

First Responder to Our First Responders

by Jeff Wing

Life is capricious – to put it as charitably as possible – and “First Responder” has become too familiar a term. The full weight of what “First Responder” means bears some quick recollecting. When the Thomas Fire raged across 440 square miles of central coast some five years ago, it blasted all vegetation off the steep foothills above Montecito; just in time to receive the freak winter storm that immediately followed. At around 3:30 am on the morning of January 9th, 2018, the soaked and denuded hillsides released their enfeebled grip on the Earth, a 15-foot-high wall of semisolid chaos thundering straight down into the darkened, sleeping village, carrying boulders, trees, cars. Twenty-three lives were lost in a matter of minutes – neighbors, friends; loved ones all.

First Responders – Montecito Fire crews, Santa Barbara County and City Fire crews, Sheriff’s department rescuers and local police – surged into the devastation and waist-high mud with flashlights and dogs, shouting for survivors. The horrific sights and sounds experienced that night, and in the days and nights following, reached into the lives and psyches of these rescuers. Even the highly trained have their limits. Who responds when First Responders are imperiled?

In the aftermath of the cataclysm a new organization called One805 was created – to both lavishly thank the rescuers and see to their needs. The org put together a demure little gathering they called *The Kick Ash Bash!* in 2021. Entertainers, singers, actors and grateful Montecitans convened to communally transcend the tragedy and answer it with a rollicking celebration of life – and of the rescuers who swarmed into the war zone that night. The event managed to raise some \$2M for the disaster’s first responder community, dramatically introducing One805’s ongoing *raison d’être*: providing counseling support to First Responders and purchasing equipment to assure future successes.

In 2023, One805 is a permanent 501(c)(3) corporation and continues to raise funds for all three First Responder groups – Fire, Police, and Sheriff. To that end, One805 has two events coming up to further their mission. On April 16 at Sunstone Winery, from 2 to 7 pm, Ed Roth and the Session Kings will be exquisitely rocking the sun-splashed environs with jazz, R&B, and Latinx rock. Top-flight session musicians **Ed Roth, Andy**

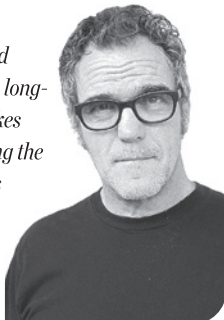
Vargas, Linda Taylor, Travis Davis, Leo Costa and Rock Deadricks – who collectively have lent their chops to such acts as The Doors, **Annie Lennox, Diana Ross, Ziggy Marley, Santana, Artie Garfunkel**, and so on! – will be focused on one audience that day. You, dear reader. Tickets do include all food, wine, and beer, and VIP and Premium tables are available, as well.

Then on September 22nd, One805LIVE! Will be... I’ll just let the nonprofit’s justifiably excited CEO have the hollering rights. “We are excited to announce that Maroon 5 will be headlining the Fall One805LIVE! Festival,” says One805’s CEO, **Kirsten Cavendish**. “Maroon 5 will be coming off their Las Vegas Residency before continuing their world-tour, and we are so fortunate to have a headliner of this caliber generously donating their time and talent to support One805. This is an incredible opportunity for us to bring the community together and show our support for our local First Responders.” Tickets go on sale April 1st at www.One805.org.

It should come as no surprise that the September event will be hosted at **Kevin and Christine Costner’s** tumbledown oceanside bungalow in Summerland, as was last year’s One805LIVE! bash. Otherwise, though, the surprises should come hard and fast at the event. “The concert will feature a star-studded lineup of other artists,” promises One805’s COO **Richard Weston-Smith**. “We will be making further announcements about the lineup in the coming months.”

One805 is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing financial assistance and resources for the acquisition of essential equipment and mental wellness counseling services, directly benefiting police, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel. The nonprofit is also known as a helluva concert promoter. Your ticket purchase for either event will go toward funding our first Responder Community. What could be more rock n’ roll? 🎸

Jeff Wing is a journalist, raconteur, autodidact, and polysyllable enthusiast. A long-time resident of SB, he takes great delight in chronicling the lesser known facets of this gaudy jewel by the sea. Jeff can be reached at jeffwingg@gmail.com.



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