



The Portola Valley Post

Fall 2007

A Creek Runs Through It

“Given a chance, a child will bring the confusion of the world to the woods, wash it in the creek, turn it over to see what lives on the unseen side of that confusion.” --Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*

Unless you're an old timer or have a daredevil child, you might not know that a creek runs under Town Center site. Sausal Creek, named for the willows that grow sporadically along its banks, is a seasonal stream that meanders through Portola Valley, open except for the dark and slimy culverted portion that runs under the length of the Town Center property, 650' to be exact. The creek is one of 24 tributaries that comprise the San Francisquito watershed, a funnel-shaped area covering 47.5 square miles and two counties on the San Francisco Peninsula.

During the 1950's and 60's, public bodies in the U.S., citing concerns about flooding and safety, regularly paved over creeks by burying them underground in concrete pipes. Today such concerns would be widely discredited and most experts agree that the misguided practice of culverting streams was largely a function of maximizing building space. Fortunately, the 21st century has brought promising trends in environmental awareness including the newly emerging science of stream daylighting, and now towns all over the country are removing culverts to restore creeks.

In September, the Portola Valley Town Council approved the daylighting of 350' feet of Sausal Creek. While the work will be integrated with the current Town Center construction project for substantial cost savings and to limit disruption

to the site, the funding will remain completely separate. In response to this, the Portola Valley Friends of Sausal Creek was created to raise funds for the project.

Opening this stretch of the creek will be a step in restoring the entire creek system, improve the health of the watershed and provide a functional, stable creek channel for the future. Open creeks help to reduce erosion and flooding potential. Exposure to sunlight and air allows growth of aquatic and riparian vegetation that improves water quality and restores habitat. Too, an open creek, whether full of water in the spring or dry in the fall, is a valuable tool for environmental education and stewardship programs as well as a soothing place to relax and enjoy nature. Once children witness how nature can enrich their daily lives, they can take this knowledge with them as they grow up and become the stewards of the next generation in Portola Valley. And, contrary to what you might believe, research shows that more children have been seriously injured getting stuck in culverts during floods than in open creeks."

True to the Town's green principles, the existing concrete culvert will be capped and abandoned in the ground. Since all of the rainfall runoff from the buildings and landscape areas drains into this pipe, the abandoned culvert will become a giant cistern, collecting thousands of gallons of water for irrigation on the site.

For more information about the Sausal Creek Daylighting Project or to make a donation, please contact Alex Von Feldt at 851-8201, alex_vonfeldt@yahoo.com.

Horses in the Valley

It is impossible to think of Portola Valley without also thinking of horses. The Town has a long and storied past with our four legged friends. From its earliest settlements, Portola Valley has been a place where horses and horse people have thrived. Early on, horses were a practical and important piece of the economy – from logging, lumber processing and transportation, to raising horses as stock, their role in the development of the area is central. Over time, as their place in our culture moved from the practical to the recreational, horses still made their presence known at the most core levels of the Town's growth.

Back in 1924, when Westridge Drive was first outlined, making way for horses in addition to cars and homes was not a large issue. However, by 1947 when the subdivision of Westridge began, it did factor into the area's development. The desire to live in a country setting alongside horses brought many early residents to Portola Valley. Homeowners easily housed stables on properties which were a minimum parcel size of two acres. Al and Jo Schreck moved here in 1960 specifically to have horses. "Golden Hills was just a dirt road back then," remembers Al. "Our driveway was dirt for many years. We just thought it was easier on the horses." Mary Hufty agrees. "You can tell when you enter a horse community," she says. "It's the open spaces, the rural nature of the place that you can see and feel immediately. It adds to the quality of life for everyone in the community".



Photo by Virginia Bacon

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Seismograph for Town Library

Marking the confluence of two of the earth's major tectonic plates the San Andreas fault is, arguably the most significant natural feature of the Town. Splitting the Town right down the middle, the presence of the fault and its potential impact on future development formed the basis, in part, for the Town to be among the first small towns in the country to employ a Town Geologist. Construction of a new Town Center and demolition of the old one is, in fact, the Town's means of accommodating the vicissitudes of this sleeping giant.

