SSA SUMMER POTLUCK PICNIC
GUEST SPEAKER – MICHELLE CULLENS OF THE MOUNTAIN LION FOUNDATION

JAQUA RANCH
SUNDAY, JULY 18
12:00 P.M.-4:00 P.M.

Does It Purr? Does It Chirp? Does It Mew?
Michelle Cullens, Director of Conservation Programs of the Mountain Lion Foundation will tell us about the top predator in our hills and answer our questions about the Big Cat of One Color.
(see page 2 for related article)

Bring a potluck dish to share.
If you can, please bring a chair or picnic blanket to sit on.
SSA will provide plates, utensils, lemonade and soft drinks.

This event will take place at Dick and Ami Jaqua’s on Langley Hill Road, which is located 4.5 miles south on Skyline from Rte. 84, or 1.5 miles north on Skyline from Page Mill Rd., across from Fogarty Winery.

Please—no smoking and leave your dogs at home.
Quarterly Report

Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed as a benefit for SSA members in 1994. The contract with Amerigas was renewed in 1999, and again in May of 2004 for another five years. For information about joining the SPUG, or for members wishing to have current information on the Amerigas contract with SPUG, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope with your request to Ruth Waldhauer, SSA Membership Chairperson, 22400 Skyline Boulevard, Box 35, La Honda, CA 94020.

SPUG prices are subject to change as frequently as wholesale prices change. Reported here are prices for the first week of the month. See www.southskyline.org for recent updates.

Recent SPUG prices are:

April $1.32/gallon
May $1.32
June $1.40

The wholesale price for propane has risen just as gasoline has. The open market price for propane is about $1.70/gallon. Conserve!

Under the new contract members who are served by the Scotts Valley Amerigas office have the same price as members served by the San Jose office. Members 55 years of age or older qualify for a 5 cent/gallon discount in addition to the SPUG group price. Let Amerigas know should you qualify. Our SPUG rate is based on automatic regular route deliveries on a keep-full basis, not "will call" service.

Prepare for Rattle Snakes

It’s that time of year again, for a neighborly reminder on behalf of utility and other service workers who come to our homes. In other words, it’s rattlesnake season.

By weed-whacking or otherwise clearing around propane tanks, electrical meters, etc., we provide the opportunity for people to see where they are walking and reaching, thereby greatly reducing the risk of surprising a snake. A little “preventative maintenance” goes a long way, as the saying goes. 😊

~ Georgia Stigall

Important Change to 2003 SSA Membership Roster

The phone number on the front page of SSA’s 2003 Roster for the Santa Clara County Sheriff's office was recently changed. The new number is 408-299-3233. Please note this on your roster. In an emergency, call 911.

Mountain Lion

_Puma concolor_, Cougar, Puma, Cat of the Mountains/Catamount

Our speaker, Michelle Cullens, director of the Conservation Programs of the Mountain Lion Foundation since 1991, works to protect all wildlife and its wild habitat so essential to its survival. Conflict avoidance and resolution between man and beast, a peaceful and safe coexistence are her and the Foundation’s aim. To this end she will be telling us about the shy, graceful, powerful predator among us, the great cat with black-tipped tail more than one-half the length of head and body, with hairy soles, why the cats’ eyes have a vertical slit instead of a round opening; the deer stalker of dusk and dawn.

Michelle Cullens will speak about the Mountain Lion’s natural history, what the cat does and why, whether it is good or bad to have a mountain lion in the neighborhood. Perhaps she can tell us why mountain lions have been leaving their local food supplies in the hills from time to time and what strategies could be developed to handle the strays so none come to harm. Bring your questions!

SSA Calendar

**General Meeting** – July 18, Jaqua Ranch

**Business Meetings at 7:15 pm:**
Thurs. July 15
Thurs. August 19
Thurs. September 16
(Call Pat Congdon for location and directions)
President Pat Congdon  650-941-9832
Editor Patti Begley  408-867-3973
A Whirling Tornado – Great Balls of Fire

The fall of the year has always been a particularly edgy time in California. Old newspapers are full of accounts of wild fires ravaging the timberlands of the Santa Cruz Mountains, often starting at the lumber mills themselves. Surprisingly, we have found few articles that describe fires burning in the South Skyline area, although evidence on the ground indicates that much of the area has burned in modern times. Perhaps our area was hit by many small fires, rather than big newsworthy ones. However, one account of a fire on the fringe of our area was reported in great dramatic detail in The Mountain Echo on October 14, 1899. (The Echo was a newspaper published in Boulder Creek.) “The most terrific fire ever known in the history of this part of the county swept like a whirling tornado over the country comprising the headwaters of Bear Creek last Sunday about noon and but little is left in its course but the bare ground and the green trunks of the trees.”

