



MARK YOUR
CALENDARS

JANUARY

12 – Second Saturday Median Workday. 9am-noon. N. San Pedro at Schmidt Ln. Lunch provided.

20 – Sing Along 4 Fun with Futon Mary. (see p.10)

22 – Full Moon Kayak with Ron Ford (see p.10)

29 – SVNA Community Meeting. Tuesday, 7pm. Korean Presbyterian Church.

FEBRUARY

9 – Second Saturday Median Workday. 9am-noon. N. San Pedro at Schmidt Ln. Lunch provided. (see p. 8)

9 – Get Ready Marin disaster preparedness class for Santa Venetia, 1-3pm. Korean Presbyterian Church. (see p.4)

14 – Valentine's Day
27 – Tentative public meeting on old McPhail's and Gallinas Schools. Call Pepe Gonzalez pgonzalez@srcs.org

MARCH

8 – Second Saturday Median Workday. 9am-noon. N. San Pedro at Schmidt Ln. Lunch provided.

15 – Easter Egg Hunt at Castro Field, Saturday, 10am. Rain date: March 23, Sunday, 10am. (see p. 9)

25 – SVNA Community Meeting. Tuesday, 7pm. Korean Presbyterian Church.



Santa Venetia Neighborhood Association

January/February 2008

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Storm Stories— Heroes & Zeroes

By Linda Levey

Heroes: The waters were rising. One house had sewage back up with the water. Emails were flying. Email was forwarded to **Russ Greenfield**, our neighbor on the Board of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District. He immediately responded with questions, contacted the head of LGVSD, and they had a clean-up contractor over at the house shortly. With so many people not taking responsibility for problems and not willing to assist, this was a refreshing change. Don't forget when you go to the polls: Russ Greenfield is a "keeper."

Zeroes: We had two fallen trees. One fell through our fence and across the road. We were out in the pouring rain, reviewing the situation and how to clear the road, and up pulled a PG&E truck. We were very glad to see him because we had earlier lost our electricity and thought he was there to help. He got out of his truck and asked when the tree would be moved as he needed to get through to read the meters.

Heroes: That was some wind! We talked to many neighbors that had so many things blown away. The wind grabbed our (very heavy) metal canoe, picked it up and tossed it in the creek where it began to fill with water and settle in the tules. We watched it and waited for a good time to go and retrieve it. The next day, our neighbor Evan Marks, came by with his sailboat with dinghy attached. He was looking for his and other neighbors' lost items. He went into the tules on his dinghy, emptied the canoe, and towed it back home to us. THANKS!

Zeroes: Talking to a neighbor, she told this story.... The flood waters were rising for her and her neighbor. A police car was parked on the opposite side of the street with a flat tire. The policeman sat inside the car for about 45 minutes. Finally DPW and PG&E trucks showed up, helped him change the tire, and then they all left—while the residents were left bailing water....

So, if we've learned anything from this experience, it is that we Santa Venetians need to band together to take care of ourselves and of each other as help from "agencies" may not be available. ☹

AFTER THE STORM...

...NEIGHBOR EVAN MARKS came by in his sailboat with dinghy attached looking for his and other neighbors' lost items. He went into the tules in his dinghy to rescue this runaway canoe. He emptied it and towed it back to its owner.



County of Marin Unprepared for Storm

By Mary Feller

The Friday, January 4 storm brought high winds and heavy rain to Santa Venetia. The Venetia Valley weather station measured a wind gust close to 70 mph at 10am. According to the Venetia Valley gauge, the total for January 4 was 3.9" in 24 hours. This is a two-year return period, or a storm that occurs on average every two years (based on charts faxed by the State of California climatologist.)

Other rain gauges in the area are reporting close to 5" in the 24-hour period. This would be a return period of five years (on average). The rain was heaviest between 8am and 10am. The Venetia station measured 1" of rain during that time. At this point it's difficult to judge the

Continued on page 3

SANTA VENETIA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION MISSION STATEMENT

To preserve and promote the quality of life of the Santa Venetia community. This is achieved through encouraging healthy social interaction; facilitating the flow of information; and protecting the natural beauty and economic well being of the community.

—adopted Jan. 8, 2003, SVNA Board of Directors



The Communicator

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The deadline for the Mar/Apr issue is Friday, February 29. Email text to Linda Levey at linda@goagil.com, 499-3411.



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Many thanks to Ann Thompson for designing our beautiful new Communicator masthead and photo.

Photo credits: Linda Levey, Norma Novy

Articles in this newsletter represent the opinions and ideas of the authors, and may not reflect the views of SVNA or its board. While this newsletter aims to best represent information that is useful to the community, please note that SVNA reserves the right to edit submissions for both accuracy and clarity.



FROM THE PRESIDENT



By Tad Inouye

Happy New Year! Thanks to your membership and donations, the SVNA is able to maintain the medians and support local schools and businesses. Our beautiful community is surrounded by extraordinary wildlife and landscape. It is our goal to protect this natural beauty and the best way for us to accomplish this goal is through the community plan.



