



April News 2013

Spring has sprung in a very big way here in Marin. The recent unseasonably hot weather coming on the heels of the driest spring on record, means we are in for a long and dangerous fire season. I encourage you to go to www.firesafemarin.org and follow guidelines for ensuring you have taken necessary steps to reduce fire risk around your home, as well as checking in with your local fire department for reminders on fire evacuation procedures in your area.

Topics in this issue of E-news include: an introduction to the County's new library director, highlights of new financial information available on the County website, a spotlight on transit services available for our seniors, disabled and low-income residents and other informational items. Next month I will be providing you with an update on the Greenbrae Interchange/Twin Cities Corridor Improvement Project and draft Stream Conservation Area Ordinance. To get updates on key meetings and events, please connect with me at www.facebook.com/D2KatieRice by "liking" my Facebook page.

As always, if you have any questions or comments, don't hesitate to call me at 415-473-7331 or email to krice@marincounty.org.

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Important Meetings in May

Plan Bay Area

Plan Bay Area is a long-range regional plan produced by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). These agencies are governed by elected officials from the nine counties and 101 cities and

towns in the Bay Area. The plan, driven by state legislation (SB 375) is aimed at reducing greenhouse gases and planning for growth over the next 30 years through the establishment of guidelines and goals for integrating transportation, housing and land-use. Conversation, debate and dialogue around Plan Bay Area continues this month with opportunities to learn more, participate in the conversation, and formally comment on the Plan. They include:

Thursday, May 9, 7-9pm at Angelico Hall, Dominican University: “*Choosing the Future We Want: What Does Plan Bay Area Mean for Marin?*” This is the 3rd in a series of public forums hosted by Marin organizations to engage the local community in discussion about how regional planning around the implementation of SB 375 might affect Marin. The forum is hosted by **Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative, Marin Conservation League, Sustainable Marin/San Rafael, League of Women Voters, Dominican Institute for Leadership Studies, and Marin TV/Channel 26** and will feature a panel of speakers including: Linda Jackson, Planning Manager, Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM); Chantel Walker, Social Equity Policy and Programs Coordinator, Marin Community Development Agency; Michele Rodriguez, Principal Planner, 2007 Marin Countywide Plan; Marge Macris, Co-Chair, Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative; and Dave Edmondson, former Marin resident and author of *Greater Marin*. The panel will examine what Plan Bay Area is and what it is not, how land use and transportation patterns envisioned by Plan Bay Area might reduce carbon emissions and curb climate change, deliver equity and affordable housing options, and respect Marin’s natural resources, community quality, and environmental constraints. For more information, contact mmacris@aol.com or 415-381-6867. The meeting will be taped and broadcast by [Community Media Center of Marin](#), Channel 26, at a later date.

Thursday, May 30, 6:30-8:30pm at Marin County Civic Center, Board of Supervisors Chambers: Debate style forum hosted by Dominican University’s Institute for Leadership Studies will present a range of perspectives on regional planning in the Bay area, with focus on Marin County. Panelists include: Steve Kinsey, Supervisor Marin County, District 4; Randal O’Toole, the Cato Institute; Mark Luce, Supervisor Napa County, President, Association of Bay Area Governments; Thomas Rubin, Mass Transit Consultant, Oakland. Following the panelists’ presentation, attendees will have the opportunity to offer comments or questions. For more information on the Forum, contact Office of Supervisor Susan Adams 415-473-7342.

The Draft Plan Bay Area and Environmental Impact Report along with other documents and information regarding Plan Bay Area can be found at the [ABAG website](#). The deadline for formal comment is: May 16, 2013 at 4pm.

Stream Conservation Area Ordinance (SCA)

Monday, May 13, 10am, Planning Commission Hearing at Marin County Civic Center, Planning Commission Chambers:

The Marin County Planning Commission will hold a second hearing on the Draft SCA to hear comment, discuss, and recommend changes to staff on the draft ordinance. This

ordinance would expand protections of creeks and streams in the unincorporated areas of the County by regulating development within SCA setbacks. For more information about the ordinance, including how to submit formal comment, visit the [SCA website](#).