Taking advantage of the widespread interest in faults, earthquakes and such, a group of Town residents proposed to the Town to design and construct a unique kind of seismograph and install it for all to see in the new Town library. It is being designed to be attractive, clearly visible up close in its tempered glass housing, and impervious to the challenges of the young, curious onlookers. The seismograph will be atop a large vertical pipe, or seismic pier -- clearly visible at the construction site -- set in concrete, but isolated from the concrete foundation and the floor of the library. The seismograms of earthquakes up to several thousand miles away will be displayed on a LCD screen and accessible online for all to view.

Anyone interested in joining the Seismograph Committee to help with the software or hardware, please contact: sheldon@breiner.com

Sheldon Breiner

New Trails in our Future

Our trails have never been in better condition. This is due to the excellent work of our Public Works Director and his staff. The Minoca trail has been completely rebuilt and will now take you safely from the top of Cervantes Road down to Alpine Road. The Cervantes, Los Trancos and Palmer trails have also undergone renovation in the past few months. New trails are in our future. Next year a major trail will be constructed on the newly acquired Kersten property located at the top of the Larry Lane Trail at the northern side of town. Also, a new circumferential trail is part of our Town Center project.

Safety continues to be an important trail issue. *On trails where bikes are allowed* –bicyclists please pull over and give way to horses and pedestrians. *On trails where dogs are allowed*- please keep your dog on a leash. *Pedestrians* please do not startle a horse by running up from the front; if you are coming up to the rear of a horse, please announce yourself while some distance away. Enjoy our trails in the Portola Valley way - be polite and adhere to the trail usage signs and trail rules.

Portola Valley Trail and Paths Committee

Town Center Film Series

Watch an ongoing film series by local Portola Valley filmmaker, Steven Marra, as the new, green, Portola Valley Town Center is created. The series chronicles the new Town Center showing different aspects of the project... from what building Green means, to how it was financed, designed and much more. This first episode articulates the shared vision of how and why Portola Valley decided to build a new Town Center committed to Green design.

<http://www.portolavalley.net/documentary/index.shtml>

Expanding Town Archives—Got Photos?

Have you ever wondered what your property looked like forty or fifty years ago? An exciting new addition to the Town archives is a series of aerial photos that can be enlarged on the computer to show rather close-up views of our streets and home sites through the decades.

The Historic Resources Committee invites everyone to come and take a look at these photos and the rest of the collection when the Community Heritage Room opens in the new library. This special place will be located just inside the front door of the new facility. For the first time in the twenty-five years of the committee's existence, residents will be able to easily access the large collection of photos, maps and various other documents in the collection.

Looking forward to this new available space, the committee encourages all long-time residents to sift through drawers, storage boxes and filing cabinets to seek out any long-forgotten photos, documents or artifacts that will help preserve our Town's history. Especially missing from current files are photographs and other records from the last fifty years as the Town took on its current appearance. Subdivision maps, photos of streets and houses from the 1950s and 1960s are examples that would be useful.

Items can be dropped off with Sharon Hanlon at Town Hall, or call Nancy Lund at 851-1072 for a discussion of usefulness and/or pickup. Until the new library is finished, residents can visit the archives' temporary home by appointment. Contact historicrosources@portolavalley.net.



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From The Mayor

It's my turn to write a letter to all our residents about how our Town is fairing in 2007. This is an easy job this year. The Town is experiencing a quiet miracle, thanks to the tireless efforts of our wonderful volunteers. We are creating a new Town Center for the 21st century, built to the safest and most sustainable, green standards. The design started with the efforts of over 100 volunteers, led by our home-grown architect, Larry Strain, and the construction is being managed by our home-grown superintendent, CR Hodgson. And all through the complex construction process, we are keeping most of the historic functions of our Town Center going on as normal.