Now that the **Countywide Plan** for Marin County has passed, 2008 will be a very important year for all to participate in our Santa Venetia Community. If you would like to help create our plan from the beginning, contact me at tinouye@comcast.net or 492-1947.



Many other issues face Santa Venetia including the **Gallinas Creek levee upgrade**, **33 San Pablo Avenue development**, the **Old McPhail's school** and the **soccer complex project**. If you have an interest and would like to join our association, please fill out our membership form on the page 9. It is a very reasonable fee for keeping informed about the community within which you reside.



If you belong to an association or organization and would like a complimentary newsletter, just contact me at the address above.



Bring your kids and join our annual **Easter Egg Hunt** Saturday, March 15, 10am. The rain date is Sunday, March 23, 10am.

Our **January 29, 2008 community meeting** will be held at the **Korean Presbyterian Church on Adrian Way at 7pm**. Our guest speakers will be 1st District Supervisor **Susan L. Adams** and

Damon Hill, Branch Manager of the Civic Center Library. The SVNA will provide refreshments. We will be meeting in the classroom on the side and not in the church.

Any donations of raffle prizes to benefit the medians are much appreciated.



See you on January 29 and remember to renew your membership. ☘

Tad

Traffic Eases on N. San Pedro

By Mary Feller

Have any of you noticed that our morning traffic snarl has dissipated? The SVNA would like to thank **Supervisor Susan Adams** for taking the bull by the horns and responding to the years-long traffic headache on N. San Pedro Road. A simple solution—a timing change at the Civic Center stoplight—appears to have eased our morning mess. Hopefully, the timing change will suffice and a proposed a.m. parking restriction impacting several blocks of N. San Pedro Road can be avoided. ☘

THANKS & WELCOME TO THE SVNA



By Linda Levey

As I've said before, Santa Venetia is a great place made up of great people. As we welcome and give thanks to our neighbors, I have a special "shout-out" to the following fine folks.

Mary Feller: This last year she came onboard "gangbusters" with information, research, assistance, and tireless hard work. I am so glad to have her back with the SVNA. Her input is invaluable!

Nanni Wurl: Nanni has been on the SVNA Board for as long as I can remember. This year she dropped off for a respite. She will still be around, working on the Medians, but I hope soon she will be back with a vengeance!

Tad Inouye: As the President of the SVNA, his work is endless. But he does it all with a cool, calm, professional demeanor that is hard to come by. He is the perfect leader!



A warm Santa Venetia WELCOME to new SVNA members/neighbors **Linda Boyd and Judy & Joe Sommese.**

THANKS to those neighbors that have donated "a little something extra" in the last few months: **Anna Mullins & Ruth Barstow, Maureen Brant and Charles Dubs;** and THANKS to those neighbors who have donated even more! **Hanna Decker of Hanna's Hairstyling** donated \$100 and **Chris Lev & Debra Su Johnson** donated \$75. Woo hoo!

A big thank you to the SVNA Board of Directors, to the Newsletter Staff, the Neighborhood Beautification Volunteers, the Land Use Committee, the Parks, Flood Zone, and Dredging Advisory Boards, the DART members, and to all the neighbors who show up for meetings, write letters, and participate in the process! We are all volunteers and we all give of ourselves and our time to work on these various boards and projects.

Support the SVNA! — NOW IS THE TIME!

Send in your membership now—an envelope is enclosed—no excuses! If you have a neighbor who hasn't heard about us, fill them in.



Give a gift of the SVNA MEMBERSHIP!

If you have a neighbor who would enjoy receiving the newsletter, but perhaps can't afford to join, consider giving them an SVNA membership as a gift.

The more people that get involved in our community, the more we can get done. ☘



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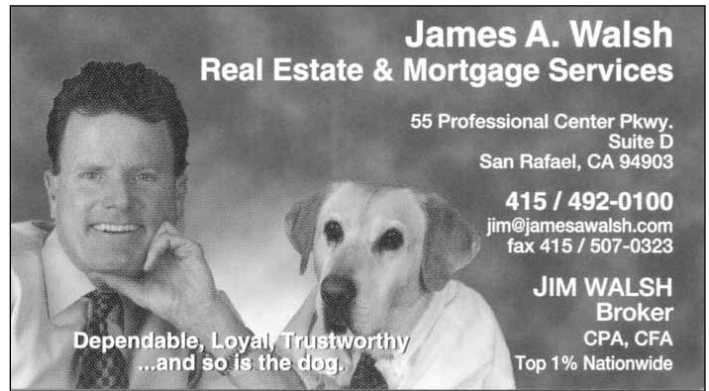
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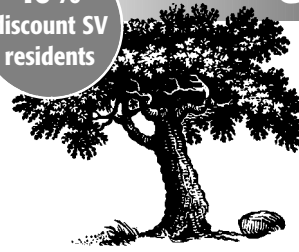
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County of Marin Unprepared for Storm

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severity of the storm in terms of hourly rainfall totals because we are still confirming and collecting data.

