SSA GENERAL MEETING

The South Pacific Coast Railroad 1880-1940
Presented by Brian Liddicoat

Friday, October 23
7:00 pm - Refreshments • 7:30 pm - Featured presentation

Saratoga Summit Fire Station, 12900 Skyline Blvd.
Please bring a dessert to share. • SSA will provide beverages.

Attorney Brian Liddicoat will entertain us with a history of the old South Pacific Coast “Mountain Division” railroad line that once ran through the Santa Cruz Mountains from Los Gatos to Santa Cruz via Felton. Having hiked and uncovered the entire abandoned railroad right-of-way (with the poison oak and dog bites to prove it), Brian will take us through the story of the line’s amazing construction in the 1870s, its financial rise and fall and its closure in 1940. He will show us what remains of it now, including photographs of the great tunnels that once ran under Highway 17.

Brian Liddicoat is a real estate attorney from Santa Cruz County. A California native, Brian earned a law degree and MBA from UC Berkeley and practices real estate transactions and litigation throughout the state. He lives in Corralitos with his wife and two children.

This is a community event; free and open to the public. You do not need to be a SSA member to attend.

Directions: The Saratoga Summit Fire Station is located on the west side of Skyline, about 6/10 of a mile north of the intersection of Skyline and Highway 9.

NEW SSA MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON

After many years of service in the role of membership chairperson, Ruth Waldhauer is passing the baton to the new SSA membership chairperson Debra Born. Ruth has done an amazing job and the SSA is so appreciative to her and to Debra for taking on this important task.

The contact information for all future membership dues and questions and communications regarding membership is:

Debra Born, Membership Chairperson
7405 Alpine Road, La Honda, CA 94020
debbborn@gmail.com • 650-917-9648
WHAT IS YOUR SSA BOARD DOING?

Michael Rowe, President

General Meeting

The summer meeting & potluck was a beautiful event at Jaqua Ranch (many thanks to Ami and Dick for hosting). The speaker program on “Wildlife Crossing Structures for Highway 17”, presented by Tanya Diamond and Ahiga Snyder of Pathway for Wildlife (www.pathwaysforwildlife.com), was fascinating. Attendees learned about the research project to determine where and why animals attempt to cross Highway 17 and about proposed solutions to minimize interactions with vehicles. I was pleasantly surprised at how interesting the research was and how well the speakers knew their topic. It seemed, based on the questions and discussion, that everyone else felt the same. If you missed the presentation, I encourage you to check out their website and see the article in the last Skylines (available at http://southskyline.org/newsletters/).

Speaking of General Meetings, please join us at the next meeting on October 23rd, hosted by the Saratoga Summit Cal Fire station on Skyline Blvd., just north of Highway 9 junction. Brian Liddicoat, Santa Cruz Mountain Historian, will speak about “The Lost Railroad Tunnels of the Santa Cruz Mountains”.

SSA Renewal for 2016

Wait, we’re not nearly done with 2015…why am I bringing up 2016 renewals now? After decades of no increases in the annual membership dues, the board has approved a modest increase of $5, bringing an annual membership cost to $20. Before anyone screams “Blasphemy!” please consider the following justifications:

• As printing and postage fees have increased over the years, the SSA has absorbed the price increases without changing membership dues.
• On average, a household spending $20 annually on SSA membership reaps $500/yr savings on propane discounts through the SPUG program.
• SSA Membership dues get plowed directly back in to our community (see next section).

At any rate, I hope you continue to support us and don’t find the rate increase obnoxious. I’d love to hear your feedback on this.

SSA Donations/Grants

If you just read the section above, you are probably asking, “what the heck does he mean that the membership dues get plowed directly back in to the community?” We make donations to CAL Fire, The South Skyline Fire-Safe Council, and South Skyline Emergency Preparedness Organization (SSEPO), to name a few. We’ve done this for years, but have not been the best about communicating the accounting to our membership. It is my goal to improve the communication, starting now. In just the last two board meetings the SSA Board has approved a $5000.00 grant to La Honda Fire Brigade for the GIS Mapping Project (see article in August 2015 Skylines), and a $5000.00 grant to Portola and Castle Rock Foundation to help them rebuild the campfire center at Portola Redwoods State Park and expand their membership program.
**Southskyline.org**

Our website continues to evolve, thanks in large part to the tireless effort of Larry Watson and our Communication Committee. I know this has been a long “work in progress”, but we purposely want to take it slow and get it right so that we don’t suffer any crashes or security issues. Please bear with us through the process. Soon, we hope to roll out the option for online membership renewals, but probably too late for 2016 renewals…stay tuned for the official announcement. Please make sure you provide us with any suggestions or comments on the website – we work for you, but need your input to make it a website that is most useful for our community.

**In the Neighborhood**

In other news, we are still working out strategies for dealing with the problem of late night racing and reckless driving along Skyline Blvd and Highway 9. (See article in this issue of Skylines). Similarly, we are still investigating how to work with the proper authorities to remove abandoned vehicles along the roadside and in State Park properties. Both of these issues are complicated by the fact that we are spanning the jurisdiction of three counties and State Park lands. There is no easy solution, but it is an important issue in our community and we will continue to work on it. Once again, I welcome the community’s input and suggestions…perhaps you have some contacts in local or state government that we haven’t pursued?

