

The Lookout

Muir Woods Park Community Association

www.mounttam.org

Summer 2007

telephone: 381-3119

Huge Turnout at Sewer Study Presentation



There was an amazing turnout for the May 23rd Sewer Feasibility Study meeting. About 130 owners attended, and the Clubhouse was bursting with people filling 104 seats, observing through the windows, watching the video feed in the back room and hanging out in the kitchen where the food was. After the presentation, a straw vote was taken and a majority of those voting indicated they were in favor of proceeding.

Additionally, many called and emailed their support of the proposed sewer project. Some of our good friends and neighbors are opposed, and their concerns are genuine. Many are still information gathering before deciding. What follows outlines the continually developing information about how a sewer would happen in our neighborhood.

The presentation was made by Dietrich Stroeh, of CSW/Stuber Stroeh, whom the MWPCA commissioned to do the Feasibility Study covering our entire mountain neighborhood. The study defined six sub-areas, each on a different watershed. Sewer lines would end up at different places at the bottom of the hill. The entire study and other information is available online at: mounttam.org. The MWPCA sewer committee objective is information gathering. They have already met with our Supervisor Steve Kinsey and he is going to advocate with Marin County Public Works and the two Public Sanitary Districts on behalf of our neighborhood. **see article, pages 4 and 5**

Safety Committee Report Dick Popson - Safety Committee Chair

Key Association people met with Supervisor Kinsey and his aide on May 12th to review our safety program plans and our needs. We reviewed materials showing that the county indeed has ownership of the now non-functioning siren and AM radio system. We strongly urged Mr. Kinsey to do what he could to make these units function ASAP, and do what was necessary before our fire season begins. We stressed the liability situations with both residence and the tourist groups. He promised to address our needs quickly. We also reviewed upgrading the emergency section of our website, implementing the tens and means phone network and initializing the steel container on our property for safety needs.

The MWP has restored the original name "Safety Committee," believing that is a more positive approach to emergency/disaster issues.

A Rx for LIFE - Guaranteed

So, maybe you had a bad day... Or you have stress problems... Or maybe you can't cope with your job, or your mate. Maybe the SUV selection has you in a spin. I've got a cure-all, a prescription better than a Dr. Phil or Dr. Edel call, ALSO CHEAPER.

Take this simple medication - 20 minutes max. Take a trip to our clubhouse area alone. (remember ALONE). Sit on one of our benches and relax for a while and seriously look at the Pacific Ocean, Mount Tam, Alcatraz, The City and Sutro Towers. Then take several deep breaths and just relax. Now shut your eyes and recall in your mind what you just witnessed and felt. Take a few more deep breaths and close your eyes again, and truly respect and the honor of what you've seen and where you are.

Now let out your feelings - smile, scream, cry elate, frown, panic, talk or all of the above, as you see fit. (throwing stones is also great, just not toward the clubhouse).

Finally, sit again and really look (this time) at YOUR life. Look at your problems. Are they real, really that difficult and are they worth all that stress and drama? DO THEY REALLY MATTER THAT MUCH?

OK, now go home. After you've done this two times minimum, minimum or four times - maximum, send me a check for \$250 and let's talk more. What you have experienced is the healing qualities of the Mount Tamalpais Clinic, which puts stuff in perspective. The Mountain can solve problems **if you let it.**

So now you can worry less about the delay in getting your designer jeans or the neighborhood dogs, or whatever. Just take a deep, deep breath and say - **bring them on.**

Dick Popson

P.S. : I've tried this procedure in rainstorms, been surrounded by fog and total darkness and it doesn't matter. The Rx is still worthy.



Asian Painting Techniques for Western Artists with Fran Thompson Thursday June 28 9:30 - 4:00 PM \$80 per person

Fran Thompson is a lifelong working artist who has studied and practiced Chinese brush painting since 1973. She has hiked the Western wilderness all her life, painting the trees and mountains she sees. She exhibits in West coast galleries, and has taught brush painting at Esalen and Green Gulch farm

Our clubhouse on Ridge Avenue is a perfect place to try out Asian brush and ink painting. This workshop is for beginning or working artists who have always wanted to try out the Chinese brush. We'll learn the correct way of holding the brush and try out the variety of marks it makes on paper. When held at different angles, when rolled and twisted, when wet, dry soft or stiff.

