



FIRE & EMS NEWS

February 2004

Volume 2 – Issue 8

Welcome to the latest issue of the Fire & EMS News! My goal is to provide you with information about your Chabot College Fire Technology Program, the local Fire Departments, in addition to other information that might be beneficial to you in your pursuit of better preparing yourself for the career of your dreams! Some of the highlights of this issue include:

- Reserve Firefighter opportunity – Alameda County Fire Department
- What is keeping you from getting a firefighter badge? A **free** firefighter oral board seminar with Captain Bob
- Volunteer Opportunity – BART Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) drill
- Firefighter employment opportunity – Salt Lake City Fire Department
- Chabot College Fire Technology Website Resources
- Chabot College Fire Technology t-shirts are now available at the bookstore!
- Paramedic programs throughout the State of California

RESERVE FIREFIGHTER OPPORTUNITY – Alameda County Fire Department



The [Alameda County Fire Department](#) is accepting applications for the position of Reserve Firefighter!

Filing Period: January 21, 2004 to March 5, 2004

Salary: None – this is a volunteer position

Applications must be in the possession of the Alameda County Human Resources Department by 4:30 pm on March 5, 2004. Postmarks and faxed copies are not accepted.

The Position:

This is the entry-level position in which incumbents receive training and experience in fire prevention and fire suppression techniques. Reserve Firefighters respond to fire alarms, emergency and non-emergency calls to prevent or extinguish fires and to protect life and property including rescue and salvage operations. Reserve Firefighters are also responsible for cleaning, maintaining and repairing fire department property and equipment.

Promotional Opportunities:

Reserve Firefighters may advance by competitive examination for Reserve Fire Engineer and/or Reserve Fire Lieutenant.

The Requirements:

The following are entrance requirements for admission to the examination, which is competitive. Possession of the entrance requirements does not assure an invitation to examination or a place on the eligible list. A candidate's performance in the examination will be judged in comparison with the performance of other candidates.

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- **AGE:** Applicants must be at least 18 years of age by April 1, 2004
- **LICENSE:** All candidates must possess a valid California Motor Vehicle Operator's license by the time of appointment.
- **PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:** Applicants must be in excellent physical condition. Hearing must be normal in both ears. Visual acuity must be correctable to 20/20.
- **RESIDENCY:** All candidates must live within Alameda County or 25 air miles from Alameda County Station 15, 5352 Broder Road, Dublin, California, upon appointment.

The Qualifications:

Candidates who do not currently possess Firefighter 1 and EMT certifications are required to complete certification as a Firefighter 1 and EMT in the State of California, within 2 years of appointment as a Level 1 Reserve Firefighter or one year of appointment as a Level 2 Reserve Firefighter. Level 3 Reserve Firefighters must possess current State of California Firefighter 1 and EMT certifications (County EMT certifications should also be acceptable since it is equivalent).

The Examination:

This is a new assembled examination. The eligible list resulting from this examination will cancel any existing list and may last approximately one year, but can be extended.

The Examination may include, but may not be limited to: KNOWLEDGE OF basic construction, fire chemistry, physics and automotive mechanics and common office practices including filing, indexing and cross-reference methods. ABILITY TO follow oral and written instructions and to read, comprehend, and remember training materials; deal effectively with the public and co-workers under circumstances requiring presence of mind, sensitivity, interest and understanding; adapt to changes in work assignments and duties; write clear, concise, and complete reports; and perform physical tasks that require coordination, strength, dexterity, and stamina.

The examination will consist of the following steps: A review of candidates' applications to verify possession of minimum requirements. Those candidates who possess the minimum requirements for the class will move on to the next step in the examination process, which is an oral interview weighted as 100% of the candidates' final examination score. The oral interview

may contain situational exercises. Candidates must attain a qualifying rating on each portion of this examination. THEY RESERVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE CHANGES TO ANNOUNCED EXAMINATION STEPS.

Candidates selected to continue on to the Reserve Academy will be required to take the physical ability test. Candidates must pass the physical requirements to proceed with the academy.

To Apply:

Visit the Alameda County Human Resources Services office at 1405 Lakeside Drive, Oakland, CA 94612

Or

To view the job flyer and download an application, go to the Alameda County Human Resources employment page at <http://www.co.alameda.ca.us/employment/jobSearchApp/JobSearch.jsp> and scroll down to “Reserve Firefighter.”

