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Directions to the Meeting:

The CDF Saratoga Summit Fire Station is located at 12900 Skyline Blvd. on the west side of Skyline Blvd. approximately 1 mile north of the intersection of Skyline and Highway 9. You may need to park along the road, so a flashlight is advisable.

SSA General Meeting

Friday January 27 at the CDF Saratoga Summit Fire Station
7:00 pm - Refreshments
7:30 pm – SSA Board Elections followed by the featured presentations
Bring a dessert. SSA will provide hot beverages and soft drinks.

Community GeoPortals

A New Approach for Community-based Mapping in the Santa Cruz Mountains
Speaker - Rebecca Moore



locations of homes and water sources for emergency preparedness, to review and visualize a proposed timber harvest plan in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and other land use projects. We'll also "fly over" the Santa Cruz Mountains in full 3-D using Google Earth, as we highlight these projects. See page 3 for more information on Rebecca Moore.

Rebecca Moore will talk to us about how modern digital mapping technology holds great promise in helping us to deal more effectively with the unique challenges mountain residents face in managing our own roads, water systems, fire, emergencies, and trail networks. She will present several recent digital mapping projects conducted by ordinary citizens in our community, used to map

Land Use Policy

Speaker - Gary Patton



Gary Patton, a noted speaker on environmental issues, and a past member of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, is currently the executive director of The Planning and Conservation League. PCL is a statewide, nonprofit lobbying organization; an alliance of individuals and conservation organizations united to protect California's environment through legislative and administrative action. See page 3 for more information.

Patton's talk will focus on land use at the local and state level, but he's also prepared to field questions about statewide environmental policy on almost any issue. Don't miss what is sure to be an interesting program.

What Is Your SSA Board Doing?

By Judy Grote

Actions Completed

- October General meeting with presentation on “Keep the Fun in Fungi!” by speaker Henry Young.
- Published the October Skylines newsletter
- SSA Adopt-a-highway program is in full gear with regular clean-up days now being held. If you are interested in participating, please contact Ruth Waldhauer. Our adopted portion of Highway 35 is near the Vista point below Russian Ridge. The last litter pick-up was completed in November. Next litter pick-up is scheduled for Jan. 7.
- Membership access to Supplier directories, in particular to LasCumbres.org provided that those wanting input register as a friend of Las Cumbres.

Work in Process

- Publish the January Skylines newsletter
- Land Use Policies: An ad hoc committee was established to investigate land use policies across the 3 county area—San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz. This group is researching the regulations related to zoning and land use and is developing possible concerns for presentation to the membership for their education. Gary Patton, executive director of the Planning and Conservation League, will speak at the January General Meeting.
- The SSA Board is investigating getting a Septic system agreement for SSA members.
- CHP Update: There has been steady improvement in the reduction of Traffic Incidents (fatal accidents, injuries). CHP has increased the # of patrols for San Mateo County. They are trying to coordinate with Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties. It’s very difficult to monitor / measure the noise, part of this being due to the expense. There will be another Motorcycle Day. CHP is applying for a grant to increase the number of patrols. Redwood City should get a matching grant given their success with reducing accidents. What has not been as successful is cooperation between the 3 counties. If we could get the Sheriff to coordinate patrols, it also would really help. Concentration has been on sport bikes and speed and not the Harleys because the Harleys are not causing the accidents.
- The Emergency Preparedness Organization is currently working on several projects. It now has a container for medical first aid supplies at the Ranger Station near Alpine and Skyline. Also of importance is the Neighborhood Coordinator project. This project will establish the basis for neighbors to help neighbors who want their assistance in an emergency. At least 3 volunteers in each neighborhood are needed who can handle the communications procedures and cover for each other when necessary. Please see Barclay Slade if interested.

- The nominating committee identified 3 possible Board member candidates for the Board positions expiring this year.
- Investigate decal for cars identifying mountain residents so locals can get home when Cal Trans closes a highway.
- Open a dialog with Dave Vincent to work out a better Good Neighbor Policy with Castle Rock

General meeting topics - Coming Attractions

- General meeting on January 27th at the CDF Saratoga Summit station will feature a presentation on Mapping by Rebecca Moore to show the areas of SSA, and highlighting speaker Gary Patton, executive director of the Planning and Conservation League. The Board Election also will be held during the meeting.
- Meeting on new Defensible Space policy and the implications of it to homeowners is being planned for the March/April timeframe.

Visitors are welcome at the SSA Board meetings as well as General Meetings. Please check the website for meeting dates. Meeting minutes and agendas are also on www.southskyline.org.

SSA Treasurer Report 2005

Submitted by Judi Lovell

CREDITS	
Membership:	
Number of Memberships	462
Dollars from Memberships	\$6,990.00
Donations	\$25.00
Interest on Investments	\$456.79
Other (SSEPO postage)	\$151.40
Fogarty wine donations	\$316.00
Total Credits	\$7,939.19
DEBITS	
Newsletters - Printing	\$1,689.23
Newsletter supplies	\$307.79
Postage	\$621.40
General Meetings	\$952.34
Honorariums/Donations	\$350.00
Website	\$95.40
Capital Items	\$101.73
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$367.09
SSEPO postage	\$151.40
Total Debits	\$4,636.38
Net gain or loss	\$3,302.81

SSA Board Elections

The annual SSA Board Elections will take place at the SSA General Meeting on January 28 at 7:30 pm. (See page 1.) There are four board members who will run for another 2-year term: Bill Prince, Ken Broome, Ruth Waldhauer and Bo Gimbal.