John A. Hoffman, whose ranch was located on the upper part of Bear Creek Road, first noticed the fire burning on Deer Creek (which runs below Las Cumbres) to the northwest of his place. During the next three days the fire “crawled over the ridges and gulches eastward between Bear Creek and the summit divide.” Then suddenly a northeast wind turned the fire into a “whirling tornado.” Hoffman heard a loud roar as “great balls of fire leaped from the burning tree tops and went whirling through the air hundreds of feet in advance and ignited everything in their track.” Flames then jumped from ridge to ridge. The Stringfellow and Tabacco families barely escaped with their lives, and their ranches were “swept clean of every building, fence, farming implement and household goods.” A few trunks that had been dragged into the vineyards managed to survive the inferno. Of the farm animals that were let go to fend for themselves, only a few survived. Several cows released from a barn ran right into the flames. The Hoffmans, putting up a desperate fight, managed to save all of their ranch buildings. They attributed their success to a fire in their shingle mill the previous year that had cleared the area below their ranch of combustible material.

~Janet Schwind
Skyline Historical Society

Reminder
If you haven’t done so, please pay your 2004 SSA dues today. Send your $15.00 check made payable to South Skyline Association to:

Ruth Waldhauer
SSA Membership Chair
22400 Skyline Blvd #35
La Honda CA 94020

Thank you!

41st Annual Kings Mountain Art Fair

Event 41st annual Kings Mountain Art Fair, a juried multimedia show restricted to 135 artists. An additional 25 “mountain” artists participate in the Mountain Folk Art section of the fair to ensure that the fair keeps its local flavor.

When Labor Day Weekend, September 4th, 5th & 6th Saturday, Sunday & Monday, 10AM to 5 PM.

Where Kings Mountain Community Center/Fire Station 13889 Skyline Boulevard, Woodside.

Admission Free

The show features juried arts and crafts from over 130 artists presenting oil paintings, watercolor, serigraph, sculpture, collage, photography, unique jewelry, wearable art, hand-crafted toys, heirloom furniture, art glass, quilts, hand-forged tools, weathervanes and more on display among the trees surrounding the Kings Mountain Community Center on Highway 35, 6 miles south of Highway 92, above Half Moon Bay. The juried artists are joined by 25 local “Mountain Folk” artists who help maintain the local flavor of the fair.

Breakfast under the redwoods with the artists starts at 8AM with other food, wine, beer and beverages served from 11:30AM. Supervised children's activities and games take place all day in "Kiddie Hollow."

Admission is free. Park along Skyline Blvd.; ride the free shuttle to the fair. Out of courtesy to the artists, please no dogs on the fairgrounds.

Information: www.kingsmountainartfair.org

Map of the area showing the location of the Art Fair.
Birds Nest In The Strangest Places

A gentleman set up a 6’ ladder while working on a project. He didn’t put it away. The next day the man came out to find a mourning dove’s nest with eggs on the top of the ladder. So much for that project.

House finches are known to nest in some rather opportunistic places. Many customers have lamented that their front door spring wreath decorations have been taken over by house finches and they can no longer go out their front doors. The most inventive house finch nest was the one built several years in a row in the baseball hat hanging in a friend’s father’s garage. The hat gave the nest the flexibility and the strength that it needed.

This year, Bewick’s wrens seem to be the most inventive nesters. A pair of Bewick’s wrens nested in a friend’s drill press under the lid. The homeowner opened the garage door at 5:30 am to make sure that the parents had easy access to their brood. How did they find an opening in the first place?!? Another customer came in with pictures for me to identify. Apparently, her gardener had spotted “an old nest” in the dryer vent. On pulling it out they discovered babies still alive in the nest. They put the nest in a shoe box and put the shoe box in a wire cage without the lid to protect the nest from the family dog. The pictures showed three babies and an adult Bewick’s wren with dinner in its beak perched on the cage. Thankfully, these wrens are very easy to identify by their buffy eye stripe.

A gentleman showed me a picture that he had taken of a mystery bird peering out of a rusted metal fish lantern that hung by the front door. He also had a picture of the eggs in the nest. With just the top of her head showing and one beady little eye, identification was not possible, but I was hooked. I went over the next day and even with binoculars wasn’t able to see much. I quietly and slowly went towards the bird. Just as I saw the lighter lower mandible, she flew and perched in a fir tree about 15 feet away. Pacific-sloped flycatcher. Spectacular. The ID having been made, I beat a hasty retreat so she could resume her incubating.

