

# THE SEA RANCH Soundings



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## *Members Briefed at Midwinter Meeting*

The Midwinter Meeting on February 15 was as saturated with information as The Sea Ranch was saturated with rain. As members arrived they received a detailed Committee Report packet describing last year's accomplishments and goals for the future. The reports revealed the depth and expertise of volunteer activities that make The Sea Ranch unique and when members of each committee rose for recognition it was apparent that per capita participation in volunteer activities is markedly higher than that found in urban areas.

## **STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION**

Board Chair Toby Lovallo gave a three-part review: what the Association has accomplished; what it is working on; and what is in the future.

Among its accomplishments was the successful conclusion to the Mariner's Drive dispute with Sonoma County recognizing the Board's authority to approve subdivisions within the Ranch. The mechanical problems that plagued Del Mar Pool last year have been solved and use of all swimming pools has increased 65% over any previous year. A new Director of the Design Review and Environmental Management Department, Jeffrey Hannigan, was hired after a comprehensive review of the needs of the entire department was conducted. Members participated in developing a list of qualifications to assist the assessment panel of highly qualified Sea Ranch volunteers. Finally, after extensive debate by the Board and the membership, TSRA provides a year-round practical space for recreational vehicle overnight parking.

The Board is still working on new use policies for the Knipp/Stengel Barn, and consideration of the CC&Rs Enforcement Review Task Force's report. The Association is staying in touch with The Sea Ranch Lodge regarding its expansion project and with Gualala Redwoods, Inc. on future timber harvest plans. A consultant has been engaged to assess the risk of wildfire on the Ranch and how to manage it. Also, the management structure for the Equestrian Center is being rearranged.

The challenges ahead include: developing a systematic plan to preserve and

restore signature hedgerows, and planning ahead for the erosion of Bluff Trail easements held by Sonoma County.

Financing The Sea Ranch Water Company poses major challenges and Lovallo explained why resolving them will bring about higher member assessments and water rates: 1) The Water Company must build up long-term replacement reserves from scratch, since the developer, being a major corporation, neither needed nor set aside such funds. 2) This Water Company simply has higher costs than before TSRA owned it because it now must operate and maintain the new treatment plant and reservoir with all the attendant regulatory changes. 3) Defects in the design of the water treatment plant require work that is costly and must be resolved. For example, when the water is filtered there is sludge remaining in the backwash tanks that must be shoveled out by hand and trucked to a hazardous waste site. 4) The Water Company reservoir has seepage, which may indicate design flaws that threaten the stability of the reservoir. The Association is in negotiation with responsible parties and prepared to go to court if necessary to recoup any costs of repairing the reservoir. The cost of engineering consultant reports to assess the magnitude of the flaws and to design remedies is part of a special litigation fund. Nevertheless, said Lovallo, the Water Company is better run because TSRA owns it and better managed than if some other company owned it. He predicted in three more years the Water Company will be running smoothly.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Alex Long, TSRA Treasurer, complimented Ellen Lester, Director of Finance, and the Finance Committee for the well-run financial organization that resulted in exemplary audits. A graphic presentation revealed the Association's ending balances for last year were well above projections. However, the Board anticipates a full 20% increase in monthly assessments to meet expected requirements, catch up on deferred maintenance and fill personnel vacancies. Long pointed out there has been a 6% growth in operating expenses for the last 10 years, excluding legal costs.

Of the monthly assessment, 78% goes to the Operating Fund, 13% to the Property & Equipment Fund and 9% to the Development & Reserve Fund. The Recreation Fund has been eliminated. Of the Operating Fund, 40% goes to Facilities & Resources, 26% to General Administration, 12% to Security, 12% to Design Review & Environmental Management, and 10% to Litigation.

The Sea Ranch Water Company serves 1,542 residential customers and 36 commercial, producing 61,000,000 gallons per year of which 92% is for TSRA residents. The Company is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Association, which is responsible for funding deficiencies in reserves and design known at the time of purchase in 1997. The Company generates \$661,271 in operating revenues through water sales, and is in charge of operations and maintenance of the facilities. Litigation expenditures are the responsibility of TSRA. Long said the Company is considering restructuring its rates to provide an incentive for water conservation.

## MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Janet Hubbard, who had attended the morning's Finance Workshop, scolded

the Board for appearing to accept a monthly assessment of \$121 over an alternative of \$113. (*Ed. note: The final vote on the Assessment followed at the Board meeting of February 24.*) She asked, "What is it that we could do in the next week to make you change your minds? Why are you doing a dues increase to create reserves rather than a special assessment?"

Peter Mattson responded he was concerned with the potential need for fuel-load management, for upgrades at the Water Company and reservoir, and building up underfunded reserves. He called it "poor fiduciary management" by the Board to underfund reserves and other expenditures. "It's much more fiscally responsible, better for the membership ... to build up reserves rather than hitting them with a substantial special assessment down the line."

Toby Lovallo said he would change his opinion if he heard that the Association was not going to need to spend extraordinary sums on litigation regarding the reservoir, upgrades and repairs to the treatment plant, improved fire protection, and greater reserve funding. "When we get the consultant's report on fire management, when we finally determine the correct fix for the reservoir, when we settle whether the seismic retrofit of the tanks has to be done, it's unlikely that we are going to escape scot free. We are going to have to spend significant funds in the short term."

Alex Long said, "I don't think the membership wants us to omit critical issues facing the membership." Onetime critical expenses that the Association must address are: fire management, the need to make sure the Water Company will be intact and function after an earthquake, and trying to get adequate reimbursement from the people who made the design errors and decisions that caused the problems. The Board struggled to try

to reduce noncritical expenditures, e.g., pool closures and staff reductions, but "I voted because the Board needs to face up to the significant challenges coming up in the next year or two."

Agreeing with the previous comments, Ann Harriman added, "A goal of the Board has always been to try to keep the dues at a fairly level rate. This is a larger increase than in the past but you have to keep in mind that we've been deferring maintenance in order to keep the dues low. We all know when you put things off; they cost more in the long run. I think this is the prudent way for us to go."

Roy Austin said, "I don't think we have enough technical justification for raising the dues to this level." Tom Cochrane agreed and said although he recognized the need for higher reserves, "I can see some split between \$121 and \$113. The \$121 is a little high." Kate MacIntyre said, "I think we haven't done a very good job of bringing the members along about why a \$121 assessment may be necessary. That may be a reflection of a flawed budget process ... we build it piece by piece, making decisions on each piece and when we get to the end and (gasp) here's where it is. I'm not sure that serves the membership very well. My concern is about how we got there, not necessarily that the \$121 figure is the wrong number ..."

Member Bruce Johnson took the mike to say he had attended all three budget workshops and a forum on finance and he understood and supported the raise in assessments. New member Jennifer Kresge asked basic questions about whether the Board met regularly and published their agendas.

After Ann Harriman presented awards to members for their service on various committees and the presentation of the Sea Rancher of the Year award, the members adjourned to the Del Mar

House for refreshments and the chance to mingle with friends.

### *Guenthers Named Sea Ranchers of the Year*

Check out a list of the things that Walt & Joanne Guenther have been involved with since they moved to The Sea Ranch and you wonder – what else is there? It looks like a complete list of every project and organization on the coast. “Wherever they are needed, they are there,” said Kathi Gordon, when she and Duane made the Sea Rancher of the Year award announcement at the Midwinter Meeting. “If they can do it, they will do it. Not for recognition or influence – many are unaware of the extent of their volunteer efforts – but because they see a need and they fill it.”

From the Trails Committee to the Ab Patrol, the Fire Department, the Barn, the Del Mar Schoolhouse, SOUNDINGS, Gualala Arts – the list of their contributions goes on and on. “They believe in community spirit and service and they obviously love Sea Ranch because they work so hard for it,” said Kathi.

Until the evening after the Midwinter Meeting, Walt and Joanne were completely unaware of the honor they had received – they did not attend since they were in San Jose for a grandson’s band concert. They brought him back up for a visit, and took him to see *The Fantasticks* at Gualala Arts. During intermission a friend came up and congratulated them. “We didn’t believe him at first,” says Walt. “We thought he was pulling our leg. But then others said the same thing, so we realized it had to be true.”

Soft-spoken and modest, one of the first things the Guenthers told me was that they “don’t like to talk about themselves.” But they quickly warmed to their subject with energy and good humor, as they talked about The Sea

Ranch community of people they love and the fun they’ve had working with them. “Sometimes I feel like the Energizer Bunny,” says Joanne. “But at least it gives me an excuse not to stay home and dust!”

