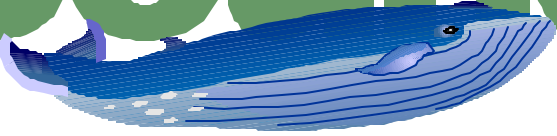


THE SEA RANCH Soundings



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Inside This Issue:

- Midwinter Meeting Meaningful
- Rae Hudspeth: Sea Rancher of Year
- Budget Session an Eye-Opener
- Neighborhood Watch Benefits All
- CRC Helpers Need Help
- Owners Surveyed on Design Review
- Interpretive Center Task Force Reports
- Serenity Care Facility Opens
- Update: Reservoir, Sewer, Stables & Water Bags
- Lines From the Library
- Unit 24 to Party
- Rhodie Show in May
- Restaurants
- Halprin Workshop April 12

Midwinter Meeting Meaningful

What better way to pass a stormy Sea Ranch Saturday afternoon than at TSRA's 2003 Midwinter Meeting? Two to three hundred Sea Ranchers jammed in the Del Mar Center to hear an outstanding presentation, thanks to the arrangements of The Communications Committee.

DICK WHITAKER ON DESIGN

Dick Whitaker, Director of Design and keynote speaker, defined "living lightly on the land" as an attitude that says the environmental setting is more important than buildings. The Sea Ranch is not about individual houses but about 10 miles of coast — a shared image that all fits together. "Great or even good architecture carries many

messages about society, individuals, values, and our dreams. It should have a lot more to say than just 'look at me'."

It would be easy if architecture at Sea Ranch were about style or a set of absolute rules, said Whitaker; instead it has to do with relating buildings both to their particular site and to Sea Ranch in general. This means responding to their specific setting, environmental factors; and to existing and future buildings; respecting what is already here.

"The garden is already here," Whitaker observed. He asked members to think of nature as a mentor — a wise and trusted counselor. "Nature" is defined as the inherent character of something independent of our activities. "Natural" means free from affectation, arising easily or spontaneously, the ordinary course of things — which is the perfect formula to develop buildings at The Sea Ranch, Whitaker feels.

The Sea Ranch experience is not free, declared Whitaker; it demands commitment and participation, like being a part of a big family. "And you don't always get your way." Dealing with each site as a unique entity under the principles of the design review process means that what may be appropriate in one place is not appropriate in another. The basic agreement of the community is that there are rules and we have accepted them.

Responsibility for the rules is given to the Design Review Committee: three architects and three landscape architects with an incredible amount of

experience. Meeting twice a month, the Committee reviews conceptual, preliminary and final submittals for projects at The Sea Ranch. The Committee provides advice, and bases approvals and rejections on: the specifics of each individual situation, the appropriateness of the design for The Sea Ranch community, and *The Sea Ranch Restrictions and Design Committee Rules*. "Over the last 38 years, they have been an effective force in helping us to keep this very special place from becoming just anyplace."

Whitaker discussed real and perceived problems: the proliferation of visual artifacts, noise, TV satellite dishes, weather vanes, and glass reflectors along the road. "Can garden gnomes and pink flamingos be far behind? ... It's easy to say what can one more hurt, but one more becomes 20 more, becomes 50 more, and pretty soon you have destroyed the essential environment we have come to love."

Whitaker highlighted a number of design problems: budgets and cost of building have affected the materials used. "We can no longer afford clear heart redwood." Materials and finish problems are a result of the cost of materials, "So we get pigmented stain instead of transparent stain, and instead of putting one coat on, it's two coats and three coats, and it starts looking like paint. Pretty soon it almost seems like it glows in the dark." The Design Department proposes to eliminate all of the lighter colors in the range of approved colors so that "hopefully we will recycle the color range at The Sea Ranch to medium and darker colors to

get back to the imagery that we all have of The Sea Ranch.”

Details such as white window frames add to the “noise” of the building. Fences are “a creeping kind of thing until you have eight-foot walls from building line to building line, and we start looking like something else — a walled-in suburban enclave.” The allowed height of buildings has very little to do with reality and views. “Any building one builds on the meadows is going to impact someone’s view.” A multitude of paved driveways contribute to the drainage problem. The apparent bulk of houses may contribute to the perception that there has been a proliferation of huge houses. They can be designed to be more sensitive to their site and their surroundings.

It is just not practical to have the participation of owners at Design Committee meetings because Committee members engage in heated discussions similar to juries. They need to discuss projects without worrying about offending someone. Owners may come in and meet with the staff if they wish. Whitaker concluded by responding to statements made on the TSR listserv such as “the Design Committee does not live in the real world.” Whitaker said, “They do. The problem is, there are some people up here that do not live in the real world of The Sea Ranch. There are probably a few too many people who want to be guests here and what we really need is a lot more thoughtful, caring folks.”

Al Boeke, one of the “fathers” of The Sea Ranch, rose and congratulated Dick Whitaker, saying, “I’ve never heard The Sea Ranch Concept described in clearer terms than Dick just did!” Whitaker then answered a few questions from the audience about alternative materials, wandering cypress trees, how to approach the size-and-bulk issue, and alternatives to cypress trees.

SPECIAL BUSINESS

Treasurer Alex Long gave a brief summary of the Association finances and announced that the dues will be around \$121 to \$122 per month in the coming year. Director Marti Campbell recognized committees for their work and distributed certificates to retiring committee members. Director Jim Flessner gave a special plaque to Ursula Jones and Tom Cochrane for their work to preserve the Gualala River.

A CONVERSATION WITH THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors took seats for “A Conversation with The Board of Directors and Community Manager,” where members could question the Board. Elaine Jacob asked about the status of the extension of the sewer for the Lodge. Community Manager Jim Carruthers replied that the Sonoma County Water Agency is preparing a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the project. It should be completed in late fall or early winter of 2003. Don Kemp asked about the timing of the Lodge expansion and heard only that the Lodge was exploring their options for sewage disposal and that the seven-mile-sewer extension was the option the county had approved.

“What is the latest about the horse Stables?” and “What is the cost to The Sea Ranch membership?” asked Jean Lackey. Director Kate MacIntyre responded that costs come out of the Property and Equipment Replacement Fund and, based on the 25-year cycle of maintenance, the Stables should cost about an average of \$6,000 a year. However in the current year, the Association did the cross-fencing of the pasture at around \$20,000 and have budgeted for manure-handling equipment in order to enhance the operation. The Stables are intended to be cost/revenue neutral when they are at full operating level, said Director

Pete Mattson.

“What is the current status of any ongoing or pending lawsuits?” asked Gene Weston. Carruthers replied, “The good news is, I think we have diverted some.” TSRA is currently in court with three members on CC&R violations. The courts generally believe these matters should be settled in Alternative Dispute Resolution rather than the court system. Carruthers commented, “From where we sit, that makes sense. Sometimes members don’t think that way.”

Janann Strand remarked that the initial maps of Sea Ranch show a third easement for a wastewater installation at the south end, presumably for the Lodge. Is that opportunity still viable? “Any sewer that goes from south to north for seven-and-a-half miles along the highway will cross 40 ravines which are an integral part of our total landscape. Will there be an opportunity to make some kind of adjustment?” Director Flessner, who works for the Sonoma County Water Agency, replied he had seen some drawings of the total pipeline and did not recall any significant problems they should bypass. The pipe will be a four-inch pipe. He added, “There is more than one idea that is being proposed, and the Lodge hasn’t bought into the project yet.”

Al Boeke followed up, “Jan is being very, very kind. What she’s really interested in is whether this will be approached sensitively, environmentally, or whether this is just another engineering problem. In which case, it’s a very sad thing to happen.” In Director Mattson’s opinion, the purpose of the EIR is so there will be virtually no environmental impacts including visual or esthetic impacts.