**CURRENT SSA BOARD MEMBERS**

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<td>Kristin Anderson</td>
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<td>Patti Begley</td>
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<td>Vice President, Communications &amp; Website Committees</td>
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<td>Debra Born</td>
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<td>Kim Hamilton</td>
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<td>Highway 9 - Santa Cruz County</td>
<td>Website Committee, Public Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Rowe</td>
<td>Highway 9 - Santa Cruz County</td>
<td>President</td>
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**START YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EARLY!**

Order your gift copies of this fascinating book on the history of our Skyline area, richly supported with historic photographs and detailed maps.

We will mail your gift copy for you and include a gift card if so desired. Your cost is just $33.11 includes tax & shipping.

Email chuck_sch@hotmail.com for more information or details.
ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

Jerry Peters

On Monday, June 22nd, volunteers Debbie Cunningham, Betty Arnold, Armen Leonian and Jerry Peters met at the Vista Point at 10 am to gather litter. Debbie and Betty were first-time participants and both proved to be very strong assets to our program. Betty had no problem working out in the weeds and Debbie was extremely thorough in her gathering. Armen comes to work every time we gather litter and has become the Coordinator’s right-hand man.

On Monday, August 24th, volunteers Sue and David Myrick, Armen Leonian and Jerry Peters met at the Vista Point at 10 am to gather litter. Sue and David have recently moved into the community and were first-time participants. The area was littered more than we have seen in the past and it was a big job to get it cleaned up.

Because the Coordinator was tired, he forgot to take a photo and apologizes to the participants who worked so hard.

SSA & SHS volunteers are responsible for gathering litter every two months. The sweep takes about an hour and a half. So far over 170 names are on the honor role listing those who have participated. We love getting new recruits. Please volunteer once. You will find it both rewarding and fun. Contact Jerry Peters (JPontheridge@gmail.com), the new Coordinator of the Adopt-A-Highway project to volunteer.

SOUTH SKYLINE FIRESAFE COUNCIL COMPLETES PG&E-FUNDED ALPINE ROAD CLEARING PROJECT

Dick Schwind

Debra Born of Alpine Road has just completed the SSFSC Alpine Road fuel break project extending from Skyline Blvd to Portola Redwoods State Park Road, a distance of about 3 miles. PG&E Corporation funded this $18,000 project via a larger grant they made to the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council. This project had to meet the San Mateo County Roads Department for traffic control (signs and flagging) which some tree companies can provide. Much of this road fronts MROSD property.

Debra’s main challenge was coordinating the involved parties, developing the work statement and bid package, and winning the cooperation of the landowners who border the road to extend an easement to the county over their property. She was successful at getting a winning contract for a large amount of work for this relatively small budget.

The San Mateo County Roads Department annually mows out about 7 or 8 feet from the edge of the gravel that borders the paved road. This project typically carried the clearing out beyond the old broken down fence for several feet into the brush. The contractor’s workmen dealt with a very tough environment - ruining dozens of chainsaw chains trying to eat the un-seeable fencing in thick brush, mowing through poison oak, and occasionally arousing a nest of yellow jackets! Delays in the project authorizations pushed the work into Debra’s vacation plans so Sue and David Myrick and I helped with monitoring the crew work.

Achieving added clearance along this part of Alpine Road is especially valuable as the road mostly follows closely to a ridge top, ideal for fire line that stops a wildland fire from either direction. Our FireSafe Council has now completed the reduction of fuel loads (shaded fuel breaks) along about 17 miles of our roads. This improves the chances of establishing fire lines and better emergency evacuation in a wildland fire. Please consider joining the all-volunteer SSFSC to help us continue our valuable work by calling me, Dick Schwind at 408-867-9422.

Robert Bradford passed away in August 2015. During the 1960s he came to live in the Medway Forest commune, and later moved to his own cabin further south on Skyline. He contributed information to the South Skyline history book. He was a faithful participant with Adopt-A-Highway cleanups for many years. Thank you, Robert.
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Lisa Short Chupity

The SC4ARC participated in the annual ARRL Field Day event on June 27-28 in La Honda Gardens. Our club, along with some 35,000 other radio amateurs set up remote radio operations and made contacts all over the world for 24 hours. Although it’s a lot of fun, it’s also an exercise in setting up an emergency communications center. We set ours up to be “off-grid”, using only a generator, solar, and batteries (much like the conditions in any disaster).

This year, we had 29 participants setting up the antennae, operating two transmitters, holding classes, and staffing an information booth. We made 262 contacts by “phone” (speaking on a radio), and 32 digital contacts using a laptop computer. As a fun bonus, we made two contacts with the International Space Station, using a small antenna made from a steel tape measure!

In other news, our local emergency coordinators (ECs) Pat O’Coffee, Linda Bennett, Jeneen Sommers, Robert Smith, and Peter Chupity renamed the tactical frequencies we’d use in an emergency to keep things consistent with the coastside emergency plan, and to keep communications smooth so that no operator is overwhelmed with traffic.

Lastly, the Burlingame office of the American Red Cross made a gift of eight older Dell laptops which will be used by our emergency coordinators in coastside zones 1, 2, and 3, for digital communications over Amateur Radio. The laptops were in various need of spare parts (power supplies, the odd hard drive, etc.). Most of them are now fully operational. These will be used with the WinLink system for emergency e-mails, and health and welfare checks (let your loved ones know you’re all right). The SC4ARC is grateful to the Red Cross for donating these, and they’ll go to good use for training or in any emergency.

VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES EXEMPTED FROM PAYING STATE SALES TAX ON THEIR FUNDRAISERS

The following press release will be of great interest to community members. Our thanks to Laurie McLean, Chief Ari Delay and Peggy Wargo for their contributions to this vital information:

September 3, La Honda, California — Last night California Governor Jerry Brown signed State Bill 598 into law, which eliminates paying sales taxes on fundraisers for All Volunteer fire departments across the state. This will save these important organizations thousands of dollars a year, funds much needed for new equipment, services and supplies to save lives in their communities.

The bill was initiated by members of the La Honda Volunteer Fire Brigade located in a small mountain town south of San Francisco. Formed in 1950, the Brigade asked that volunteer fire departments be added to the list of “consumers” in the eyes of the State Board of Equalization thereby removing the requirements the Sales and Use Tax Law places on Retailers. The bill was sponsored by California State Senator Jerry Hill and supported by Chief Ron Coleman, and Afrack Vargas, of the California State Firefighters Association.

“This bill will put thousands of dollars into the budgets of these often tiny fire departments formed out of a community need for their life-saving services. Many parts of California rely on volunteer fire departments to provide fire prevention and emergency response, especially in rural areas. These departments mostly comprise residents who voluntarily band together to provide these vital public services. It will save our fire brigade thousands of dollars each year that we can desperately use,” said La Honda Fire Brigade Chief Ari Delay.

You can read the entire text of the bill here: http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/15-16/bill/sen/sb_0551-0600/sb_598_cfa_20150402_151327_sen_comm.html.

For more information: La Honda Fire Brigade Chief Ari Delay: 650-747-0381
La Honda Fire Brigade Treasurer Peggy Wargo: 650-839-3933
SSEPO FORMING SOUTH SKYLINE CERT GROUP

Jerry Parsons, SSEPO President

There are a number of us who are CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) certified and live in the South Skyline Area: Along and near Skyline Boulevard between La Honda Road to the north and Bear Creek Road to the south.

Until now CERTs in this area have had no official recognition as a CERT group by CalFire or the emergency service organizations of the Tri-County (San Mateo, Santa Cruz and Santa Clara) area of our residents. In recognition of this situation, Cal Fire has requested that SSEPO organize our South Skyline Area CERTs into the South Skyline CERT Group.

SSEPO is in the process of forming this group. An informational email has been sent to all known CERTs in the South Skyline Area. If you are CERT trained, live in the South Skyline Area, and have not received this email, please contact Jerry Parsons at jstanley7@aol.com. We will provide the email and add you to our CERT group list. If you are not CERT trained but would like to become involved in this group, please let us know as we have CERT training classes at least once a year here in our mountain area.

CERTs in this new group will be officially activated by Cal Fire to help as CERT volunteers during emergencies. This will be a great opportunity to assist areas beyond our own neighborhoods in need of help, and a great way to gain additional CERT experience – of benefit within our own neighborhoods as well as beyond.

Here is how the South Skyline CERT Group would fit into the emergency preparedness of our own neighborhoods and of the South Skyline Area:

1. During major disasters such as an earthquake, each neighborhood (such as Las Cumbres or Portola Heights) would self-activate according to its own emergency preparedness plan. That would include the CERT priorities of self, family, home, neighborhood, and mutual assistance with nearby neighbors. These CERT priorities are followed whether or not a formal CERT activation occurs.

2. If a formal South Skyline CERT Group activation occurs, CERT response is voluntary. Responding CERTs would follow the instructions of the formal activation regarding where to report for an assignment. Activation communication channels are being developed for our Tri-County area.

Here is how we formally establish the South Skyline CERT Group:

1. SSEPO is now assembling the names, photos, and activation information of all CERTs interested in being a part of this group.

2. Your activation information includes you name, mailing address, email address, and landline and mobile phone numbers you wish to be used for your activation. This information will be entered into the CalFire approved CERT Activation System. It will also be used for notification of South Skyline CERT meetings, trainings, and drill plans.

3. CalFire will make CERT ID cards.

4. CalFire will hold a meeting for all CERTs in this group to conduct a swearing in as a Disaster Service Worker (DSW). The swearing in is the same as used for all California State employees. Once sworn in, you receive your CERT ID card.

5. The official DSW status qualifies you for Workers’ Compensation insurance, if you are injured during a formal activation in which you participate. We are seeking clarification on how Workers’ Comp will work in our Tri-County area.
Here’s Our Time Line:
1. Assemble photo and activation information by end of September.
2. Cal Fire will produce the CERT ID Cards probably in October.
3. DSW swearing in will occur probably in November.
4. We will hold our first team meeting in January, after the holiday period.

Here is how SSEPO will support the South Skyline CERT Group:
1. SSEPO encourages each neighborhood to conduct its own emergency communication and response drills according to its own emergency preparedness plans, which may involve both CERTs and non-CERTs. SSEPO can provide training to help neighborhoods develop their emergency preparedness plans.
2. SSEPO will conduct one to three South Skyline Area communications and emergency response drills each year involving neighborhoods, regional hubs, and emergency services beyond the area, based on the objectives of the specific drill.
3. SSEPO will coordinate Basic CERT trainings, CPR/Basic First Aid classes, and possibly specialized CERT classes each year.
4. SSEPO will coordinate monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly South Skyline CERT team meetings. These may involve reviewing topics such as usage of CERT backpack gear, radio communications, table-top emergency scenarios, triage and first aid reviews, special speakers, etc. This will be a great way for CERTs from all neighborhoods of the South Skyline Area to interact with other CERTs and keep their skills up to date.