The construction project is both on schedule and on budget. We have a small cushion in both time and cost, and backup financing in place if we need to draw on it. This effort is being funded by the generosity of our leading citizens who have already donated or pledged the majority of the cost. Our volunteer fundraisers are into their final push with a great matching grant helping us along. If you haven't stepped up, we humbly ask you to join the team, and help put us over the top.

The result will be a great new Town Center facility that will set new standards in environmentally sensitive design, will enhance all of our property values, and will be a treasure for our children and grandchildren in the coming century. It will actually be smaller than the old school buildings it replaces, but much more effective in serving both our day-to-day and emergency needs.

While accomplishing this challenging task, we have replenished our Town's reserves, incurred no debt, required no construction bond, and actually lowered taxes. Collectively, that is a miracle in my book. I am so proud of all of our varied volunteers and dedicated staff that made this possible.

What makes this town special is the sense of community and volunteer spirit that motivates us and informs all of our decisions. Join us and get involved. Contribute. Volunteer for a committee. Be an active part of this extraordinary community. It's that volunteer spirit that makes us special.

Don't Miss Out

Please join the PV Forum Email Service. The group is an email forum for the residents and members of the Portola Valley community to communicate with each other on a wide range of topics of interest to the greater community. The Forum was created to help residents stay well informed and more involved in all the events and issues going on in our small town.

This is a private forum that is not administered by the Portola Valley Town Council or Administration. All residents of Portola Valley, Ladera, and the PV School District and local PV businesses are invited to be members of the Forum.

Messages are limited to information relevant to Portola Valley and the surrounding areas. Any topic that you would be interested in knowing as a Portola Valley resident could be talked about in this forum including information on upcoming classes, updates on the Town Center, evaluations or questions about contractors and local service providers, items for sale or donation, climate warming initiatives, native plant information, or artist open studios. The list is not designed for commercial abuse. Limited promotion of services by PV residents and local businesses is allowed, such as local artists or writers telling the community about a new book or project, a store in town providing information about their services or sales, or real estate agents listing homes for sale or rent in the PV area.

To join the PVForum, please go to www.yahogroups.com and search for PVForum and request membership. Be sure to include your name, address, and phone number with your request to join the Forum or send an email with your contact information to PVForum-owner@yahogroups.com. All personal information is used purely for verification purposes to ensure our community list is secure and is kept strictly confidential.

Rebecca Flynn

Stop, Look and Listen

George Carlin's universal traffic observation is everyone thinks "anyone going faster than me is a maniac, anyone going slower than me is an idiot." How do you go deeper when traffic's not right in your neighborhood? The traffic committee tackles these questions in five stages.

1. **Converse** First, talk with neighbors in advance of committee meetings: most vehicles start/stop in local driveways. Seldom a cure all by itself, it sets the stage for evaluating answers – communications, signs, speed limits, or roadway changes.
2. **Measure** Whether measured formally (24 hour speed survey -- about \$300) or informally (clipboard or photo), knowing if/when problems occur highlights solutions. Three pulses are common: weekday commute, workers coming on site, evening events.
3. **Discuss** Traffic calming creates side effects: e.g. speed bumps slow emergency vehicles, create brake noise and remain in effect 7/24/365. Similarly, many signs blend in – even stop signs grow ignored if poorly placed, a danger for pedestrians. Speed limits reflect local experience and speed survey data. State guidelines often use 85% of current speeds -- presuming drivers have local knowledge and there aren't special circumstances such as a school or trail.
4. **Implement** Big changes require Town Council public hearings. Nuances range from Town borders and state laws to private roads and trails. Changes heighten problems without some consensus reached in earlier stages.
5. **Enforce** Independent of step 4, the sheriff observes, enforces and offers suggestions.