Rob Elder asked if the Association had taken a position on the proposed expansion of the Lodge. Director Harriman said, no, under the agreement with the prior owners of the

Lodge, there is Design Committee control over the expansion and the present owners have been very cooperative. “So far, we have not been presented with a finalized plan. Last Saturday afternoon, Jim Carruthers, Pete Mattson, Kate MacIntyre and I met with a representative from the Lodge and talked about a number of issues. We agreed we would establish a program of regular meetings with them to discuss things that are of mutual interest.” Director MacIntyre added, under the 1991 agreement there is no necessity for the Board to take a stand. The only approval comes from the Design Committee. The expansion is not subject to Board approval.

SEA RANCHERS OF THE YEAR

Thirty-nine past Sea Ranchers of the Year were honored by Ann Harriman and 17 were present. Sea Rancher of the Year is an award to people who have made significant contributions to The Sea Ranch. Down through the years, Sea Ranchers of the Year were: Don Carlos Hines (1970); Elizabeth Morse (1972); Tom Christensen (1973); William Rand (1974); Dr. J. S. Woodruff (1975); Al Boeke (1976); P. Satur, S. Moore, J. Griffin, (1977); Harry Estes (1978); Dave Nagel (1979); Dale Wood (1980); James L. Cockburn (1981); Jer and Sally Skibbins (1982); Byrne Thraillkill (1983); Pat Ditzler (1984); Ginny Trumbull (1985); Bill Platt (1986); George Wickstead (1987); Janann Strand (1988), Jeff and Millie Davis (1990); Dan Levin (1991); Joanne Hafner (1992); John Wingate (1993); George Snyder (1994); Dick Soule (1995); Kathi and Duane Gordon (1996); Dick Warren (1997); John Lundell and John McChesney (1998); Al Wool (1999); Mel Mirsky (2000); Joanne and Walt Guenther (2001); Matt Sylvia and Larry Halprin (2002).

The Midwinter Meeting concluded with Rob and Alice Diefenbach’s presentation of the 40th award, 2003

Sea Rancher of the Year, to Rae Hudspeth. (see accompanying article).

Rae Hudspeth: Sea Rancher of Year

The response was immediate and unanimous.

The crowd that filled the Del Mar Center to overflowing for the Midwinter Meeting was on its feet and applauding almost before presenters Rob and Alice Diefenbach finally ended the suspense: “Our winner is a physician,” said Rob. “Of my very favorite gender of physician, the feminine gender (his wife is an M.D.). Ladies and gentlemen, I am thrilled to introduce the Sea Rancher of the Year, our good friend and yours, Dr. E. Rae Hudspeth!”

“I didn’t have a clue,” says Rae — at least not until Rob began to list the many contributions that made her the perfect choice. Then, she got to walk to the podium to accept the award that makes her part of a pretty special club. Many distinguished past recipients had been invited to attend the gathering to be recognized for their own contributions to the community, and to welcome this newest member.

“I am honored and thrilled,” said Rae. “These have been 16 wonderful years. I won’t say it was always easy, but it has been exciting and challenging.”

Meeting challenges was a familiar experience for this lady by the time she retired to The Sea Ranch in 1986. Not many girls growing up in West Texas in the ’20s and ’30s aspired to a college education, let alone a career in medicine. But Rae was determined. “When I told my dad I wanted to go to medical school, he asked why I just couldn’t be a nurse or a teacher like all women,” she recalls, laughing. “But he was very supportive, and did help me a lot.” She earned her M.D. at the University of Texas in 1951, and immediately moved into an internship

with the U.S. Public Health Service in Seattle.

Her first challenge as an intern was a year as a “prison doc” at the Federal Reformatory for Women. There, her patients included such infamous inmates as Tokyo Rose (“A lovely lady who did what I probably would have done under the same circumstances,” comments Rae); Axis Sally; and the wife and mother-in-law of “Machine Gun” Kelly.

She then moved on to Detroit, where she spent three years in training for her specialty in obstetrics & gynecology. She remained in private practice there for 30 years, delivering nearly 5,000 babies and eventually moving exclusively into gynecology, since she enjoyed doing surgery. She was also a clinical instructor with Wayne State University School of Medicine, and still found time to contribute articles to scientific and medical publications.

Rae first became interested in The Sea Ranch when she read an article about environmental development in *Time* magazine, in the mid-’60s. It wasn’t until 1981, however, that she bought the Esherick hedgerow house that has been her full-time home for the past 16 years. Everyone who knows her would agree that she has more than met the challenge of creating a rich, meaningful life for herself in her chosen community.

“Rae’s contributions are so special because they have been both broad and deep,” says Ann Harriman (who presented Rae’s nomination for the award to the Board), referring to her leadership not only with organizations and committees at Sea Ranch but also with Redwood Coast Medical Services (RCMS), which benefits the entire North Coast community. Rae herself mentions how pleased she is that Sea Ranchers seem increasingly to be seeing themselves as part of the larger community.

“That has developed over the time I’ve been here,” she says, and cites two reasons: “First, there is less contentiousness among the members, and also there are so many involved Sea Ranchers that it just flows naturally into their helping with other organizations — the Arts Center, the Senior Center, RCMS.” Rae’s tenure as Board Chair at Sea Ranch was during a particularly “contentious” time when some members wanted to rewrite the CC&Rs. “I felt like if I could survive that, I could survive anything!” she says, adding that the experience helped prepare her for her leadership position at RCMS.

Rae has also worked with the Utilities Committee, the Trails Committee, and the Project Review Committee (which is charged with issues related to putting septic systems on Commons). She was deeply involved with the Heron Hill Project Committee, which tried to develop a way to construct senior housing units for Sea Ranchers on the Remnant Land.

One of Rae’s great interests has been bird-watching, which she first discovered while attending an Audubon camp in Wisconsin back in the ’60s. The camp was on wildflowers, but “I got hooked on birds!” she says. Her fascination with the feathered creatures continues today, when she will often find she starts out looking for whales and ends up getting “distracted by birds.” She has traveled as far as South America, Europe, Africa and New Zealand on bird-watching expeditions, and has recorded 400-500 species in North America alone. She is an active member of the Mendocino Coast Audubon Society, and six years ago organized The Sea Ranch Christmas Bird Count, which continues annually.

Recently, Rae made the difficult decision to put her house on the market and move to Rogue Valley Manor (RVM, aka “Sea Ranch North”), an

assisted living community in Southern Oregon. In a characteristically generous move, she has decided that most of the proceeds from the sale of her home will go to her two favorite charities: the Sonoma Land Trust and Oxfam America.

She is leaving, she says, with mixed emotions. “I know I will be lonely for everyone, but it will simplify my life,” she says. She is tired of traveling so far to see medical specialists, and points out that at RVM she will have a “built-in family” because of the large number of transplanted Sea Ranchers who live there. She will be sorely missed, not only by the community but also by the individual friends and neighbors she leaves behind.

“Rae epitomizes all that is good about Sea Ranchers,” says Gladys Marks, who with husband Larry has been Rae’s close neighbor since ’86. “She loves it for the peace, the beauty of the surroundings, and the friends who are there for warmth and support. Although Rae will be living at another location, her spirit will still be with us at the Ranch!”

Budget Session an Eye-Opener

Finance is not my thing. So why was I spending a beautiful sunny Sea Ranch day at an all-day budget workshop? Maybe to act as a stand-in for the Sea Ranchers that weren’t at the Del Mar Center — and that would be most of them. Only three or four Sea Ranchers who were in the audience didn’t have an interest in a specific item. The rest were Department heads or Committee chairs.

Stacks of financial documents on a row of chairs greeted me. I may have despaired of making sense out of them, but they became clear under the gentle but efficient leadership of Finance Director Ellen Buechner, who highlighted her Power Point

presentation so that we could follow along as she talked. She announced that the Association had ended up with almost \$2 million surplus at the end of the last fiscal year, and that this surplus would be carried over in the current year’s assessments at \$17.35 per month per member. (The estimate has been reduced to \$16.60 at the end of fiscal year ’02 -03.) Each dollar of assessment is worth \$27,504 annually.

