

SANDPIPER

The Test of Fire

By Bettina Experton

In the evening of Monday, October 22, Del Mar was just a few hot embers away from a major disaster. On board one of the Del Mar Lifeguard trucks, our new City Manager drove only two miles east of Del Mar to see burning homes in Fairbanks Ranch. With Santa Ana winds still blowing, it was time for her to issue a mandatory evacuation of homes surrounding Crest Canyon, directly in the path of the moving fire, and homes in the wooded hills where finger canyons are natural fire conduits through the town.

From advisory to mandatory evacuation orders, our Lifeguards and City officials were there to respond to the call of duty, and with our heroic firefighters on the scene; all of them passed the "test of fire" with flying colors to protect our lives. But as ordinary citizens, did we pass the "test" in doing our share to safeguard our homes? Unfortunately NOT, if we look at the fire-fuel-loaded state of our backyards: dry shrubs, dead and broken tree branches touching or perching over roofs, dense and continuous tree canopies, etc.

Indeed, the Del Mar urban forest, principally comprised of trees growing on private properties needs immediate attention, and the call to action falls mostly upon us. Further, the proper maintenance of our yards to avoid fire hazards is the law of the town, specifically Municipal Code Chapter 11.12.



But should we wait for the City to enforce the law or call for further action, when our civic duty should tell us that beyond the protection of our homes, we cannot put in danger our neighbors, firefighters and the entire community because of our negligence.

The Santa Ana season, and the danger of fire, are still upon us, and we should not delay taking action. Practical fire protection guidelines can be found on the city's web site in the Del Mar Public Tree Policy Manual*, such as:

- Keeping trees healthy, pruned, and with lowest branches at least 6' to 10' from the ground;
- Breaking up solid areas of non-fire resistant vegetation which create fire-ladders (with a 10' separation when possible); properties adjacent to slopes over 30% needing additional vegetation clearing and thinning away from structures;

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A new City Hall may be on the way, see page 3.



"First Thursday" last month featured Del Marian Lana Wilson, see page 9.

Balance Needed to Reduce Fire Risk

Del Mar can count itself lucky to have escaped, twice within four years, the ravages of burning canyons and homes. Next time (there will be a next time) we may not be so lucky.

That's why Del Mar needs a determined and continuing effort to reduce wildfire threat to lives and property. Such an effort must also balance the needs of fire safety with preserving Del Mar's unique and irreplaceable natural beauty. With prudent and determined management, that balance can be achieved.

Responding to citizen demands, the City Council appointed a committee of Dave Druker and Richard Earnest to study issues and submit recommendations. But the Council's initial focus seems fixed on establishing a fire-safety abatement district and asking voters to approve an assessment on the June ballot.

Perhaps additional revenues are needed to support our fire department; that issue clearly deserves attention. But there are existing tools at hand the City can begin using now to reduce wildfire risks and improve urban forest management, without waiting for an election.

Although it could use an update, the Municipal Code already provides ample authority under State law for inspection and removal of fire hazards on private property. Building on the Fire Department's current practice of conducting inspections at the owner's request, this ordinance can be used to begin a regular cycle of inspections that, given the availability of personnel, would cover the entire City every few years. Areas of highest risk should be covered first. Such a program should be included among the Fire Department's ongoing responsibilities, with progress monitored as part of the annual budget review. The City should provide residents


with clear descriptions of common fire hazards and the means for removing them, along with an explanation of the inspection program.

An ongoing fire-inspection program is only part of a well-balanced effort to reduce risks from wildfire. Another important element is the Urban Forest Management and Fire Safety Strategic Plan approved by the City Council in 1999. The Plan includes important recommendations for achieving carefully balanced goals of maintaining our existing tree forest in a safe and healthy condition and improving fire safety in our canyons and public open spaces.

Only two of the Plan's recommendations have been implemented by the City. The water system along the edge of Crest Canyon has been upgraded to provide greater fire suppression capability, and the City undertook reduction of unsafe fuel loads in Crest Canyon with FEMA assistance. The City Council should conduct public workshops at an early date to educate the public and promote the Plan, review recommendations, set priorities and organize further action. All residents are encouraged to review the plan available in the Library and online at the City's website. (City of Del Mar Home Page; Popular Sections; City Planning Documents, scroll to bottom.)

For these programs to be successful they must be given high priority by the City Council. Those delegated the authority to carry them out must be accountable. The efforts must be on-going, not sporadic or seasonal. The greatest hurdle to overcome is not the lack of funds, nor the means and ability to implement these programs, but finding the political will and developing the community consensus needed to sustain these programs long after the lessons from this recent experience fade from memory.

As usual, the Sandpiper will not be published in January, so that the editors and staff can enjoy the holidays.



DEL MAR'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

SANDPIPER

The Sandpiper is published by the Del Mar Community Alliance, a not-for-profit corporation. Its purpose is to advocate the Del Mar Community Plan, to foster informed public and government decision-making regarding issues affecting the community of the City of Del Mar, and to encourage a social and political climate favorable to the protection of the community character of the City of Del Mar and its environs.

Editors: Bud Emerson, Liz Dernetz, Wayne Dernetz, John Graybill, Lee Haydu, Carol Kerridge, Shirley King, Susan Miller, Art Olson, Betty Wheeler, Mark Whitehead

All staff members and writers are unpaid volunteers. This publication depends upon the contributions of readers like you. Make checks payable to **Sandpiper**, Box 2177, Del Mar, CA 92014

Encouraging News About Jerry

We are happy to report a recent conversation with former mayor and council member Jerry Finnell indicating that he is making steady progress in his fight against cancer.

Tests indicate that his bone-marrow transplant received last August was successful. The post-transplant treatment, however, will extend for up to one full year. In the meantime, Jerry's doctors have advised that he limit contacts and activities recognizing that his immune system remains compromised.

