Corona Virus Pandemic

Two Ways to Help Neighbors AND to Get Local Help

BY DICK SCHWIND

We South Skyline mountain people usually know most of our neighbors and would be willing to help them when they need some help. This is a good time to check on them to offer help when they need it, particularly during this pandemic.

The next best way to expand your help wider, is to be a volunteer with the 'Mountain Neighbors Helping Neighbors' (MNHN), South Skyline Area. The MNHN is a small, all volunteer nonprofit organization that connects volunteers to people who are requesting help. The organization describes itself as, 'Mountain Neighbors Helping Neighbors is a group of volunteers who provide free help to residents of the Santa Cruz mountains, especially our seniors. We coordinate occasional or short-term services such as stacking wood, visiting, giving rides into town, delivering meals...'

Applications to REQUEST HELP (free) or VOLUNTEER are on the website http://mnhn95033.org/

Or contact Patricia Wood at MNHN95033@gmail.com or 408-353-4565.

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Renewal Time Has Come and Gone!

Congratulations to all of you who remembered to renew your membership for 2020. But if you forgot to renew for 2020, please do so immediately. Your membership benefits will expire by the end of March so do it today. The fastest and easiest for our volunteers is to renew online via our website www.SouthSkyline.org. And if you must send a check, be sure to mail it to SSA Membership, 400 Skyline Blvd., La Honda, 94020.

We did have a small problem early this year and we sincerely apologize for any confusion. This problem has been fixed. Several of you received emails that were erroneously sent out by our notification system. We were working out some bugs introduced when we updated our email notification system which came from a test system. These emails should have been disregarded. However, if you get an email about a lapsed or expired membership, please do not disregard that.

Our membership continues to grow every year, which we appreciate as your dues support our grant program and general meetings. Our grants support local non-profit groups working to improve the South Skyline community. And many of you make donations to South Skyline Association as well as our affiliated non-profit groups, and for this we are ever grateful.

SPUG Quarterly Report

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Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed to benefit SSA members. For information about joining, or for members wishing current information on the agreement go to our website: www.SouthSkyline.org/spug/. If you have questions, please email propane@southskyline.org. SSA has agreements with Amerigas, Kamps, Suburban Propane Scotts Valley, and FerrellGas. The open market price is more than $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.

Membership dues were due in January. Those whose SSA membership has lapsed can be disqualified by our propane providers from receiving the benefit of the SPUG price. Membership can be renewed at www.SouthSkyline.org/membership/. If paying by check use the Membership Application on the website.
A Shout-out for Skylines Volunteers

The Skylines will have a new look in its future as we now have a new layout editor. Susan Seichrist, a graphic designer and experienced newsletter editor has volunteered to use her skills to give back to our community and we are so grateful to have her help.

Susan joins our team of editors and proofreaders that have been working on the Skylines for many years; some have been volunteering for over 20 years. This also includes the many people who have been stuffing mailboxes and addressing mail-outs. I hesitate to name everyone because I don't want to miss a name, but you know who you are, and you are so appreciated. The Skylines has been our primary means of communication since Janet Schwind began as its editor in the early days of the creation of the South Skylines Association (when layout was done with a typewriter), and we want to see it continue. If members are interested in volunteering some time to help with the publication or distribution of the Skylines send an email to ssa_activities@yahoo.com.

General Meetings

In January we held our first general meeting for 2020. We had an interesting and entertaining presentation by licensed timber operator Bruce Baker. He shared some little-known history of the timber operations in our area as well as personal anecdotes.

Due to the shelter-in-place order, our 2nd quarterly meeting has been postponed. If it is rescheduled we will send out an email blast, and update the meeting status on our website at www.SouthSkyline.org. Otherwise, we hope to see you at our summer meeting.

SSA Board Members and Officers Needed

We also held SSA Board elections at the January meeting but there are still seats available on the board. The board is also searching for a new board president and treasurer. Serving on the board is a good way to meet neighbors and share ideas. South Skyline members who are interested in getting involved on our community board are encouraged to contact Michael Rowe for more information at rowe517@icloud.com.

SSA Grants

Rounds 1 and 2 of our grant giving are completed. As our membership continues to grow, we are happy to report that we were able to increase our maximum amount for grants to $10,000. There will be another round of funding available in the fall. Look for application details for a fall deadline in the July Skylines.