Those not running for re-election are Dick Schwind, Judi Lovell and Jamie Kerr. Dick and Judi have served on the board for many years and their contributions to the South Skyline Association are much appreciated.

New Candidates

The three new candidates are Marianne Rose, Hertha Harrington and Noelle Cosentino.

Marianne Rose: *I have lived on Skyline (a little north of Hwy 9) for about 35 years. My skills are in graphics, advertising and event management. I also have created and currently work on several websites. As one of the founders of the South Skyline Association, I have held almost every position possible on the Board. I was the second president of the association and often a vice president or board member. With Janet Schwind I produced the Skylines newsletter for the first couple of decades. I have always felt that the South Skyline community provides a unique environment for the local residents and a valuable resource to the residents of the greater Bay Area. This special place we call home deserves the protection and nurturing care, which only concerned, educated and sensible people can provide.*

Hertha Harrington: *I have lived in SkyLonda for 20 plus years and I really love the Skyline area. I am aware that it takes vigilance and community effort to keep a place like this the way it is now. Over the years, I have read the South Skyline Newsletter and have been so impressed with the organization and the dedication of your members I would be very proud to be a part of this group.*

A native Californian, Hertha is a lifelong Bay Area resident. A graduate of U.C. Berkeley, she has a BA in Psychology and an MA in Criminology. Hertha was a Probation Officer from 1954 until she retired in 1989. She has been married for 31 years to Walter H. Harrington, a now retired Superior Court Judge.

The Harringtons moved to Morse Lane in SkyLonda in 1985. Shortly after her arrival, Hertha learned that the State Department of Forestry was considering approval of a plan to log 18 acres of redwoods near the intersection of Highways 35 and 84.

The SkyLonda Community organized a protest, and Hertha was reborn as an environmental activist. She served as vice-president and then later as president of the SkyLonda Homeowner's Association. During her time in office, she was involved in getting CalTrans to lower the speed limit on

Skyline, and getting the California Highway Patrol to enforce the traffic laws on Skyline. She was also active in getting a San Mateo County ordinance enacted, prohibiting commercial logging within 1,000 feet of an occupied residence. This ordinance ultimately discouraged loggers and saved the life of Koko the gorilla. Since 1991, Hertha has served on the Board of Directors of the Committee for Green Foothills, whose mission it is to preserve open space in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties.

Noelle Cosentino: *My husband and I moved to Indian Rock Ranch (located at Hwy 9 & 35) in June of 03. We were looking for privacy, peace, quiet, and beauty. We very quickly became aware of the "motorcycle" issues on the mountain and wanted to see if we could effect some change. Our neighbor, Judi Lovell, is on the SSA board and invited us to a meeting to discuss this issue. I was very pleased with the warm reception we received and the sense of community. Everyone was interesting with different points of view. I enjoy being part of the mountain community and was happy to accept the nomination when asked.*

Gary Patton and Rebecca Moore to Speak at Next SSA Meeting

Gary Patton and Rebecca Moore will speak to the South Skyline Association on January 27th (see page 1.)

Gary Patton now serves as the Executive Director of the Planning and Conservation League (PCL). He served on the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors for twenty years, from 1975 to 1995, during a time when Santa Cruz County went from being the fastest-growing county in the state to a county that emphasizes sound growth management as one of its basic principles. He played a leading part in making this happen, and is the author of the County's extremely effective growth management system, adopted by the voters as "Measure J," in 1978. Most recently, Patton has headed up LandWatch Monterey County, a land use policy group that promotes and inspires sound land use policies in Monterey County, through grassroots community action. Patton is also the host of a daily "Land Use Report" that airs on KUSP Radio during NPR's "Morning Edition." You can find out more at www.pcl.org; www.landwatch.org, or www.kusp.org.

Rebecca Moore is a professional computer scientist and Santa Cruz Mountain resident (Hwy 17/Summit area). She recently founded the Mountain Resource Group (www.mountainresource.org), a 501(c)3 non-profit whose mission is "to inform and empower Santa Cruz Mountain residents in order to manage our mountain resources wisely." She is currently a member of the Google Earth software development team, with a personal and professional interest in promoting environmental and community-based applications of digital mapping technology.



Quarterly Report

By Ruth Waldhauer

Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed as a benefit for SSA members. For information about joining the Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG), or for members wishing to have correct information on the Amerigas contract with us, 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. Information is also available on the SSA website at www.southskyline.org.

Recent group prices are:

October	\$1.87/gallon
November	1.95
December	1.77
January	2.04

Since Katrina struck in August, prices have risen to an all time high. The open market is about \$3.00/gallon with some customers paying even more than that. Thankfully, our group price is still significantly less than the open market price. CONSERVE! See the website for latest changes.

Prices are subject to changes as frequently as wholesale prices change. Reported here are usually prices for the first week of the month. Members 55 years of age or older qualify for a 5 cent/gallon discount on the SPUG group price. Our SPUG rate is based on automatic regular route deliveries on a keep-full basis, not "will call" service.