We know that our readers wish Jerry well.

Visualizing Our New City Hall

By Carl Hilliard and Henry Abarbanel

What is the likelihood that we can build a new city hall the residents of Del Mar will approve and support? Our first public workshop on December 1 will furnish the opportunity for all to examine the possibilities. With our community's participation, we are confident that the likelihood is very good.

The positive precedent set by the gas-station property is one of the reasons for our confidence. Today, that proposed development is a far cry from its original presentation. Frankly, it's much better. And that is due to the involvement of our citizenry. Your recommendations were thoughtful and constructive.

At our December 1 workshop, we trust the same results can happen again. At the workshop, Roesling Nakamura Terada Architects will present for public review and comment a financial-feasibility analysis prepared by Keyser Marston Associates. The analysis will include several scenarios, all of which will focus on construction of a new city hall and development of the property for parking, retail and restaurant use. Some of the proposed scenarios will recommend a public/private partnership in which a private developer will assume the risk and responsibility for building and leasing retail and restaurant space.

Partnerships are not new for our city. Actually, we have a history of successful partnerships with community-based organizations. The Powerhouse Community Center and the Del Mar Library are good examples, and coming soon, we'll have another – the Shores property.

Our consultants, including Fred Kent who pictured a "walk-about" Del Mar, have emphasized that the key to success is to encourage the development of retail and restaurant activity at the southern end of Del Mar. Making the city hall property available for parking, shopping and dining will stimulate our ability to turn this

space from an underutilized area into a financially contributory asset.

Since we don't have pockets deep enough to do this alone, a public/private partnership is the only alternative. But it will have to be a partnership unlike any we've undertaken. That's why we will present at the workshop how the new city-hall public/private partnership will allow the city to retain ownership of the property while relinquishing leasing of retail and restaurant space to a developer on a long-term contractual basis.

We have the vision for the site. And soon we will have plans for your consideration. After that, it will be time to get your feedback. Would you prefer public hearings? Private meetings? Or an e-mail exchange with us – carl@carlhilliard.com or habarbanel@gmail.com?

Speaking of the gas-station property, we appreciate the thoughts that came forth on the integration of that project with things happening at the City Hall site. Indeed,

the idea of thinking broadly about the 10th St./Camino del Mar corner, as a strong anchor for our commercial district is intriguing and really attractive.

So thanks to everyone who attends our first workshop on December 1. We look forward to extensive focused public discussion as we decide how to proceed and with what vision. We earnestly solicit your input. Community consensus is the Del Mar way to build our new city hall.

Henry Abarbanel is a City Council member, and Carl Hilliard is Mayor of Del Mar.



The Test of Fire

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- Replacing fire-hazardous trees (check the City's Discouraged Tree List*) by esthetically equivalent but fire-retardant species (see the City's Recommended Tree List*).

Lastly, let's all support our City officials to engage in courageous but necessary efforts to strengthen our fire-prevention policies and infrastructures, both locally and regionally by:

- Enforcing existing laws, and updating the municipal code when needed (i.e., to facilitate removal of fire-hazardous trees);
- Reaching out to neighboring San Diego for a permanent fix to the tinder box of Crest Canyon. As once-a-year brush clearing will not do, why not turn Crest Canyon into a "Fire Safe Demonstration Garden" or park as

called for in the City's Urban Forest Management and Fire Safety Strategic Plan*;

- Investing in the required fire-protection infrastructure (buildings and personnel), for the town and the region. It is time for all of us to pay the right price to stay alive in paradise. San Diego County's current firefighter per capita ratio, one of the lowest in the country (by a factor of 10!) will not do.

Once more, Del Mar was miraculously spared from ferocious wildfires, but our wealthy, educated and politically engaged community owes the entire region and beyond to be a model of civic responsibility, political leadership and foresight. This is the only way... and it is the Del Mar way!

*City of Del Mar Home Page; Popular Sections; City Planning Documents.

Bettina Experton is a resident of Del Mar.

Downtown Lags in Sales Tax Revenue

Part 2 of a series on Del Mar's commercial zone

By Wayne Dernetz

Concerns are growing about Del Mar's downtown Central Commercial ("CC") zone. City leaders worry that new offices are replacing retail businesses within the zone and eroding the City's sales tax base.¹ In an effort to stem the loss of retail businesses, the City Council recently imposed a moratorium on new offices along Camino Del Mar while planners study a proposed horizontal zoning ordinance.



The 12-acre CC zone (not including the Plaza or L'Auberge) is divided into 63 small parcels (not counting publicly owned parcels). Two parcels remain undeveloped. The CC zone constitutes three percent of all property in Del Mar, yet contributes just 1.7 percent (\$54,654) of Del Mar's total property tax revenues (\$3.24 million).² In the past 20 years, no significant new development or improvement has occurred within the CC zone.³

Typically, California cities rely on commercial property to generate sales taxes, an important source of general revenues. But this year, Del Mar expects its closely watched sales-tax revenues (totaling \$1.24 million) to fall 1.4 percent below the previous year. Sales taxes represent only the City's third largest source of general revenue, accounting for 11.7 percent of the total, little more than half the State average.

How much does the CC zone contribute to our sales tax revenues? Obtaining a precise answer is difficult because State laws prohibit disclosure of individual business sales-tax information. But a reasonable estimate can be made from available data.

According to a recent estimate, the total floor area currently within the CC zone is 233,823 square feet.⁴

Standard retail business guidelines set annual gross retail sales of \$300 per square foot of net retail display area as a standard. Assuming a typical net display area represents 80 percent of the retail space (excluding storage and utility areas), a reasonable estimate for the maximum annual gross sales that could be generated within the CC zone (if all current floor area were devoted to retail business) is \$56.1 million. On that amount, the maximum potential sales tax that could be generated for the City is \$561,000.