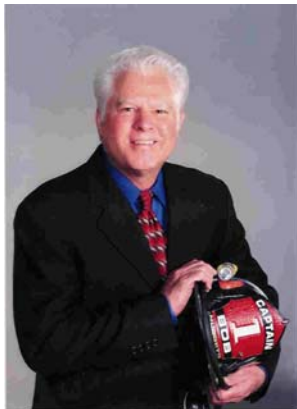
For more information about the Alameda County Fire Department (ACFD):

Visit their website at <http://www.co.alameda.ca.us/fire/index.htm>

For more information about the ACFD Reserve Firefighter positions:

Visit their website section on the Reserves at <http://www.co.alameda.ca.us/fire/volunteers.htm>

FREE ORAL BOARD SEMINAR WITH CAPTAIN BOB



What is keeping you from getting a firefighter badge?????

On Sunday April 18, from 1:00 pm until 3:00 pm, “Captain Bob” Smith will be providing a **FREE** Oral Interview seminar. This will occur at **Chabot College** in **room 916**. Captain Bob is a retired Captain from the Hayward Fire Department who has been on numerous interview panels and has helped countless candidates obtain their badges. He will provide you with tips on how to better prepare yourself for the oral interviews you will be taking or have already taken and not done as well as you possibly could have on. Remember that the oral interview is probably the **MOST** important phase of the firefighter hiring process since most fire departments score this portion 100% of your total score.

Step by step, everything you need to know in the process, starting with the application, written, physical, oral interview, psych interview, background, polygraph, and medical to gain a badge. You will find the inside “Nuggets”, tips and resources you can’t get anywhere else to shorten the learning curve and the distance between you and that badge. This is information that has helped over 2100 candidates nail their badges!

For more information about Captain Bob, visit his website at www.eatstress.com. He has numerous free tips and suggestions to score better on the oral interview. To register for this unique and excellent opportunity, email me at sprziborowski@chabotcollege.edu and let me know how many people plan to attend. Hurry, seats are limited!

Oral interviews are the toughest thing for most people (going for jobs in any line of work, not just the fire department). Why not take this free opportunity to learn at least one new thing? If you learn something that even just raises your score by 1%, it was worth your time to attend!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY – BART Multi-Casualty Incident Drill

At the request of John McPartland, Chabot College Fire Technology Instructor and BART Safety Specialist, you are cordially invited to participate as a victim during the annual BART multi-casualty incident (MCI) drill in the Trans-Bay tube (the tube that connects BART from Oakland to San Francisco). John is looking for volunteers (you don't have to be a Chabot student to participate!) to help make this year's drill a success!

What's in it for you?

- Build your resume
- Have fun
- Get some experience
- Get some action photos you'll never get any other way
- Receive a certificate

Date:

- Sunday February 22, 2004

Time:

- 4:30 am to 7:00 am (yes, that is early – drills can only be done when the system is shut down)

Place:

- Oakland West BART station, 1451 7th Street in Oakland (car-pooling is strongly recommended).

How to sign up:

- Contact John McPartland, BART Safety Specialist, at (510) 464-7547 or email him at jmcpart@bart.gov

Remember:

- Reporting time is 4:30 am! If you are late, the train will have "left the station!"

FIREFIGHTER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY – Salt Lake City Fire Department

The [Salt Lake City \(UT\) Fire Department](#) will be accepting applications for entry level firefighters in the spring of 2004. They are currently accepting names to compile an interest list. They will contact those on the list in March of 2004. No other information will be available at this time.

To leave your contact information, [CLICK HERE](#). Be sure to include your name, current address (including city, state, and zip code) and contact phone numbers (home, cell, etc.). You will not need to contact them unless again unless you have a change in your address or phone number.

Minimum requirements to submit an application include:

- Applicants must be a U.S. Citizen
- Applicants must be at least 18 years of age by the date of the written exam
- Drivers license and driving record – applicants must possess or be able to obtain a valid Utah driver’s license by the time of employment and have a good driving record
- Applicants must have a high school diploma, G.E.D., or equivalent by the date of the written exam
- Applicants must pass a physical examination on an annual basis and maintain their physical fitness after being hired.

