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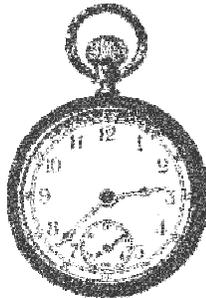
*Pg. 3
It's time to send in your
membership dues for
2002!*

SSA General Meeting

Time Traveling with the Boulevard Builders

An interactive historical adventure presented by the Skyline Historical Society
and speaker

Janet Schwind



Join Us On
Friday April 19
at
Thomas Fogarty Winery
Refreshments 7:00 pm
Program 7:30 pm

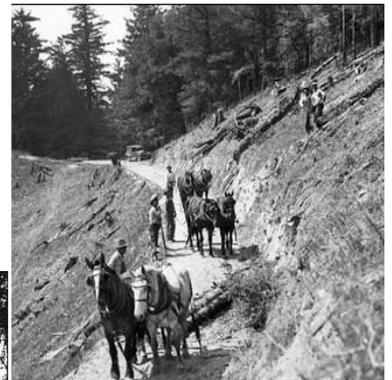
Trace the evolution of Skyline Blvd. from Summit Road petitions through construction while you mingle with the ghosts of folks responsible for the creation of this scenic highway. There will be exhibits maps and prizes!

The Skyline Historical Society is currently working on a book about the history of the Skyline area.

This will be an evening for them to share some very interesting historical information through a fun and lively activity.

This event will be held at beautiful Thomas Fogarty Winery. Fine Fogarty wines will be available. We request a donation of \$4.00 per glass.

There will also be soft drinks, snacks and goodies to eat.



Thomas Fogarty Winery
19501 Skyline Boulevard
(2.7 miles north of Page Mill Road, across
from the entrance to Yerba Buena Nursery)



Many thanks to the friendly folks at Thomas Fogarty Winery for once again hosting our spring meeting. The Winery is open for tasting Thursday through Sunday from 11am to 5pm. The facilities are available for private parties, weddings, and corporate events.

SSA Elects New Board Members and Officers

At the January meeting the South Skyline Association elected five board members for another term, and two new board members. They are Ken Broome, Bo Gimbal, Sharon Peters, Dick Schwind, Ruth Waldhauer, and new members Bill Chainey, and Bill Fowkes.

At the March business meeting the SSA Board elected the following officers:

President – Pat Congdon
Vice President – Dick Schwind
Secretary – Kris Smith
Treasurer – Sharon Peters

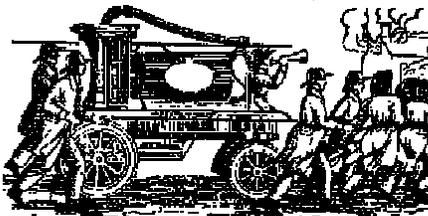
Notes from the Fire Department...

If you are involved in a medical emergency there are some standard questions that the medical responders will ask. One of these is, "Are you currently taking any medications, are you allergic to any medications, and who is your doctor?" A good suggestion is to take the time to put together, or up-date, a current list of medications and doctor's phone numbers. This list should be readily available should you or a member of your family need medical help and would be given to the medical responders. You should consider having one list at home and another list you take with you. Should you be in a car accident or fall on a hike, or need help at home, the information would be quickly given to the medical responders. This will alert them to any condition and would also be transferred along with the patient to the hospital. Trying to put this information together at the time a medical emergency is taking place can be very stressful.

I would also like to thank the members of the South Skyline Association for your continued support and recent donations. Our South Skyline Fire and Rescue group was able to purchase two new fire hose nozzles to add to our equipment and we are currently in the process of purchasing an additional hand held radio for our newest member.

Our membership has recently increased with the addition of Kyle Johnson. He has completed the minimum training requirement (approximately 80 hours) and is now able to respond along with the other five members of our group. As always we are looking for new members. If you are interested or would like more information please contact me, or any one of our group.

~George Johnson
South Skyline Fire and Rescue



SPUG Quarterly Report

Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed as a benefit for SSA members. For an information sheet send a SASE to Ruth Waldhauer, 22400 Skyline Blvd. Box 35, La Honda CA 94020.

The SPUG group price is \$1.099/gallon as it has been since August 2001. In past years the pattern for price has been higher in winter and lower in summer. In the fall of 2000 as the energy crisis in California developed, all propane prices rose to an all time high reaching \$1.799/gallon for SPUG in January of 2001 before slowly dropping to its present level. Thankfully, our group price is still significantly less than the open market price. CONSERVE!

Members 55 years of age or older qualify for a \$0.05/gallon discount on the SPUG group price. Our SPUG rate is based on automatic regular route deliveries on a keep-full basis, not "will call" service. There is no sales tax on propane for qualified users who file a Certificate of Exemption. Phone Amerigas for the form at 1-800-660-1252.

