

SAN GERONIMO VALLEY PLANNING GROUP



*“ This is the last place. There is nowhere else to go.” Lou Welch**

SGV Planning Group Steering Committee 2011 - 2012

Chair

Jean Berensmeier
Lagunitas

Vice-Chair

David Fisher
Forest Knolls

Secretary

Linda Nave
Lagunitas

Treasurer

Paul Berensmeier
Forest Knolls

Woodacre Rep

Eric Morey

San Geronimo Rep

David Bernard

At Large Representatives

Forest Knolls

Dan McKenna

Woodacre

Sarah Wright

At Large Seat

Open

Membership Meetings

2nd Monday – 7:30 pm
Community Center

Membership

\$25 Family/Household
\$15 Individual/Senior's Free

P. O. Box 57
Forest Knolls CA 94933

SAN GERONIMO VALLEY PLANNING GROUP

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Mon, Jan. 9, 2012

7:30 – 9 pm

SGV Community Center

7:30 - Introductions. Announcements.

7:40 - Secretary minutes. Review. Approve. Treasurer's Report.

7:45 - Committee & Village Reps Reports. (5 min. max each)

- 7:50
- Request for funds for events. David Fisher. Action.
 - Manzanita Fire Road campaign. Jean Berensmeier
 - Valley Disaster Council. David Fisher
 - SG Post Office Bulletin Board. David Bernard
 - Development Code. Dan McKenna
 - Woodacre Flats. Discussion/Action. WFWG or Steering Committee
 - Wood smoke complaints. Discussion. Action.

8:55 - New items for future agendas.

9:00 - Adjourn.

SGVPG JANUARY NEWSLETTER FOLLOWS

BREAKING NEWS

Manzanita Campaign and Disaster Preparation

- Updates: Coho Salmon; MMWD Task Force; Landowner Assistance Program; Pollen Study; San Geronimo PO Bulletin Board; Development Code; Woodacre Flats; Christmas Tree Removal; State Park closures; Spare the Air; Fire Prevention fee; Socks Needed.
- Valley Observations.
- Stones Unturned.
- Quick Calendar.

SAN GERONIMO VALLEY PLANNING GROUP JANUARY NEWSLETTER – 2012

BREAKING NEWS! #1

Campaign Update

Preserve Manzanita Fire Road -- Trail to the Spiral Circle

By Jean Berensmeier

The campaign to preserve Manzanita Fire Road – Trail to Spiral Circle has \$92,000 in cash and pledges towards our goal of \$100,000! The story to date is worth telling. As described in the December Newsletter, Marin County Parks negotiated and received an option to purchase the 21.14 acre Morrison parcel for \$650,000 to add to the Gary Giacomini Preserve. The department paid \$100,000 for the option agreement, and \$450,000 has been committed by the California Coastal Conservancy to fund the acquisition. The \$100,000 balance must be raised by August 23, 2012, when the option agreement expires.

In the December Newsletter you got all the details, and were notified that a campaign mailer was being sent to every box holder in the Valley. Those of us (many!) working on this were thrilled that we had \$36,000 in pledges at that time and felt that getting the remaining \$64,000 was doable by the August 2012 deadline. Who would have guessed that we would have \$92,000 cash and pledges before the end of December?

Four preserves – Roys Redwoods, Maurice Thorner, Gary Giacomini and French Ranch Open Space Preserves total around 2500 acres of public open space here in the San Geronimo Valley and probably just a few steps from your door. Most everybody loves and uses the public open space in the Valley but most did little to actively preserve it. The names of those who did are embedded in my brain. (I think you know where this is going . . .)

My calculations show that we need \$8000 to close the deal. It is conceivable that we could raise that much before the end of the year or before the end of January. Here's a plan! Find a spot, below, that fits your pocketbook. Send your donation online to MOST (Marin Open Space Trust) www.marinopenspacetrust.org <<http://www.marinopenspacetrust.org>>

POCKETBOOK SPOT

\$8000 - 1 person/family and we're done!
\$4000 - 2 families
\$2000 - 4 families
\$1000 - 8 families
\$500 - 16 families
\$100 - 80 families
\$50 - 160 families

Found your spot? Feeling a little guilty that you love and enjoy the open space we've got but didn't help, or weren't able to help, to preserve it? Good! Here's your chance to be able to say, "I did my part to preserve open space in the beautiful San Geronimo Valley." Want more information? Call Liza Crosse 488-4939 or Jean Berensmeier 488-9034.