“It’s such a compatible bunch of people, no matter where you work here,” Walt adds. “That’s what keeps me going. That, and there’s always a mid-morning ‘coffee break’ that turns into a great social hour!”

Oddly enough, when they first saw The Sea Ranch, neither of them was impressed. “We thought it was a pretty strange place,” says Walt, and Joanne nods in agreement. “Strange houses!” she adds, laughing. They drove on north without stopping. This was back in the mid-seventies, and a coworker at Westinghouse in Sunnyvale (where Walt worked as a Fellow Engineer) had told him about this “great place” where his parents lived. Walt was intrigued, and he and Joanne decided to drive up with their two children. “He just made it sound so wonderful,” says Walt.

But it was nearly a dozen years later until they decided to try again, and this time they managed to overcome that first strange impression. They stopped in at the Lodge, got the grand tour, and told the agent they’d think about it. Once again they headed north. “We got about as far as Point Arena,” Walt says, “then said, ‘Wait a minute, where are we going?’ We turned around, went back, and bought our lot.”

They moved up full-time from Saratoga in 1986 after Walt retired, and were soon happily ensconced in one of those “strange houses,” nestled on a lovely wooded acre on Pine Cone. They had hired Chris Beach to build it, and Chris was also spearheading the effort to restore the Knipp-Stengel Barn at that time. They decided to walk over one day and see what was

up. “The next thing I knew, I was under the Barn, pulling out old wood, and raking the ground to prepare it for the foundation,” says Joanne. “We did intend to work on the house,” Walt adds, “but pretty soon we were spending too much time at the Barn!”

Since then, the Guenthers have spent hundreds of hours on the Barn project, and have put in almost as much time on the renovation of the Del Mar Schoolhouse and the construction of the Gualala Arts Center. Walt was at the Arts Center from day one, digging the foundation, putting in rebar, helping with finish work.

In addition to participating in the construction, Joanne has been a faithful record-keeper – artfully arranging photos, clippings, e-mails, even pressed grasses and weeds – creating lively, colorful volumes that will serve to chronicle the details of each project and related events for future generations of Sea Ranchers and local historians. “These aren’t just pretty scrapbooks,” Joanne points out. “I want them to be used for research.”

But ask the Guenthers what they think has been their most valuable contribution to the community, and they agree that it has to be the Map Books. As a member of the Volunteer Fire Department and a First Responder, Walt is very conscious of the life-and-death necessity of being able to find the exact location of an emergency in a hurry. “One night he came back from a call and was very upset that they had been unable to locate a house right away, that the maps were too ‘hit or miss,’” Joanne recalls. Realizing the need for a simple way for emergency personnel to quickly locate any house on The Sea Ranch, the two embarked on what turned out to be a three-year project.

“We drove and drove,” says Joanne, “verifying addresses and locations, identifying the location and capacity of

every fire hydrant.” They produced 29 books with detailed maps locating every home and hydrant on every road on The Sea Ranch. The books are provided for every emergency vehicle in the area, as well as all TSR Security vehicles, the Association office, the Sheriff, the CDF dispatcher in St. Helena, and the central dispatcher in Santa Rosa. “Upkeep is the biggest part of the project now,” she says. “(TSR) Planning and Design sends us all the housing starts, and we mark the map and drive around every few months to make sure everything is correct.”

“I think this is the most important thing we’ve done,” says Walt. “It’s something we did to thank the people who take care of us.”

### **Broadband: Building Community**

The title of the Forum on Saturday, February 10, 2001, was *Broadband Telecommunications: Is it for Everybody?* but anyone who has television at TSR already has broadband communications. In fact, long before there was a Worldwide Web (WWW), cable television (CATV) was being hailed as the medium that would revolutionize communication within local communities. Future services were being projected that today’s dot.com’ers haven’t even begun to take seriously. However, more than 25 years have passed and little progress has been made toward that glorious future when interactive lifelong learning, electronic “house calls” by physicians, voting from home, improved emergency and dispatching services, meter-reading, electronic bulletin boards, electronic “town meetings” ... would all be available through an interactive television set powered by a microprocessor-based “intelligent terminal.”

The point is that the Broadband Forum was of importance to everybody and not just to the computer users who

gave impetus to the Forum because they want faster access to the Internet from TSR. Computer users at TSR do have a legitimate concern because one of the “future services” projected for interactive broadband telecommunications was “telecommuting” and that is happening right here. Quite a few Sea Ranchers are currently working from their homes, and they are being left behind by rapidly advancing technology.

Simply stated, the “problem” is that practically all access to the Internet from TSR continues to be over telephone lines, and the quality of telephone system here is – to put it mildly – less than satisfactory with little prospect of improving in the immediate future. So even though most computers can potentially access the Internet at 56 kbps (thousands of bits per second), many on TSR connect only at 24 kbps. While this may be satisfactory for those who deal primarily with text files (such as e-mail), it is not adequate for transferring large files, graphics, programs, pictures, music, etc., much less video. In the meantime, the outside world is rapidly moving ahead offering Internet access at speeds much higher than 56 kbps using phone lines, cable systems, satellite and wireless.

For those already telecommuting from TSR this means that they are increasingly “out of step” and less responsive than colleagues, fellow workers or competitors with broadband access – a sort of electronic “Gualala time” if you will. For those from the outside world who are visiting or thinking about buying at TSR, the first time they connect to the Internet from here is quite a shock. And, whether one is depending on high-speed communications to run a business or just receiving pictures and video clips of grandchildren, this can impact the desirability of TSR as a place to live, work or even visit.

In anticipation of the broadband revolution that is currently under way, Bruce Johnson organized a Telecommunications Forum over two years ago and the news was not good. We had a bankrupt cable company, and GTE announced (to our surprise) that our telephone company was up for sale. It was discouraging. But recently alternatives to the communications lines already in place (telephone and cable) have become available and Sea Ranchers in need of improved Internet access understandably want such services immediately. The situation is very complex (technically, financially, politically, and administratively) as well as being urgent. That is the reason Bruce arranged the Broadband Forum.

### **SATELLITE**

Walt Custer (Sea Ranch resident) can claim responsibility, and credit, for bringing the subject of broadband Internet access to a head by installing, testing and reporting on his experience with Starband Satellite. His comprehensive presentation at the Forum was professional and valuable – not only because of his actual experience – but also for putting various broadband alternatives into some perspective. Starband requires an initial investment of \$700 (or \$1,600 with a PC thrown in) and monthly costs of \$60 - \$70 without the need for an ISP or telephone line. Download of large files is dramatically improved (400 - 800 kbps or 20 - 30 times faster than dial-up), but for small files and uploads it is hardly better than dial-up speed. This means you could download a lengthy book such as *War and Peace* in 20 seconds as opposed to 10 minutes for a dialup modem, but wouldn’t notice very much improvement when Web surfing and downloading articles from *The New York Times*. The biggest advantage for Starband is that it is available – right now – for those who need it.

### **WIRELESS**

Rennie Innis is manager of Mendocino Community Network (MCN), which is the leading Internet service provider (ISP) to TSR and the new home for TSR listserve. Rennie, recognizing the challenge from providers of broadband Internet access and in response to the needs of his Sea Ranch users, has proposed running a test of “Wireless DSL” on TSR. Anticipated speed (in both directions) would be in the range of 300 - 1000 kbps with buy-in costs of \$400. The monthly fee would be about \$40 to \$50 per month for those residents who can be reached by direct line-of-sight from a central antenna to residences that would serve as repeaters to other houses in their area. Some houses without line-of-site to an antenna would not be able to receive service. (More advanced technology to reach all residents, when and if installed, would cost more.)

Rennie has asked the TSRA Board of Directors for permission to install the test network, and that brings a measure of political and administrative complexity. The wireless solution requires antennas – lots of antennas – and although they appear to be unobtrusive (as Rennie demonstrated at the Forum by showing one about the size of policeman’s nightstick) the CC&Rs still prohibit their installation on TSR houses. And, it is unclear whether the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations that overruled the CC&Rs in the case of satellite TV, apply in the case of two-way communications in an unlicensed part of the spectrum. When it comes to issues of CC&R enforcement, TSR membership can be contentious and administrative problems are likely to arise.