Check www.southskyline.org for recent updates.

Hoedown at Lakeside School Auction, Games, Food, and Folkdance

Lakeside Elementary School invites the mountain community to attend its annual Family Fun Day and Auction to be held Saturday May 4 from 2:00-8:00pm.



The day will begin with the silent auction and carnival games, pony rides and a climbing wall. There will also be a performance by the Lakeside ballet class doing "Swing" dancing.

The live auction will begin at 4:00 with spirited bidding on a variety of items from baseball tickets to garden structures.

At 6:00 there will be a barbeque and folk dancing. Caller and musician Evo Bluestein will lead the folk dance. Mr. Bluestein plays a variety of acoustical instruments and taught a week-long Folk Dance Residency at Lakeside this year.

This is the Lakeside Community Foundation's largest fundraiser, and is always a lot of fun. We are also looking for donations of items and services to be sold at the auction. If you have something to donate, call Mindy Charbonneau at 354-7287 or Rachel Wilson at 353-4998.

Lakeside is located on Black Road about 8 miles from Skyline Blvd. and 1.5 miles from the Bear Creek exit on Highway 17.

~Patti Begley

South Skyline Association Purpose and Programs

The following excerpt from our bylaws and a description of present program activities may be of interest to both current and prospective members. All residents who are not currently members of the South Skyline Association are most welcome to apply for membership on the form included in the January issue of *Skylines*; or see information in sidebar.

Purpose: To foster a sense of community spirit; to keep residents and property owners informed of public agency actions or other items of concern in the South Skyline sphere of influence; to protect the rights and represent the interests of the residents and property owners of our area; and to engage in various projects to enhance the unique South Skyline environment.

- 1. Fire Protection.** The South Skyline Association encourages its members to support South Skyline Fire and Rescue (SSFR), a volunteer fire company within the San Mateo and Santa Cruz County Fire Department. SSFR works under the umbrella of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection who administers the contract for fire protection in both counties providing fire, rescue and medical services within the South Skyline area.
- 2. Emergency Preparedness.** The South Skyline Association also encourages its members to support the South Skyline Emergency Preparedness organization that is training neighborhood emergency response teams to help people to cope with injuries, entrapment, and the need for emergency food, water, and shelter in the event of earthquakes and wildfires.
- 3. Infrastructure.** The South Skyline Association monitors the performance of CALTRANS in maintaining and improving State highways 9, 35, and 84 that are critical for access to our area. Recent improvements in passing lanes on Route 9 were one achievement.
- 4. Utilities.** The South Skyline Association is presently active in requesting improvements in the quality of telephone service from Pacific Bell and the Public Utilities Commission. Frequent outages in electric service this winter will be addressed in an inquiry to PG&E to determine the need for a better preventive maintenance program. A bulk purchase agreement with Amerigas, arranged by SSA, reduces the cost of propane to members of the SPUG.
- 5. Septic Tank Sewage Disposal Systems.** A South Skyline Septic Tank Committee is investigating the practicality of establishing SSA Preferred Provider contracts with licensed contractors for inspection and pumping services at prices lower than would be available to members individually.

- 6. Environmental Enhancement and Protection.** The South Skyline Association has been a strong advocate for wild pig control and strongly urged the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) and California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) to pursue trapping programs within the South Skyline area. To date over 300 pigs have been trapped by both agencies. SSA members have constructed several traps that are available to local residents for pig control on their property and supported many members with their pig management goals. Eradication of invasive non-native plant species such as french broom and yellow star thistle is strongly supported by SSA. SSA works closely with MROSD and CDPR to develop park and preserve plans that consider the impacts to local residents and the beautiful environment that we live in.
- 7. Social Activities.** SSA encourages its members to enjoy the social interaction and sense of community that General Membership events, such as the recent Square Dance at Las Cumbres Community Center, the Skyline History project, the lecture programs at Fogarty's Winery and the CDF Station, and the annual summer picnic offer to our widely dispersed membership.

~Ken Broome

2002 SSA Membership

Regular membership is open to property owners and residents in the South Skyline area who are at least 18 years of age. Those outside the SSA area may apply for associate (non-voting) membership by paying regular dues. Membership includes delivery of the quarterly newsletter *Skylines* and participation in Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG).

To become a member of South Skyline Association, send \$15 with name, address, phone number, email and property location to:
Ruth Waldhauer, SSA Membership Chairperson
22400 Skyline Boulevard
Box 35
La Honda, CA 94020.

Membership forms were included in the January issue of *Skylines*.