FLASH! Current total is \$93,445!

BREAKING NEWS! #2

SAN GERONIMO VALLEY DISASTER PREPARATION UPDATE

By David Fisher, SGVPG Disaster Preparation Committee Chair

Here's The Latest....

CERT is about building Valley Community...in case of disaster, we are on our own!

The **JANUARY 21, 28 CERT class** is filled!

We have 29 fully registered and ready to begin. The majority of folks in this class are SGV residents.

Car Pool to the Nicasio Fire House! Meet at 8:30 am at the Presbyterian Church parking area.

NEW CERT CLASS

FEB 9, 8:30am - 4:30pm and FEB 10, 8:30am - 4:30pm

Both classes are held at the Novato Fire Station, 7025 Redwood Blvd. at Atherton Ave.

We are encouraging folks to register with Friends, Family or Neighbors and carpool to the trainings.

Register at CERT website: www.marincountycert.org

SAN GERONIMO DISASTER COUNCIL TO HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING!

Wednesday, January 25TH, 7:00 - 8:30pm, Woodacre Improvement Club

The Disaster Council has been in existence for over 20 years. Today, it has just a few active members and our designated shelters remain without sufficient supplies and unmanned. The San Geronimo Valley Disaster Council is holding a meeting to pump new blood into the same historic organization.

- Come to vote in new Leadership. A Coordinator, Secretary and Treasurer.
- Come to vote in brand new By Laws. The new Coordinator and Council Leadership will now be responsive to the Community residents.
- An upcoming announcement will be made to inform you of proposed Leadership Candidates.
- Fire Chief Ken Massucco and the Woodacre Fire Department personnel are looking forward to working closely with the newly installed officers and members of the San Geronimo Valley Disaster Council.

PLEASE ATTEND THIS IMPORTANT MEETING

Leaders of diverse organizations, representing a broad spectrum of opinions about Valley issues, have already pledged to attend this important meeting. The consensus is that in event of a disaster, we will need each other's support irrespective of any political issues. Dessert and drink will be served. Need more info? Call me at home. David at 488-1647.

LATEST ABOUT COHO SALMON

By Eric Ettliger, MMWD Aquatic Ecologist

12/15/11 - Coho spawners are here but waiting for some rain... November was a surprisingly good month for coho spawning in the Lagunitas Creek watershed, but we haven't had any significant rain since Thanksgiving and spawning activity has slowed. Only three new coho redds were seen last week and only one was seen this week. This is typically the peak time for coho spawning, and we're expecting to see a lot of it once we get some rain. We haven't seen much redd construction lately but this week we observed 27 coho, mostly holding in pools and waiting for some rain. In one small pool adjacent to the Samuel P Taylor campground we saw 22 coho spawners. It's been a long time since we've seen that many spawners in one place. Their choice in pools was less than ideal, unfortunately, since it was also where State Park staff was planning to drop a large Douglas fir. The 100-foot tree was diseased and dangerous, and park staff collaborated with MMWD to drop it into Lagunitas Creek for fish habitat. But just as the cutting got started we saw the large school of coho beneath the tree and quickly decided to fell the tree away from them. It's a little ironic that a tree intended to provide a home for next year's juvenile coho could have killed some of their parents. State Park and MMWD staff is now discussing how to push the large log into the creek, in a spawner-free location.

UPDATES

MMWD PINE MOUNTAIN TASK FORCE COMMITTEE

By Ken Naffziger, Chair

CONSENSUS RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PINE MOUNTAIN TUNNEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MMWD Board Meeting, Dec. 7, 2011

Due to poor water quality, the cost of repair and an inadequate configuration for operational and emergency water storage, Pine Mountain Tunnel should be taken out of service as quickly as possible.

Based on a peak day demand of 41 million gallons per day (MGD) - which happened most recently in 2006 - and an assumption that Bon Tempe Treatment Plant can provide 12 MGD to the Fairfax Transmission Line, the amount of storage needed is 7.8 million gallons: 3.6 million gallons of operational storage and 4.2 million gallons of emergency storage.

With a total of 7.8 million gallons of storage on the Fairfax Transmission Line and at Ross Reservoir, should demand return to a peak day level of 45 MGD – as happened most recently in 2000 – the net reduction in storage available for emergencies would be 250,000 gallons, an amount the committee considered to be of acceptable risk.