For further information, contact:

City of Salt Lake City
Human Resources/Recruitment
315 E. 200 S.
7th Floor
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
(801) 799-4204

For further information about the Salt Lake City Fire Department:

Visit their website at <http://www.slcgov.com/fire>

CHABOT COLLEGE FIRE TECHNOLOGY WEBSITE RESOURCES

One of the features of your Chabot College Fire Technology website at www.chabotfire.com is the **extensive section of fire and EMS related website links**. I have put together this as a resource to you in your pursuit of becoming a firefighter or to continue your education, training, and knowledge base as a full-time firefighter or EMS professional. The sections of website links listed include:

FIRE DEPARTMENT WEBSITES:

California Fire Departments - a county-by-county listing of virtually every fire department in the bay area, the Southern California area, and the other major areas of the state. This will help you when doing research on different departments while you are participating in their testing process, anticipating being in their testing process, or wanting to learn more about that department and the services it provides.

Fire Departments: Outside of California – website links to most (if not all) of the big-city, major metropolitan fire departments in other states across the United States.

Fire Departments: I.A.F.F. Union Locals – a listing of fire department union local websites. This section is a great source of information besides the regular fire department website. Virtually every full-time firefighter is also a member of the International Association of Fire Fighters (I.A.F.F.).

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) WEBSITES:

Paramedic schools – a listing of Paramedic programs throughout California

EMT Programs – a listing of EMT programs throughout California.

EMS Agencies: County – a listing of every County EMS Agency in California.

EMS Agencies: State – a listing of every State EMS Agency in the United States.

EMS Training and Education for Paramedics and EMT's (Continuing Education) – a listing of continuing education providers so you can recertify or certify yourself in classes such as CPR, Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS),

TRAINING AND EDUCATION WEBSITES:

Fire Training and Education (Initial and continuing education) – listing of institutions that offer State Certified courses so you can work towards obtaining certifications such as Fire Officer, Fire Instructor 1, Fire Investigator 1, etc. Also included are websites that offer wildland firefighting classes if you desire to be certified and qualified in certain areas to work on wildland fires.

Firefighter 1 Academies – a listing of firefighter 1 academies throughout California so if one doesn't work out for you; you can have another one to fall back on.

Education: 2 year degree programs in fire technology – a listing of California community colleges offering two year degree programs in fire technology so you can find the one program that fits all of your needs.

Education: 4 year degree programs in fire technology – self explanatory.

Education: Master's Degree programs in fire / EMS related fields – self explanatory.

Fire and EMS related annual training seminars – a listing of annual seminars such as Firehouse World in San Diego where you can continue your firefighting education by attending seminars on all types of fire and EMS related subject matter.

ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATION WEBSITES:

Fire related organizations and associations – listed here are local, state, and federal fire service organizations to better educate you on the fire service.

EMS related organizations and associations – listed here are local, state, and federal EMS organizations to better educate you on the EMS realm.

Federal Fire Information sites – listed here are federal government websites that offer information on such subjects as nationwide wildland fire information and status during the fire season.

FIRE & EMS EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE WEBSITES:

Fire related employment assistance – listed here are some of the best fire related employment websites out there. Included are companies that provide notification of when fire departments are testing and individuals that offer hiring process assistance such as oral board counseling.

EMS related employment assistance – listed here are ambulance companies around California so you can see what they have to offer and if they are accepting applications.

Federal fire department job assistance – becoming a federal firefighter is one way to get your foot in the door. Here are some sites specifically related to assisting you getting hired as a Federal Firefighter.

FIRE & EMS PUBLICATIONS:

Fire and EMS related publications – every firefighter (and firefighter candidate) should be subscribing to one or more fire and EMS related magazine. Listed here are some of the major fire and EMS related publications so you can see what they have to offer. Many of these sites also do a great job of providing lots of free fire related news and information on them (such as www.firehouse.com)

Fire and EMS related book and video sources – looking to purchase a fire or EMS related book or video for your library or to better educate yourself? Here are some suggested websites to go to that can be of assistance.

