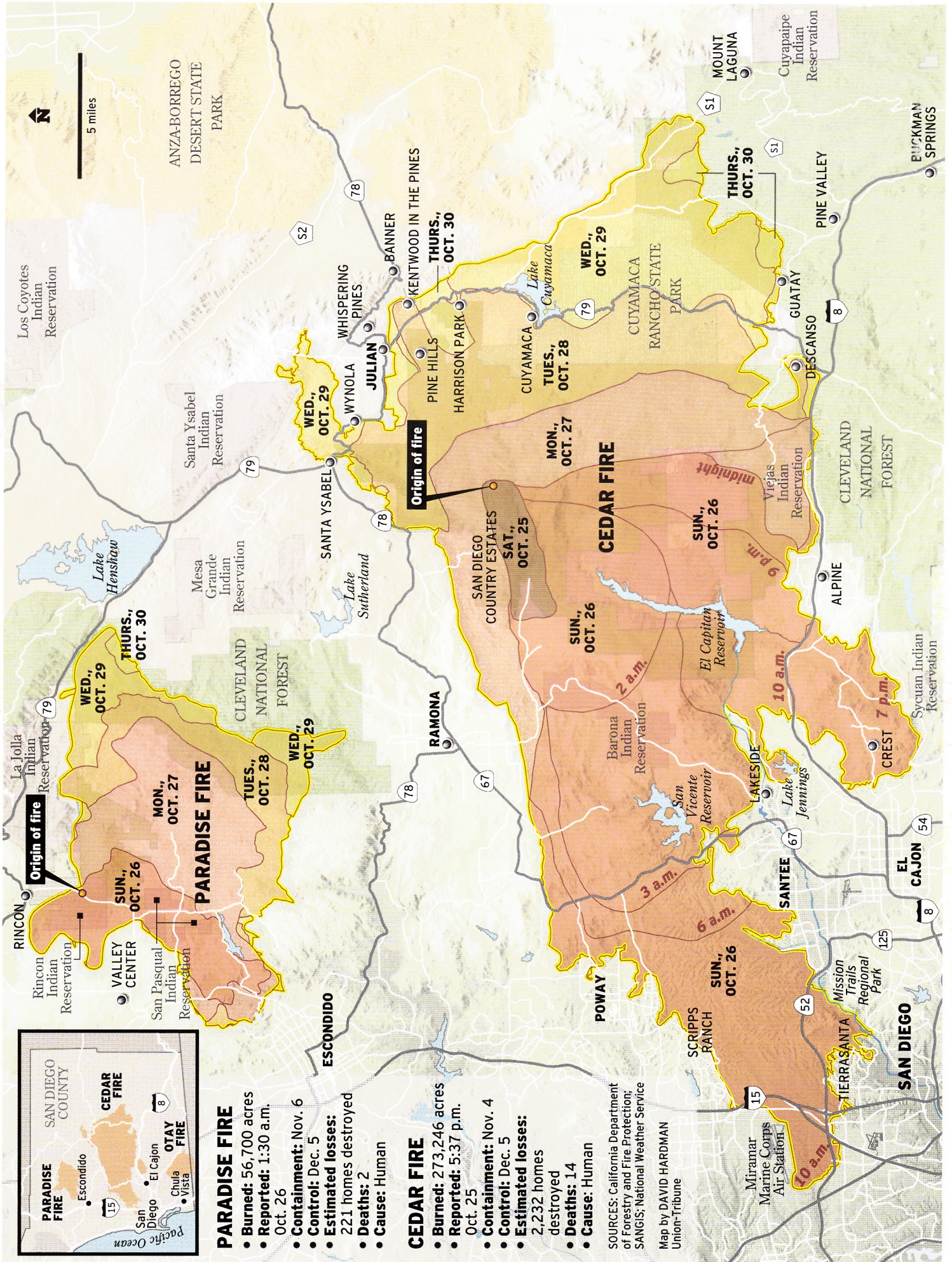


The San Diego Union-Tribune.