"Splashed ink" techniques have been used in Asian painting for hundreds of years, so we'll practice spilling and blotting ink and how these shapes inspire you to complete a landscape or abstract design. We'll experiment with crinkled and crushed paper, and practice wet mounting to produce a flat, finished piece for display. There will be further classes if interest arises.

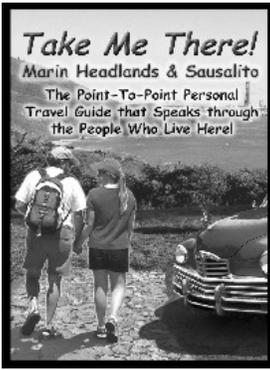
Brush, ink and paper will be available for purchase at the class, for a cost of about \$30. Call Fran at 389-6335 for more information.



West Marin Stage

Reminder: Our bus service has been expanded to 7 days a week. For schedules see our website at: mounttam.org.

Fares are \$2 for adults and \$1 for kids, seniors and disabled. Kids under 6, free. Yes! You can hail the bus at any place it can stop safely.



**Got Visitors?
We can help you with
entertaining them!**

Long-time resident on the mountain, Cindy Norman, has just completed a Car Tour-Movie of the **Marin Headlands & Sausalito**. It includes an

- Audio Car tour + Map (done in your own car) **PLUS**
- DVD Movie presenting in-depth information about the adventure locations!

Locals are getting a kick out of this as well! Have you ever heard the story of Marincello, the city of 60,000 that almost consumed the Headlands? How about the Peregrine Falcons on the Golden Gate Bridge? This is the tour that the director of the Marin Headlands took herself and loved it! The park is selling it in their own Visitor's Center store.

If you'd like to have a hand in the 2nd Edition of this, buy it directly from Cindy for \$20 (a 20% discount) in exchange for feedback. Ask for "Take Me There – Marin Headlands & Sausalito"!

**5% of each sale on the mountain
will be donated to the MWPCA**

Cindy can be reached at cyn@cynorman.com or 415-389-MUIR or at 806 (Upper) Edgewood Ave

VIDEO NIGHT RETURNS! -- 7:00 PM

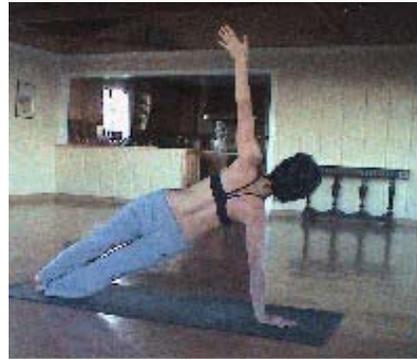
Sunday June 24: An Inconvenient Truth – This documentary is possibly the most important movie ever made concerning our world and the fate of us all. Even with the serious subject, Al Gore is uncommonly funny! If you haven't seen him in person or in this movie, come join us while we all ponder septic tanks vs sewers.

Sunday July 29: Kinky Boots – This movie was suggested by one of our mountain residents and what a hoot! Thanks! It is a **true** story about a very reserved shoe company going modern in an attempt to save their legacy. Great characters, story and ... well, I don't want to give too much away! But it's all true!!! And you know what they say about "truth". It is stranger than fiction!

Sunday August 26: Best of Show - Hilarious movie about five dogs competing in a huge annual dog show by the group that brought you Spinal Tap years ago. If you haven't seen it, you are in for a treat!

**Benefit for St. Lucia orphanage at the
Clubhouse, May 23rd. Starting at 4 PM**

Mountain neighbor JoanMary Gauvin of Marin View has put together this wonderful event complete with jugglers, volleyball limbo dancing and live music. This would be a great event to bring the family to. Many local restaurants have donated food. Silent auction and cocktails at 6:30 with dinner to follow. Please RSVP to JoanMary, 637-5585 or joanmaryg@yahoo.com \$20 per person suggested donation for dinner.



**Yoga
continues
on the
Mountain
\$12 per person**

Every Tuesday and Thursday evening at 6:30 Meighan Leibert instructs a yoga

class at the Clubhouse. **Mats and equipment are provided.** If it is raining or cold, we have a fire, come and join the wonderful neighborhood feeling. Many of you could walk to the class. Beginners or experienced, everyone is welcome, bring friends!