Miscellaneous:

Fire and EMS related equipment vendors – looking to purchase fire and EMS related tools, equipment, or protective clothing? Here are some suggestions for you.

Live or real-time fire dispatch – listen in to radio traffic of fire departments in action! This is a great way to educate yourself on the fire service by actually hearing real, live radio traffic.

Law Enforcement agencies – many firefighter candidates end up taking law enforcement tests for practice (or to get a foot in the public safety arena door). Most law enforcement agencies also have the same retirement system firefighters do (which is transferable if you ever make the switch to being a firefighter).

If you can think of other useful websites or categories, feel free to email them to me and I will be happy to add them to the website!

CHABOT FIRE TECHNOLOGY T-SHIRTS NOW AVAILABLE!

Back by popular demand! – Chabot College Fire Technology **t-shirts** are now available at the Chabot College Bookstore for \$15.00. These shirts are similar to the white t-shirts I had printed up a couple of years ago. These shirts are grey (ash) in color and have the Chabot College Fire Technology logo (the one at the top of page one of this newsletter in full color) over the left breast and the words “CHABOT COLLEGE FIRE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM” on the back in block letters, similar to the way fire departments put their name on the back of their t-shirts. They are supposed to be located with the other clothing in the bookstore; if you cannot find them, make sure you ask the bookstore staff to assist you! There should be plenty of different sizes to fit all sizes and shapes!

PARAMEDIC PROGRAMS IN CALIFORNIA

Getting hired as a firefighter often requires a candidate to become a licensed Paramedic since many fire departments only hire licensed paramedics for the entry-level firefighter positions. Unfortunately, Chabot College is presently without a paramedic program and I cannot honestly say if and when we will ever get it back. From what I understand, one of the main reasons we had to end our paramedic program a couple of years ago was because of the lack of field internships available to our students.

Having a paramedic license is one of the best ways to increase your odds of becoming a firefighter. Right now, a paramedic license is more important than a firefighter 1 certificate. Why? Because it helps you stand out. I remember when I was testing for the position of Firefighter from 1991 until 1995 (yes, 4 ½ years it took me to get my first full-time job offer). When I first started testing, everyone was saying “just get your EMT and Firefighter 1 certificate and you’ll be fine. Well, after getting both of those certificates, it became very obvious that I was still lacking one important qualification: a paramedic license.

I remember my first test: Hayward Fire Department back in 1991 and all they required you to be were 18 years old and have a high school diploma or G.E.D. There were over 3,000 people that applied for about 5 jobs if I remember correctly. If a department required EMT and Firefighter 1 the numbers would be less than 500 people applying. I remember Berkeley Fire Department in 1992 (if I remember correctly) requiring a paramedic license to test and getting somewhere between 50 and 75 applications. To take it a step further, I remember the Piedmont

and Albany Fire Departments also requiring paramedic licenses to take the test and getting less than 30 qualified applicants! Mind you this was back in 1992 to 1994. I bet those numbers have not really changed that much today!

Even though the demand for paramedics today might not be as high as it was in the mid-1990's (because virtually every department around the Bay Area now provides first-responder paramedic services), there will always be the need for paramedics because after getting hired, it is not uncommon for paramedics to want to step back to "just being an EMT" after their required time limit for being a paramedic is up (many departments require newly hired paramedics to stay as paramedics for anywhere from three years until the time they retire. Every department is different, read the fine print when you apply for jobs as a paramedic with a fire department. Some departments like the one I work for do not allow a Captain to be the primary paramedic (which I agree with). This further decreases the paramedic pool because when people promote from the firefighter rank, they aren't required to keep up their paramedic license.

Many departments continue to just hire firefighters that have paramedic licenses because every firefighter position is required to have a paramedic license (while their engineer and captain positions on a three-person engine company are required to be EMT certified). In my opinion, it is not cost-effective in today's tight budgets to not hire paramedics (as opposed to EMT's). Even if a department doesn't have a space for a paramedic, they still can use that person as an EMT. Most departments are only budgeted for so many paramedic slots. However, if you were a paramedic, and you were offered a job to be an EMT, I bet you wouldn't turn it down, would you? If we offered to keep up your paramedic continuing education (48 hours every two years) free of charge and pay you the paramedic bonus when we needed you (when someone called in sick, someone is out injured, etc.), I bet you would still take the job, wouldn't you? That's a no-brainer in most people's eyes, especially since most people go to paramedic school just to become a firefighter (and some of those folks would love to never have the chance to use that paramedic license).