Board By-Laws

The board is currently working on updating the by-laws to be more in line with the reality of modern issues such as how the SSA website functions and how we safeguard digital data. When those changes are complete, they will be published in the Skylines and members will be asked to vote on the changes at a future general meeting.
South Skyline Fire & Rescue News

BY ANDY SEIGEL, CAPTAIN, SSF&R

The first quarter has been busy, with a number of out-of-the-ordinary incidents. The most unique was a pair of simultaneous incidents at Castle Rock State Park. In one, we utilized Cal Fire Copter 106 to rescue an injured hiker.

Firefighter Spotlight!

In the spotlight this month is 2019 fire academy graduate Jesse Young. Jesse has family members in the fire service. In fact, I’ve known his dad for almost 20 years – he recently retired from Santa Clara County Fire. Jesse is a “day tripper” – he lives out of the response area, so he spends shift time at our station. Jesse enjoys “working outdoors and being a part of a team. Being able to do this all while helping out the community makes working fun and rewarding”. He worked this past season as a seasonal firefighter for Cal Fire, and his goal is to make firefighting a full-time career. Welcome!

PanCake Breakfast Postponed

We have to postpone our annual May pancake breakfast. We’ll be sure to let you know when it’s back on the calendar.

Recruiting for 2021

We are looking for several new local volunteers for Company 29. Watch our website for announcements about upcoming recruiting events.

Visit us at http://southskylinefire.org

South Skyline Emergency Preparedness Organization

Our Mission: Get Involved

BY JUDY SENCENBAUGH, SECRETARY

Thanks to the generous contributions from the South Skyline community and beyond, the South Skyline Emergency Preparedness Organization continues to increase emergency preparedness and response capability at the neighborhood and community level. The work of the members is reflected in our 2019 year-end report and we are proud to share it with the community. All community residents are welcome to attend our board meetings. Information is posted on our website: www.SSEPO.org

• Helping Emergency Services find your home: The GIS mapping project continues to make progress. Over the 250 square miles of the South Skyline area, about 15% of all households have been mapped, with five major neighborhoods mostly complete.

• Training residents to help in an emergency: April, 2019 CERT class held in Kings Mt. for 30 participants.

• Preparing for medical needs when we are cut off: Phase 2 of the Medical Trailer Project funded by 501C donations to SSEPO. This included doubling the solar power and battery capacity as well as extra heating, cooling and ventilation capabilities.

• Helping Emergency Services find us: SSEPO funded the Tarheel100A-HP HF vertical antenna installed on the Castanea Ridge COMM trailer for helicopter landing communications.

• Help with wildfire insurance cancellations: Organized media outreach and posted resources for South Skyline residents who have lost home insurance.

• Communication when ALL lines are down: GMRS • repeater testing and maintenance continued to make sure that all neighborhoods could be reached. New repeater sharing on Black Mountain is being explored.

• Emergency shelter: Relationship with Jikoji enhanced by neighborhood coordinator in Monkey Rock as a future emergency shelter for South Skyline residents.

• Coordinating within our community: SSEPO representative sits on SSA board and emergency preparedness articles were contributed to the SSA newsletter.

• Helping our “tourists:” Planning initiated for the “First Arrivers Workshop” that covers what to do if you are first on scene of accident, to be held in Spring 2020.
Home Hardening Workshops

Over a two week period in late February and early March, the South Skyline FireSafe Council (SSFSC) hosted a pair of workshops on Home Hardening. The two sessions were attended by about 70 members of the community who were very enthusiastic about what they had learned.

Home Hardening is the process of making your home more resistant to blowing embers or firebrands. The major take-away lessons were:

- Assure all roofs and decks are class A fire-rated with metal drip edge.
- Keep roof and decks free of debris, leaves and duff. Do not store materials under decks.
- Windows should be dual pane, with metal or wood frames. Be sure wood trim does not warp and create an opening to the interior. Vinyl window frames must have internal metal frame.
- All vent covers (roof, attic, soffit, crawl-space, etc.) must be maximum 1/8" opening or smaller.
- Create a new fire proof zone at least 5 foot wide all around the house and deck with NO flammable materials: only bare dirt or rock or concrete hardscaping and no landscaping plantings, and make sure this area is free of any flammable materials, leaves, pine needles, etc.
- Vinyl window frames, gutters or siding are not recommended as they will melt during a fire.
- Use gutter guards and/or assure all gutters are clean and free of debris and duff.
- Do not use acrylic skylights, only use tempered glass skylights.
- Create and maintain the state-mandated defensible space around your home and outbuildings.
- Assure wooden fences do not touch any structure (install metal gates instead).
- Keep all fuel sources away from wooden siding.