According to official City documents, Del Mar receives no more than 17 percent of its \$1.24 million in annual sales-tax revenues from the CC zone.⁵ Therefore, the amount of sales-tax revenue currently attributable to the CC zone is \$210,970, i.e. **less than 38% of the maximum potential revenues**. If Del Mar were able to maximize retail business use in the CC zone, its potential sales tax revenues could rise by about \$350,000, **increasing general revenues by 3.3 percent**.

Two conclusions may be drawn from these estimates:

- (1) The City would experience a significant, but not catastrophic effect from further erosion of sales-tax revenues within the CC zone because sales taxes generated within the CC zone represent, at most, just two percent of general revenues.
- (2) Encouraging new retail businesses to open in the CC zone could increase annual sales tax revenues by as much as \$350,000, without any additional floor area, raising current general revenues by 3.3 percent.

The sales-tax-generating potential of the downtown CC zone is an important, but not the only measure of its value to the community. Del Mar's Community Plan calls for a downtown that is "economically viable, pedestrian oriented and [an] attractive area that serves the needs of both residents and visitors and is well integrated into the residential fabric of the community." Ultimately, the extent to which the CC zone satisfies this Community Plan goal must be determined by Del Mar residents.

But a downtown area contributing disproportionately low property taxes and generating sales taxes as much as 62 percent below its potential can only be described as a significant underperformer and an economic drag on the community. The next segment in this series will explore ways to improve the downtown CC zone economic contribution without sacrificing the village charm and character.

¹Generally, office uses provide services that are exempt from California's retail sales tax.

²Property-tax revenues constitute the largest single source (30.6 percent) of the City's general revenues.

³The proposed Garden Del Mar project on the former gas station site is within the CC zone. Owners are seeking approval for the project from the City Council and Del Mar voters in 2008.

⁴With an aggregate land area of 496,500 square feet, the aggregate floor area ratio (FAR) is 47 percent. Current zoning permits an FAR on individual properties within the CC zone of 45 percent.

⁵The larger portion of sales tax revenues to the City are attributed to the Fairgrounds (40 percent), Del Mar Plaza (24 percent) and Hotel properties (19 percent).

Reviewing Riverview

By Jan McMillan

On the southeast corner of San Dieguito Drive and Jimmy Durante Boulevard sits a dirt lot that has remained empty as long as I can remember, except when it is used periodically as a parking lot. The lot's northern boundary begins near the edge of San Dieguito Drive, not far from the river, and slopes gently upward to sandstone bluffs dotted with native coastal shrubs, Torrey pines, and some non-native ornamentals. Empty as the lot is now, pedestrians, drivers and nearby residents can easily see these bluffs. Views of the river are interrupted but not blocked entirely by a few commercial buildings nearby. I've always seen it as a place that relates to the river, that's pretty once you look past the dirt, past its present condition - a place that's still quiet despite the street noise. More than being an entrance to downtown, this corner brings you back to a less hurried time in Del Mar's history.

If approved, a commercial development named Riverview Offices Project will change this corner forever, for better or for worse, depending on your point of view. The applicant, Michael Batter, proposes to build two one- and two-story office buildings totaling about 23,000 square feet, with parking for 84 vehicles. The project's main entrance would be on San Dieguito Drive with a second on from Jimmy Durante for emergency use.

I've only begun to read the (three-volume) Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) that was released by the City of Del Mar on November 7. A public hearing is scheduled for December 11, and the City must receive written comments by December 21. My first impression of this draft report? While some potential environmental



impacts seem to be addressed adequately, several excellent suggestions by the San Dieguito Lagoon Committee, the traffic task force, neighbors and others have been ignored or dismissed out of hand. Here are just two examples:

The draft briefly mentions a walking path along San Dieguito Drive - one of the City's top goals - but does not describe how the project will accommodate this path. Regarding traffic, the draft admits that danger would increase for vehicles turning in and out of both San Dieguito Drive and the Public Works yard driveway but rejects all traffic-calming techniques—opting instead for an expensive traffic signal that will not be installed until many years after the offices are in use.

My conclusion? The draft EIR needs a lot of work. What's your opinion? Get involved. Read at least the Executive Summary on the web and come to the public hearing at the Planning Commission meeting on December 11, 6 pm.

Jan McMillan is a former mayor of Del Mar.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Losing Ground In Del Mar

Del Mar underground is not progressive as some DRB members seem to think. If they are impressed by tricky architects' drawings of "invisible" basements, they might do well to reconsider. Digging yourself into the earth on that scale has proved regressive, taking our once relatively civilized community back to the rough power games of cave dwellers.

In the pre-excavation era, Del Mar was not only one of the loveliest but also more equitable communities in San Diego county, due in part to the Community Plan that for decades regulated issues like bulk, mass, air, light, and density by defining the different floor-area-ratios in different areas of the city. Based on its citizens' mutual agreement to live together in a city, that plan has contributed to their good quality of life, which excluded mansionization. But there was the Achilles heel of the

basement provision that has now grown to the 3000+ sq.ft. underground wine cellars, entertainment centers, offices, and guest rooms requiring ever larger, more polluting, more noisy excavations.

Over a period of several years, sand is blown all over the neighborhood, and giant equipment screeches and groans, consuming huge amounts of energy. This waste concerns also human physical and mental energy diminished by ever-growing air and noise pollution, increase of construction equipment traffic, and anxiety about the cumulative geological instability in our hilly town. Just look at the surreal excavation on Klish close by Tewa: the sandstone bluffs are fast disappearing to reveal eerily large spaces underground. Who says that this is good for Del Mar? The ongoing inflation of basement space is the result of individual creative greed, not of a community's wishes. The enormity of the basement provision has crept up on us, but with growing speed and momentum. We need to rethink it as a community.