Two homes on La Playa and several homes on East Vendola flooded. The County of Marin seemed unprepared. Mary Hughes, who lives on La Playa, had several inches of water in one room of her house. Her next door neighbor was inundated. No one from DPW was on patrol on her block and, with water building up around 9am, Mary made the decision to fire up a County-owned portable pump. Nevertheless, incoming water eventually overwhelmed this pump. At around 10am, Mary Hughes called the emergency into Marin DPW who arrived on scene in ten minutes. At 10:30am, Mary observed DPW personnel turning on the smaller of the two pumps inside PS#4. Within about an hour the water cleared from East Vendola and La Playa, leading to speculation that Pump Station #4 may not have been in proper working order.

Also, the culvert and flood gate on East Vendola, which are the responsibility of DPW Roads and Drains (NOT Flood Zone 7), are known to be inadequate. This may have contributed to the flooding.

Meanwhile over on Estancia Way, as water in the big ditch that leads to Pump Station #5 rose to dangerous levels, DPW personnel struggled for almost two hours to fire up a portable pump. This pump is old and finicky and I was told (twice) it hadn't been primed in advance. Estancia Way has been a known hotspot for twenty years, and is currently the subject of a threatened inverse condemnation lawsuit against the County of Marin for the County's failure to solve the on-going flooding problem.

Please attend the Flood Zone 7 Meeting in April or May.
With the participation of the entire community we can stay dry and safe. ☘

The Next Chapter? It's a Real Cliff-Hanger

By Alison Fuller, Treasurer, FCCL, 492-3439

The story begins just a year ago in January '07. A cast of over 1,500 characters throughout Marin participates in community meetings, focus groups, individual questionnaires and a Strategic Vision Workshop. Two more rounds of meetings deliver the results of all this effort. Finally, all parties receive a mailer entitled "A New Chapter for the Marin County Free Library" reporting the news, good and bad: the libraries are seeing record use, but in aging facilities with limited space. The next chapter: How to Bring the Library into the 21st Century.

Santa Venetians will have the opportunity to continue the adventure at the SVNA meeting January 29, when our own Civic Center Branch Manager, **Damon Hill**, presents a fast-paced PowerPoint update on the action. Don't miss it!

Our organization formed to keep the library open in the Civic Center dome. Now that our library needs at least 50% more space than is available there, we may be spearheading the drive to build a new and larger facility nearby. We'll need the support of all of you. Wherever the CC Library is located, the Friends will continue to provide funds for green plants, books, CDs, DVDs, computers, historic documents for the California Room, and other amenities that help our library serve your needs, even as state funding is reduced.

Why not bring your checkbooks to the SVNA January 29 meeting? You can pay your SVNA annual dues and join the Friends (\$15 individual/\$25 couple) and save a stamp or two! We may even have our smashing new tote bags for sale. ☿

FROM THE LIBRARY STACKS



By Damon Hill

We are very excited to announce we have purchased access to the very popular genealogical database **Ancestry.com**. Because of the cost of the database, we are only able to offer access in the library. The database is really amazing and you can locate many items such as school year books, immigration records and other primary sources. Researching my family I was able to locate my great-grandfather's World War I draft card within minutes and send it as an electronic gift to my relatives.

Damon Hill to attend SVNA Community Meeting

I will be attending the next Santa Venetia Neighborhood meeting on January 29. I will be discussing some of our current happenings in the library and answering your questions. I really am excited to meet you in person and hope you will attend. ☿

Get Ready Marin

Come to a free 2-hour emergency preparedness class for Santa Venetia residents that will be given Saturday, February 9, 1-3pm, at the Korean Presbyterian Church, 635 Adrian Way at Rosal by members of our SV DART team. For more info and to RSVP, call Jean Zerrudo, 492-9057.



Shrubbery can get overgrown and thus narrow the sidewalk. Caregiver must duck under a branch overhanging the sidewalk. There must be an 84"-height clearance of any plant overhanging the sidewalk.

Santa Venetia & the ADA

By John Surinchak

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) contains a variety of subsections addressing many issues. As promised during the initial congressional debates on the bill, it has spawned myriad industries, mostly in the legal arena. Although the average homeowner rarely has the need to consult it, there is a provision that affects all homeowners—the issue of sidewalk access for the disabled. The ADA makes you, the homeowner, responsible for the sidewalk in front of your home. To simplify it, your sidewalk must provide easy access to the disabled. In Santa Venetia this means that any shrubs or other plants cannot grow over the sidewalk from the yard side. Also, there must be a minimum 84"-height clearance of any shrub or tree overhanging the sidewalk.