Propane Facts

1. Propane (also called LPG, liquefied petroleum gas or LP Gas) is a widely used fuel. It is transported and stored as a very cold liquid and can cause a 'freeze burn' or frostbite if it contacts the skin as a liquid. The liquid propane is turned into a gas inside a tank or a cylinder. In its natural form, propane is colorless and odorless. To make propane easier to detect in the event of a leak or spill, manufacturers deliberately add a chemical compound to give it a distinctive smell.
2. Propane is flammable when mixed with air (oxygen) and can be ignited by many sources, including open flames, smoking materials, electrical sparks and static electricity.
3. Propane vapors are heavier than air. For this reason, they may accumulate in low-lying areas such as basements, crawl spaces, and ditches, or along floors. However, air currents can sometimes carry propane vapors elsewhere with a building.



Barby Bergman, Ami Jaqua, Virginia Lindquist, and Sharon Peters.

Skyline Adopt-A-Highway

By Ruth Waldhauer

On November 7, 2005 an all-woman crew picked up litter along the stretch of Skyline that SSA adopted, from mile marker 2 to 4 in San Mateo County. (See photo) All were pleased and satisfied to help maintain the beauty of our unique mountain environment.

The next scheduled date for the clean up is January 7, 2005 when we have an all-man crew volunteering. As we go to press no report is available about the event, but photos of the January 7 crew will be posted in the April *Skylines*.

Please sign up to help for with future cleanups on the Membership Renewal form included in this issue of *Skylines*. Four volunteers are the ideal team for each sweep, of which we do six per year. Questions? Email Ruth (waldhauer@batnet.com) or phone (650-948-1466). Dates for future sweeps are March 4, May 6, and July 8. The sweep takes about an hour.

Skyline Boulevard is our front yard, and it's very satisfying to keep it free of litter.

**3rd Annual Winter Wine
& Food Pairing & Auction**
Live Music by Bundy Browne

Presented by La Honda & Pescadero
Educational Foundations

Saturday February 11 4:00 – 8:00 pm
Mountain Terrace, Woodside, CA

\$40 in advance, \$50 at the door
For ticket info call 650-747-9287

Portola & Castle Rock State Park Foundation

By Judy Grote

The Portola & Castle Rock State Park Foundation (P&CRSP) is a 501.c.3 whose focal point is funding education about the 2 parks and their ecosystem. It has been in existence for 20+ years and is run by a Board consisting of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer as well as Board of Directors. The Board works closely with the Head Ranger of the 2 parks. Portola Redwood State Park (PRSP) is located ~6 miles west of Highway 35. The main gate to Castle Rock State Park (CRSP) is located on Highway 35 ~2-3 miles south of Highway 9.

All funding for park education comes from donations and merchandise sold in the Portola Redwood State Park Visitor Center. The merchandise is for both children and adults and is primarily educational—books, puzzles, etc.

Projects which the Foundation has funded, some of which are complete and some in progress, include

- New maps for PRSP and CRSP, as well as a new climber map for CRSP
- Several new interpretive exhibits for PRSP
- New history exhibit for PRSP
- Synthetic animal paw prints and scat for interpretive use with children at PRSP
- New interpretive exhibits for CRSP (on the drawing board)
- Cabin for Interpreter Park Aid at PRSP

Come down and explore the PRSP Visitor Center and take a look at the exhibits. While you're there, peruse the books for any which are of interest to you, your family, and/or friends.

South Skyline Emergency Preparedness Organization (SSEPO) Progress Report

By Ken Broome, President

During 2005, SSEPO held Certified Emergency Response Training, CERT, program in Los Cumbres Community Center that was attended by about 30 people, of which 28 received certificates of proficiency issued by San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services.

A continuing grant of \$3,000 was received from the Peninsula Community Foundation. This amount was matched by donations from members of the South Skyline Association. Thank you for your donations and your support. An application is in process to obtain Section 501-c-3 (Public Benefit Organization) status eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions.



Medical container crew: Jon Anderson, Bill Fowkes, Sherry Niswander, Tom Anderson, and Ken Broome.

A portion of these funds were spent under the direction of Dr. Bill Fowkes on a container for storing medical supplies at the Skyline Ranger Station, outfitting the container for supplies, and the purchase of the medical supplies. We are in the process of purchasing radio communications equipment to link the neighborhood coordinators with a central command post and to link the command post with the County Office of Emergency Services. The insert in this issue of *Skylines*, provided by Tom Anderson and Sherry Niswander, gives more specific information about the communications system.

Volunteers are still needed to provide back-up support to cover for Neighborhood Coordinators who may not always be available when the need arises. Please contact the Operations Director, Barclay Slade at (408) 354-7818 for more information.

Another CERT training session is being planned for late spring at the Lakeside School. Dates will be posted on the SSA website by mid-February. Call Hans Johsens for more information at (408) 395-0337.

Fire prevention activities, focused on implementation of the 100-ft. fire-safe clearing zone around buildings, are being organized under the direction of Chuck Schoppe. Call him at (408) 867-9229 for more information.

The Future Of The South Skyline Area -- Development Issues In Our Community

By Fred Glover, Ken Broome, Ruth Waldhauer

Our close proximity to a major metropolitan region creates pressures for change on our unique South Skyline rural environment. SSA wants input from members and locals to know what they want for the future to better lobby the three counties in our SSA area about land use planning.

