



OMVNA Newsletter

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A few minutes with...

Julie Lovins

by Velva Rowell

I first met Julie Lovins in 2001 when I volunteered to help deliver the OMVNA Newsletter. We got to know each other a bit better when I became editor in 2003 because she was not only the newsletter distribution coordinator but also one of my writers. I like to think that we make a good team, so I was excited to learn more about my friend and colleague.

Julie opened our conversation by saying, "My personal motto is 'keep moving.' I walk a lot and people see me walking and I observe things." She also shared her favorite quote: "An opportunist is a person who, finding himself in hot water, decides to take a bath." Our conversation moved rapidly through several topics because Julie has an interest in many aspects of the community.

Julie moved to Mountain View in 1979 and has lived in Old Mountain View since 1981. Her first volunteer involvement was with OMVNA shortly after it's founding, however she didn't get really involved with that group until the mid-nineties. She served the Steering Committee as the liaison to the Downtown Committee for two years and then served (continued on page 2)

OMVNA General Meeting Saturday April 12 Stargazing!

When: Saturday April 12th after dark (approximately 8:00)

Where: Mercy-Bush Park

We're having a Stargazing party for our next OMVNA General Meeting. The AstroWizard (www.astrowizard.com) will be joining us for a star talk, and refreshments (coffee, cocoa, etc) will be provided. Watch OMVNA Talk for further details about this fun event!

From the Chair

by Noam Livnat

When we bought our house here in Old Mountain View, we acquired a new family member. My wife's family's dog, Opie, came to live with us from her home in Orange County. Opie's a loving, gentle dog – great with our kids and well behaved. But despite her twelve years, the spirit of the West is strong in Opie. She loves getting loose and sniffing the neighborhood news from bushes, trees, and fire hydrants. And there's the rub. Opie loves to get out, but she isn't much enamored with asking for permission or verifying that a responsible adult is along for the ride. If we leave our front door open for a second while bringing in groceries she's *Adios Amigos!* She also excels at sneaking out the side gate if someone carelessly leaves it unlocked (I suspect she's figured out how to unlock it herself, but have no proof yet. She refuses

to cooperate with the investigation.) In the few years she's lived with us, she's found her way out dozens of times. It wouldn't be so bad if this happened only while we were home, but it often happens while we're away.

To our delight, every time our escape artist has fled the premises, some caring person has found her. Some call and keep her at their place until we're able to come by, like the person who stopped her car to catch Opie and fed her doggie biscuits while waiting for us to pick her up. Often they lead her back home, put her in the yard, and leave a message on our answering machine. Until now, we haven't been able to thank all those anonymous helpers. So to all of you who have found our bush-sniffing, joy-ride-taking German-shepherd border-collie mix, brought her home and took good care of her along the (continued on page 2)

Julie Lovins (continued)

on the Downtown Committee for two more years as an independent businesswoman.

According to Julie, "my big interest in the neighborhood is in improving communication." This is what brought her to the role that you, the reader, are probably most familiar with. Julie has been the distribution coordinator of the OMVNA Newsletter for approximately ten years (she doesn't precisely remember how long she's been doing this job). She and her team of collators and delivery people distribute over 2000 copies of eight issues per year.

Like many members of OMVNA, Julie expanded the scope of her volunteer work after participating in Leadership Mountain View (she's in the class of 2001). As a result of this program, she started working as a volunteer for the Mountain View Friends of the Library taking one or two shifts per week in the lobby shop at the library and helping to coordinate the online book sale which is managed on Amazon. The Friends of the Library raises money for the library to assist with the purchase of things such as extra copies of bestsellers and

brochure racks, as well as providing funds to help ensure that essential library programs can continue.

Julie also volunteers for the League of Women Voters as their Mountain View city council observer. She attends almost every council meeting in this capacity. She also does other work for the League in order to improve general participation in the political process and to improve the process. As she says, "I try to keep track of what's going on, and that is for the purpose of communication and action."