These limits were mainly designed for the wheelchair-bound. Santa Venetia has several assisted living homes with some handicapped individuals and there are also several residents of private homes who utilize wheelchairs. If an accident occurs because of owner negligence, the owner is at fault. Also, the county is compelled to act on any complaints. Let's clean up our gardening act so we don't conflict with the legal act. ☿

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Save Our Park Initiative

By Louis Przetak, Retired Structural Engineer

On November 2, 2005 architects hired by the Board of Supervisors presented to the Santa Venetia Neighborhood Association a detailed plan for a Public Safety and Sheriff's office building to be built in the area of the Jury Parking Lot, the Pétanque Court and the Field of Dogs. This building is to be 86,000 square feet with auxiliary facilities, including a helicopter landing pad. The neighborhood people and the public were astounded, as it was the first hint of such a construction in these quiet environs. Since that meeting we have tried to convince the BOS that this plan is disastrous for the East side of the Campus, but they have shown only their determination that a government building will be built there. When asked about the alternative sites designated in previous reports and recommendations, Supervisor Adams said that it would have been "too costly" to do cost analyses on each of the other sites!

The Marin Civic Center Vision Committee continues to be committed to preserving Frank Lloyd Wright's inspiration for the Civic Center Campus which includes The Lagoon Park. His model clearly shows a further government building to be built parallel to the Freeway, on the west side of the present Civic Center.

From now until June you will be seeing members of the Marin Civic Center Vision Committee and their friends and supporters asking voters to sign an initiative to be placed on the November 2008 ballot which will require voters' approval to construct any building over 250 square feet on the east side of Civic Center Drive. This is the same restriction that has always controlled the west side of this drive.

We have always supported the building of a Public Safety Building but urge that it belongs on the west side of Civic Center Drive along with all the other County Administration functions. The Christmas tree lot provides an immediately available, vacant, level, easily buildable site for this use.

The east side consists of Our Park and contains the auditorium and symphony and lecture hall. Many other cultural events, including the County Fair, utilize this space. In addition, there are picnic areas, jury parking, a dog park, children's playground, beautiful fountains and a lagoon. Much of this could be lost or dearly affected by the building of two acres of office floor space. Please help us to empower the voters to make this decision. Sign the initiative and Save Your Park.

If you would like to help, or if you want more information, please contact the Marin Civic Center Vision Committee: Alice Watkins at 415-497-3423. ☿

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Another View of the Public Safety Building Site

By Cathy Lynch

Most people accept that a new Emergency Operations and Public Safety Facility is needed at the Civic Center. In 2002, the Marin County Civil Grand Jury reported that "the existing Emergency Operations Center (EOC) facility does not meet minimum requirements for an efficient and effective operation." Whatever the disaster—earthquake, flood, fire, oil spill, terrorist attack—all 256,000 of us in Marin County will benefit from an improved facility.

Some vocal Santa Venetians oppose the site for the EOC that the Board of Supervisors selected in December 2006. The chosen site is the juror parking lot in front of the Armory and the Pétanque court and dog park around the corner.

Some say the Christmas tree lot would be an acceptable location. After commissioning several studies, the County concluded that this site is too far from the original Civic Center building and the lot is too small for the planned EOC. The Christmas tree lot is 99,600 square feet, and the chosen site is 312,200 square feet.

Plans for the new EOC include moving the Sheriff's Office from the original Civic Center to the new site across the street. Traffic should not become worse because the sheriffs already drive in and out on that block. And the non-Sheriff part of the EOC will mostly serve as a communications and coordination center for the county, exactly what Mississippi and Louisiana needed after Hurricane Katrina.

A dog park and Pétanque court at McInnis Park, at the end of Smith Ranch Road, are in the Comprehensive Strategic Plan begun by the Department of Parks this year.

The residents of Golf, Jefferson and Madison Avenues may not get something big and ugly over their back fences; the County must adhere to the Civic Center Master Design Guidelines. And Supervisor Susan Adams has pledged to involve us in the planning, as she has done already with a number of community presentations.

Unlike federal government, I trust local government to a large extent. The people we elected to local government live where we do, we see them in the community, they speak at SVNA meetings. A thousand people may feel inconvenienced by the site chosen for the EOC, but a quarter of a million Marin residents—including the inconvenienced ones—will benefit. If you agree that the chosen site is acceptable because the outcome is for the greater good, please speak up.

The County has a Web site with information about this project: <http://egowebprd.marinpublic.com/depts/AD/Main/EOC/eochome.cfm> ☿

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SUPERVISOR ADAMS CORNER



Supervisor Susan L. Adams, RN, PhD
1st District, County of Marin

Greetings! Responding to numerous complaints communicated to our office over the last several months, the County is looking at various options to reduce traffic congestion westbound on N. San Pedro Road during the morning commute hours. The County's traffic engineers are working with their counterparts at the City of San Rafael with respect to the timing of the lights at the intersection of Civic Center Drive, San Pablo and N. San Pedro and recent adjustments seem to be having some positive effect. In addition, the County is researching placing a restriction on street parking on the north side of N. San Pedro between Golf and Jefferson for two hours during the most congested part of the morning commute. This action would create an additional lane approaching the intersection.