- Dagmar Barnouw, Del Mar

Crest Rim: A Garden Cub Project

By Becky Dembitsky

The Del Mar Garden Club has been working on a landscape plan for an area adjacent to Crest Road, for the past year. This area is on the east side of Crest Road, between Klish Way and Amphitheater Drive and overlooks Crest Canyon and the mountains beyond. We are hoping for a park-like setting in a spot that is inviting to pedestrians as a safe pathway along one edge of Crest Road.

The project will be funded by proceeds of two events held last year by the DMGC: The Sunset Garden Event at Lynne and Vernon Blackman's and the Del Mar Garden Tour. We are working with Landscape Architect, Lane Goodkind, from Santa Barbara, who grew up in Del Mar and is funding parts of the project with a donation from the San Dieguito River Conservancy fund honoring his mother, Alice Goodkind.

The Garden Club is hoping to begin this project in January and finish it by spring, with the hope that rains will help establish the plantings. The plants will be hand watered by using the fire hydrant, a hose and water provided by the city during the first year. Beginning in the



second year the Garden Club will pay a fee to the city for water usage. After 2 years these drought-tolerant natives will most likely establish root systems and require little watering.

The plan, which uses plants, including succulents, native to our area had already been approved by the Fire Department for plant selection. In the aftermath of the recent fires, the Garden Club is continuing to scrutinize

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Truly Thankful

By Clare Bakker

We knew something wasn't right when we came home from my brother's surfing contest on Sunday. The sky was dark, and everything smelled like smoke. The air was hot, and the wind was blowing hard. It was too quiet outside, and the smell of smoke was everywhere. We walked to the top of the hill at Crest Canyon to see if we could see a fire, because we knew there was one...somewhere.

We watched the news until bedtime to see if the fire was coming near us. The wind blew hard all night; hard enough to blow the eucalyptus in our neighbor's yard completely over. None of us slept very well, and we woke up to even more smoke the next morning. But this smoke was different - it was low to the ground; it was coming through the canyon and rolling down La Amatista.

Sometime around ten that morning we heard the fire trucks at the top of our street telling everyone to evacuate. This was like a nightmare, but I was awake. All I could think of was my Dad is building our house, and are we going to lose everything he has done? So we started to pack. My Mom said to concentrate on only bringing things you can't replace, family photographs and things like that. Mom and Dad got those things together, and Garrett and I packed our backpacks with things we didn't want to leave behind. It only took about ten minutes. (My mom is an instructor for the "Are You Ready, Del Mar?" program.)

So, cars were packed, the dog was on a leash and we were ready to go. Just then, Tomas from our Lifeguard Department was in his truck right in front of our house. We asked him what was going on, and he said that we didn't have to leave right away but to be ready just in case. Then we went to some of our neighbors' homes to make sure they knew what was going on and that they had a place to go to if we did end up evacuating.

Finally, we did decide to leave around five o'clock that evening, so we headed down to my grandmother's house in La Jolla. We tried to make it fun, like we were on a mini vacation. My mom cooked dinner for everyone, and we tried not to think about what could happen. My dad stayed behind to see if he could protect the house in anyway and then finally joined us after dinner. He brought another family with him, the Hackbarts, because they needed a place to evacuate to. We actually had a lot of fun at my Omi's that night; I think she had a fun time too! It felt more like a party, because there were ten of us and two dogs! We woke up to good news! Our neighborhood and our house were okay! Plus we didn't have to go to school for the whole week!

I'm writing this the night before Thanksgiving, and I think we have a lot to be thankful for; our hardworking Fire Department and our dedicated Lifeguards for keeping us informed. We are truly lucky to have our beautiful Torrey Pines Reserve still to walk through, and we are all lucky to have our homes.

Clare B is a fifth grade student in Del Mar.

Fire-Safe Gardens

By Mary Friestedt

The fires had a silver lining! Yes, everywhere I walk in our beautiful town I see more beauty than ever. People are clearing out brush, trimming trees like crazy, and really thinking about putting in more fire-safe plantings. Have you read about the couple in Rancho Santa Fe whose home was saved by the succulent plantings around their house? All their neighbors' homes were lost, but fleshy, juicy plants stopped the fire on their property.

Wanting to learn more about fire-safe plants, I made a trip to my beloved Quail Botanical Gardens in Encinitas and visited a garden I had not examined for some time: the Firescape Garden. This might be their most popular garden now, for I had to weave my way through

crowds of Master Gardeners and UCSD students. The beauty of the plantings is remarkable, and most of the plants are drought tolerant. What a combination!

Plants in the Firescape Garden were selected on these characteristics: 1) high water retention, 2) low fuel volume, 3) absence of flammable oils or resins, and 4) low amount of litter.

I learned these general rules for fire safety regarding trees: 1) Do not plant trees or shrubs in rows or masses. A break in continuity is essential. Strive to keep a minimum of 10 feet between tree crowns. 2) Avoid combustible trees, such as Eucalyptus and Conifers, near buildings. 3) Know the mature height of a tree before planting it. 4) If there are too many large trees and shrubs growing together, thin them out!

Quail Botanical Gardens has an excellent brochure, "Landscaping for Fire Safety," which is free to people who visit the Firescape Garden. In it are listed hundreds of fire-safe trees, shrubs, perennials, ground covers, and succulents.

Look for a display of fire-safe plants at the Post Office Display Box in January. If you would like a docent tour of the Firescape Garden at Quail, call the Gardens to find out when I will be leading tours in January. Or check the P.O. Display Box. Happy gardening!

Mary Friestedt lives on Balboa Avenue.



Crest Rim

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the plant list. It is expected that this will be an ongoing project, due to problems of availability of plants and seeds. Garden Club members and volunteers from the community will be responsible for keeping the plants well maintained by regular thinning.

