



VOLUME 56, ISSUE 6

Homestead Headlines

JUNE, 2011

HVCA Board

Tues., 6/7, 7:30 PM

HVLT Board

Tues., 6/14 7:30 PM

CERT Committee

3rd Tues., as called

Sanitary Board

Tues., 6/28, 7:30 PM

Tam Des Rvw Bd

1st/3rd Wed., 7:00 PM
Log Cabin, Tam Vly

A. A. Meeting

Saturdays, 10:00 AM

N. A. Meetings

Thurs & Fri, 6:30 PM

Homestead Village

Walking Group

Fri., 1:15-3:15 PM

Blue Bear Music

Fridays, 4:30 PM

Puppy Training

Gentle Touch Classes

Thurs., 6:30 & 7:30 PM

Ali Weiss Music

Thurs., 9:30, 10:30 &
11:30 AM and
3:30 & 4:30 PM

T'ai Chi Chuan

Mondays, 6:00 &
7:00 PM

Group Meditation

Wednesdays, 6:30 PM

Music Together

Fridays 9:30, 10:30 &
11:30 AM

Mat Pilates

Wednesdays., 9:00 AM

Measure A progress...

HVCA and County of Marin Announce Partnership for Improvements to our Community Center

By Dana Schmidt

On May 23rd, the community gathered for an update on the Community Center Improvements project being funded by the Measure A tax proceeds. The meeting was hosted by the HVCA Improvement Committee and the County of Marin and the purpose was to provide funding details, rough scope of plan, and next steps.

Greg Lehman, Chair of the HVCA Improvement Committee, reiterated that funds generated by the tax assessment are split between the HVCA and the Land Trust 60%/40%, respectively, with some flexibility implied. All 60% of the HVCA allocation, approximately \$75,000 per year, is dedicated to the upgrade of the community center, pool and grounds. Upgrade plans do not affect the current or future split.



**Steve Kinsey,
Marin County Supervisor**

Given the scope of the necessary upgrades, and the desire to incur as little disruption to day to day Center activities, the Committee decided to approach the County about borrowing funds in advance. In formulating some possible upgrade plans and cost estimates, the Committee developed the following goals:

- Rectify any accessibility shortcomings of the existing building, pools and grounds
- Correct current deterioration of the building, including foundations, exterior enclosure, drainage and finishes
- Consider a main entrance to the building that is identifiable from the street
- Create 3 separate program spaces that can hold independent events, while giving each space access to restroom facilities
- Gain additional main meeting room space, proven to be too small for annual community events/meetings if possible, and
- Allow our program spaces to open up to outdoor spaces, allowing larger group functions to occur without building additional enclosed space.

The Committee then developed a 'dream plan' as a tool to request financing from the County, which totaled from \$1.85 million (building only) to \$3.25 million (for building, pool and meadow.) When we approached the County for financing assistance, Supervisor Kinsey worked with the county administration and was able to offer our community association approximately \$1 million for a 20 year loan based on our Measure A proceeds. The scope of the plan will need to be narrowed to focus primarily on the building, which is in greatest need of Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), foundation, and other safety and usability upgrades.

continued on Page 8

Deadline for the July Headlines: June 15th, 2011

Images of Early Homestead Valley

By Chuck Oldenburg

La Verne Avenue

The earliest reference to La Verne Ave. in Homestead Valley is the 1902 Tamalpais Land & Water Co. Map #6. The history of Homestead is replete with the name La Verne. From 1909 to 1914, the La Verne post office was in Cooper's Grocery on what is now Linden Lane—Homesteaders' mail was addressed to La Verne, California. During the La Verne post office era, the Homestead community was called La Verne, and Homestead School became La Verne School. In 1911, the La Verne Heights development offered lots for sale in what is now the Pixie Trail area. In 1914 there was a La Verne baseball team. In 1916, the La Verne Public Highway Lighting District maintained the street lights.

The question is often asked, "Where does the name La Verne come from?" Le Petit Larousse French dictionary confuses the issue: *Le Vergne* or *Le Verne* are old nouns which are masculine not feminine. The English meaning is alder tree. Today, the French word for alder tree is *l'aulne*, and it is masculine.

La Verne, California today is a city of 32,000 near Claremont. In 1888, La Verne and Lordsburg had been two side-by-side townships. In 1917, the city of Lordsburg changed its name to La Verne, which was the name of a neighborhood in Lordsburg. Good timing—three years earlier La Verne, California was in Homestead Valley.