It is cheaper (and easier) to train someone to be a firefighter than to be a paramedic. Think about it, most fire academies are three months long while most paramedic schools are six months to a year long (or more). The time requirement for paramedic training is about two to three times that of firefighter 1 certification. Don't expect a department to put you through paramedic training; it is not that common in Northern California. Many large departments such as Phoenix, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, etc. are able to put people through paramedic training after probation ends because they are large enough to justify the cost of the training and they have bought off on that concept. It would cost a department about \$100,000 to put a firefighter through paramedic training. The cost would not necessarily be in the cost of the books or tuition as much as it would be in overtime having to back-staff your position. If an engine is supposed to run with three or four people on it (per the department rules, union contract, etc.), they have to fill your spot while you're in school. Times that by one year and you can see how it adds up.

Not much has really changed today if you look at the situation closely. Many departments can't even require a paramedic license by itself to get sufficient numbers of qualified applicants. Even Berkeley and Hayward Fire Departments (and many others) will allow students that are currently enrolled in a paramedic program to apply to take the test, just so they get sufficient numbers of

candidates to pick from! You're not even a proven commodity at that point and they're willing to take a chance on you! In a perfect world (from a paramedic viewpoint), we would only be hiring paramedics with at least one year of experience working on an ambulance. Why? Because virtually every department has complaints of hiring "green" paramedics with no experience, which in turns causes a heavy workload for the department to get that person up to speed or terminate their employment.

As a paramedic, you're expected to run the show since you're the highest medical authority on the scene. This can be very challenging for new firefighters without paramedic experience. Regardless, getting experience on an ambulance is tough because ambulance companies like American Medical Response hire in cycles, and it can be a year or more between hiring phases. Regardless, I strongly urge each and every one of you to strongly consider paramedic school if you want to become a firefighter. In most fire departments, it is not uncommon to have over 60% of the call volume be EMS in nature. It just makes sense to have firefighters trained as paramedics.

What does it take to get into a paramedic program? Well, to start out with, a person must be a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) prior to applying to paramedic school. Some schools require an applicant to have worked as an EMT (on an ambulance or in some other capacity) for at least six months. Some schools require you to successfully pass a written examination to evaluate your EMT knowledge. Some schools require you to successfully pass a manipulative skills assessment / scenario to evaluate your EMT skills. The bottom line is that each paramedic school has different entrance requirements and you need to investigate each program to see what requirements you will need to complete to be able to participate in their entrance examination process.

There are three phases of a paramedic program:

1. **Didactic** – the classroom portion that builds upon your EMT knowledge. When you went through EMT training, you probably spent about three hours on cardiac related diseases and treatment. Paramedic school will put you through at least 20 hours of the same subject matter. Expect to spend over 400 hours in the didactic portion.
2. **Clinical internship** – the hospital internship portion where you must complete at least 160 hours of time working in a hospital. You will be assigned a nurse preceptor to evaluate you on a continuous basis on your ability to function as a safe paramedic in a controlled setting.
3. **Field internship** – the field internship is where you are assigned on an advanced life support ambulance or fire engine functioning as the person in charge of patient care. You are assigned to a preceptor (a senior paramedic with instructional experience) who will evaluate you over a period of at least 480 hours (and 720 hours in some departments). During this period, you will be evaluated on such areas as delegation, communication, patient management, advanced life support knowledge and skills, basic life support skills and knowledge, interpersonal skills, and documentation.

Typically a paramedic student can expect to be in a paramedic program anywhere from 6 months to 1 ½ years (depending on the format of the classroom sessions and the availability of

internships). Unfortunately, our students were taking upwards of 2 years to complete paramedic training because of the lack of available internships in the Bay Area. Students had to drive 3 hours out to Fresno, just to do their field internships. We were unable to guarantee field internship placements for our students.

