



The Lookout

Muir Woods Park Community Association

www.mounttam.org August & September 2005

telephone: 381-3119

Newsletter Highlights

We hope that you are really enjoying our long-awaited summer. As usual, we have included what we think are enjoyable articles and suggestions for things to do in this issue of the LOOKOUT. We also have added a section, "Cook's Corner", and found an additional "historian". The MOST IMPORTANT mission of the LOOKOUT, however, is to provide the community with important safety information.

Fire Season is rapidly approaching so fire protection is at the top of our list for this issue. We invite you to review the fire prevention and safety information on page six to help protect you, your family, home and our community.

Did You Know

- The vegetation management department of the Mill Valley Fire Department notes that Mt. Tam's fuel load is three times that of Oakland with steeper and narrower streets and far less water capacity.
- Until 70 years ago the mountain had a major fire every 10-15 years. Since then, we have stopped all fires.
- The fuel load at the base of Mt. Tam and the Mountain itself now exceeds 30 tons per acre in many places.
- A "fuel load" (grass and brush) is considered to burn with "light" intensity when it is 5 tons per acre or less. Mowed grass is approximately 1 ton per acre.
- Many different conditions can combine to create disastrous fire conditions. Considering just wind variations as one example, a five mile an hour wind out of the east could burn 45 acres in 30 minutes. If that wind increased to 20 mph, 750 acres could burn in the same amount of time. (640 acres = 1 square mile)

(See page 6, column 2 for the continuation of this article and important safety information.)

Community Survey on Septic and Sewer

Last call to get your survey information added into the community tally. We need to know your thoughts along with if and how you think the plan group should proceed.

The hard-working plan group has made the survey easy for us:

- ▣ The survey has just 8 questions.
- ▣ The questions can be answered with a check before Yes or No.
- ▣ You just seal, stamp and mail it.

If you are on the fence, please don't decide NOT to fill out the survey.

We are a small community , and when polling a small group, each reply makes a big impact on the final result.

So don't put the survey aside. INFLUENCE IT!



The "good old days" on Mount Tam as remembered by Julie Ley

My father came to the United States from Germany in 1913. He worked for Eastman Kodak in New York and later settled in San Francisco. In 1920 he bought a 2 1/2 acre property that sloped from Panoramic Highway toward the Flying Y ranch off Edgewood to the east. It came with a house, a barn, four cows and a horse for \$900. He met my mother at a dance at the California Hall in San Francisco and they married in 1928.

When the stock market crashed in 1929, my parents gave up their apartment and moved with their baby (me) to the mountain to "live off the land". There were only a few houses on the mountain in those days. Father, who was a machinist, made much of our income by spending every summer in the salmon canneries of Alaska.

Winter rains made dirt roads into very muddy roads and when mother couldn't get milk delivery, the owner of the Dias Ranch suggested getting a goat. That was the start of the animals. Chickens, rabbits and ducks were soon added. We grew vegetables and had seventeen apple trees along with some peach, plum and pear trees. I used to deliver milk and eggs in the neighborhood. As long as the goats ate barley, alfalfa and not strong tasting weeds, the milk tasted just as sweet as cow's milk.

Mom canned the fruits from our trees as well as cherries from Sebastopol and Vacaville apricots. We had plenty of blackberries and used the goats to control their growth. We had walnut trees that had to be harvested before raccoons and squirrels got them all.

The LOOKOUT article on the hot springs near Steep Ravine brought back memories. My mother used to take me out of school to go to the hot springs starting back in the 30s. You had to check the tide tables for the lowest tides. The road was not paved past Mountain Home Inn until around 1939, but we would keep going on the dirt road and then take a short cut through the dairy pasture, opening and then closing the gate behind us to keep the cows in.

One time there was a bull in the pasture so, needless to say, we took the long way around! We would leave the car at the top of the ridge and walk along a steep trail down to the beach. There we would look for bubbles coming up through the sand and proceeded to dig a pool. After soaking, we would run into the surf and then take a shower from the natural spring that came out of the cliff side.



