

The Portola Valley Post

Spring 2011

Town Picnic Saturday June 4

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AGAIN for 2011! Bring your iPod touch or iPad and request the music you want to hear! (You'll need Apple's "Remote" application from the iTunes store.)

Join us for the annual Portola Valley Town picnic! Start the day at 9 am with the Zot's to Tots foot and bicycle race from the Alpine Inn to the Portola Valley Town Center, then enjoy fun and games for the whole family!



Please Note: Race starts promptly at 10 am; access to places via Alpine and Portola Roads will be restricted for the duration of the race.

Activities

- Barbecue lunch served by the Boy Scouts
- Cake walk under the trees by the Girl Scouts
- Midway, popcorn, cotton candy, and snow cones by the Cub Scouts
- Frozen yogurt by Corte Madera School Class of ~~2011~~ 2012
- Face painting and crafts by Cultural Care Au Pairs
- Book and CD sale by Friends of the PV Library
- Climbing Wall
- Jumpy Houses
- Dunk Tank

Special Demonstrations

- Martial Arts
- Tennis - The Quickstart Method

Schedule of Activities

- 9 am Register for Zot's to Tot's Race, Alpine Inn, 3915 Alpine Road
- 10 am Race begins, good luck everyone!
- 10:30 am Picnic begins, join the fun!
- 11:30 am Lunch is served (until 1:30)
- 12:30 pm Martial arts demonstration
- 1 pm Introduction of and demonstrations by tennis pro Corinne Mansourian

THE YIN AND THE YANG OF GROWING UP IN THE POV

By William Derwin

I didn't always like growing up in Portola Valley. Though now that I think about it, I'm not sure I realized that I didn't always like growing up in Portola Valley.

Through my elementary and middle school years, the PV lifestyle—what my brother Charlie likes to call “living down in the POV”—was simply the norm. Socializing with friends largely depended on mom's availability to drive me. Dropping by a neighbor's house involved a ten-minute journey, probably past a donkey, a flock of chickens or a llama. When television shows featured suburban neighborhoods, compact worlds of humans and cement, I always assumed they were just amusing illustrations of an urban era of times past. The point is, for better or for worse, the spacious, green, private world of Portola Valley was the only one I knew.

But when I ended up in high school outside of town, I was suddenly exposed to a different setup. My friends from San Carlos spent their weekends biking to every destination: friend's homes, the park, restaurants even the movies! The only places where I could bike necessitated navigating through clumps of thistles, steep uphill grades and narrow trails sometimes shared with horses. For a change of scenery, they could hop on Caltrain and explore the Peninsula. When I was bored at home, my options were limited to weekend ballgames on the middle school field or perhaps digging a large hole on the back slopes of our property. Exposed to this new sense of suburban freedom, I began to resent Portola Valley's seclusion.

It was not until I departed the Bay Area for college that I began to reinterpret my childhood home. Living among the flat fields of corn that define rural Ohio, the voids of my new environment quickly became clear. Don't get me wrong; central Ohio offers plenty of interesting woodlands and ecosystems, albeit between strip malls of Walmarts and Long John Silvers. Driving through the rolling hills between towns, I often found

myself behind an Amish buggy pulled by horses. Charming, sure. But where were the mountains? The oak trees? The foraging families of deer and crafty dusky-footed woodrats? The recycling containers and LEED certified buildings? It turns out the rest of the country, at least the part in the middle, is nothing like Portola Valley.

There are still plenty of things I resent about Portola Valley. Our dependence on cars is less than ideal. Park rangers give too many tickets for off-leash dogs on Windy Hill. The politics can often become completely absurd. But every shortcoming has its own logic. Democracy is a tedious yet exceptional process. Windy Hill's habitats deserve to be protected. And a reliance on cars is the price to pay for living in this undeveloped oasis. Portola Valley can't offer its residents a classic neighborhood feel because it is much more than a simple neighborhood. It's a piece of the natural world tucked into the suburban Peninsula with creeks and trails to be explored. It's a supportive community that encourages kids to ask questions. It's a place where humans and coyotes, houses and wildlands, cars and horses still manage to co-exist. And it is a place I am grateful that I can call home.

William Derwin, a senior at USF studying Environmental Science and Spanish, currently lives in an apartment in San Francisco. He plans to go to law school.