Car Break Ins

Two cars were broken into on Monte Cimas the night of May 22nd. Also, a car was broken into and many things stolen the night of May 30th on Upper Edgewood. If you see anyone acting suspicious around a car - don't hesitate to call the sheriff.



**MWPCA has a
new look!**

Our stationary finally ran out and when we decided to order more, we thought it was time for a new

look! Here is our new logo, thanks to Dick Popson's friend Mick Birlin. Mick is also refurbishing the old sign at the bottom of our driveway. And, we're sure you have all seen the new sign at 4 corners. Huge thanks to **Andy Lillestol** and **Pat Teahan** for their magnificent efforts. Finally we have a neighborhood sign we can be proud of!

**Are your MWPCA dues paid for 2007?
Check your mailing label**

What Are The Next Steps?

There are two steps on a neighborhood level: **One** is for several people in each area to volunteer to become captains/lieutenants/worker bees in their Study areas. The larger the area, the more needed. Each neighborhood group needs to come together, have meetings, reach out to those who aren't yet informed, and determine just who wants to proceed now, who wants to proceed later and who wants out entirely. Our fervent wish is to reach out to everyone and work out a plan that acknowledges every opinion and accommodates as many as possible.

Seed money will have to be raised. The **second** step is to form a study group to determine how the overall project will be financed and managed.

What we will do soon: Right now, we are networking for volunteers for each of the six defined areas. A study group will be formed to examine the financial and management alternatives, come up with a recommendation, and proceed.

We have updated the parcel lists that were on the wall at the meeting and posted them on the website. Please check and review. This is also a developing process, and if you think your property should be designated in another area, that may be correct. The best way for your ideas to be considered is for you to participate. **This is your wake-up call to become involved.** Call/email us. We will be thrilled to include you. Call 381-3119 or email webmaster@mounttam.org.

We will send out another informational letter to the owners-at-large soon. It will cost about \$300, paid for with the donations many of you have made over the last several years to the sewer committee. For developing updates we will need to send out communications by email for cost reasons. And, of course, there will be updates on the website. If you are not getting emails from webmaster@mounttam.org, please give us your email address. Group emails to the neighborhood include reminders of events, bus schedule changes, important warnings and neighborhood issues such as this. You will not be inundated, and all large group emails are sent out masked - which means that only the webmaster has your email. **This is your neighborhood; be informed!**

Management

A Sewer Maintenance District, a separate legal entity from the MWPCA, must be formed for the areas - we hope all - wanting to proceed. The County would run it and appoint a local advisory board. The Muir Woods Park Sewer Maintenance District (MWPSMD) would make arrangements to build the sewer system which would connect to the Homestead Valley Public Sanitation District (HVPSD) and the Mill Valley Public

Sanitation District. They would arrange for treatment rights to use the Mill Valley Treatment Plant and contract for maintenance, operation and administration.

A sewer maintenance district is a simpler organization than a Public Sanitation District. There are six public sanitation districts that purchase treatment rights to the Mill Valley treatment facility located across from the Middle School. Our proposed pipes from the Sequoia Valley, Madera, Ridge and Chanticleer areas would feed into Homestead Valley Public Sanitation District, and pipes from the Washington Park and upper Edgewood areas would feed into Mill Valley Public Sanitation District.

Boundaries

If one or more of the identified areas wants to opt out entirely, new boundaries can be drawn. If special planning and restrictions are desired in any micro - area, this is the time.

What is it all going to cost?

The construction estimate for the entire neighborhood was about \$6,000,000. There would be another \$1,000,000 in engineering and legal fees and costs to set up the sewer governing body, for an estimated total capital cost of \$7,000,000. The county may bear a small part of this to get the district going, and it is possible that state funds might be secured in the form of a low interest government loan. The capital construction component would bring a sewer line to within connection distance of each participating property. It would be each owner's responsibility to actually connect to the new sewer pipe, at a cost that could range from \$2,000 to \$5,000 for most properties depending on how close you are, what lies between, and any special obstacles. Look at the Study map and find your location, find the nearest proposed sewer line, go outside and walk around and think about how close you are and what obstacles exist.

When completed, each owner would also pay a connection fee to the sewer district. For long established Public Sanitation Districts these are \$3,000 - \$5,000 to add a NEW home. There would be annual sewer fees for maintenance and treatment rights, billed on your property tax statement, which range from about \$250 to \$800 per year in Southern Marin sanitation districts. We understand it is not necessary to dig out your old system and dispose of it. We also caution that this information is preliminary.