The *preliminary* budget totaled out at \$120 per month, compared to the current assessment of \$124. However, Workers Compensation has risen dramatically, requiring another 95 cents per month. Buechner went over changes to the preliminary budget - request which would bring the total to \$121.45 per month. Now, the committee buckled down to deal with the numbers presented in a preliminary budget and to reach agreement on the operating budget; incorporating Board, committee and member requests.

Members of the Finance Committee and the Board of Directors sat around tables formed in a giant square. DeWitt Bowman, Chair of the Finance Committee, facilitated the wide-ranging discussions that touched on all aspects of Sea Ranch administration and policy. This was the place to be if you ever wanted to know about the pros and cons of card-keys for the pools, floating tennis courts, riprap for the reservoir, seismic retrofitting to the water tanks, etc.)

This January session was the second in three budget workshops, each with a different focus. The first in November, said Bowman, allowed the joint committee to “review progress made in the current year, hear of necessary projects and requests from The Sea Ranch committees and members, and give initial direction to the staff on the projects and fiscal direction to be incorporated in the budget over the next three years.” At the end of each presentation, members in the audience

were recognized to ask questions or comment.

Not far into a review of capital projects by Facilities and Resources Director Randy Burke, a member of the audience was recognized by chair Bowman. "Weren't you going to assign priorities? I don't see any numbers," asked Janet Hubbard. Chair Bowman said the committee did assign priorities on committee requests, but allowed the various departments to set priorities in actual operations. Hubbard persisted, "In Facilities and Resources, I see a lot of things that are optional." Burke replied that the 25-year plan is the beginning of a prioritization process. "We have a legal obligation to maintain our facilities; these are not discretionary items," said Director Long. Director Mattson shared general agreement about prioritization, "... but we have a fiduciary responsibility for maintenance of the Association's capital assets." He felt the committee was too far along in this year's process to set priorities. Al Reid, member of the Finance Committee, suggested the committee could take the lead in developing guidelines for prioritizing next year's budget.

Responding to positive Board member interest and requests for more information at the November meeting, Lin Plescia, Director of Security, gave a comprehensive report on the advantages of an "Amenity Access System," a card-key system to access the pools. "The system would be intended to complement the services provided by the pool monitors but not replace them," said Plescia's report. Her analysis of the products of three different manufacturers contained detailed spreadsheets defining the costs of the various systems. The cards cost around \$6.00 each and are embedded with a small electronic system that allows the holder to open the gate by waving the card in front of it.

Board members debated whether the

Association could afford the card system plus additional security persons to provide eight-hour coverage, seven days a week. Director MacIntyre asked what were the problems that the system would solve? "My sense is it would be helpful to have actual statistics."

Bill Hatcher, Chair of the Security Committee, read off a list: unauthorized use of the pool and parking lot, graffiti, vandalism, swimming in the nude, unwanted sexual approaches, construction crews using showers and saunas, etc. In his view, "Nothing's going to stop perps from climbing over the wall. We'll never get away from needing a person on site. The card-lock is a second level of protection but we need both." Al Reid asked about risk management, "What is our level of exposure?"

A straw vote was taken which supported an eight-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week pool monitor instead of the card-key system. Director Long asked that a pilot card access project be undertaken at one facility for a limited amount of time, to see what the benefits are. He proposed that the subject be brought back at the next meeting.

Randy Burke then continued with a discussion of using "billy goat blowers" instead of purchasing a street sweeper. Also, he announced, the Hedgerow Program resulted in a surplus of \$39,000. Community Manager Jim Carruthers said that because of run-off concerns, the Equestrian Center is required to relocate the storage and processing of manure to an uphill location, requiring a small tractor.

A lengthy and confusing discussion of seismic retrofitting water storage Tank #1 with shut-off valves ensued. The purpose is the retention of potable water at the south end of the Ranch in the event of a moderate earthquake. An engineering study concluded that shut-off valves and flexible pipe connectors

would be the best option at a cost of approximately \$180,000.

Utilities Committee Chair Mel Mirsky spoke, "I think we should drop the whole thing." His conclusion was based on: 1) The Harding geotechnical report says that Tank #1 is sited on competent bedrock. 2) The tank is 37 years old. A September 20, '02 inspection revealed that the interior shell walls are failing with major corrosion, and the exterior walls have minor corrosion. The tank needs to be recoated. 3) Cost: "By the time you're finished, it's going to cost \$200,000 plus. I would not spend \$200,000 for gadgets to put on a tank that is not in good condition."

Al Reid asked are there plans for repair or replacement? Mirsky replied that the 25-Year Plan requires patches and annual maintenance. "The tank will last at least five to 10 years. When you replace it, bring the tank up to modern standards." The life span of a typical tank is about 50 years. Said Bowman, "The issue needs to be settled in a comprehensive fashion. Also, the committee needs to address whether it is a Water Company or Association expense."

Director Mattson declared, "We have an obligation to get this right! We need a study of the entire water system in terms of public safety." Brad Clayton, Water System Operator, said there is no comprehensive disaster plan for the water system, though some specific studies have been done. Mirsky mentioned the due diligence study done when TSRA bought the Water Company; however, Director Long felt the Board's information is "ill-focused." Director Harriman observed that it's difficult making decisions in the face of uncertainty, but "we may never have absolutely definitive information." Director MacIntyre disagreed, "We have decided we will not pursue the \$155,000 option and we would like to come back with a plan to

deliver services and water in case of an emergency.”

The Design Review Compliance and Environmental Management Department proposed increased deposits for a number of activities such as septic system review. The current schedule of deposits does not cover staff costs nor deter violations. The Board may want to reconsider the schedule from that point of view, not that it would have much of an effect on the revenue stream. The Department will be adding an additional position of a full-time Associate Architect to provide additional staff support for the review and documentation of all design submittal activities, and research into new building materials.

Community Manager Carruthers reported the repair project for The Sea Ranch Water Company water storage reservoir is on schedule for this summer and the riprap project will be included. The riprap to reduce erosion on the inside face of the dam is to be funded by the Association at a cost of approximately \$544,000, depending on the price of the rock. The insurance company for Brelje and Race, the engineers who designed the reservoir, will pay for repair of the seepage in face of the dam. Al Reid asked, “Are we going to use in-house staff to oversee the project?” Carruthers replied, “We will do both.” Randy Burke has a background in earthmoving projects, but not the time to manage repair of Sea Ranch roads and the reservoir at the same time. Director Mattson wants outside oversight that is liable for its decisions. That may be in the settlement agreement, said Carruthers.

The agenda specified a lunch break at 12:45 but it was not to be. Committee and Board members discreetly munched on sack lunches as they continued their discussion. This writer was driven out by hunger pangs at 2:00 or 2:30.

Neighborhood Watch Benefits All

When we moved to Sea Ranch 11 years ago it was our dream come true. Since then, we’ve heard that “dream-come-true” statement many times from our neighbors. Phrases like: “It’s a beautiful place,” “It’s a comfortable place,” “a place of community,” “a safe place,” “I feel secure here” are common among the residents’ descriptions of Sea Ranch. Neighborhood Watch, Neighborhood Awareness play an important part in those feelings. Crime and fear of crime are not a major concern for Sea Ranchers, except for some infrequent events. Neighborhood Watch, along with our Security Department, can help ensure the continued enjoyment of The Sea Ranch lifestyle.

What is Neighborhood Watch?

Neighborhood Watch is an ongoing program involving members of this community asking us to be aware of the safety and welfare of our neighbors. Each neighbor in a specific area accepts some responsibility for watching out for other neighbors. The principle is that people working together can make a difference in the general welfare of the community.

Why do we need a Neighborhood Watch Program at the Sea Ranch?