Keep your eyes open – you too might have a nest in the most unlikely place.

~ Freddy Howell

Golden Fleece Shines Along Skyline

Golden fleece (Ericameria arborescens, formerly Haploppapous arborescens) dots the chaparral of South Skyline. The late blooming, bright yellow flowers are a welcome bit of color in mid to late summer.

The shrubs grow 0.5 to 3 meters tall from a single trunk-like main stem. Narrow, alternate leaves are green, smooth margined, up to 60 cm long and more than 5 times as long as wide. The resinous, pine-scented leaves are covered with tiny pits.

A member of the Sunflower family, golden fleece has disk flowers only. Flower heads grow at the ends of branches in open clusters, with 18-25 blooms. Bracts below the flowers are in irregular series of 3 to 4. Later on, inflorescences turn beige, releasing silky, five-sided seeds on the fall winds.

Golden fleece grows on rocky, sandy soil in full sun. The thick taproot and narrow resinous leaves help it adapt to the hot, dry environment. The shrubs are found along the coastal ranges from Del Norte to Santa Barbara Counties, and on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada foothills.

Similar species grow in nearby regions. Mock heather (E. ericoides) grows in the back dunes along the coast as far inland as Scotts Valley and Bonny Doon, while narrow leaf sunflower (E. linearifolia) grows in the interior coastal ranges. Both have ray as well as disk flowers, and grow from multiple stems. Mock heather has short leaves. Rubber rabbit brush (Chrysothamnus nauseosus) grows in the southern interior coastal ranges, but possible sightings have been reported in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Like golden fleece, rubber rabbit brush has disk flowers only, but bracts below the flowers are in well-defined rows, there are multiple stems from the base, and the foliage is gray green.

~Sarah Schoen
Take a Hike...

Correction: Achistaca Trail

In an April 2004 article about the new Achistaca trail in the Long Ridge Open Space Preserve, I incorrectly stated that Bo Gimbal constructed the trail failing to give the MROSD crew credit for their work in planning and execution. Bo corrected me when he saw the article. Stan Hooper, MROSD Lead Open Space Technician, and his crew joined Bo to work on the new trail, connecting it with the Hickory Oaks Trail. Bo worked on about a third of the trail. Stan named the trail Achistaca for a tribal group indigenous to the upper San Lorenzo watershed and Saratoga Gap.

Bo Gimbal, SSA board member and long time volunteer in various parklands, worked on the conceptual route for many years. Several years ago he took Betsy Crowder and Jean Rusmore, co-authors with Frances Spangle of the hiking book, Peninsula Trails, on a bushwhacking tour of the proposed trail along the west side of Skyline. As a result Betsy, an MROSD board member, liked the plan and played a big role in convincing MROSD to authorize building the trail, and to restrict it to hikers and equestrians because there is an existing trail on the east side of Skyline dominated by mountain bicycles. The result is a wonderful new trail.

~ Ruth Waldhauer

On May 27, 2004 the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space district celebrated the opening of the new Achistaca Trail with a morning hike.

Hiking the Skyline Trail

Walking the Skyline Trail is good in any season, for much of the trail follows a compacted road surface. It is not muddy in winter and the way is sheltered from winds. In spring, meadows are flowery and irises bloom in the woods. Much of the trail is shady, making it a cool summer walk.

My friends and I started at Saratoga Gap walking south on the trail for pedestrians only, a narrow footpath crossing several bridges built of wooden planks. The historic old toll-road station was at Saratoga Gap and sections of the toll-road were visible from below our trail. More than forty years ago this part of the ridge was logged, and we saw signs of old logging roads and skid roads. Young firs are now growing up through the oaks. There are signs of human habitation, too, along the way, abandoned trailers and equipment of a former resident within a chain link fence. Further along on a knoll above the trail is the site of the Loughry house. The Loughrys planted an arboretum of unusual trees. We saw only a few. The Loughry Arboretum proper is accessed directly from Skyline.

At about 1-1/2 miles we met the old Summit Road section. After another 1/2 mile at a trail junction, a well-worn path turns left off the Skyline Trail, leading to Summit Rock, a large outcrop of sandstone rising 20 feet or more above a little plateau. The drop off on the valley side is alarmingly long. Eroded pits in the rocks make good handholds and footholds for the nimble climber to reach the top. From this vantage point, you can look up and down the Santa Clara Valley.