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From The Mayor

We're in pretty good shape, thanks to a series of good decisions we've all made

With all the recent news about how every government body from the federal government down to small school districts are facing unprecedented fiscal challenges, I thought I would devote my Mayor's letter to giving our citizens a little good news. In this small space, I am going to give a State Of The Town summary.

In short, we're in pretty good shape. Thanks to a series of good decisions we've all made, we are not at the brink of a precipice.

First, every four years our citizens have continued our small local Utility Users Tax. These funds have given us a buffer as the State has withheld funds we have been traditionally getting.

Second, we have avoided getting into the long term entitlements and retirement obligations that other government agencies are now saddled with. Our employees are well compensated, but not excessively so. We rank near the frugal bottom in comparative studies, but we are also one of the smallest cities in the county.

Third, we have kept our staff small, substantially smaller than even adjoining similar sized communities. This has been partly made possible by our volunteer ethic and the hundreds of citizen committee hours given advising our

Town government and staff.

Fourth, we have avoided costly litigation. We receive most of our insurance coverage from the Association of Bay Area Governments, and over the years we have been such a good risk, that we have had to pay very little to remain in the pool.

And finally, there is a general sentiment toward minimal government on your volunteer Town Council and committees. It may not always seem that way, but we try to govern with a light hand, protecting the great assets that we have and showing informed leadership where appropriate.

So I believe you can add competent and fiscally secure local government to the list of reasons why this valley is such a great place to live. Your volunteer government appreciates your support every four years keeping our fiscal buffer in place, and contributing your volunteer hours helping our various committees.

And I want to close by deeply thanking our citizens for stepping up when we faced a serious fiscal challenge with our "faulty" Town Center problem a couple of years ago. Look at it now! We have been blessed by a wonderfully effective, safe and sustainable new Town Center facility, and we got it remarkably painlessly, thanks mostly to our leading Town citizens. Thank you.

Earth Day Fair 2011 at Portola Valley Town Center

Let's Talk Energy

Residents learn about the benefits of a home energy upgrade at Earth Day Fair 2011. You can, too, at www.empowerportolavalley.net



Photos: Virginia Bacon

Cultural Arts Committee Offers Events

The Cultural Arts Committee has been busy planning a host of activities for this spring/summer. Our first event will take place at the Town Picnic (Saturday, June 4th) where we will provide the musical entertainment, a safe biking seminar and an "Art in Action" activity. Due to the popularity of last year's concerts we will be launching a concert series this summer. The concerts will be held on Thursday evenings from 6:30-8:30. Further details will be provided soon on the PV forum, Town web site or flyers posted about the Town.

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The objective of the Cultural Arts Committee (CAC) is to arrange cultural events that foster interaction with among the PV community. We aim to introduce and educate folks on the arts as well as provide opportunities for the many local artists to showcase their talents. If you are interested in finding out more about our committee, please attend one our meetings (the 2nd Thursday of the month at 1:00 in the old Historic School House). Questions or suggestions may be forwarded to Deirdre Clark dcdesignz@sbcglobal.net or Steve Marra srmarra@sbcglobal.net.

See Native Sod in Action



Visit the Native Sod demonstration plot at the Town Center, near the soccer field. You can see four types of Native Sod, which requires less maintenance and about 50% less water than conventional sod.

Woodside Fire Protection District Chief Armando Muela Retires

Following more than three decades of service to the public, Woodside Fire Chief Armando Muela has retired, and plans to pursue a number of interests, with more time with family and friends at the top of his list. The Town Council recognized Muela's distinguished career at its April 13th, 2011 meeting, where Vice-Mayor Maryann Derwin presented him with a proclamation honoring him for his service.

Over the course of his career, Chief Muela has seen the role of firefighter evolve to include provision of emergency medical response, and under his leadership, the communities of Portola Valley and Woodside have received exceptional response to their needs in an emergency.



Vice-Mayor Maryann Derwin presents Fire Chief Armando Muela with a proclamation honoring him for his service.

Once a Chief, always a Chief, and Armando will continue to use his valuable experience to assist with emergency preparedness efforts for our area, which will undoubtedly be of great value to the community.

And as Chief Muela moves on, we welcome newly appointed Chief, Dan Ghorso, who has spent twenty years with the Woodside Fire Protection District, and has undoubtedly learned a great deal from his mentor.

The Town extends its best wishes to both Chief Muela and Chief Ghorso!