FIRESTORM 2003





PARADISE FIRE

- **Burned:** 56,700 acres
- **Reported:** 1:30 a.m. Oct. 26
- **Containment:** Nov. 6
- **Control:** Dec. 5
- **Estimated losses:** 221 homes destroyed
- **Deaths:** 2
- **Cause:** Human

CEDAR FIRE

- **Burned:** 273,246 acres
- **Reported:** 5:37 p.m. Oct. 25
- **Containment:** Nov. 4
- **Control:** Dec. 5
- **Estimated losses:** 2,232 homes destroyed
- **Deaths:** 14
- **Cause:** Human

SOURCES: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection; SANGIS; National Weather Service

Map by DAVID HARDMAN Union-Tribune

CREDITS

Robert York
Senior Editor / Visuals

Michael Franklin,
Bruce Huff
Photo Editors

Karen Clark Ristine
Firestorm 2003 Editor

Chris Ross
Designer

John Kowalczyk,
Kelly Murphy
Copy Editors

Michelle Gilchrist
Research

Dan Osborn,
Sal Medina,
Clint Hill,
Terry Brandes
Color Lab

ON THE COVER

Fire threatened
a Scripps Ranch
neighborhood.
Photo by John Gibbins

Photographs from
this book are
available for purchase
as reprints at
photo.order@uniontrib.com

FIRESTORM 2003

The historic firestorms that ravaged our region took precious lives, destroyed more than 2,400 homes and scarred some of our most beautiful landscapes.

The San Diego Union-Tribune photojournalists captured searing images of the flames and the people who fought them, of the destruction and the people who lost homes and of the thousands of people who volunteered in the multitude of relief efforts that emerged even as the fires still burned.

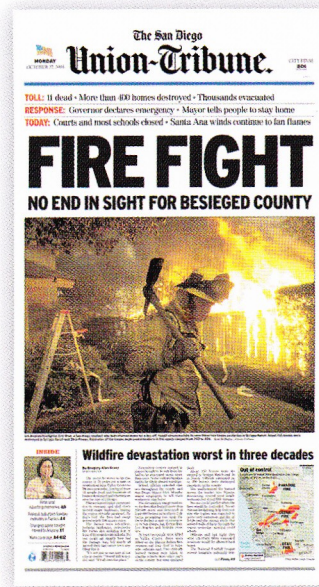
We offer this book as a tribute to the spirit of everyone in San Diego County. Once again, these fires proved that disasters draw us together, that we are resilient people who care deeply about each other and about community.

Proceeds from the sale of these books will go to fire relief efforts.

