



Dedicated to a continuing rural atmosphere

From The Chair

By Mid Hoppenrath

Happy Holidays to all residents in the valley. I hope you'll attend our holiday party this December 7th at 7:30 PM at the EF/HG Fire Station. This year, the Town Council Board of Directors (TCBD) has a special present for everyone in our community! We'll be giving away our very first community calendar, featuring beautiful full color photos of our valley and containing helpful information about rural living. It's marked with all the important dates so you'll have no excuse for missing the TC meetings in 2006! The holiday party will be a dessert potluck, so bring a sweet goodie to share and meet your neighbors.

We'll also be distributing a survey questionnaire to record our area's economic characteristics and opinions. This'll be the first year we'll include Harmony Grove so we should have a good idea of the demographics of the entire community. Please take the time to read through the questions and return the survey; you do not have to identify yourself. Your TCBD can use this information to better characterize our communities, create our board policies, and improve our ability to keep the area rural.

We're looking for volunteers for our TCBD so give some thought to nominating a friend, neighbor, or yourself. It's a great opportunity to join our team and contribute much needed and appreciated public service. Lastly, this is the time of year to nominate special individuals for community service awards. We will be presenting these awards in January.

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**Town Council Meeting – Wednesday, December 7th @7:30PM
At The Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Fire Station**

Topics: HOLIDAY PARTY, DESSERT POTLUCK, GIFT FOR YOU!

Holiday Party

By Evelyn Alemanni

Our December town council meeting will feature the ever-popular dessert potluck. So bring your favorite holiday treat to share and bring your neighbors. Everyone's welcome, including the kids.

This year the town council has a very special gift for everyone who attends. It's a full color, full size community calendar with photos of our beautiful rural landscape. The theme is "Protecting our Rural Environment" (see more details elsewhere in this newsletter). Be sure to come and receive your gift.

Community Survey

By Jan Denny

The Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Town Council is sponsoring an update to our community survey and circulating a petition to downgrade the public roads that cut through our community: Elfin Forest Road and Harmony Grove Road. Both roads are currently zoned for future expansion beyond their current number of lanes. The survey form and petition will be distributed to every property owner within the boundaries of the Town Council. Surveys and petitions will be distributed at the annual holiday party at 7PM on Wednesday, December 7th, 2005 at the fire station. If you cannot join us at the annual holiday party, look for the survey and petition in your mail box by mid December. Deadlines are:

- Petitions must be signed and returned to the Town Council by December 31st, 2005. Once received, they will be collated and presented to the county.
- Surveys are anonymous and must be returned to the Town Council by January 14th, 2006. Results will be tallied then used by the Town Council board to accurately represent the community when the board negotiates with developers and county organizations on behalf of our community members.

Thanks for your participation in these two important efforts. Make your voices heard!

Just Moved Here?

If you just moved here, contact Karen Gardner 760-744-9500 to get your free six month subscription to the newsletter and discounts on town council merchandise.

Community Service Awards

By Evelyn Alemanni

So many people in our valley do so much. At the January 4th town council meeting we want to thank them and acknowledge their efforts. Here's your chance to nominate your friends and neighbors for their contributions to a maintaining a continuing rural environment. There's no limit to how many people you can nominate, but town council board members are not eligible. Natalie Chaffer has again graciously volunteered to coordinate the awards, so please send nominations to her at natalie@chaffer.us or call her at 760-744-7233. Please be sure to tell her the name of the person, why they are being nominated, and their phone number.

Newest TC Board Member

By Gordon Fines

We first became aware of Harmony Grove and Elfin Forest while looking for a horse ranch several years ago. We liked the area and focused our efforts on finding a suitable property in this special place. We've spent the last three years renovating our ranch on Country Club Drive, and it's our intent to maintain a rural and comfortable setting for horse-oriented people.

After my father retired in the 1970s, my parents lived in the Escondido area and, through them, I saw many of the changes which have taken place over this time period. Obviously, changes are coming to the valley and hopefully we can have a positive influence as they unfold so that we can maintain the lifestyle we have all chosen. For most of my business career I've been involved in equity portfolio management of mutual funds and pension plans.