The name La Verne for the original township had been chosen by Mrs. L.H. Bixby and her sister Mrs. Lyman Allen. Their family had been camping in the area since 1883 and had moved there in 1886. The sisters chose the name La Verne, they thought meant "growing green" or "spring-like" in French. They knew the French word also meant "alder tree", but they focused on its other meaning. Perhaps they thought that "*verne*" had something to do with the Latin word from which we get the adjective "vernal". But what about the noun gender problem? Even though *Le Verne* might have been correct, *La Verne* sounds so much better.

My French etymological research into the origin of the word *la verne* came up with many possibilities. One that I liked was a goddess of Greek origin named "Laverna" which people worshipped in a grove of trees. The best explanation is that for many centuries in the south of France, *la verne* referred to an alder tree or a grove of alder trees. In the south of France there are a few villages and two ancient monasteries named *La Verne*. However, when the French language of the south, *Langue d'oc*, was integrated into the French language of the north, *Langue d'oïl*, all names of trees became masculine nouns. Thus *La Verne* became *Le Verne*. I conclude that on the 1902 map, La Verne Ave. likely refers to the alder tree. A 1897 map of Mill Valley has Birch St. and Cypress Ave. which both terminate at Edgewood Ave., the north border of Homestead Valley. Thus Laverne Ave. is in good company.

Chuck's articles are posted on www.millvalleyhistoricalsociety.org. Photos are clearer on line than in print. He can be emailed at chuckoldenburg@gmail.com.

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HVCA Web Site
www.homesteadvalley.org



4th of July Parade & Picnic

An Annual Homestead Valley Celebration

Monday, July 4
11am- 2pm, Stolte Grove



Featuring:

11:00 PARADE

Dress up you and your dog (or goats...) & parade from Volunteer Park (corner Melrose and Evergreen) to Stolte Grove!

11:30 PICNIC

Hot dogs, sausages, corn, watermelon, chips and sweets!
Sodas, beer and wine will be available. \$5 and \$7 meal tickets.

12:30 PARTY

Prizes for kids' parade costumes, dog show, piñatas, face painting!

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Volunteers help make this event a success! We need all talents - pie bakers, grill-ers, ticket takers, judges, face painters, bartenders and more.

If you're interested, please call 384-0685.

Land Trust Notes...

Wet Spring...Everything's "Bigger, Greener and Stronger"
By Philip Moyer



We are having a lovely, wet spring which means everything grows bigger, greener and stronger. This includes plants we call weeds: Thistles, Poison Oak and Broom. You can do your part to help keep our open spaces and trails free of these scourges. A "Maverick Says", "Pull thistles especially if your property is adjacent to open space." We would like to prevent thistles from getting a stronger foothold in Open Space Lands. Always pull broom where ever you see it. Of course, it will still come out with roots until things dry out.

Finally, the great leaning redwood on the edge of Stole Grove has fallen. The roots gave way a few Saturdays ago and it slowly came down amazingly missing the Port-a-Loo, electrical box and since it was about 7:30 am, walkers as well. The Department of Public Works, whose land it was on, came out the following week and, with our field manager Maverick adding direction, cut up the trunk into sections, which remain, and chipped the rest.

Another "Maverick Says" part of this article needs to address the growing problem of people putting their dog waste into plastic bags and dropping them by the edge of our paths and hiking trails. In a word DON'T do this! Take it home! The bags look unsightly and they last forever, probably longer than you will! If you forget your bag... cover the fresh waste with bark, leaves, dirt something that will decompose, and just leave it off the path.

Thanks for reading and get out there and walk the trails!

Celebrating Homestead history...

Marin's Oldest Married Couple
By Chuck Oldenburg

Tony and Mary Brabo are the oldest married couple in Marin County. They were married 82 years ago on July 3, 1929. They have lived together in Homestead Valley ever since their marriage on the corner of Laverne Avenue and Reed Street. Tony is 99 years old and Mary is 100 years old.

Mary was born in 1910 in the farmhouse on her father's 3-acre farm, and has always lived on the same property. Tony was born in 1912 in Mill Valley. At age 12, he was orphaned and at age 14 he began a 365 day/year job that lasted over three years milking cows twice a day on dairy ranches in Tennessee Valley.

Parents of both Tony and Mary emigrated from the Portuguese Azores. Tony and Mary met at the IDESST Hall, a Portuguese lodge in Sausalito. She was 18 and he was 17. Two months later they eloped and were married at the home of Mary's half-brother in Alameda. It was a memorable day. Across the bay they saw smoke on Mt. Tamalpais and Mill Valley—the great fire of 1929. When they returned to Mary's home in Homestead Valley, they were pleased that her father, Manual Bettancourt, welcomed his son-in-law and the bride. Tony and Mary lived in the farmhouse with her parents and grand parents until 1932 when they had a house built on a lot split off from the farm. A daughter was born in 1932.