Come to a traffic committee meeting on first Thursdays at 8:15 a.m. or email to traffic@portolavalley.net

Chris Buja

Plant Invasion Strikes PV

No one knows how it got here or exactly where it came from. But, one thing is certain; Portola Valley is being invaded by *Dittrichia graveolens*. The plant, commonly known as Stinkweed or Stinkwort, has been spreading rapidly since it was first discovered in Alameda County in 1995. The weed is so new to the state that it is not listed in *The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California* (1993) the most comprehensive guide to native and naturalized California plants available.

Paul Heiple, Chairman of the Conservation Committee for the Town of Portola Valley has watched Stinkwort spread around the Bay Area. The plant likes the hard, compact soil in disturbed areas such as construction sites, pathways and the like and travels quickly by way of car and truck tires, wind, even feet or clothing. Mr. Heiple has seen the plant spread from Los Altos east to 101, up the 101 freeway north to Healdsburg, out Route 37 and



Get Stinkwort off your property at the earliest possible sign

around San Pablo Bay. "Our local infestation may have started at a CalTrans Station behind Foothill College. The wind and equipment carried it over towards 280 where it took off along the freeway in both directions. The intersection of Page Mill Road and 280 is the worst area of infestation" he says.

A native of Southern Europe, *D. graveolens* invaded southern Australia where it is well established. It travels best as a weed and likely came to California from Australia. It has adapted well to our climate and has been found in Blue Oaks, Portola Valley Ranch, part of Westridge, Town Center near Springdown Farm, Alpine Road from Ladera to Alpine Hills, Los Trancos and recently in Ladera. While it spreads rapidly, it does not take over other well established plants according to Mr. Heiple. "It grows best where other plants tend not to grow: in very hard packed soil with little water. It is an annual, so if you can keep it from seeding, you can keep it from spreading" he said. The plant germinates in May/June and becomes more visible in July/August. Often, it is the only green plant visible during the late summer months. The time to eradicate the weed is prior to flowering.

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District suggests three ways to remove the plant. Pulling the weed out is effective, but wear gloves. People have been known to get a rash from the strong, camphor smelling oils of the plant. Cutting or mowing the plant back close to the ground also works provided that it is done prior to the plant going to flower. The blossoms of the Stinkwort are small and yellow, while the seed heads are small and fluffy. Repeat cutting or mowing in late summer is recommended. Careful disposal of the clippings is important as once the plants have flowered, they are filled with seeds. "Carefully wrap the clippings in newspaper or plastic bags before disposing of them" says Mr. Heiple. Herbicides like Round Up

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New Faces at Town Hall

Janet McDougall As the Assistant Town Administrator, Janet's primary function is to back up Angie Howard, the Town Administrator. A native of South Lake Tahoe, Janet loves the small town atmosphere and working environment of Portola Valley. She previously worked for the City of South Lake Tahoe for 17 years. She has also worked in the private sector in many capacities such as a legal analyst, in public works and redevelopment.

Michele Arana Michele first started working for the Town of Portola Valley as a temporary when her friend Stacie Nerdahl told her there was an opening back in 2006. After a brief time as a temporary, Michele was hired as the Town's Accounting Assistant. Born and raised in Burlingame, Michele works part time for the Town. She previously worked for Oracle Corporation as an administrative assistant. She loves what she calls the "wonderful office environment" of the Town as well as the challenge and flexibility offered by her position.

Josh Maierle Josh is new to the San Francisco Bay Area having recently moved here from Bozeman, Montana. Growing up and going to school in the small town of Bozeman, he loves the rural setting and small size of the staff in Portola Valley. He has a hydrogeology degree and has worked in civil engineering firms in both design and review capacities. Josh is the Town's Engineering Technician responsible for grading and drainage inspections, plan reviews and encroachment permits.



(L to R) Michele Arana, Josh Maierle, Janet McDougall and Tony Macias. Not pictured is Gary Fitzer.