Along the rocky part of the beach, squatters built cabins. One of the squatters was very nice and used to give us abalone. Each year Mr. Kent, who owned the area, would have the cabins burned down so they



I got a job as a waitress at the Mountain Home Inn the summer I was fourteen, too young to be working legally, so I was passed off as the proprietor's daughter. We memorized the menu and catered to hikers mostly serving breakfast, lunch, short orders and pastries. We had the Air Force Base nearby so we had soldiers stop by for beer, soft drinks and so forth. Fifty cents an hour and tips was good money for me. I worked there throughout high school and learned much about getting along with people. The mountain was a wonderful place to grow up.

(The excerpts above were taken from Julie Ley's book, Snapshots of My Life which she wrote in conjunction with a class she took at the University of Nevada. We are grateful to Julie for letting us reprint some of her writing here. Julie moved to Reno in

Saturday Video Nights

at the Clubhouse

August 20

September 16

October 15

Saturday, October 15

7 pm

Standing in the Shadows of Motown

If you like music and especially if you like Mo-Town, this is a great documentary about the characters that made MoTown happen. Director Paul Justman's music-infused documentary is based on the true story of the Funk Brothers -- the anonymous backup group that from 1959 to 1972 provided the music for nearly every hit produced by Berry Gordy's famous Motown Records. Narrated by Andre Brauer, the action revolves around a reunion of the talented musicians who lent their instruments to a multitude of hits during that amazing 13-year period.

Mark your calendar for these shows NOW!

Walk to the theatre on Saturday night!

Join us for a great time right here in our neighborhood clubhouse. There is no admission fee. Popcorn, pizza, soft drinks are \$1 & \$2. Anyone disturbing the movie-watching experience will be duct-taped and painted plaid.

All movies will be preceded by a CARTOON!

Saturday, August 20

7 pm

War of the Worlds

This 1953 adaptation of H.G. Wells' classic won an Oscar for its special effects, and with good reason! From the deadly Martian machines to fleeting glimpses of the grotesque invaders, *The War of the Worlds* set the sci-fi standard for years to come. Presented in its original, amazing format, the movie hasn't aged and still packs a heckuva jolt.

After movie — Star Gazing 9 pm

This August is a perfect time for viewing stars and especially certain planets that are unusually close this year only! We will view the heavens through our big telescope. If you've got one, bring it along. For information, call Karen Buckter at 381-1801.

6 pm Picnic

7 pm Video

9 pm Star-gazing

Saturday, September 17

7 pm

Baraka

This is the most visually stunning documentary I've ever seen. There are no words in this film yet there is a powerful message. The relationship between humans and their environment is the subject of this mesmerizing visual study from Ron Fricke, the cinematographer and editor of *Koyaanisqatsi*.

The images -- which Fricke gathered from 24 countries -- range from the daily devotions of Tibetan monks and whirling dervishes to a cigarette factory and time-lapse views of the Hong Kong skyline. Diverse world music accompanies the visuals. This is a real WOW in Cindy Norman's book. (Cindy runs Video Night and can be contacted at 389-MUIR.)

(Continued above, column two.)

Community Calendar

AUGUST

Friday	Aug. 19	Plan Group	3:30 pm
Saturday	Aug. 20	Video Night & Star Gazing	7:00 pm 9:00 pm

SEPTEMBER

Monday	Sept. 5	Labor Day	
Thursday	Sept. 8	Board Meeting	7:00 pm
Saturday	Sept. 16	Plan Group	3:30 pm
Saturday	Sept. 17	Video Night	7:00 pm

OCTOBER

Thursday	Oct. 13	Board Meeting	7:00 pm
Saturday	Oct. 15	Video Night	7:00 pm
Friday	Oct. 21	Plan Group	3:30 pm
Saturdays	Oct. 22	CERT Training *	

Oct. 29

(*Two-part Training. Attend both days. To sign up, call 389- 4138.)



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Cook's Corner

Delicious soup is always a winner with family and friends. Since fresh tomatoes are now in season (and in the gardens of a few lucky neighbors), this issue features a tomato soup recipe from Lynn Hindley who promises that it is not only delicious, but easy to prepare. How about your best recipe for our next issue?

Tuscan Tomato Soup

1/4 cup olive oil
1 small onion, minced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 pound dry, Italian bread (1 " cubes)
2 pounds ripe tomatoes, peeled, cored and finely chopped
3 cups chicken stock or broth
1 large bunch of fresh basil branches!
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Heat oil in a 3 quart saucepan over medium-low heat. Add onion and garlic; cook, stirring often, until onion is soft, 5-6 min. Add bread cubes; stirring well so they are coated with oil. Cook 2-3 minutes, being careful not to let mixture burn.