Housing demand will increase. Commercial ventures to which the public is invited threaten our peace and quiet. Our water basins will be over-drafted. The natural beauty that delights both residents and visitors is threatened. SSA intends to keep members informed about the status of land use planning in our area that includes three counties: San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz.

Again and again, local residents learn about destructive development policies and projects too late in the planning process to stop or modify them. SSA hopes to provide an early warning system so members will have input at the beginning stages of planning.

Four proposed or developed projects in the past four years call into question all three counties interpretation of their General Plans. The four projects are:

1. In Santa Cruz County a permit was given to build a 17,000 square foot house in a zone for 7,500 square foot maximum size residence within 150 feet of Skyline Boulevard and 100 feet in a view corridor of a neighboring house.
2. In Santa Clara County, a permit was given for subdivision of a large parcel into several "estates" of a total over 80 acres. All of the chaparral, poison oak and late summer annuals were removed from nearly the entire parcel in mid-October and the gutters of the adjacent public roadway ran dark brown with sediment in the ensuing two winters' rain. The project developer spent the next two years mitigating the resulting erosion. In fact, four years later, the steep hillsides are still being re-engineered.
3. In San Mateo County the Planning Board approved grading for an 80-acre vineyard and three wine caves. This resulted in perceived threats to water supplies of a neighboring community three miles downstream. Testing and monitoring of the effluent water shows no deleterious effect by the activities of the vineyard. A winery is proposed for the site. Here the stated intention is never to have a public tasting room, nor public events. The issue for the County is whether to approve production of 10,000 cases of wine per year. The present code for this resource management zone is 3,000 cases of wine per year.

4. In Santa Clara County, a three-acre vineyard was planted and then a wine cave was permitted on a 31-acre parcel. The wine cave is being constructed. Santa Clara County codes allow a winery with production 10,000 cases of wine per year in this hillside zone. The proposed (not yet permitted) winery will be within sight of neighbors. A public tasting room and events center is planned. Santa Clara County failed to require an Environmental Impact Report even though both sides of the ridge-top property drain into different publicly owned preserves and into a stream protected by Fish and Game ordinances. Only after neighbors intervened did Santa Clara County require an Environmental Impact Report.

County planning Commissions and Boards of Supervisors are required to review and update their General Plan every five years. SSA Board of Directors needs input from members to inform the Counties of desired changes.

Attend the January 27 General Meeting to learn more about the issues. SSA Board of Directors plans to gather information from you via a questionnaire in a later issue of *Skylines*. Please consider how to balance the needs of the larger community with the property rights of landowners in order to maintain a chosen quality of life that includes parks for those living in cities or here, and private land for those who choose to live in the mountains.

Landslides Are Likely This Winter – What Can We Do?

By Patti Begley

Mother Nature dumped a lot of rain on us in the beginning of the New Year, and with that came fallen trees and landslides, especially on some of our roads. What can we do help assure our safety in an area where slides might be a problem?

Skyliner, Dick Schwind, provides some good ideas for checking to see if there have been any changes in the slope of your house: "If some corner or part of your house is on fill and/or on a hillside, you may want to take a sensitive carpenter's level (2 ft. or preferably longer) and record how level is the top of your foundation, top of the floor, and/or how plumb (vertical) are the hinge side of doors, etc. Look for changes over time. Look for sloping downhill toward the fill, which might suggest movement or compaction of the fill soil under the foundation. Check the accuracy of your level by rotating it 180 degrees horizontally and reading the same bubble from the other side (split the difference if there is any). If there is noticeable movement (1/16 or 1/8 inch per foot) in a month, it is time to take immediate action."

Local engineer and building contractor Tom Anderson offered these pointers: "House movement always manifests itself by cracking plaster or drywall, (*Continued on page 7.*)

Recent Changes in State Law Will Affect Area Residents Brush Clearance Increased to 100 ft.

By Chuck Schoppe

Last year, our state experienced an intensive fire season. The areas of Morgan Hill, Walnut Creek, and Southern California saw fast-spreading and damaging fires.

Our high rainfall amounts can mean more abundant grasses and denser brush. Dry grass, brush, dead trees, and low-hanging branches are fuels, which lead to very fast-spreading and disastrous fires. Droughts in recent years have stressed our trees making them weak and defenseless against the ravages of beetles, causing great patches of dead and dying pines and firs. Sudden oak death disease has killed thousands of trees.

Looking out over our hillsides reveals the thousands of still-standing dead trees which will provide fuel for fires this year and for many years in the future. We live in a high fire-danger area and it is the responsibility of each property owner to address these issues in order to minimize the dangers of fire. To do so, a homeowner provides protection for himself, his family and property and for his neighbors as well.

All of us have work to do, and with the recent changes in state law our work is even greater this year. In past years the mandated clearance of fast-burning vegetation around structures has been 30 feet. As of January 1, 2005 a **new state law requires that property owners must increase vegetation clearance around all structures to 100 feet** – an increase of 70 feet! This is one of the conditions that CDF will be checking when they conduct their annual inspections. This new law also provides insurance companies with rights to enforce compliance through their own inspections and/or policy cancellation for non-compliance. It should be noted also, that failure to comply may affect settlement of a fire damage claim to your insurance carrier. *A few SSA residents have been contacted by their homeowner insurance carrier and been threatened with cancellation for lack of compliance to the new regulations.*

This does not mean that you must take trees and plants down to bare dirt, however. What is expected is a 100 foot “defensible space”. In order to create this space the grass must be mowed down to less than 6 inches and the area raked clean of organic matter; removal or pruning of overgrown bushes and trees; and removal of all debris. Trees should be pruned of low branches to 6 feet in order to eliminate ladder fuels, and trimmed at least 10 feet away from the roof. Shrubs should be pruned to 18 inches high. Remove all dead branches, leaves, pine and fir needles, yard waste and debris of any kind. Fire-resistant landscaping should always be considered when renovating or planting new areas around the house. In a wildland fire emergency defensible houses will get CDF priority over non-defensible structures!

