



LOS TRANCOS WOODS & VISTA VERDE

Newsletter – December 2011/January 2012

New Holiday Traditions, or Reclaiming Old Traditions

With the tough economic news at home and abroad, maybe now is the time to rethink how we celebrate the holidays. There is a movement afoot to reclaim quality instead of quantity, preserve local economies instead of overseas economies, and give help to those in need instead of giving more to those not in need. Below are ideas to give your holidays a more meaningful expression.

- From the comfort of your home you can peruse charities that fit the interest of the receiver and give a gift in their name. Even your local Fire Department could use some extra financial help. Check out national charity ratings at www.charitynavigator.org.
- Who wouldn't love a gift of housecleaning by either employing local people or by you, especially at this time of year? Or what about a month of gym visits?
- Giving to the arts has dropped dramatically, but many of us are enraptured by local play productions or taken to other worlds by live music concerts. Why not give tickets?
- Locally owned restaurants would happily sell you a gift certificate keeping your money in the community.
- With all the time and energy that you save by not going out endlessly shopping, you can then give the gift of spending time or sharing activities with loved ones.
- One of my favorite holiday traditions that I was once told about involved an auction. Each attendee at the holiday dinner was to purchase one item for \$10 or less, wrap it up, and put it under the tree. A lively auction then ensued after the dinner with the group encouraging everyone to be generous in their bids. Much laughter accompanied this affair. At the conclusion the group pooled the donated money and gave it all away to a different charity of choice each year. (I was running a nonprofit store at the time a customer told me about this idea. The man was so excited to find a bright yellow banana slug magnet for his auction item.)

We have the opportunity to make a difference in our world each time this season comes around. Shall we begin celebrating a New Tradition?

Submitted by Linda Drey-Nightingale

Wrap-up on Emergency Preparedness Drill

When the big one hits, what skill will we need immediately? With cell towers knocked out and a lot of individual injuries from cuts and blunt traumas, a knowledge of first aid and how to use a radio will be helpful. On October 29, 37 residents from Vista Verde and Los Trancos Woods got together at the Vista Verde Emergency Operations Center of 184 Vista Verde to learn and practice radio operations, how to stop serious bleeding, how to splint, how to establish an airway, and how to strap someone to a backboard for transportation. We thank our able instructors Steve Friedman, Gail Smith, Sheila Bleier, Mike Ward and Bill Tagg (Can you thank yourself? *Editor: You bet. Thank you from the rest of us!*) Four students were very helpful as volunteer victims. Each household who attended received an emergency flashlight. There was also time before and after the classes to formally and informally exchange ideas which can be just as informative as the planned sessions. People walked away feeling they were better prepared and more confident for when an earthquake does come.

Watch for information from Steve Friedman on the Wildland Fire Exercise which will be held in late April.

Submitted by Bill Tagg, VV Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

A Few Parting Thoughts about Los Trancos County Water District

Changes I have seen in 4 years –

- Calmer, issue related election campaigns (thanks to all three strong candidates)
- Alignment of direction with much community input, and after deep exploration of alternatives
- Lots of processes hammered out and put in place, such as, web site, 3-year forecast, budget, Finance Committee, Policies and Procedures, calendar
- Community communications through a 3-year report, two community surveys, ad hoc Newsletter articles, and there is much more to be done

The Water District has survived major inquiries and strengthened because of them –
LAFCo, Grand Jury, Newspaper articles

Thoughts on staying “in business” –

I can think of 4 ways we are liable to fail and lose access to our local tax dollars – and some countervailing ideas.

1. *We get legislated out of business.*
 - pretty unlikely, as we are very small
2. *LAFCo closes us down.*
 - again, not too likely, and I am sure we could muster the support to overturn
3. *We run out of good projects that provide broad benefit to the community and within our scope of operations (the California Water Code).*
 - Current projects will require years to deliver all their potential. Others can be created and tested with the community.
4. *We run out of willing volunteers to do the work needed to keep the District or projects going.*
 - A little creative conflict seems to help bring out interest. Filling our Secretary position with a long-term person will help retain organizational learning. And hiring ad hoc help now and then will reduce some burden and complexity while avoiding bureaucracy.

Finally –

We have a very unique and wonderful stewardship available to us – to manage a small but significant budget at the most local level possible, with tremendous efficiency, effectiveness and leverage. Let us preserve it. It has been fun and educational with the occasional bit of angst, but again, creative conflict generates new ideas, solutions and directions. And I got to know many people in the community that I would not have otherwise. Thanks for the opportunity to serve.

Submitted by Mike Ward, out-going Board Member of LTCWB

Keeping Mountain Lions Safe

Now that I have your attention, here is how we can do our part to safely coexist with our local Mountain Lion population.

“Staying Safe in Mountain Lion Country

Mountain lions are quiet, solitary and elusive, and typically avoid people. Mountain lion attacks on humans are extremely rare.

- Do not hike, bike, or jog alone.
- Avoid hiking or jogging when mountain lions are most active—dawn, dusk, and at night.
- Do not approach a mountain lion.
- If you encounter a mountain lion, do not run; instead, face the animal, make noise and try to look bigger by waving your arms; throw rocks or other objects. Pick up small children.
- If attacked, fight back.

You may be attracting mountain lions to your property without knowing it! Mountain lions generally exist wherever deer are found. Mountain lions prefer deer but, if allowed, they also eat pets and livestock. Help prevent deadly conflicts with these beautiful wild animals.

- Do not feed deer; it is illegal in California and it will attract mountain lions.
- Deer-proof your landscaping by avoiding plants that deer like to eat. For tips, request A

Gardener's Guide to Preventing Deer Damage from DFG offices.

- Trim brush to reduce hiding places for mountain lions.
- Don't leave small children or pets outside unattended.
- Install motion-sensitive lighting around the house.
- Provide sturdy, covered shelters for sheep, goats, and other vulnerable animals.
- Do not allow pets outside when mountain lions are most active—dawn, dusk, and at night.
- Bring pet food inside to avoid attracting raccoons, opossums and other potential lion prey.”

Excepts from a California Department of Fish and Game Brochure

Neighborhood Notes

- The community thanks all three **Water Board candidates** who had well run, informative campaigns. Congratulations to Susan Coons and Claudia Mazzetti who will now bring their ideas and energy to the Water District. Nancy Neuer will be volunteering her time for other community projects.
- The latest and greatest **rainfall data** from Gene Hunner is: Oct. – 2.1”, Nov. – 2.3”, total for the season – 4.4”. Thank you, Gene.

Community Associations' Web Sites

The web site addresses are:

<http://lostrancoswoods.org/>

<http://www.vistaverdepv.org> *NEW*

The group e-mail list is:

VistaVerdeLTW@yahoogroups.com

VistaVerdeCommunityAssoc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Thank you, Jerry Jensen & Rob Kalman for maintaining web sites