News From South Skyline Emergency Preparedness

It's been a busy season. CDF Firefighters and Volunteer Firefighters conducted a great class this January 12th in Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation. Small groups of three or four to one instructor learned the difference between symptoms of stroke and heart attack, practiced ventilating through different types of protective shields both on adult and infant victims (dummies), saw an instructive video, tried the Heimlich maneuver on each other, and learned a great deal. We now have 10 CPR trained graduates on Skyline who know how to resuscitate adult, child and infant victims. Bravo Fire Fighter instructors: Engineer Rand Amores, Dale Johnson, Captain Ted DeNapoli and hard-working students!



A community wide forum to discuss emergency communication was held February 2 at the Summit Fire Station. A full house of interested participants attended. Consensus at the end of the session was to continue exploring realistic alternatives, including the use of a number of different technologies, short range and long range family radios, pagers, satellite telephones, scanners, and training in The South Skyline Emergency Preparedness Organization looks forward to your becoming a member of our Community Emergency Response Team. Join us in helping ham radio operation.

Plans are underway for the next Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training to be held at the Saratoga Summit Fire Station, starting April 23 on six consecutive Tuesday and Thursday evenings and one whole Saturday [see sidebar for time and dates].

Some of you have asked who are CERT volunteers, how are they trained, and what are their responsibilities? They are South Skyline residents, trained under the auspices of the CDF/County Fire of San Mateo/Santa Cruz using FEMA-supplied training materials and guidelines. CERTs are activated in the aftermath of disasters or during local emergencies when the community's need for help exceeds the capacity or availability of professional emergency response resources.

Come to the training. We have outstanding instructors for you. Here is a partial list:

- ✓ Disaster preparedness, light fire suppression (fire extinguisher use) will be taught by Members of the CDF and SS-Fire Volunteers.
- ✓ Light Search and Rescue (of trapped victims) will be directed by John Carnes, coordinator for Woodside and Portola Valley Citizens Emergency Response and

Preparedness Program. He supervised the King's Mountain Emergency Preparedness Kids leveraging and cribbing at this summer's Emergency Preparedness Fair.

- ✓ Triage (grouping victims according to medical need) and medical operations (emergency first aid) will be directed by Dr. Rich Lee, local Stanford Medical School family practice physician. He spoke at our January's General Meeting about "Coping with our Local Problems before Heading for the Emergency Room.
- ✓ Post-disaster psychology (emotional recovery) will be taught jointly by another local, Dr. Eva Blum, psychologist specializing in Critical Incident Stress Management; Bruce Young, Licensed Clinical Social Worker at the VA Menlo Park and from the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, together with local resident Shelley Montfort, who has served as Volunteer Fire Fighter.

The South Skyline Emergency Preparedness Organization looks forward to your becoming a member of our Community Emergency Response Team. We live in a remote area; during a disaster we will be on our own. You make a difference. Join us in helping our community take care of itself.

~Eva Blum

CALENDAR 2002 CERT SPRING TRAINING & EVENTS

SSEP and the Saratoga Summit CDF will hold the next Spring CERT training sessions during 6 consecutive two and a half evening meetings in April and May, plus one full Saturday meeting in May. If you miss one meeting you can make it up in the Fall! Additional events are planned for the upcoming season.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) TRAINING:

- **Tuesday, April 23, 6:30pm-9pm--** Disaster Preparedness
- **Thursday, April 25, 6:30pm-9pm--** Medical Operations Part I
- **Tuesday, April 30, 6:30pm-9pm--** Fire Suppression and Hazard Mitigation
- **Thursday, May 2, 6:30pm - 9pm --** Medical Operations Part I
- **Tuesday, May 7, 6:30pm - 9pm --** Search and Rescue
- **Thursday, May 9, 6:30pm-9pm--** Disaster Psychology and Team Organization
- **Saturday, May 18, 9am-7pm--** Exam Review, Disaster Simulation Drill, Graduation and CERT Pot Luck Bar-B-Q Celebration.

Additional Events:

- **Saturday, June 8—**Expanded CERT Neighborhood Team Meetings
 - **Saturday, July 20 –** Community-wide Disaster Drill
- Times to be announced.

All classes will be held at the Saratoga Summit Fire Station. Class size is limited to 24, so please register ASAP by calling 831-338-0554 or email disasterparedness@yahoo.com.

Take a Hike . . .

Ridge Top Walk



Long Ridge is one of the most beautiful and walkable places in the Santa Cruz Mountains. It has spectacular ridge top views, grassy hills, and shady wooded canyons.

Begin this hike on the Hickory Oaks Trail of the Long Ridge Open Space Preserve which is accessible from Skyline Boulevard 1.6 miles north of Highway 9 at a metal gate on the west side. Take the hikers' stile around the gated fire road to pick up the ranch road-trail through the woods. In 100 yards the road turns right.