Calendar For December

Date	Time	Event
Weds 12/7	7:30 PM	Town Council Meeting
Tues 12/6, 12/20	7 PM	Fire Training@Firehouse
Weds 12/14	7 PM	Fire Auxiliary @MaryGarman's House
Mon 12/12	7 PM	Fire Board@Firehouse
Sat 12/24	8 AM	Fire Training@Firehouse
Sat 12/3, 12/17	10 AM	Bookmobile@Firehouse
Every Thurs	6:30 PM	Yoga@Firehouse

Town Council Board Elections

By Evelyn Alemanni

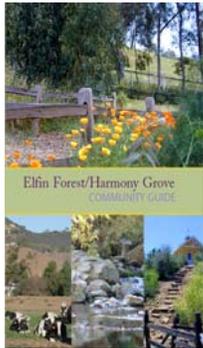
It's your turn to serve! The town council will have several board vacancies in the upcoming election. Nominations for the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Town Council Board will be taken at the town council meeting on January 7th. The Town Council Board consists of nine members who work on a variety of community projects.

The time commitment is two meetings each month, help with the 4th of July parade and picnic, and to lead at least one or two special projects (you don't have to do it yourself!) Terms are for two years.

Serving on the board is a great way to meet lots of your neighbors, understand what's going on in the community and make a difference. If you have any questions, please contact any of the current board members.

Community Guides Available

By Evelyn Alemanni



Our new community guide is available at all town council meetings. This beautiful, keepsake edition has nearly 200 color photos showing our community's past and present. It makes wonderful gifts and an indispensable marketing tool for realtors. It provides resources for rural living, a history of our community, and much, much more. The price is \$25 or five for \$100.

Be Fire Wise And Fire Safe

Just a reminder, as the weather turns cooler **DO NOT STACK FIREWOOD NEXT TO YOUR HOUSE!**

Keep firewood at least 100 feet from your house. Besides presenting a fire hazard, it can also attract termites. Stay safe.

Town Council Website

The town council's website is continually updated. Check it out at: efhgtc.org. Note: the town council is not affiliated with elfinforest.net and elfinforest.com.

EF/HG Fire Department

Board of Directors Election

By Nona Barker

The Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Fire Department Inc. Board of Directors is requesting nominations for two (2) upcoming vacancies on the Fire Board. In order to create a degree of geographic diversity, citizens living in the eastern end of CSA 107 are encouraged to nominate themselves or others living in area. Citizens with a financial background are also encouraged to nominate themselves. The Board is asking interested citizens to submit a letter of interest in the position not later than 5:00PM on December 12th, 2005. Address letters to:

Elfin Forest / Harmony Grove Fire Department Inc.
Board of Directors
C/O Secretary Dorothy Caldwell
20223 Elfin Forest Road
Elfin Forest, CA 92029

- Directors attend an average of one regular meeting per month and represent the citizens of the service area at large.
- Directors may attend a variety of meetings in San Diego County concerning the Fire Department and CSA 107.
- Active Directors are vital to the success of the fire department.
- There is no compensation for this position.
- To learn more about what the Board does, we encourage you to attend the upcoming meetings.
- Board meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month @ 7:00 PM at the fire station.

Questions about the responsibilities of the director position can be answered by phone or email.

Nona T Barker, Chairwoman	
ecllamas@aol.com	760.471.5559
Frank Twohy, Fire Chief	
ftwohy@tns.net	619.851.2801
Bob Kephart, Vice Chair	
bkephart@ricochet.com	760.471.0689
Dorothy Caldwell, Secretary	
docaldwell@ricochet.com	760.753.9955
Donn Grace, Treasurer	
odonn-grace@cwix.com	760.744.5541
Rob Hill, Director	
wrhmarketing@aol.com	760.744.0505
Byron Macfarlane, Director	
byronbobbie@aol.com	760.744.1235
Stephanie Miglorie, Director	
stephanielawr@yahoo.com	760.420.8802

2006 Community Calendar

By Evelyn Alemanni

ELFIN FOREST/HARMONY GROVE 2006 Community Calendar



Thanks to the EF/HG Town Council, advertising support from your neighbors, and a grant from the Elfin Forest Community Foundation, every family in Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove will receive a gift of a full color community calendar. Calendars will be distributed at the holiday party on December 7th at the fire station.

The theme of "Protecting our Rural Environment" is supported on each month with a beautiful photo. Meeting dates for community groups are included for each month. The last four pages of the calendar include phone numbers for various agencies you might want to call, web links, and information about community groups.

The calendars are keepsake, collectors' items. You can purchase additional calendars to send to family and friends, perhaps to former neighbors. The cost is \$12. Let us know how many you want and we'll have them for you at the holiday party.