Paying for the Sewers, There are Options

Natural questions are: How would the \$7,000,000 in capital costs be paid for, who would participate and is non-participation an option? There are two basic courses of action.

1. Participation by Choice

With this model, very simply stated, those properties who want to participate would opt in; the overall cost would be divided up between them. To give an example: If 250 owners choose to opt in, dividing \$7,000,000 by 250, each owner would pay \$28,000 all at once to cover the initial capital cost. Owners could of course, borrow the money against credit lines or create a mortgage. If more opt in, the cost per property goes down, if less opt in, the cost goes up. The actual costs may be adjusted between the six identified areas, and issues of unimproved lots, two lots with one house, and so forth will be investigated. A method will be developed to reimburse the owners of the original participating properties with the fees paid by those opting in later. Those opting in later would pay more, according to a predetermined scale.

2. Assessment

An assessment is similar to the school bonds you presently pay. All properties within the specified boundaries would participate. The assessment is approved by vote, the bonds are bought, and everyone pays the debt back over 20 to 30 years. Two (of many) illustrative approaches are:

Per Parcel:

One is for every owner to get one vote per parcel. If approved, owners are assessed an equal amount per parcel. This model has obvious issues with those already on sewer, those with far larger/smaller homes than others, those with expensive, recent septic systems and owners of unimproved or unbuildable lots.

Special Benefit:

The second assessment model is to hire engineers to determine the **special benefit** each lot would receive when the sewer goes in. There is a process for this with room for discussion/appeal and so forth. Those already on sewer or with unbuildable lots would have minimal special benefit. Properties with large relative value would have greater special benefit than the average single-family house. The weight would confer greater voting power on some properties, but it would also confer proportionally greater capital costs. The range in cost could be large. Whether per parcel or special benefit, the **average** homeowner would pay (very roughly) something like \$1,500 annually over 20-30 years to retire the bond, in addition to the other annual costs for maintenance and treatment. This would be billed on your property tax statement.

Why Get Sewer?

- 1) To avoid the costs of repairing or replacing existing septic systems.** Most of us have antiquated septic tanks and leach lines. If you wish to get a permit to improve your home, you will probably be forced to upgrade or replace your system. In 2000, California passed Assembly Bill 885 which mandates inspections of septic installations. The requirements were too stringent, the bill was impractical to enforce and it has languished. The state has been working on this, and information we have indicates that within a year or two these inspections will commence. If a system is found to be in violation, repairs in the \$10,000 - \$20,000 range would be common and replacement systems could cost up to \$60,000 or more. Furthermore, this type of septic repair may be required every 15 years or so.
- 2) To solve the sewage problem once and for all.** Once a property is on sewer, annual maintenance is built into the annual fee, and maintenance should be minimal during the early decades of a new sewer system.
- 3) To increase property values,** which would likely immediately rise over and above your cost for the sewer system, and overall, properties would be easier to sell.
- 4) To reduce the health hazard of sub-standard septic systems.** Mosquitoes, for example, commonly breed in antiquated septic tanks.

Why Not Get Sewer?

- 1) To avoid or delay paying the cost of the sewer system.** Your septic system may be working fine right now, especially if you have recently paid for an expensive upgrade. Paying in the next year or two for a sewer system you may not need for many years is a substantial cost and may be burdensome.
- 2) To prevent others from making improvements and increasing the size to their existing homes.**
- 3) To prevent others from building on their unimproved property.**
- 4) This may bring about change in the look and character of our community.**

Few people look forward to larger or more houses being built near them. Regarding 2 and 3, we are doing a study to discover an approximate number of buildable lots in our area. Many of the unimproved lots are not buildable for strong reasons other than septic issues. The report will be posted soon on the website;

<http://www.mounttam.org>



Come Join Us!

Breakfast Saturday and Sunday 8 am – 11 am
Lunch Wednesday – Sunday 11:30 am – 3 pm
Dinner Wednesday – Sunday 5:30 pm – 9/9:30 pm
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P a c i f i c U n i o n

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Board Meeting Highlights

Note: Complete MWPCA Board minutes are now posted online at <http://www.mounttam.org>- password is: **musty**

April: Lynn Hindley is appointed to chair the MWPCA Sewer Committee for 2007. A neighborhood-wide meeting is being developed for May. The MWPCA is trying to coordinate with the Tourist Club to put up signs at the corner of ridge and Panoramic and along Ridge. A new logo designed by Mick Birlin is approved for the sign at the bottom of the driveway and for new stationary. A new sign design for 4 corners is presented, work will commence on the upcoming general work day.