We live in a rural area and have access to several emergency services:

1. The Sea Ranch Security Department, consisting of five Security Officers, a Director of Security, and several individual volunteer activities.
2. An in-residence Sonoma County Sheriff.
3. California Department of Forestry station including EMT personnel.
4. A local ambulance service - Medic 120.
5. In addition to formalized services provided to this community, there

are the informal eyes and ears of Sea Ranch full- and part-time residents and their guests. It’s to this informal group that the Neighborhood Watch Program is addressed.

What are some specific areas that the Program covers?

1. Crime prevention.
2. Aid to neighbors who experience physical accidents.
3. Communication with elderly neighbors living alone.
4. Watchfulness for property damage occurring during storms.

What are some specific examples where Neighborhood Watch was effective during an emergency situation?

PHYSICAL ACCIDENT

About a year ago while picking up the newspaper early in the morning, I noticed our neighbor, an elderly lady living alone, lying on her driveway. I went over to find out if she were all right. She apparently had fallen out of a window and had been lying outside all night. I quickly called 9-1-1 and her son who was living in the area. Within a few minutes, EMT from CDF, officers from Sea Ranch Security, the local Sonoma County Sheriff, and the local ambulance arrived, gave our neighbor first aid and transported her to medical facilities in Santa Rosa. She returned home the next day after being checked thoroughly for any ill effects from the fall.

POSSIBLE CRIME PREVENTION

While traveling north to Gualala, one of our neighbors noticed a transient standing on the west side of Highway One peering at some houses. He notified Sea Ranch Security of the person’s general location and direction. Security monitored his progress during the day, and at one point located him at the corner of Halcyon and Highway One attempting to start a fire. Security

notified the Sheriff who apprehended him and took him to Santa Rosa.

WATCHFULNESS FOR PROPERTY DAMAGE

On one occasion, a neighbor noticed water trickling down the foundation of an unoccupied rental house next door. Luckily, they had a spare key to the home and were able to locate the leaking toilet which was the source of the water. They closed the toilet valve and reported the problem to the appropriate rental agency, thus avoiding what could have been a major flooding and damage situation.

Again, during the now legendary storms of late 2002, when wind and rain disabled both electric and phone services, these same people were able to help other neighbors. During a brief hiatus from the storm, someone who had been walking the Blufftop Trail noticed that a large floor-to-ceiling window in a house across the street had been blown out. Knowing that this couple would know the owners' names and rental agency, she asked if they could help. The ground was covered with shattered glass and the window shades were flapping and getting wetter by the minute, as the rain had started again. The couple did a makeshift repair. They tried using their cell phone to contact the rental agency, to no avail. They were able to get the owners' off-Ranch phone number through the Security office and used their cell phone to call and leave a message for the owners. As soon as phone service was restored, these good Samaritans called the neighbors' contractor, who came over and told them he could not have improved on their "patch job." It held up through several more days of storms until the window was replaced.

In another incident on Galleon's Reach, a neighbor noticed the smell of gas in their vicinity. They called CDF who checked it out and discovered the pipe to the propane tank was leaking.

The gas company was called to fix the problem and another possible catastrophe was averted.

How does one get involved in a Neighborhood Watch Program at The Sea Ranch?

First, realize that as a member of our community you can be alert, observant and caring of your neighbors, and that you CAN make a difference. Second, take advantage of Sea Ranch Neighborhood Watch special training which will increase your knowledge of how to help your neighbors, your family and yourself to continue making the community a safer place to live. Third, take the initiative and volunteer to set up a Neighborhood Watch meeting in your neighborhood. Call the Security Department at 785-2444, or e-mail them at lplescia@tsra.org and ask them to help you set up a Neighborhood Watch meeting in your unit. They will walk you through the procedure, which is quite simple and requires a minimum amount of work on your part.

What can I expect at the Neighborhood Watch meeting?

A presentation will be made by a Sea Ranch Security Officer and will cover the following topics:

1. How to protect your home and valuables.
2. What to watch for in your neighborhood and whom to call in case of an emergency.
3. How to have your home watched by the Security Department when you're absent on vacation.
4. What to be watchful for in case of severe weather conditions.
5. A specific checklist of items to monitor to keep your home secure and safe.
6. An updated report on activities being undertaken in our community to deal with a serious emergency.

7. An open question-and-answer period and a discussion among the attendees.

CRC Helpers Need Help

The initials "CRC" are no doubt very familiar to many Sea Ranchers, even though they might not know their meaning: "Community Resources Connection." For over three years this local service organization has been helping North Coast residents (including many Sea Ranchers) with transportation, simple home repairs and a variety of referral questions.

CRC has transported Sea Ranchers to medical appointments in Gualala, Ft. Bragg, Ukiah and Santa Rosa; has taken and picked up Sea Ranchers from hospitals; and helped out with a multitude of other important activities. In other words, CRC has had a significant, beneficial impact on the well-being of many of us. It is the largest volunteer organization in the area. Recently, however, a number of people have moved, leaving gaps in our list of volunteers.

There is need for volunteers in the office, and drivers and van drivers to Santa Rosa on Thursdays. Volunteers staff the office at the Gallery Center (renamed Elaine Jacob Center) for a minimum of four hours a month. Driver schedules vary, but usually are for one specified day a month, though many drivers elect to be on a reserve list if they cannot commit to a specific day.

For those who have not used the van service, it provides weekly Thursday trips to Santa Rosa from the Elaine Jacob Center to Santa Rosa. Passengers are taken to their appointment and later picked up for return home. The service was inaugurated in May 2001 and continues to grow in popularity. The van is a 1998 Dodge Grand Caravan provided to CRC by the Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) and carries four to five passengers. The drivers

are, of course, CRC volunteers and a vital part of CRC's transportation network. There is currently a pressing need for all types of drivers.

Last year, transportation volunteers compiled an incredible record of 19,675 documented miles, plus 7,166 miles for the van trips to Santa Rosa, for a total of 26,841 miles. Of these trips, 76 percent were related to medical appointments, 5 percent dental, 3 percent social services, and 16 percent for personal needs. Handyman volunteers (women also) are another essential component of CRC in providing help with difficult repairs, re-hanging doors, rewiring small appliances, and changing smoke detectors, for example.

The philosophy of CRC is neighbors helping neighbors — from Timber Cove to Elk. Volunteering for as little as four hours a month will enable this essential community service to prosper. It will be a contribution not only in filling an important community need, but also providing the opportunity to help your neighbors in a very personal way. A bonus for joining CRC is the annual party — a grand event to which all volunteers and special friends are invited.

Owners Surveyed on Design Review

Last summer, TSRA Board established the Interpretive Center Task Force (ICTF) to explore the possibility of an "Interpretive Center" at Sea Ranch. (See related article)

During November 2002, members of the Task Force conducted a telephone survey to learn about the experiences of owners with design review. Task Force members drafted a questionnaire and reviewed it with Community Manager Jim Carruthers before proceeding. Armed with pointers from Jim, Matt Adams, Don Kemp, Jackie Knowles, Laurie Mueller, and myself,

all conducted the interviews.

THE SURVEY SAMPLE

The sample for the survey consisted of 50 owners who received building permits for new houses or major additions in 2000 and 2001. The sample, drawn randomly from the lists of applicants, included 63% of those building new houses and 20% of those adding to existing houses. From this sample, the interviewers reached 39 of the 50 owners in the sample — 30 who built new houses and 9 who added to existing houses. This was 78% of the total sample (see Table 1 for details).