After enjoying the views, we retraced our steps to the junction where the Skyline Trail turns south along the ridge top. We took the first trail left (the Summit Rock Loop Trail) down into the canyon of Benjetti Creek, one of the wild canyons that furrow the east face of the Santa Cruz Mountains. The trail, an old wagon road, crosses a sloping meadow of bracken fern and native red thistle -- in spring a flowery grassland -- to enter the shade of majestic firs. The cool depths of the canyon make this a good route on hot summer days. The old road rounds a ridge and comes out again on an open slope that slants down to Benjetti Creek.

Our journey down this old wagon road took us into the past when it reaches a small clearing on a flat, where an apple orchard marks a long-abandoned DiFiore homestead. A few large redwood stumps and some 100-foot tall redwoods are what is left of one of the groves of redwoods that punctuate the fir forest of the east slopes of the Santa Cruz Mountains along creeks where water is plentiful. We considered having lunch under the apple trees, but decided against it because we faced an uphill climb of 0.4 of a mile back to the Skyline Trail. Our climb uphill followed Benjetti Creek. In winter and spring, the sounds of cascade and waterfall are heard. (The creek is named for an Italian early settler.) Seeping springs keep banks fern-clad, and big leaf maples flourish alongside the stream. At the junction, we found a beautiful large colony of red larkspur. Turning left, the trail became less steep. We finally had lunch at a huge boulder in the shelter of a mature fir tree. From there, it was a very short walk to the parking lot of Castle Rock State Park where we had a car shuttle taking us back to Saratoga Gap.

~ Ruth Waldhauer
**Aloha in the Redwoods 2004**  
A Benefit for La Honda Education Foundation  
Sunday, August 29,  
3:00 p.m. till 6:00 pm

**La Honda Gardens**  
(behind Pioneer Market)  
8865 La Honda Road (Hwy 84) in La Honda, CA  
6 miles west of Skyline (Hwy 35)

Concert ~ Hula ~ Potluck Luau

La Honda Educational Foundation is at it again, bringing the Aloha spirit to La Honda to benefit our schools.

We are currently looking for sponsorship and volunteers to help with this wonderful event. Sponsors will receive FREE advertising*, FREE tickets* to the event, and public acknowledgement on stage! (Privacy is kindly respected for anonymous donors & sponsors.)

*For sponsorship details go to www.karenshaff.com/aloha04 or email aloha@karenshaff.com

La Honda Educational Foundation Presents:

Hawaiian Music's Next Generation  
Ki Ho'Alu (Slack Key Guitar) and Ukelele Masters  
David Kamakahi, Herb Ohta, Jr., Keoki Kahumoku, Patrick Landeza

PLUS lovely HULA dancers will perform on the beautiful garden stage!

Special Guest performance by Ki Ho'Alu Master  
~ DENNIS KAMAKAHI ~

Please visit: www.karenshaff.com/aloha04 for more details.

Authentic Kahlua pork "Plate Lunches" available for purchase provided by Ono Hawaiian Grill of Half Moon Bay.

Tickets: $20 advance; $25 day of show; children 12-18 yrs. $10; children under 12 FREE.

For Sponsorship, Information, Volunteers, or Tickets ~ email Karen Shaff, event coordinator at aloha@karenshaff.com or call 650-747-9633.

All proceeds benefit the La Honda Educational Foundation. The Foundation is dedicated to raising funds for teacher salaries, classroom aides, educational enrichment, and the music program at La Honda Elementary School.

State budget cuts have forced the La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District to lay off two teachers for the 2004-05 school year unless our educational foundations can raise at least $100,000. This is a difficult burden for our small rural district with few commercial enterprises to draw upon - we are grateful for our generous local community and surrounding neighbors who donate to our foundations and volunteer in classrooms or at fundraisers regularly. Your help allows us to maintain the small class size and excellent teaching environment found here in this unique, rural setting. La Honda Elementary School is very special; it has many highly educated parent volunteers assisting in the classrooms and on campus every day. The quality of education is important to us, no matter how small the district or how tight the budget, and we work hard to do whatever we need to do to preserve it!

What is Aloha?

A couple of years ago, in June 2002, George Kahumoku, Jr., Hawaiian Ki Ho'Alu (Slack Key Guitar) Master, performed a wonderful concert for our very first Aloha in the Redwoods. It was a fundraiser to help raise money for a new playground for our school. The playground was soon constructed from the ground up by the community of parents and teachers of La Honda Elementary School. People ~ all volunteers ~ brought their tractors, shovels and all kinds of tools, food, and refreshments on several scorching hot weekends to prepare the land and assemble the large purple climbing structure & swing set which now stands upon the "upper playground" at La Honda Elementary School. The day after Kahumoku's 2002 performance, he flew over to Maui and called me all the way in La Honda, California to thank ME for putting on such a wonderful event and making him feel so welcome and at home here. George loved the warm spirit of the community of La Honda, the generosity of the people, the wonderful food people had prepared for the luau and the wonderful connections he had made with community members at this event. This is Aloha, La Honda!