Of the fourteen storage tank sites analyzed by the Committee, those that have the least environmental and community impact, and which have the lowest in projected construction costs, appear in the view of the Committee to be Ross Reservoir, Five Corners and Worn Springs – all of which are on the MMWD Watershed.

MMWD should proceed with the environmental documentation necessary to design UP TO 7.8 million gallons of treated water storage in an appropriate combination at Ross Reservoir and at either Five Corners or the Worn Springs site.

MEMBERS OF THE PINE MOUNTAIN TUNNEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

David Behar, MMWD Board of Directors
Jack Gibson, MMWD Board of Directors
Paul Helliker, MMWD General Manager
Jon LaHaye, MMWD Principal Engineer for Planning
Michael Ban, MMWD Env. Services & Engineering Manager

Ken Naffziger, SGV Planning Group Chair
Phil Sotter, SGV Planning Group
Jean Berensmeier, SGV Planning Group
Dave Anderson, SGV Planning Group
Mel Wright, SGV Planning Group
Sarah Wright, SGV Planning Group

The MMWD water board listened to presentations by Staff, Board members and Planning Group members and unanimously approved the recommendation. Staff will now prepare to move forward with an EIR.

Clarifying Comments:

3.6 million gallons will be for operational storage and 4.2 million gallons will be held for emergency storage. The storage will be provided in a combination of tanks located at two of three locations all on District lands. The sites are above Deer Park at the Four Corners area and two sites above Phoenix Lake near the town of Ross.

Originally 11.4 million gallons of storage was proposed. Planning Group members continually challenged this figure. Over the course of two years, the 7.8 million gallon figure was arrived at and was recently confirmed as adequate by the consultants Montgomery, Watson and Harza.

Editor's Note: After the PG and an aroused community successfully got the MMWD Board to unanimously vote to remove any consideration of a proposal for a 10 million gallon tank on Blueberry Ridge, the MMWD board asked several committee members of the Anti-Tank Committee to serve on the MMWD Pine Mtn. Tunnel Task Force to study alternatives for meeting operational requirements that could include repair of Pine Mountain Tunnel, changes in systems operations, water storage facility alternatives, etc. The Valley Committee worked long, hard and conscientiously with staff, board members and consultants studying the District's needs and making suggestions while protecting the Valley's ridges and lands from storage tanks. Although this recommendation completes the committee's work the committee will monitor the EIR and future efforts of the water district that could impact the San Geronimo Valley.

LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

By Dan McKenna

Here's our checklist (✓) and ongoing progress report

- ✓ All grant funding was secured in February 2011.
- ✓ The technical consultants were interviewed and selected for recommendation in April/May.
- ✓ The technical consultants were approved by the Board of Supervisors in June.
- ✓ Consultants were introduced to the Landowner participants at an orientation meeting in July.
- ✓ Landowner site assessments started in August.
- ✓ Fall Workshop – Great success! 40+ participants. Superb presentations.
- ✓ Consultants reviewed properties for consideration for design drawings.
- Landowner site assessments will be completed by early February.

MOVING ON . . . MOVING ON!

We are in the process of individually contacting all the program participant landowners about the status of their recommendation reports and larger project consideration. The parcel-specific recommendation reports will be completed by early February, and we will be announcing a meeting soon where the reports will be handed out and overall program findings will be discussed. The meeting will be scheduled in February for the participants to ask questions, hear about next steps, and learn about upcoming community workshops and assistance opportunities.

POLLEN STUDY

By Linda Nave

Editor's Note: In June 2011, the Planning Group membership approved a \$300 donation to sponsor bee hives in Forest Knolls and Lagunitas for this Pollen Study. Subsequently, a PG member donated \$300 to sponsor hives in Woodacre. For details about the Pollen Study in past Newsletters go to the PG website www.sgvpg.org Click on Events & News. Scroll down to PG Newsletter Archives. Open pdf's for June and July on the Pollen Study.

Pollen Study protocols will be decided in spring after an assessment of which hives successfully survived the winter season. The bees are currently in their hives clumped in a vibrating ball around the queen and the brood (bee larvae) keeping them at a perfect 96 degrees, no matter what the temperature drops to outside. On sunny December days the intrepid forager bees will still venture out to collect pollen and nectar. The pollen I've seen them bring back is either a pretty yellow orange or a bright white.