— KARIN WINNER, *Editor*



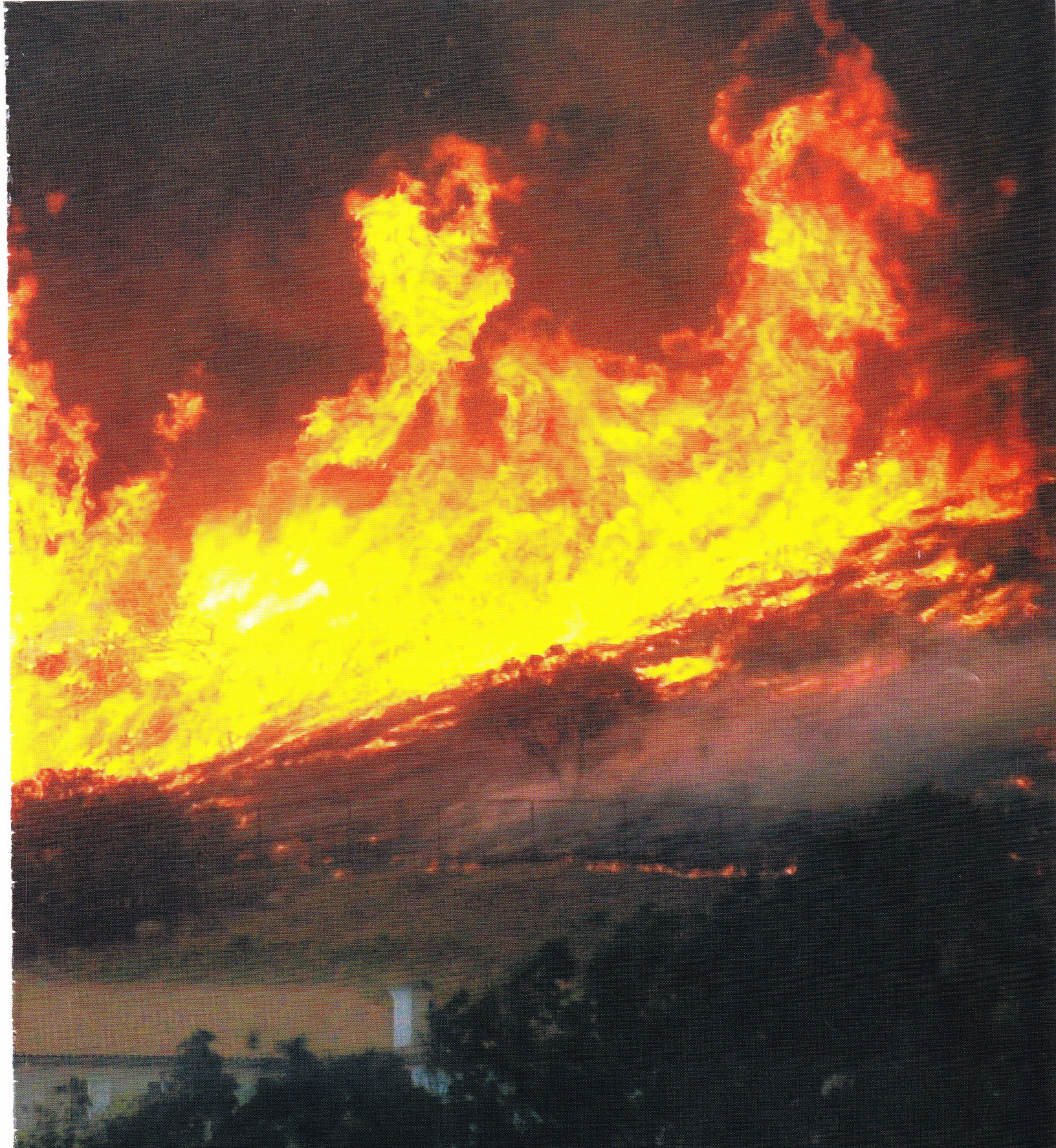
A California Department of Forestry firefighter passed burning brush in Barona Mesa Estates in Ramona just after midnight, Sunday, Oct. 26., when the Cedar fire was only a few hours old. **PHOTO BY JOHN GASTALDO**



The first day

Residents throughout San Diego County woke to darkened skies filled with smoke and ash on Sunday, Oct. 26, as the worst fire in California history tore through wild lands, backcountry and residential neighborhoods. Terror reigned along Wildcat Canyon Road near Lakeside, where many of the 14 people who lost their lives in the fire died. By daybreak, the Cedar fire had burned through miles of brush to reach residential Scripps Ranch and Poway. In Valley Center, a separate fire claimed two lives as residents rushed to flee the firestorm.