All of us on the SSEPO Board look forward to the formation and ongoing activities of the South Skyline CERT Group! Want to be part of this action? Contact us at jstanley7@aol.com.

NATURE NOTES

GOPHERS ARE BENEFICIAL TO YOUR SOIL

Some may curse those cute little burrowing rodents of the family Geomyidae for destroying gardens, and filling lawns with unsightly mounds of dirt but gophers, like many so-called pests, can also be an important part of the local ecosystem.

They increase soil fertility by mixing plant material and fecal wastes into the soil. Their burrowing aerates or tills the soil. They can help speed up the formation of new soil by bringing minerals to the surface and they also serve as food for a variety of animals including owls, coyotes, weasels, and snakes.

www.pestworldforkids.org/pest-guide/gophers/

If you have any snippets of information about local wildlife or fauna which you would like to share with your neighbors, please email to skylineseditor@yahoo.com

Get in touch with your neighbors. Share your ideas/concerns/activities.
Submit your artwork, photos, articles to SkylinesEditor@yahoo.com
LARGE ANIMAL EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Pat O’Coffee

Many of us who live in the South Skyline area have horses or other large animals. In the case of an emergency, the evacuation of large animals can be difficult. Each of the counties that exist in the South Skyline area have large animal evacuation groups as part of their county emergency response teams. The members of the large animal evac groups are all volunteers and they are activated similarly to CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) responders. As with CERT, this activation process is somewhat different depending on the county. Each member of these evac teams receives specialized training in handling large animals of all kinds, trailer driving, CPR, CERT and working within the incident command structure of the Office of Emergency Services. Most are also HAM radio operators to help facilitate communications with emergency responders. Each trained member is registered with their respective County Office of Emergency Services as Disaster Service Workers. This gives them the authorization to enter restricted areas to evacuate the animals in need. Each of these organizations will provide information and training to interested parties upon request.

What can you do to help your animals in the event of an emergency? In a word: PREPARE!

Prepare yourself, prepare your animal, prepare your equipment and prepare your property. Prepare yourself as an aware owner by having a plan for your own safety; immunize and keep documentation of your animal’s feed, health and medications; and ensure that your animal has permanent identification. Prepare your animal by taking him out and trailer-loading in the dark, using flashlights/glow sticks, using a blindfold, and by having other people handle your animal. Pack a “go” kit for your large animals: halters and lead ropes, ID forms and photos, markers, special instructions, etc. Prepare your property by having a primary and secondary escape route, gates and latches that can be opened quickly, and proper maintenance of your trailer. These are just a few suggestions. The San Mateo County Large Animal Evacuation Group would be happy to meet with interested parties to discuss what you can do to be prepared and what they can do to help in the case of an emergency.

As residents of three different counties, we in the South Skyline area have some unique cross-county issues. As can be read elsewhere in this newsletter, the South Skyline Emergency Preparedness Organization (SSEPO) is developing a South Skyline CERT organization, which will be activated when a disaster strikes in our area, regardless of which county it is in. I would like to include as part of this group, a large animal rescue team. If you are interested in belonging to this team or in getting additional information about large animal evacuation preparedness and services, please contact me via the below e-mail. Once I hear from interested parties, I will hold a meeting with representatives from the San Mateo County Large Animal Evac Group for further discussion of how we can help each other. Information about Santa Clara County and Santa Cruz County evacuation groups is also below.

San Mateo County Large Animal Evacuation Group (LAEG)
Contact: Pat O’Coffey, pocoffey@earthlink.net
President: Sharon Montoya-Brettz, sharonmontoyabrettz@gmail.com

Santa Cruz County Equine Evacuation Unit: www.equinevac.org

Santa Clara County Large Animal Evacuation Team: www.scclaet.org
PRESERVE YOUR OAKS BY UTILIZING DEER TO CONTROL SUDDEN OAK DEATH

Larry and Judith Watson

In our area of South Skyline essentially all California Bay Laurels can be infected with, and be the perfect host for, the organism that causes Sudden Oak Death (SOD), Phytophthora ramorum. This 400 year-old Coastal Live Oak is the ‘awning’ on the West side of our house.

I have no concern that this Quercus agrifolia specimen (perhaps a seedling when Shakespeare was a child) will suffer a SOD fate, as long as we live here and assure that no bay or tanoak trees can drip on it during rainfall.

This tree can be located on the map below which also includes 4 of the 8 nearby California Bay Laurels that have been part of the UC Berkeley SOD Blitz surveys since 2011. In 2011, all 8 Bay trees were positive for the organism. Shortly afterward, three trees (522, 523, and 528) were cut to a height near the ground. The leaves sampled from these trees have been negative ever since.

I have yet to succeed in killing a bay, unless I dig up or pull the roots, and so these surviving 3 bay trees sprout new leaves year round which are relished by area deer. With deer continually consuming all new leaves, the SOD organism appears not to “over summer” on these close-to-the ground bays. Over 40 pruned-low bays within our defensible space are foraging stops on the deer’s regular paths. Regardless of whether foraging by deer eliminates lasting infections in these low growing trees, maintaining their short height eliminates dripping onto nearby heritage oaks if infected.