If you missed these sessions and would like to watch the video, use this link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LhpoF9xn2uwvJb_6QgOHCoCBVnp5jnA/view

Free Spring Chipping Program

The deadline for our Spring Chipping Program is April 15, and by the time you receive this newsletter, it may be too late to apply: http://www.southskylinefiresafe.org/Home/free-chipping-program

So if you missed it, please plan to take advantage of the Fall Chipping Program. The deadline for applications in the Fall is October 15, and applications will be accepted starting in early September.

Portola Heights Fuels Reduction Program

SSFSC is moving forward with a state grant from CalFire to do significant fuels reduction along key escape routes within the Portola Heights Community. The project is being managed by our board member Debra Born, with assistance and coordination within Portola Heights by resident Jeff Solt. The work will be done by the California Conservation Corps and should begin as early as this Spring with completion expected this Fall.

This project was initially conceived of, and the grant obtained for SSFSC by, our former board member Mark Haynie who passed away suddenly last year.

Goat Trail Fuels Reduction

Phase II of the Goat Trail Fuels Reduction Program should be completed this summer. Funding for this project is from a grant obtained by the Santa Clara FireSafe Council (SCCFSC). SCCFSC is providing project management and covering costs. SSFSC has been providing boots on the ground assistance obtaining property owner permissions forms, education and outreach overseen by our board member Jane Manning.

Volunteers Needed

SSFSC is in need of additional members to help with these and other valuable programs. We are a dedicated group of volunteers who meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 PM. We have a wide variety of committees, liaison positions with other Fire Safe Councils, and projects with which we very much need help. Please take some time to be active in your community by joining the South Skyline FireSafe Council. Contact us at ssfsc.outreach@gmail.com for location of the next meeting.
Las Cumbres Newly Recognized as Firewise USA Site

BY VICKI PERKINS

In December 2019, the Las Cumbres community was officially recognized as a Firewise USA site. We started the Firewise process in the fall, after reading about the success of Redwood Estates, Chemeketa Park and Sunset Ridge in the Mountain Network News. None of us will forget the Bear Fire in 2016, when Las Cumbres and nearby communities were evacuated. I still have the embers which fell on our front steps as a reminder of this close call. Another motivator was that many of us received the dreaded letter from our homeowner's insurance company that they were no longer renewing policies in the Santa Cruz mountains. Our hope is that by taking a community-wide approach to reducing wildfire risk, we will make it easier to obtain fire insurance.

Firewise USA requires the following steps for recognition:
- Form a committee
- Complete a wildfire risk assessment
- Create a multi-year action plan
- Conduct an annual education event
- Meet minimum investment in volunteer hours or dollars
- Submit an online application through the Firewise USA portal.

We had our own mini “firesafe” committee, and were already conducting educational outreach and exceeding the minimum investment requirements through our community chipping pile, roadside grass cutting and fuel reduction projects. We already had a volunteer “advisory” process in place, where trained volunteers review defensible space around each home and advise homeowners on reducing wildfire risk. We have been working closely with CALFIRE over many years on fuel reduction and homeowner education.

We were already meeting the requirements for Firewise USA recognition – we just needed to get ourselves better organized and document the work we were already doing. Firewise USA provides a framework for working with CALFIRE to create a risk assessment and multi-year action plan. Based on input from CALFIRE, we are focusing on safe egress (brought home by the Paradise tragedy) and defensible space around each home and the Las Cumbres community center.

Using the Firewise USA risk assessment template along with the results of our advisory inspections, we realized that our biggest opportunity for risk reduction is for each homeowner to create a combustible-free zone 0-5’ around their home, in addition to removing brush and limbing up trees within 100’. The 5’ around each home will be a focus for our advisory inspections and education event in 2020.

While creating defensible space may save homes, creating safe egress will save lives. We are removing dead and diseased trees near our roads (with an eventual goal of a non-combustible zone 10’ from the edge of the pavement and shaded fuel break up to 50’). We are also exploring the viability of alternative egress routes and of creating a safe zone around our community center area.

