



The Lookout

Muir Woods Park Community Association

www.mounttam.org

February-April 2010

415/381-3119



St. Patrick's Dinner

MWPCA Community Center, 40 Ridge Avenue
Wednesday, March 17th at 6:00 PM
Adults—\$20 / Children under 14—\$10

The theme for the 2010 Board is "Know thy Neighbor." So, we offer a special invitation to those who haven't come before to join in the fun this year. For many of us, it's the highlight of the social calendar for the year!

Cocktail hour starts at 6:00 PM with no-host beer and wine, followed by traditional corn beef and cabbage dinner at 7:00 PM. Dessert follows, along with Irish coffee for adults. Dancing into the evening orchestrated by Foo Kennedy. Space always fills up quickly, so please let us know ASAP whether you plan to attend. Again last year we had to turn away a few people who hadn't reserved, because there wasn't enough food.

Kids are welcome - we will have a movie in the back room for them.

The menu is courtesy of Executive Chef Lynn Hindley, a meal many of us relish. This year Lila Daniels will manage the event and the kitchen and she needs your help! Call or email her if you'd like to help with set-up, shopping, cooking, serving, or clean-up.

- Lila Daniels
lilasd@aol.com or 415/819-0845

Know Your Neighbor...hood

This year the MWPCA Board is encouraging us "Mountain Folk" to know our neighbors.....at least a little bit.....! There are many interesting people who have chosen to live here. And, now that times are stressful (to say the least) knowing who lives nearby can contribute to our sense of well-being. This issue includes biographical information on our two new Board members, an article about Monte Cimas residents, and an article about the huge thunderstorm. Several of us were hit hard by its impact, especially what happened as a consequence of the power surges.

Enclosed on page 6 is the 2010 dues form to complete and return. Just take a few minutes to complete and return it. Be sure to include your email address as we plan to communicate more frequently and ultimately less expensively. One never knows when there will be a serious emergency and we will need to rely on each other. What if that huge thunderstorm had turned into something far more serious? Besides, one of the most fulfilling aspects of life is community involvement.....and the price is right! (No increases and remember.....members receive special rental rates for the Clubhouse.)

There are new residents.....and others who don't know about the community association. If you fall into either category we hope you will make an effort to join us for a social event—the St. Patrick's Day Party is especially joyful—or attend special meetings from time to time, like those focusing on the sewer/septic situation. Why not start the new decade by checking out the MWPCA? The Clubhouse is on Ridge Avenue, right in the center of the community.

We are working to make the Web site (www.mounttam.org) more useful to you. Check it regularly to find out about upcoming events and special announcements. The Lookout is also posted there for future reference.

MWPCA President's Message

2009 was a banner year for the MWPCA, with excellent turnouts for events such as the St. Patrick's Day Party, the Jazz Fest, the Annual Meeting, the Christmas dinner, and the children's parties. As usual the Fall Arts Festival sandwich booth demonstrated community spirit amongst the many volunteers and raised considerable funds to boot.

Clubhouse improvements include (almost) completing the lawn-side patio, participating in the widening of Muir Woods Trail (to the Tourist Club) to improve fire truck access, and installing a security system. In addition the Marin County Fire Department cut down numerous sapling eucalyptus in the grove down slope on the west side in return for using the Clubhouse for several training sessions.

Revenues were up and expenses were down compared to budget in 2009, giving us a cushion to undertake projects in 2010.

The Sewer Committee continued its excellent work and has received nearly enough pledges to cover its share of the cost of an election in which the neighborhood will decide if wants to extend sewer coverage to the MWPCA area. We had 111 dues-paying members in 2009 and are going forward with a full 11-member Board in 2010, thanks to the addition of Susan Johnson and Faybeth Diamond.

Potential projects for next year include gravelling the lower parking lot, improving drainage on the driveway, actually completing the patio, and (probably longer term) replacing the siding and windows on the weather-worn west side of the building.

As always we encourage your participation in MWPCA activities and welcome your comments.

- Peter Hindley

Board Meeting Highlights

Note: Complete MWPCA Board minutes are now posted online at: <http://www.mounttam.org>

Work Day on Sunday, April 4th at 9:00 AM

Come join in the fun of helping with upkeep of the MWPCA Community Center. There's always plenty to do, especially after the recent stormy weather.

Peter Hindley, Jon Lovell, and Lynn Hindley are always there with a long list of simple and complicated tasks to be done.

