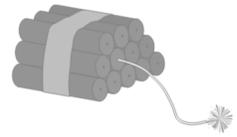


The Primer



Newsletter of the Golden West Chapter, International Society of Explosives Engineers

Volume 33

Spring 2022

Issue 1

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The Primer was published four times per year on the web site of the Golden West Chapter of the ISEE:

www.iseegoldenwest.org

Mike Burneson - editor

A Message from the Officers & Board of Directors.

When the Golden West Chapter was first organized 34 years ago, times were quite a bit different. We had a number of small blasting contractors working on projects. We also had blasters who were in charge of blasting at various construction projects and at mining operations and who were left on their own to develop good blasting programs. These blasters were solving their particular problems as best they could, sometimes getting a little advice from their respective powder suppliers. In short, there was a need for these folks to come together and share their experiences and help one another solve their technical issues. The organizing of the Golden West Chapter filled that need in the Northern California region.

We held dinner meetings several times per year where blasters could gather and share experiences. We had guest speakers who provided us with very interesting programs. We also put on one or two well-attended workshops each year. The Chapter helped support the annual blaster refresher training that Alpha Explosives conducted each year. The various sales representatives and other of our members who circulated through the territory promoted the Chapter and invited interested parties to join. Times were good and the Chapter grew accordingly. At the annual business dinner meeting there was actually competition among members to be elected to the governing Board of Directors.

Over the years, however, times have changed, at least in our territory. As the industry began to shrink into fewer, larger players, much of the blasting guidance came from the employers rather than being developed by the blasters themselves. Many of the blasters who had formed the backbone of the Chapter reached retirement age or moved out of the area. Interest in our training seminars began to wane. The makeup up the Chapter leadership began to change also as fewer people wanted to assume that responsibility. Some officer positions and board positions were eliminated, not because we didn't need them, but because no one would step up to fill them. The responsibility of keeping the Chapter running fell upon fewer and fewer people. Meetings were reduced to just one business meeting per year. Workshop attendance dropped to the point where it was no longer feasible to go to the trouble of organizing them and they were dropped. The future did not look good for the Golden West Chapter.

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The idea was proposed to refocus the Chapter by sponsoring scholarships for students who were children of employees in explosive-related industries. Funding was obtained through donations and through an annual clay-shoot and barbecue. We funded four very successful scholarships in this manner. Unfortunately, the recent issue with Covid put a damper on fund-raising and the Chapter's scholarship program eventually came to a halt.

During the year 2021, the Chapter saw a large drop in membership. The bulk of today's blasters didn't seem to have the same approach to their profession as in the past. Their employer paid them a wage and told them what to do. Why would they need to belong to the Chapter? In addition, the same group of individuals who had been carrying the ball and keeping the Chapter alive were beginning to burn out or were reaching retirement age.

The handwriting was on the wall. It appeared that the Golden West Chapter had outlived its usefulness. The Board of Directors analyzed the situation carefully. No new blood was on board to carry on the work of the previous leaders and the Chapter was not going to be able to continue without them. Support of the major explosive suppliers had become non-existent. At their last meeting in 2021, the Board determined that the matter of the continuation of the Golden West Chapter should be put to a vote of the general membership at the upcoming annual business meeting. The membership could either vote to continue the Chapter and elect new officers and board to manage it properly or they could vote to dissolve the Chapter. At the meeting which, as had been the case for the past few years was poorly attended, the vote to dissolve the Chapter was unanimous.

A committee was appointed to wind down the affairs of the Chapter. The committee determined that the assets of the Chapter consisted of the Chapter library and a bank account. The committee investigated various charitable organizations and selected three that they thought were worthy. The funds remaining in the Chapter's bank account after all financial obligations had been met were divided evenly among the three. The organizations that received the funds were (1) The Salvation Army, Del Oro District (northern California) for their Youth and Job Development Programs, (2) The Boy Scouts of America, Golden Empire Council for their Uniform and Equipment Fund, and (3) The scholarship fund of the SEE's Education Foundation.

The Chapter library proved to be a bit more problematic. Numerous inquiries were directed to universities in the chapter area that had schools of mining. None were interested in obtaining any part of the library. With so much information being available on the internet and from other electronic means, printed materials are not in demand. An attempt was made to return items to the various donors if they could be identified.

Thus, with the disposal of the assets and with the submission of the chapter's annual report to the ISEE, the Golden West Chapter fades into history. It was a fun ride for everyone involved and it served its stated purposes well.

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History of the Golden West Chapter

In late 1987, Dale Nies and Wes Bender sat on a pair of barstools at Cirino's in Nevada City and, in a sudden burst of intelligence discussed the possibility of forming a local chapter of what was then the Society of Explosives Engineers (now the International Society of Explosives Engineers). After mailing invitations to SEE members throughout Northern California and inviting blasters who might be interested, an organizational meeting was held in Sacramento on December 14, 1987, assisted by our old friend and SEE Director, Darrell Brown. A chapter name was selected, constitution and by-laws adopted and offices and board members elected for the fledgling chapter.

Founding Members:

Present at the Founding Meeting.