I found the Firewise USA application process helpful in providing structure for our efforts. Developing a multi-year plan helped us think long-term about maintaining our defensible space and egress routes. The annual renewal process will help us keep the momentum going on maintenance and community education. Creating and submitting the application through the Firewise USA portal is straightforward. I’d encourage other Santa Cruz mountain communities to pursue Firewise USA recognition — we are all safer by working together to reduce wildfire risk in our communities.

Many thanks to Frank Rodgers of CALFIRE, Joe Christy of Santa Cruz County Firesafe Council, Andy Seigel of South Skyline Firefighters, and Eugenia Rendler and Lynn Sestak of Santa Clara County Firesafe Council for their help and advice with our Firewise USA risk assessment and action plan.

For information on Firewise USA recognition, see https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA.

Download this PDF fact sheet at: https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Preparing-homes-for-wildfire
Self-sufficiency in the Time of Coronavirus

BY DR. RICH LEE, M.D.

By now this topic is pretty much on everybody’s mind in our community. Just about every media outlet has information on how to prevent spread of the virus as well as symptoms associated with it, who is at greatest risk and what are the basic measures to prevent the spread. Some of these outlets especially on the Internet can be extremely alarmist because that gets peoples’ attention. Stick to the basics and go to the CDC website first:


If you want to know the latest info on where the virus is and what it is doing, here are the links:

https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6
https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/coronavirus-cases/

As to what to do about the virus, refer to the CDC website first for preventive measures. If you wish to go further, there are some basics with respect to lifestyle, diet and supplements that may considerably increase the resistance to this virus and lessen the severity of any illnesses from it. There is probably a growing list based on scientific research on hundreds of drugs, compounds, herbals and vitamins that may make a difference, I will try to keep the list to three which are very simple.

1. Vitamin D, particularly vitamin D3 which is now widely recognized as the most important supplement source of this vitamin. Over the past 10 years I’ve tested thousands of vitamin D levels and found most of them in people to be on the low side of what is known as the “reference range.” On top of that, dietary requirements for vitamin D can vary as much as tenfold based on genetic mutations which are fairly common. Although the recommended daily allowance, which is the minimum amount of vitamin D supplementation to prevent disease is only 400 IU per day, nearly everyone I’ve tested could benefit by taking at least 5000 IU a day and in some cases 10,000 IU or more just to get their level within the middle of the reference range of 30-100ng/ml. There are many other reasons than boosting your immune system to supplement with vitamin D, but focusing on immune defenses, here are some examples from the medical literature:

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3308600/

2. Next on the list is Vitamin C. This has been discussed back-and-forth for decades ever since Dr. Linus Pauling, winner of two Nobel prizes wrote his book on the topic. I remember he was a friend of my grandfather (founder of the Palo Alto medical foundation) and heard him tell my grandfather one night that if he took more vitamin C his farts wouldn’t be so bad. Although some people think Dr. Pauling went overboard, there’s more evidence now that he was probably right. It’s not necessary to take the amounts that he took on the order of 13 to 20 g a day, but if one is worried about increased risk of viral illness is at least 1 g a day would be a good idea, 3 g per day if one has been exposed to an illness and 5 g per day if one is starting to get sick. The main side-effect for some people is diarrhea if they are overdosing, but that usually occurs at doses of 10 g per day or more. A good commercial source of this is a product known as Emergen-C, although I think this has been found out it is probably becoming as coveted and hoarded as toilet paper. For those who like to know some of the science, here are some references:

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5707683/

3. The third supplement which now has a growing list of benefits for health outside of preventing infections is the common spice known as curcumin or turmeric. It has recently become popular due to the evidence of it helping improve memory and reverse inflammatory changes in the brain that are associated with Alzheimer’s disease as well as being a natural anti-inflammatory for arthritis. However, evidence is now coming out regarding curcumin’s role as an antiviral. Typical doses for this are between 500 and 1,000 mg daily. The more effective forms of this are often combined with an extract of pepper called bioprene. The best quality brands of curcumin will be found by manufacturers who attest that it is GMP certified. Here are a couple references including one where it has been shown to be specifically effective against one form of Coronavirus.