Make your family’s fire-safety education a priority! To learn more, pick up free printed publications, available from the friendly people at our local CDF fire stations or from your South Skyline Emergency Preparedness Organization neighborhood coordinator. You can also check on-line at the following websites: www.sccfiresafe.org , www.smcfiresafe.org , and www.fire.ca.gov .

Landslides – What Can We Do?

(Continued from page 6.)

usually at the corners of windows and door openings. Sticking doors and windows are another clue. Some is normal - be aware of unusual or rapid changes. Steep hillsides next to homes pose the particular risk of the structure being engulfed or swept away.” He recommends two websites with landslide info and maps: www.consrv.ca.gov/index/ www.consrv.ca.gov/index/ and www.abag.ca.gov .

The American Red Cross also has some good general information on what to watch for and what to do about landslides. For detailed information go to www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_254_00.html

Here are a few highlights from the Red Cross website:

- **Areas that are generally prone to landslide hazards include** existing old landslides; the bases of steep slopes; the bases of drainage channels; and developed hillsides where leach-field septic systems are used. Learn whether landslides and debris flows have occurred in your area by contacting geo-technical consulting firm.
- **Learn what to watch for prior to major landsliding.** Look for patterns of storm-water drainage on slopes. Check hillsides for small landslides or debris flows or progressively tilting trees.
- **Listen for any unusual sounds that might indicate moving debris, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together.** A trickle of flowing or falling mud or debris may precede larger landslides. Moving debris can flow quickly and sometimes without warning.
- **If you are near a stream or channel, be alert for any sudden increase or decrease in water flow and for a change from clear to muddy water.** Such changes may indicate landslide activity upstream, so be prepared to move quickly. Don't delay! Save yourself, not your belongings.
- **Be especially alert when driving.** Embankments along roadsides are particularly susceptible to landslides. Watch the road for collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks, and other indications of possible debris flows.
- **If you suspect an imminent landslide, contact local officials, inform neighbors, evacuate!**

California Hazelnut Graces Skyline

By Sarah Schoen



California hazelnuts (*Corylus cornuta* var *californica*) are one of the more graceful shrubs growing in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Reaching up to 12 feet high, the multiple stems, horizontally-tiered branches and rounded crown give them an open spreading appearance. In fall, the mixtures of yellow and green leaves mimic the dappled sunlight under which the plants often live.

Hazelnut leaves are alternate, double-serrated with a rounded base and sharp tip. They are covered with fine, downy hairs - pale below and darker green above. Winter deciduous, they turn yellow in the fall before dropping, and reappear in the spring. Trunks and branches have smooth, gray bark. New twigs are brown and hairy and, if undisturbed, grow in a zigzag pattern.

Male and female flowers grow separately on the same plant. Stalkless male catkins first appear in October or November, dangling from year-old outer branches. They don't release pollen until January to March, when the female flowers are in bloom. Singly or in pairs, female flowers appear as small, rounded scaly buds on the joints of that year's stems. The two protruding bright red stigmas are best viewed with a hand lens. Although pollination occurs in winter, fertilization is delayed until the ovaries become receptive in the spring.

The nuts, very similar and related to filberts, are ½ inch across and grow singly or in pairs inside a 1" bristly husk. *Corylus* is from the Greek *korys*, for hood or helmet, relating to the husk's shape. Relatively large crops ripen on an irregular basis - every 2-3 or 5 years. References disagree on the time of ripening - late spring to early fall. Perhaps that is because it's difficult to find ripe nuts before they are eaten. Squirrels and jays favor the nuts. Deer and rabbits browse the foliage.

California hazelnut nuts grow in cool canyons, along streams, and in the understory of north-facing slopes. Santa Cruz County is at the southern end of their distribution, which goes north to British Columbia. Adapted to fire, the shrubs are crown sprouters and produce a bumper crop of nuts two years later.

California hazelnuts were very important to early California natives. There are indications the plants were once much

more common, being tended in hazelnut flats. The nuts were eaten raw or roasted. They were also ground into meal and either baked into bread or mixed with water to make porridge. The nut husk was used as a remedy for parasitic intestinal worms. Stems were used in basketry, branches for arrows, and new growth twisted into rope. Using fire and pruning as management tools, nut production was increased and numerous straight (rather than zigzag) stems preferred in basketry were encouraged to grow.