Winter can be hard on the bees. In spring, for the past three years, Marin Beekeepers has compiled a survey on survival rates of hives. We have 50-54% loss of hives over the winter; this is significantly lower than the national average of 30%. It is believed that the root of the high Marin rate of loss stems from the fact that most Marin beekeepers promote the philosophy of survival stock. This is a difficult (heart breaking at times) means of keeping bees because when you see them struggling there is little you can do. We do not treat our bees with any kind of insecticides (kills the mites that can infest the bees) or antibiotics. The hope is that over time we will develop a genetically stable strain of bees that are adapted to Marin climates and have hygienic behaviors that provide a healthy disease free hive. Watch for future updates of this important study.

A BULLETIN BOARD FOR THE SAN GERONIMO VILLAGE

By David Bernard, Planning Group San Geronimo Representative

The Planning Group is supporting exploratory efforts to put a bulletin board next to the San Geronimo Post Office. Three of our four Valley villages have bulletin boards next to their Post Offices. However, San Geronimo only has a telephone pole. The San Geronimo Presbyterian Church owns the property next to the Post Office and is open to considering the creation of a community bulletin board.

The Planning Group has formed a Bulletin Board Committee to develop a draft proposal. The Planning Group will use its monthly public meetings to hear comments and will provide community updates in the monthly Newsletter and on our Website www.sgvpg.org Anyone interested in this effort should contact David at davidj.bernard@mac.com

DEVELOPMENT CODE - TITLE 22

COUNTY SUPES TO TIGHTEN TREE REMOVAL REGULATIONS

By Dan McKenna

On December 13th, the Marin County Board of Supervisors deliberated over changes to Title 22, the Development Code. As previously reported in the Newsletter the changes focused on streamlining and improving how permits are reviewed and processed for building in the County, but one change specifically to the Tree Ordinance resulted in much discord amongst Valley residents and the environmental community as a whole.

The Board, tabled the issue and asked the County staff for specific changes before bringing the issue back in January, but it seems the Tree Ordinance is pretty well decided and will result in the following changes:

1. Currently, you may remove up to 5 protected species of trees from your property in any twelve month period without a permit and new law will lower the threshold to 2 trees.
2. Any protected tree growing in a Streamside Conservation area or a Wetlands Conservation Area will require a permit to remove.
3. Any especially large protected species will require a permit
4. Hazardous trees or those trees deemed to pose a fire hazard will be exempt from the permit process.
5. Permit fees will be reduced from \$1,490 to \$150
6. The Board recommended that property owners removing hazardous trees to seek the advice of an Arborist in order to minimize future questions as to whether a tree was truly hazardous and exempt from the permit process.

The last point seemed to cause some confusion amongst some who opposed any Tree Regulations, so the Board further stated that it was not requiring an expensive arborist report, but only recommending that a property owner seek professional advice.

Although the Planning Group supported a stronger set of regulations, the Board's proposed actions tighten the current regulations and protect sensitive habitat next to our riparian areas. In the end, it will be harder to remove large groups of healthy safe trees without a permit and it will be less costly for property owners to obtain a permit.

This was seen as an interim step until the Board acts on wider Countywide issues concerning Planning, the environment and development. Stay tuned for an update when the Board reconvenes and finally passes all of the Title 22 amendments.

Editor's note: On Aug. 2, 2011 the Planning Group went on record with a letter to the Planning Commission and staff stating that any amendments recommended by the Commission for adoption by the Board of Supervisors be done with a careful consideration of long term impacts and consistency with the County Wide Plan as well as the San Geronimo Valley Community Plan. The Planning Group attended the Dec. 13 meeting with its recommendations. The PG supports all efforts to streamline Title 22 provisions that will improve processes and maintain consistent application of the County Wide Plan and the SGV Community Plan.

WOODACRE FLATS WASTEWATER GROUP (WFWG)

By Eric Morey, Woodacre Representative

We are attempting once again to get a meeting with the WFWG so we can make a report at our January membership meeting. Below is the article from December that briefly indicates the effort and concerns of the Steering Committee.

Despite repeated requests as the Woodacre representative, acting for the Steering Committee, to meet with the Woodacre Flats Wastewater Group and get answers to questions that arose as a result of their Sept. 29 meeting to put into our Newsletter they continue to put off meeting with us. We had expected that the Steering Committee meeting with the WFWG group would be before our November 14 membership meeting and had it on the agenda for a report and discussion. At that membership meeting many members, including residents from the Woodacre Flats expressed concern about what appears to be a shift in focus of the project and a shift in the process. Several Steering Committee members who have attended the original meetings as well as the 3 community meetings including the Marshal Plan presentation also expressed concerns. Subsequent requests for this information, as well as a request for the results of the October 31 deadline for the petition/survey, that could be put in the December newsletter were, again, put off.