**CABLE**

Tom Gilardi is the owner of Central Valley Cable TV which acquired the “assets” of Wander Cable. He said Central Valley is now in the process of spending \$300,000 to replace cable

that deteriorated during 10 years of deferred maintenance under Wander. This will be completed in March and, after about six weeks of balancing the system, TSR will have one-way broadband communications capable of providing fast Internet access for downloads (up to 3,000 kbps) but requiring a dial-up (telephone) connection for upstream, and also an ISP. While the system could be upgraded to provide two-way access, Central Valley is confronted with stiff competition in its CATV markets, and has lost business on TSR to satellite systems because Wander allowed the system to fall into disrepair. TSR is a major business challenge for Central Valley Cable because of its low density, and Tom Gilardi is candid in his assessment of the limited market potential of TSR for high-speed Internet access by cable. But he does not have a closed mind.

**MARKET FOR BROADBAND ACCESS**

Jim Flessner is a Sea Ranch property owner who, while an executive at ISP Channel, worked with CATV companies – including Central Valley Cable – to provide broadband Internet access. While working with Central Valley in Coalinga, ISP Channel determined there was not sufficient market for broadband Internet access in smaller communities to sustain the business. Penetration of the CATV population by broadband Internet access on two-way systems was around 3 percent and for one-way systems was less than 2 percent. Jim’s actual experience is more valuable than any market research in this area.

**FIBER OPTIC CABLE STALLED**

The telephone company (GTE-Verizon-Citizens) was not represented on the panel because there is currently little prospect that the much-publicized DSL (digital subscriber line) service

for high-speed Internet access will be available at TSR in the foreseeable future. However, there is a potential problem with the installation of second phones for Internet access – TSR may run out of lines because the current equipment is so old and the installation of fiber optics from Timber Cove to TSR has been delayed for over a year by right-of-way problems.

**AGREEMENT ON TYPE OF ACCESS?**

It would appear that the issue of broadband Internet access could fragment The Sea Ranch community rather than bring it together, and there does not seem to be any simple solution to the problem, or agreement among computers users and technical “experts” about the best approach to take. However, there are some promising signs.

1. Rennie Innis is working with Tom Gilardi in Coalinga since ISP Channel dropped out, and he expressed the feeling that the best course of action might be for MCN and Central Valley to work together to provide ubiquitous broadband access to the Internet at The Sea Ranch.
2. Both Rennie Innis and Tom Gilardi, by merely showing up at the Forum and honestly presenting their positions, seem willing to work with The Sea Ranch Association in finding a reasonable and mutually satisfactory approach toward solving some of the problems. Their interest in working with TSR is fortunate.
3. The Community Manager and the Board of Directors recognize both the importance and urgency of the rapidly changing telecommunications environment to The Sea Ranch. And Jerry Gonce has established a Manager’s Advisory Task Force on Telecommunications to analyze and provide counsel on

these complex issues. This is a very positive sign.

The whole subject of telecommunications at TSR is receiving more attention than it ever has before. By the time the next SOUNDINGS is published, there should be a better understanding of both the problem(s) and possible solutions.

**Forum Details Finances**

This wasn't a forum for the "bottom line"-people who just want to know how much their assessments will be. That came in February when the Board of Directors adopted the new budget with a monthly assessment of \$121. The January Forum was about how TSRA spends and manages over three million dollars of. Presented by the TSRA Finance Committee, the Forum was titled: "What Is On 'Our' Mind (It May Affect Your Wallet!)."

Presenters were: R.C. Vasavada, Chair of the Finance Committee; Jim Flessner and DeWitt Bowman, Committee members; and Ellen Lester, TSRA Director of Finance and Human Resources. The Finance Committee is a group of volunteers with expertise in the subject. They advise the Board of Directors, act as an audit committee, act as an investment committee, review financial statements, perform studies or research and recommend policy, act as liaison with TSRA departments, and participate in the Budget Process. Only a few years ago, they encouraged the Association to adopt a three-year budget process so that there are fewer wide fluctuations in assessments. With a multitude of charts and graphs, they patiently led the audience through the complexities of Sea Ranch Association finances.

**DUES STAY CONSISTENT WITH CPI**

Jim Flessner reviewed the last 10 years of operations, which indicated raises in

assessments have generally stayed consistent with raises in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), although there were fluctuations due to legal expenses. "That's remarkable," he said, "considering all the services and capital equipment we've added to our community in the last 10 years." Of Sea Ranch revenues, 85 percent comes from assessments, 6 percent from rental income, 2 percent from fees, the rest from interest and other miscellaneous sources.

The 25-Year Plan extrapolates the cost of replacing facilities and equipment over that period. In the three years since the 25-Year Plan was created in 1995 and revised in 1998, TSRA added the Del Mar Meeting Hall, the Del Mar restroom, the Del Mar Garden, the TSRA Office Annex, and the Annex Corporation Yard. Next year when it is revised again, the Del Mar Pool and facilities will be added.

Over the next 25 years, it will take an average of \$344,000 just to maintain TSRA facilities and, by far, the highest cost is maintenance of roads. The largest cost in last year's Operating Budget was for salaries for 38 employees. That is expected to increase next year as employees are hired to fill vacant positions.

**FUND ORGANIZATION**

Flessner delineated the rules for fund organization: The Operating Fund is used for routine operations and at the end of the year excess must be distributed or used to offset next year's assessment. The Development Fund can be accumulated without tax liability for use in the development of TSRA. Funds may not be transferred to operations, though they may be loaned for a year (which may have tax implications). Assigned Funds are collected for a specific purpose such as Property and Equipment, Recreation or the Clusters, and cannot be used in any

other way. However, they may be treated as development for the purposes of accumulation.

The present minimum reserve levels are \$150,000 for the Property and Equipment Replacement (P&E) Fund, \$100,000 for the Operating Fund, \$100,000 for the Operating Contingencies Fund, and \$50,000 for the Development and Reserve Fund. Proposed level for the P&E replacement Fund is \$270,000, and proposed ending balance for the Development and Reserve fund is \$150,000. R.C. said frankly there is no good way to judge the adequacy of a reserve fund. The most rational way is to come up with a 25-year replacement fund, but there are good reasons to go higher than that. Contingency reserves are for unplanned events.

**SERVICES**

Beyond the costs of operations and facilities maintenance, DeWitt Bowman described the services provided to enhance TSRA's quality of life. There are two types: the services provided directly to members, and those within the organization to make it operate (e.g., legal services, staff training, etc.). The increase in homes on the Ranch and the number of people using the facilities create challenges in providing adequate services. "A lot of the inflation of costs we are experiencing relate directly to the level of services and the extent to which they are provided."

There are four major service departments: Security, Design Review and Environmental Management, Finance and Human Resources, and Administration and Community Manager. Bowman reviewed each department and its projected increases in costs over the next four years. The Security Department expects to add another person to help with CC& R Enforcement, increased calls, controlling access and improving communications;

the Design Review and Environmental Management Department anticipates a 29 percent increase over the next four years as it improves record-keeping, manages build-out and reviews and maps septic systems on Commons; the Financial and Human Resources Department budget will increase slightly, as it deals with integration of the Water Company and investment management. Finally, Administration and Community Manager projects a 30 percent increase as it provides a full range of services to owners relating to their rights and privileges as members. “We’ll be very lucky if we can keep costs within the inflation rate in the future,” said Bowman.

Current services are largely a product of the original Sea Ranch Plan: recreation centers, airstrip, equestrian facility, trails on Commons, and limited RV storage. As they have been expanded in time they have impacted the budget and the question is how to accommodate new services financially?

## BUDGET PROCESS

There are three meetings involved in the budget process and all members are invited to attend. First, all of the Departments and Committees present their plans, or “wish lists” based on the three-year budget cycle. The Board of Directors and the Finance Committee jointly review and discuss these plans, both Operations and Capital. The Board and the Committee reach consensus on the Operations Budget, then reach consensus on Capital Projects and develop an assessment profile to cover the costs. The Board then finalizes the budget and adopts it.

## QUESTIONS

Questions from the audience mainly involved minute details of the various charts and graphs accompanying the presentation. Members were cautioned that all figures were preliminary and will undergo scrutiny in two more

budget workshops. Bill McCarthy asked why the increases go up sharply in first year, then level off in the following years. Bowman replied that a number of personnel positions were not filled in the past year and will have to be filled in the next year. Vasavada said TSRA is in a transition point where there is a demand for more services and personnel to fill them.