Tree #522 (approximately 60’ high in 2011) nearest our treasured oak is approximately 100’ North. Four years since being pruned to ground level, here it is today in front of an multi-trunk oak it “killed” but two trunks have since re-sprouted:

I have noted that deer seem not to eat California Bay Laurel seedlings and therefore they must be uprooted when small to eliminate possible future infections of nearby oaks. The seedlings pictured grew a few feet from #522 but were never even tasted by the deer herd:

NOTES FROM THE CALIFORNIA OAK MORTALITY TASK FORCE

While the drought has tempered sudden oak death (SOD; caused by the water-loving invasive plant pathogen Phytophthora ramorum) in many areas of California, predictions for El Nino suggest the time for prevention is now.

Sudden Oak Death remains a major threat to coast live oak, California black oak, Shreve’s oak, canyon live oak, and tanoak trees in 15 coastal California counties. During periods of dry weather, the SOD pathogen becomes less active and can go into a dormant state until environmental conditions become more favorable for pathogen/disease spread. However, even during drought periods there are locations in California where environmental conditions remain favorable for the pathogen. SOD is the primary cause of tree mortality in coastal California, with more than three million trees having died since its discovery in the mid-1990s.

For more information on Sudden Oak Death and P. ramorum, go to the California Oak Mortality Task Force website at www.suddenoakdeath.org

OAK MISTLETOE IS AT HOME IN THE TREE TOPS

Sarah Schoen

As fall approaches, and deciduous oaks begin to drop their leaves, attention focuses on spots of green foliage high up in the trees. Oak mistletoe, which has been there all along, suddenly comes into view.

Oak mistletoe (Phoradendron leucarpum subsp. tomentosum formerly P. villosum) is a perennial shrub that is parasitic on trees, particularly oaks. Leathery leaves with simple margins grow opposite from brittle stems. The leaves are covered with short, dense hairs.

Inconspicuous green flowers grow on short spikes, with male and female flowers on separate plants. The flowers have lobed sepals, but no petals. The female flowers bloom 10 to 15 per spike, while male flowers bloom 20-30 per spike. Flowers can bloom at most times of the year, but are most common from July to September. Pollination is by wind.

Small, round pinkish white berries, containing 1 seed, are eaten by many species of birds, including robins, western bluebirds, phainopeplas, and cedar waxwings. The sticky seeds are then distributed when the birds fly to another branch or tree, wipe them from their beaks or defecate on a branch. In addition to providing food for birds, when in reach or when the brittle stems break and fall to the ground, leaves are browsed by deer.

The oak mistletoe has lost its ability to absorb water and mineral nutrients from soil. Instead, shortly after germination, and if near a breach in the tree’s bark, it sends a root-like structure called a hastorium into the host’s xylem, where there is plenty of water and minerals for the mistletoe’s survival. Retaining its green leaves and still able to perform photosynthesis to make its own sugar, this mistletoe has no need to tap into the tree’s sap. Although mistletoe stresses the host tree, healthy trees can tolerate some infestation.

Oak mistletoe takes advantage of being up high in the tree. There is more light for photosynthesis, especially in deciduous oaks after the leaves have fallen. Berries are available to birds for seed distribution, and leaves are beyond the reach of deer. This subspecies is found generally in oaks, and occasionally in chamise, manzanita, and California bay laurel.

Although the berries are reportedly toxic to humans, oak mistletoe is used by people as well. Two California Indian tribes used it medicinally. Kawaiisu and Pomo used an infusion or decoction of the plant to end unwanted pregnancies. The Kawaiisu also used an infusion externally to treat rheumatism. Mistletoe is used as a Christmas decoration, with our local species substituting for the eastern mistletoe, which substituted for the European mistletoe Viscum album. The tradition may have evolved from a Druid winter solstice ceremony.
Bring binoculars when you visit Pescadero Marsh Preserve, the largest marsh between Monterey Bay and San Francisco. Pescadero Creek and Butano Creek pool resources to form a lagoon and estuary that is a haven for birds, and a heaven for bird-watchers. Best bird-watching is during the late fall and early spring.

Park on the west side of Highway 1 (just 0.3 miles north of Pescadero Road) where you will find a restroom. Head down the south end stairs then left (north) on a safe sidewalk along Highway 1. Take another short set of stairs left to the edge of Pescadero Beach, and then cross under the highway bridge to reach the Sequoia Audubon Trail. On the dunes note that native dune grass planted to replace the invasive foreign ice plant is doing well.

At a junction with a trail leading left, on which you will return, you will reach a signboard, which has information about spawning steelhead trout and advisories to boaters. From here go straight ahead on the Sequoia Audubon Trail, passing on your right an unsigned track leading to a shingled beach on Pescadero Creek itself. This estuary with calm waters and small beach might be a safe and pleasant place to swim on a hot day, avoiding the dangerous cold undertow of the ocean beach itself. The main Sequoia Audubon Trail soon reaches another junction where on the left is a bridge over a slough and a viewing platform. This area of the marsh is being managed by state scientists so that various sloughs, dikes and tidal gates keep water in the marsh and the pond for a longer period. Here you may see egrets feeding, herons stalking their prey or a pair of cinnamon teal ducks paddling through the water. This trip continues straight (east) on the Sequoia Audubon Trail along the levee next to the slough. You are several hundred feet north of the main Pescadero Creek at this point. Along the way pass a huge, sprawling eucalyptus whose branches sprawl along the ground, inviting climbers of all ages. Soon you will reach a bench near the creek where you can view the marsh extending to the south. Look for some wood-rat nests in the thick willows, and for more benches by Pescadero Creek.