Add tomatoes and simmer; add stock or broth and bring to a gentle boil. Remove from heat; THEN add basil bunch and cover; set aside for 1 hr. Remove the basil; whisk the mixture to break up any remaining pieces of bread. Reheat to taste.

MWPCA Receives \$5,000 Award

The MWPCA has received a \$5000 grant from the Marin Community Foundation for facility improvements that support community programs. The Board of Directors voted unanimously to use the funds to install parking lot lighting in the lower parking lot and improve the path up to the Clubhouse with steps, railing and lighting.

Several projects were considered, including replacing the siding and windows, repairing and re-facing the fireplace, and improving the landscaping. The parking lot lighting was deemed the most appropriate within the intent of the grant. Anyone wanting to consult with the parking lot project should call the Clubhouse. We will be happy to receive your input.

The exterior of the building continues to be of concern. When the siding is replaced, that is the time to replace the windows. Since we don't have funds now, the board is presently considering pressure-washing and repainting the exterior until we have saved up enough for the project.

Our sincere thanks go to Karen Buckter who sought the grant and wrote the proposal!

New Non-fiction Book Club Forming!

Like reading good non-fiction? A group of 10 -12 neighbors will meet on a monthly basis and discuss a book of our choice.

Several people have signed up and we look forward to filling the group by September. Once we come together, we can decide on a time and place that works well for all of us.

Etta Deikman is the spark behind this group.
To reserve your space, give Etta a call at:
383-2198.

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P a c i f i c U n i o n

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REAL ESTATE Changes since March, 2005

The following information is provided courtesy of Yvonne Young

This information reflects changes to the Mountain real estate market since May 17, 2005:

Sold

14 Saint Jude 3 bd/2.5 ba	\$ 960,000
6 Washington Park 1 bd/2.5 ba	\$ 969,000
3 Saint Jude 2 bd/2.5 ba	\$1,880,000

Emergency Response Training

(CERT) classes will be held Oct. 22&29. A fee of \$25 includes training manual, hard hat and vest. To schedule, call 389-4138.

Deaths from West Nile Virus are Increasing!

West Nile Virus is spread by mosquitoes that must have standing water or wet places to breed. The first death in California this year came in Kings County in July. While most people who get bitten may not have symptoms, 20% get rash and fever. When West Nile Virus results in brain swelling, it can cause death. 668 people have died in the U.S. since it was discovered in 1999. **Because there is no cure or vaccine for humans, the only defense is mosquito control.** Empty any containers in your yard that can hold standing water and thus can harbor mosquitoes. Get rid of such containers or see that they stay empty.

A common place for problems is in a septic tank with improperly secured lids and vents. Our area had tank infestations last year. Check your septic tank area for mosquitoes. Be sure the lids are on tightly. Wrap the top of all vents with nylon window screening and secure with nylon ties. If you are seeing lots of mosquitoes in your area, bang on your septic tank covers. If there is any evidence of mosquitoes flying around when you do so, **DO NOT OPEN THE LID!** That could release 10,000+ mosquitoes into the neighborhood. Call Mosquito Abatement (1-800-231-3236).

If your septic tank is secure and vents wrapped and you still have mosquitoes, they are probably coming from a neighbor's area. Ask your neighbors to check their tanks. Mosquito Abatement will come out and check at no charge and spray oil into the septic tank. They **ONLY** focus on and have authority for checking on mosquitoes.

Tired of Getting Neighbors' Mail in Your Mailbox?!

YOU are NOT alone! Many of us have noticed this problem over the past year. Most take the mail over to the proper neighbor. While this is courteous, it will not solve the problem. We must notify the Post Office to see that they "clean up their act".

In May alone, I received incorrectly delivered letters addressed to three different people but placed in my box. The addresses were not even on my street! I brought the mail to the manager of our post office who said he was not aware of the problem.

The Post Office Manager is Jessie Boykin. He asked that we call him when this happens. He is available by phone (388-0639) until 2 pm. If we all do this, or better yet, **TAKE THE MAIL TO THE POST OFFICE,** they should get the message.

Marie Annette McCabe

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Peter 383-1842 / 515-2642 cell
PeterSpear@words-b-us.com

How long have you been thinking about "joining the club"?