Gary Fitzer This is Gary's second term working for the Town of Portola Valley. He worked for the Town from 1996 through 1999 after which he worked for the County of San Mateo. As Senior Building Inspector and father of three college age children, Gary has over 20 years of experience in engineering, building and construction review. He is responsible for reviewing all plans and building inspections. In a field that is ever changing, Gary combines his broad experience with continuing education to stay abreast of new code requirements, construction techniques and technology. Gary says he loves the challenge and continuous learning. Looking at each job with fresh eyes keeps his work interesting and satisfying.

Tony Macias As the Coordinator of Recreational facilities, Tony is responsible for scheduling and maintenance of the Town's fields namely Rossotti Field, Ford Field, Triangle Park and Russ Miller Field at Portola Valley Town Center. Tony previously ran his own landscaping and commercial landscaping business. With this experience, his passion is grass. That is why he is excited to watch the new Portola Valley Town Center come together with its new irrigation, soil and playing field. One of the many challenges here is keeping up with the demand for playing fields. Tony works to keep fields playable and in good condition for all of the various clubs and leagues that use them.

Ormondale's New Principal

Ormondale School opened its doors this fall with a new principal at the helm – Jennifer Warren. Replacing 20-year veteran Eva Gal, Ms. Warren previously served as a gymnastics coach, teacher, and assistant principal. Jennifer will soon add “Dr.” to her official title. She is a Penn doctoral candidate, finishing up her dissertation, “When Policy Implementation Gets Messy.” *The PV Post* caught up with Ms. Warren on a busy Ormondale day for a quick interview.



So, Jennifer, why Portola Valley? I was intrigued with Ormondale's philosophy of education. They were not just teaching the basics, but also thinking outside the box and trying new initiatives to meet the needs of 21st century students. Portola Valley is such a small community, yet it has

two schools and is so supportive of them. That let me know education is a real priority here.

Why did you become a principal? I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, but I also taught gymnastics and worked at camps. Somehow I kept ending up being the person who organized everything. I enjoyed that and began to think it would be great to impact an entire school of students rather than just the 35 kids in my class. Being a principal provides a wonderful opportunity to work with an entire school, especially with the expertise of the staff. I've always enjoyed that collegiality, especially when we're working on the common good of students.

What has surprised you most about Portola Valley? The warm reception I've received from everyone. Not just at official events, but informally – on the playground, in the drop-off line, at the grocery store. People have been so welcoming. There's a real sense of genuineness that I really appreciate.

Where do you think education is heading? I honestly don't think the system can sustain its current state. You have a group of professionals who have lost the freedom and flexibility to practice their craft. This hasn't impacted Portola Valley as much as other schools, but if educators aren't provided the space to be professionals as they balance creating a strong foundation while teaching the 21st century student in innovative ways, they won't stay in the profession. I worry about losing some really quality educators to that. Our country won't be as rich as it should be if we don't have students who explore the arts and sciences and who learn to be global citizens.

When you're not working, what do you enjoy? Spending time with my husband, John! He's a senior automation engineer specializing in robotics in the biotechnology industry. I love to bake – cookies are my specialty! I also enjoy photography and try to take advantage of the great photo opportunities that abound in Northern California, especially here in Portola Valley.

Anything else to share? I want to thank everyone for the warm welcome – it's been great! I'd also like to invite the community to visit Ormondale – just give me a call and I'll set up a tour.

News From the Climate Protection Task Force

Portola Valley just upped the ante. On October 4, the Town convened a special Council meeting as part of the National Conversation on Climate Change, one of 70 communities across the country to do so. At that meeting, the Council unanimously voted to adopt the state's AB32 standard to reduce green house gases, a much stricter standard and widely recognized as more effective than the Kyoto Protocol specified in the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement signed a year earlier. In concert with achieving the AB32 goals, the Council directed staff to create and implement key recommendations by the Climate Protection Task Force, with a target date of July 1, 2008.