Hiking the Table Mountain / Stevens Canyon / Peters Creek / Long Ridge Loop

By Jerry Peters

This is another one of my favorite hikes in our local area because it explores numerous and diverse ecosystems and is also physically challenging. You start in the mixed evergreens and then wind around in the chaparral before descending into the Douglas Fir forest of Stevens Canyon. On the way down you can explore unique Table Mountain before continuing further down to Stevens Creek. After following the creek for a while, you climb back out of the canyon on a moderately graded fire road back to Skyline Blvd. You next cross the highway and enter Long Ridge Openspace Preserve. In this beautiful preserve, while returning to your starting point, you will enjoy Peters Creek, Jikoji pond and finally, dramatic views of Butano Ridge and the Pescadero coastline. The hike is a loop of slightly under 10-miles but is strenuous due to the 2100-ft. elevation gain. Despite this fact, there are not many steep sections going uphill. Most of the time you are hiking in the shade, but during the last 1.5-miles you will be exposed to the sun. Again, bring the essentials--a hat, plenty of water and a substantial lunch to help you complete this hike.

Park at the Hickory Oaks trailhead on Skyline Blvd. (1.7 miles north of Highway 9). Get a South Skyline Region Openspace Preserves map at the Long Ridge OSP kiosk to the west of Skyline. Return and cross the road and follow the sign for the Saratoga Gap Trail. You will go to the east for 0.3-mile until you reach Charcoal Road. You can get a map for Upper Stevens Creek County Park here (but the MROSD map is better). Go a very short distance along Charcoal Road and take the Table Mountain Trail on the left. This is the nicest trail in Upper Stevens Creek County Park. As you wind down into the canyon, the scenery continues to change and after 2.7-miles you will reach Table Mountain, an 1800-foot knob protruding from deep in the canyon. I heard that it was so flat you could put a table on it. Actually, the area is strangely deforested which leads to some good views of Montebello Ridge, but I wondered if the trees were used to make charcoal? Next, continue for another mile along the trail until you reach and cross Stevens Creek. Follow the (Continued on page 11.)



Our Flying Cats

By Larry and Judith Watson
Photos and text © 2005

Rodent management is a continuous task for most of us in the South Skyline Area (rodent control is believed to be unachievable). A recent addition to the management program at our house is our pair of "flying cats". (Photographed by a digital camera held up to a 20-40x spotting scope in the den from about 60 feet, 6:18am, 9/14/2005).

Bubo Virginianus

They may weigh about 3-4 pounds, hunt mostly at night, pounce on their prey from above or behind, and have a diet of mostly rodents or other small mammals plus an occasional bird, reptile or amphibian. Historically known as cat owls or flying tigers, our pair of Great Horned Owls have voracious appetites. Distributed throughout much of the Western hemisphere, the adults have few enemies unless they are on the ground. They are reported to love skunks and can take animals 2 to 3 times their weight. In some locations they may wade in shallow water for crustaceans or eat earthworms.

The Perch

In collaboration with our neighbor Mike we installed two 16" wide, 2" diameter perches each approximately 24' off the ground centered along our open grasslands area comprising approximately one acre. This is the same area where we have been plagued by gophers. Our properties adjoin state park that includes scattered grasslands within mixed evergreen, fir monocultures, or chaparral. Using the perch width as a guide, we estimate our flying cats are almost 24" head to tail. Because they have wingspans up to 5', they cannot effectively hunt in cluttered areas. The pole came from an Arizona Cypress that was cut and then planted 3' in the ground. We know that this wood will last in the ground for several years. The 2" diameter perch was 16" from the top of the pole, notched to fit tightly on the upright, and then secured with two 3" galvanized deck screws downward through the top of the perch.



Perch for What?

After we put up the raptor perches, we saw that they were used by kestrels when permitted brush fires were burning, on rare occasion by hawks or vultures, perhaps a jay or black phoebe, but you know that an owl is using a perch when you find one or more pellets on the ground below:

Owl Pellets

The digestive system of most owls accommodates their practice of swallowing their prey whole or in chunks. The first "stomach" or craw is the chamber where digestive juices dissolve the nutrients within the softer tissues but the hair, fur, feathers, bones, and teeth remain after each meal and the resulting compressed pellet must be ejected (upchucked, "got something stuck in your craw") 6 to 10 hours after eating. Some sources report that owls cannot fly during this period.

By dissecting an owl pellet, you can determine some of the ingredients of the preceding meal. A 3" long pellet that we found this spring contained these larger bones, which we believe to be a dusky-footed wood rat:



Good Idea?

Is attracting Great Horned Owls a good thing to do? These owls seem to be the superior competitor to other rodent-eating residents of our area, including: bobcats, coyotes, foxes, and other raptors. We haven't seen foxes or bobcats in the yard since the owls showed up. Yes, the coyotes do still pass through.

We still have some gophers but they are largely restricted to areas that are out of line-of-sight to the perches or are in areas with insufficient room for these large birds to navigate. The frequency of trapping deer mice or wood rats in the crawspace and garage has certainly declined. Possibly on the downside, it seems that we saw fewer bats than in previous summers. However, the bats that roost in our bat houses, and under the gutters, seem to have always had more than one place of residence. They were never here when it was very hot or very cold. We don't know if owls catch bats or perhaps just make them feel unwelcome.

Barn Owls

Being aware of the success of barn owls in gopher control throughout much of California farmlands, we erected a barn owl house years ago but it has never been occupied. Great Horned Owls will not tolerate Barn Owls around and now they use the house as another perch.