Supervisor Adams has been meeting with the principal of Venetia Valley and the administration at the Jewish Community Center campus to explore ways to decrease morning congestion and encourage more non-motorized transportation to and from each of their respective facilities, including bicycling, walking, car pooling, etc. Also, Marin Transit will be doing some outreach with the JCC campus employees to encourage the use of local shuttles, further reducing the traffic on that corridor.

My warmest wishes for a great 2008 and see you Jan. 29.

Submitted by Susannah Clark, Aide to Supervisor Susan L. Adams
Marin County Board of Supervisors, District 1, 3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 329, San Rafael, CA 94903. Direct line: 499-7342
www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/BS/main/sups/sdistr1/index.cfm ☞

Keeping Everything in the 'Hood

By Sandy Fullerton

Several years ago, Michael Aron of Vendola Dr. was walking on the levee when he noticed a man, wearing motorcycle boots, walking his dog. In passing, Michael overheard the man mention that he had a motorcycle for sale. His interest piqued, Michael asked what kind and discovered it was a Ducati, exactly what he had been looking for...and the bike changed hands, to Michael from Blake Herod, Rincon Way. Both men continued their passion for motorcycling, Michael with on-track racing and Blake with weekly rides with his buddies in West Marin.

Fast forward to this spring. Blake was out, as usual, enjoying his ride when a car crossed the double yellow lines, colliding with Blake and critically injuring him. After being hospitalized for almost four months, he is now home continuing his rehabilitation and recovery. He has lost the use of his right hand (his "throttle hand") and is working to regain strength in his right leg.

On December 22, Michael Aron, through his non-profit Mojotown Project, organized a Benefit Ride at Infineon Raceway for Blake and for the American Federation of Motorcyclists' Air Fence Fund. The day included track time, a silent auction and a raffle for a 1962 Triumph motorcycle. And, coming full circle, the bike was won by Aron's next door neighbor, Mike Marelli! ☞

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Parking Enforcement In Santa Venetia

By Barbie Sorensen, Parking Enforcement Officer, Marin County Sheriff's Office, 479-2311



At the Marin County Sheriff's Office I'm known as 1T26, but a lot of the local residents know me simply as Barbie the parking lady! Over the last two years I have been assigned to enforce parking laws in your community on a relatively flexible basis. Initially, the problems were vehicles Parking on Sidewalks (cvc22500(f)) and Parking Facing the Wrong Way on Street. (cvc22502(a)). As I drive around today it is awesome to see the street's 80% free of these violations compared to two years ago.

More of a problem these days in Santa Venetia is the abundance of vehicles parked over the 72-hour limit ordinance (mcc15.36.030) and/or vehicles without current registration (cvc4000a). This has resulted in my towing a number of vehicles within your community on a fairly regular basis. The law provides that vehicles may be towed immediately, without prior notification or warning, when the registration is expired in excess of six months. The law provides that a vehicle may not be parked on a public road for more than 72 hours (3 days) without moving. When we see vehicles that appear to have been sitting for a while or if we get a citizen complaint on a vehicle, we "tag" it by placing a yellow warning sticker on the window that states the vehicle will be towed if not moved within 72 hours. We also mark the vehicle in various ways like chalking tires, so we may later determine if the vehicle has moved. Remember, the longer vehicles sit on a road, the dirtier they get and more debris builds around the tires causing a real eye-sore to other residents. Residents frequently call in complaints on vehicles like this and we go out and "tag" the vehicle, ultimately towing it if it is not moved.

In keeping your neighborhood looking nice, if you have an old, inoperable car you just want off your lawn, driveway, back yard, etc., give me a call and I will get you the form to fill out so it can be towed away for FREE! The Marin County Sheriff's Office offers FREE VEHICLE ABATEMENT in all unincorporated areas of the county, so tell a friend... we can help clean up their neighborhood too!

I am still out there these days, just not as frequently! If you see me in my jeep, feel free to wave me down if you have any parking problems or concerns or just to say HELLO! ☞

Flood Control Update – Advisory Board Zone 7

By Art Reichert

Supervisor **Susan Adams** recently organized a "think tank" meeting with members of the Santa Venetia Community to discuss flood control issues. This group has been working diligently over the past nine months on several fronts.

Zone 7 Priorities

For projects, our priorities are:

1. rebuild Pump Station #2
2. build a new Pump Station #6 along the Estancia ditch, and
3. replace/rebuild the levy behind the homes on Vendola.

