

## **FACES OF BODEGA BAY**

### **Fire Chief Sean Alan Grinnell**

Interview by Adri Boudewyn

Here in Bodega Bay, residents and visitors alike are grateful and honored to have Sean Alan Grinnell as a well-qualified, dedicated Fire Chief. At the time of his appointment in 2002, the position had been filled seven times in just 10 years. Sean remains a welcome, respected and stable change to the old revolving door. He earned his current role as a certified Chief Fire Officer with many successive steps of training, experience and education including a BS degree in Fire Service Administration followed by ongoing continuing education and training.

The Bodega Bay Fire Protection District (BBFPD) covers a 34 square mile area. The ambulance service area is even larger. It is the only fire department in the area that is a combination of both paid and volunteer firefighters. And Bodega Bay is only one of four towns in the County providing paramedic services and transportation. The crew is unique in other ways too. Special training and talents are required for surf, water and cliff rescue. Our Chief has enjoyed the honor and privilege to train and launch successful careers of aspiring fire fighters but retaining talent in Bodega Bay presents a challenge.

Given the unusual talents and capabilities in this remote area, The Chief's largest challenge is uncovering funding to maintain the current service level. The Bodega Bay community works to support the Fire Department with various fund raisers including Crab Feeds, professional comedy and music productions and for the past ten years, the local Cabaret at our Grange Hall where Sean played an active role.

Today, BBFPD employs 14 full time firefighters and EMS personnel, has 12 volunteers, two interns and four par-time employees. On site and on call 24 hours a day, shifts are now covered by four people for 2 days or 48 hours, with 4 days or 96 hours off.\* When duty calls outside Bodega Bay, our local firefighters heed the call. Major fires such as the disastrous Tubbs fire in October 2017 which burned 36,432 acres and destroyed 5,300 structures between Calistoga and Santa Rosa, was aided by Bodega Bay water tenders, an engine and ambulance for time frames ranging between 24 hours for the staffed ambulance and two water tenders for 7 days. While his crews were fire fighting elsewhere, the Chief covered bases in Bodega Bay. Grinnell says the Santa Rosa fire "made all of us even more diligent with inspections and proactively reaching out to residents."

Born in Santa Rosa, growing up near Bloomfield Road and later living in East Santa Rosa, Grinnell visited Bodega Bay as long as he can remember. His entire career has taken place in Sonoma County beginning in East Santa Rosa at Rincon Valley in 1988.

He and his wife Patricia are proud parents of four children, Joshua, Holly Ali and Thomas. Holly is following in her Dad's footsteps pursuing a career to be a firefighter/paramedic. Sean encourages her to seek her education before beginning her working career. She followed his advice and in her senior year undertook her first EMS (Emergency Medical Services) class at Santa Rosa Junior College. She graduates High School in 2019. Sean learned the hard way and doesn't want his family to miss out. Waiting until he had a full-time job and a family to chase higher education, he missed a lot of family time because of work and school.

## THE FACES OF BODEGA BAY



It's obvious that Sean is dedicated to his family and his work saying "I have the greatest job in the world with a variety of work, at a great location with great people and a sense of satisfaction from a job well done. I have been to other beautiful places but I always return home. Nothing beats Bodega Bay."

\*as of April 1, 2019 (no foolin'!) ●

**Come see portraits of Chief Grinnell and his crew at the FACES OF BODEGA BAY  
at the the Grange Hall on April 27 & 28th • 10am-4pm**

*A regular appearance in our quarterly newsletter, The Faces of Bodega Bay is a photojournalistic record of people in our town: school kids, surfers, shop owners, fishermen, restaurant workers; a whole gamut of people who live and work in Bodega Bay and help make it the wonderful community that it is. These "environmental portraits" portray the subjects in their natural environment, capturing their character and telling their story through their surroundings.*

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