Wes Bender, Eric Bennett, Rudy Christians, Gordon Coleman, Ben DiDuca, Geof Gordon, Dale Nies, Charlie Richardson, Neil Skellenger and Charles Standen.

Not Present, but Commitment Made.

Mike Burneson, John Falconi, Mike Lovejoy, Mike Shields and Ladd Stephenson.

Chapter Presidents:

1988 Wes Bender, 1989 Dale Nies, 1990 Ben DiDuca, 1991 Richard Love, 1992 Gordon Coleman, 1993 Dale Nies, 1994 Mike Burneson, 1995 Randy Messer, 1996 Bill Warfield, 1997 Russ Evanski, 1998 Bill Reid, 1999 Steve Bare, 2000 the late Al Colflesh, 2001 Jim Light, 2002 Tim Hurley, 2003 Duane Niesen, 2004, Tom Shirley, 2005 Brian Fortelka, 2006 the late Todd Harris, 2007-2008 Bill Warfield, 2009 Bill Warfield, Wes Bender (co-presidents), 2010 Sandy Figures, 2011– 2021 Mike Chiurato.

Participation:

Many Chapter Members have worked hard on behalf of the Chapter through the years. For their considerable contributions of time and effort. Wes Bender, Mike Burneson, Gordon Coleman, Rudy Christians, Mike Chiurato, Jerry Fulghum, Carey Haughey, Dale Nies and Bill Warfield have been awarded Lifetime memberships in the Golden West Chapter.

The Chapter Newsletter, The Primer

Prior to 1990 communication to the membership was through mailed flyers and memos. In 1990 Dick Love initiated the regular publication of a chapter newsletter and named it The Primer. Dick edited The Primer until early in 1995. John Givogri filled in as editor for a few issues, assisted by Gordon Coleman. In 1996, Randy Messer and Gordon Coleman handled the editorial duties.

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In 1997 Wes Bender took on the role of editor. After 15 years, in 2012 Wes Bender stepped down and Mike Burneson took over the editorial duties. In addition to the regular articles provided by the Chapter Presidents, various members have contributed articles through the years. Contributors have included Lake Herman Mike (Live at the Rock), Dick Love, Gordon Coleman, Bill Warfield, Bruce Redpath, Linda Nies, the late Ed Criley, Jock Masson, Eric Bennett, Tim Hurley and Wes Bender. In 2019 The Primer completed its 30th year as the Chapter's official publication. The Primer has been awarded the ISEE's Chapter Newsletter Award at the annual ISEE conferences 13 times between 1993 and 2019. After the 2019, the award was renamed by the ISEE to the Communications Award to include chapter websites. The Primer won that award at the ISEE Conference in 2020. Commencing with the year 2007 issues, the Primer has appeared quarterly in electronic format on the chapter website. Back issues can be found in the website's archive section.



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Editors Notes ...

I personally want to thank everyone that has shared their time and contributed to the Golden West Chapter. I have enjoyed participating in our chapter functions for many years now . Workshops, picnics and fundraisers for our scholarship program. I am proud of what our group has accomplished for our members. I really enjoyed attending our annual business meetings. I remember attending meetings that were held at various locations all over Northern California. Cattlemen's, Charlie Browns in Sacramento, Bakers Square over in Stockton to name just a few. I don't remember the name of the hotel in Sacramento that we had a dinner at when Fred Semnara of ETI retired but, I do remember we all had a great time. Mount Pleasant Hall took things to a whole new level with the hard work and dedication of everyone involved. Mike & Donna Chiurato gave much of their time to make sure we all had a great time. The food and drink, the raffle prizes. The list of guest speakers we have had over the years was fantastic. I still remember most of them like it was just the other day. The San Mateo Bomb Squad with the K-9 Unit, The Gentleman in charge of Drill and Blast for the Crazy Horse Monument, The drill and blast program about restoring water to the Upper Klamath Refuge. The retired Navy Seal certified by Cal OSHA to teach forced entry with explosive. The history of explosives presented by Angus McFarlane, Michael Miller of the original 16 to 1 mine, Mark Bracco of the Placer County Sheriffs Special Operations Unit. We all enjoyed Rich Brockman of Cal Osha when he performed his stand up comedy act. We were flying high thanks to everyone that gave of their time to participate as a officer or a board member. We had several major sponsors / donors who kept the chapter going. Brad Langner, Lars Johansen just to name a few. I must mention our webmaster and original founder Wes Bender who tried to teach me how to put a newsletter together. I am still learning but, we took great pride in publishing an award winning publication. I always looked forward to reading all of the contributions Wes provided. We were all very luck to have him share his stories with us about the different projects he worked on over the years. Advertisers and supporters we would have never lasted this long without you. I could go on and on about all of the men and women who put great energy into our chapter. We have had a great team for many years and all of the previous officers and board members should be proud of the Golden West Chapters accomplishments. Wes Bender plans on keeping the website online as a tribute to the men and women of the Golden West Chapter.