RESPONDENTS

These respondents are scattered throughout Sea Ranch with some concentration in Units 24 and 35. Five of the 9 re-modelers have houses in Unit 28. Eighteen of the respondents use their Sea Ranch houses for vacations and weekends, with 6 of these staying more than 2 months a year at The Sea Ranch. Fifteen live full-time at The Sea Ranch. This is a slightly higher proportion of full-time residents (38%) than listed in the 2000 Census (37%). Another 14 plan to live at Sea Ranch full-time in the future. Five of the houses were under construction at the time of the survey. Only 5 of the 39 houses are or will be on a rental program (see Table 2 for summary)

The interviewers asked how people first learned about Sea Ranch and were surprised by the long involvement. Twenty-five (64%) of the owners came here first as renters, many going back to the 1960s when development at Sea Ranch was just beginning. Nine (23%) learned about Sea Ranch from friends and the other 5 (13%) learned about it by driving through, from newspaper or magazine articles or ads, or from a relative. Twenty-nine (74%) had spent more than a month at Sea Ranch before deciding to buy property.

REASONS FOR BUYING AT THE SEA RANCH

The questionnaire provided a list of possible reasons for buying at TSR. Respondents were asked to indicate if each reason was "important," "somewhat important" or "not important" in their decisions to buy property at TSR. The results are shown in Table 3 with the reasons listed in order of their importance. The natural environment and location on the coast are clearly the most important reasons the respondents bought at TSR. The Task Force was surprised that architecture and recreation facilities ranked so low. These features may bring visitors, but they do not seem to be major attractions for buyers.

When asked for "other reasons" for buying at TSR, the respondents produced a long list. Many of the reasons were specific examples of the general categories on the questionnaire. They included:

- Isolation (remote, quiet, peaceful, unpopulated, little traffic)
- Natural Features (ocean, beaches, forests, beaches, Commons, wildlife, abalone, beauty, views, weather)
- Community (community without crowds, intelligent people, social network, good place for grandkids, Posh Squash, lack of graffiti, not like Gualala)
- Design (design concepts, TSR plan)
- Other (cost, don't need a Coastal Commission permit to build).

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Almost all the respondents received information from realtors or rental agents before deciding to buy at TSR. Fewer than 23% of the respondents contacted TSRA staff or referred to a Sea Ranch publication, and only 3 sought information from the TSRA Web site (see Table 4 for details). At least 2/3 of the respondents felt they

had adequate information about septic systems, height and bulk limits, Bane Bill restrictions, design guidelines, landscaping restrictions and steps in the design review process. However, nearly 1/3 indicated a need for more information about steps in the design review process, the Bane Bill and design guidelines.

The questionnaire asked for sources of information about the design review process. Thirty of the 39 owners received information from their architects, designers and contractors. In fact, most owners rely on their architects and designers to take them through the process and are not that familiar with how it works. Other significant sources of information included realtors, TSRA staff, closing documents and the preliminary site visit. Three people got information from the TSRA Web site and three from the TSR listserv (see Table 5).

When asked to rate various possible sources of information about design review as effective, somewhat effective or not effective, respondents favored contacts with TSRA staff, TSR publications and the Web site, but all the methods listed received support from at least 1/3 of the respondents. Videotapes or CDs and “displays at a specific TSR site” were considered ineffective by most people (see Table 6 for details).

Although respondents rated sources of information about design review, only 6 thought that more or better information might have helped them with the process. Thirty-three of the respondents did not consider lack of information a problem that affected them; however, many implied that others might need better information.

EXPERIENCES WITH DESIGN REVIEW

Thirty-three respondents used architects or designers who had done other Sea Ranch houses; the other 6

were all architects who designed their own houses. All but two owners used local contractors.

Twenty-nine owners had plans approved with minor changes. Five needed to make major changes and 5 had initial plans rejected. The reaction to design review was very positive. Even when pressed, 9 of the 39 owners could think of no negative comments, and another 20 reported the experience in positive terms. Seven cited minor problems and irritations and 3 viewed the experience in mostly negative terms. One of the three was totally negative. On the other hand, 4 people said their projects benefited from changes required by the Design Committee (DC).

Issues that arose between the applicants and the Design Committee included: the siting of houses, garages, and driveways; size of houses and courtyards; eaves, overhangs, siding, use of glass blocks, fencing and decks, roof slope, window type and height, and tree removal. Handling of vegetation on and affecting the sites was the most frequently recurring issue.

What’s right with the process? A lot, according to our interviewees. TSRA staff came in for much praise: fair, accessible, professional, careful, friendly, responsive, helpful, flexible, wonderful and delightful. The process itself was also commended as clear, understandable, painless, smooth, predictable, no roadblocks, reasonable, quick, easy, enjoyable, good outcome, and as one person put it: “easiest thing we’ve ever done.”

With all those compliments, what could possibly be wrong with design review? The same staff is viewed by different owners as arrogant, rude, inflexible, dogmatic, inaccessible. Several noted the “gatekeeper mentality” that keeps folks out of upstairs where the action is. Also, almost all the people interviewed were

caught in the transition from Ted Smith to Jeffrey Hannigan to Bill Wiemeyer. This undoubtedly disrupted the review process.

Complaints about the process include: inadequate reasons for decisions, inaccurate flow chart, last-minute requirements, slowness, and excessive detail. Some complained about the standards and disagreed with decisions of the Design Committee. Terms used were: inconsistent, trendy, picky and arbitrary. One person thought the entire process was too focused on details and that it failed to ensure that the overall house fit into The Sea Ranch design environment.

SUGGESTIONS

Respondents had lots of suggestions for improving the experience with design review:

- TSRA should keep realtors informed and provide materials for prospective buyers.
- TSRA must have an updated design manual with guidelines organized by topic, summary materials, flow chart, and a step-by-step guide through the building process.
- The DC should adhere to the original Sea Ranch concept and resist exceptions to the guidelines. This speaks to the fact that many of the complaints with design review do not relate to one’s experience with it, but to what others have been permitted to do.
- Several, especially the owner-architects, would like to see open DC meetings.
- TSRA should provide better guidance about appropriate landscaping and tree-removal policies.
- TSRA should consider allowing appropriate new materials and eaves.

RESPONSES FROM DECEMBER FORUM

At the December 1, 2002 Forum on Design Review, the Task Force passed out brief questionnaires to the audience. The questionnaire asked for the most positive and negative aspects of their experience and suggestions for improvement in the design review process. Twelve were returned at the end of the meeting and the results paralleled those of the telephone survey. All 12 reported an essentially problem-free experience with design review. The few negative comments related to:

- Change in staff during process
- Inconsistency in decisions
- Lack of explanation of DC decisions
- Length of time
- Analysis required to remove trees
- Although generally satisfied, the Forum attendees suggested many ways to improve design review at TSR:
- Provide better information to prospective and new owners.
- Provide information to rental agents and realtors for prospective buyers.
- Conduct workshops for owners before they begin designing.
- Be consistent in design decisions.
- Consider alternative building materials.
- Update the design manual.
- Do not issue so many variances.
- Explain TSR characteristics that influence design.
- Communicate DC thinking to membership.
- Study landscape architecture principles.
- Notify neighbors of resubmitted plans.
- Do not give occupancy permits to owners who violate CC&Rs.

All this excellent input from TSRA members makes it easy for the

Interpretive Center Task Force to complete its mission and make recommendations to the Board. Sea Ranchers have a generally positive view of design review and seem to be in agreement about both problem areas and how to approach them. Members of the ICTF Task Force thank you for all your help!

Interpretive Center Task Force Reports

Task Force Members: Dibby Tyler, Chair, Matt Adams, Reva Basch, Don Kemp, Jackie Knowles, Laurie Mueller, Gene Weston, and Dick Whitaker. Staff Liaison: Jim Carruthers. Board Liaison: Ann Harriman

Is an Interpretive Center coming to The Sea Ranch as a new building? Not if the Board of Directors follows the recommendations of its Interpretive Center Task Force. The Task Force report, presented to the Board at its February 22 meeting, outlines 13 recommendations to improve architectural design at TSR without constructing a center.

The idea of an Interpretive Center at Sea Ranch has been around for a long time. The Sea Ranch Comprehensive Environmental Plan (CEP) uses the terms “library,” “repository,” and “space within its community facilities” to describe a physical place where members (and perhaps prospective members) could go for information on The Sea Ranch design philosophy, development history, landscape design, plants and wildlife.