Our area has 360 homes and we have received 150 memberships to the association so far this year.

Perhaps you have been thinking about getting more involved in enjoying this community. We invite you to join us in any of the association's activities.

If you also take out a membership, you will be supporting the clubhouse, this newsletter, all our events and the work of the Disaster Brigade.

MWPCA MEMBERSHIP / DONATIONS

\$45 Household membership _____ \$15 Seniors (includes newsletter) _____

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

Designated Donation: \$ _____ CIRCLE ! Bldg. Improvements Sewer

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ e-mail _____

Mail to: Muir Woods Park Community Assn., 40 Ridge Ave., Mill Valley, CA 94941

Preparing for Fire Season

The late spring rains gave an extra growing boost to vegetation this year. Seasonal grasses were taller than ever. Now they are part of our heavy fuel load. Every year the fire department personnel come through our neighborhoods on their vegetation hazard reduction inspections. For your safety and the safety of those around you be certain that you have your property in compliance with their standards.

1. Remove all flammable vegetation and cut all grasses to less than 3" in a 30-100' radius of all structures.
2. Remove all tree branches within 10' of the ground on all mature trees.
3. Remove all dead vegetation from roof and gutters.
4. Remove all dead branches and foliage from trees and bushes.
5. Clear all dead vegetation on the ground.
6. Clear all tree branches less than 2' in diameter or with foliage, within 10' of the roof or any chimney opening.
7. Driveways must be clear of vegetation 15' vertically and 5' horizontally from the edge.
8. Address numbers must be a minimum of 4' on a contrasting background and be posted where clearly visible.

If you have neighbors who have not cleared their area, tell them about the notification from the fire department. If there is vegetation accumulating on a vacant parcel, it is in your best interest to contact the owner and let them know of the county fire clearance requirements. If you have any questions, you can always call our Throckmorton Fire Station at: 388-5414.

Wild Fire Information

(Continued from page 1)

Under the worst conditions, it is possible that an area the size of Blithedale Canyon from the church near Throckmorton to the top of the mountain, could be consumed in 30 minutes if the wind was at 35 mph and moving uphill.

Such a fire moves faster than you can run. If a fire gets to that point, you will not be able to drive out because of traffic congestion.

If you hear of a fire that might threaten our area, the best thing to do is LEAVE IMMEDIATELY. (Those who leave early by car would avoid the later congestion.) That is the advice of Fire Captain Frank Neer at the Throckmorton Fire Station. As Frank says, "You can always return if the fire doesn't reach our area. Why take a chance?". Sounds like the best advice. Don't hesitate, LEAVE. While one might hope to have officers coming through a neighborhood telling residents to leave, that is not likely to happen. You must depend on yourself. Warn your neighbors and leave.

A fire creates its own wind system and especially if it is coming uphill, it can have a "drawing" effect like a chimney. With a good wind it can also jump to different areas by carrying embers from one place to another. We saw this with the Oakland fire. **Firestorms are a real possibility and CAN'T be outrun.**

We must prepare ourselves and our families ahead of time to be ready to leave on a moment's notice. Have a plan that tells each member where to go or who to contact if you are in different areas (school, work, etc.) and separated. **If you have thought ahead and prepared an evacuation kit/suitcase for your family, it will be easier to get going.** (See column one.) Store all your valuables (negatives or CDs of pictures, jewelry, important papers and copy of insurance policy in a safety deposit box. Keep your evacuation kit/pet carriers in the car or near the door.

If you must leave, take:

- Your evacuation kit, check book, credit cards and cell phone
- Needed medication
- Safety deposit box key

When you leave, close all windows and doors. Get all remaining vehicles off the street.

Fire Station Building News

Our fire station building was razed in July. The fire station has temporarily relocated to portable buildings on the premises. They hope to break ground for the foundation later this year. Completion of the building could be as long as the end of 2006.

Emergency Evacuation Kit

This kit can be put together in 40 min. All time (and potential panic) saved if the time comes to leave!

- **Set of clothing and shoes** for each member of the house. (Warm jacket, hat, etc.)
- **Toiletries and extra eye glasses** (an old pair)
- **Copies of important papers / insurance policy**
- **Important phone numbers, cash, paper/pen**

Store all items in a suitcase (close to the exit of the house) that is easy to roll to the car. You can also place it in the trunk of the car you KNOW you will take. **Place a note on it reminding you to grab your credit cards, check book, medications, cell phone and anything vital to you.** Have pet carriers nearby with dishes inside.