PV Teen Committee News

By Sharon Driscoll

Dance for Japan. The Teen Committee held a dance in April and donations were collected in support of the Japanese Red Cross to aid victims of the earthquake. Many thanks to Teen Committee members and community volunteers for helping to put on the event – and to the town’s 6-8 graders for coming out in droves to dance and contributing more than \$1,300 for our friends across the Pacific. Way to go PV Teens!

Sharing the Bounty. An initiative launched by the Teen Committee last year will receive an added boost this year with the tremendous support of the PV School District. Corte Madera teacher Treena Joi and the administration of the town’s middle school have kindly agreed to let the Teen Committee manage their garden over the summer holidays so that we can grow food to support our “Sharing the Bounty” project, bringing fresh fruits and vegetables to the needy via Second Harvest in Redwood City. Brad Payton and the PV Garden Club will be lending their expertise. Shifts to work the garden will be posted on the Teen Committee website in May and June.

Bill and Jean Lane Civic Involvement Program.

One of the Teen Committee’s most important missions is to engage local youth in the town. The late Ambassador Bill Lane and his wife Jean have been examples to us all of the importance of civic involvement in our community and the value of democracy at the local level. This program, named in their honor, will provide an opportunity for local high school teens (10-12 grades) to learn about the town’s government, and to experience firsthand the vital work of the Town’s com-

mittees and the importance of citizen input. Our aim is simple: get teens to attend council and committee meetings – to come and listen. That will be the basic requirement, with a more advanced level and a written paper on the student’s observations possible with school oversight. The program will launch in the fall, please look for more details on the website over the summer.

Portola Valley Town Picnic & Teen Movie Night.

Members of the Teen Committee will be on hand at the Town Picnic on June 4th to paint faces... and have fun. That night, we’ll also host a teen movie night. So save the date and plan to come. Popcorn will be for sale, and blankets will be available for rent.

For more information about the Teen Committee, please contact chair Sharon Driscoll at sdriscoll@savoca.com.



Teen Committee members working at the "Dance for Japan." L to R: Katherine Moore (St. Francis HS), Georgia Reid (MA), Katie Putnam (Sacred Heart), and Georgia Savoca (Summit Prep).

A Call for Synergy

By Lenora Ferro

Recently Friends of the PV Library answered a request for help from the East Palo Alto Library. In the spirit of today’s zeitgeist of *regionalism* (updated neighborliness), it was decided to partner a long-established, active Friends’ group, FOPVL, with members of the East Palo Alto Library and some local reps there who are eager to establish their own library’s Friends’ group.

Although our role is strictly advisory, all currently working on the partnership’s goal recognize the benefits of advocacy organized from grass-roots upward and exer-



cised on behalf of a community resource as critical to its residents’ well-being as the free, local, public library. East Palo Alto has a bustling, much-loved library. Now, for the moment, it’s just a matter of moral support from “old” F/friends sharing experience to benefit new F/friends. After all, what is a library if not a living culture of sharing and a place dedicated to the free exchange of ideas?

Behind the Scenes with Portola Valley Filmmakers

By Marti Tedesco

Northern California knows how to make wine, computers and software. We know finance and real estate, but the art of making movies belongs to our neighbors in the south. Why then, does little Portola Valley currently boast five film makers among its residents? Allen Neuharth, the founder of the USA Today newspaper once said, "I quit being afraid when my first venture failed and the sky didn't fall down." This same entrepreneurial spirit is alive in Portola Valley and provides a backdrop against which creative residents take fate into their own hands and make a movie.

If you want something done, some say give it to a busy person. This describes Joann Loulan, who is as colorful in person as her movie poster. A wife, mother, psychotherapist, two time breast cancer survivor and activist, Joann wrote and produced a film called "Our Feature Presentation" in 2006. Her son Gardiner, then 25, directed the film. While Gardiner was interested in film from an early age, Joann took a script writing class at Stanford to crystallize a story idea she had. The result was a film written, directed and produced almost entirely by local talent. While the film's distribution was limited, many of the young producers went on to larger careers in film and video production. As a student at Ormondale, Gardiner escaped to the woods with his friends to make movies. Joann credits the freedom to explore and the access to so many bright, local people as playing an important role in his developing talents. Inspired by this same freedom and confidence, Joann found a book on how to make a movie and proceeded to have a wild and wonderful time producing "Our Feature Presentation" with her son. Today, Gardiner is working for the internet start-up, Tout in San Francisco which specializes in viral spot video distribution.