To Bob Hocker’s question about the fluctuations in administration balances, Ellen Lester replied, “Because we had a high reserve for litigation last fiscal year and didn’t use it all, it resulted in a high ending balance in the Operating Fund. That means we will have to assess less next year, but then in the next year we assume we won’t have that high ending balance.” She also said, “We have to assume we are going to use all of the Litigation Fund this year.” That is due to the conflict over repair of the Water Company Reservoir. To another question about the same balances, Lester said TSRA had an insurance rate guarantee that lasted for three years and at the end of the time they have to assume the rates will go up.

Rosemarie Hocker observed that 6 percent of the revenues come from rentals and asked why that contribution from renters was voluntary. Alex Long responded that the question had political implications going back to previous Boards that made that determination. Vasavada said, “We haven’t addressed it firmly because of its very delicate nature. Changing it may involve tax implications and other issues.”

## THE FUTURE

Long encouraged the panel to discuss their predictions of the most significant financial challenges facing the Association in the future. Bowman responded, “We need to develop better reserve policies and look very seriously at increasing our reserves, be-

cause we have constructed some significant new physical facilities that will require maintenance. If we keep putting it off and then finance it through assessments, it creates a very jagged line. Whereas, we can predict some of the maintenance expenses and set up reserves over a long-term basis. Secondly, we need to think very seriously about some kind of user fees. Probably not for any basic activities, but if there are requests for facilities and activities that only benefit a few, it’s only fair to ask those few to contribute. I think that’s a better alternative than just making the request to the Board and having it turned down.”

Vasavada agreed, “There is no question that we need to set a higher level of reserves just as a sound management practice. The challenge is in the area of services; there is a constant battle between the desire to have more amenities and more services and yet keep the assessments where we think they should be.” He mentioned fuel load management, hedgerow restoration, and communications as examples of items that will cost money. “If we want our property values to be where we want them to be and if we want the benefits of modern technology, then we need to do something about it. If we act as a community, we can do it.”

Flessner said, “It’s a pretty much unanimous opinion that we should increase our reserves. There are also concerns about natural disasters that can affect us and have a significant effect on our assessments. There is also repair of the reservoir to our satisfaction so that it will withstand earthquakes. There are always upward pressures to buy and do more things. I’d like to see us try to maintain what we have and not try to acquire more things.”

## *Hannigan to Direct Design*

Rushing out of the middle of the Board

meeting to catch a plane back to New York, Jeffrey Hannigan found himself trailed by four people eager to press their pet cause. This was his introduction to the passions of The Sea Ranch.

Friendly and good-natured, Jeff Hannigan is the new Director of Design Review and Environmental Management (sometimes known as the “Dream Department”). He was recruited in a nationwide search to replace former director Ted Smith who retired last year. Community Manager Jerry Gonce said, “We’re fortunate to have someone of Jeff’s talents to fill the void of Ted’s departure.”

What brought Hannigan from the far coast of Vermont to the far coast of California? His late father lived in Sebastopol and Hannigan was aware of The Sea Ranch’s history and early struggles. When invited, he leaped at the chance to extend the legacy of Halprin, Moore, Turnbull and Lyndon. He said, “It seems to me we are kind of forming a new paradigm about how we reinvigorate their ideas in the new millennium.”

### LEARNING CURVE

Plunging right into learning about The Sea Ranch, Hannigan remarked the job has a big “learning curve” of procedures and the way things have been done in the past. He credits Joanne Dixon and Environmental Planner Bill Wiemeyer of the Design office for being so helpful in his introduction. But there’s another aspect that takes time. “There’s a whole history of this place and people who have been familiar with that history. Learning what people’s expectations are is not something you can learn all at once. Learning how people understand this place takes time and I will be listening carefully.”

Revision of TSRA Design Guidelines is under way and Hannigan is meeting with the Design Committee and consultant Eldon Beck to look at the old

guidelines, past documents, and the changes in the contemporary scene. One thing he is interested in looking at is what kinds of building and roof materials are sustainable and will go with previous building materials. Durability and application are issues. Hannigan expects the guidelines to be complete by May.

Back in the East, Hannigan was heavily involved in fighting sprawl, so the idea of a self-contained community was attractive. “Sea Ranch may not be aware that it produced the basis for many aspects that make a community sustainable. Its relative remoteness is incredible protection for this place.” After the rigors of Vermont winters and hot summers, Hannigan is happy to be in California, although his first trip across Skaggs Springs Road in a rainstorm gave him pause.

### BACKGROUND

What would he like Sea Ranchers to know about him? Hannigan graduated from Cornell with the Class of ‘71. He lived and practiced in New York, and designed the Staten Island Children’s Museum and numerous exhibits for the museum. He was a professor of architecture and community planning, having taught at Syracuse University last year; then the previous 13 years at the University of Vermont and McGill University in Montreal, Canada. He commuted between the two during the week, then back to Syracuse on the weekends to visit his partner, Susan Henderson, who is a professor of architectural history, specializing in community planning, at Syracuse University.

When living in Vermont, Hannigan worked in community planning, focusing on issues of sprawl and encouraging community growth centers where there were services to support them. He fought Wal-Marts in outlying areas and conceded that WalMarts came

anyway, but they located close to the downtown areas. He worked with then-Governor Madeline Kunin and present Governor Howard Dean on the proliferation of telecommunications towers on every hilltop. Drawing on his experience in working with opposing groups in trying to reach agreement, he succeeded “to some degree” in getting the various companies to cooperate on their installations.

Hannigan was involved in the planning and design of the “new community” of Palmer Island, near Duck on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. There he dealt with a commission much like the California Coastal Commission except it deals with protection of the Barrier Islands. Until the advent of the Federal Flood Insurance Plan, the Barrier Islands were relatively undeveloped; but once the feds made it possible to obtain insurance, development moved in. Because the Islands are prone to hurricanes and wave action, homes had to be designed up on pilings driven 15 feet into the sand. The beach is only 1/4-mile wide and it is common for the ocean to sweep completely over it!

Prior to working in the universities, Hannigan worked with the U.N., both in the World Health Organization and UNESCO in the Caribbean. In St. Kitts, after disastrous sugarcane fires, it was important to get tourism going and to find a way to keep it sustainable by focusing growth. His part of the planning process was to try to guide development to sites designed for tourism rather than to vulnerable sites that are environmentally unique.

On St. Lucia, the importation of a small snail on the bottom of ships polluted streams, which led to blood parasites especially in children. The natives were drinking from freshwater streams infested with the snail, and Hannigan set up a community education program to get them to use treated water. Twice the fresh water was zapped with pesti-

cides to get rid of the snail and success came in 1985. From 1977 to 1985, he worked on four or five different projects in the Caribbean and became involved in Caribbean government issues.

When asked what he has learned about Sea Ranch that he didn't expect, Hannigan paused and thought for a long time, then said, in a community that has such a reputation for imagination and innovation, he was surprised that it takes as long to get things done here as it does in an urban bureaucracy. He's learning fast.

### ***Watershed Council Protects River***

"Our water sources are the heart of our community," said Jerry Gonce, Community Manager, in the 1999 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report. The Sea Ranch Water Company's Financial and Customer Services Officer, Mary Condon, reported figures on well production for 2000. A total of 102.81 million gallons of water were drawn from wells deep within the Gualala River across from the Hot Spot (no water is drawn in the dry months when the river is low). The TSRA Comprehensive Environmental Plan states, "The Gualala River provides a recreation resource to the membership and the coastal community. Like the coastal abalone fishery, the Gualala River steelhead fishery is a significant natural resource. The fishery has declined in recent years due to drought and habitat loss. Because of its value as a unique local natural resource, TSRA should actively support the protection and enhancement of the steelhead fishery." Furthermore, "The Sea Ranch Water Company staff works hard to provide quality water to every home," wrote Gonce, "We ask that our customers help us protect our water sources."

The report goes on to state although our water source is free of many of the

common contaminants, it is still susceptible to potential sources of contamination. These potential sources include forestry and lumber activities, farming, spills along roads, and vandalism. That's where the Gualala River Watershed Council (GRWC) comes in.

The GRWC is a forum of Gualala River landowners, resource managers, representatives of public agencies, and interested parties. In summary, their Mission Statement includes: to support sound resource management, to promote education about the watershed, to maintain and improve the watershed, to encourage stewardship of the resources, to influence land-use decisions in the watershed, and to address that portion of the federal Clean Water Act that requires a "Water Quality Attainment Strategy" while maintaining economic viability, resource management and recreational uses.