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6509173/
https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acsanm.8b00779
Armed with all this information, you have done the best you can to avoid areas of high risk and exposure and avoid those who appear to be sick or where they may be congregating. You are getting adequate sleep and avoiding as much stress as possible and having regular exercise, have quit smoking, especially vaping and cut down some on your drinking. You have taken the supplements mentioned above, but somehow you still got sick. What do you do now?

If you are one of the people on the list of those who are at higher risk, you need to contact your physician and let them know that you may need to be tested and seek more aggressive treatment or possibly hospitalization. If, however you have only a mild illness representing the cold or flu, you should treat it accordingly, knowing that until you prove otherwise, that’s what it is instead of coronavirus. This means:

• Staying at home and not infecting anyone else regardless of what virus you have.
• Resting.
• Staying well hydrated including warm drinks as even that may weaken any virus that gets in your mouth. One of the better ones would be your favorite tea which has medicinal properties to reduce respiratory inflammation. Think of all the things your grandmother used to do and try to employ the ones you can, including “steaming”. Viruses prefer cold dry air and don’t do well in warm humid air. Adding your favorite aromatic substance such as menthol, eucalyptus, “Essential oils” or even just Vicks vapor rub or a couple of mentholated cough drops to a pot of steaming water and breathe in the vapors is an old-time remedy that still works well in reducing respiratory inflammation. Don’t forget chicken soup.

There are some cases with many of the common viruses we see each winter that can progress to a secondary infection. The most common one I see in my practice or what we call “walking pneumonia.” These are infections caused by more mild bacteria that often have symptoms of low or no fever, a chronic dry cough, profound fatigue and respiratory symptoms that resemble asthma even in those who don’t have it. These infections are easily treated by common antibiotics in the class that include Zithromax and Biaxin. The most severe cases may require a more potent antibiotic known as Levaquin. These people, although they don’t have asthma do often benefit from all of the above home remedies as well as occasionally bronchodilator and/or steroid inhalers to reduce the lung inflammation. A natural anti-inflammatory for the lungs can also be found in a supplement known as quercetin.

Now that you have isolated yourself and are treating yourself appropriately and have stocked up with 20 gallons of hand sanitizer and 1000 rolls of toilet paper, what else do you need to consider? How long do you plan to stay in isolation? That depends on how fearful you are of getting sick, but more importantly how much risk you have based on your age and pre-existing conditions. Most important are the truly necessary items such as food and medicine you have to sit out the duration. Opinions vary wildly on this and they run anywhere from two weeks to two months. We are still not at the point where the growth curve for infections in the United States has begun to level out, which makes predicting actual quarantine/isolation times difficult.

Sources for food can be done by way of home delivery although many of us are in such a remote area that the usual services don’t come here. Your next resource would be friends and neighbors who are healthy who can shop for you and leave it at your doorstep. Another resource for the South Skyline area is the organization known as Mountain Neighbors Helping Neighbors. They have been supported through donations from the South Skyline Association, but as of yet have not had anyone request their services in our area. They can be found at: http://mnhn95033.org/index.shtml

They can be contacted by either email: MNHN95033@gmail.com or by phone at 408-316-2938.

A bigger problem will be having adequate supplies of necessary medications to meet your needs. At the most recent White House press conference with all of the promises of relief in this pandemic, I do not recall anything said about requiring insurance companies to allow and pay for more than one month of prescription medications. Some pharmacies have the option for patients to do this, but it may be restricted by insurance reimbursements. For those who plan to isolate or self-quarantine, make sure you take stock of all the necessary medications you have and contact your physician to see if they can authorize a three-month supply instead of the usual one month.

Most of us live here because we value and appreciate the remote beauty of our area and in many cases, our own self-sufficiency as well as the sense of community and dedication that many of us have in helping each other. Take care of yourselves, take care of each other.

Regards,
Rich Lee
Medical Director, South Skyline Emergency Preparedness Organization www.SSEPO.org
Board Member, South Skyline Association
www.southskyline.org
“First Arrivers” Workshop Rescheduled –
Highlights of Findings

BY FRANCES MANN-CRAIK FOR SSEPO

The First Arrivers workshop, to talk through / walk through the steps to take when you are the first responsible person on the scene of a mountain accident, is being rescheduled from March 21, due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019. An email with new date will be sent directly to signed up attendees when available.

Our team has made some helpful discoveries while doing the research. Sharing highlights here, in advance of the class.

