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House fire destroys structures

Neighbor injured rescuing cat

By Julia Sawyer
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A house fire on the outskirts of Windsor left multiple structures destroyed and led to one minor injury following a robust response from local fire agencies.

According to Mike Elson from the Sonoma County Fire District, at approximately 5:40 p.m. on Aug. 1, buildings on a property 600 feet off of Mark West Station Road caught on fire.

The fire burned in a northwesterly direction and destroyed an uninhabited single-family dwelling used for storage, six other storage buildings and one travel trailer. Accessibility to the location was difficult because of the narrow private property driveway, according to Elson.

Sonoma County Fire District responded to the scene with four engines and two water tenders. The property had no water supply or fire hydrants of its own, therefore extra water tenders were needed. Other resources from Forestville, Healdsburg, Santa Rosa, Gold Ridge, CalFire and air units from Geyserville were deployed. In total, there were 38 firefighters and five water tenders.

While the fire only took one hour to control, firefighters were on scene for four hours afterward to fire-haul, clean up and investigate.

Capt. Jason Piloni is still investigating the fire and the cause of it is still unknown.

There was one injury related to the blaze — a neighbor who attempted to rescue a burning cat. After capturing the cat and putting it out with her jacket, it attacked her and she suffered scratches and bites. She took herself to the ER. The cat's location is currently unknown. The property has two other homes on it that were not damaged by the fire.



Photos courtesy Sonoma County Fire District Instagram

FIRE RESPONSE — Firefighters from Sonoma County Fire District led the effort to put out a fire on Mark West Station Road on Aug. 1. Several structures were destroyed, and one neighbor was injured by a burned cat she was attempting to rescue.

National Night Out



Photos Heather Bailey

MEET AND GREET — On Aug. 6 Windsor's first responders met with residents on the Town Green for National Night Out, a national "block party" for first responders to get to know their neighbors. Members of the Windsor Police Department were on hand to meet with people and serve them hot dogs, while representatives of Sonoma County Fire District, Bell's Ambulance, the Drug Enforcement Agency, Parks and Recreation and Sonoma County Animal Services were on hand to chat and hand out goodies for the kids. SCAS also had a few adoptable dogs on hand. Kids got to sit on a police motorcycle, climb into a fire truck, check out the bomb squad's vehicle and bomb disposal robot, and Henry 1 did a fly over. The highlight of the evening was a demonstration from K-9 Mako, who cheerfully showed off his takedown skills.



Tinkering around at SSU academy

Sonoma County girls explore science, tech and engineering with SSU's Tinker Academy

By Katherine Minkiewicz
Staff Writer
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Twenty-three middle school girls from various Sonoma County schools participated in the Tinker Academy STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) showcase on Aug. 1 at Sonoma State University.

Participants for the program were chosen based on applicants' demonstrated passion for STEM-related projects and activities.

The program is hosted by the School of Science and Technology at Sonoma State.

According to a press release from the Career Technical Education Foundation, the camp encourages girls to "dream, make and innovate."

Camp activities include computer coding, 3D modeling, crafting, robotics and sewing.

"I'm humbled to be working with these amazing 23 middle school girls these past two weeks. They learned

a lot," said Natalie Hobson, assistant professor of math and statistics at Sonoma State and the lead instructor for the Tinker Academy. "They learned how to use the sewing machine, the 3D printer, the laser cutter, the vinyl cutter in addition to a collection of amazing coding skills and circuitry and it is just amazing to see their curiosity and be in their presence."

Classwork also includes presentations that are designed to inspire and motivate girls to pursue STEM-motivated careers.

Ciara Torres, a student at Geyserville New Tech Academy, Rebecca Paluvicki from Washington Middle School in Cloverdale and Atiana Gonzales from Cali Calmecac Language Academy decided to work together in a group for their project.

Throughout the two-week camp the girls worked on creating a science-themed board game.

The aim of the game is to answer questions on outer space in order to be the first to the finish line. For instance, a question card could ask a player how many moons a certain planet has.

"We made a board game which is called Space Race and you race spaceships — you have to put the spaceships together, and we have prizes which are different types of stickers," Torres explained.



Photo Katherine Minkiewicz

CAMP CREATIONS — Geyserville New Tech Academy student Ciara Torres, left, shows off her hair scrunchies that she made in addition to her group project during the two-week Tinker Academy at Sonoma State University.

The trio made all pieces of the game, from the laminated question cards to the 3D printed space men and spaceship game pieces.

"We also laminated the cards and I wrote all of these questions and I 3D printed all of these movers for the game," Paluvicki said.

"My favorite part of the project

was working with my friend Ciara and I really enjoyed using the vinyl machine because I love stickers and I liked using the 3D printer because now I have an interest in making, so now I kind of what to be an engineer," Gonzales explained.

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