Studies include stream monitoring, restoration of eroding roads, estuary evaluation, sediment reduction, creating model projects, etc. Funding for studies comes from California Water Resources Control Board, Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Department of Fish and Game, and State Coastal Conservancy.

Ray Van de Water, retired ocean shipping executive, gave this historical perspective on efforts to protect the river: "For quite a few years, it has been obvious to residents and users of the Gualala River and tributaries that the condition of the watershed is deteriorating year by year: game fish populations are declining and some varieties have practically disappeared; the lower reaches of the river have become notably more clogged with gravel and sediment; the growth of human population in the area leads to serious concerns about the quantity and quality of the river waters, and whether they are adequate for sustaining life of all kinds.

"By the early 1990s, local concern had reached a point where many felt something had to be done about the situation. Conservation groups were formed. In 1996-97, the Redwood Coast Land Conservancy (RCLC) obtained a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy and engaged Patrick Higgins, a fisheries biologist, to document all currently available information and data on the Gualala watershed. This was done and published in early 1998. His report provided a basis for scheduling further needed studies and restoration efforts.

"Meantime, as an outgrowth of some watershed workshop meetings organized by the RCLC, the GRWC came into being in May 1997. In the beginning, the Council meetings were supported and facilitated by the North Coast Regional Office of the State Water Quality Control Board, which together with the Federal Environmental Protection Administration was under a mandate to conduct a 'Total Maximum Daily Load' (TMDL) process on the Gualala watershed. The purpose of this process is to determine the maximum load of sediment that can be carried by the river system without harm to fish and wildlife, or to water quality. Three-and-a-half years later, this project is still ongoing, with a target date for completion in September 2001. At the same time, other studies are being done looking toward eventual remedial and restoration efforts in the watershed. To accomplish this work, the GRWC has obtained substantial funding from government agencies, partnering with the Sotoyome Resource Conservation District, Santa Rosa.

"Soon after it was formed, the GRWC established policies and guidelines emphasizing the importance of including all interested parties such as the resource managers, government agencies, other landowners and the general public in its deliberations and efforts.

It was recognized that in the long term, the watershed enhancement project could not succeed without a general consensus on findings, needs, and restoration protocols.

Since then, the GRWC has strictly adhered to this philosophy and has thereby been quite successful in maintaining general interest and participation. It has become a respected and permanent part of the local scene. We are told that the GRWC is unique in its approach among watershed groups elsewhere and has inspired favorable comment well beyond our immediate area.”

“The GRWC is not only essential, but a necessity,” said Paul Chappell, Kashaya Utilities District Manager/ Operator, “and is the only local organization that represents the community in its entirety, to pursue goals that will protect our environment. Many of us realize how important the river is to our welfare. What happens to the Gualala River concerns local communities, and the problems can better be solved locally such as with the GRWC.”

“There is no choice,” declared Julie Verran, local environmentalist. “The Gualala River watershed must have a watershed Council; it is up to us to make it helpful. The state must, under a court decree, prepare TMDL documents for 19 North Coast streams that are classified as impaired as habitat for threatened and endangered species of salmonid fish. The Gualala River is judged impaired by sediment. The TMDL documents must include plans to reduce pollutants. To do so, a fact base must be created to show how much these streams are carrying.”

She added, “The point of the Council is to create a fact base. Even if stakeholders disagree on some of the facts, the Council insures that people will work from the same facts, and that

they will keep correcting and refining these facts. The wider the interests of the people who attend Council meetings and help with the Council’s work, the better. There would be a quasi-Council composed of agency people if there were not an open one like ours.”

The GRWC is different, according to Henry Alden, Forester and Resource Manager for Gualala Redwoods Incorporated. “I have worked with several watershed groups around the state in the last several years and the GRWC is easily the most congenial and productive group. I believe the two go together. The combination of a non-threatening atmosphere for landowners, input from the community, and financial support from the state has allowed good things to happen. There has been significant education and communication within the Council. This has resulted in real projects to monitor and improve the watershed being completed. Most other groups, that haven’t disintegrated, are still arguing about if there is a problem, and if so, whose fault it is.”

Paul Chappell added, “It would be most difficult to achieve environmental goals without the input and expertise of local business people, timber representatives, ranchers, farmers, vintners, and Resource Managers.

“Although we might criticize the GRWC for moving so slowly,” stated Tom Cochrane, member of The Sea Ranch Board of Directors, “I believe that having one is very important. It is a place in which all the stakeholders can look at the entire watershed with its problems and not just focus on their particular patch. The ultimate aim is to create an overall management plan for the entire watershed. Without input from all the players, this will not be possible. We do need broader participation in the watershed Council.

“Some watershed groups are composed

primarily of environmental organizations. They have excluded or at least not included the timber companies in the development of these plans. Their philosophy is to come up with a good plan and get the regulating state and federal agencies to accept their plans and force the timber companies to comply. I think this is a difficult road to follow. Our Council gives us a place to have interaction with timber harvest companies, wine growers, and other stakeholders. Hopefully, we can influence their use of the watershed.”

The consensus is the Council helps the Gualala River Watershed. Though there are many problems to be resolved, many yet unknown, the GRWC expects to be in operation, helping with the resolution, long into the future. GRWC meets the third Tuesday of every month from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Gualala Community Center. **FORUM:** “Environmental Issues Impacting the Sea Ranch Water Supply” May 5, 2001, 3 p.m. at the Del Mar Center.

**Unit 24 to Hold 7<sup>th</sup> Get-Together**

Unit 24 home and lot owners are urged to attend the seventh annual Unit 24 party to be held on Saturday, May 19, 2001, from 4 p.m. until 6:00 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. This annual gathering provides a great opportunity to greet old friends and meet new ones. Houseguests will also be welcome.

A \$2.00 donation per person will be accepted at the party to help defray expenses. If you would like more information about this event, please call Jim or Miriam Littlejohn at (707) 785-2514, or send an e-mail to: jimlj7@earthlink.net. All of us in Unit 24 look forward to meeting and talking with you.

**Marguerite Talbert Reaches 100**

Marguerite Talbert, mother of Millie Davis, reached her milestone of 100 years on January 28. When asked to what she attributed her many years, she declared with a twinkle in her eyes, “Hard work!” Millie and Jeff can attest to that because -- until about a year ago -- Marguerite insisted on helping out around the house, doing dishes, baking and cooking. “She was always busy,” Millie said, adding, “She’s a better cook than I am,” high praise from a consistent California State Fair blue-ribbon winner for her cakes and baked goods.

In 1901, Marguerite was born and grew up in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, then married and moved to a farm where she and her husband raised produce to be sold in Baltimore City. Millie and an older brother were born on that farm. The only time Marguerite was not working on the farm was when she worked in a chocolate factory in Baltimore – which may explain why she is so fond of chocolates. After about 40 years, she and her husband moved to Sacramento where Millie and Jeff lived, and when he passed away, she sold her home and joined them in their move to The Sea Ranch.

A small group of friends and neighbors joined Marguerite at the Davis home for a luncheon in celebration of her birthday. Though her hearing is gone, she quite enjoyed the gifts and attention. Upon retiring to her room, she paused, turned, and graciously thanked her friends for coming.

**Sounding Off**

**Off Letter FROM the Editor:**

Dear Readers, On this page is an advertisement titled “BIG FINES Are Coming Soon ...” which does not tell the whole story. In the interest of balance and accuracy, I believe you are

entitled to read the entire proposed “Schedule of Fees for CC&R Violations” before it is adopted.

Kathi Gordon, Editor

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

- Foster a proactive program to educate members on the policies for enforcement of the Governing Documents.
- Resolve complaints/violations through *voluntary compliance* wherever possible.
- Provide an *opportunity for members to question a notice of violation* informally or formally through Alternative Dispute Resolution (“ADR”).
- Conduct a fair and impartial investigation of the alleged violation in a timely manner.
- Apply fines, charges and/or remedies *only when there is no timely voluntary compliance.*

**Ranchers Called To Conserve**

Do you think before you flip that switch or turn on the faucet? If not, now is the time to polish up those conservation habits. Not just from a financial standpoint – though heaven knows prices for electricity and propane are shocking – but because by living here, Sea Ranchers have agreed to subscribe to a mode of conservation not found in urban areas. Jim Littlejohn, new member of TSRA Utilities Committee, said “The original Sea Ranch philosophy of ‘living lightly on the land’ has to be interpreted and applied by each generation, but clearly conservation of resources has always been, and should always be, an integral part of that philosophy.” Once again, Sea Ranchers are asked to use their ingenuity to conserve electricity, gas and water.