Chairperson note: When WFWG asked the PG to support a feasibility study to investigate solutions, the original goal was a project to help those subjected to health issues and environmental damage due to failing septic systems. Many septic systems in the Flats do not operate at their maximum capacity during the rainy season when the ground is saturated with water, resulting in raw sewage spills. In January 2010, the PG sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors supporting a feasibility study to investigate solutions that included the following statement, "The Planning Group looks forward to reviewing the results of this feasibility study. We will monitor this effort to be sure that recommendations conform to the goals and objectives of the Community Plan, resolve safety and health issues and will not impact Valley streams or increase the residential footprint."

The May 2011 Questa Report Summary is posted on the SGVPG web site. The 254 page Feasibility Study is posted on the SGVPG web site and at this county link:

http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/CD/main/pdf/EHS/Woodacre_Feasibility.pdf

Editor's Note: The Planning Group has not yet taken a position on this project. The PG Woodacre Flats Committee has attended all meetings of this group to monitor it, determine local support and be informed of all impacts.

CHRISTMAS TREE REMOVAL

By Jean Berensmeier

Thinking about what to do with your Christmas tree? They can and will be recycled in a variety of useful ways including compost, thickening soils and burning. But you must do your part!

Have garbage service? Remove ornaments, lights, tinsel and tree stands. Cut tree to fit in your green bin! About 2' will do it. Flocked trees will not be picked up.

No garbage service? January 11 – 14. Take your tree to the Woodacre Fire Dept. Go to dumpster next to Castle Rock. Remove ornaments, lights, tinsel and tree stands. No flocked trees.

STATE PARK CLOSURES

By Jean Berensmeier

As you know, Tomales Bay State Park and Samuel P. Taylor State Park, our neighbor, were saved from the ax. Tomales Bay State Park will get help from the Point Reyes National Seashore and stay open. Operations at Taylor Park will be paid, in part, by the recently raised entrance fee (\$5 to \$7) to visit Muir Woods. The fee will go for basic operations and not used for capital improvements or repairs.

PROPOSED ANNUAL FIRE PREVENTION FEE

By Eric Morey, Woodacre Representative

\$150 Annual Fire Prevention Fee - Owners of residential parcels in the San Geronimo Valley and elsewhere will be faced with a \$150 annual fee when the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection votes on a Cal Fire prevention proposal at their January 2012 meeting. The fee will help raise \$50 million in the first year and \$80 million the next, even though Cal Fire's annual fire prevention budget is only \$23 million. Marin county residents do not receive Cal Fire service but will pay the fee anyway, although they may be eligible for a \$35 discount. There is a concern that the new fee will make it harder to convince residents to support local taxes that maintain local fire districts when they are already in the hole for \$150. Others maintain that the new fee is illegal and unnecessary and will do nothing to improve fire prevention. Read the article from the SF Chronicle here: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/12/23/MNSO1LVO24.DTL>
And here: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/12/27/EDNG1MGFAP.DTL>
and you can contact Cal Fire here: <http://www.fire.ca.gov/>

SOCKS NEEDED! WHO WOULD HAVE GUESSED?

By Sarah Wright, At Large Representative, Woodacre

A U.C. wildlife team researching the rare Pacific fisher in the Sierra Nevada is asking for donations of clean, gently used socks. They use the socks to hang fisher bait in trees, for motion-activated cameras to photograph the critter as it climbs the tree and chews on the sock. The Sierra Nevada Adaptive Management Project (SNAMP) is examining the effects of the U.S. Forest Service's forest thinning on the health of local wildlife, the forest and water resources. The researchers are going through 250 pairs of socks a month to survey the distribution of the fishers in a 500-square-mile area near Bass Lake. If you have some old, unmatched, socks without holes, now you have a place to send them where they will be welcome. The address is SNAMP, 40799 Elliott Dr., Oakhurst, CA 93644.

Note: This article, edited slightly, was recently seen in the West Marin Citizen "News Shorts" section.