Whether you're handy in the cleaning department, have some carpentry skills to offer, or no particular skills at all, just drop by and join in.

Adult International Holiday Party

For those of you who haven't attended, this international holiday party during mid-December is a great way to catch up with neighborsand to try some wonderful new dishes.

Many of us anticipate repeats of popular dishes like Julia Rydjord's sushi, Bonnie Himberg's Latin American dishes, and Lynn Hindley's Swiss fondue.

Children's Christmas Party

The Children's Christmas Party was a lot of fun this year. There was a good turnout of mountain families. The kids had a blast decorating gingerbread men and stuffing themselves with sugar. Everyone ran out to greet Santa who arrived via fire truck in the rain.



Santa was led inside and distributed goodies to an eager crowd. The kids were awed that Santa knew their names.

Thanks to everyone who made it a memorable event. A special thank you to our terrific Santa, Jack Vogenson, to Jenn Sheetz and Lynn Hindley for providing cookies, frosting and food to share, to Bonnie Mumford for the adult snacks, and to everyone who brought food and cheer. Thank you for making it fun. See you next year!

- Kit Harris

Harold Dittmer Updating Neighborhood Directory for Muir Woods Park Residents

It's time to update your address, phone numbers, AND email addresses for the new neighborhood directory. It's been five years since we put the last one together and we'd like to include your current listing.

Include details with your 2010 membership dues by completing the form on page 6 and sending it to: MWPCA, 40 Ridge Avenue, Mill Valley, CA 94941. If you prefer to send your contact information only via email, please send it directly to Harold, our trusty data base manager at: hdittmer@sbcglobal.net

This directory is for neighborhood use only. Your information will not be shared outside Muir Woods Park.

Fire House News

Emergency preparedness: As you may know our community's involvement in this realm goes back many years. In fact, our own Del Goetz was recognized by the Marin County Board of Supervisors as one of the pioneers in the development of community emergency preparedness. We have recently begun updating the Muir Woods Park Emergency Plan. The group working on this includes Virginia Soper (CERT), Larry Lewis (RACES-radio communications specialist), Brad Silen (MWPCA), Libby Colman (MCFD contract employee hired to write Emergency Plans), Michael Koffman (Muir Beach), Chief Bill Roberts (MCFD) and myself. We are all excited about how our work is progressing and look forward to introducing this document to the community this summer. If you would like to be involved please contact me.

Get Ready Marin: This is an excellent educational program to help us all better prepare for the next disaster. I cannot underscore enough how a little work now can keep you and your family be healthier and more comfortable when the next disaster hits. Please take a look at the Get Ready Marin website for valuable information: www.getreadymarin.org.

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT): Our community is fortunate to have a handful of residents who have invested a weekend of their time to become CERT members. These folks play a key role in our disaster plan and are recognized by the County of Marin as authorized "Disaster Workers." If you are interested in this training check out www.citizencorps.gov/cert/ or contact me for more information.

Emergency Siren: After much work by the MWPCA and the County of Marin the siren on top of the community center is back in full operation. It is part of a web of sirens throughout Mill Valley that are controlled remotely by our Emergency Command Centers. We test the sirens on the first Saturday of each month at noon. Write this on your calendar and see if you can hear it in your yard and home. Should you hear the siren sounding, other than on test day, it means there is a problem. Please tune your radio to KCBS or KGO radio or contact us at the Fire Department for more information at 388-5414.

For example, we answered the firehouse phone recently to an excited voice asking why the siren was sounding. We were scratching our heads wondering ourselves since we had not activated it. The mystery was soon solved when her husband broke in and announced we could relax: it was just him running the vacuum in the other room. We all had a little chuckle; then we thanked her for staying alert.

Ruben Martin: Ruben was injured 2 years ago in a fire truck backing accident at our fire station. You may have seen an article recently about him in the IJ. Although he is still not back to full duty, Ruben continues to improve and hopes to return to our fire station in the future.

Chipper Day: Summer will soon be upon us and with all this rain we should have a good grass crop. Last year we were awarded a grant from Fire Safe Marin to fund a

curbside chipper day. Hopefully, we will receive the grant again this year. In any case the MCFD will try to organize a vegetation disposal program to help everyone with fuels reduction work.

Now is a good time to start preparing for maintenance of the flammable fuels on your property. We will be doing our annual fire hazard inspections in few months and each year the standards become a little stricter. Check out the Fire Safe Marin website for more information on this year's code requirements at www.firesafemarin.org.