Currently a group composed of representatives from the Planning Commission, ASCC and Task Force are working on options for implementing the Council directions including an easily understood green rating system for new construction, remodels and additions. Early next year, the full Planning Commission and ASCC will consider the working group's recommendations and formulate final recommendations to be presented to the Council by the end of March, providing a three month period prior to the July 1, 2008 target date for review and action.

For more information about the Climate Protection Task Force's work, check out the group's new website at www.coolpv.com or email Town Planning Manager Leslie Lambert at llambert@portolavalley.net.

Meet Ann Wengert

Portola Valley will have a new Town Council member – Ann Wengert. She clearly espouses the Town's belief in the importance of volunteer contributions, having served for the past four years as a planning commissioner, and offering years of service at the executive level with the YMCA.



Ann is a seasoned entrepreneur who co-founded two national institutional real estate investment and advisory firms and has had extensive experience in managing complex multi-party transactions. Currently she provides acquisition and transactional services to local entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Ann's love of the outdoors and of Portola Valley's open spaces brought her to Portola Valley nine years ago. When she's not on her bicycle or hiking local trails with her two Australian shepherds, Ann can frequently be found at Ano Nuevo where she volunteers as a docent/naturalist.

With years of business and volunteer experience to draw upon, Ann looks forward to the opportunity to contribute to the Town.

Horses in the Valley From page 1

In those early years there was a large local horse population with many active trail riders. With the help of people like Admiral Quilter, Walter Jelich, Bill Lane, Al Schreck and other avid riders, the Town took great care to incorporate the horse culture into its general plan. Current Town requirements state that for any parcel touching a trail, the owner is responsible for maintaining the trail and ensuring that horses and riders have access to a continuous trail. For decades the Town has had a Trails and Paths Committee dedicated to the care and maintenance of the 38 mile trail system. Accommodating our equine friends ensures that we have a broad network of trails, paths and pastures for years to come.



Photo by Virginia Bacon

In the newer, Blue Oaks neighborhood, integration and maintenance of a horse trail system was a cornerstone of the development agreement. “We worked with the engineers early on to map out the riding trails and get them installed properly before the first building permit went out,” recalls Mary, a longtime member of the Committee. Getting proper trails installed means making sure that an all weather trail is built with drainage and compacted base rock. The natural, soft surface tread must be five feet wide and the trail must allow ample vertical clearance for horse and rider. Mary is quick to point out that all weather trails that avoid slippery, sloping driveways are safest for every one – horses, riders, hikers and runners.

While horses and the trail system are integral to the community, not every rider prefers trails. Amy Seigle is a dressage rider who has spent years with her horses practicing the “Zen of dressage and the art of riding.” As horses and horse property have become increasingly expensive, many horses are kept at stables rather than on the owner’s property. “Horse care is different at every barn,” says Amy, “Barns offer a variety of services such as feeding options, bedding and turnout as well as training programs.” Al Schreck comes at the issue from another angle. Having horses on their property for over 45 years, he knows what it takes. “Keeping horses is real work. You have to be around home a lot. Horses are like athletes – they need daily feeding, training and exercise or they get out of shape,” he says.

This may be one reason that many take advantage of the numerous stables in Portola Valley. Springdown Farm,

Portola Farms, Webb Ranch, The Portola Valley Training Center, Glenoaks Stables and Portola Pastures are just a few of the local stables that board and train horses. What Amy Seigle values the most at her barn are the level of horsemanship and the hands-on nature of the horse owners and staff. “People are involved in their horses,” she adds. The breadth of services is likely dictated by the breed of horse and the interests of each rider.

Portola Valley is home to a variety of horse breeds. For dressage, Amy rides a Lipazaner, the famous prancing breed from Vienna. Others prefer long legged, graceful breeds like Arabians or Thoroughbreds. Trail riders tend to prefer sturdy Quarterhorses who are popular as work and show horses. Smaller Icelandic horses are becoming popular here too, perhaps due to the fact that they are smart, strong and calm. Still others prefer a warm blooded horse that is a mix of the cold-blooded, calmer draft horse and the hot blooded, racier thoroughbred.