Brad Clayton, Manager of The Sea Ranch Water Company, points out that all the pumps, lift stations and water treatment facilities run on electricity,

so the more water saved, the less electricity consumed. But saving electricity is not the only reason to save water. Water stored in the reservoir was drawn down to about onethird of its capacity due to flaws in its construction. When it comes time to repair those flaws during dry weather, Sea Ranchers will have to do some serious water conservation. The January-February *Bulletin* has some excellent hints regarding water conservation

Here’s a reminder of simple steps to conserve energy: \*

- Turn down the thermostat every degree lower saves up to 5 percent on heating costs.
- Layer warm clothing and set the thermostat at 68; or lower during the day, 55; or off at night.
- Turn off lights, fans and heaters when leaving the room.
- Reduce hot-water temperature to the “normal” setting to save 7-11 percent of water heating costs.
- Shorten showers, which account for 2/3 of water-heating costs. Cutting a shower in half will reduce water-heating costs by 33 percent.
- Use clothes washer and dishwasher only when full. Wash clothes with cold water when possible to reduce the washer’s energy use by 75 percent.
- Replace or clean furnace filters once a month to save up to 5 percent of heating costs.
- Replace incandescent lightbulbs with compact fluorescent lightbulbs that use 75 percent less energy.
- Plug leaks in door and window frames with weather-stripping or caulking for a savings of up to 10 percent.
- Install low flow showerheads and faucets to save 10-16 percent of water-heating costs.
- Wrap the hot-water tank with insulation to save up to 10 percent on

water-heating costs.

- Go to bed an hour earlier. Just think how much healthier you will be!

*\*All but the last hint is from the California Energy Commission's Web site: "Flex Your Power." <http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/flex>.*

### **Imhaus Joins Soundings Staff**

Susanne Imhaus appeared like a ray of sunshine just when things were looking pretty dark for SOUNDINGS. Keeping up with advertising is not a job this editor wanted to take on after the resignation of Linda Clyne and Laura Barry, who had done such a fantastic job as co-Ad Directors for years. Yet the revenue from advertising supports about half of the operations of SOUNDINGS.

So, when Susanne showed up at the Communications Committee and volunteered, saying, "I've always loved SOUNDINGS and I would like to help," it was like the sun came out! She brings her years of professional experience to the job, and is learning the ins and outs of the SOUNDINGS advertising business rapidly under the excellent tutelage of Linda Clyne.

Susanne is a native of Tucson, Arizona, having grown up on a ranch 30 miles out of town on a dirt road. Her father was a doctor, back when Tucson was a town of about 30,000. But when it came time for college, she was ready for the "big city" and chose Mills College in Oakland. She majored in Art History but her first job after graduation was as assistant buyer to the Livingston Bros. Department Store. She then moved into personnel as a counselor in an employment agency – her highest placement was at a salary of \$500 per month! But then, apartments in San Francisco were only \$85 at that time.

When Susanne married, she enjoyed

the life of a housewife for only three years. Then her father-in-law died and her husband asked her to join him in the family insurance business in San Francisco. She has been in the insurance business ever since, finally running the business during her husband's illness and eventual death. The company was merged with another group and she worked with them for eight years until they bought her out in 1997. However, she still is in the insurance business, working with another group in Fresno. Her specialty is bowling centers, and she sells insurance all over the Western U.S.

About 1964, Susanne took a weekend job doing typing for an author who had an A-frame at Salt Point. She would drive up from San Francisco on Friday, and her only break was when Mrs. Fisk would invite her over to tea. But Susanne fell in love with the coast and came back every chance she got. She would come up to Sea Ranch in the early days with her husband and daughter, and once even rented a house on Longmeadow for a year. But commuting was too much for her.

By that time, she had her heart set on Sea Ranch and bought a lot and finally built a home in 1992. It was rented out for five years, then she decided to take a risk and move in. "It has been the best thing in the world for me." There's no doubt she has been captivated by the lure of Sea Ranch and it's Sea Ranch's and SOUNDINGS' gain.

*Ed Note: Our overwhelming gratitude to Linda Clyne and Laura Barry for all their hard work on SOUNDINGS advertising and for sticking around to help Susanne. They both are hatching travel plans and we wish them well.*

### **The Cat and The Trumpet**

We're talking about a real cat here – a feline – *Felis catus*. How Abby acquired a passion for jazz is a mystery. Now about 16 years old, she has been

with me for 11 year, and for the first eight of those years I was unaware of her unusual interest, as I never listened to jazz. Her excited response the first evening I turned on Fred Adler's jazz program of the Gualala radio station, quite by happenstance, interested me enough to tune in the following week. Abby was even more pleased and began to show personality changes (for the better).

I became more and more interested, not only in Abby's responses, but in the music itself. Knowing almost nothing about jazz, I began to read and research (the Bookmobile is a great resource), to listen frequently to the FM jazz stations KCSM and KLON, as well as Fred Adler's weekly jazz program on KTDE. I began calling him regularly to request specific compositions, to discuss music, and to begin a taped CD collection.

This, for Abby, was a happy turn of events and she became my shadow, lest she miss something. Only now, three years later, does she occasionally go outside while the radio is on. As I write this she is contentedly kneading the wool lamb on my window seat as we listen to something upbeat on KLON.

A particularly rewarding result of my previous stories about Abby (SOUNDINGS, Spring 1998 and 2000) and of my new interest in jazz, is that I have met some fascinating people. I discovered there are Sea Ranchers who are not only jazz connoisseurs but also professional jazz musicians.

One who has been extremely generous with his time, expertise and jazz collection is Harold Strack. Hal is a part-time Sea Rancher, a former professional jazz musician – saxophone and clarinet – and is now a retired Air Force general. Hal knew musicians who are legends to us today and has wonderful stories to tell of his experi-

ences. He gave up jazz reluctantly for a more stable way to make a living – the Air Force – but maintains ties to the world of jazz.

Many times I have wished that I could watch Abby react to live jazz, but taking her to a jazz concert is not a viable option. Hal, it turns out, has been adding the trumpet to his musical skills *and* he likes cats, so he offered to play for Abby. When Hal and wife Margaret arrived, all the cats disappeared into the fourth dimension or wherever they go when visitors are in the house. We humans went into the living room and, sitting quietly, Hal took out his trumpet and began to improvise softly. Immediately Abby raced in, skidded to a stop on the tile floor and threw me a wide-eyed startled look that seemed to say, “Why did you start without me?”

She then sat directly in front of Hal, watching him intently. Hal continued to play while Margaret and I watched Abby, fascinated. After a few minutes, Abby turned and ran to my chair, jumped to the arm, circled the back, bumping my head affectionately, purring madly, then climbed in my lap, kneading, emitting little excited meows. After a few minutes, she leaped off my lap and went to Margaret (previously unknown to her) where she repeated the same sequence. Abby then threw herself on the floor in front of Hal and went into her sensuous, seductive movements including rug-kneading. She then jumped the table behind Hal’s head where she lay down in her contemplative position: back legs to the side, forepaws to the front, claws extending and retracting, ears rotating separately. As Hal continued to play, Abby jumped to the floor where she continued rolling around and kneading the carpet. Hal played for about 20 minutes, with Abby actively responding the entire time. There was no question she was thrilled.

Almost a year later, Hal and Margaret made a return visit. Abby happened to be in the entryway when they arrived and retreated to the bedroom area, but almost immediately returned and followed us into the living room where she arranged herself on the table behind Hal’s head. Clearly she remembered them. After a few minutes, Margaret gently said, “Hal, Abby is waiting for you to play.” He began playing his trumpet while Abby repeated her previous performance. She was clearly pleased with the lovely sounds she was hearing. It was also clear that live music was as exhilarating to Abby as it is to humans. Up here we couldn’t live without recorded music, but live music is better.

