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When Kids Play with Fire

By Sophie Braccini



Rheem hillside fire on July 26 Photo Lisa Duncan

conducted the criminal investigation which has been presented to the District Attorney," added Priebe.

The Moraga Police Department has revealed the source of the fire that burned five acres on the hillside behind the Rheem Shopping Center, causing the evacuation of two Ascot Drive apartment complexes on July 26.

"The fire investigation was (initially) closed with the cause deemed 'suspicious, likely caused by humans'," said Moraga Police Chief Bob Priebe. "Fireworks were suspected from the start, but there was no evidence to be found because it all burned in the fire," he explained. The investigation was reopened when, on August 8, a mother brought her son to Moraga Orinda Fire District Station 41 when she found out that he and a friend had been shooting off bottle rockets in the dry grass. The mother of the second boy was contacted and she brought him in. Due to their ages, 14 and 15, the boys' names have not been released.

Police also said that one of the mothers gave the bottle rockets to the boys.

"The information was then given to us (by MOFD), and we

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