There will be one curved stone bench and 4 wooden benches that have been made by John Coughlin, and are like the benches he has made for Sea Grove and Powerhouse Park. All of the benches were underwritten by donors. One bench will be handicapped accessible. Local soil will be mounded in planting areas on top of the existing sandstone mesa, since it is almost impossible to dig in the existing soil thereby increasing the difficulty of establishing new plantings. The existing boulders will be aesthetically incorporated into the new plantings. The new landscape will extend all the way to the street and there will be no longer parking along that edge of Crest Road.

All of the adjacent neighbors have reviewed the plan and we have welcomed their suggestions for improvements,

including sensitivity to view issues. They all have been encouraging in our challenge to beautify this area.

This project is expected to be a wonderful enhancement to the beauty of Del Mar. Furthermore, it provides a unique opportunity to educate our community about our fragile and unique landscape and may even have a calming effect on Crest Road traffic.

Becky Dembitsky is a member of the Del Mar Garden Club.

Garden Del Mar (formerly Gas Station Property) update:

A draft of the first part of a new Specific Plan has been received from the developer's planning consultants covering zoning, and it is beginning review by the Committee. Copies of the new material are available at City Hall.

Public comments are welcome by e-mail or in person at the Committee meetings.

We Were Ready - Del Mar's Response

By Mark Whitehead

Karen Brust, reflected on her "trial by fire" as our new city Manager. What went well? "I was extremely impressed how well organized and ready to respond city staff members were. They knew exactly what to do and they had the Emergency Operations Center up and running in one hour." Brust also complimented local businesses and residents for their offers of help and information. "Communication between all sectors was



excellent, and the 'Are You Ready, Del Mar?' neighborhood disaster preparedness meetings and CERT training really paid off."

Some challenges were not met perfectly, and changes are already underway to make improvements in the city's response protocols. For one, the reverse 911

calls, which came late – after Del Mar had gone door to door urging residents near Crest canyon to evacuate, were made by San Diego. Our 911 calls should come, and sooner, from our County Sheriff's office, which shares the same phone number database as San Diego. Brust further mentioned that Del Mar residents who believe they were skipped during the reverse 911 call, can contact city hall to enter their number in the database. Residents can also register their cell phone numbers.

City staff members who knocked on doors urging evacuation in neighborhoods near Crest Canyon made a point of asking about seniors or disabled neighbors who might need assistance. The city is now working with Del Mar Community Connections to assemble a list of residents who, during future emergencies, could all be contacted efficiently without relying on word of mouth.

Manager Brust soberly recounted the scene when she decided to order the evacuation. "I was up on Crest looking to the east through the fire department's special binoculars and the wall of flames advancing west stretched wide and ominous." Seeing the threat was one thing. Knowing that most of the firefighters were away from Del Mar, working on the front lines from the very beginning of the Protrero fire, compounded our vulnerability. "The fire hydrants lining Crest Road are a terrific safety asset, but only if we have enough firefighters in town to use them." Major fires are a challenge to resources county-wide and beyond. Procedures for meeting that broader challenge, while at the same time safeguarding the city, are under review.

Mark Whitehead is a former mayor of Del Mar.

Cathy's Perspective

By Catherine Danola

As the fires began to approach Del Mar, I began to think of all of the things that make it special and the things that I would miss if it were consumed by flames. I would miss my home and all of my things. More importantly, I would miss out on the experience of growing up in Del Mar. I would no longer be able to:

1. Go to Board & Brew where they already know what I want (a Baja Chicken Wrap with no jalapeños). Then, I spend hours with my friends in the back "green room" talking, eating our sandwiches with special sauce, and drinking the perfect blend of Diet Coke and raspberry ice tea.
2. Swim at 17th Street and listen to the concerts that are held during the summer at Powerhouse Park.
3. Watch weddings at the 15th Street Park in my bathing suit and hope that someday I get married there. I will wear a dress and maybe shoes for that wedding.
4. Take my dog Max to Dog Beach and watch him have the time of his life.

5. Buy amazing (and cheap) sushi at Harvest Ranch Market and take it down to the beach with my friends.
6. Go to Jake's Del Mar (with the financial support of my parents) and order amazing (and not so cheap) sushi along with Hula Pie.
7. Walk down to En Fuego every Friday night to order a black bean burrito and virgin strawberry margarita. If I have an extra few dollars and room in my stomach, I head over to Jake's for more Hula Pie.
8. Spend the entire summer at Powerhouse Park working on my tan and watching friends surf.
9. Take the Penguin Plunge on New Year's Day in anticipation of a free donut at the lifeguard tower.
10. Have my mom barbecue burgers to eat in the jacuzzi after my friends and I promise not to get ketchup in the water or tell my little brother anything about our dinner.

We are lucky to still have our homes and the town that we live in.

Catherine D is a high school sophomore in Del Mar..

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December Community Calendar

Del Mar Farmer's Market: Saturdays, 1-4pm, City Hall parking lot. Purchase fresh, locally grown produce, flowers, eggs, and many other products.

Teen Knitting: Saturday, December 1, 1-3pm, Del Mar Library. Ages 11-17 years learn new stitches and make a simple project to take home. Instructor: Linda Hart. Call ahead to register: 755-1666.

DMVA's Holiday Wonderland in Del Mar: Sunday, December 2, noon-5:30pm, along Camino del Mar throughout downtown. Entertainment and activities galore. For tickets call 755-1179.

Children's Music Concert Series: Sunday, December 2, 1-2pm, L'Auberge Amphitheatre (corner Camino DM & 15th). Entertainment by "Hullabaloo", featuring Steve and Brendan.

