



LOS TRANCOS WOODS & VISTA VERDE Newsletter – Dec. 2015/Jan. 2016

Hottest Holiday Items – Family & Friends

Have the holidays come barreling into your house. We sometimes get so overwhelmed that we forget what the holidays are really about: family and friends. In light of the current Paris Climate Change conference and the Pope's message on the environment, here are some ideas to get back to the basics of enjoying family and friends.

- 1) Would your friends enjoy a visit more than a gift? Think of setting a day in January to get together. You provide a fun activity.
- 2) Do your children really need more stuff, or do they need more memories of fun times as a family?
- 3) How about your family reads a book aloud together, taking turns reading? Sounds a lot better than cleaning up all the wrapping paper together.
- 4) Are holiday decorations about quantity or about quality? Think about those few decorations that have real meaning to you.
- 1) What about giving a thank you note instead of giving a reciprocal gift? This takes a lot less time and money but is so meaningful to the receiver. Include the role they have played in your life.
- 2) Cooking meals for a group? Either a potluck or getting everyone into the kitchen to help and/or chat means that people feel connected in a very personal way to your gathering.
- 3) #GivingTuesday is a wonderful opportunity to give to a nonprofit in someone else's name. What a way to tailor your gift exactly to the heartfelt interests of the receiver!

Whatever method you use to simplify and slow down your life, so you can really enjoy your family and friends, it will also mean you are consuming less.

Submitted by Linda Drey-Nightingale

Harrowing Halloween

On Saturday, 31 October 2015, out of the dark of night came the hordes – hordes of happy trick-or-treaters. There was everything from zombies, to superheroes, to “sand witches.” About 50 made it around Los Trancos Circle to our house and beyond. Before descending on the houses, a rockin' street party took place with food, fun, and friendships being formed. Along the route the trick-or-treaters snuck through a fairy forest and braved a haunted pyramid. Afterwards the Smernoff/Russell house was buzzing with candy high excitement for all who made it that far. The planning team has really brought the families together to make it a festive, yearly, neighborhood event. Make sure you sign up next year with Julia Peters to be part of the fun and the planning team, and to carry on the tradition. Many thanks go to Cam Smith/Julia Peters, Martin Casado, Joe Sabel/Jane Leibowitz, Hayley Leinfelder, David Smernoff/Cindy Russell, the Duwes, Styers, Flemings, and Karen Tate. See below for snapshots of the Halloween hordes.

Submitted by Linda Drey-Nightingale, Cam Smith and Karen Tate

Earthquake Acumen

40 residents of Vista Verde and Los Trancos Woods are much more prepared now after they attended a fabulous **Earthquake Exercise on 17 October**. Bill Tagg headed up the planning and execution of 3 hands-on activities. The Exercise got rolling with background information and training. Then with sharpened wits, 3 groups took on assessing a potentially damaged house including practicing shutting off utilities, performing a quick neighborhood survey to prioritize where help is needed, and working radios for the Command Center. Participants improved their radio skills by learning the most efficient method to pass on information, and all experienced the potential for chaos in an emergency. It was a humbling experience, but one that whetted the neighborhoods' resolve to keep learning how to handle a local emergency in our isolated community. Thanks go to the numerous assistants who helped Bill.

Bill Tagg is leaving us with some very BIG shoes to fill. For over 15 years (I think more like 18) Bill has been the Emergency Prep Chair for Vista Verde. He has been instrumental in so many of the events and carefully laid plans that it is hard to do it justice in this short space. Bill and Carol Wagner (LTW) literally set up our programs from scratch - organizing the neighborhoods into groups with group leaders with assigned households to watch over, purchasing and assembling emergency supply caches, and initiating a radio communication tree. Bill went on to take extensive training classes with Woodside Fire and Red Cross, which he brought back to us and presented some phenomenally useful workshops for the community. For several years, he did double duty, serving as the chair of San Mateo county CERPP teams. He was never at a loss for ideas of how to improve the emergency program and make it more robust. Bill's wife, Jo, was always at his side, usually typing away to prepare all the materials that Bill needed, except when she was baking delectable treats for the community workshops. Know that we hold you both in high esteem for what you have accomplished!

Submitted by Linda Drey-Nightingale and Mike Ward, LTW & VV Emergency Prep Teams

'Tis the Season for Ticks

There have been a plethora of ticks reported since the rains have come. It turns out ticks, just like other animals, are looking for water. They not only come out for water, they are out for blood, your blood. Two residents have had some serious reactions to bites they received locally. One was even hospitalized; the other was put on antibiotics. To protect yourself there are a couple of things you can do: wear light-colored clothing so the ticks are easier to spot, tuck your pant legs into your socks to prevent them from crawling up your legs from your shoes, stay in the middle of the trail where you will not brush against any plants containing questing ticks, and lastly check yourself every time you come back from a walk. Do not forget to protect your dogs and outdoor cats too, as they tend to be tick magnets. There are some great tick repellent products on the market now to treat dogs and cats. Be sure to check with your vet for the appropriate product and dosage.

Submitted by Linda Drey-Nightingale and Bill Scharninghausen

Neighborhood Notes

- We are all giving a long overdue "Yes" to celebrate the fall rains, as Gene Hunner reports our local **rainfall figures**: October - .1", November - 3.7", and season-to-date - 3.9".
- There have recently been a number of **thefts of plants** (both potted and in the ground) from homes on Los Trancos Road, between Ramona and the circle. The thefts are likely taking place during the daytime when homeowners are out. If anyone should see any unusual activity involving unfamiliar cars or trucks at neighbors' homes whom you know to be out, please alert the affected neighbor.

Submitted by Alison Farrell

- We want to welcome **Tap and Heidi Richards** to our court at Vista Verde Way. They have relocated from Seattle and have a delightful daughter that will turn 8 years old soon. She is now attending Ormondale. An amazing fact about Tap and Heidi, they are seasoned mountaineers and have both climbed to the top of Mount Everest successfully!

Submitted by Eiri Inenaga

Community Associations' Web Sites

The web site addresses are:
<http://lostrancoswoods.org/>
<http://www.vistaverdepv.org/>

The group e-mail list is:
VistaVerdeLTW@yahoogroups.com
VistaVerdeCommunityAssoc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

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