Stately groves of hickory oak, madrone, and Douglas fir crown this beautiful ridge, with sweeping views of the Monterey Bay, and the Pacific Ocean. From the massive hickory oak, clear trunks, sometimes up to 5 feet in diameter, grow huge horizontal and often contorted limbs. This oak, *Quercus chrysolepis*, also called canyon, gold cup and maul oak, has fine-grained hardwood that was prized for wagon wheels and farm implements. Beyond the grove a meadow opens with views down to the southeast of the deep, lush, canyons of Oil and Waterman Creeks. On a very clear day one is able to see as far as the Farallon Islands. At 0.2 miles there is a trail to the left leading to an interesting rock formation.

Partial List of Spring Flora

- Popcorn Flower
- Lupines
- Buttercups
- Poppies
- Manroot
- Snowberry
- Milkmaids
- Hounds Tongue
- Owls Clover
- Chinese Houses
- Buckeye



This short loop rejoins the main trail in 0.1 miles. Most of the trails are former ranch roads. After another 0.5 miles the Hickory Oaks trail turns sharply downhill. Before you lies the great redwood canyon of Pescadero Creek and the lands of Portola State Park.

Take the trail that continues north on the summit. Soon you will see the Leonard Schiff bench, a memorial to the Stanford physics professor and conservationist. Schiff and Wallace Stegner were part of a group of 16 families from the Palo Alto area who sold this land to MROSD in 1978. (The Skyline Historical Society will include the fascinating chain of ownership in the book they are

writing.) From here to the Ward Road intersection, 0.2 miles, the meadow is filled with Baby Blue Eyes, *Nemophila menziesii*, in spring.

Continue on as the trail enters a wooded grove. After 0.1 miles Ward Road turns downhill to the left and the Peters Creek trail forks to the right. Follow straight ahead for 0.5 miles on the Long Ridge Road trail to the Stegner bench. Due west lies the great redwood canyon of Slate Creek, Butano Ridge with Pine Mountain peaking over its shoulder,

and a broad view of the ocean at Pescadero. Pause and contemplate the message on the Stegner bench: “--- to try to save for everyone, for the hostile and indifferent as well as the committed, some of the health that flows down across the green ridges from the Skyline, and some of the beauty and refreshment of spirit that are still available to any resident of the Valley who has a moment and the wit, to lift up his eyes unto the hills.” Though you retrace your steps, the return trip to your car (1.6 miles) will provide new views as you travel in the opposite direction. Deer and wild turkeys abound.

~Ruth Waldhauer

Wild/Feral Pigs Update

Dick Seever, the trapper for the MidPeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) has trapped 175 wild pigs in his second contract year. Nearly all have been taken on the Long Ridge Open Space Preserve. He had reached the original contract limit in early December, but MROSD quickly increased the funding limit. The have just issued him a new contract for the third year's effort. This contract is a 'maintenance' contract where he is paid an hourly rate rather than a 'per pig' rate, up to a budget limit of \$43,000. Probably our prodding got them moving with their wild pig control efforts, but MROSD deserves our praise for preventing the severe destruction of our local environment. This would have surely occurred if they had not started their trapping program, as the pigs would have overwhelmed the trapping and hunting efforts of we locals as the pigs spilled over from the various park and Open Space lands.

Mr. Seever has just completed a smaller contract with the Santa Cruz regional headquarters of State Parks. This winter he trapped approximately 70 at Big Basin State Park (many more taken there earlier) and 20 wild pigs at Partridge Ranch (Goat Rock area). This shows that there is a slow spread of wild pigs southward from the Saratoga Gap area. Also, San Mateo County Parks now has funding and Mr. Seever very recently started trapping in their two parks near Portola Redwoods State Park. He has already removed 14 pigs from there. Interestingly, he reports that these have more feral pig characteristics, while the ones up on the Skyline have more Russian boar characteristics.

Elsewhere, about 250 pigs have been taken at Wilder Ranch State Park, just north of Santa Cruz.

Pig Traps Available

We residents need to do our share in the wild pig control in our area. I have the community - made pig traps. We loan them out, and I have pig bait that is available for a donation to replace the supply. A depredation permit is required for trapping. Call me if you have permit questions. Call the Dept of Fish and Game at 831/649-2870 to start the somewhat lengthy permit process. The permit is free.

~Dick Schwind
408-867-9422





What's In A Name?

I've often wondered how birds got their names, English or Latin. One logical way is by how they sound. Northern Mockingbird, *Mimus polyglottos*, is the perfect name for a bird that mocks and mimics other birds and other sounds. Killdeer, *Charadrius vociferus*, vociferously say their name, kill-deer, kill-deer, deer, deer, deer.

