



## San Anselmo News

Debra Stutsman, Town Manager  
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February 6, 2009

### **Tunstead Bridge Dedication**

On Saturday, January 31, about 25 people gathered to dedicate the new Tunstead bridge and walkway. The bridge was dedicated to Supervisor Hal Brown, for his two decades of support to the Town of San Anselmo.

The dedication was a surprise for Supervisor Brown, and he was, indeed, surprised. His contributions to San Anselmo include participation in the Millennium Playground, Red Hill Community Park, Downtown Beautification, assistance after the 12/31/05 flood, and scholarships for Recreation Department program participants. In addition, Supervisor Brown was instrumental in creating a coalition of Ross Valley towns and cities and the County of Marin, with the goal of reducing the risk of flooding in the Ross Valley.

Hal, many thanks for your continued support of San Anselmo.

### **Refuse & Recycling Subcommittee Update**

The Town's franchise agreement with Marin Sanitary for refuse and recycling services ends on January 31, 2009. In order to facilitate negotiations for a new agreement, the contract has been extended through July 31, 2010.

Last March the Town Council appointed Barbara Thornton and Ford Greene to the Refuse and Recycling Subcommittee, charged with reviewing the terms of the Town's current refuse and recycling contract, making requests for additional information from Marin Sanitary Service, reviewing the information received and making recommendations to the Town's negotiating team regarding a new contract with Marin Sanitary.

In May, San Anselmo residents Carey Lando and Richard Taylor were appointed by the Town Council to serve with Councilmembers Greene and Thornton on the subcommittee. Since that date, the subcommittee has met six times on July 23, September 24, October 30, November 24, December 3, 2008 and January 15, 2009.

The subcommittee's focus has been on the Town's rate structure. Marin Sanitary has advised that the contract signed in 2004 had a number of disadvantages to the company. In addition, they reported that the method of increasing rates outlined in the contract has resulted in rates that have not kept up with the cost of providing the service. San Anselmo's rates are among the lowest in Marin County. They concluded by advising that the Town may be faced with the prospect of significant increases in rates or a reduction in service levels.

At the meeting of January 15, 2009, the subcommittee agreed that as a first step it is critical to understand all the components of the cost of providing refuse and recycling services in San Anselmo. Marin Sanitary recommends that the Town engage a CPA firm to do a rate review of San Anselmo's rates, to be paid for by Marin Sanitary. The rate review would help the subcommittee better understand the cost of the various services enjoyed by San Anselmo customers and provide a basis for negotiating a new contract with Marin Sanitary.

The Town Council agreed with the subcommittee and staff is in the process of contracting with a CPA firm to do the rate review. In the meantime, our refuse and recycling rates will increase by 3.48%, the amount allowed for in the current contract.

## **Mid-Year Budget Review**

At the last meeting, the Town Council approved the mid-year budget review, allocating funds mid year for expenditures that were not anticipated at the time of budget preparation. Council previously directed staff to limit all mid year expenditures to those that were required by business necessity.

As reported last week, those expenditures included the replacement of our emergency generator, a compressor for the emergency horn, and an allocation to the Insurance Fund to cover higher than expected Workers Compensation costs. In addition, funds were allocated to the Fire Department to account for an unanticipated delay in a contract change with Sleepy Hollow and to the Planning Department for the State required update to the Housing Element.

The mid-year budget staff report also presented a preliminary assessment of the Town's financial outlook for 2009-10. San Anselmo, like all other California municipalities, is facing financial uncertainties. The State of California's unprecedented budget deficit, the sinking economy and ever increasing expenditures are all cause for alarm and caution.

The San Anselmo Town Council and staff are well versed in dealing with financial crises. In 2003, the Town experienced a declining financial situation, due to State takeaways and a poor economy causing revenues to fall. At the same time, expenditures for employee health and pensions soared due to industry wide increases in health care and very poor stock market performance.