You come around a corner and there it is a car crashed into a PG&E pole or a motorcycle rider down on the highway, or a bike rider smashed into the mountain side, or a hiker down on a mountain trail...What should you do?

FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR RESEARCH TO DATE:

1) INCIDENT CONTROL
   Your Safety Comes First
   a. Park in a safe location and turn on your emergency blinkers
   b. Put on a safety vest and grab your “trunk kit” – see below
   c. Check out the accident and your resources
      i. Be calm
      ii. Identify yourself as a non-professional (or whatever is applicable to you)
      iii. Let them know help will soon be on the way
      iv. Account for all the vehicles and occupants in the accident
      v. Check for injuries
   d. Organize on-scene other “volunteers”
      i. Traffic Control: Provide a safety vest and flares and triangles and ask them to set up 50 feet away from scene, in oncoming lane, to control traffic
      ii. Emergency Communication – see below

2) EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION
   gather essential data – CALL 911 – or ask a volunteer to call. If possible, use an Emergency Call Box or landline.
   a. CALL 911 and provide:
      i. Your personal information
      ii. Location of accident:
         1. What highway/street/trail you are on
         2. Which county the accident is in BE VERY FIRM (even if you are not 100% sure – see info on the 911 Dispatch center)
         3. Distance from nearest cross street – approximate is okay
         4. Your GPS location (pinpoint on your cell phone)
   iii. Number of vehicles involved
   iv. Injuries – number of people in accident, types and extent of injuries
   v. Ask 911 Dispatch to call Cal Fire Saratoga Summit Station 21 Emergency phone number to deploy them. Tell them they are the closest EMS.

3) AT THE SCENE
   a. Be calm and controlled
   b. Don’t move anyone unless they MUST be moved (carbon monoxide filled car; car on fire)
   c. If safe, turn off ignition
   d. Don’t get between a person and an undeployed air bag
   e. Provide First Aid (much more of this in workshop)
   f. Remain on the scene until EMS arrives
   g. If asked, ID yourself as the “reporting party”
   h. Quietly slip away
   i. Replace your trunk kit materials

4) THE GOOD SAMARITAN LAW
   6/12/19 – California Health and Safety Code Section 1799.102. This law states that when a person renders emergency care and acts in good faith without expecting compensation, they won’t be held liable for their acts or omissions. (Important – don’t do MORE than is needed. An individual in California recently lost a law suit when they badly injured someone they pulled out of a car that they thought would catch on fire.)

5) TRUNK KITS
   a. Non-CERTs – full kit: vests, flares/triangles, First Aid material, fire extinguisher, goggles, gloves, etc.
   b. CERTs – mini kit: vests, flares/triangles, fire extinguisher

Do you have additional / alternative information? (Have tried for 5 weeks to get information from Santa Clara County Emergency 911 – with lots of promises and few results...) Please let me know if you have additional info or ideas for officials that might return my calls!

manncraik@gmail.com
Blue Dicks Usher in Spring

BY SARAH SCHOEN

Blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*) are one of the earliest spring flowers, blooming in March, occasionally as early as February. They tell us that seasonal spring, if not yet astronomical spring, has arrived. And they can keep blooming as late as May. So, no matter when I get out on the trail this season, it’s Spring! It’s Spring! It’s still Spring!

Blue dicks are herbaceous perennials, growing in winter from underground corms, then dying back above ground during summer drought. At the base are 2 to 3 linear, grass-like leaves. The 1 to 2’ narrow stem is bare and nodding, weighed down by terminal blooms.

Flowers are blue, purple, and rarely white 3/4” blooms, the petals surrounded by bracts. The pedicel (flower stem) is shorter than the petals. Blooms grow in small umbel-like clusters (from a central point at the end of the stem) of 2 to 15 flowers. *Capitatum* refers to having a head. Inside are 6 white stamens – 3 short and 3 long, with forked appendages. *Dichelostema* refers to the forked crown of appendages on the stamens. Pollinated flowers then form fruits capsules with tiny black, angular seeds.

Blue dicks reproduce in two different ways. First, they can reproduce by seed. Seeds result from flower pollination by insects. They allow for more genetic diversity and can be distributed farther from the parent plants. Blue dicks growing from seed will take several years to bloom.