Paramedic school is a full-time endeavor. The didactic portion of most paramedic schools is either two days a week (eight hours per day) or five days per week (eight hours per day). Either way, there is homework and assignments to complete every night. Working a job while going to paramedic school is not impossible, but it takes a bit of a juggling act to complete. Most successful paramedic students have saved up money before they enter paramedic school so that they only have to work part-time, and can focus on the rigorous demands of the paramedic training. When I went to paramedic school, I left a successful full-time job and took a \$20,000 a year pay cut so I could step back to part-time status (basically to have a flexible work schedule) and moved back with my parents to be able to save money. It was not easy or fun, but I had to do what I had to do to become a firefighter.

If you are thinking about becoming a paramedic, I encourage you to look into the following programs to see if any of them meet your needs:

[Abrams College \(Modesto\)](#)
[American River College \(Sacramento\)](#)
[Butte College \(Oroville\)](#)
[California Paramedic Institute \(Mission Viejo\)](#)
[Crafton Hills College \(Yucaipa\)](#)
[Emergency Training Services \(Santa Cruz\)](#)
[EMSTI \(Stockton\)](#)
[Foothill College \(Los Altos Hills\)](#)
[Los Medanos College \(Pittsburg\)](#)
[Mendocino College \(Ukiah\)](#)
[Mount San Antonio College \(Walnut\)](#)
[Northern California Training Institute \(NCTI\)](#)
[Palomar College \(San Marcos\)](#)
[Saddleback College \(Mission Viejo\)](#)
[Santa Rosa Junior College](#)
[UCLA / Daniel Freeman \(Los Angeles\)](#)
[Victor Valley Community College \(Victorville\)](#)
[Westmed Training \(San Jose\)](#)

You'll notice there are not a lot of schools around the Bay Area, which is true. There are probably less schools today than there were 10 years ago when I went through paramedic school. The demand really hasn't lessened that much, but it makes it tougher on the student trying to get into a paramedic school that is close to their house.

If you seriously are looking at becoming a paramedic (which I highly encourage you to do if you are interested in a fire service career), start now by looking around to **find a paramedic program that meets your needs and most of all, guarantees an internship!** Talk to as many

firefighters and paramedics as possible to get their opinions on how to be the best paramedic student you can be! People ask me which school is better, and that is hard to say. My medic license looks the same as the next medic's license, even though we might have gone through different programs.

Paramedic schools can cost up to \$9,000 to attend. Yes, it can be very expensive. Most of them have financial aid programs available and I encourage you to use them. In most fire departments, you will make that \$9,000 up your first year with your paramedic bonus (most departments pay you an extra 10% for having your paramedic license) and with overtime. Think of it as you're buying yourself a job. Being a paramedic does not guarantee you a job as a firefighter; however it does greatly increase your odds at getting hired since less than 10% of all applicants for the position of firefighter in most departments have a paramedic license.

CLOSING COMMENTS

I hope you have found this newsletter somewhat valuable. If you have learned one new thing, then I think I've done my job. I truly want to see everyone succeed, and I also really enjoy doing what I do. This program is your program. It can only get better with your assistance. There is an old saying, don't just give me problems – give me solutions! I can't read your minds, so please provide me with feedback. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or want me to clarify any rumors you might have heard. Thank you very much!

Steve Prziborowski, Fire Technology Coordinator - Chabot College

Office: 510-723-6851, Building 1500, Room 1556

Cellular: 408-205-9006

Fax: 510-782-9315

Email: sprziborowski@chabotcollege.edu

Chabot College Fire Technology & EMS web site: www.chabotfire.com

Chabot College web site: www.chabotcollege.edu

***** PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PASS THIS ON TO YOUR FRIENDS OR CO-WORKERS*****

The Fine Print:

- If you would like to be added to our mailing list (no, I won't give your email address out to others), email me at sprziborowski@chabotcollege.edu and I will add you to the list. Benefits of being on the mailing list include being notified when the latest Fire & EMS news is published, and being notified of firefighter testing opportunities, volunteer opportunities, or training opportunities.
- If you know of someone who wants to receive this newsletter (as well as other updates) email me at sprziborowski@chabotcollege.edu and I will place them on the mailing list.
- If you want to take your name off of the mailing list, just send me an email at sprziborowski@chabotcollege.edu and in the subject heading, and type in "unsubscribe from mailing list" and I will remove your name.