

Scott Valley Voice

July 31, 2009

Newsletter of Beautiful Scott Valley

Vol. V, Num. 1

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT BY JOAN BOESSENECKER

Dear Members:

We hope this edition of "The Voice" will serve to update you on current issues affecting our Scott Valley neighborhood and also serve as a reminder of the Association's needs in accomplishing its goals.

Please consider this a first notice that 2009 Membership dues of \$40 per household are due. Checks should be made out to the **Scott Valley Homeowners' Association** and sent to: **P.O. Box 392, Mill Valley, CA 94942**. Our bank account is getting low in funds and we do need your support in paying for the on-going costs of landscape maintenance, maintaining the Emergency Preparedness box, as well as our communications with residents via "The Voice".

We have a second request – Are there any volunteers available to serve on the SVHA Board for the term of 2009-2011? The board has three openings at this time, and we always appreciate the assistance and inspiration new members can bring! It does not require a lot of your time, just 5-6 meetings per year! **If you are interested in joining the SVHA board, please email Francine Millman at: scottvalleyha@aol.com.**

Thank you for your continued support. Have a great summer!

BECOME A SVHA MEMBER

**KEEP SCOTT VALLEY SAFE
AND MANICURED!**

It's that time again! **Expenses for things like landscape maintenance have INCREASED!** For only \$40 a year, the Homeowners' Association can continue to **maintain the landscape and emergency preparedness box**, as well as any other projects affecting Scott Valley. **Without your support, these projects cannot be maintained!**

Your membership also gives you the ability to vote for board members, each year. Please send your check to: **Scott Valley Homeowners' Association, P.O. Box 392, Mill Valley, CA 94942.**

ALTO TUNNEL UPDATE BY JOHN PALMER

On March 4th the County of Marin's Transportation Authority held a public meeting at Edna Maguire School for the purpose of obtaining public input on its current study to determine the best of the three options to improve the multi-use link between Corte Madera and Mill Valley. The three options are: improving Camino Alto, improving the existing Horse Hill multi-use path and bicycle route, and reconstructing the Alto Tunnel. Ken Campbell and John Palmer from your Scott Valley Homeowners' Board attended.

After an introductory series of speeches by County representatives and Randy Anderson, the president of Land People, the consultant doing the current study, the meeting broke up into three smaller groups, ostensibly to make it easier for all to be heard. The Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) packed the house with supporters from all over, including some from Mill Valley.

Mr. Anderson consistently referred to the multi-use path from Sausalito to Vasco Court as "the bike path", and it was not until this meeting that I found out that the firm Land People is made up of many of the same personnel as Alta Consultants, the firm which has done most of the other bicycle-oriented studies around the area. In my view, and that of many others I spoke with, the consultant exhibited thinly veiled bias toward the tunnel option. County personnel tried to be more objective, and any preference they may have was nowhere near as much in evidence. When I raised the issue of access (see "Open Letter to the Mill Valley City Council on **Page 3**"), I was heckled by MCBC members or supporters. Other Scott Valley residents experienced similar reactions from the MCBC crowd in their sub-groups. It wasn't nasty, just mildly unpleasant.

There will be one more public meeting, currently planned for September. We will keep you posted by email if we have your email address. Your board strongly urges you to attend and be heard.

➤**Note from the Editor: If you would like to receive email information from the SVHA, please email: scottvalleyha@aol.com.**

NEWS FROM THE SCOTT VALLEY SWIM & TENNIS CLUB

BY TOM ASHLEY

Why news from the club? – It's our neighborhood and the homeowners association appoints two of the directors of club. This measure ensures that the neighborhood's welfare is taken into account. (If you want to be considered for appointment to the Club board, the only requirement is that you be a proprietary member of the club.) Directors serve a two-year term and attend monthly evening meetings.

So what is the news from the club? The club is planning a major renovation starting this Fall. What does it consist of? The major elements are upgrading the pool and deck, expanding the fitness room, and adding a café. Other items include repaving the lower parking lot and the road down to it; resurfacing the tennis courts with the latest in soft surfaces, and a minor renovation of the upper clubhouse. The club hopes to start at the beginning of August and finish in March. During the construction, the courts and the fitness facilities will still be open.