Common bird names are also interesting especially when you follow the name changes. When we first started the Wild Bird Center in Los Gatos, I was very confused when people would talk about Marsh Hawks, Pigeon Hawks and Sparrow Hawks. Nowhere in any of my books were these birds mentioned...until I looked in my father's 1960 Peterson Field Guide. Marsh Hawk is a Northern Harrier found mainly in marshy areas. Pigeon Hawk is a Merlin, which is actually a falcon, and likes to feast on pigeons. Sparrow Hawk is an American Kestrel, also a falcon, and will eat small birds though it likes lizards and insects better.

Common Yellowthroat has a yellow throat. Chickadee says its name. Flycatchers do just that, catch flies. Yellowlegs have yellow legs. My favorite is the Kite who looks just like one when it hovers in the sky looking for prey. Many other raptors "kite" into the wind but the Kite family is the only one that can do it without wind.

An interesting new book has just been published titled *100 Birds and How They Got Their Names*, by Diana Wells. Author Wells goes from A to Z and covers bird families the world over. Hawks are in the Accipitridae family, from the Latin *accipere* meaning "to seize." Their common name, hawk, is from the Middle English *hawk* and the Anglo-Saxon *hafoc* meaning "having". About flycatchers she says "The western Pacific-slope flycatcher, *Empidonax difficilis*, is so called because it is "difficult", if not impossible, to distinguish from several other species. *Empidonax* is from the Greek *empidos*, "of a gnat" and *anax*, "king" or "lord". These "king of gnats" are small birds that catch flying insects." Nuthatches, a favorite in the mountains is described both in Latin and in Old English. "The nuthatch's family name, *Sittidae*, comes from the Greek for "a climbing bird" and was used by Aristotle. The common name, nuthatch...comes from Anglo-Saxon *hnuta*, "a nut", and the Old English *hakken* meaning "to break" or "to cleave". These little birds will wedge a nut into a crevice to hold it while they pound it open."

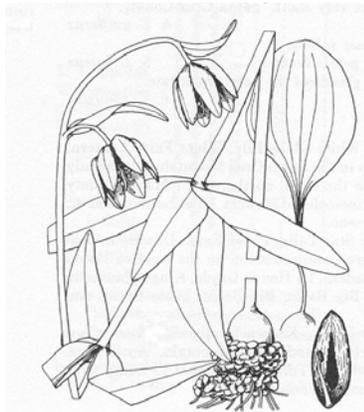
The book is fascinating and an easy read, but watch out, it's hard to stop reading about "just one more bird."

~Freddy Howell

Watch for Mission Bells

Mission bells (*Fritillaria affinis* (formerly *F. lanceolata*)) manage to blend in and stand out at the same time. Focusing on color, the camouflaged yellow-green, gold, and purple-brown flowers of this lily blend in with the other forest colors. However, the flower's shape, like a nodding cutout of a six-pointed bell, is quite striking.

Like other lilies, mission bells are perennial. They start as an underground bulb covered with tiny bulblets or scales that resemble grains of rice. The plant is also known as rice root lily or purple rice-bulbed lily.



In late winter or early spring the plant appears above ground as a quickly growing erect stem, becoming 1 to 3 feet tall. The stem develops 1 ½ to 6-inch lanceolate leaves, generally less than 10 times as long as they are wide. The leaves grow in several imperfect whorls of 2 to 8 on the upper half of the stem, and alternately toward the tip. The lower stems are leafless.

Flower colors vary with individual plants from yellow-green with purple spots to purple-brown with yellow-green and purple spots. The contrasting colors may have a checkerboard appearance, inspiring the other most common name, checker lily. Hanging flowers are deeply bowl-shaped with six-pointed perianths (fused petals and sepals) that taper from the middle. The six yellow stamens are shorter than the perianths. The fruit is a short, broad, six-winged capsule.

In the Santa Cruz Mountains, mission bells bloom from March to May, usually in open woodlands in well-drained soil, occasionally in grasslands or brush. They are found in the West from British Columbia to Southern California, and east to Idaho below 5,000 feet.

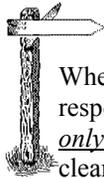
Mission bells can take 5 years before blooming and, even then, take occasional years off. At these times, the plant grows low to the ground as a seemingly unrelated single large oval leaf. If you suspect one is growing in an area nearby, make a note and try again the following year.

~Sarah Schoen



Help Emergency Responders Find You!

According to the DF/County Fire, the lack of proper addressing is one of the biggest problems facing emergency response personnel.



When you dial 911, emergency responders are given your street address only. If your street address is not clearly marked at your roadway entrance from the highway *and* at every fork in the road, you run the risk that emergency responders may be delayed. A fire can spread throughout your home in a matter of minutes. Seconds can make a difference for heart attack and choking victims. Finding your home in time is critical.