The Marin County Fire Department Throckmorton Ridge Fire Station and its personnel are proud to be available 24/7 to assist you and your family. Thank you for your support and please feel free to contact the station or me personally if we can be of help.

David Carr, Fire Captain
Throckmorton Ridge Fire Station
388-5414 (non-emergency business line)

Muirly Spring News...Check Out Progress in YOUR Parks!

Muir Woods is lush and green, full of running water, and hopefully salmon will return again to Redwood Creek...the watershed is big news for them (and for us!). It is all the way down at Muir Beach where BIG improvements to the channel and area began last fall.

Restoring the natural flow of the creek, pulling back the parking lot to expand the flood plain, providing backwater areas for young fish and waterfowl, and digging a red-legged frog pond are big accomplishments. But, probably the big WOW factor is the awesome view of the ocean you see when you first drive in! Plan on spending some time in this area to see the improvements. Other pleasant surprises include the new porta-potties and nicely placed picnic area! Crews are down there all the time planting...join them! Call 388-2596 to learn what's needed.

And, up on the hill, another long-dreamed of project happened and will be unveiled late this spring: the Dias Ridge Trail finally was well-constructed to provide a safe, scenic trail that also connects Panoramic Highway to Muir Beach. It also offers options to those hiking the Miwok and Coastal Trails...plus it is open to hikers, bicyclists and equestrians. Resist taking a peek until it officially opens since the soils need to settle and plants need to grow!

The days ahead are perfect to start appreciating the wild-flower parade. Get out now to see milkmaids, hounds-tongue, fetid adders-tongue, and Indian warrior...that's just the kick-off to a long season of delicate flowers and bright colors.

We hope to see neighbors often in our park!

Mia Monroe
Site Supervisor
Muir Woods National Monument

Neighborhood Preferences: Bringing a Sewer to the Area

In my role as sewer statistician, I thought you might be interested in the data we have gathered through the end of 2009 on the preferences of the neighborhood regarding whether to bring a sewer to the area. Here are three relevant sets of statistics.

MWPCA:

The first set covers the entire group of 111 dues-paying (for 2009) MWCPA households. Only one preference per household, not one for each person. 54% of members indicated a preference, of which 85% favored the sewer.

Statistics	MWPCA Members Preferences As Indicated By Categories Below					
	MWPCA Members Total	Straw Poll	May 23, 2009 Mtg	2009 Donation	Prior Year Donation	Pledges
Number of Members	111	-	-	-	-	-
FOR Sewer (Note 1)	51	34	26	11	11	22
AGAINST Sewer (Note 1)	9	8	3	0	0	0
Total Showing Preference	60					
% Showing Preference	54%					
% of Preferences FOR	85%					
% of Preferences AGAINST	15%					

Note 1: Totals are less than sum of categories because some members appear in more than one category

All parcels with houses:

Statistics	Area Homeowners Preferences As Indicated By Categories Below					
	All Area Home Owners Total	Straw Poll	May 23, 2009 Mtg	2009 Donation	Prior Year Donation	Pledges
Number of Parcels With Houses	About 300	-	-	-	-	-
FOR Sewer (Note 1)	118	86	26	11	15	36
AGAINST Sewer (Note 1)	24	23	3	0	0	0
Total Showing Preference	142					
% Showing Preference	47%					
% of Preferences FOR	83%					
% of Preferences AGAINST	17%					

Note 1: Totals are less than sum of categories because some homeowners appear in more than one category

The second set is of all residences in parts of the area not presently served by the Mill Valley or Homestead sewer systems. This amounts to about 300 parcels with houses. It does not include undeveloped lots, except for a few. A rough estimate of the number of undeveloped lots is about 50. Based on 300 parcels, 47% indicated a preference, of which 83% favored the sewer.

Pledges:

A third item of interest is the pledges made thus far to support (about \$40,000 needed) the next phase of activity, leading up to an election. So far \$27,350 has been pledged by 36 households, of which \$16,750 is from 22 MWPCA members.

	Pledge Statistics		
	Total	MWPCA Members	Non-MWPCA Members
Pledges	36	22	14
Total Pledged Amount, \$	27,350	16,750	10,600

Based on results to date, and in the spirit of full disclosure, we will share these results with those who have already made pledges when we ask them to redeem their pledged amounts.