Along with the special abilities of each breed comes a host of clubs and associations. Peninsula Carriage Association members keep draft horses like Clydesdales or trotting horses such as Morgans to hitch to their wagons and carriages. From its early days as an outpost of the Menlo Circus Club, the Shack Riders is a much fabled adult riding club. Younger riders have Pony Clubs in Woodside, Portola Valley, and Los Altos Hills. The San Mateo County Mounted Patrol in Woodside offers programs from rodeos to cowboy poetry readings. There are also those who enjoy the tradition and majesty of the hunt through clubs such as the Los Altos Hounds.

Throughout Portola Valley and its surrounding communities, there is a sense that we must protect our very special way of life. Mary Hufty has kept a horse on her property for over 20 years and loves the freedom of saddling up her horse in her own yard and riding out through the back gate. “Every trail here has a story,” she says. “What is now called the Shady Trail was once called the Loping Trail. It was probably named Shady Trail by Admiral Quilter. It was one of the original hay roads to the old Ormondale Ranch.” Hufty, Schreck and others are currently working to raise tax deductible funds to buy and donate to the Town a piece of property that is for sale along the Shady Trail.

Development of the property will dramatically change the historically and biologically rich trail. “It is by far my most favorite trail to ride,” says Al Schreck. “It’s tranquil, broad, shady and cool in the summer.” One of the best and most central trails in the Portola Valley system, it runs between Golden Hills and Cresta Vista Drives and is widely used by runners, hikers, dog walkers and horses. More information on this open space acquisition can be found at www.theshadytrail.com.

Over time, the horse population in the Valley has decreased as residents, traffic, development and costs have risen. Yet, we share the benefit of their legacy. Shelly Sweeney is a local parent working with the town on peaceful coexistence of horseback riders and children who want to walk or bike

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On Time, On Budget

The Town Center Project is moving along smoothly, on time and on budget. The buildings are being framed, the playing fields and trails are being created, and the playground is partially open, soon to be completed.

The Town Center is certain to become a hub of community life in Portola Valley, a place where civic functions, educational opportunities, cultural enrichment, recreational activities, and social gatherings will all take place. Every resident of the Town, from the youngest to the oldest, will benefit. The design of Town Center is the result of extensive public input solicited over the past three years. All of the buildings and recreational facilities reflect state-of-the-art environmental green design. Real estate professionals report that the Town Center will enhance property values throughout the Town.

The main fundraising effort for the Town Center is in its final campaign. An anonymous donor has launched a \$500K matching grant which, if met by the community, will bring the main fundraising effort to a successful close by year's end. The time to donate is now! The matching grant deadline is December 15th. Every donor who contributes to the Town Center project will be recognized by name with a permanent inscription on the campus. Your support is appreciated and will always be remembered!

For more information, visit www.pvtowncenter.com, email sareiss@sbcglobal.net or call 529-0829.

Sally Ann Reiss

Horses From page 6

to school. Working with the Town, Shelly has established the Portola Valley Safe Routes program that allows children to bike on the trails from Ormondale School to Corte Madera School. "Growing up here we rode bikes everywhere. Now parents drive their kids to school. We'd like to get more kids on their bikes on the trails instead of in cars on the streets," explained Shelly. To promote the program, she held a bike rodeo and invited a horse and rider so kids could learn how to behave on the trail with an approaching horse. "It's all about being able to share the trail," she concluded. If we can do this effectively, everyone benefits.

Ellen Vernazza is Chairperson of the Trails and Paths Committee. She recalls hearing horses regularly clip clopping down her street years ago at night. "For sure it is harder to do now, but it is still pretty great. Portola Valley is one of the last areas where you can have that country feel, and yet be close to resources like Stanford University and San Francisco," she says. It is true; we owe much to the horses for the role they have played in our town. Horses have contributed to both the preservation of long stretches of open space and the creation and maintenance of our trails. Regardless of the breed, we are indebted to the special beasts that have helped shape the rural, natural beauty and culture of our Town.