For County policy and procedures, our one big priority is to address the various flood control issues from a watershed perspective. This Gallinas Creek watershed approach would include:

1. minimizing runoff from hillside development
2. ensuring that the three large culverts that handle the hillside water have capacity to handle the runoff from the ongoing development
3. realizing that dredging the creek plays an integral part, and
4. finding ways to increase the revenue (such as expanding the size) for Flood Zone 7.

We looked into how we might be able to get more money into Zone 7 by possibly expanding the size of the zone to include the whole watershed, combining our flood zone with others to form one big county-wide flood zone, and getting a portion of the ad valorem taxes from the nearby homes not currently in the zone. There is little chance any of these will succeed.

Starting this Spring, a watershed plan will be developed for Miller Creek and Gallinas Creek. We were one of five watersheds chosen –out of about 25 in central and eastern Marin. This may help us to secure State or Federal money in the future.

Culvert Capacity

There are three culverts which direct hillside runoff under our neighborhood and into the bay. A 1971 study evaluated their ability to handle a 50-year storm:

1. the Meadow Way culvert was found adequate, but "if the hillside lands were developed," the system would require about 20% additional capacity
2. the La Pasada culvert has adequate capacity, and
3. the East Vendola culvert has only 42% of the required capacity.

The Levee Behind the Homes on Vendola Drive

The County admits "uncertainty" on the ownership of the levee and the underlying property. They maintain they do not own the levee, and that it sits entirely on private property. Further, they expect Flood Zone 7 to pay the entire cost for rebuilding it. We feel that the County owns the levee and should pay (or at least contribute) for the rebuilding of it, as part of government's role to enhance and preserve Public Health & Safety. The County built the levee after the 1982 and 1983 Santa Venetia floods, and by not fixing it, we feel they are refusing to take responsibility for the public safety of Santa Venetia.

Supervisor Susan Adams said she would give Zone 7 \$300,000 of her District One discretionary funds to be used for a levee study. This study will assess the condition of the levee, identify the weakest points, and give some broad options for repair and rebuilding. We are certainly grateful for this appropriation of discretionary dollars.

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So, where does that leave us? The creekside homeowners on Vendola Drive need to realize that, per the County, you own the levee in your backyards, and are potentially responsible if a levee breach or overtopping were to happen on your property. That being the case, it would seem prudent to increase the liability portion of your homeowner's insurance to cover that possibility.

A possible next step might be to form a working group (with County and neighborhood participation) to deal with all the issues surrounding the levee behind the homes on Vendola Drive. These issues include, but are not limited to: ownership of the levee; lot line clarification; liability for damages if the levee were to fail to protect the neighborhood; easements; structures built by homeowners either on top of or on the creek side of the levee; repair/rebuilding of the levee; and where the funds to pay for the repair/rebuilding (est. \$11 million) would come from.

Everyone should realize that until we pay off the remaining two years of our Pump Station #1 rebuild loan, we cannot fund or initiate any additional flood control projects. One ray of hope is that County general fund money can be used for flood zone improvements if approved by the Board of Supervisors. ☘

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VENETIA VALLEY TIMES

By Pepe Gonzalez, Principal

Venetia Valley K-8, 492-3150 x 203, Fax 492-3160

The winter is finally here and we are gearing up for the new year. **Pepe Gonzalez** has been named Principal of Venetia Valley School and the assistant principal position is now open. Gonzalez was previously the assistant principal at Venetia Valley and has now moved up to serve as principal.

Friday, December 14 concluded the first trimester of the year. As we go into the new year we are starting the registration process for the 08-09 academic year. We encourage all neighborhood members to visit our school and take a tour. Please call the main office line at 492-3150 to reserve a space on our next tour:

February 5 - 9:00 am

March 19 - 5:30 pm

April 2 - 9:00 am

May 6 - 3:30 pm

May 20 - 3:30 pm

Check out our website at www.venetiavalley.org to see all of the events taking place. Our 5th grade students are getting ready to go to Walker Creek Ranch for a week-long Science Camp experience. Our Middle School students are gearing up for basketball season and as a whole school we are anticipating warm Spring days. ☘

SECOND SATURDAY MEDIANS



By Nanni Wurl

I can't help smiling when I drive past the Medians—what a treat to see the blooms. It's painful to prune blooming plants but since we don't have the luxury of a lot of helpers, we have to make the best use of our limited time. I know that neither the Board nor I can express sufficiently our gratitude to my fellow workers.

There are other people who do their best to keep Santa Venetia attractive by picking up litter along the roads. They do not get the credit we median workers get, but I hope they know they are appreciated.

In November, **Dennis Bortoli** & his truck "Old Faithful," **Wayne Lechner** and **Helen** & **Carl Sitchler** worked. Special thanks to **Carl** & **Helen** for convincing their neighbor, **Winsor Orrick**, to join us. What a thrill to have a new person on board. He is no slouch either.