Your friends and neighbors donated their time to create the calendar. When you see the following people, be sure to thank them.

Writing, proofing, editing: Evelyn Alemanni, Mid Hoppenrath, Janel McDonald, Patti Newton, Cheri Smith

Advertising sales: Tony DeBellis and Melanie Fallon

Photography: Evelyn Alemanni, Mid Hoppenrath, Jake Jansen, Janet McGurk, Patti Newton, Todd Nordness

Design and Layout: Evelyn Alemanni

Calendar Advertisers:

All.ea

Allegiance Mobile Notary Service

Arrow Printing

Blanca's Flowers

Dubs and Company

Elfin Forest Pony Club

Elfin Valley Nursery

MegaArte Dressage

Miller Chiropractic

New Urban West, Inc.

Plumeria Farms

Sue Hill, Realtor

Sunshine Gardens

Voices Of The Valley DVD

By Patti Newton

If you haven't seen the new DVD, "Voices of the Valley", you may still know what you're missing because people are talking! Harmony Grove resident Bob Ganey, owner of multimedia services company Media One, produced this exquisite documentary of Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove. Funded in part by a grant from the Elfin Forest Community Foundation, all proceeds from sales directly benefit the community.

Ganey's skillful blend of archival materials, still photographs, resident interviews, and beautiful film footage, has given voice to the stories of many. You'll learn about the diverse early occupants of this valley from the San Dieguito Indians' legacy to the rarity of white ceanothus; all current residents of this enchanted valley are encouraged to listen to one another and to honor the spirit of this land. These are vital to shaping our own legacy as we strive to protect the Escondido Creek, preserve our rural heritage and lifestyles, and ensure subsequent generations have access to a sizable piece of it.

This DVD treasure will be available for purchase (\$20) at the town council holiday party, Dec. 7th at 7:30PM and at subsequent town council meetings. You may also contact any town council member or visit our website at www.efhgtc.org to make a purchase using PayPal.

Past chaparral Issues On Web

Past issues of the chaparral are now posted at www.efhgtc.org in downloadable PDF format.

Escondido School Site Update

By Eden Valley Bugle

(Reprinted with permission)

Bad News. Last night, 11/15/05, the Escondido School District trustees directed Terry Jackson of Burnham Real Estate, to expand his search for a comprehensive high school site into the Harmony Grove Valley. They also directed Jackson to open discussions with New Urban West for the possible purchase of 50 of its 468 acres. Trustee Tina Pope was quick to point out that if NUW turned out to be an unwilling seller the district could invoke the right of eminent domain.

The Dorn property has mysteriously resurfaced as the site of choice after being eliminated by a 3 to 2 vote in February 2005. My question would be: "when did this Board publicly vote to place this property back on its priority list and authorize expenditure of monies to prepare a traffic study?" Trustee Charlie Snowden reported that meetings were held in October with officials from the County and City of Escondido to discuss road improvements needed to mitigate traffic concerns. As mentioned, the District even went so far as to commission a traffic study. The study showed that with a \$15 million dollar investment the intersection at Via Rancho and Del Dios could be improved and roads widened from two to four lanes and the level of service would "remain about the same." If you included the construction of a "cloverleaf-type bridge", you would have to add another \$30 million to the tab and, according to the study, the level of service would "be slightly improved." According to Snowden, County and City officials are in full support of moving forward with these road improvements. All they are waiting for is a final decision by the school district to purchase Dorn. While trustees stopped short of making that decision, they told Michael Foote, the Oregon-based developer who owns the property and was in attendance at the meeting, they hoped to have an answer for him at the December meeting.

The trustees continue to be secretive, indecisive and vague, except for Snowden who is adamant that Dorn will be the next comprehensive high school site and for Trustee Jon Petersen who is equally as adamant in his opposition to that site being selected. The bottom line: the Harmony Grove valley, the Escondido Creek, the watershed and good government . . . are all in harm's way from all fronts.

County Position On Dorn Site

By Robert Copper, San Diego County Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

November 18, 2005

Escondido Union High School District
302 North Midway Drive
Escondido, CA 92027

PROPOSED LAND ACQUISITION OF THE DORN/FOOTE SITE FOR A FUTURE ESCONDIDO UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

The County of San Diego has significant concerns related to the District's proposed acquisition of the Dorn/Foote site for construction of a high school to be located at Del Dios Highway and Via Rancho Parkway within the City of Escondido. The site is bordered to the west and south by unincorporated lands that are zoned residential with minimum parcel sizes of one-half acre. The site is located at a very busy intersection that currently operates at a failing level of service. Additional traffic from the school will seriously exacerbate traffic congestion in the area and make provision of safe ingress and egress for students nearly impossible.