CDF and County fire protection guidelines require the following:

- Your address sign(s) should be visible from all directions of travel for at least 150 feet from your roadway or driveway.
- If your roadway contains branches or side roads, additional street name and address signs should be posted at each branch in the road.
- When more than one house is accessed off a single driveway, all addresses should be posted at the street and at each appropriate intersection along that driveway
- Street names and addresses should be printed, on all roadway signs, in white letters and numbers that are at least four inches 4" tall by 3/8" wide brush stroke on a contrasting background.

- All structures are required to have an address number placed where it is readily visible from the street or road. Address numbers affixed to structures must also be at least 4" tall by 3/8" wide but may be light on dark or dark on light contrast.
- When the structure is not visible from the street or roadway, a post or sign bearing the structure address should be set adjacent to the driveway or access road to the property.

South Skyline Emergency Preparedness (SSEP) has an ongoing program to help emergency responders find you. For only \$9 per sign SSEP volunteers will make road signs with up to five 4" address numbers and a directional indicator. Signs are constructed of sturdy 2" x 6" x 24" lumber painted dark green. Your address number and a directional indicator will be stenciled on the signs in white gloss paint. A sample road sign will be on display at the upcoming SSA General Meeting. You can place orders for signs there, or send an email request to disasterpreparedness@yahoo.com.

With your new signs in place, delivery people, first-time visitors, and emergency response personnel can then simply "follow the signs" to your house!

~ Irene Long

Spring Sales are On for Native Plants

If you are looking for an opportunity to purchase native plants, the local chapters of the California Native Plant Society will be holding their annual spring sales.

On **April 13-14** the Santa Clara Valley chapter will hold a **Native Plant sale at Hidden Villa 10:00-4:00pm**. Hidden Villa is 2 miles west of the Moody Road exit from I-280, 1.7 miles from Foothill College. Parking is free.

The **Wildflower Show** will be held on **April 20-21 at Foothill College 10:00-4:00pm**. Bring 8 quarters to pay for parking.

For more information on either of these events contact Georgia Stigall at gstigall@aol.com or 650-941-1068.

The Santa Cruz chapter is holding their **Native Plant Sale on Saturday, April 20 at the UCSC Arboretum**. Members of the Arboretum and/or CNPS will be admitted during the members-only preview time from 10:00 to 11:00am. The general public will be admitted from 11:00 to 3:00pm. There will be many long time favorites for sale and some not as frequently available species.

Also on **April 20** is the **Annual Spring Sale** of California native plants at the **East Bay Regional Parks Botanic Garden from 10:00 to 3:00 pm**. The garden is located on Wildcat Canyon Road at the foot of South Park Drive in Tilden Regional Park, in the hills above Berkeley.

Telephone Problems are Being Worked

Joe Davis continues his campaign to improve our telephone service. His latest update:

I have diligently been working the phone problems. I finally gave up on Pac Bell/SBH as they were completely non-responsive. I have filed a complaint with the Public Utilities Commission as a representative of the South Skyline Association. It has been about two weeks; we should get a response in about 4 to 6 weeks. Send your comments to: fixphoneproblems@aol.com or call 650-948-6424.



~Joe Davis

Skyline “Preferred Providers” for Septic Tank Pumping and Inspection

The SSA has initiated a Septic Systems committee with the purpose of establishing a Skyline ‘Preferred Provider’ list for septic tank pumping and inspection services, and to educate our members on septic system care. The committee has sent inquiries to all the businesses performing septic tank pumping in our three counties. The committee’s next steps are to write a ‘Request for Quotation’, receive responses from the interested services, select the ‘Preferred Provider’ for each of our three counties, and inform our members. We expect our efforts will lead to improved care of this vital system for each of us, and result in reduced costs for tank pumping and subsequent inspection of the tank. It is expected the committee’s ‘Preferred Provider’ list will be published in the next issue of ‘Skylines’.

*~Dick Schwind,
Committee Chair*

Your Septic Tank and Leach Field - A Primer

Most septic tanks are made of cast concrete (unless very old, when they were often built using redwood). Polyurethane and fiberglass tanks are sometimes used where installing a concrete tank is impractical. They have two chambers and outlet tees or baffles, designed to ‘manage’ most efficiently the waste the tank receives. The system is designed to vent back through the house drain plumbing and up the vent stacks that stick up through the roof.

Your septic tank provides the first step in processing the wastes you put down the drain. The tank is designed for heavier materials to settle to the bottom, the sediment, and the scum to rise to the top. Grease is part of the scum. Bacteria in the tank help break down some of the solids, but some remain and accumulate. The tank effluent, the cleaner liquid in a properly working tank, flows up through the bottom of the tee. That fluid flows out into the leach field via a diversion valve on newer systems. Older systems may also incorporate a distribution box to distribute effluent to the leach field. The effluent flows into the leach field where it is treated as it filters down into the soil toward streams, the ground water, and your well, but required separations are adequate to prevent pollution. The diversion valve divides the leach field into two parts, so one half is resting while the other half is being used.