SPARE THE AIR! WOOD SMOKE COMPLAINTS

By Air Quality Committee

The Bay Area Air Quality Management Dist. received over 400 complaints in the Bay Area about wood smoke over the recent holidays. Dry air traps pollutants and this is the driest December since 1989. Air testing last year showed that the worst areas for wood smoke in Marin was Woodacre with Forest Knolls close behind. The Air Quality Committee provided extensive information about wood burning in our monthly Newsletters that you may want to refer to. Go to the PG website www.sgvpg.org Click on Events & News. Scroll to PG Newsletter Archives. Check March/April/May.

WORTH REPEATING . . .

Excerpts from an earlier Air Quality Committee Report

Know that it is illegal to burn wood, manufactured fire logs or any other solid fuel, both indoors and outdoors when the Bay Area Air Quality Management District calls an air alert between Nov. 1 and February 28. There are some exemptions. And breathing in fine particulate is hazardous to your health as well as your neighborhood. Burning illegally can subject you to a warning for a first offense; a \$400 fine for a second offense and it goes up from there. The Valley, particularly Forest Knolls and Woodacre consistently has serious wood smoke problems.

Before you burn:

- Call 1-877-4NO-BURN
- Visit www.sparetheair.org or www.baaqmd.gov
- Sign up for automatic e-mail AirAlerts at www.sparetheair.org
- Sign up for automatic phone alerts by calling 1-800-430-1515

You can file anonymous complaints for people who are burning improperly, or on ban days. But the Planning Group does not recommend this unless it is a last resort due to health reasons. If you have a problem try to first sit down with the offending neighbor and try to come to some agreement that works for both. Don't just talk – be a good listener.

VALLEY OBSERVATIONS

Eric M. Woodacre - The change in the weather has created some spectacular sunsets on these cold and cloudy winter evenings. It appears that there are more hawks and kestrels in the neighborhood these days. Ticks have returned to the tall grass but not in the numbers of last summer. Deer are still invading the streets at night. An egret was spotted at the upper school campus.

Sarah W. Woodacre - My husband, Mel, has seen a bobcat on numerous occasions in the vicinity of Spirit Rock. He says that it's easy to see from the road. He has observed it acting like a big housecat, appearing to stalk gophers and lazing around as though it owns the place (oh, that it were so).

More from Eric M. Woodacre - There seems to be fewer squirrels around these days. They should be going to acrobatic lengths to remove the buckeye seed pods from the ends of the slender branches. Instead, the seeds fall to the ground. The only squirrel that I've seen lately looked rather sickly and had patches of hair missing. But the overturned trash cans and the churned moss in the driveway indicate that raccoons are active and still about. And the Spare The Air alerts seem to be doing the job. The recent view from Maurice Thorneer Preserve reveals an unusually smoke-free Valley, from Forest Knolls all the way to Lagunitas. Most times that view is thick with smoke on cold days.

STONES UNTURNED

By Jean Berensmeier

Richard Sloan, resident of Woodacre and long time Lagunitas School District Trustee was named Citizen of the Year by the San Geronimo Valley Lions Club at their annual holiday dinner recently. The Lions Club said, "Richard was honored for his 40 plus years of service in the San Geronimo Valley. Richard volunteers at every construction project at the School and throughout the community, including playgrounds, ball fields, homes and parks. For over 20 years Richard has been Santa at the annual Community Center Holiday Arts Fair. Richard's carved pumpkins at Halloween on Railroad Avenue have delighted the children and adults in the Valley for decades. Richard supports every organization at their annual events. He is truly a treasure of our San Geronimo Valley Community." It couldn't have been said better . . .

Jake Luria of San Anselmo, a 13 year old St. Mark's School 8th grader collected \$4400 in gifts for his bar mitzvah and donated \$1900 to the Preserve Manzanita Fire Road –Spiral Circle campaign.

Lester Paul Bailey, long time resident of Lagunitas has crossed over. Most Valley residents will remember Les for his smile, gentle manner and love of music and gardening. For many years he was a frequent entertainer at The Two Bird. But during those 91 years he also joined the Marine Corps and served in WWII between 1943 and 1946. And during the '50's and some of the '60's he was the Assistant Field Secretary for the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) National Office and remained a civil rights activist. He leaves behind three sons, three daughters and his beautiful wife Joyce.

Popa Bob Shiner & Grandma Peg Duggan of Lagunitas welcomed Thomas Sawyer Carter, a 9 lb. grandson to the world. He is the first baby born in the New Year in San Francisco. Mother, Father, Son and grandparents are all doing well.