How big is the club? The club has 400 family memberships. While non-members are allowed to participate in some activities, principally the outstanding swim team, the emphasis is on keeping the club as a private family-oriented facility for its members. The club has always had a large percentage of its members come from the neighborhood and a large number of neighbors have been members.

Have any questions / want to consider joining? Call the manager Patsy Love Broyles at 383-3483.

P.S. The Club is aware of the traffic issues in the valley and asks its members to drive responsibly. In addition, the club thanks the residents of Scott Valley for your patience during the 5 swim meets during the spring.

BRING IN YOUR TRASH AND RECYCLE CANS

We all know that trash and recycle day takes place on Thursday mornings and it is customary for everyone to put their bins and cans out the evening before.

However, many people leave these cans and bins out for DAYS and DAYS after pick-up giving an open invitation to thieves that no one is home!

Please bring in your cans and bins as soon as possible after trash day to keep your home and Scott Valley safe!

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CAMINO ALTO BULGE?

BY JOHN PALMER

Many of you may remember with varying degrees of antipathy the bulge in the median strip on Camino Alto just north of E. Blithedale, which caused so much congestion for cars coming down Camino Alto and coming out of the Mill Valley Health Club/Maria Maria parking lot.

Your board decided to do something about it, and asked me to take the matter up with City officials.

One in particular, City Council Member Ken Wachtel was extremely helpful and attentive to our request, and convinced Wayne Bush, the head of our Public Works Department, to have a city contractor remove the bulge and repave the affected area. Now traffic flows out of our neighborhood MUCH more smoothly.

Thank you Ken Wachtel and Wayne Bush!

➤ **Note from the Editor:** *I would like to personally thank John Palmer for taking on this project. It has made a huge and noticeable difference in the flow of traffic coming down the hill to East Blithedale. THANK YOU JOHN! Your time and effort on this project is most appreciated.*

REDUCING WILD LAND FIRE HAZARDS AND BRUSH MANAGEMENT IN SCOTT VALLEY

BY KEN CAMPBELL

Do you remember the devastating wild fires in Santa Barbara just last month? Did you hear about the potential wild fire hazards in Mill Valley and on Mt. Tamalpais?

Scott Valley residents are surrounded by large open spaces that have the potential to be major wild fire hazards. With some simple brush management, we can reduce wild land fire hazards and make Scott Valley as wild fire safe as possible.

Here are some vegetation management tips:

- Clear all flammable vegetation (dry grass and broom) and any dead or fallen debris a minimum 30' from homes and structures;
- Trim back Tree limbs extending over rooftops at least 10' from the eaves;

- Place firewood piles away from your home or deck
- Clear dry leaves, debris or pine needles from the roof and storm gutters

Free “Chipping Service” for Mill Valley Residents!

The City of Mill Valley has a “free chipping” service to residents and neighborhood associations who group together and put flammable vegetation in a central location for removal.

There are many different people and companies who do this brush clearing work, and you can find them in the Yellow pages and the local newspapers.

If you would like information on how protect your home, property and family from wild land fire hazards and improving fire-safety **contact Mill Valley Fire Dept. Vegetation Hot line at: 721-4367.**

**SCOTT VALLEY AKA
THE WILD KINGDOM –
WILDLIFE IN THE OPEN SPACE
BY FRANCINE MILLMAN**

We have received several calls and emails regarding a seeming resurgence of coyote up in the Open Space. This is a reminder that the wildlife in the Open Space area is alive and active and they will NOT hesitate to surround and attack your dog, mostly when they are off-leash!

There have been a few coyote and a bobcat incident reported: One Scott Valley resident, Ginny Horton, reports that three coyote in the Open Space recently cornered her dog and her dog would not have made it, if not for the heroic efforts of some neighbors.

Coyotes devoured their neighbor’s dog last month and a bobcat attacked their own dog, a Lab recently requiring 64 stitches and a 3-day hospital stay due to infections. They have been in contact with Open Space, PG&E and other public agencies who admit the problem has grown exponentially in the past two years.

It's summer now and the young are coming out - the adults can be protective of their young if they feel threatened. **It is Important to keep dogs on leash during this time when walking in coyote habitat.** Also, family groups can consist of an average of 3 to 6 coyotes, if not more.