- Peter Hindley

Septic Regulations Report , February 2010

Last year a letter was mailed to the community to conduct a straw poll to determine the level of interest to pursue extending sewer pipes to our neighborhood. Many have responded. Some have not. If you have not responded, please do so. We would love to hear from you.

The results so far are strongly in favor of the sewer. As a consequence we are going ahead with the first phase of the project. The first phase is:

1. Prepare an accurate Assessment District Boundary Map. To do so, it will be necessary to pull together property map information from the Recorder's Office, requiring interpretation of older deeds and maps. This will take time.
2. Prepare a list of all parcels with ownership information within the Assessment District Boundary.
3. Prepare an Assessment Report outlining the Assessment costs for each parcel. This will include all costs for engineering services and incidental expenses.

Community and Agency meetings will be held to keep the stakeholders informed. This phase will conclude with an election held by an appropriate Agency and a vote taken. Each parcel will get one vote, not each person, and 50% + 1 vote is needed to approve.

Estimated Costs. First phase: \$ 79,000. The County has promised that if we come up with the first \$40,000 they will fund the remaining costs. We currently have pledges for about \$37,000 and feel that we can raise the final amount needed. Thank you to all who have made pledges. Remember that this is not a donation, but will be returned to Property owners in the form of a tax credit, provided the vote passes.

As a reminder, here is a quick breakdown of the rough estimates of expected costs.:

- Paying for the system with financing over a 30-year period, each homeowner would have about \$2,000 added to their annual tax bill.
- On top of that there would be a one time (\$5,000-6,000) hook-up fee, plus costs associated with dismantling the old septic tank (about \$1000).
- Homeowners would also have an annual fee to the Homestead Sanitary District (\$500 by 2011).
- Roughly, the costs for a new septic system would be \$50,000 - \$120,000. The estimated added value to homes has been said to be \$60,000.

Senior citizens who have concerns about the expense could opt to defer the taxes until such time as the property is sold.

Eventually the State will require either expensive new septic systems or a hook-up to the sewer. Many homes have poor soil and / or small lots which will further complicate building a modern septic system.

I believe that if we take the long-term approach and extend the sewer before it is mandated, we will all benefit.

- Questions? Email me. lynnhindley@sbcglobal.net

Where were You on January 19th?

Scott McBirnie was sitting at his desk when it happened. All he remembers was a gigantic white light that filled the sky. The kind of flash that you knew immediately meant trouble. Almost instantaneously after the flash came the boom. Think bomb boom, or dynamite taking out the side of a mountain boom. Never before had Scott experienced the two so close together. Downstairs in the kitchen, a contractor's helper let out a yelp as the tip of his saw was hit by the light and burst into a small flame. Poor guy was so shaken that his coworker had to drive home that day.

A few doors down over at the Kahns, Michael and Virginia were both home. Their house took a direct hit. Their phone wires immediately fried. The sonic boom knocked the kitchen cabinets open and threw things on to the floor. Smoke appeared rising from the deck, causing enough concern that a neighbor checked to make sure they were all right. It was like an earthquake the way the house moved and shook. The first thing they did was check on each other. Both okay, they went about cleaning up the mess and getting the electrician, PG&E, the furnace guy, and anyone else they could reach to come up the Mountain for repairs.

Lila and Bill Daniels were in Portland. Dreary, stormy Portland in January. Why couldn't they be home in sunny California instead? However, business called, so off they went. Besides, what could happen while they were away? On their return, they got their answer as Lila stood over what had been her home computer network. Fried. Crisped beyond recognition. She always knew that surge protectors gave her a false sense of security, but why was it this trip that she forgot to unplug everything?

At the Hindleys, Lynn sat quietly minding her own business. Next thing she knew, there was an explosion. The house rocked and shook. She was sure that her beautiful A-frame was about to come down around her. Before she could react, a small window blew out, then a few other windows were damaged. The furnace control panel blew, and a telephone line went dead.

Everyone agreed. They'd never heard or seen anything like it before. More news followed.

- The FedEx driver who said the hail was so slick on the road that day that he feared he would go over the side of the Mountain.
- A neighbor who saw a brick chimney sway and was afraid it might come down.
- The PGE repairman who reported that four transformers along Panoramic Highway all blew that day.