### *Time Capsule Ready To Go*

Planning to be around in 2050? Want to come to a party this year? All kids, grandkids great-grandchildren and child-friends are invited to the installation of The Sea Ranch Millennium Time Capsule after the Annual Meeting May 26 at the Knipp-Stengel Barn. Adults are invited, too. All children who have applied will receive a “cool” certificate attesting to their presence at the burial of the Time Capsule and inviting them to attend its uncovering in the year 2050.

Gene Weston is the guardian and the curator of the Time Capsule, which was constructed out of clear acrylic by Pierre Mirmont who does archival work for museums. Gene says it is so elegant it’s a shame to bury it. The burial site near the Barn will be marked with a Corian plaque.

In the capsule are documents depicting the history of The Sea Ranch; for example, *The Barn Book*, the early book *Island on the Coast*, TSRA Design Manual, the “Bane Bill,” Trails Map, several “Milestones” booklets, newspapers and early promotional advertising, Larry Halprin’s book *The Sea*

*Ranch, Diary of an Idea*, a videotape *Flying Our Coast* from the Flying Society, the 2000 Scroll signed by Sea Ranchers at the Millennium Party in the Barn, etc. The items were dredged from the collections of many longtime Sea Ranchers.

At the celebration, a slide show with slides of the early Sea Ranch will be on view continuously, courtesy of Dick Soule and John Wingate. Dee Euske very kindly digitized a selection of the early photos on a CD for the time capsule. Martha Wohlken has led the planning of the festivities, aided by Janann Strand, Gene Weston, Al Boeke and Kathi Gordon. Louise DeWilder and Dick Halley are coordinating the children’s portion of the ceremony.

### **NEED FOR PERMANENT ARCHIVE**

As items were collected for the Time Capsule, the planning group became aware of the need for permanent storage of early historical material. As members move on, historic documents are slowly disappearing and some material has been lost forever. Thus the group plans to continue their efforts as an “Archives Committee,” with the goal of creating a system to collect, protect and organize all historical materials in a fireproof, waterproof, rodent-proof archive with controlled access. Once the system is in place, those willing to donate their collections will be assured that the archives are secure.

### *The Sea Ranch Landscape*

*Ed Note: When George Wickstead was sorting out his things prior to moving to Oregon, he found a set of papers from The Sea Ranch 1974 Design Awards Jury and thought they should be shared with the members. This is the first. (Thanks, George, we miss you and Feef with all our hearts.)*

During the course of serving on the Design Citation Jury, I had the oppor-

tunity to become somewhat familiar with the natural Sea Ranch landscape and how people live with it. It is a bold and beautiful landscape, whether one is at the ocean front, in the meadow, in the open uplands or forest. People who have built homes there have a rare opportunity with respect to their gardens that few other people have.

It has been my observation that people in general want low-maintenance gardens – ones that require a minimum amount of their free time, that don't enslave them to a rigorous work schedule. But the paradox is that while this may be their desire, there is really no such thing aesthetically acceptable in the customary suburban scene of trimmed lawns and borders of shrubs and flowers. Customarily, people who live in single-family communities live in areas where nature was literally stripped away in the development process. Neighborliness requires at least a certain minimum standard of landscaping and maintenance. Variations in attitudes and commitments of time and money result in the more or less green hodgepodge of landscape effects that characterizes most residential communities.

At The Sea Ranch, residents have a unique opportunity to be free of the usual gardening chores that accompany home ownership. The opportunity lies in acceptance of The Sea Ranch philosophy of "living in and with nature with a minimum of intrusive effect" and the fact that The Sea Ranch landscape is truly beautiful and can be largely self-maintaining if people will let it be.

Oceanic Properties originally initiated a philosophy of respect for the land as a basis for all of their early planning and construction. Residents have for the most part accepted this philosophy and their homes and surroundings reflect a conscious effort to be a part of the natural landscape. However, this

effort requires a complete shift in attitude about gardens. Much of what we consider "right" about gardens is so strongly embedded in the subconscious that it is little wonder that a few people find it difficult to make the adjustment. For the adjustment requires a "new" sense of beauty, a "new" sense of the appropriate, and an appreciation of things once a source of irritation such as dry grass, uneven driveway and walkway edge, and lack of decorative eye-catching features.

The homeowners who agree with The Sea Ranch philosophy appreciate the natural landscape and its rock outcrops, native grasses, meadows and herbs, old hedgerows, and upland woods. Their garden is the entire landscape of The Sea Ranch, not the customary fenced-in plot. Therefore, the area that they maintain around their house will be treated and maintained as a part of the total Sea Ranch landscape. Where they need to plant trees, shrubs, or ground covers, they will use indigenous plant material in a way that will look natural – an appropriate part of the whole.

For the immediate surroundings of one's house to look like a natural part of the total Sea Ranch landscape, one has to pay particular attention to the scale of things. Anything of small scale, anything fussy, can be visually annoying in the larger scale. For instance, a few homeowners have decorated their grounds with artifacts such as driftwood and bottles (*and abalone shells, ed.*), thinking they are doing something attractive, but actually indulging in a kind of littering. In a different atmosphere, these small-scale efforts might not stand out like a sore thumb, but here they are very much out of character. I do not believe that people generally know that this kind of response on their part indicates a subconscious, if not conscious, lack of appreciation of the natural scene.

Elsewhere at The Sea Ranch, a few people have planted lawns and made other efforts at decorative horticulture. This is so wasteful of time, energy and money that one wonders what motivates people to make such a sacrifice that turns out so badly from the standpoint of the community landscape. I suppose it is really just life-long habit, unthinking response, so to speak, that makes people carry the habits of suburbia along with them. Much more of this could destroy the total Sea Ranch landscape, for it depends upon its consistency, its continuousness for its quality.

### *Lines From The Library*

#### **The Case of the Missing Hillermans**

"Some swine must have taken them." These are the words of the donor who gave an entire set of Tony Hillerman mysteries to the library, when told that these books had been missing from the shelves for over a year.

Is there not swinishness enough in this world without someone taking advantage of the library honor system to deprive Sea Ranchers of their right to read Tony Hillerman? It is sad indeed to have to say that the materials in the library belong to the Association, and that any other use constitutes the swinish deed of theft. Neither this nor any other library may be thought of as a source of free books.

There is a "Free Box" in the back room, and it is the place to look for books to take and keep for one's very own or to put in a rental house.

In spring, as the season of holiday feasting and rainy-day sloth gives way to thoughts of summer slacks and sunshine picnics, some recently donated diet books and low-fat cookbooks may be just the thing for some cook beginning to think of a series of slimming menus. Check these out in the Self Help and Cook -ing sections

(conveniently placed one above the other).

Good news is that the library is being used as never before. The volunteers are kept busy reshelving returned books and processing new donations. More good news is that it seems that the Association is going to provide funds for the new shelving, which will give much more space for the library's ever increasing collection.

Donations continue to pour in and are always welcome. Recent donations include audio-tapes, mysteries, thrillers, and a good cross section of current and time-honored fiction. Many thanks to these donors, to whom the library owes its existence.

Those new to the library should be aware that the library is open daily from (roughly) sunup to sundown. The fact that the lights may be off, or that no one is there, is immaterial – the library operates on the honor system. Come in anyway, browse, borrow, and return. Enjoy this marvelous resource!

### ***Soroptimists Hold Tour/Tasting***

On May 12, 2001, the Soroptimist International of Mendocino Sonoma Coast, Inc. will sponsor its 17th Annual Architectural Home Tour and Wine Tasting. The tour will highlight innovative and dynamic concepts in both architecture and interior design as developed by some of the coast's most creative architects and designers. Their designs are especially suited to the experience of living on the beautiful and rugged Sonoma and Mendocino Coast. The tour begins at 10:30 and ends at 3:30. A tasting of Mendocino and Sonoma wines and hors d'oeuvres from several local restaurants takes place from 3:30 to 5:30 in the main auditorium and deck of the spectacular Gualala Arts Center.

Tour proceeds benefit Community and youth projects as well as youth, sen-

iors, and individuals with special needs. Among last year's beneficiaries were: ESCAPES work in domestic violence; RCMS Breast Cancer Awareness; South Coast Senior Citizen Center meals and special events; South Coast Fire Department Halloween Haunted House; Point Arena High School and Horicon School field trips and special projects; and many others. Soroptimists have continued their annual Women of Distinction, Youth Citizen, Making a Difference for Women, and Women's Opportunity Awards. Guests are welcome at program meetings on the 2nd and 3rd Tuesday of each month at Oceansong Restaurant from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Advance ticket purchases are available at Gualala Pharmacy 884-4107, and Coveralls 884-4522, or from any member of Soroptimist at a price of \$30 for the tour and wine tasting, or \$20 for either event separately. Information is also available from coordinating committee members: Vicki Hodge 884-3302, Mary Mobert 884-3368, and Cathy Frey 884-1019; or Linda Bradbrook at the Surf Motel 884-3571 or 1-888-451-SURF (for outof-town inquiries).