After about a mile, retrace your steps from the far end of the Sequoia Trail to the viewing platform and the bridge that you passed earlier. Here take the right-hand trail going northwest. You will see bushes of twinberry, a member of the honeysuckle family, which has reddish-yellow flowers in spring and black berries in the fall. In damp areas there is yellow cinquefoil, a rose family relative with feathery leaves. Shortly you will find another viewing bench, where you turn left (south) to return to the signboard, go under the bridge and on to the parking lot. Distance: 2-1/2 miles round trip.

A Bit of History

In the early years of the 20th century, European farmers who had settled in Pescadero drained much of the original marsh and used the area for agriculture. Owned by the Nunziatti family, the marshy areas remaining were managed after World War II by Tom Phipps as a hunting club. Migrating birds were the quarry, as well as ducks and Asian pheasants raised specifically for hunting. In the 1960s members of the Sequoia Audubon Society realized what a valuable habitat the marshland was and raised the money to buy part of the land from the Nunziatti family. During the 1970s the state parks acquired this nucleus of Pescadero Marsh, and continued acquisition until today the state owns 90% of the original marshland. Conservation easements on farming lands to the east were negotiated by POST. A marsh restoration effort is ongoing, managed by the state, and the Sequoia Audubon Society has been commemorated with a trail named for them, which they maintain. Pescadero Marsh one of the premier birding spots in the county is the only sizeable estuarine marsh between Bolinas Lagoon and Elkhorn Slough.
WATER WISE: A YEAR OF WELL WATCHING

Larry Watson

One year ago, the October 2014 issue of Skylines contained an article by Michael Rowe describing the automated well water level measurement device that a number of neighbors had recently purchased, including me. To see that article for more background, go to the Skylines tab on the SouthSkyline.org home page and download the Skylines_2014_10.pdf.

Here is the summary from my year of observations on our community well since August 31, 2014. Our submersible pump is at 200’ below ground level. Similar to most Skyline household water systems, water is pumped into a storage tank at higher elevation. Whenever the float switch in the tank reaches a lower level the pump turns on and delivers approximately 10 gallons per minute until the water level in the tank rises to the high limit of the float switch. For our system, a pumping event occurs generally every 1 to 2 days and pumps 560 gallons in approximately 1 hour.

The static water level just prior to the start of a pumping cycle varies through the year. The graph below indicates that prior to our December, 2014 rains, the static level was down to 114’ above the pump, the lowest level recorded. On April 11, 2015, after most of the season’s rainfall, the level had risen to a peak of 132’. Approximately 25” of precipitation had increased the static level by 18’ from the low.

It can be noted that for each of the pumping events in the graph there are 3 components: (1) when the pump comes on, the static water level falls rapidly during approximately 1 hour of pumping, (2) when the pump turns off there is a period of fast recovery, (3) which is then followed by a slower recovery.

In summary, we see the static level continued to fall once the rains have ended in the spring. We also see the static level begin to rise after the rains begin in the fall.

We look forward to results from our second year of measurement for comparison but now we are less concerned about our water supply assuming some rain is coming.

Water Level Above Pump (ft) 562 gallons to fill
High, Low, and Most Recent Since 2014-08-31

![Graph showing water level changes over time]

11/10/2014
4/11/2015
8/16/2015
ROAD RACING UPDATE - FIRE RISK

Dave Anderson

The road racing on our local highways has been a source of concern for quite some time. As the activity increases, so too do our concerns. These racers often cross the double yellow line, which raises concerns of a head-on collision or running off the road to avoid a collision. Racers have been noted on Facebook rationalizing with stories about how they post lookouts and operate in the wee hours of the morning when few other cars are on the highway. Of course these steps do nothing to help the motorist who pulls on to the highway from a driveway that is between the lookouts. Moreover, the steps they claim to take do nothing to mitigate what may be the biggest risk to our communities from these racers, that of fire.

A few months ago a crash on 9 North of 35 (Saratoga side) started a fire in the Heather Heights area. A search on the web turns up other recent examples including a 3,800 acre brush fire in Richland, WA ignited on September 13 by a car crash. So these racers CAN start wildland fires if they crash, and it’s not hard to imagine a number of us being burned out of our homes by such shenanigans.

The SSA board has met with numerous high-ranking California Highway Patrol (CHP) and State Parks officials from the various jurisdictions that lie within the SSA area. Here are some of the key points of those discussions and other conversations I have had with other law enforcement up here.

* State Park rangers are the Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) most present up here, but they are being actively discouraged by their management from pursuing this issue.
* The three relevant CHP jurisdictions are often stretched too thin and too buried in higher priorities to spend much time in our area.
* A Santa Clara County Sheriff Deputy who had contacted me earlier in the year wanting to collaborate on a task force now tells me that due to injuries and other circumstances they cannot revisit the task force effort for 4-5 months at least, though they expect to be patrolling the area as usual.
* All law enforcement agency representatives say that if we can establish a pattern of when and where the activity is taking place they can focus on those times and places.
* Cameras are not going to help prosecute, even if they could see the cars and their plates in the dark they will not show the driver’s faces and ticketing requires a positive ID of the driver. Cameras MAY be useful for establishing and reporting activity patterns though.

continued
I understand that this information paints a bleak picture, because it will take an organized and sustained effort of SSA members and neighbors to consistently collect the data needed to inform LEOs so that they can take action. We have a pretty good picture of activity on Highway 9 south of 35 but we need more participation along other highways in the SSA area.