Like Loulan, Jim Kohlberg is a man of many talents. His recent film, "The Music Never Stopped" is his fourth and debuted at the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year. By day, Kohlberg is the Chairman of a private equity management firm in Portola Valley. A

father and aspiring writer, his primary attraction is storytelling. The story is what drew him to this film, which opened nationwide last March. With a soundtrack of rock music from the late 1960s and 1970s, the story centers on a father and son and the healing power of music. The soundtrack is heavy on the Grateful Dead, another distinctly Northern California product. Living in Portola Valley has provided Jim with the atmosphere he prefers for creative work, and coming home after filming was, "like getting off the plane from frozen tundra into warm heaven". Combining great story telling, family, music and working with talented people, it is easy to see the similarities between making a movie like this and living in Portola Valley where all of these things feel at home together.



Taking a slightly different tack is Stephen Marra and his co-producers Liz Stangle and Ginger Pistilli. Together this trio of creative, busy parents are writing the script for a feature length film they hope to complete by the end of 2011. Currently called "Big Foot in Portola Valley", the fictional film is inspired by their lives and the colorful characters they encounter here each day. The intersection of people and the natural environment in Portola Valley was

the catalyst behind their documentary spoof, with inspiration drawn from a PV Forum discussion about wildlife. All three producers have children in local schools and realize what a privileged enclave Portola Valley can be. By choosing a "mockumentary" format, the end result promises to be a humorous and irreverent look at both themselves and the community in which they live. Using as much free technology as they can, Stephen, Liz and Ginger will be working through the summer to raise money, complete their script and start filming using Portola Valley as the set.

Tennessee Ernie Ford, Shirley Temple Black and John Harkins are just some of the film and TV stars who have called this area home. Whether big star or local film maker, they all share a keen appreciation for life here in Portola Valley whether it be refuge, inspiration or both. These five movie pioneers are proof that if it can happen, it can certainly happen here against the backdrop of Windy Hill.

LIVING WITH MOUNTAIN LIONS

By Derry Kabcenell

We are all lucky to be living in an area as beautiful as Portola Valley. Most of us are here at least partly because we enjoy a close relationship with nature. The hills shape our world; the trees, grasses and wildflowers decorate it; and the wildlife and creeks bring it to life. We often see hawks, vultures, turkeys, rabbits, raccoons, bobcats, coyotes, skunks, deer and many others. Encounters with these animals are part of what makes this place special.

Portola Valley is also a habitat for mountain lions, also called cougars or pumas. Although these animals do not want to pick a fight, under the right circumstances they can be dangerous. This article talks about how mountain lions and people can live together safely.

What's a Mountain Lion?

A mountain lion is a cat, surprisingly like a housecat in many ways, and is light brown in color, with white markings on the chin and chest and dark markings on the face, ears and the tip of the tail. In California, mountain lions typically weigh 100 to 130 pounds, and a male can measure almost seven feet from end to end. A mountain lion can run at 35-45 miles per hour for short distances, can jump more than fifteen feet vertically and up to forty feet horizontally, and can swim and climb trees. Although data is sketchy, mountain lions probably live about twelve years in the wild.

The preferred food of mountain lions is deer, and they live wherever deer are found. Although half of California is mountain lion territory, it's estimated that there are only four to six thousand of them in the state. We're lucky to have them in our area! Mountain lions play a role in the prevention of deer overpopulation, which is important to the health of the California landscape. When deer are not readily available, mountain lions will eat other animals, including many found in Portola Valley.

Mountain lions are quiet, solitary and elusive. A mountain lion may have a range of up to 100 square miles, which it may occupy with only a handful of other mountain lions. They hunt at dusk, dawn and night. If you are like most, you've never seen one in person, but if you hike in this area you've probably been near one without knowing it.

In California, mountain lions are "Specially Protected Mammals". Except in well-defined cases of threats to

human safety or attacks on livestock, they cannot be hunted.

The Challenge

We have all chosen to live in an area that strives to remain rural, and wildlife is an essential part of the setting. Mountain lions have lived here for a long time and do not have maps to tell them which locations they should avoid. As we expand into their habitat, it's inevitable that they will sometimes be seen in populated areas, especially if deer are present. In most cases, this doesn't cause a problem, because mountain lions avoid humans – especially when we're standing up, we don't look very much like prey to them. But sometimes encounters can become dangerous.

First, as mentioned above, mountain lions will eat animals other than deer if they have to. Pets and livestock *do* look like prey, and so are at risk if they are available to a hungry mountain lion.

