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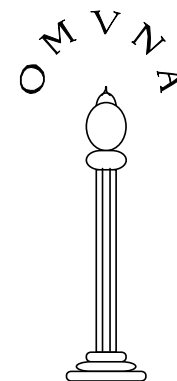
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# OMVNA Newsletter

Published and distributed by the Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association

September 2007 Volume 19, Number 6 www.omvna.org

## City Awards OMVNA \$1500

On August 17 the City awarded OMVNA \$1500 to defray the costs of our Summer Ice Cream Social. These funds are part of a program of neighborhood grants that have been in operation for approximately six years.

OMVNA wishes to express its gratitude to the City for its support of our neighborhood's end-of-summer celebration. More than 400 neighbors enjoyed our best Ice Cream Social to date!

## OMVNA Steering Committee Nominees for 2008

Each year a Nominating Committee is formed to identify residents who are willing to spend a few hours each month serving on the OMVNA Steering Committee. This year's Nominating Committee members are: **Kim Copher** (Chair), **Bruce Karney**, and **Paul Goldstein**.

The Committee nominated the candidates listed below. In cases where no name is listed, recruitment will continue until a suitable candidate is found. If you would like to serve on the Steering Committee, please phone Kim Copher at 650 814-2503.

- Chair: **Noam Livnat**
- Vice-Chair: **Bruce Karney**
- Treasurer: **Aaron Grossman**
- Secretary: **TBD**
- Newsletter Editor: **TBD**
- Community Liaison: **Ken Rosenberg**
- At Large: **Hugh Donagher**
- At Large: **TBD**

The Nominating Committee also tapped **Aaron Grossman** to continue to lead OMVNA's CERT Committee.

The election will be held at our next General Meeting on Saturday, October 27. Details will appear in next month's newsletter.

## Our House is a Very Very Very Nice (Small) House

By Ken Rosenberg, OMVNA Chair

I often talk about how nice it is to live in the best part of town: the downtown! We are blessed with great parks, recreation, restaurants, and shopping. My family and I love it here! Our only problem is -- our house.

We purchased a complete fixer-upper on Mercy Street five years ago and poured thousands of dollars into its renovation. We turned a 1440 square foot dilapidated home (some might call it "unusual" or even "charming") into a modern 1750 square foot house. My wife, who acted as general contractor, made hundreds of the decisions that play an integral part in our enjoyment of the home. For my part, I assisted in the demolition, painted, and installed chair rails and crown molding. When we are home, we are happy and content with our house and the choices we made, except for one thing. The *flow* of our house doesn't work!

It was originally a 2 BR/1 BA and is now a 4/2 post-renovation. When we have company, everybody congregates in the living room. Unfortunately, it is also our dining and family room. It's simply too tiny to be all of these  
(continued on Page 4)

## Light Brown Apple Moth Invades Mountain View

Homegrown fruits and vegetables from Mountain View, Palo Alto and parts of other nearby communities are under **quarantine** because of the invasion of the Light Brown Apple Moth. Those of us living in the quarantine zone may not transport homegrown produce anywhere, even within the neighborhood.

The August 18 *San Jose Mercury News* ran an extensive article and the material in this article is excerpted from their coverage.

These moths have the potential to do devastating harm to California's agricultural economy because they feed on a wide variety of valuable crops.

(continued on Page 7)

The Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association consists of residents interested in preserving and improving the quality of life in our neighborhood. Neighborhood boundaries are El Camino Real, Shoreline Boulevard, Evelyn Avenue, and Highways 85 and 237.

Planning, Training are Key to Disaster Response Effort

By Aaron Grossman, CERT Chair

OMVNA CERT is the Community Emergency Response Team, the neighborhood group focused on preparing our neighborhood for a regional disaster and helping with post-disaster communication and response. We will respond to any event that overwhelms the ability of fire, police, and other public services to maintain public health and safety. A major earthquake is the most likely event, but not the only one possible. Public power and telephone communications are likely to fail, and public water supplies are uncertain. It will be up to each neighborhood to maintain its well-being.

Our members will first make sure their own families are safe. Then we will use our radios to coordinate with each other to survey each area, assess the situation, and determine the response. OMVNA CERT provides the communication and coordination structure to help the neighborhood get through a disaster. We are recognized by the fire, police, Red Cross, and other public service agencies as a designated emergency community service organization. Our members will interface with those agencies through our ham radio volunteers.

Naturally, the more skills and training a CERT member has the more he/she can do to help out. However, there is no minimum level of training required beyond a 45 minute orientation and commitment to help. We purposely keep the time required to a minimum. There is a ten minute radio check each month, an annual two

hour meeting and drill on a Sunday morning in January or early February, and usually another two hour exercise during the summer. We encourage all of our members to participate as much as possible in these practice events, but attendance is not mandatory.