When the septic tank doesn’t perform properly, scum and/or sediment will flow out into the leach field and gradually plug it up. The system has then failed and at least the leach field must be replaced. There are several causes for system failure noted here. First, when there is too much scum and/or sediment in the tank, the liquid effluent carries solids and/or scum with it. Further leach field damage is stopped when the

septic tank contents are pumped out by a septic tank pumping service and hauled away.

Failure of the septic system is evident when sewage rises to the surface of the ground, creating offensive odors. This sewage may contain dysentery, infectious hepatitis, typhoid and para-typhoid and other infectious disease organisms.

Another type of tank failure occurs when the outlet tee fails. Normally, this tee prevents the scum from flowing directly into the outlet, as fluid is drawn off from some distance down from the surface. Sometimes these tees have been found to be broken off and lying in the bottom of the tank. Also, leach field failure can occur when tree roots invade the leach lines. Corralled horses, etc, over the leach field denude vegetation and compact the soil, reducing the important transpiration of the liquid in the effluent.

Good practices for your septic system between pumping start with:

- a) Know where your septic tank is located and don’t drive over it.
- b) Minimize use of a garbage disposal or don’t use it at all, as it puts an unnecessary load on the septic system. Compost vegetable matter and put meat scraps and grease in the trash.
- c) Minimize any grease going down the drain.
- d) Go easy on the use of toxic drain cleaning materials and bleach in the wash, though the tank can handle a moderate amount of these.
- e) Minimize dirt you wash down the drain (those muddy boots? Sediment!).
- f) Eliminate water system leaks. The septic system is designed to work with intermittent loads, not a steady load, even the dripping of a faucet.
- g) Rotate the diversion valve, if you have one, annually,
- h) Protect your leach field (see above). Don’t expect septic tank digestion promoters to do any good - they will not delay the need for pumping the tank.

In the next issue of ‘Skylines’ we will describe what a septic tank inspection involves, and will attempt to give you intelligent guidelines as to how often you should pump your septic tank. There is no single answer to the latter - it depends upon tank size, the number of people that have been living in the house, and how you have been treating your tank. A rule of thumb is, pump the tank when the total depth of floating scum plus bottom sludge exceeds one-third the depth of sewage in the tank.

~Dick Schwind



A Sunflower House For Your Child's Garden



This is the time of year when I start thinking about growing our annual sunflower house. I started it as a project for my daughter, but like a lot of children's activities I think I do it mostly for the child in me. I was inspired by Sharon Lovejoy, a wonderful author of children's gardening books. I attended her lecture on "Fairy Gardens" at an educational forum and couldn't wait to get started on my own child's garden. Did you know if you remove the petals from a vinca/periwinkle flower, inside you will find a fairy's paintbrush? Tiny wizard wands can be found in poppies. Snapdragons serve splendidly as a fairy's mailbox, and they make lovely earrings as well!

The sunflower house is for bigger people, but it is something even I can build. We usually choose 2 – 4 kinds of sunflowers. It's fun to experiment. The 6+ foot tall varieties make nice tall walls. The shorter varieties fill in the spaces and make a nice border around the house.

Prepare the soil for planting. Draw the perimeter lines of the house in the soil. Seeds can either be planted directly along the perimeter, or grown in pots and transplanted. I usually grow mine in pots where the deer can't eat them, then transplant them when they are a few inches tall. The deer don't seem to care about them when they get larger, but just to be safe (those deer can't be trusted), I put up a barrier until they are 2-3 feet tall. Plant about 4-5 inches apart. Don't forget to leave a door. Last year my 7 year-old designed a small tunnel to crawl through as a back door.

To fill in the spaces in the wall, plant a climbing vine. Morning glories grow quickly, really wind around the sunflower stalks, and add some beautiful color. I cover the floor of the house with bark to keep the weeds down.

While blooming, the bees and butterflies are frequent guests. When the flowers begin to wilt, the birds arrive to nibble the seeds. After the stalks fall to the ground, the quail gather to enjoy the feast.



Start your seeds soon so you can enjoy your house throughout the summer.

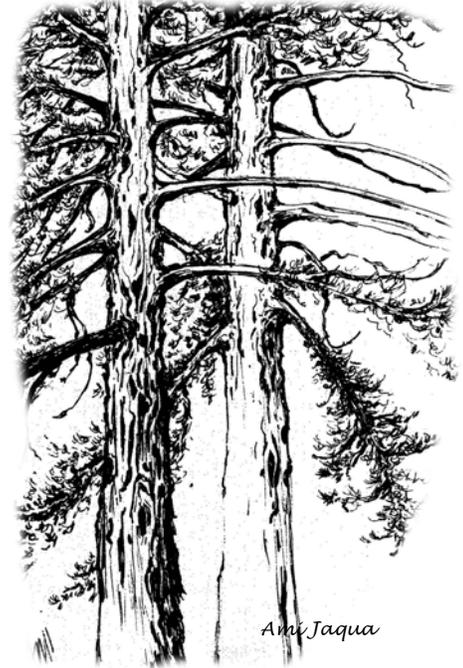
~Patti Begley.