Marti Tedesco

The Sequoias

The Sequoias opened the new Lodge - the long building overlooking the Windy Hill parking lot, on September 14. It is the Ritz of assisted living, with large single rooms looking towards the hills, beautiful dining rooms on both first and second floors with comfortable sitting rooms adjacent. Both floors have large open kitchens. There is a spa room and a beauty parlor, plus a new Clinic with examining rooms. Another room is reserved for family consultations. Residents of the present Lodge were moved into the new building and are delighted with their new surroundings. The old Lodge will now be refurbished to offer care for those who are coping with Alzheimers and other problems of mental health.

A first time Health Fair on September 20, was a great success. Talks were offered on pain management, the value of health screenings, a discussion on theft and fraud, and hints on downsizing. One parlor was reserved for observation of spiritual growth through work in our gardens. There were 16 booths set up in Fountain Court, including Keplers books, Pathways Hospice, Vista center for the visually impaired, the Parkinson's Institute, and Sammons Preston Co. offered examples of their adaptive equipment. To top it all, different types of body work were offered: Feldenkreis, reflexology, and craniosacral therapy. Many residents and guests took advantage of these relaxing therapies.

The Sequoias plans to repeat this event in 2008 since it was received with great enthusiasm. We hope that residents of Portola Valley will join us at next year's Health Fair.

Trish Hooper

Plant Invasion From page 4

can also be used and should be applied in both early and late summer. No matter what method you choose, Mr. Heiple is clear, "Get the plant off your property at the earliest possible sign." Mr. Heiple and his Conservation Committee follow conservation issues and promote programs that enhance our rural environment. He notes that non-native invasive plants harm the environment in several ways. They displace native species, possibly causing extinctions of plants and poisoning wildlife. They can also change the environment by altering soil conditions, water supplies and sedimentation causing fire hazards and changes to rivers, lakes and bays.

If you have questions or concerns about how to clear your property of this invasive weed, contact the following:
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District: (650) 691-1200 or info@openspace.org.
Conservation Committee: conservation@portolavalley.net

Marti Tedesco

Community, Learning and Interaction at Your New Library

From humble beginnings, the Portola Valley Library has been the de facto town community center. Its roots are entwined with independent, voluntary Town governance but it has always enjoyed a big-city mentality and spirit brought to small-town community-building and dreams.

The Friends of Portola Valley Library have recently embarked on a capital campaign to supplement San Mateo County Library funds for outfitting the new library. The Furnishings, Fixtures and Equipment Campaign (FF&E) goal is to raise \$150,000. The Portola Valley Community Fund has fundraised diligently to build the new Town Center but neither the PVPF, nor the Town are responsible for equipping the Library's interior.

The FOPVL is extremely grateful for the rich legacy and support from our members and patrons throughout the years. Your FF&E donation will help us create a future of vibrant community, learning and interaction as well as provide the appropriate accoutrements for the new library. For example, your dollars will help us create a living-room atmosphere, a family area, state-of-the-art public access computers, wireless internet access, a flexible Learning Center and an expanded collection. The new Library is likely to be the highest-use structure on the campus with 60,000 visits per year, and, quoting you, the most important Town Center facility. Therefore, we feel the library deserves and needs FF&E that befit such an important role. Your gift matters greatly!



Bunny Dawson and Jean Lane, the Honorary Chairs for the FOPVL FF&E Campaign

Check out our new website www.fopvl.com for updated fundraising news and library programs. New email address: friendsofpvl-library@gmail.com.

Lenora Ferro and Jane Wilson

Planning Commission Application Deadline Extended

The planning commission is seeking a commissioner to replace Ann Wengert. The term is four years and the meetings are the first and third Wednesdays at 8 p.m. in the Historic Schoolhouse. Please apply by letter to the Town Council by January 11. For more information visit www.portolavalley.net



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