The goal is to have at least one OMVNA CERT member on each of the approximately 60 blocks in Old Mountain View. Our 42 current members cover 35 blocks, so we need at least 25 more members. The benefits of joining CERT include getting to know more of your neighbors, helping them get ready by giving them one of our free preparedness hand-out sheets, knowing better how to get your own family prepared, and the use of a disaster team backpack for as long as you are a CERT member. Each backpack is valued at \$100 and includes a two way radio, heavy duty long life LED flashlight, hard hat, vest, and an assortment of disaster response materials.

If this interests you, e-mail me at [aagrossman@yahoo.com](mailto:aagrossman@yahoo.com) or call me on my cell phone: 408 202-2802. We will set up an informal 45 minute orientation session and get you on board. This is a fun and easy way to get involved, and can greatly benefit your own family.

Trail Extension is on Track

Construction of Stevens Creek Trail under El Camino Real is on schedule to finish next spring. This exciting new stretch of trail will create a safe and attractive pedestrian and bicycle path alongside the creek, completely separate from the busy traffic above. South of El Camino the trail will

extend to Sleeper Avenue. Further south, the difficult last stretch will be built to MVHS and two over-crossings of Highway 85 will re-connect the Dale and Heatherstone neighborhoods to the rest of the city.

Trailblazer Race Sept. 30

The imminent completion of the Mountain View portion of the Stevens Creek Trail is one giant step toward realizing the dream of the Friends of Stevens Creek Trail: a continuous trail from the bay to the mountains. The Friends of Stevens Creek Trail is a 501(c)3 non-profit that organizes public and private trail support, trail and creek clean-ups, and education programs. As the only organization focused entirely on promoting the trail and wildlife corridor, FOSCT works in all four cities along the creek: Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Los Altos and Cupertino.

The Friends are hosting the 13th annual Trailblazer Race and Walk on **Sunday September 30**. The race is FOSCT's major annual fundraiser. It will start at 8:30 a.m. by La Avenida alongside Stevens Creek Trail, will include USATF certified 5K and 10K runs, a 5K trail walk, and free children's races afterwards. Go to [www.stevenscreektrail.org](http://www.stevenscreektrail.org) for more details and to register.

Old Mountain View residents are encouraged to bicycle there on the trail and take advantage of a free bike corral provided by the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition.

Volunteers are needed to help with registration and other tasks. Please send an e-mail to [aagrossman@yahoo.com](mailto:aagrossman@yahoo.com) if you can help for an hour or two.

Apple Moth (continued)  
Quarantine Rules

- 1) Plant material - including fruits, vegetables, herbs, plant parts and cut flowers - cannot move from or within a quarantined area. In other words, if you grow it on your property, it must stay on your property.
- 2) Set out your yard waste as usual. Green yard waste that is removed from quarantine areas by municipal pickup services is being treated to ensure that any moths or larvae contained within it are killed.
- 3) Cooked, dried or home-canned foods may leave the quarantine area.
- 4) Plants and plant products produced outside a quarantine zone

can move into a quarantined area. But once it's in the zone, it stays in the zone.

- 5) Gardeners at community and school gardens should contact the county agriculture office at 1553 Berger Drive in San Jose to schedule an inspection; (408) 918-4600. Once a garden has been inspected, produce may be removed from the site for a specified period.
- 6) Movement of plant materials from retail and wholesale nurseries with the quarantine zone is OK, as these businesses are operating under a compliance agreement and have been inspected.

A map of the quarantined areas is online at this URL: [www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/pdep/LBAM\\_QUAR\\_SCLARA\\_SMATEO\\_07.jpg](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/pdep/LBAM_QUAR_SCLARA_SMATEO_07.jpg)

Don't Flush Old Medicine

Have you seen the three-eyed fish from *The Simpsons*? If it didn't get that way from a radiation overdose, the culprit was probably low levels of Prozac, Cipro or some other medicine that got into a creek or the bay because it was flushed down a toilet instead of being disposed of properly.

On **Thursday, Sept. 13** you'll be able to safely dispose of old medications at "Thursday Night Live" on Castro Street. Volunteers from the Fire Department will be stationed near California Street to take care of them.

The Regional Water Quality Control Plant at 2501 Embarcadero Way in Palo Alto accepts medicine drop offs Monday through Friday, 8 - 5. See [www.cleanbay.org](http://www.cleanbay.org) for more information or call 650 329-2598.



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## Steering Committee Meets

Future meetings: **September 10 and October 8** at 7:30 p.m. at 580 Castro in the Chamber of Commerce Board Room. Everyone is welcome to attend!