Second, attacks on people have occurred on rare occasions. But as of 2007 the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) had recorded only sixteen such attacks, six of them fatal, *in the last 120 years*. Being struck by lightning is much more likely! Virtually all of the fatalities were in remote areas, and in several of the cases the animals were confirmed to have rabies, influencing their behavior.

Third, even benign encounters are also dangerous for the mountain lions. An animal that is a threat to people, appears to be a threat, or is judged to have the potential to become a threat, is usually killed, even though in most cases no attack has occurred or is likely to.

How Are Reports Handled?

In our area, most people report a mountain lion sighting to the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office, the recipient of our 911 calls. A deputy is dispatched to the location of the sighting, and if the animal is not found or is obviously not a threat to people, the only action taken is to publish the sighting using SMCAAlert (<http://www.smcalert.info/>) so that nearby residents are made aware. A report is also provided to the CDFG, as required by state law.

If an actual attack has occurred or is occurring, the deputy (or anyone) may take whatever emergency action is required in self-defense or to protect others. In any case, a CDFG field investigator is brought in to determine whether the mountain lion is an "imminent threat

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to public safety". This means that there is "a likelihood of human injury based on the totality of circumstances", which could include the animal's behavior and its proximity to schools, playgrounds and other public gathering places. If it isn't a threat, the reporting individuals may be given information on wildlife behavior.

If a public safety threat does exist, the area is secured and then the mountain lion is located and, usually, killed. This outcome is required by state law, and is considered to be the most humane. People often wonder why mountain lions are not captured and relocated. That does happen sometimes, but the nature of the tranquilizer dart makes a successful shot difficult, and it can take up to fifteen minutes for the medication to work. During this time the animal may be very unpredictable and dangerous. In any event, state law does not permit relocation of what the CDFG calls "public safety lions" to another location; it's likely to be within the range of other mountain lions, resulting in lethal encounters or return of the animal to its original range.

What Can We Do?

Fortunately, the situation does not usually reach the point where a killing is required. In 2008, for example, the CDFG had to kill three mountain lions out of a total of 381 incidents. Given the low population, though, the loss of even one lion is something we should try to prevent.

Our goal should be to live together in nature without injury to people, pets, livestock or the native wildlife. As described above, an encounter can easily progress to a bad outcome for someone, so the best course is to *avoid* an encounter that can lead to trouble, and then to not overreact to a non-threatening encounter. Here are some suggestions:

Avoiding encounters when you are out walking, jogging, hiking or biking:

- **Be aware of what is going on around you**, including behind you. Don't wear soundproof headphones; they eliminate one of your important senses.
- **Be extra cautious when hiking, biking or jogging alone.** Remember that even deer are more vulnerable when not with the herd.
- **Avoid being out** when mountain lions are most active – at dawn, dusk or night.
- **Make noise when hiking.**
- **Don't crouch down;** if you need to tie your shoelaces, stay standing.
- **Keep a close watch on small children**, and keep pets on a leash.

Avoiding encounters when you are at home:

- **Don't feed deer.** It's illegal in California, and if deer are attracted, mountain lions will be as well. Feeding wildlife is rarely beneficial to the wildlife.
- **Don't leave pet food outside;** it might attract animals that are mountain lion prey.
- **Avoid plants that deer like to eat.** CDFG publishes "A Gardener's Guide to Preventing Deer Damage", available at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/hunting/deer/docs/gardenersguide.pdf>; use this in conjunction with the Native Plant List at the Town's website.
- **Trim brush**, especially dense brush, to remove places where mountain lions can lie in wait.
- **Don't leave small children and pets outside unattended.**
- **Don't allow pets outside** when mountain lions are active: dawn, dusk, and night.
- **Provide sturdy, covered shelters** for vulnerable livestock.

If you do encounter a mountain lion:

- **Don't approach a mountain lion.** Most will avoid a confrontation and run away if given a chance.
- **Don't run from a mountain lion.** This may stimulate an instinct to chase. Stand up, face the animal, make eye contact, and pick up small children without turning away or bending over.
- **Don't crouch down.** It makes you look like a four-legged prey animal.
 - **Look larger.** Raise your arms, wave them slowly, open your jacket, throw stones and branches, and speak firmly in a loud voice.
- **If you are attacked, fight back.** Stay standing, and get up if you are knocked over. Rocks, sticks, clothing, garden tools and bare hands have been used in successful defenses to mountain lion attacks.
- **Call 911 immediately** if there is an attack on or a threat to a person.