The underlying idea is that if members and prospective owners truly understand the special qualities of TSR natural environment and the reasons for the design philosophy, they will act to protect them.

On June 21, 2002, the TSRA Board authorized Chair Ann Harriman to establish a Task Force to explore the

idea of an Interpretive Center for The Sea Ranch. The Board charged the Task Force to study:

- What purposes or objectives an Interpretive Center (IC) might accomplish?
- Who might make use of the IC, e.g., members, potential members, architects, builders, scholars?
- What content should be included?
- Explore alternative options.

The Interpretive Center Task Force (ICTF) held six meetings between July 2002 and February 2003. At the beginning, the ICTF decided that “Interpretive Center” would be broadly interpreted to include a wide range of ways to communicate information about design and the environment at The Sea Ranch. Also from the beginning, discussion centered on how to convey TSR design concepts to a variety of audiences including: prospective owners, members considering additions to their houses, realtors, architects and designers, and contractors. With new staffing for design review and two new members on the Design Committee (DC), the time seemed right to explore in detail how people get and use information about design at TSR and how to inspire adherence to TSR design philosophy.

The Task Force recognizes the importance of conveying information about The Sea Ranch environment — its history, the processes shaping it, and the plants and wildlife inhabiting it.

The Task Force believes that effective use of the Web site, publications, and space in existing community facilities can enhance understanding for all of us. However, as noted above, the Task Force chose to focus specifically on design issues.

The Task Force developed a work program and proceeded to identify problems to be addressed and gather information. Members interviewed

several realtors, architects and designers, talked with TSRA staff , and conducted a telephone survey with owners about their experiences with design review (see companion article for details of the telephone survey).

After reviewing all the information gathered, the Task Force reached the following findings:

1. Most buyers of property at Sea Ranch know about the community and its design philosophy.
2. Before they buy, most people get information about Sea Ranch primarily from their realtor.
3. When planning to build or add on to a house, most people get information about design review primarily from their architect or designer.
4. Most members have little or no difficulty with design review. Those few who have problems usually sell their lots and move on. In this sense, the process succeeds in weeding out those whose design views are not congruent with TSR concept.
5. Many of the difficulties with design review in the last couple of years stemmed from staff changes and vacancies. Ted Smith's retirement more than two years ago left a gap in staffing that was not filled until recently.
6. More Sea Ranchers are disturbed by what they perceive as laxness in design review rather than by the difficulty of going through the process.
7. The greatest unmet need is for more and earlier contact with staff or knowledgeable people about issues specific to a lot.
8. As Sea Ranch approaches buildout, the relationship of each new building to those around it becomes more important.
9. TSRA provides little design guidance specifically for remodels and additions.
10. Many design controversies involve landscaping, especially tree removal. Members need better guidance.
11. Members look primarily to traditional ways of getting information about design review: TSRA staff, the *Bulletin* and SOUNDINGS.
12. The TSRA Web site was not used much by the survey respondents, but many thought that as it improves, it will be a more important medium to inform both prospective buyers and existing owners about design issues.
13. An "Interpretive Center" as a separate structure does not appear to be needed to help resolve issues with design review. The problems that arise are mostly related to specific site conditions and, with very few exceptions, do not stem from a lack of understanding of "The Sea Ranch Concept." Simpler, less expensive solutions can effectively resolve the problems.
4. In remodeling TSRA offices on Annapolis Road, provide space for visual displays of excellent design at TSR. If a design awards program is established, consider displaying models and photos of award-winning houses, coupled with a brief explanation of why the design was chosen for an award. Similar visual material should also be available on TSRA Web site.
5. Convene an annual workshop with TSRA Design Committee members and staff, and local architects and designers for a dialog about any changes in design criteria, or shifts in emphasis, procedural problems, use of new materials, etc.
6. Hold an annual meeting for contractors to keep them up to date on design and building issues at TSR and use of new materials. The meeting also would introduce new contractors to TSRA procedures.
7. Establish a program to train and use volunteers as "design docents" to talk with prospective and existing owners and their architects, designers and builders about design issues at TSR. The docents could give out general information and refer complicated problems to staff. Other tasks might include helping to organize the annual meetings of realtors, architects and contractors, conducting tours of both prospective buyers and visiting professionals and students, and assisting with compliance monitoring.
8. Improve availability of design department staff to talk with owners and their architects early in the design process to avoid expensive redesigns later.
9. Increase the visibility of the Design Committee by including profiles of members in the *Bulletin* , SOUNDINGS and TSRA the same as, the booklet.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create a clear, concise, colorful and visually exciting booklet to convey TSR design principles to prospective buyers. Provide copies to realtors for distribution to clients as a complement to the currently used black-and-white pamphlet (1999).
2. Convene an annual meeting with realtors to describe any changes in policies, design criteria or procedures that a prospective buyer should know. The meeting would also introduce new realtors to Sea Ranch and consider any issues relevant to the two groups. Appropriate TSRA staff, Board members and/or committee members would participate.
3. Add a link to the TSRA Web site for prospective buyers. The text and graphics could be similar to, or

Web site, inviting them to speak at Forums, and perhaps having occasional open Design Committee meetings.

10. In redesigning TSRA office space, consider improving direct Sea Rancher access to the design support staff.
11. Update and distribute the Design Manual. The updated version should include: graphics, a description and flow chart of the review process, and explicit guidance on issues that tend to cause problems, such as house size, use of new materials, paving, garages, etc.
12. Prepare new manuals for both landscape design and house remodels.
13. If the Lodge expansion goes forward, help the Lodge to create appropriate displays at the "Interpretive Center" now shown on its plans.

Serenity Care Facility Opens

Equinox Care Facility in Gualala is expanding by opening a new house and naming it Serenity Care Facility. It is located at 38281 S. Highway One, a few houses in front of Equinox. Serenity is licensed by the State of California to care for six ambulatory or non-ambulatory clients. All of the rooms are private. They assist clients with activities of daily living, including meals, assistance with meds, assistance with showers and dressing, or anything else in which the clients might need help.

Serenity increases the opportunity for coast residents who need care to stay on the coast in a pleasant atmosphere. The administrator and co-owner is Judy Frazier, who runs the facility, along with business partners Laurie Bucci and Amanda Free. They invite the public to stop by and take a look. If you have any questions please call Judy at 884-4561 or 884- 9764.

Update: Reservoir, Sewer, Stables & Water Bags

Issues rigorously debated for a time at The Sea Ranch eventually fade from view. Activity may be taking place but it's just below the public radar. While few of these issues have been completely resolved, an update is in order.

RESERVOIR REPAIR

Geomatrix engineers have completed concept design on the two separate projects involved in repair of The Sea Ranch Water Company reservoir. The repairs are funded by two separate sources. The insurance company for Brelje and Race (the original designers of the reservoir) will finance repair of the down-slope seepage area. Riprap to control erosion from wave action on the upside slope of the reservoir will be installed at the same time as the repair of the seepage, but will be funded by TSRA.

The Geomatrix plans were submitted to the California Department of Safety of Dams (DSOD) in February. Once the DSOD returns the plans with its comments, Community Manager Jim Carruthers said, "Our expectation is we will go out to bid with a May time frame." If bids are back the first of June, the actual repair will commence mid-July. Weather permitting, the project would be finished in 90 days, by mid-October of this year. Saying, "Our goal is to bid it to one contractor, with the riprap being the added project," Carruthers demonstrated a piece of Geocell, which will hold the riprap rock in place over an impervious membrane.

The reservoir will be drained at the time the repair starts. The Sea Ranch Water Company has asked the State Water Resources Board for a special permit to pump water from the Gualala River wells while the reservoir is dry. "We have had initial conversations

with that agency and we expect that there will be an affirmative response as it is a repair," said Carruthers, but there may be some restrictions. Sea Ranchers will be asked to conserve water during that period.