Adults (humans) are fine on the trails, but it might be

wise to carry a whistle with you. If a coyote confronts you, sound the whistle and if you have any small pebbles or rocks close by, throw them at the coyote’s body, not its head. They will retreat.

Report any incidents. Keep your pets safe!

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE
MILL VALLEY CITY COUNCIL
REGARDING THE ALTO TUNNEL
BY JOHN PALMER**

The following was read to the Mill Valley City Council on April 6, 2009 regarding the Alto Tunnel.



Mayor Berman and Members of the City Council:

Many of those who are lobbying to reconstruct the Alto Tunnel are either not aware of, or are not willing to take into account, the complications posed by the development of the neighborhoods on either side of its entrances after the tunnel was abandoned. Each of you should have recently received a copy of a letter I sent to those conducting the current study on it demonstrating that there are at least two properties in private hands which block the right of way.

The dirty little secret of the Alto Tunnel is that despite all the previous engineering reports done on it, until I did the research a couple of weeks ago, no one has ever bothered to study, in-depth, the issue of whether the County actually has complete rights of access to it. It turns out that neither the County nor the railroad, which has retained some of the right of way and deeded some to the County, have all the property needed to reconstruct the tunnel.

After studying the title to just two properties, the homes above each end of the tunnel, I can say with certainty that in one case, the easement the railroad had has expired according to its terms, and in the other case, those rights have been sold and deeded to the property’s current homeowner, thus blocking the access. This is an extremely significant finding for several reasons:

- 1) It demonstrates without a doubt that at least one home in Mill Valley will have to be taken and the current occupants compensated and relocated in order to re-construct the Alto Tunnel and in the second case, that of the Corte Madera home, the easement rights would either have to be successfully litigated in order to be re-instated, and case law does not favor the County, or that home would also have to be taken.

- 2) The cities of Corte Madera and Mill Valley will have to either condone such takings, stand by while the takings are conducted, or voice opposition to them;
- 3) Any attempt at a taking will give rise to a highly emotional response by neighbors on either side of the tunnel, especially considering that one of the major beneficiaries of a reconstructed tunnel would be the growing numbers of private firms which rent bicycles for profit for use on multi-use paths, as documented in recent articles in both the Chronicle and the IJ. Please remember the Bicycle Coalition's original name for this route – the North-South Bicycle Freeway.

The Scott Valley HOA, on whose behalf I have spoken publicly on this issue for nearly a decade, has consistently supported the City of Mill Valley's Resolution 00-36 from the year 2000, which asked that 11 separate issues be examined in depth if the tunnel were to be studied again. One of these was to analyze any access, easement, or real estate-related issues.

When I found out that not only had these access issues never been studied in depth, but also that no one conducting the current study was planning to examine them, I did it myself, on only the two most obvious properties, with the help of a Senior Title Officer at a local title company, the railroad mapping expert at the County DPW, and a land use attorney.

Upon presenting these findings to the people overseeing the current study at the County, I was initially told that the real estate issues I uncovered were complicated and outside the scope of this study. Once they studied the deeds I gave them, and determined that my findings were correct, they said that the issue would be flagged so that those who will use the current study to determine further action on the three routes, presumably the County Board of Supervisors, will be aware of the access issue.

Now that we all are aware that there are serious impediments to the County's right to access the tunnel, our HOA is asking the City to stand by its 2000 Resolution and request that this finding be given the weight it deserves. In other words, our HOA has stood by the City and supported its Resolution at every turn, and now we are asking this current City Council to please stand by the City's own resolution and request that this finding be examined and quantified, in other words, more than just flagged, in the current study. We would prefer, of course, that the City also publicly voice opposition to any taking in this matter.

Why spend another nickel of taxpayer money studying this matter until both the takings issue and the costs of securing access are examined in detail? After all, unless this issue is resolved, all the other issues regarding the tunnel are irrelevant.

I would be happy to discuss this matter in more detail and share copies of my collection of deeds, easements, and related documents with anyone from the City, the City Attorney, Wayne Bush or Jill Barnes. Anne Montgomery has my contact information.

Thank You.