The proposed land acquisition site presents serious constraints and problematic issues for location of a new school. For example, access to the site is very steep as the site contains canyons. Based on the topography of this site, it is our understanding the school would fill in the canyons to provide for a flat building site. This would impact significant sensitive biological resources and natural features. Clearly, a school at another location could offer improved site conditions, avoiding these serious impacts.

Development of a future high school at this location would dramatically increase traffic volumes on a heavily congested corridor and intersection. The traffic impacts would be significant. Mitigation of the traffic impacts would be difficult, very expensive and may not fully mitigate the impact. Let me be clear, it will be the responsibility of the School District, not the County of San Diego, to provide needed traffic mitigation to ensure adequate and safe access to and from the school site as well as to comply with CEQA. These improvements could be in the millions of dollars to design and construct.

(Continued next page)

(County Position On Dorn Site continued)

The County would also like to respond to the District's untrue assertions that the County supports this project. To date there has been virtually no coordination between the Escondido Union High School District and the County regarding traffic concerns. During the one meeting County staff recently attended they were not given an opportunity to review the traffic study that was supposedly commissioned by the School District, nor have we ever indicated support for the acquisition of the Dorn/Foote site for a new high school. Reports that the County has "signed on" on this proposed high school location are completely false.

The County of San Diego encourages the School District to reconsider acquisition of the Dorn/Foote property for a new high school. As indicated above we have serious concerns about the biological, traffic and community impacts a school in this location would create. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Chandra Wallar, Assistant Director of Public Works, at (858) 694-2125.

{Editor's Note: This is a reprint of a November 18th, 2005 letter from SD County Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Robert R. Copper to the Escondido Union High School District}

Poinsettias

By Evelyn Alemanni



Around the holidays poinsettias become the ubiquitous house plant.

Here's how to care for your poinsettias to make them last through the holidays and beyond.

- Place your plant in indirect sunlight for at least six hours per day. If direct sun can't be avoided, diffuse the light with a shade or sheer curtain.
- Provide room temperatures between 68 - 70° F. Generally speaking, if you are comfortable so is your poinsettia.
- Water your plant when the soil feels dry.
- Use a large, roomy shopping bag to protect your plant when transporting it.

- Fertilize your plant **AFTER THE BLOOMING SEASON** with a balanced, all-purpose fertilizer.
- **DON'T** place plants near cold drafts or excessive heat. Avoid placing plants near appliances, fireplaces or ventilating ducts.
- **DON'T** expose plants to temperatures below 50° Fahrenheit. Poinsettias are sensitive to cold.
- **DON'T** over water your plant or allow it to sit in standing water. Always remove a plant from any decorative container before watering and allow the water to drain completely.
- **DON'T** expose your plant to chilling winds when transporting it.
- **DON'T** fertilize your plant when it is in bloom.

Poinsettias are safe! The widespread belief that poinsettias are poisonous is a misconception. There's ample scientific evidence demonstrating the poinsettia's safety. Studies conducted by Ohio State University in cooperation with the Society of American Florists concluded that no toxicity was evident at experimental ingestion levels far exceeding those likely to occur in a home environment. In fact, the POISINDEX Information Service, the primary information resource used by most poison control centers, states that a 50-pound child would have to ingest over 500 poinsettia bracts to surpass experimental doses. Yet even at this high level, no toxicity was demonstrated. However, they may be hazardous to pets, so keep them where pets won't be likely to chew on the leaves.

As with all ornamental plants, poinsettias are not intended for human or animal consumption, and certain individuals may experience an allergic reaction to poinsettias. However, the poinsettia has been demonstrated to be a safe plant. In fact, in 1992, the poinsettia was included on the list of houseplants most helpful in removing pollutants from indoor air. So, not only is the poinsettia a safe and beautiful addition to your holiday decor, it can even help keep your indoor air clean!

chaparral By Email

If you're not already receiving a full color, PDF format copy of the *chaparral* by email send an email note to alemanni@allea.com to be added to the list. The PDF version is free to regular "hardcopy" subscribers and only \$10.00/year to receive the PDF version only.