Welcome to Sarah Jones, Marin County Free Library's New Director

I am very pleased to introduce and welcome Sara Jones to our community and to her new position as Director of the Marin County Free Library system. Sarah began her career in library services as a librarian in 1988. In the years since she has held numerous positions, most recently as Director of the Nevada State Library, and her current position as Director of the Carson City, Nevada, library system. Sara replaces Gail Haar, who retired March 29 after leading the library since 2007.

An Idaho native and 25-year Nevada resident, Jones is highly respected in her profession for her innovative ideas, fundraising skills, collaboration with community groups and ability to inspire staff. She was the state of Nevada's Co-Librarian of the Year for 2012.

Sarah has a proven track record of engaging both the community and staff in library programs and operations, and believes passionately in the importance of library services and how libraries contribute to the quality of life of our residents. I feel confident that Sara Jones will be a great fit for the Marin County Free Library and true leader as we chart our course forward. I look forward to working with her to enhance library services in our community.

You can read the County's [press release](#) for more information.

County creates new financial information website

In response to requests for greater access to public financial information, the County has updated and posted additional information on the [Department of Finance website](#). The goal of the update is to create a resource that will be more informative, convenient, and provide greater transparency in local government finance. In the [Tax Information section](#) you will find all the information related to property taxes. In the [Financial Information section](#), you can find current debt and pension information, the county budget, and financial reports. The [Marin Public Finance Portal](#) focuses on debt and pension and invites other governmental agencies throughout Marin to collaborate with the Marin Department of Finance to provide agency specific information for this new site.

Let me know if you have any feedback – we will continue to look for ways to keep residents informed.

College of Marin Academic Center Construction Update

The College of Marin is poised to begin construction on its New Academic Center. The project includes temporarily relocating offices and classrooms, demolition of four existing buildings near the corner of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and College Avenue,

and construction of the new center. The project will be the most recent improvement in a series of projects undertaken by the College over the past several years.

My thanks to the College construction team, who working with neighbors, County public works and community groups has come up with a construction management plan that will minimize construction traffic impact on bordering neighborhoods, without further impacting already heavily traveled Sir Francis Drake Blvd and College Avenue. For more information on the project, visit www.marin.edu/MeasureC.

AB 1322 Property Tax Postponement of Seniors and the Disabled

The Board of Supervisors formalized its support for [Assembly Bill 1322](#), the legislation co-authored by Assemblymember Marc Levine that would restore the Senior Citizens and Disabled Citizen Property Tax Postponement program, offering income-eligible seniors and the disabled the opportunity to postpone their property tax payments in exchange for full repayment with interest when their home is sold. The restoration of this program would provide these residents a means of staying in their homes that they otherwise would no longer be able to afford. I am hopeful that this bill will pass and offer this opportunity to our numerous low-income and disabled in Marin. [Contact Assemblyman Levine](#) with your comments.

Marin Access: Transportation Options for Seniors, Disabled, and Low-Income Residents

A key issue for many Marin residents is the ability to accomplish day to day activities outside of their home. Marin Access is a one-stop call center coordinating transportation resources for Marin's older adults, persons with disabilities and low-income residents. Callers can learn about the range of transportation options open to them, thus opening up a whole new world of mobility to many who otherwise experience isolation.

Two volunteer driver programs are available to help meet the needs of seniors, low-income and disabled residents. These programs provide mileage reimbursement for seniors 65 and older and persons with disabilities to help empower them to find their own volunteer driver. Marin Catch-A-Ride is an age-based taxi subsidy program that allows Marin seniors (age 80 and older or age 60-80 who are no longer driving) to receive a subsidy toward their taxi ride of between \$14-\$18 depending on income level. A door-to-door "ride share" service is in place for eligible riders unable to ride the public bus due to a disability and low-income paratransit discounts are also available. More projects are in the works including a "County Wide Transportation Guide" and an expansion of the Marin Catch-A-Ride program to serve ADA eligible residents.