It was the kind of incident which could grow and become a part of Mountain legend. A shared experience that reminds us that here on our ridge where the earth meets the sky, we are privy to both the beauty and the fury of Mother Nature. The kind of event where neighbors will gather outside the clubhouse after a St. Patrick's Day dinner, turn to one another and ask, "Where were you the day the lightning struck?"

MWPCA Dues Are Due for 2010!

MWPCA Members: Please return with your annual dues payment
MWPCA Non-Member Neighbors: Please consider joining the MWPCA

What the Muir Woods Park Community Association (MWPCA) is doing for you:

- Disaster Preparedness / Mountain Emergency Team (Club House is your local Disaster Shelter)
- Fire prevention efforts
- Neighborhood Sewer Feasibility Study (see info pp. 4-5 in the Lookout)
- Social events
- Club House rentals at reduced rates for members

What you can do for your community:

- Become a member of the MWPCA; your dues assist the community
- Volunteer time for community projects
- Share issues are important to you
- Show up for events and get to know your neighbors
- For more information about the Muir Woods Park Community Association:

<http://www.mounttam.org>

MWPCA MEMBERSHIP / DONATIONS

Membership includes Lookout mailed 4 times a year, also available online

\$45 household membership \$ _____ \$15 Senior household membership \$ _____

General Donation: \$ _____ Designated Donation: \$ _____

CIRCLE: Building/Landscaping Children's Activities Sewer Study Disaster Prep

\$10 Lookout subscription for nonresidents \$ _____ TOTAL \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Mail to: Muir Woods Park Community Association,
40 Ridge Avenue, Mill Valley, CA 94941

Remember, if we have your e-mail address, you will get immediate notification about sewer study, neighborhood emergency alerts, social events, and other issues

Susan Johnson, New MWPCA Board Member

It is my pleasure to be joining the board of the MWPCA. My husband and I moved to the Mountain in 1971. We raised our two daughters here. Some of my fondest memories are of the children's parties that took place at Halloween and Christmas. I am very pleased to find friends from that time who are still involved in sustaining the Clubhouse and its traditions. The new and continuing members I have met this fall are bringing new energy to our Club. Looking ahead, there are new challenges to address. I look forward to serving with the Board members in addressing the needs of our community.



Besides being a resident of the mountain for several decades, I have been a teacher in the Mill Valley School District, at Edna Maguire and at Tam Valley. I retired in June 2008. During my teaching career, I served on the Board of Kiddo. I was an active member of the Mill Valley Teachers Association, serving as negotiator and as MVTA president. Since retiring I have discovered hiking. This mountain is a wonderland of beautiful views, flowers and animal life. I now have the time to appreciate the beauties of our surroundings.

I am hopeful that my experiences in teaching and the personal knowledge that comes from living in our community for many years will be valuable resources to draw upon while serving on the MWPCA Board.

- Susan Johnson

Thank you, Bob Clemens

A special thanks goes out to Bob Clemens who has just "retired" from his position on the MWPCA Board. Bob has served on the Board at least twice over the years. His efforts over this past year contributed to establishing guidelines for an effective budget process. He was also helpful reviewing engineering issues related to widening the road below the Clubhouse for fire truck access in case of emergency.

Bob and his wife Emily moved to the Mountain in 1974 and raised 2 children here. They have both contributed to and supported the community. Always first to volunteer to help with whatever was needed, clean up, dish washing or work day. An ex-employee of Bechtel Corporation, Bob continues working as a consulting engineer to assist in the BART expansion.

Faybeth Diamond, New MWPCA Board Member

A Bay Area resident for 40 years, Faybeth moved to Mill Valley in the 1970's. She has lived on the Mountain since 1979. She has a daughter aged 25 who lives in San Anselmo and 2 pugs (well known around downtown Mill Valley).

Currently "retired" from work as a home stager for the residential resale market, Faybeth works part-time as production coordinator for Xanadu Productions which makes dance-based or dance-related children's film shorts

Her previous 25-year career was in various media and music businesses (broadcasting, journalism, production, concert production, talent management, business management for recording artists, industrials/ cultural documentary film shorts).

MWPCA involvement: Madera Way's Mt. Emergency Team person since inception, long-time crew member of food booth at MV Fall Arts Festival.

Board related experience: during the 12 years her daughter was at Marin Horizon School, Faybeth served as an executive officer on the Parent Action Committee (treasurer, VP, parent volunteer co-chair) and was also member of the Board of Trustees' Planning Committee.