For more gardening inspiration for your child (or your inner child) try these books by Sharon Lovejoy: *Sunflower Houses*, *Roots Boots and Shoots*, and *Hollyhock Days: Garden Adventures for the Young at Heart*

Fog Catchers One Mountain Resident's Perspective

Mitch Matheu is a native resident of Woodside, and grows a nursery of 400 redwood trees to plant in places where they are needed. Here, he shares his method of collecting water, and his vision of Skyline.

I placed a five-gallon bucket underneath the branches of a ridge top Douglas Fir, and within a month, the summer fog that had condensed on the tree, falling like rain, had filled the five-gallon bucket to overflowing. Ten feet from the same tree, the fog had passed over but left the ground hard, broken and dry. When I walked past the dry dirt to the soft, black earth where the bucket was underneath the tree, I got the feeling that more trees were needed on that ridge top. In fact, the whole ridge top should be replanted.



Only the few mature second-growth trees still collect the fog that passes through their highest branches. Ferns, nettles and grasses live where they receive water under remaining trees on the ridge. The rest of the ridge top is dry, deficient soil.

The conditions here are astounding; you'd think we would have a fully-grown temperate rain forest from the surprisingly heavy fog and rain. Instead, creeks are swollen with flooding waters that run straight off denuded hillsides. Why not just plant trees?

I am writing this article because I have a sense of imagination. Instead of hiking up to Skyline to see ancient temperate rain forests of mature redwood trees, I see the fog advance toward vacant slopes and empty canyons instead. As I imagine the ten-foot diameter redwoods and the fern-covered slopes, the diffused light and clear springs, I feel a greater responsibility to bring it about by planting young trees. Perhaps this is even more meaningful than the joys of those who follow.

~Mitch Matheu



CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE

Home Theater Receiver - Just upgraded home theater and have an Aiwa home theater audio/video receiver for sale. Specs: analog and digital inputs, Dolby 5.1 and DTS processors power output is 170 w/channel @ 8 ohms, from 40 Hz to 20 Mhz. Like new, only 6 months old with manual, remote and original carton. \$125 John 867-3313

Wood Stove – Heavy plate steel with some interior bricks, 2 non-glass arched doors. \$205/trade. 650-851-3181

10 inch Sears Table saw, older model, but works. \$125 **Gas fired Spa heater**, setup for Natural Gas but could be converted to propane. \$150. Also **1.5 HP Spa pump and motor**. \$125. Call Joe Davis 650-948-6424

WANTED

WTB Dump cargo trailer- I'd like to buy a 10k lb GVW, 6x10 or 6x12 dump trailer. Occasional hauling of road rock, concrete aggregate, retaining wall materials, drain rock, soil, etc. for my homestead near Saratoga Gap. \$4500 price tag seems too steep for the times I plan to use it. Know where to look for a used one or live nearby and want to go in on it together? 4 guys = \$1200 or so. Steve Clark, 408-867-1885 (msg), sclark@sj.znet.com

Recommendation for Piano Tuner who will come to Alpine Rd/Skyline Area. Leave a message for Don: (650) 941-8382 or dcmcb@earthlink.net

FREE

TV Antenna - 9' antenna with 15' metal mounting post. Good condition. Jim 408-867-9485

Fire Fittings: Convert 1 ½ inch pipe thread to fire thread. Blue reflectors included. South Skyline Fire & Rescue. George. 408-354-1401

GE Clothes Dryer in good operating condition; converter to propane. Phone 650-948-1466



Skylines Is Published Once A Quarter

Policy on Classified Ads: Ads are free to SSA members. No continuing ads will be accepted. They must be resubmitted for each issue. Deadline dates are July 1, October 1, January 1, and April 1.

Skylines News Articles: The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue is June 17, 2002.

Send all ads and articles to: Patti Begley, 26160 Highway 9, Los Gatos, CA 95033, or skylinesEditor@earthlink.net

Skylines invites individuals to submit articles, and artwork.

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

SSA CALENDAR

General Meeting – April 19, 7:00 pm
at Thomas Fogarty Winery

Business Meetings at 7:15 pm:
Thurs. April 11 – Georgia Stigall
Thurs. May 9 – Kris Smith
Thurs. June 13 – Bill Fowkes
(Call Pat Congdon for location and directions)

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