Recently Julie has turned part of her focus to the environment. She is a member of the Mountain View Cool Cities Team (<http://coolcities.us/cityProfiles.php?city=132&state=CA>) which does outreach connected with global warming. She is also a member of the recently appointed Mountain View Sustainability Task Force which is an advisory group to city council. You can find more information about this group by going to the City of Mountain View home page at <http://www.ci.mtnview.ca.us/> and clicking on (continued on page 7)

Solar Buyers Group is Back

Last year Bruce Karney organized a city-wide Solar Buyers Group that led to 119 families deciding to invest in rooftop solar photovoltaic systems. This level of activity made Mountain View the #3 city statewide for adopting residential solar in 2007, behind only San Jose and San Diego.

This year former Mayor Mike Kasperzak is leading a similar effort. Public information meetings will be held in March and April. See <http://www.solarcity.com/tabid/133/Default.aspx> for dates and locations.

As gasoline approaches \$4 per gallon, we are all reminded that the price of electricity from PG&E has nowhere to go but up. State rebates for solar are ratcheting down, but, when combined with the \$2000 Federal tax credit, they still pay about 30% of the cost of the system. A typical solar system will cost \$12,000 - 18,000 after government incentives and will last 30-40 years.

For more information, please contact Mike Kasperzak at mkasperzak@mediates.com.

Steering Committee Dates

Future meetings: **Monday Feb. 11** and **Mar. 10** at 7:30 p.m. at 580 Castro in the Chamber of Commerce Board Room. Everyone is welcome to attend! Agendas are sent to the OMVNA talk e-mail list a few days before each meeting. To suggest a topic, send e-mail to: chair@omvna.org

OMVNA Steering Committee Update

At the January meeting of the OMVNA Steering Committee, it was decided that we need a post office box to serve as a permanent physical address for this corporation. Our new mailing is:

**OMVNA
650 Castro Street #120-500
Mountain View, CA 94041**

This mailbox will be checked every couple of weeks, so urgent financial business should still be delivered to Aaron Grossman at 234 W. Dana Street.

Starting with our January issue, we have decided to switch to printing this publication on recycled paper. The decision was finalized at the February meeting. This will cost us approximately \$84 per issue, but we believe the savings to the environment justify this decision.

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Critter Column Relaxation Techniques

by Jack Perkins

The Silicon Valley needs a name change: Stress Valley is more like it.

The stress of raising young kids, of our jobs, and of financial pressure, all strains our ability to stay in control.

Getting away to relax, really relax, means driving long distances. But then, after relaxing, we must drive long distances home (which isn't very relaxing). It's even stressful worrying about not having enough time to get away to relax. Nature is always there to help humans relax, but having enough time to go to Yosemite, skiing, Ocean Beach, or Carmel is often difficult.

If you yearn for nature and can't get away, you can always take a short walk downtown and grab a big coffee. Try not to sit at Starbucks, or Redrock, or Dana Street Roasting, but rather head to Pioneer Park instead. Grab a bench, and start bird watching. It's spring so you'll hear them calling for mates, which will help you locate them. What kind of bird is it? A Junco, Oak Titmouse, Chickadee, Bewick's Wren, Black Phoebe, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Nuthatch, Towhee, American Gold Finch, Bullock's oriole... they're all there. Try identifying them by their calls. Your mind will disconnect from the modern world.

Try having lunch or an early dinner at Cascal, and sit outside. The local Ravens nest in the 40 foot tree right in front of you. The waiters will point out their nests. (continued on Page 7)

Soap Box Derby Returns to OMV

by Hugh Donagher

On June 1st, the Silicon Valley Soap Box Derby will return to Old Mountain View. Building on the momentum and success of last year's event, the organizers are excited to bring this event back to "the perfect hill" in Old Mountain View: Dana Street between Calderon and Pioneer. Many anxious soap box drivers, ages 8-17, are looking forward to their second chance at racing for the right to represent Silicon Valley at the All American Soap Box Derby at fabled Derby Downs in Akron, Ohio at the end of July.