Minutes Of Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Town Council Meeting

By Patti Newton

Date: November 2nd, 2005

Call to Order: 7:30 PM.

Members Present: Bill Wilgenburg, Patti Newton, Bob McGurk, Jan Denny, Gordon Fines, Evelyn Alemanni, Mid Hoppenrath, Eric Anderson

Board Updates: Mid Hoppenrath stated that **Gordon Fines** will be filling in for town council board member, **Joe Benson**, who had to resign because of time constraints. Gordon is from Harmony Grove as is Joe. The town council wrote a letter to the city of Escondido regarding the issues relating to sewer and the New Urban West project in Harmony Grove. The letter stated the position that the town council opposed any hookup to sewer unless the city could provide bulletproof evidence it would not allow others to tap into it otherwise the risk of increasing density in the valley is too great.

Evelyn Alemanni: there will be no garden festival next year because no one has volunteered to open their garden. Production of the community calendar is coming along well. Today is the deadline for input. The calendar will be made available free of charge to all residents in December.

Jan Denny: most people have picked up and paid for the Barricade kits they ordered. The community survey is being re-worked and will probably be mailed with the community calendar next month.

Treasurer **Bob McGurk:** reported income for October was \$795.50 which was generated mostly from bulb sales and from newsletter adverts and subscriptions. There were expenses in the amount of \$1837, mostly for the newsletter and AIB expenses.

Item #1: Tim Collie, Senior Water Service Worker, Recycled Water Specialist, from the Rincon Del Diablo Water District came to discuss refurbishing activities on the twin water tanks in Harmony Grove. They are recoating water tanks for structural integrity – touch up on inside and outside re-painted. The paint that is being removed is not lead-based paint and the sandblasting is safe for the community. They will strictly limit weekend work on the project. The second tank will be done after completion of the first. The second tank will not require sandblasting so the job will be quieter. The district hopes to be finished

in three months. Please feel free to contact Tim if you have any questions; phone is most efficient way, or you can e-mail Tim at operations@rinconwater.org.

Item #2: Harry Ehrlich, OMWD; **Jack White**, OMWD environmental subcontractor, gave the update regarding the ammonia feed injection facility. It will include a 900 sq. ft. building on a concrete slab; 26 ft. tall, rectangular; will look quasi-residential. The site is near the intersection of Harmony Grove Road and Via Ambiente; it is located approximately one mile southeast of this intersection. Coast Live Oaks and other landscaping will be planted to soften the site. The Negative Declaration (available on OMWD's website) is currently circulating – Nov. 29th deadline for public comments. Design will continue and be complete in February. The ports and future pipe connections are already installed and in place. This site is already disturbed. Deliveries – one or two trucks per month. Dry, granular ammonia will be poured into a hopper, injected into the tank and then released into the pipeline. Two developers will offer input on the design and color of the building. Community input is welcomed and encouraged. There is a very low risk of health and environmental disaster, especially since the ammonia is granular and will be managed in relatively small quantities in a closed system. OMWD is talking with the fire department to develop safety responses in the event of an emergency. Feel free to contact Harry at OMWD if you have any questions.

Item #3: Earthquake preparedness. Al Cabacungan, President of Be Ready Disaster Preparedness, Inc. You can learn more by visiting their website at www.bereadyinc.com. Water supplies are vulnerable to terrorist attacks. L.A. would be first in line for water in the event of an emergency because San Diego is at the end of the line. Be prepared to be on your own for the first 72 hours; water, food, batteries, radios, first aid kits. Ideally, your 72-hour kit should include a solar-powered radio and flashlight. Some radios have a hand crank to power up if no sun is available. These can give you about one hour of air time to get emergency information. You should always have provisions in your vehicle as well; you never know when you may be stuck for hours on the road. Most people don't realize that SBC turns the incoming phone lines off in the event of a disaster to prevent overload.

(Continued next page)

(Minutes EF/HG Town Council continued)

Outgoing lines (going outside the immediate area) would remain open, so your family should have an emergency contact in a distant city or state that could be notified of the status of local relatives. Program your cell phone to ICE (In Case of Emergency) to spouse, child, and relative. Water purification can be accomplished by using a special purifying bottle. It purifies the water to a greater degree than your tap water. These systems filter out many things including bacteria, viruses, and anthrax. Foods to avoid using in your disaster preparation kit are salty foods like crackers, cheese, and peanut butter to prevent excessive thirst. Ideally, you should be prepared for one week, not just 72 hours. MREs (meals ready to eat) are not generally available to the public. Figure one gallon per person per day; however, the reality is five gallons is better because it includes water needed for personal sanitation.

