose another seismograph....

On a pipeline project near Auburn for the Placer County Water Agency, blasting had been proceeding nicely with very few problems. Suddenly, on one fairly simple blast, a large amount of flyrock landed in yards and on roofs of the surrounding residences. The Agency called me to come help determine what had gone wrong. After looking over the blast plan and discussing it with the blaster, everything appeared to be OK. He had placed a seismograph directly across the street from the blast and I asked to see the seismic record from it.

Comparing the seismic tape and the blast report, it was obvious that something other than the loaded holes had been the source of the flyrock. The last hole in the blast detonated nearly a full second before a spike on the seismic tape and a slightly later and larger spike on the airblast channel, indicating that something else had detonated, probably causing the flyrock. In addition, the flyrock had all come from a crater near the end of the blast. A Drager gas detector was brought in to see if there was a possibility of methane gas in the area. Sure enough, methane was detected. Apparently the area had been used as a dumping area at some time in the past, resulting in some methane buildup.

Blasting was allowed to continue, but only if the boreholes and surrounding area were tested for methane first. Damage from the incident wasn't excessive and, in this instance, the blasting company was as much a victim as the folks who had received the flyrock.

Editor's Notes...

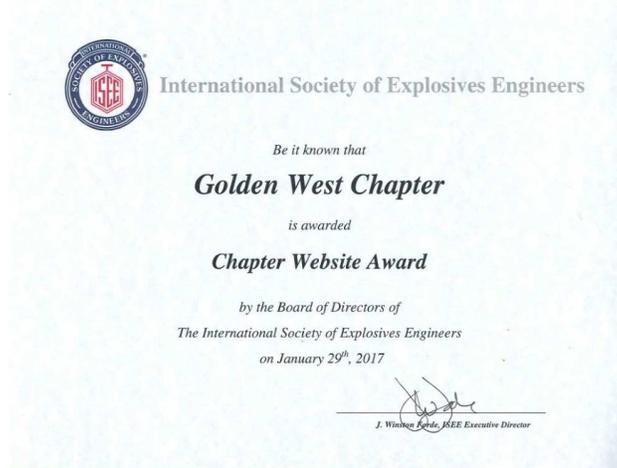
The Golden West Chapter Annual Business Meeting held on January 28th 2017 at Mt. Pleasant Hall was well attended. I think pretty much everyone in attendance had a good time and plenty to eat. I really look forward each year to bringing the food and everyone working together to make such a great event. This year we had 200 lbs of crab, 40 lbs of tri tip, 30 lbs of chicken, salad and pasta with marinara. The desserts were fabulous and we had plenty of adult beverages to go around. If I could only get the darn water to boil for the pasta a little sooner it would have lowered my stress level. I would like to thank Mike and Donna Chiurato for every thing they do each year to make this such a special event. I want to thank my wife Sue for the long day of preparation. Thank you Ladd and Maggie Stephenson and Brian Stopper for your help in the kitchen. Could not have done it without your help. I want to thank everyone who helped make this year's event the best ever. We had two amazing speakers. Angus Macfarlane's presentation on explosives during the California gold rush was outstanding. The material he presented in his slide show was very old historical news articles from the era. Michael Miller, the CEO from the Original 16:1 mine gave a very passionate presentation and had everyone in the building watching. Great job Mike you are a true professional in our business. I hope the chapter can put together a field trip to the mine in Alleghany.

Continued on next page

The Primer

Editor's Notes...

Our president Mike Chiurato and his wife Donna left a few hours after our Business Dinner / Party to attend the International's Conference In Orlando. If they would have been able to attend the Sunday Morning breakfast they would have been able to receive in person. **The Chapter Quality Operations Award. The Chapter Newsletter Award and The Chapter Website Award.**



Continued on next page

Editor's Notes...

The awards received by the Golden West Chapter at the International are a credit to those that have served the chapter for many years. As our President pointed out in his letter we had many past presidents attend our meeting and it was just a great time seeing everyone at the hall. In this issue you will see the application for the Wesley L. Bender Scholarship Fund. I strongly suggest that if you have a family member that wants some assistance with the cost of college to apply for these funds. In this issue of the Primer we have an article by our Webmaster Wes Bender it is a really good read. I would like to share some photos of the dinner with you and hope everyone has a busy Spring. We will publish the next issue of the Primer in June.

Current board members and officers are:

President- Mike Chiurato

Treasurer- -Gerald "Jerry" Fulghum

Secretary- Danniell Edwards

Board member- Ladd Stephenson

Board Member/Newsletter Editor-Mike Burneson

Website Master –Wes Bender

Continued on next page.

The Primer



The President was talking but, not many were watching. A lot of eating going on.



Past President Bill Reid and Donna Chiurato and Sue Burneson

The Primer



Ladd and Maggie Stephenson Welcome to the GWC Board Ladd. Our President Mike Chiurato conducting the raffle.



Secretary- Danniell Edwards.
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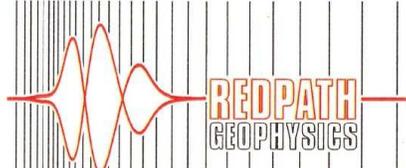
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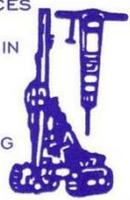
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Fire in the Hole...

The Bagpiper....

As a bagpiper, I play occasional gigs. Recently I was asked by a funeral director to play at a graveside service for a homeless man. He had no family or friends, so the service was to be at a pauper's cemetery in the Eastern Kentucky back country. As I was not familiar with his area I got lost and, being the stubborn bonehead that I am, I didn't stop for directions. I finally arrived an hour late and saw the funeral director had evidently gone and the hearse was nowhere in sight.

There were only the diggers and crew left and they were eating lunch. I felt badly and apologized to the men for being late. I went to the side of the grave and looked down and the vault lid was already in place. I didn't know what else to do, so I started to play.

The workers put down their lunches and began to gather around. I played out my heart and soul for this man with no family and friends. I played like I've never played before for this homeless man. And as I played 'Amazing Grace,' the workers began to weep. They wept, I wept, we all wept together.

When I finished I packed up my bagpipes and started for my car. Though my head hung low, my heart was full. As I opened the door to my car, I heard one of the workers say, "I never seen nothin' like that before and I've been putting in septic tanks for twenty years."

Apparently I'm still lost..