If we have more people reporting consistently then we can begin to paint a picture of activity. For example, we do not know whether the activity heard on 9 tends to move along 35, north on 9, etc. If we can get enough people reporting regularly then we can begin to understand the racers’ habits better and help inform LEOs so they can develop a plan.

In response to past articles in this newsletter, a handful of single reports of single incidents were submitted. Unfortunately single reports are not really actionable and do not help us to go to LEOs with a documented pattern. I have one stalwart activist who has reported incidents more than once, and I am writing in hopes of encouraging repeated reports from other concerned residents.

What we need to do is treat this as a community effort where we all participate. Please discuss this with your neighbors and get involved. There is only one thing that is going to get LEOs to take this matter seriously and that is for us to show that people are paying attention and documenting the activity so that they can take appropriate action. While it seems that LEO actions in the past have not been effective, there is a new strategy in play that has the potential to change the dynamic. This strategy relies on LEOs having the information they need to bring their resources to bear at the right places at the right times. This is even more important than it has been in the past due to the change in strategy.

The documentation needs to show a pattern of activity over time, and what that means is that each participant should collect observations over time. To reduce overhead for everyone involved I have created a spreadsheet that can be printed out if you want to hand-write reports, or it can be used to enter information and emailed when you have a couple of weeks worth of entries. Email and snail-mail addresses are provided in the spreadsheet. This spreadsheet may be downloaded from http://southskyline.org/wp-content/uploads/Road_ReportForm_v1.1.xls.

The spreadsheet has columns for the most important info we need to collect. Reporting each incident to LEOs may be more than many can commit to, but if you can do so at least occasionally and record it in the spreadsheet then it helps support our case by correlating our records with their records. Additional details, such as plate numbers, type of activity, whether seen or heard, may be entered in the description. If you would like to have printed forms mailed to your address please request this at ssa.road.reports@gmail.com.

Cameras may be used to document activity patterns, but keep in mind that if the camera sees them they may see the camera and vandalize or steal it. A camera that is invisible by day may show a reflection at night that reveals its presence; “infrared” LEDs on many cameras are visible at night so consider that too.
Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed to benefit SSA members. For information about joining, or for members wishing current information on the agreement, please contact Ruth Waldhauer at ruth.waldhauer3@gmail.com or 650-948-1466. Information is also available at: www.southskyline.org.

SSA has agreements with Amerigas, Kamps Propane, Suburban Propane, and FerrelGas. The open market price is about $1.00/gallon higher than the SPUG price. Prices are subject to change as frequently as wholesale prices change. The prices SSA posts are for the first of the month. Our SPUG rate is based on a keep-full basis, not will-call service.

You are not required to pay sales tax on propane if you do not have natural gas available where you use propane. If you get your propane from Amerigas, you will need to submit a sales tax exemption form. Contact Amerigas for the form.

Recent SPUG prices ($/gallon) are:

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<th>Month</th>
<th>Amerigas</th>
<th>Suburban San Jose</th>
<th>Suburban Scotts Valley</th>
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Those whose SSA membership has lapsed will be disqualified from receiving the benefit of SPUG price for propane.

2015 FALL FREE CHIPPING PROGRAM
OCTOBER 26th & 27th

SOUTH SKYLINE FIRE SAFE COUNCIL IS OFFERING FREE BRUSH CHIPPING FOR DEFENSIBLE FIRE SAFE CLEARING AND FUEL REDUCTION AROUND INDIVIDUAL HOMEOWNERS PROPERTY.

APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 16TH
For Applications/Policy Rules: Ed Hayes at edhayes@wildblue.net or 408-872-1715

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: • Home must exist within the SSFSC Boundaries • Brush piles must be orderly and within proximity of good access for chipper • Chips will be left on homeowner’s property in a pile or broadcast • Brush piles must be available for inspection one week in advance of chipping date • Chipping is for existing homes only, No new construction or area clearing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE: WWW.SOUTHSKYLINEFIRESAFE.ORG

The SSFSC Defensible Space Free Chipping and Partial Reimbursement Programs are supported by donations and matching contributions from SSA, Santa Cruz County, San Mateo Fire Safe Council, Pacific Gas and Electric, and community homeowners and residents. SSFSC GREALLY APPRECIATES YOUR TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ANY AMOUNT SO WE CAN CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THIS VALUABLE COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM.
Our local Cal Fire crews were out of county for much of July and August. We worked with crews from the city of Sacramento, Cal Fire Mariposa/Merced, and Cal Fire Lake Napa in that time. In mid-September, crews were again sent out to Lake and Amador counties. We have covered the area several times as crews move around. So far, we have been very lucky this year and there have been few fires in our response area. In early September, a vegetation fire on Bear Canyon Road was contained at 5 acres.

Finding a long term replacement for Rescue 2961 is a work in progress. Once fire season subsides, we should be able to find a solution.

Remote Water Storage
We have been busy with final preparations for the addition of a 5000 gallon water storage tank to one of our remote sites. There’s been a lot of brush clearance, then hand excavation to level the surface. We took delivery of the tank on 9/15. Thanks to the SSA for helping to fund this project.