May: The new MWPCA sign at Four Corners is installed. The board approved last year to apply to the county to waive property taxes, since we are a 501C3 non-profit. They require that a correction be made to the Articles of Incorporation. A ballot was sent and passed unanimously with over 140 member votes. Dick Popson has restored the name of his committee to the original name of "Safety Committee," in the spirit of being a more positive approach to emergency/disaster preparedness. Dick has met with county officials to discuss disaster preparedness on the mountain.

In other news, Brad Silen has stepped down as President of the MWPCA, but will remain as a director. We applaud Brad for his service to the Association. Vice-President Lynn Hindley will chair meetings for the remainder of 2007.



Matthew Pouliot
Pacific Union
60 Belvedere Dr.
Mill Valley, CA 94941
415-265-7020

Active Listings - All realtors

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 11 Ridge | 1BD/1BA | \$ 790,000 |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|

Mid-century modern retreat Bay and bridge views! 20 minutes to Stinson or San Francisco

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 47 Ridge | 4BD/3.5BA | \$ 2,295,000 |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|

Views, acreage, privacy and prestige. Over 4,600 square feet on 1.5 acres, media room. Large master suite, level lawn

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 409 Panoramic Hwy | 2BD/2BA | \$1,049,000 |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------|

Contemporary cottage with miles and miles of views

Pending

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 16 Monte Cimas | 3BD/2BA | \$ 925,000 |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|

Ruggedly sophisticated, stunning view of San Francisco, Sausalito and the Bay.

Sold

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 59 Washington Park | 3BD/2BA | \$ 1,035,000 |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------|

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 65 Marin View | 2BD+/2BA | \$ 1,800,000 |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 354 Panoramic Hwy | 3BD/2BA | \$ 1,850,000 |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------|



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**LOOKOUT
deadline: August 15th**

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MWPCA MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS

\$45 Household ___ \$15 Senior ___ (both include newsletter)

General Donation \$ ___ \$10 Lookout subscription for non-residents ___

Specific Donation: \$ ___ Facility Sewer Disaster Children's (circle)

Name: _____ Email: _____
Address: _____ Phone: _____

Mail: MWPCA, 40 Ridge Ave., Mill Valley, CA 94941

THE LOOKOUT

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

| |
|---|
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|---|

Return Service Requested

2007 MWPCA Board Officers

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|-----------------|-----------------|----------|
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| Rec. Secretary | Carol Stern | 388-0824 |
| Director | Lila Daniels | 383-8422 |
| Director | Barry Joseph | 383-2624 |
| Director | Jennifer Sheetz | 383-3185 |
| Director | Pat Teahan | 388-1122 |
| Director | Dick Popson | 388-1135 |
| Director | John Lovell | 383-4530 |
| Director | Jon Rutchik | 388-3321 |
| Director | Brad Silen | 383-3612 |

Committees

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Clubhouse Rentals | Lynn Hindley | 388-7252 |
| Membership | vacant | |
| Safety/Emergency | Dick Popson | 388-1135 |
| Newsletter | great opportunity! | |
| Parenting | vacant | |
| Webmaster | Karen Buckter | 381-1801 |
| Tech Consultant | Peter Spear | 383-1842 |
| Sewer Committee | Lynn Hindley | 388-7252 |

Community Calendar - see online for updates

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------|------------------------|---------|
| ONGOING | | | |
| Tuesdays | | Yoga Class | 6:30 PM |
| Thursdays | | Yoga Class | 6:30 PM |
| JUNE | | | |
| Thursday | June 14 | Board Meeting | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday | June 23 | Benefit - all welcome! | 4:00 PM |
| Sunday | June 24 | Video Night | 7:00 PM |
| JULY | | | |
| NO Board Meeting | | | |
| Sunday | July 29 | Video Night | 7:00 PM |
| AUGUST | | | |
| NO Board Meeting | | | |
| Sunday | August 26 | Video Night | 7:00 PM |

Clubhouse Available for Rent

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