Cathy Scott of Lagunitas joined naturalist David Wimpfheimer and other volunteers in Woodacre on a recent Saturday morning in the 36th annual Marin Audubon Society's Christmas Bird count. "Pishing" an imitated bird call that birders make with their voice attracted a number of house finches, pine siskins, acorn woodpeckers, scrub jays, crows and sparrows among others. Both sight and sound are used in identification. This year's count was amusingly called "Cheep Thrills."

Plastic Bag Ban - The law approved last year went into effect on Jan 1 for Marin's unincorporated area. It imposes a 5¢ charge on paper bags. Plastic bags used for produce are exempt. Now's the time to get those cloth bags!

MARIN COUNTY OPEN SPACE DIST. EVENTS

Special interest for Valley folks!

TREK TO THE TOP OF WHITE HILL

Thu, Jan 5, 2012

9 – 2

David Herlocker, county naturalist: This is an interpretive walk for adults. We'll aim for lunch at the summit, but we'll make the 1,000 foot ascent at a pace that will allow us to find plenty of mushrooms, birds and other wildlife along the way. Directions: From the Valley, head east on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Meet at the big gravel parking area on the left side of the road, just over the top of the hill. See important note below.

DEVIL'S GULCH

Wed, Jan 18, 2012

10 – 2

David Herlocker, county naturalist: There are a lot of possibilities for this day. A wide variety of mushrooms, and if we are lucky we may even see spawning salmon. Perhaps we'll go up the trail to Stairstep Falls, or we just might explore the less traveled parts of the main canyon (none of these options are strenuous). This walk is for adults. Directions: Meet at the parking area across from Devil's Gulch: Follow Sir Francis Drake Boulevard west 1 mile past the entrance to Samuel P. Taylor State Park.

NOTE: Marin County Open /Space Dist. requests that no animals (except service animals) attend these two events. Questions: Contact David Herlocker at (415) 893-9508 or dherlocker@marincounty.org. Call (415) 893-9527 on the morning of the walk to hear a recorded message if cancelled due to heavy rain. For more info: www.marincgov.org

BAEER FAIR

Sat Jan. 21, 2012

10 – 4:30

Marin County Exhibit Hall

Visit the 35th annual Bay Area Environmental Education Resource (BAEER) Fair. There will be a variety of workshops about wildlife, ecology, adventure and environmental education. General admission: \$12; high school students/senior citizens: \$10; youth: \$8; and kids 6 and under: free. For more information call (510) 657-4847.

QUICK CALENDAR

DESCRIPTION	DAY	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Christmas Tree Removal (if no garbage service)		Jan 1 – 14	8 - 5	Woodacre Fire Dept.
Trek to Top of White Hill	Thu	Jan 5	9 – 2	Top of White's Hill
PG membership meeting	Mon	Jan 9	7:30 – 9	Community Center
Devil's Gulch	Wed	Jan 18	10 – 2	Devil's Gulch/Taylor State Park
BAEER Fair	Sat	Jan 21	10 – 4:30	Marin Exhibit Hall
Marin County CERT Program	Sat	Jan 21 & 28	9 - 4:30	Nicasio. – Corporation Yard
Valley Disaster Council	Wed	Jan 25	7- 8:30pm	Woodacre Improvement Club
Marin County CERT Program	Sat	Feb 9 & 10	8:30 – 4:30	Novato Fire Station
Development Code –Title 22	TBA			

Planning Group Membership

Please urge a friend or neighbor to join us.

___ \$15 Single ___ \$25 Family ___ \$0 Over 65 and under 21

Make your check out to SGVPG and mail to:
P. O. Box 57 Forest Knolls, CA 94933

Note: Request a membership form from info@sgvpg.org

Newsletter Editor: Jean Berensmeier jeanberens@comcast.net.

Suggestions, comments and Valley Observations are welcome.

Newsletter Contributors: Steering Committee members; Chairpersons and PG members

*** “This is the last place. There is nowhere else to go.” Lou Welch.**

This line, always at the top of our agenda, is an excerpt taken from a poem by Lou Welch that was included in the extraordinary document “**Can the Last Place Last?**” which, in the late ‘60’s laid the ground work for the unique County Wide Plan that was adopted in 1972 and created zoning, policies, codes and regulations that has served to preserve major parts of Marin from inappropriate development.