Dial 911 for All Emergencies
There is only one phone number you need for all emergencies: 911. It’s not that we don’t want to hear from you, but while it might seem like calling a South Skyline volunteer directly can speed an emergency response, in fact it can have the opposite effect. Especially if the one you call is not available. Even for a smoke investigation, there is no need to be shy about calling 911, but if you can’t bring yourself to do that, call your closest staffed fire station. Even then, there is a chance they will be out, whereas 911 operators are always there.

Firefighter Spotlight
Today we have a three-way spotlight. First, congrats to Doug Aumack who has been promoted to Volunteer Engineer. In this position, he can operate any fire apparatus.

Second, we would like to extend our best wishes to Austin Rugg and his wife Alyssa on the occasion of their marriage.

Finally, let me introduce one of our 2015 graduates, Jeremiah Njoroge.

Jeremiah and his family moved to Las Cumbres in March, 2014. He joined the team to contribute to the community. “It turns out to be one of the best challenges I have taken on. I learn things with each call, each interaction, and it affords me the ability to help one more person in our community, or maybe one that was passing through.”

We have some candidates for next year, but we still need more volunteers. If you are interested, please contact us. You can find a description of the process of becoming a volunteer on our website at http://southskylinefire.org/join.php
CLASSIFIED ADS

Due to many requests, we will attempt to keep a list of ads that will run every issue. However, there is no guarantee that an ad won’t be missed because of our changes in staff. If you want be on the list, you must make a request to “run until canceled”. It is best to resubmit ads for each issue. Send to: skylineseditor@yahoo.com

Please keep ads to 45 words or less.

Skyline Broadband Service Offering high-speed wireless Internet with speeds up to 25 Mbps in much of our 500-square-mile coverage area. http://SkylineBroadbandService.com
phone: 650-917-9279

Free Fire Fitting for those in the South Skyline Fire & Rescue primary response area. This 2-1/2 inch 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. Please visit http://southskylinefire.org/ for more information under the “Help us help you” section.

Learning Strategies One-on-one tutoring in your home by qualified educators. K-12, all subject areas including test prep ISEE, HSPT, SSAT & SAT, Contact Learning Strategies, www.creative-learning-strategies.com or email victoriaskinner@creative-learning-strategies.com or call 650-747-9651 for a free phone consultation.

Russian Ridge Winery, 919 Washington Street, San Carlos. Award winning wines, many Santa Cruz Mountains varietals. Tasting room opens Fridays 5-9 pm and Saturdays/Sundays 12-5 pm.

Award Winning Dog Training Classes!
Saturdays in Portola Valley/Ladera & in Atherton at the lovely Holbrook Palmer Park weekday evenings. NEW class! AKC Urban Canine. (for ‘CGC dogs) Private Lessons available Please call 650 851-5500

Residential Design: Country and urban custom houses, remodel and additions. 20+ years experience in California. See some of my work at: http://www.TSVresidential.com  Taruno S. Vega 650-747-0654  taruno@coastside.net

SC4 Amateur Radio Club Welcomes those interested in amateur radio for emergency communications and neighborly talk. License is free. Simple exam: No Morse code. We offer classes. Visit www.sc4arc.org or write: SC4ARC, PO Box 237, La Honda, CA 94020

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Barbara Harriman (C) 408-656-8209
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Rainwater Catchment Systems:
Despite the drought, you can harvest rainwater; water which can be used for irrigation, and any non-potable use. It’s also available in an emergency.
Saving Private Rain, a licensed, certified rainwater catchment systems contractor, can design/install one. SavingPrivateRain.com.

Wanted: Part time handyman/gardener. Some skills and knowledge of carpentry, plumbing, and electrical is a plus. Possible low rent exchange. Location near junction of Alpine Road and Portola State Park Road. References please Phone (650)-948-3285

Ads are free to SSA members. Membership is $15 per year.
Membership forms are available at www.southskyline.org
Please limit each ad to 45 words. Ads will be shortened when space is limited.
Email ads to: Skylineseditor@yahoo.com
SOUTH SKYLINE ASSOCIATION
Box 400, Star Route 2
La Honda, CA 94020

Consider Getting Your *Skylines* by Email

For those members who receive the *Skylines* through the Post Office please consider the option to receive it on-line. This will save paper as well as postage. If you sign up for this option you will be notified by email when the next issues is released. Sign up and update your email address with Debra Born, 7405 Alpine Road, La Honda, CA 94020, Phone: 650-917-9648 Email: debborn@gmail.com

Those members who live locally where we stuff mail boxes will continue to get a paper copy.

SSA CALENDAR - General Meeting

October 23, 7:00 • Saratoga Summit Fire Station

Board meetings will be held at 7:00pm
  October 8
  November 12

For location contact Michael Rowe
rowe517@gmail.com • 408-872-1775

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*Skylines* is Published Once A Quarter

*Skylines* invites individuals to submit articles and artwork.

**Policy on Classified Ads:** Ads are free to SSA members. They must be resubmitted for each issue.

**Skylines Ads and News Articles:** The deadline for submitting ads and articles for the next issue is December 7, 2015

**Send all ads and articles to:** SkylinesEditor@yahoo.com

We reserve the right to edit all submissions. We assume no responsibility for omissions, incorrect information or personal opinions.