Rehearse this with the family and you'll avoid panic.



Out and About This Summer

Verna Dunshee Trail

is that nice walk around the top of Mt. Tam. This is a great place to take visitors — especially if you want to be sure to be out of the fog and have the greatest of views!

Point Bonita Lighthouse

Our neighbors, Ellen and Bob Olson have become volunteers at the lighthouse and remind us of what a great spot it is. If you have never seen this historic place, you are in for an adventure and a “stunning” walk across a suspension bridge to the lighthouse. The 1848 discovery of gold brought San Francisco’s population of 900 to over 20,000 by 1849! Alcatraz’s lighthouse was built to show the way for ships directly in front of the Golden Gate. But another lighthouse was needed to make the entrance recognizable for sailors coming up from the south. That lighthouse sight became Pt. Bonita. Despite these efforts, over three hundred boats ran aground during the gold rush years.

Point Bonita is still an active lighthouse and is maintained by the Coast Guard. It is reached by a half-mile trail, steep in parts. Black sand coves and pillow basalt formations tell an ancient volcanic history. A tunnel half way to the lighthouse is open on during visiting hours (Sat., Sun. Mon. 12:30 pm — 3:30 pm).

The Marine Mammal Center is also in the headlands at above Rodeo Beach. It serves as a hospital and conservation facility for wild mammals, including seals, sea lions and sea otters. You can walk the grounds every day from 9 am — to 5 pm. Call 289-7325 to find out what animals may be on site.

West Point — “Breakfast anyone?”

How about a nice morning hike capped with breakfast served while you overlook the Bay Area and Pacific Ocean? **August 14th** is the next pancake breakfast at the Inn. No reservations. The Inn was built in 1904 by the Mt. Tamalpais Scenic Railway as a stopover for passengers making connections with the stage to Willow Camp (Stinson Beach) and Bolinas. Years after the stage, passengers could choose to take the gravity train to Muir Woods or continue on to the Tavern at East Peak. If you would like to stay overnight at the Inn or its rustic cabins, call the Innkeeper at 388-9955.

Board Meeting Highlights

Meetings are held at the Clubhouse on the second Thursday of the month from 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm. Everyone is welcome. For complete minutes or to add agenda items (a week in advance of the meeting), contact Mark Montaine, recording secretary, at 381-3523 or fivemark@aol.com.

June 9th

The Pancake Breakfast brought in \$200. Proceeds will go to the Disaster Shelter Supplies Budget. Discussion took place regarding board committees, advocacy groups and entities deemed to be separate from MWPCA. Issues of insurance were discussed. The Clubhouse passed its electrical inspection. \$600.00 in building improvement money has come from the General Fund. \$500.00 is currently available for children’s programs and the children’s play area. Following last month’s board request, an increase in clubhouse property insurance coverage to \$200,000 was obtained. The additional coverage will cost \$60 annually.

July 14th

Discussion regarding marketing of the clubhouse as a rental site for business meetings, seminars and workshops. Board feels it must be more proactive in getting the word out and will prepare some materials for distribution. Request to the Disaster Committee and review by Captain Frank Neer for recommendations for items to be purchased for building use as a disaster shelter. The board approved spending \$5,000 grant for lighting, stairs and rails to the lower parking lot.

2005 MWPCA Board Officers & Directors

President	Brad Silen	332-3202
Vice President	Etta Deikman	383-2198
Treasurer	Karen Buckter	381-1801
Rec. Secretary	Mark Montaine	381-3523
Director	Lila Daniels	383-8422
Director	Lynn Hindley	388-7252
Director	Barry Joseph	383-2624
Director	Jennifer Sheetz	383-3185
Director	Carol Stern	388-0824
Director	Marie A. McCabe	381-0980

Committees

Clubhouse Rentals	Lynn Hindley	388-7252
Com. Planning	Steve Thompson	388-9630
Membership	Etta Deikman	383-2198
Mt. Emergency	Del Goetz	388-8493
Newsletter	Marie A. McCabe	381-0980
Parenting	Brad Silen	332-3202



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