What a great way to get to know your neighbors, enjoy a beautiful summer afternoon among the redwoods with friends and family, sipping a cool drink and having a traditional Hawaiian meal while the sounds of the islands transport you to paradise ~ all the while knowing that you are helping the local schools maintain the high quality of education every parent wants for their children.

Please mark your calendars and join us August 29, 2004 at 3:00 PM for Aloha in the Redwoods 2004, on this fun-filled "Hawaiian Island of La Honda!"

For more information, call Karen Shaff 650-747-9633 or email aloha@karenshaff.com

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Karen Shaff  
Beads of Light  
http://www.karenshaff.com
FOR SALE

High efficiency Solar Water Heaters, Vacuum type, thermo-siphon. Call for details: $500/each. 650-948-6426

Oak Barrel Halves - 1/2 used oak wine barrels for sale. Make good wooden planters. 30 gallon size (halves of 60 gallon barrels) at special price of $10 each while they last. Call John at 408-867-3205


DirectPC satellite dish internet connection. This is a 400 kbps connection download only, it uses a dialup for the connection going out. $150. Not as fast as Broadband, but much better than a phone line connection. Call 650-948-6424.

Joe Davis
Aries Limited
22400 Skyline Blvd. #26
La Honda, CA 94020
Phone:650-948-6424
Fax:650-948-5605

Watertight Drums – Approx. 55 Gal. - $5 each Contained fruit products only. Uses include storage of emergency supplies, irrigation water or fermentation. Proceeds go to Animals in Disaster (La Honda/Coastside area). Pick up in La Honda. Order by e-mail: Animals_In_Disaster.com

FREE

Free firewood, both Oak and Doug Fir, split, ready to go. Also, 2 barn cats, Russian blues. 650-948-6426

WANTED

Seeking Rental...Responsible, mature woman seeking a quiet and peaceful place for me and my beloved horse. Willing to rent or work an exchange taking care of your pets. I offer 30 years of experience working with horses, a lot of TLC, and competence. Cassandra Williams 530-333-4979

Utility trailer for dump runs. Single axle in O.K. condition. Cosmetics not important. Contact Rob Skinner: rob@pescaderolodging.com or 650-879-9420

Kayak for flat water - Looking for a double, single, or kid’s kayak. Patti 408-867-3973.

Donation of trailer for purposes of storing medical supplies to be used by SSEP Org. Medical Committee professionals during emergencies. Location to be mid-Skyline (somewhere between Saratoga Gap and Rocky Creek on Skyline Blvd). Contact Bill Fowkes at 650-941-4684

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Lakeside Joint School District
Positions Now Open Until Filled:

Special Circumstances Student Coach. Part-time (3-3.5 hours per day); temporary position beginning August 23, 2004.

For more information regarding duties and responsibilities, qualifications, and how to apply, call the Lakeside School Office at 408-354-2372

SERVICES

High-speed Internet Access
1 Mbps symmetrical broadband is now available in the South Skyline area. What our subscribers are saying:

"Ah, heaven -- nay, bliss! -- to request a web page, and have it display within a breath, rather than having to hear the theme from Jeopardy. We are amped."
-- Connie

“"I cannot believe it, this is at least 5 times faster than the satellite system. Anybody wants to know, send them to me. Maybe 10 times faster.”
-- Joe

Visit our website at http://SkylineBroadbandService.com 650-917-9279; ask for Bill

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New houses, remodel & additions. 30 plus years experience (20 in California)
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taruno@pacbell.net

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Four Corners on Skyline
Come meet the new owners-(650) 851-0303
8:30AM-9:00PM daily; 7:00PM (Tuesday)
Gourmet dinners from our chef, Ruffino
Full breakfast and luncheon menu
Personable and knowledgable Maitre D'

The Mountain Terrace
(formerly Skywood Chateau and Boulevard Bar and Grill)
Charming and rustic atmosphere, uniquely suited to your special occasion.
Now available for private events and Sunday brunch (650) 851-1606

SERVICES

Pet Sitting – Responsible 10 year old (w/resp. mom) will care for your pets during the month of July. Start at $5 a day. Pref. within a few miles of Hwy 9/ Skyline. Patti 408-867-3973
Attention Mountain Artists!
We are still looking for entries for a new Skylines Logo. Share your talent with the mountain community by submitting your ideas for a Skyline theme. Please send them to Patti Begley (see address below) by August 31. For more info call 408-867-3973.