Holiday Show: Sunday, December 2, 2pm at the Del Mar Library. Enjoy "The Wonderful World of Puppets around the World" puppet show, part of DMVA's Holiday Wonderland.

City Council Meetings: Monday, December 3 and Monday, December 17, 6pm, Del Mar TV Station.

Friends of Del Mar Library Board Meeting: Wednesday, December 5, 4pm, Del Mar Library.

Books and Art for Ages 4-10: Wednesday, December 5, 4-5pm, Del Mar Library. Listen to Sandra Dodd read "Corduroy" by Don Freeman; paint a watercolor teddy bear. Call to register: 755-1666.

First Thursday: Thursday, December 6, at St Peter's Parish Hall. The Cultural Arts Committee of the Del Mar Foundation presents "Pacific Coast Harmony: Holiday Harmonies", featuring a cappella chorus and quartets. Wine and cheese at 6:30pm, performance at 7pm (sorry, subscribers only).

Teen Tag: Friday, December 7, 3:30pm at the Del Mar Library. Meet with other teens to discuss and plan fun library activities for 2008. Refreshments served.

Del Mar Community Connections Monthly Board Meeting: Saturday, December 8, 9am, City Hall Annex. Open to the public.

Teen Crochet: Saturday, December 8, 1-3pm, Del Mar Library. Ages 11-17 years learn beginner crochet skills and make a drawstring bag to take home. Instructor: Linda Zlotnik. Call ahead to register: 755-1666.

Del Mar Art Center's Annual "Starry Night" Exhibit and Fundraiser: Sunday, December 9, 4-6pm, Del Mar Art Center Gallery, 3rd floor of Del Mar Plaza. Featuring small image wall (max size 12 inches, no more than \$100), music by "Common Crowd". Proceeds support the Young Artists Exhibit held in February. The public is invited to enjoy local art, socialize and enjoy yuletide refreshments.

Del Mar Television Foundation Board Meeting: Monday, December 10, 8:30am, Del Mar TV Foundation Studios. Monthly meeting to review/approve grants and other business.

Preschool Spanish/English Storytime: Tuesday, December 11 and Saturday, December 15, 10:30-11am, Del Mar Library.

DM Planning Commission: Tuesday, December 11, 6pm, Del Mar TV Station.

Cultural Arts Committee: Wednesday, December 12, 8:30am, Powerhouse Community Center. Open to the public.

DMVA Promotion Committee: Wednesday, December 12, 9-10:15am, Del Mar TV Studio.

Del Mar Foundation Board Meeting: Thursday, December 13, 8:30am, City Hall Annex. All interested parties welcome.

Producer's Showcase: Thursday, December 13, 6pm, Del Mar TV Studio. The purpose is to hone skills and develop programs of interest to local viewers.

Author Talk: Thursday, December 13, 7-8pm, Powerhouse Community Center. Todd Buchholz will discuss his new books. Public welcome.

DMVA Design Committee: Friday, December 14, 9am, City Hall Annex.

Youth Craft: Saturday, December 15, 4pm-4:45pm Del Mar Library. Ages 6-10 years paint a festive holiday decoration. Call ahead to register: 755-1666.

Book Talks and Treats: Sunday, December 16, 3-5pm, and Friday, December 21, 3-5pm, Del Mar Library. Recommendations and reviews of new books over coffee and snacks.

Del Mar Arts Center Board Meeting: Monday, December 17, 6:30pm, Del Mar Arts Center.

Del Mar Historical Society Monthly Meeting: Tuesday, December 18, 7pm, City Hall Annex. Public welcome.

Friends of the Powerhouse Board Meeting: Wednesday, December 19, 9am, Jakes. Open to the public.

Chapter Book Club: Wednesday, December 19, 4-5pm, Del Mar Library. Ages 7-10 years enjoy a fun book discussion about chapter books over refreshments. Call for upcoming titles: 755-1666.

Del Mar Television Foundation Producer's Meeting: Wednesday, December 19, 6:30pm, Del Mar TV Studio. Open to those interested in meeting others to develop programs at DMTV.

Pajama Storytime: Wednesday, December 19, 7-7:30pm, Del Mar Library. Ages 5-8 years come in your pajamas and enjoy entertaining stories and special treats.

DMVA Board of Directors Meeting: Thursday, December 20, 8am, City Hall Annex.

DMVA Economic Restructuring Committee: TBA.

Happy Holidays! For January Community Calendar details, go to the City's website, click on Residents & Businesses, then click Community Calendar.

Bronze and Clay: Two Lives in Art

By Lynn Gaylord

Del Mar clay artist Lana Wilson shared the evening with bronze artist Manuelita Brown to enthrall the First Thursday audience with slides and insights into creativity and the world of art. For four decades Lana Wilson has experimented with glazes using everything from eggshells and kelp to metallic salts and lichen. First Thursdays is sponsored by the Cultural Arts Committee of the Del Mar Foundation.

Pacific Coast Harmony will entertain subscribers on December 6 at St. Peter's Church with "Holiday Harmonies: A cappella chorus and quartets." Unfortunately, this year's subscription is sold out.

Start off the New Year with a clean slate; dip in the ocean with your neighbors at the **annual Penguin Plunge, January 1.**

Steve Denyes - The Music Man

By Claire McGreal

Have you seen the "Free Children's Concert" poster at the Powerhouse before the first Sunday of most months? Well, life-long Del Marian and former music teacher, Steve Denyes, is the man behind those "Hullabaloo" concerts.



Steve now performs about thirty shows per month as "Hullabaloo", sometimes solo, and sometimes with friend (since kindergarten) and percussionist Brendan Kremer. Steve has also pursued his creative talents by writing a book entitled *Gigging for a Living: Lives of Working Musicians*, and writing two musical plays.