In December, the dedicated crew consisted of **Dennis** and "Old Faithful," **Wayne Lechner**, **Winsor Orrick**, **Carl** & **Helen Sitchler**, and **Tim Ribble**. **Carl** is an expert leafblower. We worked first on the Median between Birch and La Pasada and proceeded later to the longest one, between Mabry and Meadow.

I received a complaint that we impinge on the traffic since some people (2) were parked along the road. Please remember: We give up our free time to improve the Medians. We need to get our tools out of our cars at different times. We need our fellow residents to slow down! — It is such a short distance... ☘

Raffle Benefiting the Medians

All raffle prizes are donated by our members.
The raffle costs \$1 per ticket or six tickets for \$5.
See you Tuesday, January 29, 7pm.

LAND USE UPDATE



This is a partial list of current and ongoing projects in Santa Venetia. Get involved now, before the projects are built, not after. If you have an interest in the outcome of any of these building projects, please contact the appropriate parties or the SVNA Land Use Committee:

Old McPhail's and Old Gallinas Schools – changes are "afoot." San Rafael City Schools has been holding committee meetings to decide the fate of various school sites that are no longer being used. A Public Meeting is in the works and tentatively scheduled for February 27. Mark your calendars! **We need the community to show up in force to let them know we have a huge interest in what is being planned for our neighborhood.** Call Pepe Gonzalez pgonzalez@srcs.org for meeting information.

Contact: Chris Thomas, San Rafael City Schools

33 San Pablo Avenue – 83 units/condos proposed

Contact: Bob Brown, City of San Rafael

650 North San Pedro Road – 12 + 2 units proposed

Contact: Jeremy Tejirian, Marin County Planning

Oxford Valley – ongoing applications

Contact: Thomas Lai, Marin County Planning

Public Safety Building at Marin Civic Center

Contact: Susan Adams, District 1 Supervisor or Susannah Clark, Aide to District 1 Supervisor, Susan Adams

Soccer Complex Project at San Rafael Airport – ongoing project

Contact: Bob Brown or Kraig Tambornini, Planning, City of San Rafael

110 Sunny Oaks Drive – project from June – not sure of status

Contact: Jeremy Tejirian, Marin County Planning

900 Bayhills Drive, San Rafael

Contact: Neal Osborne, Planner, Marin County Planning

Not in My Neighborhood, You Don't

If you witness suspicious persons, vehicles or activities, dangerous driving, abandoned cars, garbage dumping, endangered or injured animals, dogs off leash and running wild, call these NON-EMERGENCY numbers:

Sheriffs (Streets/Neighborhoods) 479-2311

Rangers (Parks/Marsh) 499-6405. ☘



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CSA 18 PARKS & RECREATION

Ron Ford Resigns

As of December 2007, I have resigned from the CSA 18 board. After 12 really great years of progress in rehabilitating and building new parks in Santa Venetia, I felt my time to turn over the reins had come. CSA 18 has a great group of board members at this time with **Wayne Toba, Kathryn Neville, Sharon Lange and Mary Estes**. You might want to join this board and be a part of the "solution."

CSA 18 has added three parks in the last 12 years: Candy's Park, the Promenade and the award-winning Castro Park. I am extremely proud to have been a part of this progressive board and to have worked with people like **Steve Petterle, Ron Paolini, Ed Hulme, Dave Hattem, Ron Miska, Rick Fraites** and former Supervisor **John Kress** at the County of Marin. It took all of these people to get things done and all have been professional and respectful in working with our board.

Thanks to you all for working to better our community.—Ron ☿



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12th Annual Easter Egg Hunt March 15

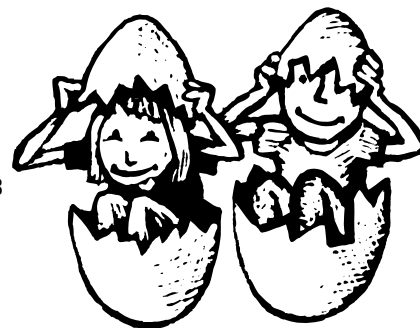
**For toddlers to
12 years old**

Saturday, March 15, 10am

Rain Date: Sunday, March 23

Castro Field

(Please use the entrance
between 62 and 64
Vendola Drive)



Once again, James A. Walsh Realty and Mortgage Service and the SVNA will generously sponsor this year's 12th Annual Easter Egg Hunt at Castro Field on Saturday, March 15, 10am.

Expect a hopping-good visit from America's First Bunny to our green and lush park—perfect for hiding an orgy of eggs (even more eggs than last year!). Let's hope for sunshine for our bunny event, but even hard-boiled participants can get rained out. If rain does happen, plan to come on the Rain Date, Sunday March 23. ☿

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SVNA, PO Box 4047, San Rafael, CA 94913-4047

Would you like to help? Please note any areas of special interest or concern, and we'll aim to keep you up to date and involved. Have ideas of your own? Please share them!