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You may also call 911 to report sightings that are not threatening, particularly in residential areas, but *please make clear* to the dispatcher that the report is for information only and you do not believe a threat to safety exists. Remember that once an encounter occurs and is reported, the chances of the animal being killed rise, and that a non-threatening mountain lion can *become* a threat if it feels cornered. Once that happens, its fate is sealed. You should not hesitate to report true threats, but use your judgment.

With care, we can preserve the qualities that make Portola Valley such a great place in which to live.

Resources

The Town's Conservation Committee works to safeguard many of the environmental attributes of the Town, such as trees, creeks, wildlife and night skies. You can find out more about the Committee, and contact its members, through the Town website.

Contact the Conservation Committee if your neighborhood may be interested in a more formal program to reduce the chances of undesirable wildlife encounters.

Another resource is the Little Blue Society, <http://www.littlebluesociety.org/>, a non-profit organization that devises interventions to mediate and resolve human-animal conflicts.

The CDFG's "Keep Me Wild" program helps people live with wildlife. Specific mountain lion information is at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/keepmewild/lion.html>.

The Felidae Conservation Fund's mission is to advance conservation of species in the Felidae family, which includes mountain lions and house cats, and has good reference material at <http://felidaefund.org/education/>.

Get more information about law enforcement response to wildlife encounters, in excruciating detail, at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/news/issues/publicsafety.html>.

More detailed statistical information about mountain lion attacks is at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/news/issues/lion/attacks.html>

Doggies and Leashes and Baggies, Oh My!

By Janet McDougall

One of the treasured aspects of living in Portola Valley is residents' ability to virtually walk outside their door and enjoy the extensive trail system that has been carefully developed and maintained over the years.



Recently Town staff has received a number of complaints from residents that many dog owners using the Town's trails do not have their animals on leash while on the trails. This can present problems, not only for other pedestrians and dogs, but also equestrians and in some cases bicycle riders, who all

share the trail system.

Portola Valley does have a leash law, so please be sure to have your dog leashed when using the trails that allow dogs, and refrain from using trails that are marked with signage indicating dogs are not allowed. Also, please be courteous to other trail users by picking up pet waste and disposing of it in your trash. Horse manure, often found on the trails, does biodegrade on its own; unfortunately, dog waste does not.

For more information about the Town's trail system, including maps and information designating permitted uses, please go to the Town's website under the "For Residents" section, or go to the link below:

<http://www.portolavalley.net/index.aspx?page=71>

The sun is finally out and the trails are beckoning – please get out there and enjoy them!

PV School Reunion

By Nancy Lund

Who would guess that a town that is 45 years old would be home to a school district that began 150 years ago? Although it is surprising, in April 1861—the date the Civil War began and when the Pony Express was still in operation—the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors authorized the creation of the Searsville School District. The students at that little school moved to a new one on Portola Road in 1894 after the Searsville Dam flooded the area around the school. In 1909, enrollment was large enough that a second school-house was built, the one that still stands, and the district's name was changed to Portola.

With the rapidly expanding population after World War II, the 1894 school was taken down, and the new Portola Valley School rose on its site during the first years of the 1950s. It wasn't until 1955 that the current name Portola Valley School District came into being.

Thus, 2011 is the time for the young town to celebrate the sesquicentennial of its school district. A committee is already making plans for the weekend of October 1-2. It seems early, but for the news to spread to members of the district's family that have scattered far and wide, it takes time. To date, plans are underway for open houses at the schools in the late morning or early afternoon of October 2, followed by a picnic on the

Town Center's fields. Under discussion are possible activities for the evening of October 1.

There are several ways for members of the PVSD family to become involved in the celebration. First, reserve the dates. Alert people you know outside the boundaries of the PV Forum to sign up for Yahoo group PVSD150 for news. The committee is looking for photos through the years, 2 and 3 generation families who've attended the schools, and also for former members of the Corte Madera band for a potential "jam session" at the picnic. A souvenir book is being created, including a time line and vignettes of important events in the district's history. The plan is to also include a list of those volunteers who have been recognized for exceptional service. A complete list from 1992 to 2011 exists. Many gaps exist in years before 1992. If you know of people who have been so recognized, please report their names.