Tony and Mary Brabo

During the great depression they lived off the land. The farm had a milk cow, chickens, goats and vegetable crops. Tony did a lot of fishing and hunting. They provided food to friends and relatives in need during those tough times.

Tony bought a small concrete business with a concrete mixer, two wheelbarrows and four shovels. Building up the business was interrupted by World War II when he was drafted into the navy and sent to a naval base in North Africa where he worked on maintenance and construction projects. During Tony's absence, Mary and her daughter lived in the farmhouse with her parents. Rent from the other house was of great help. After the war Tony made a great success of his concrete business. He was awarded several contracts by the city of Mill Valley where many of the sidewalks are stamped with a Tony Brabo label. He also did demolition work for the National Park Service on Angel Island. Mary spent much of her life managing the household, raising their daughter and caring for her mother, an invalid for many years.

Tony bought land for development in the Mill Valley area as well as a commercial building in Lytton Square—the Brabo building. After Tony retired, the couple traveled in their 30-foot trailer, mainly fishing trips to northern California lakes. They currently live in a home that they had built in the 1950s overlooking the old farmhouse and a view of Homestead Valley with Richardson Bay in the distance.

Homestead Valley Classifieds

**LOOKING FOR A
SUMMER JOB?
LOVE THE OUTDOORS?
BECOME A
HOMESTEAD
LIFEGUARD**

Homestead Valley is looking for lifeguards & swim instructors for the 2011 pool season, beginning April 16th.

Attractive hourly wage and flexible hours, including after-school. Must be lifeguard, CPR, and First Aid certified...and be at least 15 years old.

For information visit www.homesteadvalley.org or call David at 388-0128 or email david@homesteadvalley.org



Kathy Ryan
Real Estate Broker
(415) 381-3000 x 259
(415) 271-4994, Cell
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Homesteadvalley.com is an interactive community website where neighbors can add free ads, news and photos. Find current Homestead listings and sales in the Real Estate section. Sponsored by Kat Ryan of Frank Howard Allen Realtors, 271-4994.

Bound editions of  **Chuck Oldenburg's History Articles—on sale now, \$15.00.**



E-Headlines "Green" Delivery

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MATH TUTOR Retired JPL/NASA/ Boeing engineer, MS in Mathematics. Junior high through college-age. David Hilt, cell 415-342-5030, hm 415-380-8775. 300 Ridge-wood Ave., dehilt13@yahoo.com

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Having a Party?

The Homestead Valley Community Center and Pool are available to rent for parties, events, meetings, and more...check rates at www.homesteadvalley.org or call Les Lizama at (415) 388-0137.

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Homestead Headlines

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Return Service Requested

The mission of the Homestead Valley Community Association is to enhance community for the Homestead Valley residents through cultural, educational and recreational activities, events and service.

Editors: Les Lizama and David Ross

from Page 1 *HVCA and County Partnership*

The pool upgrades are not immediate, but do need to be factored in, and the meadow improvements were considered icing on the cake. Interim routine maintenance of the building, pool and grounds will continue to be funded by CSA funding. The \$1 million would cover construction costs, required ADA updates, permits, architects and servicing of the loan.

Supervisor Kinsey commended Homestead Valley for taking the initiative to self support this project and pledged his and his staff's dedication to working alongside us to make it happen. As evidence of their commitment, the County is contributing \$25,000 up front to defer the costs of obtaining more refined costs and plans and initiating the bid process to select an architect. As an added incentive, Kinsey committed to appealing to the Board of Supervisors to contribute another \$100-\$150,000 over a period of years. Finally, the Committee expressed its intention not to undertake a capital campaign within the community over and above the Measure A proceeds.

Supervisor Kinsey and Greg then took questions from the audience regarding financing, ADA costs, and some very preliminary feedback on building improvements. We then took an informal vote by show of hands and gained majority agreement from the attendees to move forward with obtaining more refined costs estimates, pursuing the County loan, and initiating the process to select an architect. The Committee will schedule another community meeting this summer to update everyone on the more refined design plans and provide another opportunity to gather feedback.

On the Calendar...

Camp Tam Begins
Monday, June 20, 2011

Next "Homestead Walkabout"
Saturday, June 25, 9:00 AM

Get acquainted with Homestead Valley's wonderful hiking trails, get some exercise, and meet some of your Homestead neighbors. Dr. Jerry Freedman will be leading a 1 1/2 to 2 hour leisurely paced walk. Dogs and children are welcome. Call Jerry at 383-1270 for details and meeting place.

4th of July Parade and Picnic
Monday, July 4, 2011

Parade line-up starts at 10:30 AM
Parade begins at 11:00 AM