"I'm looking forward to applying my production, coordination, & organizational skills to the MWPCA Board to further enhance the experience of living in this unique community."

- Faybeth Diamond



Bus Service in the Neighborhood



Marin Transit would like to remind riders of the availability of The Stage coming through our neighborhood. Call them at 415/526-3239 or go to the following website for schedule updates:

<http://www.marintransit.org/stage.html>

Surprised by love

I am surprised by love.
It rises within me,
As the sun on a clear morning,
Shakes off the flanks of the mountain
That had contained it,
Shedding glory
On the tops of trees,
Igniting joy with its shining light,
Lifting us all toward heaving.

Really? Lifting us all?
How can that be?
It's not joy for all.
The world's misery
Has not gone away,
And yet,
At this spot,
The blue sky smiles down:
With a golden sun,
And the birds sing.

"Are you happy?"
"I was, but the sun doesn't stay,
It keeps rising,
And then retreating,
Behind the mountain."

But you know it's there.

By Arthur Deikman

Neighbors

Etta Deikman and Claudia Chapline are curating an upcoming art show in Petaluma: **Journeys**. It will feature interior and exterior art related to journeys. It will run for two months beginning in mid-March. For details contact Etta at: 383-2198

Judy Sparks (Lila Daniels' cousin) and husband Bob Graham recently purchased Marge Priests' former home and are relocating from Los Angeles. Judy is retiring as Professor of Organizational Science at Cal State University at Long Beach; Bob just retired as an attorney.

Scott McBirnie and Derrick Chan finally moved into their beautiful "new" home after a 2-year+ major remodeling. Though they're far from finished they are very pleased with the results. Beautiful use of natural elements creating a spacious home that reverences the mountain location.

Call for Neighborhood Journalists

Do you notice more writers/contributors to our Lookout Issue? That's deliberate.....and I'm looking for other contributors, too. Photographs are always welcome. Send updates to: lilasd@aol.com

Perceptions of Tamalpais

When I was a child my father took great delight in telling me stories of his childhood adventures. I clearly remember one story quite well that remains wild in my imagination.

My dad would sometimes take the ferry over to Marin from the City in the late 1930's with his buddies and they would climb and hike Tamalpais and camp out.

Apparently a magnificent boulder was perched on top of Tamalpais and my dad really wanted to roll it down the mountain. He enlisted the aid of his friends to move it. They worked for many hours and finally managed to dislodge the boulder and push it down the mountain, separating it from its high perch where it had reigned for a millennium.

My dad always got excited and animated by this wild tale of his youth as he described how the rock "sheered off huge trees as it rolled and bounced down the mountain, rumbling and rolling all the way to Mill Valley". As the rock gained momentum it must have excited these young men beyond all reason. I can imagine the excitement of hearing huge trees breaking.

Occasionally I pass a huge rock at the base of the mountain and often wonder if this is the same rock they pushed from the very top of Tamalpais more than seventy years ago.

Perhaps my father's wild youth spent hiking and exploring Tamalpais was one of the reasons that I was fortunate enough to grow up in Mill Valley.

I am thankful for the companionship of the mountain community and our altitude seekers. These past several years have been the happiest of my life. I am mesmerized daily by the constantly changing weather and myriad of options surrounding our community that truly create a haven up here. I can't imagine ever being bored.

I have no illusions; there are many great locations in this universe—but I prefer earth, and more specifically this mountain.



- Thanks, Andy Lillestol

"Knit Night" Thursday, March 4, 7:30 PM

Are you spending time relaxing in the evenings with your knitting needles? Want to share some time learning with others? Lila's hosting an informal evening to test interest. She's just beginning and is eager to improve. Call or email for details. She promises to fix a nice dessert to share.

- Lila Daniels,
lilasd@aol.com or 415/819-0845

A Walk on Monte Cimas

On a gloomy Saturday when the clouds are about to burst, **Gordon Robinson** appears to be the only one willing to brave the elements in his Monte Cimas neighborhood. He is meticulously pruning a plum tree in his expansive yard of lawn, shrubs and trees -- apple, plum, pine, magnolia, pyracantha. A retired computer systems manager, Robinson, 60, knows this property well because his grandfather owned it and he spent long hours tending the grounds. Originally, he didn't think he'd like to live there because he knew too well how much work it takes to maintain the property, but it's been about 20 years since he moved in, and the same commitment that his grandfather had to the land is evident.