Second, they can reproduce by cloning from corms (short vertical underground stems) which produce cormlets, attached to the corms by stolens. The cormlets break away from the parent plant, travelling only a short distance. Reproduction by this method produces a genetically identical plant, presumably able to survive in the current environment. Unlike seeds, after a fire, corms and cormlets, being underground, are able to survive. They can take advantage of the additional sunlight and soil nutrients after a fire and flourish. Corms and cormlets are eaten by deer, rabbits, and pocket gophers, who help to distribute those they don’t consume.

Blue dicks were harvested by several California Indian tribes who used digging sticks to collect corms from the soil. They then baked the corms in cooking fires or earthen ovens before eating them. The corms could also be eaten raw. Harvests were kept sustainable from year to year in a number of ways including harvesting less than half the plants, replanting the cormlets, replanting seeds, tilling plot soil, and/or use of fire management.

Blue dicks are found in open, possibly disturbed, grasslands, oak woodlands, and coniferous forests from Oregon to New Mexico. A close relative, ookow (*Dichelostoma congestum*) is also found in this area, but is much less common. Ookow flowers have 3 forked stamens. Flower heads are more tightly packed (congested) in a raceme-like cluster (branched slightly from the top of the stem) of 6 to 15 flowers. The stem is taller (generally >2’) and more heavily keeled. And ookow blooms a bit later, from April to May.
**Staying Safe In Open Space**

**Help Keep the Parks Open**

LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA – Midpen preserves are remaining open at this time. However, if visitors do not maintain safe social distancing—staying 6 feet apart from people you do not live with—they will close their preserves.

Please follow these simple guidelines to reduce crowding in Midpen preserves:

- Stay close to home and avoid crowded areas.
- Share the trail and yield to others to maintain a safe distance.
- Choose less frequented parks and trails. Do not park in a crowded parking lot or use a crowded trail.
- Leave no trace: pack out what you pack in. Most Midpen preserves do not have garbage cans and collection is limited where they do.
- Look for nearby nature to enjoy, look for the hidden nature in your own neighborhood.
- Do not hold social gatherings at parks or anywhere.

**Know Before You Go**

- Restrooms and drinking fountains are closed; plan ahead before leaving home. Visitors are advised to carry and use hand sanitizers.
- **Areas receiving high use may be closed without notice. Please check the trail conditions and preserve pages before heading out.**
- Paper maps are no longer available at preserves.
- Many Midpen preserves are remote, vast in acreage, and offer many multiple miles of available trails, allowing people to enjoy nature while maintaining safe social distances. Visitors are reminded to maintain social distances of at least 6 feet from others. During this time, please consider visiting one of the more remote and less crowded preserves!

**Group Gathering Areas and Activities**

Group gathering areas are closed to ensure social distancing including: Deer Hollow Farm, the Daniels Nature Center, the Black Mountain Backpack Camp and the Picchetti Winery and picnic area.

**Permits, Docent Hikes and Volunteer Projects**

ALL use permits, docent-led hikes and volunteer projects have been suspended until further notice.

**Midpen Announces Annual Photo Contest**

LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA – Do you have one or two (or 1,000) photos from your time on the trails? Take some time while you’re sheltering-at-home to organize your images. You can relive memories time spent in nature AND find your favorite preserve photos to enter in our photo contest. Contest categories include landscapes, plant life, wildlife, people in open space and aspiring photographers for youth in grades 6 through 12. **Contest ends May 31, 2020.**

For more information visit: [www.openspace.org/photo-contest](http://www.openspace.org/photo-contest)

2019 winning entries, left to right: People in Open Space, Moving On by Charles Tu, Russian Ridge Preserve; Plant Life, Owl's Clover in Twilight by Alex Song, Rancho San Antonio Preserve; Wildlife, White-Tailed Kite by Kwon Chiu, Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area; Aspiring Photographer, Ladybug in Maze by Zoey Lim, Rancho San Antonio Preserve.
Soak in the Beauty of Windy Hill

BY JOANNE IRWIN

On a clear day, the trails that traverse the upper regions of Windy Hill Open Space Preserve offer some of the most breathtaking views of the San Francisco Bay Area. From either of the preserve’s twin peaks, one can enjoy a 360 view that showcases Mt. Tamalpais to the north, Mt. Diablo to the east, Mt. Umunhum to the south, and the sparkling Pacific to the west.

