

Long fire fighting career

Marty Echito, a legacy of aid

Marty Echito is ending a long association with the Chino Fire Dept, a career that ranged from firefighter to president of the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Mr Echito, better known as an insurance broker to many Chinoans, began his career back about the start of World War II as a volunteer fireman. In those days there were only two paid fulltime firemen, leaving most of the firefighting to the volunteers, who dropped everything and ran when the big fire siren roused the town.

A Gilmore gas station at Sixth and Riverside was Mr Echito's business and he lived just south of the station (now Rodelo's). Derek Wright was his partner and he lived right across Sixth St. If an alarm came in at night, Mr Echito said he would be dressing, while his wife, Lois, ran to open the garage doors. When Mr Echito got to Mr Wright's house, he would be ready, too, and would hop into the pickup and the two volunteers drove to the one and only fire station in the old city hall at Seventh and D, usually being the first to arrive.

Mr Echito says that since there was only one paid day man and one paid night man at the station, the volunteers handled a lot of calls. The volunteers drilled one Monday night each month. Those drills were serious practice in fire suppression, Mr Echito said, but the volunteers were a close-knit group and enjoyed each others company. He doesn't remember the dates, but Mr Echito used to be captain of the volunteers.

It wasn't a fire, but a pumper sliding off a narrow road up in Carbon Canyon that was Mr Echito's

closest call while he was an active firefighter. He was on the right side of the truck and that was the downhill side. Mr Echito had to scramble up over the tilting truck to safety.

Mr Echito's term as a fire commissioner ends officially Jan 31, and he declined reappointment. He has served on the board since May, 1972, and has served as president part of the past 11 years.

The board used to work on budgets, meeting sometimes until midnight or 1 am, but the board is now classified as advisory, Mr Echito said. It does advise on various matters, actually approving personnel items, such as hiring or disciplinary actions. Meetings on the third Monday of each month are usually brief nowadays.

Mr Echito is a native Chinoan, actually born here in the city, at home, "about three or four doors south of the Centro Basco restaurant." He graduated from Chino High in 1936 and was married the following year. The gas station was Mr

(See Echito Page 16)

High school scores are still based on raw percentage of correct answers, and for the third con-



Marty Echito

Threatens little league

School space needs ca

By Trissa Borgongo
Staff Writer

Chino's need for classroom space is throwing a shadow even over little league.

Chino American Little League was warned at Tuesday night's school board meeting that the need

assurances that your people understand the situation before they make that investment."

In other business at the meeting, the board tabled action to go to bid for 18 computers for the Regional Occupations Program computer occupation classes until the additional equipment is work-

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Echito

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Echito's livelihood and was operated by Mr Wright while Mr Echito spent 18 months in the Marines at the end of World War II.

Because of an injury and neck surgery, Mr Echito decided there were better ways to earn a living than running a service station. In 1954, Mr Echito sold his first insurance policy working for Ed Pine, with whom he was associated until 1960.

On Jan 1 of that year Mr Echito struck out on his own as a broker, operating out of a small office on Central south of Chino Ave. He built the office himself with the help of two firemen, Dick Simmons and Ray Muriset. Both have since retired as captains.

Mr Echito sold his business to his son, Randy, in 1980, but keeps a desk in the office, now located at 5385 Walnut, in a building that Mr Echito and Noel Tomberlin, contractor, built and lease. They have joined together to build other office buildings and apartments over the years.

Volunteer firefighting and serving on the fire board did not restrict Mr Echito from other civic endeavors. The late Levi Dickey approached Mr Echito, who was a member of the 20-30 club (a young men's organization), about launching a Christmas vacation basketball tournament. Mr Echito organized it and the tournament continues to this day under the auspices of the Chino High Lettermans club, which took over when 20-30 folded. Mr Echito was a charter member of 20-30, admitted actually a year before he should have been because of his age. He was a member until the age of 35, the upper limit. He also sponsored a basketball team in a non-school league.

A longtime member of Rotary Club, he was the Chino president in 1970-71, and 10 years later, his son, Randy held the same position. Mr Echito has 22 years perfect attendance in Rotary and has attended every regional conference.

Mr Echito is active in the Chino Basque Club, and speaks the Basque language. Randy is also active in the club.

Mr and Mrs Echito raised three sons in Chino, Randy, who has one daughter, is the second son. Gary, the oldest, is also in the insurance business, operating a State Farm office in Riverside. There are five children in his household. Marti, the youngest, is a musician and he and his wife operate a dance studio in Ontario.

Marty and Lois Echito travel to Cottage Grove, OR, often to visit an aunt of hers, and they have a small travel trailer parked on a piece of leased ground at Dana Point, where they spend some long weekends.

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