Steve's musical career began in grade five when he was a student at Del Mar Heights Elementary School. Steve played trombone, baritone horn and saxophone, before taking up the guitar in junior high school. While students at Torrey Pines High School, Steve and his music partner, Brendan played dances and parties with the band "The Federales".

Steve grew up in Del Mar swimming, surfing, and playing soccer. "My Dad taught my older sisters and me to play soccer, and he coached our teams. He was in the restaurant business here in town, and served on the City

Council. My Mom had a hair salon where Rusty's is now located." Sadly, when Steve was twenty, his Dad was diagnosed with cancer and lost a heroic battle. "My Dad was a great Dad. He was as good a Dad as you could possibly get". After losing his Dad, Steve transferred to UCSD and graduated with a degree in Anthropology.

Following his initial professional career in real estate, he became a music teacher, teaching Band at seven different schools in Escondido. Later Steve joined the staff of the Del Mar Unified School District, and eventually taught music at Del Mar Heights, his alma mater.

After eight years as a music teacher, Steve took a "leap of faith". "I loved teaching. Teaching is the best job in the world, but I needed to do something new to keep things fresh for myself. My wife, Jobi, likes to say: 'Leap and the net will appear'. Well, I've been caught in a pretty nice net. Writing songs and playing my music for children is pure joy for me."

The message from this Music Man is "Don't be afraid to follow your dream, and remember to give something back. I am so lucky to live here in Del Mar and to do what I do." Steve performs at many charitable events and fundraisers - most recently to a sold-out crowd at the Lyceum Theatre benefiting the San Diego Food Bank, and at another event raising more than \$8,000 for a San Marcos child with glaucoma.

Indeed, and it is Del Mar's good fortune to have such a talented native son who is also such a wonderful role model and inspiration to Del Mar's youngsters. To learn more about Steve Denyes and Hullabaloo visit www.HullabalooBand.com or www.SteveDenes.com/news.html.

Claire McGreal is a resident of Del Mar.

The Del Mar Foundation's Children's Concerts will continue on the first Sunday of each month at 1 pm, at the Powerhouse through June 2008.

An Ounce of Prevention....

By Claire McGreal

Each year, the Del Mar and Solana Beach fire departments offer three series of free classes through which resident volunteers can qualify for the Community Emergency Response Team. At present, there are 136 CERT-trained volunteers living or working in the two cities. This program offers residents basic skills to act as first responders in a disaster, if emergency services personnel are not immediately available or are overwhelmed.

The fire departments will begin a new academy for CERT training on January 8, at 6pm, at the Solana Beach fire station located at Lomas Santa Fe and Nardo. Classes will

run throughout January on Tuesday evenings and Saturday mornings. To enroll, call Lorn Canon of the Solana Beach Fire Department at 720-4412 or email him at LCanon@cosb.org. or Pat O'Neil of the Del Mar Fire Department at 755-1522 or email him at PONeil@delmar.ca.us.

Another way to be prepared is to invite your friends and neighbors to a neighborhood "Are You Ready, Del Mar?" meeting at your home. Over 420 Del Mar residents have attended these meetings which includes a one-hour program to show some easy steps you can take to make your home and yard less susceptible to damage, to establish a plan for your family and to assemble a disaster or evacuation kit that includes items that will be needed during the first 72 hours following a disaster.

Del Mar residents interested in hosting a neighborhood meeting, please call Carol Kerridge.



Del Mar Community Connections: a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Corporation

Neighbors Helping Neighbors to Create a Web of Safety, Service and Support

DMCC Special Events and Activities

Monday, December 10: Holiday Tea. Mingle with friends and neighbors; enjoy savories, sweets, and song! St. Peter's Parish Hall, 1:30 to 3:30pm. RSVP by 12/4 to 755-4926.

Monday, January 14: 10am, at the Annex. "Maintain Your Brain," with Christina Gigliotti, UCSD Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Team. Learn about the latest research, clinical trials and intervention in memory and aging. Refreshments. Call to reserve: 792-7565.

DMCC Ongoing Events

NEW! Silver Age Yoga for Seniors: Fridays, 10 to 11am, at St. Peter's Parish Hall. FREE! With chairs or on the floor. Chairs provided; bring your own yoga mat for floor work. Teacher trained and certified by Silver Age Yoga.

Singing Together: Tuesday, December 18, from 3:30-5pm at 1010 Crest Rd. Park on Amphitheatre.

Knit and Stitch: Thursday, December 6, 3 to 4:30pm, at the Del Mar City Library. Bring your own project and share an idea. Call Regina Horner at 755-1931 for details.

DMCC's Senior Legal Services: Last Friday of the month, 9am to 1pm. Attorney provides advanced healthcare directive, power of attorney, wills, referrals and more. FREE for seniors 60 and older in the 92014 zip code area. Must call DMCC at 792-7565 for appointment and to confirm date.

Senior Fitness Classes: At the Powerhouse – Colleen Soto, teacher. San Dieguito Adult School (760) 753-7073 ext. 3418 or www.sdadulted.com. Three classes at the Powerhouse end Jan 21. Tues. & Thurs. 8am, 9am or 10am, low impact and chair support. \$15. Registration for Winter/Spring session begins 1/22/08.

Life Story Classes: With Mai Lon Gittelsohn, the Library at St. Peter's Episcopal Church Library. Thurs. 9 to 11:30 or Fri. 9:30 to 12. See info for SD Adult School above. No classes 12/21 to 1/6/08

Bridge and Mah Jongg Games: Wednesdays at Powerhouse Community Center. Mah Jongg players upstairs 10am to 2pm; Bridge downstairs 11am to 2 pm. No partner necessary. Call 792-7565.

Computer tutoring for seniors: In partnership with Casa di Amistad and the Solana Beach Senior Center, DMCC offers free computer tutoring plus use of Web Adapt technology for

those with vision problems: Mondays, 9 to 11:30am, 120 Stevens Ave., SB, Computer Lab, Room 108. Call DMCC, 792-7565 for details.