Many would assume the trail to Windy Hill Summit is an arduous climb. Indeed, it is if you start from Portola Valley and make the 1,200-foot ascent along the Spring Ridge or Hamms Gulch Trails. However, mountain residents get a head start — our closest trailhead is the Anniversary Trail, off Skyline Road, and the ‘ascent’ usually takes less than a half hour and is a mere 127-foot elevation gain.

The Anniversary Trail, so named because the trail was built to honor the 10th anniversary of Windy Hill becoming a preserve, is a single track trail that gradually climbs towards the two summits. When you see a wooden bench, look behind it for the Herb Grench trail. A short walk uphill leads you to the top of the first peak and another bench awaits, with a fine view of the bay and the communities that surround it.

Return to the Anniversary Trail and proceed north another five minutes and you’ll spy another bench. Just beyond it you’ll find a second short trail to leads to the Windy Hill Summit. After soaking up the view one can return the way you came for an out-and-back hike, or turn it into a loop by continuing north another five to ten minutes. At the intersection turn LEFT to follow the disc trail back on the western side of the peaks. The view is expansive: rolling hills descend towards the San Mateo Coast and the distant Pacific.

It is well worth walking the Anniversary Trail at different times of day, as the view can bedazzle you in several different ways — early morning sometimes hosts a sea of clouds that hides the entire bay, at other times the churning fog envelops you. As the late day sun sinks towards the horizon, it can cast a rose light on the distant glittering skyscrapers of San Francisco’s financial district and turn the shimmering water of the bay pink. Sunsets can be show-stopping. Sometimes lucky hikers catch long lines of clouds shifting from pink to purple to orange, as the sun dips into the sea.

Announcing the 2020 Sudden Oak Death Blitz

A Citizen Scientist Study in Its TENTH Year on South Skyline

BY JANE MANNING

Not surprisingly, the 2020 Sudden Oak Death blitz has been moved to an online training and a sampling process designed to protect everyone’s safety. Please plan to collect samples starting on Saturday April 25!

There will not be a meeting per se. Instead, participants will pick up sterilized sampling materials at the meeting location,* then register and train online at home. All sampling must be on our designated weekend. The packets must be returned to the Fire Station by 10 am Tuesday April 28. Please don’t hesitate to contact Jane (skyline_sod@yahoo.com) either beforehand or the weekend of April 25th. Your participation has so many benefits to you, our neighbors here on Skyline and the broader California community!

*Location: Saratoga Summit CalFire Station, 12900 Skyline Blvd, Los Gatos, located just N. of Hwy 9
Classified Ads

Community

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Please check our website for updated information about how we can bring you goods and produce from our Thursday market vendors during the shelter-in-place order. pvfarmersmarket.com

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SOLAR CONSULTATION For a free, no obligation solar consultation from your mountain neighbor, please contact David Morgan dmorgan@simplysolarcalifornia.com (408) 348-5781. Simply Solar is a local Northern California company installing North American made panels.

SPRING CLEANUP is fast approaching and now’s the time to make your plans. Order a 20-yard debris box and get it all gone! I can make deliveries and pickups all along Skyline. Cost is based on weight but unless it’s more than 2 tons budget around $500. Contact: rob.skinner@gmail.com

SKYLINE BROADBAND SERVICE
Offering high-speed wireless Internet with speeds up to 50 Mbps in much of our 500-square-mile coverage area. http://SkylineBroadbandService.com phone: 650-712-5900

When placing an ad: Please limit each ad to 45 words. 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 to be on the list, make a request to “run until canceled”. It is best to resubmit ads for each issue. Next deadline: June 7, 2020 Classified Ads are free to SSA members. Membership is $20 per year. The online SSA membership application is at www.southskyline.org. Email ads to: skylineseditor@yahoo.com
Access to local public lands is changing quickly due to the shelter-in-place order. Be sure to check websites before heading out to visit any of our parks or trails. At this time, restrooms at ALL preserves are closed even though preserves are still open. Here are a couple of websites to check: http://www.openspace.org and https://parks.smcgov.org/

SSA 2020 Calendar

At this time, future board meetings are scheduled to be held remotely at 7:00pm until further notice.

April 9
May 14
June 11

For further updates contact Michael Rowe: rowe517@icloud.com
408-872-1775

Skylines Ads and News Articles

The deadline for submitting ads and articles for the next issue is June 7, 2020

Skylines is published once a quarter: January/April/July/October

Skylines invites individuals to submit articles and artwork.
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.