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ SVNA Board | ☐ Community parks |
| ☐ Newsletter | ☐ Window decoration |
| ☐ Attend Meetings
(rides to and from available) | ☐ Santa Venetia Market |
| ☐ Land use and development | ☐ Disaster Preparedness (DART) |
| ☐ Neighborhood beautification | ☐ Other _____ |
| ☐ Social activities | |
| ☐ Civic Center Library | |
| ☐ Neighborhood safety | |
| ☐ Flyer distribution | |
| ☐ N. San Pedro medians | |
| ☐ Marsh, creek
or neighborhood clean-ups | |
| ☐ Phone banks | |

Advertising: Paid SVNA members can introduce themselves to the community and support *The Communicator* by buying a 3-5/8" x 2" ad. (Jan/Feb issue \$50, all other issues \$25.)

For ad specs, contact Norma Novy with your info at 499-9409, normanovy@comcast.net



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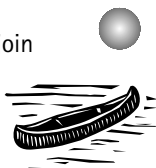


NEIGHBORLY NOTES



From Ron Ford

Full Moon Kayak on Gallinas Creek – Come and join an enthusiastic group of neighbors for an easy kayak on Gallinas Creek and enjoy the beauty of your neighborhood from a different vantage point. If you have never done this before, now is the time to get out there and do it. We'll stop and have a short break along the route. This is not a strenuous trip but you should be able to kayak two miles. Beginners are welcome and if you don't have a kayak, we can get one for you. Our next trip is on Jan. 22, weather allowing. Time will be adjusted according to tides. There is a full moon trip every month and we will branch out to other areas of the bay. This event is free. For more information, call Ron Ford at 342-0220.



From Bethe Jensen

Once Upon A Mattress – Jean Zerrudo (past SVNA president) and I will be performing in North Bay Rep Theatre for a Cause's production of "Once Upon A Mattress." Performance dates are February 29, March 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15 and 16. (By the way, Jean and I both live on Adrian Way in the houses we grew up in!)

From Robin Gaspare & Danny Indelicato

Gaspare's Pizza House – Hi Everyone. Hope this email finds you well and Happy New Year! The link below, with a review and video clip of Gaspare's Pizza House in San Francisco, came out recently. It's a good one and fun to watch! We feel very fortunate, since Michael Bauer doesn't often give kind reviews! If you are so inclined, you may post your comments at the end of the review. After all the comments have been tallied and the votes are in, we could win "SF's Best Pizza Restaurant Award," as we did five years ago in 2003. Thank you so much.
<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/blogs/sfgate/indexn?blogid=26>

From Mary Lou King

Welcome to another new Santa Venetia couple – Debbie Boitano and Gerry Macchello have moved in on Whittier Avenue. She's a teacher, a nice enthusiastic person and very keen on preserving the Park. Haven't met her fiancé yet, but hope to soon. Welcome to the Neighborhood!

From Mary Hughes

Sing Along 4 Fun – By the time you receive this newsletter, Futon Mary will already have hosted



her first "Sing Along 4 Fun" on January 20. She plans on making this a regular event, open to ANYONE who likes to sing (for the minimal cost of \$5). Invite your friends and neighbors for a night of fun. They will be singing many of the standards with accompanist Barbara Bacon. You can contact Mary for a list of the songs (bring the music if you have it) and/or sign up on the mailing list RSVP at SingAlong4Fun@aol.com.

From Nanni Wurl

Children & Bikes – I have noticed on my afternoon walks along N. San Pedro Road that some children ride their bikes on the road towards oncoming traffic. Most of them pay more attention to their fellow students on the sidewalk than to the cars. Parents should teach traffic rules to their children. Unluckily, the majority of bikers do not follow the rules and in the event of an accident, the automobile driver would be at fault.

Pedestrians: an Endangered Species – It appears that the pedestrian crossing from Meadow towards the 7-Eleven is becoming a hazard. Two friends told me that they almost got hit by drivers going through the stop sign. I got another complaint on the morning of the 25th—Christmas! The Highway Patrol has been alerted. There is no excuse for this. Please, stop at the sign!

From Mary Feller

Small Fire on Estancia Way – On Sunday, December 23, a fire, perhaps caused by a faulty electrical strip, damaged a home on Estancia Way. Fortunately, many neighbors were home and they ran to the aid of the homeowner with additional fire extinguishers. The San Rafael Fire Department response time was ten minutes. By the time the trucks arrived on scene, the fire was out. Had neighbors not been home or without extra fire extinguishers, the home would have been fully engulfed.

We are currently in communication with the San Rafael Fire Department to discuss why the response time in this instance was so poor and how the situation can be improved.

From Norma Novy

Thanks to Jane Kloh – On a Friday morning, Jane and I clambered along the east end, south side of N. San Pedro, cutting off the seed-heads of *Coraderia selloana*, otherwise known as Pampas Grass, named by California as an invasive weed. It took an hour and we were rosy cheeked and laughing by the time we finished and our bags were full. ☘