## Steering Committee News

### July 9

City employee **Peter Skinner** alerted us to the upcoming "Thursday Night Live" events on Castro Street this summer. The city is paying for these events, which were suggested by the Central Business Association.

Treasurer **Aaron Grossman** reported a balance of \$11,776.

We continued the planning for the Aug. 19 Ice Cream Social.

For several years we have shared a PO Box with **Marian Concus**, who has recently moved out of the area. We will investigate ways to continue to receive postal mail at a PO Box.

### August 13

The Committee learned that OMVNA has received a tax bill of \$800 for 2004 and 2005 (see article in column 3). **Aaron Grossman** is investigating ways to resolve this situation.

We have \$10,933 in our bank account, but will be spending more than \$1,000 on the Ice Cream Social.

Several Steering Committee members have decided to step down from the Committee in 2008, necessitating a significant recruiting effort.

A neighbor contacted us about underage patrons at the Monte Carlo night club. **Kim Copher** will look into this situation.

## City Seeks Developer for Affordable Housing in OMV

By Roy Hayter, Chair, Advocates for Affordable Housing

The City has issued a Request for Proposal to non-profit developers to bid on the Evelyn Avenue affordable housing project for very low income families. Applications are due September 24.

Preference for renting an apartment in the new development will be given to those who live or work in Mountain View. The City will provide funding to prepay the long term ground lease at fair market value. \$7 million has been set aside from various housing funds. The one-acre site is zoned for a maximum density of 50 units.

To learn more about affordable housing in Mountain View, visit [web.mac.com/aah751/iWeb/AAH/](http://web.mac.com/aah751/iWeb/AAH/)

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## OMVNA Gets a Tax Bill

By Aaron Grossman, Treasurer

OMVNA may be facing back taxes of \$800 a year for 2005 and 2006. OMVNA was registered as a California corporation as of April 29, 2004 but did not complete the necessary paperwork with the state Franchise Tax Board to become a Public Benefit (non-profit) organization and qualify for exemption from taxes. As I understand it, this happened because of miscommunication between several successive OMVNA board chairs. OMVNA also needs to register with the IRS as a 501c4 Social Welfare Organization to establish federal tax exemption.

I am currently working to submit the state paperwork and will ask for retroactive tax exemption. If that fails, our current funds are more than adequate to pay those bills. Naturally, I would much rather put the money into future local activities. If anyone has expertise in these matters and is willing to advise us on how best to proceed, please contact me at [aagrossman@yahoo.com](mailto:aagrossman@yahoo.com).

The **OMVNA Newsletter** is distributed to 1900 households and 175 downtown businesses by dedicated volunteers. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the OMVNA Steering Committee.

**Let us know what you think!**

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## Your Neighborhood Mortgage Advisor



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## The Critter Column

### Ravens vs. Crows

By Jack Perkins

We're seeing a lot more crows in the neighborhood. They are loud, dissonant and sometimes contemptuous. I don't like them.

Ravens are a different story. If you see a black bird and think "that crow is huge!" you're looking at a raven. Ravens are far more intelligent than crows and more interesting to observe.



Pioneer Park has two resident ravens. They croak rather than caw and they have a complex vocabulary that is often very musical. They are fine mimics and can mimic the human voice.

The common raven (*Corvus corax*) has the largest brain and highest intelligence of any bird. Their IQ is on a par with wolves.

Spend 15 minutes watching them and you'll see they are not just reacting to their environment – they are thinking. Sometimes I swear they are pondering problems, working out solutions in their minds before trying them.

Ravens eat carrion and garbage every chance they get. They will dislodge baby squirrels from their nests and eat them. They also eat rats, nestlings, eggs, and insects.

Raven populations have increased since 1980 and they are successfully adapting to our urban environment.

## Considering Selling Your Home? Not Sure Who to Turn To?

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## LMV Scholarship Winner

**Teresa Testa** is the recipient of OMVNA's scholarship to Leadership Mountain View. Teresa grew up in Los Altos and still roots for St. Francis Lancers. She now lives on View Street. Before returning to her native area she studied at Notre Dame in South Bend and earned her Masters degree in psychology at NYU. Today, she works as a sales analyst at the Electric Power Research Institute.

She loves living in Old Mountain View with her border collie, Mollie. She especially enjoys the restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores, rollerblading or cycling on the Steven's Creek Trail, and the Farmers' Market. Teresa also enjoys making jewelry and tutoring students. She's excited to take on new adventures as member of Leadership Mountain View's class of 2008.

## Ken's House (continued)

things. We enjoy entertaining, so we are constantly feeling overcrowded when we have more than one family over at a time.