Lake Herman Mike Live @ the Rock

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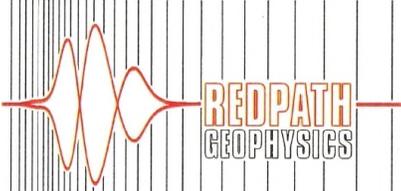
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The Golden West Chapter Wants to Express Its Most Sincere Appreciation and Thank All of the Companies Who Have Purchased Ad Space In The Primer. We Could Not Have Stayed Around this Long Without Your Support.

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Fire in the Hole...

What happens to a frog's car when it breaks down?

It gets toad away.

I submitted 10 puns to a joke-writing competition to see if any of them made the finals.

Sadly, no pun in ten did.

What's the difference between a hippo and a Zippo?

One is really heavy, and the other is a little lighter.

Can a kangaroo jump higher than the Empire State Building?

Of course! The Empire State Building can't jump.

You ever get cold, stand in the corner of a room for a while.

They're usually 90 degrees.

What did the duck say when it bought lipstick?

"Put it on my bill."

What's the best thing about Switzerland?

I don't know, but the flag is a big plus.

A horse walks into a bar...

The bartender says, "Hey."

The horse replies, "Sure."

Apparently you can't use "beef stew" as a password.

It's not stroganoff.

Fire in the Hole...

A frog walks into a bank and approaches the teller, whose nametag reads "Patricia Whack."

"Miss Whack, I'd like to get a \$50,000 loan to take a vacation," says the frog.

Patty looks at the frog in disbelief and asks his name.

"Kermit Jagger. My father is Mick Jagger. It will be fine to authorize the loan, I know your manager." Patty explains that he will need to secure the loan with some collateral. "Sure, how about this?" asks Kermit as he produces a tiny porcelain elephant, about an inch tall, bright pink and perfectly formed. Very confused, Patty explains that she'll have to consult with the bank manager and disappears into a back office. Patty walks into the manager's office and proceeds to tell him, "There's a frog called Kermit Jagger out there who claims to know you and wants to borrow \$50,000, and he wants to use this as collateral." Patty holds up the tiny pink elephant. "I mean, what in the world is this?" The bank manager looks back at her and says, "It's a knick knack, Patty Whack. Give the frog a loan. His old man's a Rolling Stone."

So there was a plane and in that plane were 4 people a pilot, a lawyer, a priest, and a kid. The plane is going down and fast but there were only 3 parachutes so the pilot says "I have a family and a daughter that is expecting" he grabs a parachute and jumps off the plane. The lawyer says "well I'm the smartest man on earth so I have to live" he grabs a parachute and jumps off. So now there is only 1 parachute left the priest notices this and tells the kid " Son go ahead take the last one I have lived my life" The boy looks around the plane and says "wait we can both live" the priest says " well how can that be?", the boy says "because the smartest man in the world just jumped off with my backpack".

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Fire in the Hole...

Forrest Gump Goes to Heaven...

The day finally arrived: Forrest Gump dies and goes to Heaven. He is met at the Pearly Gates by Saint Peter himself. The gates are closed, however, and Forest approaches the gatekeeper.

Saint Peter says, "Well, Forrest, it's certainly good to see you. We have heard a lot about you. I must inform you that the place is filling up fast, and we've been administering an entrance examination for everyone. The tests are fairly short, but you need to pass before you can get into Heaven."

Forrest responds, "It shore is good to be here Saint Peter. I was looking forward to this. Nobody ever told me about any entrance exams. Shore hope the test ain't too hard; life was a big enough test as it was."

Saint Peter goes on, "Yes, I know Forrest. But, the test I have for you is only three questions. Here is the first: What days of the week begin with the letter 'T'? Second, how many seconds are there in a year? Third, what is God's first name?"

Forrest goes away to think the questions over. He returns the next day and goes up to Saint Peter to try to answer the exam questions.

Saint Peter waves him up and asks, "Now that you have had a chance to think the questions over, tell me your answers."

Forrest says, "Well, the first one, -how many days of the week begin with the letter 'T'?" "Shucks, that one's easy; that'd be Today and Tomorrow!"

The saint's eyes open wide and he exclaims, "Forrest! That's not what I was thinking, but ... you do have a point though, and I guess I didn't specify, so I give you credit for that answer."

"How about the next one" says Saint Peter, "how many seconds in a year?"

"Now that one's harder," says Forrest. "But, I think and think about that, and I guess the only answer can be twelve."

Astounded, Saint Peter says, "Twelve! Twelve! Forrest, how in Heaven's name could you come up with twelve seconds in a year?"

Forrest says, "Shucks, there gotta be twelve: January second, February second, March second...."

"Hold it," interrupts Saint Peter. "I see where you're going with it."

"And I guess I see your point, though that wasn't quite what I had in mind.

I'll give you credit for that one too."

"Let's go on with the next and final question," says Saint Peter, "Can you tell me God's first name?"

Forest says, "Well shore, I know God's first name. Everybody probably knows It's Howard."

"Howard?" asks Saint Peter. "What makes you think it's 'Howard'?"

Forest answers, "It's in the prayer."

"The prayer?" asks Saint Peter, "Which prayer?"

"The Lord's Prayer," responds Forest: "Our Father, Who art in Heaven, Howard be thy name..."