RECENT BURGLARY IN SCOTT VALLEY

The Mill Valley Police Department was recently called to Scott Valley regarding a recent burglary. Because the investigation is on going, there are not many specific details they could provide. Here is what they were able to tell us:

- On June 11th, a closed and locked garage was broken into on Underhill. The report was made at approximately 9:40am.
- Items were stolen from the garage, including a purse.

If you see anyone suspicious loitering around Scott Valley, you are encouraged to call 911 immediately. They will send an officer out. Try to provide as much information as you are able – gender, ethnicity, age, height, etc.

THE GET READY PROGRAM WHAT IS IT?



GET SMART!

Disaster professionals say the most important thing we can do is be prepared to survive for 72 hours in our homes. This first line of defense, called "Shelter in Place", will save the most lives. To help you prepare, Southern Marin Fire Protection District and the Mill Valley Fire Department are offering a two-hour course to teach you what to do before, during and after a regional disaster.

GET TRAINED!

That's all it takes – two hours. You owe it to your family. You owe it to your neighbors. You owe it to your community. Southern Marin is looking to become the first community in the nation to have 100% of our households certified and ready for disaster.

GET READY!

To schedule a class or get more information call : 380-1105 or visit <http://www.getreadysouthernmarin.org/>

DO YOU HAVE A SCOTT VALLEY ISSUE FOR THE BOARD TO ADDRESS?

If you have any concerns or issues that you would like the SVHA Board of Directors to address, please feel free to email us at ScottValleyHA@aol.com. The board will review the topic and reply as to whether it is a Board issue or direct you to the proper agency to deal with the issue, if it is not one for us to manage.

We are continually addressing such topics as coyote and wildlife issues, Emergency Preparedness, landscape maintenance and general safety issues effecting Scott Valley. Please email scottvalleyha@aol.com with any topics you would like to see us address.

ITEMS FOR SALE

If you have items you would like to sell? Sure, we have Craig's list for that, but how about listing some of your items locally in The Voice? If you have any items you would like to sell, please email scottvalleyha@aol.com. Provide information about the item, the price and contact information.

Here are some items to get us started:

❖ "Reflections of Venice" canvas

by artist Howard Behrens - \$3,200 or make offer

Medium: Giclee on Canvas - Enhanced Painter's palette knife highlighting

Year: 1996, Limited Edition; unframed

Hand signed and Numbered: 47/71

Colors are rich and vibrant.

Measurements: 30" wide x 38" high

Pictures available or go to www.howardbehrens.com to view (colors are more brilliant in person)

Call Francine at 388-5809

❖ 1905 Kohler & Chase Baby Grand Piano -
\$4,000 or make offer

This Kohler & Chase piano was built in 1905 in San Francisco, CA. Beautiful condition and the sounds are lovely. Half or full open lid & full sostenuto middle pedal. Classic style. The piano and matching bench were completely restored. Warm medium mahogany brown finish; beautiful wood grain. Genuine ivory keys. The measurement is 58" x 58" **It also has Pianomation.** (Read on)

What is Pianomation? I added Pianomation to the piano – a small unit attached under the piano & with the use of special CD's & radio frequency, it becomes a player piano. It is fantastic because you get the both of both worlds! Special CDs from Elton John tunes to Mozart to Broadway show tunes - all PLAYED for you by Pianomation. It's fun to have the piano playing while you get to enjoy relaxing or entertaining guests. The CD's alone are worth over \$500. **Call Francine at 388-5809.**

ARE YOU A BABYSITTER LOOKING FOR WORK IN SCOTT VALLEY?

If you baby sit in the Scott Valley area and wish to have your name and phone number or email address listed in The Voice, please email scottvalleyha@aol.com. We will make sure to include your information in our next issue.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN FROM THIS EDITION OF THE SCOTT VALLEY VOICE??

- **ALTO TUNNEL UPDATE**
- **WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CAMINO ALTO “BULGE”?**
 - **WE NEED YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES!**
 - **SCOTT VALLEY NEWSLETTER ‘FLEA MARKET’**
- **LEARN ABOUT PREVENTING WILD FIRES IN SCOTT VALLEY**
- **COYOTE IN THE OPEN SPACE – PROTECT YOUR DOG!**

**SCOTT VALLEY
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