Warm Water Aerobics Class for Del Mar Seniors: Monday, 12 to 1pm, at Noonan Family Swim School, Jimmy Durante Blvd. Fee: \$6/class or \$30 for 6 classes. Register in class. For more information call DMCC, 792-7565, or Eleanor Conlon, 792-8167. Also offered: arthritis warm water class; open to all residents; meets on Thursdays, 12 to 1 at the same time and for the same price. This class is taught by a teacher trained and certified by the Arthritis Foundation.

Shuttle Bus Service: DMCC shuttle bus provides pick-up at City of Del Mar residents' homes and takes them on alternate Wednesdays to Henry's (Solana Beach) and to Trader Joe's (Encinitas); on Thursdays to Vons on Mango and Ralphs shopping center in DM Highlands. Suggested donation for each trip: \$3. Call 792-7565, 24 hours in advance to arrange pick-up.

The DMCC bus always has a volunteer host to help shoppers with their shopping and taking their groceries into the house. New hosts are always needed—**PLEASE VOLUNTEER!** 792-7565.

Rides to medical appointments: DMCC volunteers, using their own cars, drive City of Del Mar residents to medical appointments. Call 792-7565 a week in advance to reserve a ride. To become a volunteer driver, call 792-7565.

Dial-A-Ride taxi vouchers: For seniors over age 62 and residents with special needs who live in the City of Del Mar; now available through DMCC. Call 792-7565 for details.

Friends of the San Dieguito River Valley, using the DMCC bus, will resume its tours of the San Dieguito Lagoon wetlands and restoration project on Saturday, January 12. Free. Call 674-2275, ext. 14 to reserve.

Shared Housing and Rental Assistance

Del Mar Community Connections administers Shared Housing and Rental Assistance Programs and is always looking for new HOME PROVIDERS to provide affordable housing in Del Mar! If you are a Del Mar homeowner with an extra room or separate unit to exchange for rent &/or services, please fill out a Home Provider Application at www.dmcc.cc/shared-homeprovider.shtml or call DMCC, 792-7565, to learn more about the program. Becoming a home provider offers many benefits: a bit of extra income from rent, help with chores, companionship or preventing loneliness, practice in seeing what it's like to share your home. All prospective tenants are prescreened, and background checks are conducted.

All efforts are made to find a compatible match for you. No one is placed with you until you have met and fully approved the individual.

Home seekers earning \$38,650/yr or less and looking for affordable housing in Del Mar, may apply to be matched with a home provider in exchange for rent and/or services. Call 858-233-9105 for a recorded message listing current Shared Housing opportunities in Del Mar, or complete a Home Seeker Application at www.dmcc.cc/shared-homeseecker.shtml. Home seeker income limits apply; references are required, and background checks conducted.

Applicants for rental assistance may call the DMCC office (792-7565) for information on qualifications and to obtain an application.

Make Holiday Shopping Rewarding

By Anna Haerle

For those who are making a list and checking it twice, now is the time to head to the Del Mar Village as local merchants and restaurants are enticing shoppers with two fabulous holiday promotions.

\$100 or more at any Del Mar Plaza store or restaurant between Dec. 1 and 24, and get \$25 Del Mar Plaza Dollars to spend at any restaurant or store in the Plaza. Redeem your receipts at Jolie Femme or Java Kai.



For each \$100 spent during the month of December in downtown Del Mar, shoppers will receive a Del Mar Village Association Restaurant Voucher good for one free appetizer offered at the following participating Village Restaurants: Americana; En Fuego Cantina and Grill; Epazote Oceanview Steakhouse Restaurant; Giorgio's Osteria Del Pescatore; Pacifica Breeze Café; Pacifica Del Mar; Poseidon On The Beach; and Sbicca, an American Bistro.

From December 1 through December 24, shoppers simply bring in their combined receipts from purchases made during the month to the following locations: Soul Shine, 1217 Camino Del Mar; Jimmy O's, 225 15th Street; or Earth Song Books, 1440 Camino Del Mar.

The Del Mar Plaza is also offering a holiday rewards program for shoppers. Make a combined purchase of

chocolate and books to fuel one's "spiritual" journey.

For those wanting to personalize the holidays with a heartfelt greeting card, invitation, or announcement visit Clone Duplicating & Printing/Create-A-Design Invitations. They offer customized cards that can be ordered online and delivered at your front door. To order online visit www.clonecopies.com or see their selections firsthand at their 1202 Camino Del Mar location.

For a taste of the holidays visit Pacifica Del Mar located in the Del Mar Plaza. Savor the return of Pacifica's famous Butternut Squash Bisque with apple crème fraiche and toasted almonds. Spread holiday cheer to your family and friends by purchasing Pacifica Del Mar gift certificates and receive bonus certificates for yourself on every certificate over \$100 that is purchased.

Also in the Plaza is Il Fornaio; its Region of Umbria menu will be offered nightly from Dec. 3 through 16. Those who order from this menu will receive a complimentary gift while supplies last. Each patron will receive a \$20 Complimenti Card valid January thru March of 2008 for every \$100 of Il Fornaio gift cards purchased. A variety of holiday gift baskets, panettone (Christmas bread), and sets of wine from Il Fornaio's own label are also available to purchase.

Del Mar Village offers residents a place to warm their hearts, check off their shopping lists, and fill their senses with holiday cheer. From lingerie to linguini, Del Marians will find everything to deck their halls, fill stockings, and satisfy holiday appetites.

Anna Haerle is Assistant Executive Director of the Del Mar Village Association.

Don't miss Christmas Eve with
Peter Sprague & friends

Free live concert

L'Auberge Amphitheater, 2 pm

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