The main problem is that most people tend to not heed warnings for proper preparedness. Even our cities are not adequately prepared; for example, the zoo, Seaworld, etc., are not at all prepared at this time to effectively manage visitors and animals in the event of a disaster. This area has daily earthquakes which are of relatively low score on the Richter scale, but are indicators we are not immune to the possibility of a devastating earthquake. Be prepared to evacuate when ordered to do so. Don't assume you can ride it out. Kits should include water, food, communication, radio, first aid, candles, matches, batteries, money (\$100 in small bills and roll of quarters). Cell phones will also be turned off by the phone companies (public phones are your best bet).

What happens if you are prepared and your neighbor is not? What do you do? Many people, especially if unprepared, will not share and will protect what they do have by using firearms. The community approach is the best; one home may be identified as a hospital, one as a school, one as communication center, etc. Each quadrant should operate as a community and pool its resources. Ham radio operators are golden resources in emergencies. What roads do you have to evacuate? If you cannot get out, who would you depend on? Who is a nurse, or doctor? Who has fuel? Who has horses for transportation? Can our kids leave their schools? Thinking as a community is essential. The EF/HG Fire Department is planning a community emergency response team (CERT). Don't assume it won't happen to you. Have a plan; don't

wait for a disaster to make a plan (that's too late). Properly stored water is good for one year. Do not store plastic container on cement; put it on a pallet or board. Keep out of light; don't use container from a water company because it will grow things in a short period of time. Pool water can be purified to be potable. The filtration bottle Al likes is one designed by Carl Palmer at www.seychelle.com – however, it does not filter salt water. LED flashlights (Magic Torch is the brand they've tested and like) are the best (last 1000 plus hours). Website: www.bereadyinc.com.

Open Forum: Nona Barker warned that people here are not prepared; so many homes are overgrown with vegetation and are obviously under-prepared for a real emergency. Talk to your neighbors about preparedness. Complacency is dangerous and irritating. We know it's just a matter of time before the next disaster and we need to do more to be ready. Dehydration is probably the biggest problem. Solar power is the most reliable source of energy in this climate. Fire Board and town council elections will be coming up in February. The Fire Board, which meets once a month, has two seats available. Nona encouraged Harmony Grove people to sign up.

Adjourned: 8:50 PM.

Fire Auxiliary Meeting

By Mary Garman

The Fire Auxiliary Meeting was called to order on November 9th, 2005 at 7:15PM. The minutes were read and approved. The treasury report showed a balance of \$290.72.

New Business: Everyone signed up for lunch and on call for the year 2006. The fire auxiliary provides lunch once a month for fire training days and, in case of fire, two people are on call to assist the fire department. The Christmas get together for the auxiliary members was canceled and we will get together in January instead. Tuesday, December 2nd, the Fire Board asked Fire Auxiliary members to the holiday get together and meeting.

Old Business: Events for the year are the Chili Cook Off and Tack and Saddle community sale on May 6th, Ice Cream Social and meet the firemen on September 17th, Halloween party for the community on October 28th. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15PM.

The School Yard

By John Stiker, Trustee and Clerk

Welcome back to the School Yard! Our next meeting is Thursday, December 8th at 7PM in the LGI.

Much has happened since our last update. Perhaps, most importantly, we certified the Del Charro school site Environmental Impact Report (EIR) at our November meeting clearing the way for us to purchase the property and develop the school. At that meeting, opponents of this site promised the District would hear a “campaign of confusion and chaos” in order to defeat passage of a bond. We’ve already seen misinformation, distortion, and untruths in their print advertisements and expect we’ll see much more over the coming months. So, I want to talk about key components of the Del Charro school site EIR.

First, Traffic. The EIR concludes a significant traffic impact. No surprise and true of any location we select. However, this isn’t “new” traffic. It’s trips currently being made primarily from the northeastern part of the District to the current Village site. Much of this traffic will be re-directed to the new site improving overall Village traffic and on roads leading to the Village. The EIR also concludes, with the addition of currently-planned roundabouts on Del Dios and a new roundabout at Aliso Canyon and Camino del Norte, traffic impacts would be reduced to a level “less than significant.” In fact, for most areas, this represents an improvement in traffic flow. Since the County is responsible for the roundabouts, rather than the District, we list the traffic impact as unmitigatable. That doesn’t mean the traffic impact itself is unmitigatable – clearly it is, as described above – but rather we as a school district can’t mitigate it on our own. We’ll certainly be working with the County to effect these traffic changes.