References

When searching the Internet for information we found <http://www.owlpages.com/> to be a great site. *Editor's Note: Another good site, that includes calls in sound files, is <http://www.owling.com/>.*

Ranger Holly Retires

By Ranger Holly & Judy Grote



Ranger Holly has been the Supervising Ranger for Portola Redwoods and Castle Rock State Parks for the past 15 years. Besides being Supervising Ranger for the parks, she has been instrumental to the success of the Portola & Castle Rock Foundation with her enthusiasm for helping us with all the interpretive exhibits and maps as well as the further development of Castle Rock State Park. Judy, Stu

Langdoc, and the rest of the Foundation will miss Holly very much. We wish her well in her retirement and hope she will continue with her interpretive interests in the park. Below is Holly's impressive bio.

Holly has been with the California State Park system since 1971. She was attending San Diego State when the specification requirements for California State Park Ranger were rewritten. One of the significant changes was to open the door for women applicants. She was hired in October 1971, and her first assignment was San Onofre and San Clemente State Beaches in Orange County.

April 1, 1973 found her at Henry W. Coe State Park: There she addressed cattle trespassing and poaching problems, using horses and a four-wheel drive patrol vehicle in the isolated coastal mountain back country. Holly developed the Interpretive Prospectus and Unit History for Henry Coe.

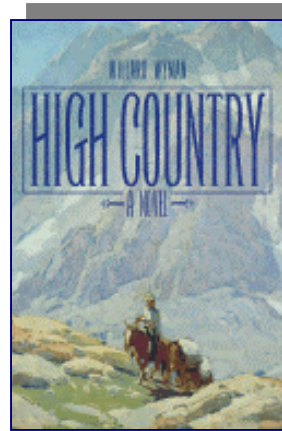
In 1974, the District asked her to go to San Juan Bautista State Historic Park: Some of the memorable projects she completed were a revision of the unit history, documentary photography of the Mission restoration, development of a Teacher's Aid Kit to assist 4th grade teachers to prepare their classes for field trips to the park and Mission, and helped to develop and participate in the living history program at the unit.

April 20, 1978 took her to Lake Oroville State Recreation Area. Holly drew boat patrol her second year and loved it. She used her law enforcement skills extensively and was very involved in aquatic safety and boat inspections. Navigating by instrument in the fog in winter on the lake was a challenge, but rescuing someone who ended up in the freezing water before they died of hypothermia was very rewarding.

May 1, 1981, Holly returned to Central California and spent the next 10 years at Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area. Besides motorcycle patrol that was always fun, she developed and submitted several Minor Capital Outlay projects. All the staff had ample opportunity to apply their Emergency Medical Responder skills. She thinks she

probably had to render first aid for the fracture of every bone in the human body during her 10 years there.

On January 31, 1991 Holly was promoted to Supervising Ranger for Portola Redwoods and Castle Rock State Parks. It is here she has spent the last half of a long and rewarding career. She was very involved in the Portola and Castle Rock Foundation. She says these have been the best of her years with parks due in large part to her great staff, the wonderful neighbors, personnel from other agencies, and the variety of people from all walks of life she has had the privilege to meet and befriend. The parks themselves are so special with towering redwoods, grand vistas, great rock formations, oak woodlands and the opportunity to observe up close the rich variety of wildlife from insects to Mountain Lions.



High Country A Novel by Willard Wyman

By Patti Begley

It's always fun to hear about our Skyline "neighbors" and their interesting and exciting accomplishments. Will Wyman has accomplished many things in his lifetime, and the latest is the recent publication of his novel *High Country*.

Will has taught literature and been a dean of students at both Stanford University and Colby College and is Headmaster Emeritus of The Thacher School. He has also been a wrangler, guide, and packer in Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness and the Sierra Nevada High Country for over forty years.

Will has drawn from his experience as a packer to write *High Country*, a story about Ty, a young man who is sent from his family's failing Montana Ranch during the Great Depression to learn from the last of the great packers in the Montana Rockies. His packing adventures take him from the Swan Range to the Big Divide. After his mentor dies, Ty leaves Montana for the Sierra Nevada where he becomes a legend in his own right.

A quote from the University of Oklahoma Press says, "Writing in the tradition of Norman Maclean's *A River Runs Through It*, Willard Wyman shares techniques of breaking and packing and leading animals into forbidding country, hunting and tracking, and making camp. Wyman brings you so close to the packer's life you smell the leather, sweat, and oil."

Hiking the Table Mountain ... (Continued from page 8)

signs to the Canyon Trail. Follow this trail for 0.3-mile until you see the sign for the Grizzly Flats Trail. Take the connector trail and again cross Stevens Creek; continue on until you reach the fire road. There are some nice lunch spots in this area along the water. Note: in the winter these creek crossings can be difficult; you may need to cross on downed trees.

Now, you must deal with the 2-mile uphill fire road that is called the Grizzly Flats Trail. While it is not steep, you will be happy when you make the highway! So find the right pace and enjoy one of the best examples of a Douglas Fir forest in the area. See if you can spot the big tree I call "Branchy" about halfway up on the east side of the road. Keep to the right at both junctions along the way. Leave Upper Stevens Creek County Park, cross the road and enter Long Ridge Openspace Preserve. Go down into the canyon and follow signs to the Peters Creek Trail. While following the Peters Creek Trail along the creek, see if you can spot the ancient apple orchard, grazing lands and ranch-site of the former Bar WY Ranch. After slightly less than 2-miles, you will reach Jikoji Pond. As you cross the dam you can occasionally see some waterfowl. Follow the trail one-half

mile up the hill and you reach Ward Road and the Long Ridge Trail. Enjoy the coastal views here because you get a more northerly perspective. You continue to get fantastic views as you follow the Long Ridge Trail and then the Hickory Oaks Trail to the south. After 1 1/3-miles you will reach the end of the trail (and the beginning of the Achistaca Trail which continues south). Follow the road to the left down to the highway and you are back at the starting point. I think you might agree that this hike gives you "a lot of bang for the buck."