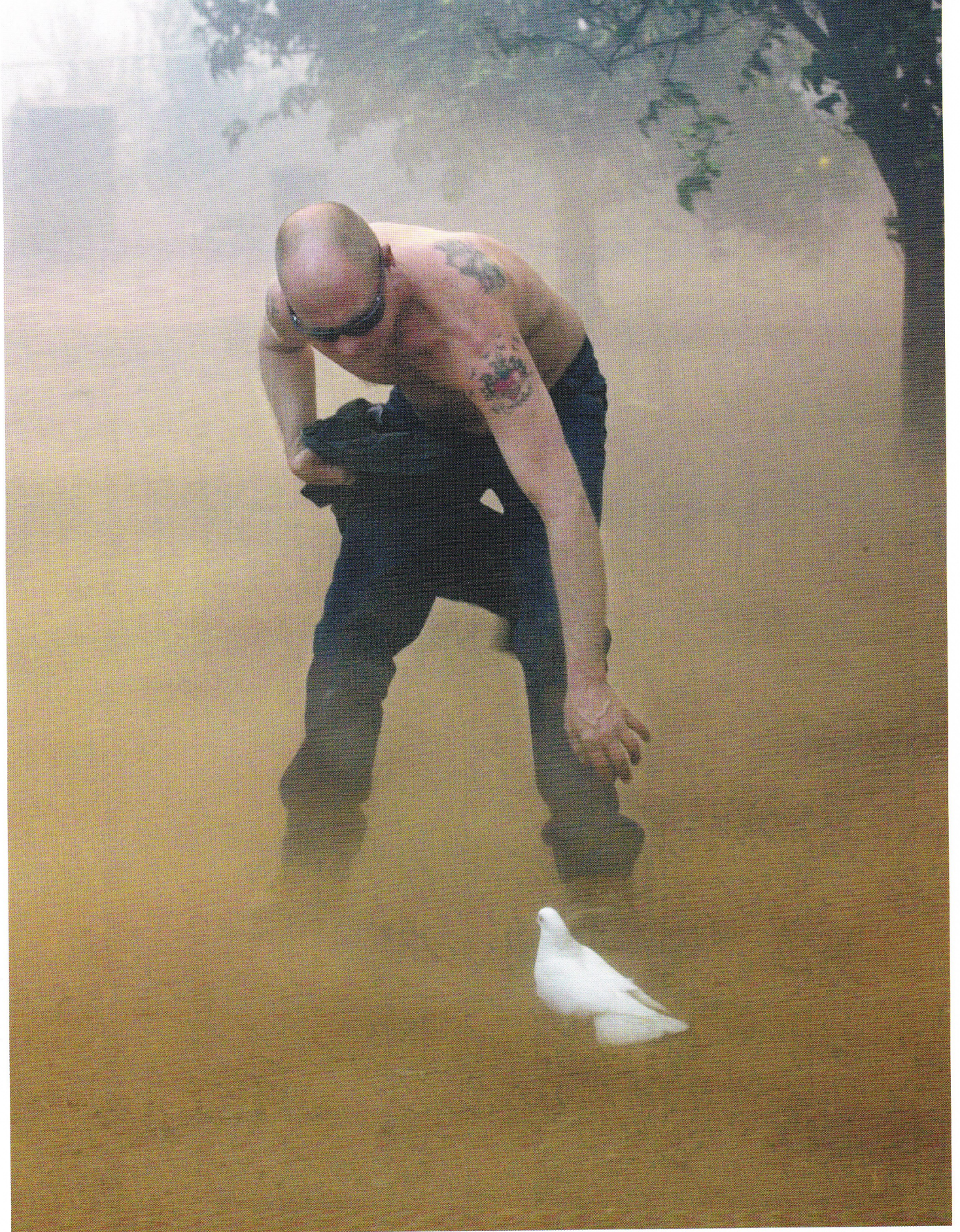




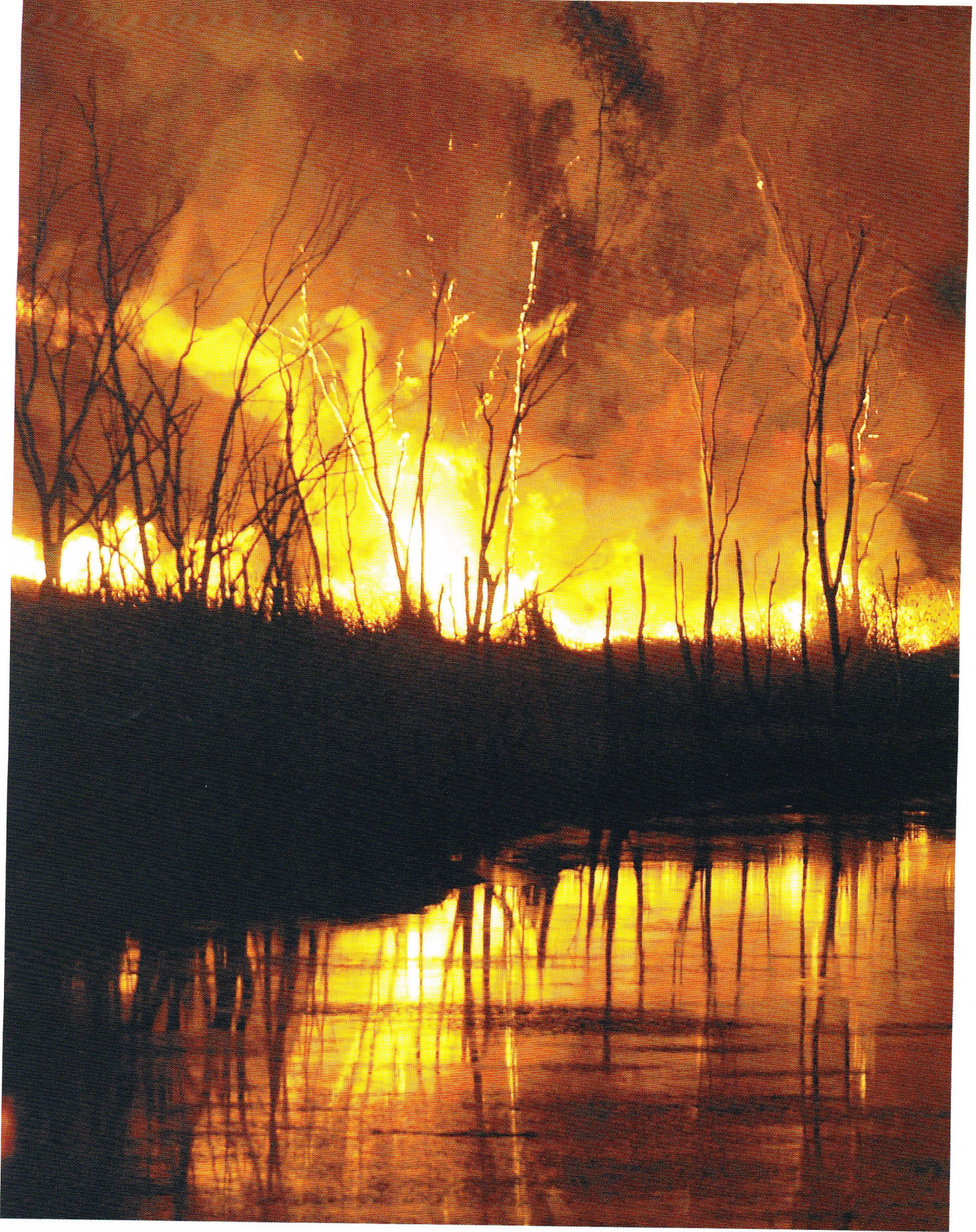
Flames approached a home in San Diego Country Estates near the intersection of Wildcat Canyon Road and San Vicente Road. The Cedar fire began in the late afternoon Saturday, Oct. 25, possibly set by a lost hunter. **PHOTO BY JOHN GASTALDO**



Fire engulfed a home in the 11500 block of Bridle Path Lane in Lakeside early in the morning. **PHOTO BY NANCEE E. LEWIS**



Rick Acherman made repeated attempts to grab a lost and confused homing pigeon as flames from the Paradise fire tore through Valley Center. **PHOTO BY SCOTT LINNETT**



Flames raced through trees along the east bank of the Lower Otay Reservoir east of Chula Vista. The Otay fire was reported at 7:10 a.m. Oct. 26. It burned more than 46,000 acres. The fire burned for four days, with officials concerned initially that it might join the Cedar fire. **PHOTO BY EARNIE GRAFTON**



A family fled with a few possessions from a Tierrasanta home as fire broke over the hill beside the house.
PHOTO BY JERRY RIFE





A passenger headed east on Interstate 8 at Dunbar Lane photographed the fire as it approached the highway.

PHOTO BY DAN TREVAN



Anthony Pless, his sister Alexis and brother Alexander waited with their mother, Shalonda, in a line for food at Qualcomm Stadium, which served as a temporary evacuation center until officials deemed the air quality too poor for the outdoor site.

PHOTO BY CRISSY PASCUAL



Friends Johnnie Kish and Sam Evans, both 14, found each other at Qualcomm Stadium after both of their families were evacuated from Tierrasanta.

PHOTO BY CRISSY PASCUAL



Horses were led to safety from where they were boarded on Driftwood Creek Road in Blossom Valley.