Second, Noise. The EIR concludes a significant impact. This is also no surprise as the current school (in fact, any school) violates the County noise standard. This is why schools are exempt from the standard. The ambient noise used as a baseline and measured at several of the nearby homes in the Del Charro area also violated the noise standard! We could mitigate the noise impact by building cinderblock walls, but doing so would be out of character with our neighborhood and create a significant aesthetic, as well as, safety impact. So the noise impact is listed as unmitigatable, though we will expend great effort to minimize it.

Third, One Way Access. Right now, the access to the site is Aliso Canyon Road. It’s not uncommon for schools to only have one access and no requirement in California law or education code that schools have a secondary access. Schools are generally well-designed for emergency shelter. In our hundred-year history we’ve yet to evacuate the school. Despite that, we’re going to work very hard to develop a secondary emergency access to this site and have two potential routes identified. One is through the Bridges and the other through Cielo. Either would require access into these gated communities only in times of an emergency. We find it hard to believe anyone would truly be unwilling to do this.

Lastly, Trails and Equestrian Safety. The EIR concludes there wouldn’t be a significant impact. Trails to the north and west will generally be unaffected. The trail on the northern boundary will have a driveway cut through it and used infrequently for special event overflow parking. The trail on the western side of Aliso Canyon will be untouched. From a safety standpoint, there are very few children in the District who walk to and from school, so there will not be a significant amount of horse-child interaction on the trails. So we don’t expect we would have any more issues than we do around the current Rowe site, also surrounded by trails with horses and children, where we’re not aware of a single negative incident of horse-child interaction in more than forty years.

There is much more in the EIR, which we encourage the entire District to read (it’s available online at www.rsfschoolboard.org). As we lead up to a bond issue, you’ll continue to hear “chaos and confusion” from our opponents as they try to “scare the District.” Not out of genuine concern for the safety or education of the children, but because they don’t want the new school built near their homes. But the facts are the facts and available for anyone to read. Please feel free to call or email any one of your School Board members (johnstiker@rsf.k12.ca.us), or Superintendent Delaney, with any questions.

Path Forward. In our next School Yard article, we’ll talk more about the results of our November meeting, including an update on our bonding capacity, the legal status of our purchase of property, and the overcrowding on the current campus. Remember, our next regular meeting is December 8th – hope to see you there!

December In The Garden

By Evelyn Alemanni

December is a great month to relax after you finished all the fall planting. If you haven't finished, get busy! You can still plant spring bulbs – especially tulips and hyacinths which you have prechilled for six to 8 weeks. Other bulbs that can still be planted include daffodils, narcissus, and iris. Toward the end of the month, you can start to plant gladiola bulbs.

Make room for bare root plants (roses, berries, fruit trees) which start arriving in nurseries toward the end of December. Gift certificates from nurseries are welcomed by all your gardening friends because they can buy exactly the right plant at the right time. Other nice gifts for gardeners include soft leather gloves (www.bionicrobes.com), Neptune's Harvest Fish Emulsion, Felco pruners, SuperThrive, Marilyn's Own Humate (www.marilynsown.com), garden tools made of stainless steel (www.leevalley.com).

Maintenance

- As days and nights get cooler, cut back on watering. If it rains, stop watering!
- Prune pines and conifers.
- Prune deciduous fruit trees and spray with dormant spray; prune grapes.
- Prune trees and shrubs, removing any branches that maybe susceptible to damage from high winds.
- Continue applying snail and slug bait.
- Divide perennials.

Plant Now

- Plant trees, shrubs, vines.
- Plant azaleas and camellias. Be sure to check your soil pH and adjust if necessary.
- Plant bareroot strawberries, grapes, cane berries.
- Water newly planted items at least weekly until rains start.
- Plant winter vegetables: carrots, beets, lettuce, cabbages, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, broccoli, peas.

Fertilize

- Feed spring annuals now for good bloom in the spring.
- Fertilize lawns.
- Fertilize trees and shrubs that bloom in January and February.