7-1/2-MILE SEWER

In October 2002, the Sonoma County Water Agency introduced plans for a 7- 1/2-mile sewer the length of The Sea Ranch, which would accommodate the needs of The Sea Ranch Lodge for sewage disposal. (See SOUNDINGS, Winter 2002, p. 1) At its subsequent meeting, The Sea Ranch Board of Directors requested the Community Manager to draft a letter to the Agency requesting a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to determine impacts of the sewer on air quality, induced growth, archaeology, recreation, public health, and the Salal Creek riparian area. In addition, the letter requested an investigation of the ability of the Gualala Community Sewer District Plant to process and distribute effluent from the expanded capacity of The Sea Ranch North Treatment Plant. In response, the County Water Agency abandoned plans for a Negative Declaration and revised its schedule to include the preparation of a full EIR.

Mark Bautista, Environmental Specialist for the county, wrote on December 10: "The Draft EIR is currently scheduled for completion in late 2003. Upon completion of the Draft EIR, a Notice of Completion will be sent to responsible agencies to solicit comments on the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR will also be made available for public review. All comments received will be addressed in a Final EIR. Final Project approval and selection of the preferred alternative would be determined by the Agency Board of Directors."

Dale Roberts, Water Agency Engineer, anticipates completion of the EIR by Fall 2003, followed immediately by selection of a project. Project design

would run from winter 2003 to summer 2004; construction would start in the summer of 2004 and be completed by summer 2005. The Agency will include the connection of the Lodge to the Central Plant or the North Plant in the review of project options.

The Sea Ranch Lodge wants assurance that easements will be available to connect the Lodge property to the proposed projects. Roberts responded: "The acquisition of a permanent easement up to 12 feet wide would be required from the Lodge to the Central Plant and from the Central Plant to the North Plant. In addition, the Agency would need a temporary construction easement up to 24 feet wide during the construction phase of the Project." The Agency has not requested a formal agreement from TSRA at this early stage of the project.

The Agency is using existing Sea Ranch Sanitation Zone construction fund reserves for staff labor and other expenses of the EIR. These reserves came from the fees collected over the years from those already hooked up to the sewer. A preliminary summary of estimated costs indicates a portion of the expenses will be shared by the Lodge, based on the ratio of miles of Lodge pipeline to project pipeline, i.e., 3.5/7.5. An agreement between the Agency and the Lodge will identify costs for each phase of the project. The Lodge share would be approximately \$1,644,000. The Agency anticipates selling bonds for the Sanitation District's share of the project not already funded by reserves.

EQUESTRIAN CENTER

"We will be able to open the Stables by April," said Community Manager Jim Carruthers, after the February 22 Board approval of a contract with the new Stables Manager. The Sea Ranch Equestrian Center has been closed for over a year due to an extended conflict over its management. Throughout 2002, a group of horse owners met

with Directors Flessner, MacIntyre and Cochrane to develop an alternative means of operation. The Board of Directors reviewed and revised its proposal and in August of 2002, the Board authorized the Community Manager to issue a Request for Proposal to prepare a draft Stables management contract and recruit an independent contractor. (See SOUNDINGS, Fall 2002, p. 1)

WATER BAGS

For those who have not heard, in December Alaskan Ric Davidge withdrew his application to export water from the Gualala River and Albion in gigantic poly-fiber bags and float them down the coast to San Diego. Well-organized and overwhelming public opposition, plus the unanimous vote of the California Coastal Commission protesting his application, may have hastened his retreat. He also mentioned the million dollar cost of studies as being "far beyond reasonable."

Nevertheless, two weeks later, Davidge emerged in Eureka where he proposes to buy 20,000 acre-feet of water per year from the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District. Because Humboldt Bay has about 22,400 acre-feet of water for sale, Davidge feels he wouldn't have to deal with the same regulatory agencies. In a note to Ursula Jones of Friends of the Gualala River, Davidge declared, "we have a far more secure water source that would not cause any harm at source moving along very well now." He identified San Diego and Monterey as potential customers for the bagged water. However, the California Coastal Commission would have to approve water delivery operations in Monterey Bay, which is a national marine sanctuary.

Lines From the Library

Every year or so, it seems to be in order to acquaint new Sea Ranchers

with the fact that they have a library, and to tell something about it and its history.

The Sea Ranch Library was started by Pat Ditzler in 1981. She established a small collection of donated books on a six-foot shelf in the old Activity Center. These were monitored daily by Sherry Marstein, who stopped by on her daily walks. After Sherry left The Sea Ranch, Beverly Sloane and Zdena Price took over the care of the collection. When the Activity Center was closed down, the Library was moved to one very crowded room in the Ohlson Ranch House (ORH).

A fire in the mid-1990s shut down the Library for over a year, but when it reopened it occupied its present three rooms in a much more attractive, redecorated area of the ORH. The two additional shelf units, added in 2002 in the front room of the Library, were installed to meet a growing need. The Library has now reached a saturation point of shelving and is requesting potential donors to limit their gifts to a carefully selected few.

The Library is open every day from dawn to dusk. Patrons are welcome even if no volunteer is there; volunteers work only part-time. Borrowing is on the honor system.

The collection consists of a good selection of popular and classic fiction, mysteries, thrillers, science fiction, westerns, romances, biography, history, hobby and cookbooks, children's books, general nonfiction, short stories, jigsaw puzzles, audiotapes, and even a few videotapes.

Certain things are expected of Library patrons. Borrowers should return books to the desk, not re-shelve them, as that so often causes extra work for the volunteers.

The free books in the back room are gifts to anyone who wants one or more — and they are NOT to be returned. The Free Book corner is the place to

find romances, mysteries and thrillers to put on the shelves of rental houses.

Borrowed materials should be returned, complete and undamaged, when they have been enjoyed. This applies particularly to audiotapes, which are far too often returned with a tape missing — it is probably somewhere in the borrower's car. All patrons should check their cars for orphan tapes, bring them in, and leave them on the desk.

More Library volunteers and assistants are always needed. Anyone interested may call one of the numbers listed on the bulletin board in the Library.

Book donations remain the essence of the Library but, again, donated books should be brought in small numbers that can be carried in by hand, and the posted guidelines for donations should be observed.

Ours is an impressive little Library. The work of many people has made it so, and Sea Ranchers' respect for it has kept it so.

Unit 24 to Party

All Unit 24 home and lot owners are urged to attend the Ninth Annual Unit 24 party to be held on Saturday, May 17, 2003, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at One-Eyed Jack's picnic area. The Unit 24 committee will provide beverages and picnic supplies, but requests participants to bring finger foods to share with 10-12 people.

Last year almost 80 people attended this annual gathering, which provides a great opportunity to greet old friends and meet new ones. Houseguests will also be welcome.

A \$3.00 donation per person will be accepted at the gathering to help defray expenses. A flyer will be mailed within the next few weeks. In the meantime, if you would like more information, please call Bob or Jo Dillon at 707-785-2945. All of us in Unit 24 look

forward to meeting and talking with you.

Rhodie Show in May

The 26th Annual John Druecker Memorial Rhododendron Show & Plant Sale will be at a different location this year: Redwood Elementary School, 324 S. Lincoln St., Fort Bragg. Hours will also be shorter: Saturday, May 10, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 11, 10:00 to 4 p.m.

The Show is FREE, wheelchair-accessible, and features a juried show with about 700 entries, ranging from huge hybrid trusses to tiny alpine species. Visitors especially enjoy the outstanding display garden containing trees, bushes, plants of many kinds, with a stream, waterfall and pond. There is also a raffle with 10 or more plants, plus hundreds of potted rhododendrons for sale.

For more information, please contact President Dick Jones at 707-964-4353, or Merrie Goodwin 707-951-1173.