PHOTO BY DAN TREVAN

Ami Skinlo and her father, Robert, cared for 15 dogs in the family's van after being evacuated from their home.

PHOTO BY DAN TREVAN





California Department of Forestry firefighters attacked the fire along Lake Wohlford Road at Valley Center Road.

PHOTO BY EDUARDO CONTRERAS



A sheriff's deputy directed traffic at the corner of Sunset Road and Fruitvale Road in Valley Center.

PHOTO BY EDUARDO CONTRERAS



Poway resident Cenona McNeill was overcome with worry about the fate of the home she and her husband were building.

PHOTO BY JOHN GASTALDO



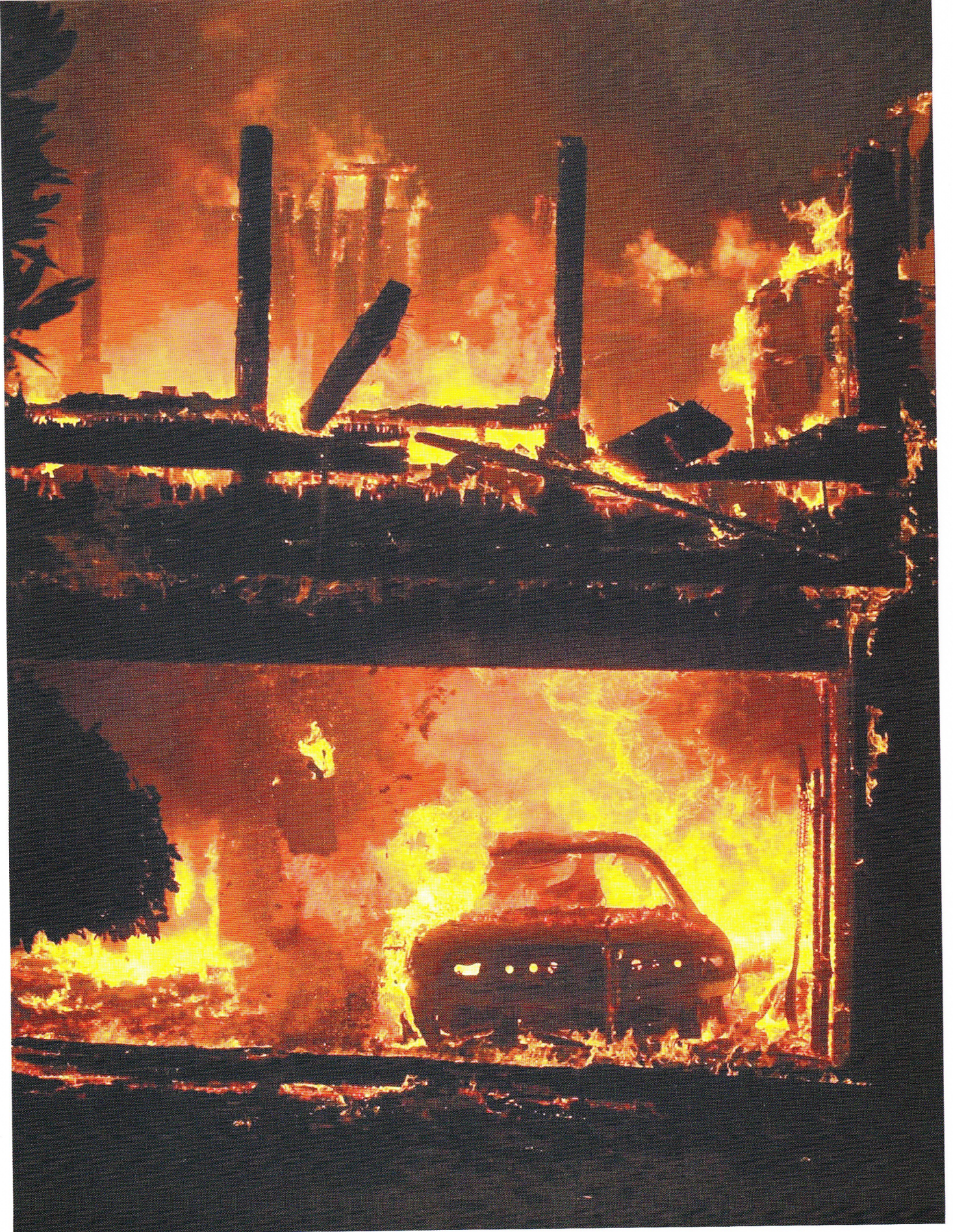
Fire raced toward a Scripps Ranch neighborhood along Pomerado Road. **PHOTO BY JOHN GIBBINS**



