

Davenport Firemen Mark 40th Year

By BILL NEUBAUER
Sentinel Staff Writer

The steak was good, the wine agreeable, the memories lively. Many said that such reunions ought to be held more often. Then somebody laughed and asked: "How often can you have a 40th Reunion, will you tell me that?"

Still, present and past members of the Davenport Volunteer Fire Department are now thinking in terms of other reunion barbecues following their 40th Reunion celebration Saturday night in the firehouse built with their own hands.

The first such event in the department's long history was attended by 27 present or past members. Formal highlight of the occasion was presentation of plaques to Frank Garaventa, the department's second fire chief (1932) and Sal Celebrado, who resigned as fire chief last year after service that included work on a committee chaired by Frances Gregory to reorganize the department after World War II.

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Tribute was paid through a silent minute of prayer to Frank Meyers, the department's first chief (1930) and to other deceased members.

In the yard outside the firehall was displayed a 1934 Chevrolet fire truck which was bought from the Live Oak Fire Department.

It reminded a member of a happening.

"We got this call to take care of a chimney fire," he said. "We got there and I got on the roof and this was my first experience. We pumped water and pumped water and pumped water. Somebody finally said the fire was out. Was it out? We opened the door and some furniture floated out. We must have filled that house with two of three feet of water."

Someone else recalled: "Back when Frances Gregory was chief (1952-1962) we had no baskets, no stretchers, no nothing. We had to get down to the beaches any way we could to help people who'd slid down the cliffs or got caught by the tides where they shouldn't have been."

Santa Clara came in for a kind of roasting by other firemen.

"It seems every time we get a rescue call, it's somebody from Santa Clara," somebody said. "They don't know this country. If they want to go down a cliff, down they go, without

thinking of how they'll get back up."

Emilio Olimpio recalled happily one rescue he helped to make in 1968, however. "This fellow went 136 feet down the cliff," he said. "He was broken up all over. Finally we had to get a helicopter to get him out. But the last letter we got, they said he was doing real good."

Olimpio, who cannot swim, recalled another rescue he had to make. Some fisherman from Santa Clara decided to try his luck from a scrap of beach and let himself down the cliff on a quarter-inch line.

"He couldn't get back up," Olimpio said. "I went down another rope and then had to go with him in the water to a place we could get picked up."

Asked why they volunteer for firefighting and rescue work, a half dozen members said: "Well, somebody's got to do it. You have to help your fellow men."

Memories of the fires that destroyed the historic Ocean View Hotel and the Davenport Cash Store were relived by members who were serving with the department when their successors were still in school.

But past and future were blended by Elio Orlando, current chief, in a speech during which he paid tribute to Davenport women for their support

and work on behalf of the the department.

Down through the 40 years, Orlando said, more than 85 men were trained in firefighting and rescue work.

"In other days," he said, "no one sued anybody and everybody helped and did the best he could. But today the biggest expense for the district is insurance. But maybe we'll have more money to work with as time goes on. Even though we'll be losing about two miles of ocean front from our district if annexations go through, we may pick up other support through the nuclear-powered generator plant PG&E is talking about putting in on the old Coast Daries Ranch. This plant may have an assessed valuation of more than \$200 million. It will bring many changes to the area. We may grow so big we'll be a metropolis one day."

Orlando welcomed the possibility of the plant being built, saying: "When they enlarge it, it may be a project of a billion dollars of more. No smoke. No stacks. I can't see anything but good in this."

Later, Orlando drew a big laugh by saying: "People don't believe anybody was born in Davenport. Well, we have four members here who were born in Davenport."

Introduced were native sons Francis Gregory, Hugo Bagnas-

co, Frank Olimpio and Emilio Olimpio.

Orlando was given an ovation for arranging the celebration and acting as dinner chairman. Chef was Pete Pianavilla. Sausage maker Italo Bertolli, not present, was praised lavishly for his art.

Alvin Gregory, formerly county supervisor for the Seaside District, was saluted for having been "one politician who got things done for the people."

Others present included: George Domenichelli, Lewis Palletti, John Bettiol, George Mungai, Fire Commissioner Frank McCrary, Abbie Novelli, Fire Commissioner Ben Wilson, Jimmy H. Smith, Bob Somers, Anthony Demos, Douglas DeJesus, Julius Giovannoni, James Harris, Paul Hirsch, John West, Joe Aliberti and Larry DiTano.



T-Bone steaks and Italian sausage made for hearty fare at Davenport Fire Department's 40th Reunion Saturday night. Left to right are fire chief; Elio Orlando, president fire chief; and Francis Gregory, chief from 1952 to 1962.

Sewer Study District Plan To Be Discussed In SLV

Formation of an improvement district to support a sewer feasibility study in the Boulder Creek — Brookdale area will be discussed Wednesday at 8 p.m. in Boulder Creek Firehall at a public meeting scheduled by the Boulder Creek—Brookdale Business Association.

"Main topic will be the objectives of such a district if one

is formed," Bob Brimblecom, group president, said Monday. "The people have a lot of questions about this. Members of our group think it is up to us to help them find some of the answers."

Technical questions will be answered by John Jenks, a sanitation engineer, and Robert Haight, an attorney.

"Questions will be encouraged," Brimblecom said "We

to form an improvement district to sponsor a sanitation study."

Brimblecom said petitions are now being circulated to get action on district formation. "A number of persons have signed these," he reported, "including property owners in outlying areas."

Business group plans are to continue circulating petitions.

tors have said they want to be told by the people what action they should take on the sanitation problem.

SLV pollution was spotlighted recently in a report made to county supervisors by county health officials.

Before the report was issued, the Felton Businessmen's Association had taken the lead in the valley to solve pollution problems through a