Restaurants

Willow Wood Market Café

9020 Graton Road,
Graton.

823-0233

Monday–Thursday 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Friday, Saturday 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Sun 9 a.m. to 3 pm

With so many excellent Sonoma County restaurants firing up their stoves and making great use of the local bounty of wine and fresh abundance, you can dine at a dozen or more wonderful restaurants.

Unfortunately, however, you can also be forgiven for confusing one meal with another. But not here. Willow Wood Café stands out because of its sheer uniqueness. In the tiny town of Graton, just off Highway 116 in western Sonoma County, this cozy, casual café is busy charming diners with unpretentious good basic fresh food.

Part market, part café, diners are greeted with a warm country-store style ambiance in an earthy '70s style décor. Bare wooden tables, benches, a chalkboard menu and items of nostalgia abound — even a 24-hour big round clock. Joe and I love to stop here for a late lunch or early dinner. It's a convenient stop if you shop at the new Costco in Rohnert Park and take the back roads, but it is well worth a trip just for itself.

When you drive up in front you'll not even be sure it is a café. The sign out front reads "Willow Wood Market." Find yourself a quiet table and settle in for a relaxing, casual meal. Well known for its polenta dishes, their "market plate" consisting of sautéed spinach and coppa, polenta, cambozola toast, roasted tomatoes and boiled egg priced at \$9.75 is a favorite. Rock Shrimp baked in garlic butter, sweet peppers and basil is another winner, served with polenta and priced at \$12.75. But it is the sandwiches that wow Joe and me the most. Adventurous without being strange, they never let us down. Try the hot Black Forest Ham with Brie.

Warm melted brie seeps through the holes of the rustic fresh bread, and it is served with sliced fresh pear, mustard and pickles, olives and a salad garnish. Or how about their hot roasted eggplant sandwich with roasted red peppers, feta cheese, pesto and roasted garlic mayonnaise? Joe's absolute favorite is the open-faced smoked salmon sandwich with chive cream cheese toast, served with cucumber salad, tomato and thin red onion slices. There is a long list of sandwich choices and all are priced at \$9.75.

The salads are equally unique. Smoked trout salad with spinach, walnuts, apples and blue cheese, dressed in lemon vinaigrette is priced at \$8.75 and comes with garlic bread. The Mediterranean plate with hummus, eggplant, artichoke hearts, roasted

tomatoes and pesto is priced at \$9.75. Their signature soup is a tasty black bean garnished with tomatillo-lime relish and a swirl of sour cream, but they have a daily special soup up on the chalkboard as well.

Beverages include a wide selection of Sonoma County wines, microbrewery beers, coffee and teas, and an intriguing selection of old-fashioned sodas. Our favorite lunch beverage is their house blend of iced tea. It has a peachy, jasmine flavor that is light and refreshing. The wine list is extensive with many wines served by the glass between \$5.00 and \$7.00. (One day we promise ourselves we are going to try their Frog's Leap brand "Leapfrogmilk.") Many are designated as Certified Organic. Bottles are priced typically for Sonoma or Napa restaurants. Beers are priced in the \$3.50 range. The dessert menu on the chalkboard changes daily but their staples are always available. Rich old-fashioned gingerbread with whipped cream and caramel sauce is one of them (\$5.95). Another is Lava Cake, a warm rich cake with decadent chocolate filling (\$5.95). They always look tempting but the truth is, the salads and sandwiches are so filling we've never been able to squeeze in dessert. Maybe next time? Jerry and I used to love this place, glad it's still there.

A new feature is Sunday Brunch served from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Originally closed on Sundays, they are meeting the demand with adventurous takes on standard brunch fare. Farmer's Scrambled Eggs (\$9.50) includes New Mexican chicken-turkey sausage, peppers, red onions and white cheddar cheese. Huevos Rancheros consists of two corn tortillas topped with black beans, poached eggs, Manchego cheese, avocado salsa, sour cream, and served with creamy polenta. Their Willow Wood Monte Cristo has challah French Toast filled

with Black Forest ham and Jarlsberg cheese, topped with roasted hazelnuts, maple butter and strawberries with pure maple syrup on the side (\$10.75). Mimosas are available at \$5.00 and Kir Royale at \$6.00.

Owners Sally Spittles and Matthew Greenbaum (who is also the chef) opened Willow Wood Market and Café seven years ago. Their core idea, says Sally, was that the café be set up around the community. And it indeed feeds the soul as well as the body. Local art hangs on every bit of empty wall space in the restaurant area, affording artists a place to exhibit and sell their work and a place for diners to enjoy local talent. Monthly readings by local authors are held in the lounge area in the rear of the restaurant. It's a place to meet, eat and shop that is friendly and fun. The shop portion features a bemusing mix of British condiments and foodstuffs, gourmet Sonoma County items, and a few bread-and-beer-type staples. Sally recognizes that some out-of-towners don't understand the ambiance, but this doesn't deter them one bit.

Service is casual yet attentive and courteous. Presentation gets top marks. In fact, when I should be firing up my own stove and "cooking up" lunch, I am tempted instead to "cook up" a good excuse to head to Santa Rosa or Rohnert Park with a lunch or dinner stop at Willow Wood Market and Café.

Directions: From Jenner: Go east on Highway 116 through Guerneville. Stay on Highway 116 by turning right in Guerneville over the bridge. (Alternatively, stay on River Road and turn right on Mirabel Road to Highway 116, where you will then turn left.) Proceed on Highway 116 to Graton Road, turn right and continue until you come to the town of Graton. The restaurant will be on your right.

Halprin Workshop April 12

Lawrence W. Halprin, legendary

landscape architect who designed the original land use plans for The Sea Ranch, has generously offered to present a workshop for The Sea Ranch on April 12 in the Knipp-Stengel Barn. "When The Sea Ranch dream emerged in the 1960s, its design and environmentally sensitive value system were avant-garde and on the leading edge," explained Halprin. "Now that we've entered the new millennium, we would like to reexamine the Sea Ranch's core value system and see how it has weathered the test of time." Watch for a postcard inviting members to sign up workshop. Cost for attendance is \$50 per person.

The idea for the workshop grew out of discussions Halprin had with his longtime friend, the late Gordon Beebe, an ardent environmentalist and Sea Rancher for many years. The workshop will be dedicated to the memory of Gordon Beebe.

Halprin received The Sea Rancher of the Year award in 2002 for his extensive contributions to the Ranch. He presented a set of "Taking Part" workshops titled "The Sea Ranch, Process for the Future" in 1983: Workshop #1 in February and Workshop #2 in June. At those workshops, there was a minimum of lecturing or telling others how to feel or think about any issue. Instead, they moved toward consensus by personal participation: creating together through sharing, drawing, discussing and other inventive modes. Out of the first workshop, seven major topics of concern were identified: architectural design, community activities, historic preservation, landscape, land use, political structure and attitudes, diversity.

John McChesney told the Board of Directors at its February 22, 2003 meeting, "A great benefit came from that first workshop when we asked for a unit on governance. What happened was an outgrowth of that governance

unit discussion led directly to the change in governance of The Sea Ranch Association in 1985. In my estimation, that workshop was of tremendous value besides the aesthetic value.”

Beyond The Sea Ranch Master Plan, Lawrence Halprin’s epic achievements include: the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington D.C.; the Lovejoy Plaza in Portland; Levi’s Plaza in San Francisco; Ghirardelli Square, San Francisco; Seattle Freeway Park, Seattle; Embarcadero Plaza and Fountain (now M. Justin Herman Plaza), San Francisco; Gardens for the University of California, Santa Cruz; Bank of America Headquarters, San Francisco; Library Gardens, Los Angeles.

The National Park Service and the Yosemite Foundation approved Halprin’s final design for the Yosemite Valley Plan in May, 2002. Numerous exhibits of Halprin’s paintings and drawings have appeared at galleries such as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Phillippe Bonfant Gallery, San Francisco; Gund Hall Gallery, Harvard University; and SPACED: Gallery of Architecture, New York. He has received many prestigious awards for his work.