A narrow street off Panoramic that starts flat and then twists downhill until Panoramic seems very far away, Monte Cimas (in Spanish, "top of the mountain") has 15 houses, some of which started off as tiny plots of land given as gifts by the San Francisco Chronicle to new subscribers.

Dr. Milton Estes has lived in a house on one of those plots since 1980 and remembers the free-spirited rebels who were drawn to the wild, unincorporated area and were the first to live in their Monte Cimas houses. There were activists of many different stripes. There was the woman, a dedicated labor organizer along with her husband, who made the trip to San Francisco -- by foot -- to catch the opera. Dogs ran free in the neighborhood.

Dr. Estes himself has been recognized for his work first as a family practitioner and pioneer in childbirth and has received numerous honors for his advocacy for and care of people with HIV and AIDS. He launched Marin's only private HIV/AIDS clinic, named after his late partner, civil rights lawyer Tom Steele, and is now medical director of the Forensic AIDS Project at the San Francisco City and County Jail.

In a rare get-together for Monte Cimas residents, Dr Estes opened his home for a discussion about bringing the sewer up to the mountain. His neighbor, **Constance Downing**, who works for the Marin Humane Society, can point to a Christmas party where the neighbors got a chance to talk. On the whole, however, people tend to keep to themselves except for a friendly "hello." "I wish the neighbors were a little more communicative," says 67-year-old **Helen Gildred**, who has lived down a steep driveway on Monte Cimas since 1978 and says she came to Mt. Tam "to get away, to live in a country setting away from the chaos of the city."

Chiropractor and sculptor **Roy Forest** thinks the isolation of neighbors is a California phenomenon. He came from the East Coast and says everybody knew everybody there. Here there isn't that closeness of neighbors.

"This isn't the kind of place where your neighbor bakes a cake and brings it over," agrees **Phil Saltonstall**, a professional photographer who bought the "funkiest house in Mill Valley" in 1994, tore it down and built another one. "If I baked a cake for a neighbor and brought it over, I'd feel like I'm invading their space."

Adults prevail on Monte Cimas, Saltonstall, who lives towards the end of the road where there is no traffic and a cat can nap in the middle of the street for hours, is one of the few with kids living there. He and his wife have four children between them. "A lot of people say it's lots of trips up and down the mountain," he notes, but he says his kids regularly make what he says is a 15-minute walk downtown. At the same time, whether they're conscious of it or not, they're becoming sensitized to the "sense of place -- the tranquility" of the mountain that drew him there in the first place.

Leslie Smith, 41, and her husband **Grant** moved to Monte Cimas in 2004 to take advantage of all the outdoor activities that they had had to drive to before. They mountain bike, road bike, and run trails. Grant is into kite-surfing. Now, all the activities they love are just outside their door. People are friendly, she says, but she doesn't see the street having a block party. "People who come up here are more into their privacy and space."

Richard Tarnas needs both privacy and the calm of nature for his work. "I'm a writer so I'm in my own world pretty much," he says. He is the author of *The Passion of the Western Mind*, a best-selling narrative history of Western thought that is used widely in universities throughout the world, and the more recent *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View*. He also is the founding director of the graduate program in Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness at the California Institute of Integral Studies and former director of programs and education at Esalen. Tarnas, 59, came to the mountain in 1995 and found the nature and serenity he was seeking -- with a couple of exceptions: The noise from weed whackers, leaf blowers and power tools, he says, "is an intrusion." Downing also points to a disadvantage of living on the mountain: power outages that tend to last longer than those in other neighborhoods.

One thing everybody who lives there pretty much agrees on: It's heaven.

- "I feel like I'm in the most spiritual setting I could ever want," says Gildred.
- "I just can't get enough of the view," says Forest, 61, who lives with his concert pianist wife Liana on the highest part of the street. The couple travels often, and, he says, "it's never bad coming home."
- "It's absolutely gorgeous," says Downing.
- "The unique thing about up here is the tranquility," says Saltonstall.
- "You've got views of the mountain and the bay and the city. It's also very hidden, so it's kind of like an island -- off the beaten path. People don't know it's here."

- Diane Curtis



Come Join Us!

Notice our New Bar Menu Hours

Breakfast, Wednesday – Sunday 8:00 am – 11:00 am

Lunch, Wednesday – Sunday 11:30 am – 3:00 pm

Dinner, Wednesday – Sunday 5:30 pm– 8:45 pm

Bar Menu, Wednesday to Sunday 3:30—7:00 pm

Phone 415-381-9000

www.mtnhomeinn.com

Does “Yoga on the Mountain” interest you?