Approximately forty drivers are expected to enter this year's event, competing in the Stock and SuperStock divisions. These drivers race in a bracket that gives all of them more than one chance to advance in the standings. Each heat they race consists of two phases. In the first phase, two drivers race down the hill. At the finish line, the wheels from the two cars are swapped, and the cars swap lanes, after which the cars are returned to the starting line and the two drivers race again. The aggregate of the times from the two runs determine the winner of the heat. The winner of each heat advances to the winners' bracket and the other driver advances to the consolation bracket. This continues throughout the day until the winners are eventually declared at the end of the day's racing.

In addition to the traditional Soap Box Derby, this year's event will again feature a SuperKids Classic, expanded to include more kids facing different challenges, such as blindness and low vision.

In the SuperKids races, children who are physically or developmentally disabled race in cars built for two that are piloted by qualified Soap Box Derby drivers. Like the winners of the Stock and Super Stock divisions, the winner of the SuperKids Classic will advance to the National SuperKids Classic, held concurrently with the All American Soap Box Derby in July.

In the weeks leading up to Derby Day, all drivers must build their own cars, participate in mandatory safety and driving clinics, earn their "driver's license" and finally, submit their car for weighing, inspection and impound the night before the race.

Committee meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at Clocktower Coffee Conference Center, 425 North Whisman Road, beginning at 7:00 pm. Anyone is welcome to attend. If any parents and kids are interested in participating in this year's race, attending a meeting is a good start, but an email to OMV resident Hugh Donagher (hugh.donagher@yahoo.com) will put you in touch with the organizers.

From the Chair (continued)
way – thank you. And for those of you who haven't chanced across Opie yet, thank you in advance!

Annoying as Opie's escapades are, they offer a gratifying revelation. We live in a community where it's taken for granted that people will help a dog find its way back home. And most do it so matter-of-factly that they don't leave their phone number so you can thank them properly later.

Soon

by Shelly King

There's a Japanese maple that sits outside my apartment window. Right now it's bursting with pink blooms and deep red leaves. I came home crabby from work today, but on my way to the mailbox, a breeze shook the limbs and I was showered in a pink petals. They fell in my hair and on my shoulders like whispers saying "soon, soon." It gave me a case of the giggles.

Spring is coming. I have to step outside to judge if I need a jacket. Sidewalk tables along Castro Street are full. When I open my front door, my indoor cat scurries past me for a few precious moments of sunshine before something moves and she runs back inside. Today a neighbor asked me what we're doing for Easter.

Soon windows will open, barbecues will be planned, and margarita machines will come out of storage. I'll start hearing the distant cheers from the baseball field off Miramonte. I'll have to decide what kind of tomatoes to plant this year.

There's a lot to be said about Spring. Renewal, rebirth. It's all been said before. But I think it's mostly the change I crave, the anticipation. In the Fall, I love the crisp air with its promise of hot toddies, rich stews, and the holidays. In Spring it's the blooms and the sun and the rich earth plump with rain. Winter and Summer are just plateaus of what Fall and Spring build to. They are like an old movie I watch over and over. Spring and Fall keep me guessing. They get my attention. (continued on page 5)

From the Editor Rediscovering the Neighborhood

by Velva Rowell

Two years ago, Dave, Evelyn and I moved out of our 1913 house in order to do a major remodel. Eighteen months later, we returned to our neighborhood and began the long process of getting reacquainted with the people and places of Old Mountain View. Some of this was accomplished in the fall, but winter weather and commitments kept us from really enjoying the neighborhood.

Now that spring is here, we are able to really explore on the weekends. Weekly walks on Stevens Creek Trail with our beagles, and weekend walks downtown for lunch or dinner help to really make us feel connected to Old Mountain View in a way that we dearly missed when we were living in another neighborhood.