Upcoming Outdoor Outings

By Geoffrey Smith, Executive Director TECC

You are invited to participate in our scheduled outings and service events! What better way to learn about the watershed, while getting some exercise at the same time? All outings listed are lead by me, a qualified outing leader with over 25 years of backcountry outings experience. I look forward to getting to know you on these trips, as we get to know our watershed better. Please contact me at information@escondidocreek.org or 760-471-9354 to learn more about each destination and to sign up. We need to know you are coming in case there is a change in plans.

Wednesdays in the Watershed (WW) Series -

1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month: 8 – 11AM. Each week we'll chart a different course through the ever-expanding network of trails in the watershed. Meet at the staging area parking lot of the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve on Harmony Grove Road. Each week we'll traverse a new section.

Weekend Watershed Wanderings (WWW) Series

Headwaters Hike - Saturday, Dec 3rd 8AM – Noon
We'll explore the upper headwaters of Escondido Creek, exploring hiking trails in the vicinity of Lake Wohlford. See the sights around Paradise Mountain and Bottle Peak, and enjoy the cool shade of the oak woodlands. Meet at the Lake Wohlford Café at 25484 Lake Wohlford Road, just past the main gated entrance to Lake Wohlford recreation area.

Elfin Forest Preserve Tour - Saturday, Dec 17th

Saturday, January 14th 8AM – Noon
TECC owns and manages several parcels of land directly along Escondido Creek. Join us on a guided tour of these areas as we explore them on foot, with possible short car shuttle hops in-between. Meet at the staging area parking lot of the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve on Harmony Grove Road.

Be Prepared! Here's a short checklist of gear to bring and wear on TECC outings:

Clothing: Light weight shirt (nylon is best), light weight pants (nylon is best), hat, sturdy boots, windbreaker, jacket

Food: 2 quarts water, nuts, fruit, crackers, cheese

Other: cash, identification, day pack, extra clothes, extra food, first aid kit, whistle, sun screen, sun glasses.

Landscape Contest

By Jeff Barnes

Six local water agencies (including the OMWD) are sponsoring the 3rd Annual California-Friendly Landscape Contest. Judges will review landscapes for water-wise landscaping: innovative design with water conservation and function in mind, use of California-Friendly plants, use of color and texture in the landscape, use of zoning techniques (grouping plants with similar water requirements), energy-efficient landscape design, functional use of grass areas, creative use of hardscapes (patios, walkways, decks, paving, sculptures, etc.) and the use of water-harvesting designs to reduce runoff.

Up to eight winning yards will be awarded prizes. The region's best do-it-yourself homeowner and best professionally landscaped yard each will receive a \$500 gift certificate to an area nursery. Six other landscapes will be recognized as best-in-district winners and receive a \$250 gift certificate.

The winners will be announced during the 2006 Spring Garden Festival at The Water Conservation Garden in El Cajon. The deadline to apply is April 14th, 2006. Residents interested in entering the contest can call 619-667-6202 to request an application.

News From Questhaven Retreat



Sunday worship is at 10:45 AM.
All are welcome.
20560 Questhaven Road.
760-744-1500
www.questhaven.org.

Study groups meet on weeknights. Please call the office for times and locations.

Weekly Meditation - Wednesday at 7:30 PM.

Dec 4th—Seekers of the Light—Conceivers, Doers, and Transformers —*Rev. Phyllis Isaac*

Dec 11th—Christ is Love —*Rev. Blake Isaac*

Dec 18th—The Eternal Christ—*Rev. Susan S. Cary*

Dec 23rd-25th—Christmas Retreat (call office for details)

Dec 31st—New Year's Eve Light Walk

Sheriff's Department Contacts

In an emergency, please call 911. For non-emergency reporting, contact the following: Gen -760-510-5200
Jackie Cruz – Agriculture crime prevention specialist
760-940-4350

Sgt. Dan Wilson – COPPS – 760-510-5231

Betty (B.J.) Williams – Crime Prevention

Specialist/Neighborhood Watch 760-510-5254

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Jessica MacKinnon - Babysitting/Feed Animals, EF Resident, 14 years old, SFC High School - 9th grade, took babysitting course through Red Cross. Contact at 760-744-8955.

Brooke York - EF Resident, LCC School 12th grader, Baby Sitting. Tel: 760-752-7784.

Jared York - EF Resident, RSF School 10th grader, Baby sit or feed animals. Tel: 760-752-7784.

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