The most special part of this commemorative book will be the memories of people who have passed through the doors. Students, parents, staff and school board members (past and present) are encouraged to contribute memories of their days in the schools, from a paragraph to a page in length. It is these memories that will make the book wonderful.

Send all information and any questions or comments to nlund@yahoo.com.

Get Ready for Summer and Go Native!

Did you know that the Town Center has over **75 native plants!** Thanks to Town Staff and local volunteers and native plant experts, Paul Heiple and Alex Von Feldt, the plants are labeled with their common name and botanical name. Download the list of plants including their location using this link <http://www.portolavalley.net/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=4280> or pick up a copy at Town Hall. The Town has also collaborated with California Water Services, Earth Saver's Club for Kids and the Holland/Yates Family to create a **Native Sod** demonstration plot at the Town Center. Native Sod requires less maintenance and about 50% less water than conventional sod. The demonstration plot is located near the soccer field and includes four types of Native Sod. Check it out the next time you're at the Town Center or contact Brandi de Garmeaux, Sustainability and Resource Efficiency Coordinator for more information bdegar-meaux@portolavalley.net or 650-851-1700 ext. 222. Learn more about native plants and landscaping in Portola Valley at <http://www.portolavalley.net/index.aspx?page=139>.

In the California Water District – Bear Gulch (which includes Portola Valley) **landscaping accounts for up to 62% of total water use** in a typical household? One strategy to reduce your outdoor water use is to convert your conventional lawn to native sod and use native plants in your garden.*

*Source:

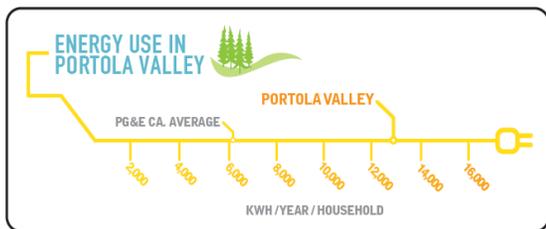
<http://www.recycleworks.org/co2/USTFwaterenergyreport.pdf>

The Launch of Portola Valley's Energy Upgrade Program - And What It Has To Do With You

By Brandi de Garmeaux, Sustainability & Resource Efficiency Coordinator, Town of Portola Valley

Hello again, Portola Valley! I want to tell you about the launch of an exciting new program – Energy Upgrade Portola Valley! What is Energy Upgrade Portola Valley? Read on and find out how it came about and what it has to do with you!

In the Fall of 2009, Portola Valley joined four other towns and the environmental non-profit, Acterra, to apply for a grant from the California Energy Commission to offer an online home energy assessment program. This program was started by Los Altos Hills resident and entrepreneur, Steve Schmidt, after discovering that Los Altos Hills, Atherton, Monte Sereno, Portola Valley and Woodside make-up 5 of the top 7 cities with the highest energy use in the 225 cities served by PG&E. Per household, these cities use **two to three times** the statewide average. After many months of negotiating with the Energy Commission to bring this program to you, **Acterra High Energy Homes** is ready to go! The Acterra High Energy Homes online assessment is a great first step for high energy using homes to identify the low-hanging fruit that will easily reduce your energy use – without changing your lifestyle or comfort.

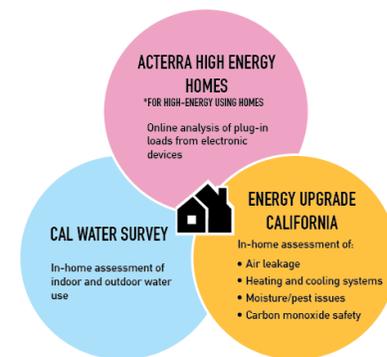


At the same time the Town was working with Acterra and the Energy Commission to implement the Acterra High Energy Homes program, we were also busy helping the County of San Mateo on a statewide effort – **Energy Upgrade California**. The Energy Upgrade California program includes an in-home energy assessment and upgrade that looks at your house as a whole system to improve its comfort, health and safety. Environmental and energy saving benefits are a bonus! The Town has gone one step further to partner with local home performance contractors who are Energy Upgrade California-qualified to offer a specific set of services that target energy hogs often found in Portola Valley homes (e.g. continuous hot water recirculation pumps). Energy Upgrade California also includes rebates and competitive financing options.

Wait, you say, what about water? In addition to the Acterra High Energy Homes and Energy Upgrade California programs, the Town has partnered with California Water Services to offer a **Residential Water Use Survey** to Cal Water customers in Portola Valley. The Water Use Survey will identify water waste both indoors and out, as well as provide you with information about how to read your meter, request water-efficient plumbing fixtures and take advantage of available rebates.