As an alternative to this strenuous hike, I recommend the 5-mile Long Ridge Loop. Park at the Grizzly Flats trailhead (on Skyline, 3.3 miles north of Hwy 9). Follow the instructions above past the pond and to the ridge. In this case, follow the Long Ridge Trail to the north past the Stegner Bench and back into the forest. Avoid the road to the right at the first intersection; stay on the footpath. Continue to follow the Long Ridge Trail along Portola Heights Road and then up and around the ridge and back to Peters Creek. Follow the signs back to the parking lot.

Classified Ads

FOR SALE

Two Buck inserts for open fireplaces with blowers that have temp controls. One at \$500 and one hardly used at \$750. 408-353-3393

Sierra Wood Stove: Side-loader, freestanding or fit on fireplace sill. Includes shield to cover fireplace opening. \$200 Keith 408-867-8670

SERVICES

Skyline Broadband Service
1Mbps symmetrical broadband is now available in the South Skyline area. A customer quote: "Wow!"-- Adam
Visit our website at
<http://SkylineBroadbandService.com>
650-917-9279

Attorney – Wills & Trusts Review, Tax Background, Bay Area native. Home office near Four Corners on Skyline.
Amir Atashi Rang (650) 851-9166
www.arp-law.com

Pet Sitting now through mid-June by responsible 11-year old. In Hwy 9 / Skyline Blvd. area. Starting at \$5 per day. Call Patti 408-867-3973

SERVICES

Alice's Restaurant
Four Corners on Skyline
Locally owned and operated
8:30AM-9:00PM daily; 7:00PM (Tuesday)
Gourmet dinners from our chef, Ruffino
Full breakfast and luncheon menu
Personable and knowledgeable Maitre D'
(650) 851-0303

The Mountain Terrace
Charming and rustic atmosphere uniquely suited to your special occasion. Now available for private events (650) 851-1606

HELP WANTED

Administrative Assistant Part-time position (flexible, 8:00AM – 1:00PM Monday - Thursday) located in the Skyline/Hwy 35 area of Woodside. Duties will include answering the telephone, processing and packing orders; posting accounts receivables, data entry, and miscellaneous customer service and office support tasks. Requirements: proficient typing ability, great phone manner, competence with Microsoft Office, ability to handle order entry and its associated bookkeeping tasks. No phone calls. Please send your resume to eric@informationpublications.com

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Sound technician and other volunteers needed by "Into the Woods for Performing Arts" to help with planning and staging occasional benefit concerts for the Lakeside School Community Center on Black Rd. The sound tech would need to be able to set up, strike, and provide the stage monitor & Front of House (FOH) system for audio reinforcement of small, primarily acoustic groups, and provide the FOH and monitor mix for those groups as well. The FOH mix is a standard stereo arrangement and there can be up to two monitor mixes provided on stage. Any and all types of volunteers are needed! Contact Laurie Gee 408-867-1546

FREE

Free fire fitting. This fitting will allow the connection of a fire hose to your water supply and can be utilized by the fire department to access the water necessary for fire suppression. South Skyline Fire and Rescue, George 408-354-1401

Exerciser: It has many upper and lower body resistive exercises and a stepper. I would like to give it away to someone. Call me if you are interested. 650-941-4684

SOUTH SKYLINE ASSOCIATION

Box 400, Star Route 2

La Honda, CA 94020

Inserted in this issue of *Skylines* is an application for the 2006 South Skyline Association Membership. The \$15 membership dues fund the publication of the *Skylines* and General Meeting expenses. All members receive a copy of the *Skylines* and free classified ads.

A membership application can also be printed from the SSA website at www.southskyline.org/About.html

SSA Calendar

General Meeting – January 27, CDF
Fire Station

Business Meetings at 7:15 pm:

Thurs. January 12

Thurs. February 9

Thurs. March 9

(Call Bill Prince for location and
directions)

President Bill Prince 650-917-9279

Editor Patti Begley 408-867-3973

SSA Volunteer Sign-ups

Periodically, SSA needs volunteers. Sometimes simply to help set up or tear down at a general meetings (4 times per year), and sometimes we need people to sit on a committee (infrequent, but sometimes once or twice per year).

If you would like to participate once in a while, let us know, and we will add you to our private volunteer mailing list.

Email us if interested at: webMaster@SouthSkyline.org

***Skylines* Is Published Once A Quarter**

Skylines invites individuals to submit articles and artwork.

Policy on Classified Ads: Ads are free to SSA members. No continuing ads will be accepted. They must be resubmitted for each issue. Deadline date for ads for the April issue will be April 1, 2006.

***Skylines* News Articles:** The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue is March 27, 2006.

Send all ads and articles to: Patti Begley c/o 22400 Skyline Blvd #35, La Honda CA 94020, or SkylinesEditor@earthlink.net, 408-867-3973
We reserve the right to edit all submissions. We assume no responsibility for omissions, incorrect information or personal opinions.