The local Soroptimist Club is part of Soroptimist International of the Americas. Founded in 1921, it is a nonprofit volunteer service organization comprised of business and professional women who contribute time and financial support to communitybased projects benefiting women and their families. For more information about Soroptimists, please visit their web site at [www.simsc.org](http://www.simsc.org).

### ***Specter of Offshore Drilling Returns***

With the confirmation of U. S. Secretary of Interior Gale Norton who is openly sympathetic to oil exploration on the Alaskan North Slope, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the question

arises: "Are we next?"

Offshore Northern California has been protected from exploration for about 35 years by both state and federal agencies. The state has jurisdiction of the area within three miles of the coast and federal jurisdiction extends beyond that. The North Coast Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) is included in two drilling moratoriums: one, a moratorium declared by the President that runs until 2012; and the other, a Congressional moratorium that is renewed annually. Both will be subject to review by the Bush Administration. The U.S. Minerals Management Service is preparing a new "Five Year Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Leasing program for 2002-2007." Although it does not include the North Coast, newspapers report that the oil industry would not be averse to seeing these areas included.

Most North Coast residents become alarmed when they visualize multibillion dollar drilling and production platforms within their view, oil tankers, and possibly oil pipelines and storage tanks despoiling the coastline. Whether or not this ever materializes is dependent on the size and value of the resource that lies offshore as well as on whether these offshore areas are ever officially opened to exploration and development by the federal government. If the target resource is small, the chances of its being developed are also small, in view of the huge expense of developing offshore oil and gas resources and the resultant lack of interest on the part of the oil industry.

Admittedly approximate, the 1986 U. S. Department of Interior estimate of what might be found Offshore Northern California was 250 million barrels of crude oil and 1.12 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Compare that to the total U.S. offshore resource estimated at that time as 12.5 billion barrels and 90.5 trillion cubic feet of gas. The

Northern California estimate encompassed three areas: offshore Bodega, Point Arena, and the Eel River. Since then, the estimates of the resource in Northern California have been raised to approximately 726 million barrels by the U. S. Department of Energy (and to a hypothetical 10 billion barrels quoted in the *Press Democrat*, January 20, 2001 – no source given). Note that the estimates are of “resources” rather than “reserves” which in the trade is tantamount to the difference between a “bird in the bush” and a “bird in hand.” However, apparently the Northern California resource was not considered large in 1986, and that opinion surely reflected the drilling results following the 1963 OCS P1 Lease Sale – there has been no drilling since. Thus in retrospect, the withdrawal of Northern California tracts in federal OCS lease sales in 1981 (OCS Sale 53), 1983 (OCS Sale 73) and 1989 (OCS Sale 91) was not surprising. The withdrawal mollified many local opponents up and down the coast but did not target the areas of prime interest to the oil industry, which were tracts in the Santa Maria Basin offshore of northern Santa Barbara County offered in OCS Sales 53 and 73.

The reason why the North Coast offshore areas are not considered prime oil exploration targets relates to exploratory drilling that took place offshore in the ‘60s. Most residents of this area may not be aware that 12 offshore exploratory wells were drilled in the Bodega and Point Arena basins in connection with the leasing of federal offshore tracts. The accompanying map shows the location of the basins as well as the location of the 12 exploratory wells that followed leasing of tracts acquired in OCS Sale P1 in 1963.

There were three wells drilled to a depth of 4,700-10,640 feet off of Point

Arena, and nine wells 3,200-10,466 feet deep off of Bodega Head. An additional four offshore wells, 900-7,400 feet deep were drilled beyond the mouth of the Eel River (these are not shown on the map). The sedimentary basins are very old accumulations of Miocene and Pliocene detritus containing carbonaceous matter that degrades over millions of years to form hydrocarbons. Between the two offshore prominent basins, there is a ridge called the Gualala Uplift, which conventionally would not be considered a prime target for oil exploration. It lies offshore of the Sonoma-Mendocino Counties’ joint boundary, and extends from the town of Point Arena to the middle of The Sea Ranch, some 20-25 miles along the coast.

The terms of the federal leasing agreements with the participating oil companies require that they submit the results of their exploration activities to the U. S. Department of Interior. This information is held confidentially for 10 years, whether or not the oil companies proceed from an exploration to a production phase. In the case of the Bodega and Point Arena wells, the information ultimately made public by Shell Oil Company, the 1963 leaseholder, indicates that most wells had hydrocarbon “shows,” but test drilling on all the major geologic structures with oil or gas potential identified by seismic surveys produced dry holes (E. G. Haskins and J. R. Griffins in *Am. Assoc. Petr. Geol. Memoir 15*, p. 223). Ultimately, the drilling rigs were dismantled, and all leases expired.

It is obvious that the economic stage has changed substantially in the decades that have passed since the relinquishment of the leases in this area, and the same decision to abandon the leases and discontinue exploration might not be made today. True, the nominal price of crude oil has escalated dramatically. Nonetheless, in

“real” 1996 dollars, average refiners’ acquisition cost of crude oil has only risen from \$12.05 per barrel in 1968 to \$16.69 per barrel in 1999 (*Annual Energy Review*, 1999 p. 157, U. S. Dept. of Energy). This may not be enough of an improvement in the market to entice the oil industry to look seriously again at the North Coast in the foreseeable future.

### *Bells for Ginny*

The rattle startled me. My foot hit the map basket and set the Bear Bells ringing. Ginny had suggested Bear Bells as we set off in separate campers heading for an encounter with bears near Denali. She was deadly serious – Fred said she wanted to “avoid dead.”

Ginny and Fred had explored Alaska before, recording wildlife sounds without a trace of man-made sound – no car, no train, no plane. They were pioneers in this field and had to go farther and farther each trip. In the process, they had discovered secluded thermal pools, a pristine stretch of river, a hidden valley; and we rendezvoused in these spots as we laced our different ways north. We’d meet every few days in some agreed-upon camp spot and toast the sunset around a campfire. ... Our husbands relished their friendship, too.

We drove the long Denali road, pulling off to the side when the combination of brown bulk, caribou calf, willows and berries convinced Ginny an encounter was feasible. Bear Bells are three inches in diameter, a sturdy silver metal, paired by a leather thong and *loud*. Locking our campers by the road we headed into the willows making a terrible musical racket. Visibility in the towering willows was about 15 feet. I soon missed the vista and my unease drove me up hill where I could see in all directions but I had no idea of the wind direction in the willow gully.

It was clear there would be an encoun-

ter at the open space a quarter-mile ahead with a caribou and calf in the mix. Whether it was the Bells, the wind, or the more familiar target, I do not know, but the brown bulk veered out of the willows and towards the caribou. When close, the weighty matron stopped and bellowed as the calf trotted on and the bear paused. Three heads emerged from the willows muttering some disappointment. I waited until campfire to tell Ginny that the Bear Bells were quite effective and the bear chose the calf for a juicier meal. We saw no bear kill; we saw various animals steer clear of each other with nonchalant courtesy, but we lost our taste for encounters and settled for contemplative observation and awe.

Ginny relished encounters of other kinds, too. She listened intently, reasoned carefully, wrote cogently and chose large targets. Nothing trivial, petty or selfish: the Coastal Initiative, legal matters, recalcitrant board members, and local management. She and Fred were compulsive Board watchers and voters. When a certain magnificent tree was given a drastic haircut she scolded about the lack of notice to neighbors. She supported rambles on Commons and rambled and scrambled (that's *off* trail) with the most energetic. Our frequent canoe trips became a first rank Sea Ranch tradition and, by example, added to Sea Ranch early beginnings to turn a subdivision into a community. It was good satisfying work which is why she was so upbeat. The climate around Ginny was always fine! She was at work in her garden when she died.

Poet Mary Oliver writes, at the close of her poem, *Shelly*: "...*I believe in death. I believe it is the last wonderful work...*"

I'll bump that basket every once in awhile just to hear those Bear Bells rattle. Good work, Ginny, and thanks from your friend Jan.