So, like many of you, the question we're asking is: do we stay or do we move? Staying is easier and more affordable. The house works, it's just not ideal for us. If we move, will we really be able to pull out enough equity to buy a larger home? Even if we can, how comfortable will we be paying so much more property tax?

Sigh. This certainly is not an easy decision. I have spent a great amount of energy and time getting to know my neighbors and being active in the neighborhood. Simply put, I like it here and you all have helped me. Ultimately, we will decide what is best for our family and go forward from there. Until then, I predict angst in my living arrangement.

## New Moms Meet-up

By Beth Wilson

I have lived in Old Mountain View for three years, but it wasn't until "baby made three" in March that I suddenly noticed that new parents – and babies -- were coming out of the woodwork! I thought that it would be nice to connect with other OMV parents to share experiences and have a little fun, so I started a group just for OMV parents at [meetup.com](http://meetup.com).

We plan to meet for walks, coffee, play groups, downtown MV park/coffee meet-ups, etc.

Check out our web page [sahm.meetup.com/2399/](http://sahm.meetup.com/2399/) for more information. As a member you can e-mail the group and post messages. We will set up events based on the needs and interests of members. Please feel free to invite local new parents to join. The more the merrier!

## Energy Action

### Navigating the Complexities of Carbon Offsets

By Bruce Karney

Back in high school history class you may have learned about a practice of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Roman Catholic Church called selling indulgences. In a nutshell (and with apologies to those who hold different views on this practice 490 years later), the controversial part of this idea was that one could obtain forgiveness for past sins by donating money to the Church to support good works. The practice of selling indulgences was held in such revulsion by some priests and bishops that it was a primary cause of the schism that led to the formation of Protestantism.

Let's fast-forward to 2007, and move from religion to global warming – a topic that many view with near-religious zeal. Are carbon offsets a valid way to respond to the climate crisis, or are they a just a way for environmentalists to salve their consciences for a price?

### The Carbon Footprint

As I described in last month's column, it is not hard to calculate your carbon footprint – the amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) you put into the atmosphere each year as a result of driving, flying, burning natural gas and using electricity. Last year my family's CO<sub>2</sub> production was 26 tons and we expect it will be 18 tons this year. That's 9 tons per year for my wife and another 9 for me.

Unfortunately, the planet's ability to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, given the

current human population of 6.6 billion, is only about 3 tons per person. So, despite our best efforts to date, my wife and I are making global warming worse with each passing year. Like most residents of North America and Europe, we are creating more carbon dioxide pollution than the planet can handle.

We have plans to reduce our carbon footprint further, but so far we can only see how to get to about 7 tons/person/year without making larger changes in our way of living than we are prepared to undertake. Do we have any other options? We do, and that's where carbon offsets come in.

### The Big Idea

The main idea behind carbon offsets is that we can offset the harm from our emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> if we invest in activities that either

- 1) Prevent the release of greenhouse gasses
- 2) Remove greenhouse gasses from the atmosphere and safely sequester them

One example of the first kind of offset would be to invest in a project to capture methane that emerges from landfills as buried trash decomposes. Methane is a very powerful greenhouse gas, and is the primary constituent of natural gas. By capturing the methane before it disperses into the atmosphere and burning it for heat or to generate electricity, the methane capture project makes a direct and measurable reduction in the release of greenhouse gasses. Here in Mountain View we have an excellent example of this kind of project at Alza, which has

tapped into the methane being generated by our closed landfill

The classic example of greenhouse gas storage and sequestration is tree planting. If my wife and I were to buy an acre of land that had already been cleared and plant trees on it, within a few years those trees would absorb many tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year as they grew.

If they were long-lived tree species, and if we arranged that the land would never be sold and the trees never harvested, then they would lock up our excess carbon emissions for several centuries until they died of old age, fell, rotted, and released their store of CO<sub>2</sub> back into the atmosphere. Assuming we planted enough trees, we could sleep as guilt-free during our remaining years as any 16th century indulgence-buying nobleman.

### Where to Get Them

The most convenient source of carbon offsets for natural gas and electricity use is PG&E's new ClimateSmart program, launched in July. It allows an average family to offset its carbon emissions for \$4.31 per month. See [www.pge.com/about\\_us/environment/features/climatesmart.html](http://www.pge.com/about_us/environment/features/climatesmart.html) for details or to sign up.

For auto travel and air travel, I recommend the program offered by Acterra and the Sierra Club. See [www.cool-it.us/index.php?refer=acterra](http://www.cool-it.us/index.php?refer=acterra) for more information or to sign up.

An excellent article on this topic appeared in the Aug. 26 *Mercury News* under the title "Getting Smart About Buying Carbon Offsetting" You can find it online at [mercurynews.com](http://mercurynews.com).



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