Any suggestions for an instructor? Please contact Kit Harris to express your interest and share ideas about a possible instructor.

Sunday, Memorial Day Weekend in 2010 Muir Beach—Volunteer Fire Department’s Annual Fundraiser

Attendees will feast on BBQ chicken, veggie tamales and lots more, including **Live music**...R&B and rock 'n roll dance music by Asher & Paige and Andre's Allstars. For more information visit their website at: www.muirbeachfire.com

2010 MWPCA dues are due! Emails, please!

Please complete the form on page 6 and return it at your earliest convenience.

We continue to update the database and will publish a new Neighborhood Directory this year. We want to make sure we have your most current informationespecially your email address. It will be used in the neighborhood only.

There may be times between Lookout issues when we would like to contact you. Email is the most cost-effective and convenient way to do it.

Remember to refer to the MWPCA Web site on occasion: (www.mounttam.org).

One of the privileges of being your editor is that I become better acquainted with my neighbors. This year why don't you join me in reaching out to more neighbors And..... don't forget to let me know if something especially interesting is happening in your world.something you're happy to share with the rest of us!

- Lila Daniels, Lookout Editor
lilasd@aol.com

Thank you, Kathleen,
for the quarterly real
estate updates!



Kathleen Delehanty

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Contact me...Let my 20+ years experience on The Mountain
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NEW LISTINGS

690 Panoramic	1Br/1Ba	\$ 469,000
15 Saint Jude	2+Br/3Ba	719,000
125 Bayview Dr	5 Br/4Ba	2,150,000

ACTIVE

689 Edgewood	3Br/2.5Ba	998,000
130 Marin View	3+Br2.5Ba	1,250,000
667 Sequoia Valley	4Br/3.5Ba	2,450,000

PENDING

479 Panoramic	2Br/1Ba	649,000
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SOLD

442 Panoramic	3Br/2Ba	385,000
45 Washington Park	5Br/4Ba	410,000
35 Castle Rock	1Br/1Ba	575,000
764 Panoramic	3Br/1Ba	612,000
740 Panoramic	3Br/2Ba	825,000

LEASE OPTION

98 Washington Park	3Br/2.5Ba	1,849,000
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LOTS

56 Mountain Ln	Active	395,000
23 Ridge Ave	Active	585,000
Sequoia Valley	Contingent	395,000

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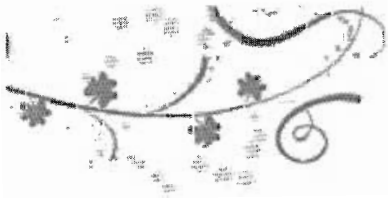


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 \$100/year for larger size

We'll adjust fees if you decide to join in
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 Contact Faybeth Diamond for details at
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MWPCA MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS Due for 2010!!

Be sure to complete the form on page 6.

THE LOOKOUT

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Corresp. Sec.	Lynn Hindley	lynnhindley@sbcglobal.net 388-7252
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Director	Faybeth Diamond	388-9255 fbdlive@comcast.net
Director	Harold Dittmer	hdittmer@sbcglobal.net
Director	Kit Harris	Kitter01@Comcast.net
Director	Susan Johnson	susancaj@comcast.net
Director	John Lovell	golfodulce@yahoo.com

Committees

Clubhouse Rentals	Lynn Hindley
Safety/Emergency	Brad Silen
Lookout Newsletter	Lila Daniels
Webmaster	Diane Curtis
Tech Consultant	Peter Spear: 383-1842
Parenting	Kit Harris
Sewer Committee	Lynn Hindley

Community Calendar - see online for updates www.mounttam.org

FEBRUARY			
Thursday	11	Board Meeting	7:00 PM
MARCH			
Thursday	4	Knit Night	7:30 PM
Thursday	11	Board Meeting	7:00 PM
Wedn'day	17	St. Patrick's Day Party	6:00 PM
APRIL			
Sunday	4	Work Day	9:00 AM+
Thursday	8	Board Meeting	7:00 PM
Saturday	11	Easter Egg Hunt	9:00 AM

Clubhouse Available for Rent

Rates, rules, forms, calendar and all information about what is included are on the website: <http://www.mounttam.org>. Special member discounts.