Gary Perkins used a garden hose to spray a friend's home on Caminito Suelto in Scripps Ranch, saving it from the nearby fire. **PHOTO BY SEAN M. HAFFEY**



The Cedar fire destroyed the Chabad Hebrew Academy in Scripps Ranch but spared the adjoining new campus that was still under construction. The only surviving remnant of the old school was a large menorah. **PHOTO BY JOHN GIBBINS**



A car burned in the garage of a fully engulfed home on Caminito Suelto in Scripps Ranch. **PHOTO BY SEAN M. HAFFEY**



Los Angeles firefighter Eric Brue was off duty in San Diego County the day the fire reached Scripps Ranch. Early that morning, he drove toward Pomerado Road, drawn toward black, oily clouds. He came upon a home on Caminito Munoz with smoke curling out of the roof. Using a garden hose, garden pick and ladder he found at the home, he worked to fight the blaze. When he realized he couldn't save the home, he made four or five trips inside to retrieve baseball, soccer and softball plaques, sports team photos and family vacation photos. Residents credit him with saving more than a dozen houses, but he remembers with regret the ones he lost.

PHOTOS BY SEAN M. HAFNEY







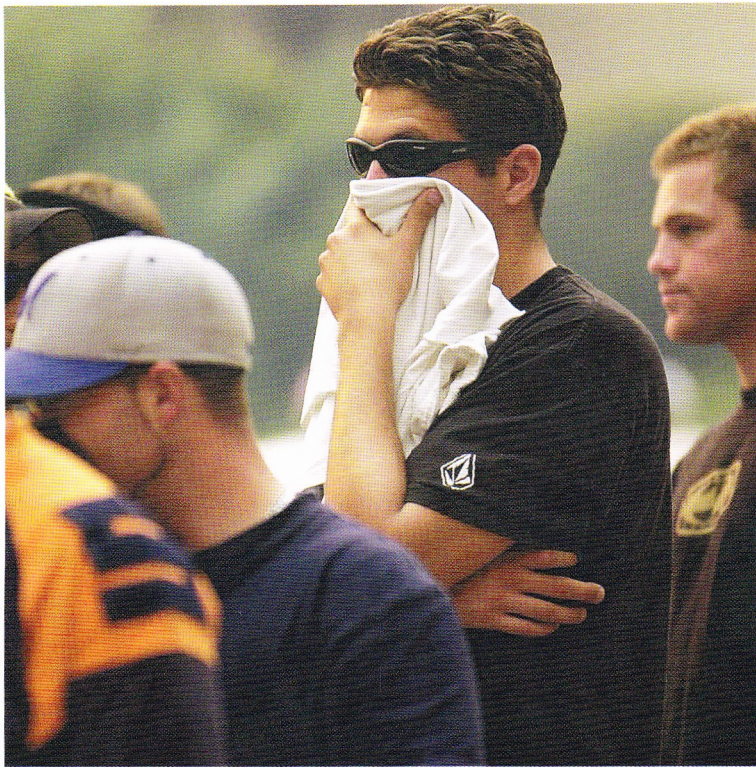
Flames towered over San Diego firefighters as they tried to save houses on Rue Biarritz in Scripps Ranch.

**PHOTO BY
K.C. ALFRED**



Paul Rubesh and David Hatfield watched as the Cedar fire destroyed homes in Scripps Ranch.

**PHOTO BY
JOHN GASTALDO**



Chris Kargacos held a cloth over his mouth to filter smoke as he and friends watched the fire in Scripps Ranch.

**PHOTO BY
HOWARD LIPIN**

Motorcycle officers rode into the smoke in Scripps Ranch.

PHOTO BY K.C. ALFRED