We enjoy walking downtown in the afternoon and seeing the new stores that opened on Castro Street during the time we were gone and rediscovering old favorites. Dana Street Roasting Company and Books Inc. are beginning to see us again. We are also enjoying the convenience of having a new Long's downtown. There are several new place downtown where I will look when it is time to supplement my wardrobe for spring.

It's almost warm enough to walk to Cascal and have sangria with our tapas. Don Giovanni, the first restaurant Dave and I went to together, is still serving a menu that will allow us to order our first date meal on our anniversary if we like. Evening walks to Hong

Kong Bakery and Ryowa noodle shop are something to look forward to in the coming months.

New discoveries include Xahn, the Vietnamese restaurant that is rapidly becoming one of our favorites, Naminami which serves Kyoto style Japanese food in a very calming setting, and Le Petite Bistro which isn't really in downtown, but it's close enough that we can get there easily when what we really want is French food.

Having been gone for eighteen months is just serving to reaffirm something that we had begun to take for granted. Old Mountain View is a great neighborhood, and we are glad to be back.

On a newsletter-related note, I would like to thank everyone who took the time to comment to me about the January issue. My goal in this is for the newsletter to be a tool that brings our neighborhood closer together.

To that end, I would like to extend an invitation to anyone who is interested in writing for this publication. I am looking for a few reliable writers who are willing to work to a deadline and write stories that I assign to them. I'd like to use this publication as another way to involve volunteers who might not necessarily want to serve on the OMOVNA board.

If you are interested in writing for this publication and have a story idea or are willing to write a story I have in mind, please contact me at editor@omvna.org because I would love to talk to you!

Soon (continued)

I grew up back East with much more extreme versions of the seasons, and many of my fellow expatriates complain we don't really have seasons here in the Bay Area. But I disagree. The seasons in the East are swelling operas. Our seasons here are string quartets. They aren't muted, just subtle.

I'm in a coffee shop downtown while I write this. The door is open, but it's not too cold. In a few months, it'll be hard to find a unoccupied table in here at this time of night. I'll be ordering an iced coffee drink instead of a hot one. I'll pin my hair off my neck. But tonight, there's just those whispers in the air that comes in the open door. We're not there yet. It's only just now starting to change. Soon, soon.

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

Let us know what you think!

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Relaxation (continued)

Have some sangria! Have more sangria. What are the Ravens doing?

If you're not too sluggish you can walk along the Steven's Creek Trail from Landel's to Central Ave. You'll identify every bird along the way because of all that time in Pioneer Park. You may see a Merganser because you'll be in a Riparian Woodland.

If you have post-stroller kids, take the oldest fishing. Steven's Creek Reservoir is a 12 minute drive from OMVN. The DFG starts planting trout the week of March 9th, and they stop in May. Your expedition may turn into tossing rocks in the water and catching a crawdad, but that's fun too. Keep your eye out for Ospreys; they nest there, and sometimes you can see them plucking fish off the surface of the water.

Little kid fishing tip: Use pliers

to crimp down the barbs (not the points) of the hooks. Your kid will probably hook you. That's pretty good for getting your mind off things too.



Interested in helping deliver the OMVNA Newsletter? Contact Julie Lovins at 964-0368.

Julie Lovins (continued)

Environmental Sustainability. About this new group, Julie says "Participation by the larger community is very much desired, and you will be hearing about ways you can participate."

Julie's favorite volunteer job is coordinating a small agricultural group to bring boxes of organic produce directly from farmers. More information about this group is available at www.fullbellyfarm.com.

When I asked why she does all of this and more, Julie responded that "my goal is to leave the community better than I found it."

This is part of a series of ongoing articles about people who are active in our neighborhood. If you have a friend or neighbor whose activities you would like to see featured in this series, please contact editor@omvna.org.

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