To get information about all the transportation options available, visit [Marin Access](#) or call 415-454-0902. Two free training programs are available for groups of older adults – "Navigating Transit," a one-hour presentation and discussion on transit options and "Travel Tours," in which small groups accompanied by a guide experience riding the public bus first-hand. For more information on these training programs, call Jon Gaffney at 415-226-0869.

Volunteers Needed for Special Advocates Program

The Marin Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program recruits, screens, trains and supervises volunteers to advocate for children who have been victims of abuse, neglect, or abandonment and are dependents of the Marin Juvenile Court. CASA volunteers are sworn officers of the court, appointed by a judge to investigate and report on the best interests of children, between the ages of birth through eighteen, who have been abused and neglected. CASA volunteers are often the only consistent person in the child's life and provide support for the child throughout the court process. Because of this, volunteers are asked to make an eighteen-month commitment to the child or siblings they have been assigned to.

The work of a CASA volunteer is difficult but the rewards can be great. "Knowing what I do makes a difference in a child's life is what I like the most," says Maggie Hickey of San Anselmo. Bonnie Swift of Fairfax says "I have learned so much about myself, Marin Children and Family Services, and the plight of a child who falls under the jurisdiction of the court due to neglect, abuse or abandonment. Sometimes the work is heartbreaking, but I have seen how much of a difference a CASA can make in a child's life." Sue Zimmerman, a resident of San Anselmo, has been a CASA volunteer for seven years and is passionate about her role.

CASA volunteers are community members who are concerned about their community's children and want to ensure they don't "fall through the cracks" of the system. CASA volunteers don't have to have a certain type of education or occupation. Maggie, Sue and Bonnie all agree on the skills needed: empathy, patience, perseverance, sense of humor, diplomacy – and lots more patience.

The CASA Program is currently looking for volunteers for a new initial training that will start in May. Please email Robyn at robyn@marinadvocates.org or call 415-507-9016 or visit www.marinadvocates.org. Marin CASA is a program of Marin Advocates for Children, a private, non-profit agency.

Women and Money Conference 2013

The Marin Women's Commission in partnership with Dominican University's Institute for Leadership Studies is holding a morning long conference for women on May 11, 8:30am-1pm at Guzman Hall, Dominican University, to provide the answers needed to become "money smart." The special keynote Speaker is Kate Levinson, PhD and author of "Emotional Currency, a Woman's Guide to Building a Healthy Relationship with Money." Workshops include Healthy Money Habits: Get Your Money Straight in 2013, Making it on Your Own: Negotiation and Financial Preparedness, Retirement Planning: A Reality Check for Financial Independence and Women's Economic Power through Entrepreneurship. You can register now at: www.marinwomenscommission.org, call 499-6105 or pay at the door (\$20 for conference including continental breakfast).

Upcoming Local Events

Star Viewing hosted by the San Francisco Amateur Astronomers

Thursday, May 2, 7:30 – 8:45pm

Library Branch Fairfax, 2097 Sir Francis Drake Blvd

Come learn about the night sky with experienced amateur astronomers. Viewing will be held in the lower lot. Bring the family and share the wonder. This event may be cancelled due to weather (rain, fog or cloud cover) so be sure to call Fairfax library on the day of the viewing at 415-457-5629.

Focus on Grasses with Ashley Ratcliffe

Thursday, May 23, 10am – 2pm

Meet at the gate at the end of Cascade Dr. in Fairfax

This walk will explore the theme “how to look at a grass” and will serve to familiarize those who are botanically inclined but intimidated by the completely new vocabulary that applies to these familiar plants. Bring a hand lens and a Marin Flora if you can. This walk is for adults and we request that no animals (except service animals) attend.

Heavy rain may cancel. If questionable weather, call 415-893-9527 on the morning of the walk for a recorded message to see if the walk is cancelled. Questions: Contact David Herlocker at 415-893-9508 or DHerlocker@marincounty.org.

For a complete listing of County events and meetings, visit <http://www.marincounty.org/main/calendar>.

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