Together, these three programs address “vampire” or “plug-load” waste from appliances and electronics, energy waste in your home’s building systems, and indoor and outdoor water waste. The idea is to make your home as comfortable, healthy, safe and efficient as possible.

What does this have to do with you? The ultimate goal of Energy Upgrade Portola Valley is to reduce town-



wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2,058 tons in the next year, **but we can't do it without you!** To meet this challenge, we need 150 residents to complete the Acterra High Energy Homes program and at least 90 residents to complete a home energy upgrade through the Energy Upgrade California program. And we're here to help! The Town has developed seamless partnerships with Acterra, CalWater and local home performance contractors to reduce paralysis by analysis, provide information about all three programs in one place, and empower you to take action with issues in your home that have probably been bothering you for years. If you have any questions while you are going through the program, I am, along with the rest of the Planning Department, here to assist you. You can think of us as your “energy concierge.”

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How do you get involved? See our step-by-step guide as well as up-to-date information about each individual program at www.empowerportolavalley.com. For any questions, feel free to contact me at 650.851.1700 ext. 222 or bdegarmeaux@portolavalley.net

So near – yet so far

By Sheldon Breiner

Did *fear of shear trump shirking from shaking* in our new Town Center ?

During the run-up to the decision to construct the new Town Center, many in the Town couldn't believe that it was worth \$20 million to effectively move the old one a mere 100 yards away! Well, that's almost what we did—I say, almost. The important operative words here would be: *to be built* and *not on*, the San Andreas fault.

Earthquakes originating from motion along faults can damage buildings in several ways: shaking due to seismic waves; shear if the fault is under a structure; landslides on alluvial slopes; distortion from liquefaction if the structure is underlain by water-saturated unconsolidated sediments; or demolition from the impact of water in a tsunami. Any of these would have been enough to cause serious damage and possibly injure those inside.

Geologic studies had shown no evidence of liquefaction nor landslide at the then proposed level site and the coastal areas of the Town were not expected to experience a tsunami. For the Town Center site, therefore, we had to focus on shear and shaking.

Shear damage means breaking or tearing apart of a structure. The old Town Center was built smack-dab over the now-known active trace of the San Andreas fault . In a major quake when --not if-- the ground surface ruptures, so too, will the building. Contrary to some local rumors, no man-made structure or plants will hold the earth together. The nature of the historic faulting under the old Town Center was even more complicated as it tended to shear across a wide zone in what is called, *en echelon* faulting. However, it is possible to design and construct a building to withstand, to

some extent, underlying shear, but this can only be done from scratch and such structures are exceedingly expensive to build. Following considerable geologic studies, we determined exactly where on Town-owned property the active faults were located and where they were not located, so it was indeed possible to relocate the structure(s) nearby and know that it will not fail—at least not due to shear damage.

In a seismically active area such as Portola Valley the greatest threat to structures not located directly over a fault is the shaking that accompanies large earthquakes. Major earthquakes generate damaging seismic waves that affect structures at distances up to 100 miles or more. To understand the effects of say, a magnitude 7 earthquake it may be helpful to consider such a quake to be many magnitude 5 earthquakes all occurring simultaneously along 20, 30, maybe 100 miles or more of the fault. Structural damage due to seismic shaking on a given structure is not caused solely by its proximity to the nearby fault, but rather the sum of all the shaking originating up and down the fault or nearby fault including across the Bay and by the nature of the subsurface geological conditions. A new building constructed under current building codes (not those of the 1950s) can be designed to better withstand the effects of seismically-induced shaking.

By re-establishing buildings away from the known fault and with good geological underpinnings and incorporating modern structural design, we have better insured the safety of the Town Center and its occupants, particularly those that are required, by employment, to be inside.

So, thanks to the chance location of the old PV School/Town Center, we also now have a Town facility much more useful--and safer--for the current needs of the citizens of the modern Portola Valley .

Fall Elections

Two Town Council seats expire, with terms ending for Steve Toben and Ann Wengert.

Residents Interested in running for election may request information and nomination papers at Town Hall. The candidate filing period will be July 18 through August 12, 2011 unless an incumbent does not file for re-election, in which case the deadline will automatically be extended until 5:00 p.m. on August 17, 2011. There is no fee for filing.