Between 2003 and 2006, the Town took action to reduce expenditures. The number of staff members was reduced from 63 to 49, a 22% cut. Other actions included reducing the number of open hours at Town Hall, eliminating employee raises and training costs, delaying capital projects and equipment purchases, reducing Department budgets and drastically reducing the number of open hours for the Library. In addition, the Town Council negotiated significantly lower cost pension plans for all new employees.

On December 31, 2005 San Anselmo experienced a devastating flood that affected many residents and merchants. The flood rendered a number of public buildings inoperable, including the Police Department, Fire Department, Town Hall Council Chambers and the first floor of the Library. Since 2006, much of the Town's staff time and resources has been devoted to flood recovery. With the scheduled completion of the downtown Fire Station and the Town Hall floodproofing project in late Spring, the recovery effort will be finally completed.

Looking forward to 2009-10, the Town Council is continuing to be very cautious and fiscally conservative. Because of the Town's watchful management over the last five years, we currently are in a reasonably stable position financially. However, property tax revenue, the Town's largest and most reliable form of revenue, continues to drop. In 2000, San Anselmo's property tax revenue increased 8%. For 2009-10, staff projects it will be just 3%. State funding sources to cities, while not specifically targeted as of now, are always vulnerable to State cuts. The poor economy is a cause of great concern to all.

The San Anselmo Town Council and staff are carefully planning for the next several challenging years. This includes contingency planning for the possibility of reduced revenues and increased expenditures.

If you have questions about the Town's financial situation, please don't hesitate to contact me.

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February 13, 2009

### Community Emergency Response Training

In any type of large scale disaster, it is necessary to use volunteers under professional guidance and to ensure that as many people as possible are self reliant.

With this in mind, the Fire Departments and Districts in Marin County are offering a program in Community Emergency response Training (CERT) for the public.

The program is designed to emphasize hands-on experience, and is taught to Marin County residents by Marin Fire Agency personnel. The following classes will train and prepare volunteers to achieve higher levels of skills in:

- Emergency Preparedness
- Disaster First Aid/Triage
- Fire Prevention/Suppression
- Light Search and Rescue
- Utilities

In our area, the 15 hour course is available over a Thursday night and two Saturdays. Thursday night is from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and held at the Corte Madera Council Chambers. Saturdays are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the College of Marin. The schedule is as follows:

February 19 (Thursday), 21 & 28 (Saturdays)

July 16 (Thursday), 18 & 25 (Saturdays)

November 5 (Thursday), 7 & 14 (Saturdays)

The cost is \$30 per person, to be paid at the time of registration. The registration deadline is the Monday before each class session begins. For scheduling information or to register: Call 927-5077 or go to [www.cortemaderafire.org](http://www.cortemaderafire.org)

### Mountain Lions and Turkeys

The Humane Society advises that in addition to sharing our space with coyotes, other wild animals are often sighted in our area, including mountain lions and turkeys.

The Marine Humane Society wants to know of all sightings of mountain lions, even if you aren't altogether sure what you may have seen. If you encounter a mountain lion, use vexing techniques, by making the animal feel unwelcome. These techniques include shouting, making loud, unusual noises, spraying them with a garden hose and throwing small objects toward them. Mainly, however, if you see a mountain lion be observant and act "big." Mountain lions mainly prey on deer, so they may be found wherever there are abundant deer populations. For more information, go to [www.mountainlion.org](http://www.mountainlion.org).

Large populations of wild turkeys have taken up refuge in many neighborhoods. Humans should try to coexist by not creating a habitat that turkeys enjoy. Don't feed them under any circumstances. Wild turkeys can become a nuisance and the males can be very assertive, sometimes intimidating people. Garden hoses and loud noises can be great tools to keep them moving. Turkeys are capable of full flight and will often roost in the high tops of trees. The Humane Society will respond to calls about people feeding wild turkeys and will let people know that it is a violation to feed them. The Humane Society can be reached at 883-4621.

## **Potholes**

The Town's Public Works crew works very hard to fill dangerous potholes in the street when they appear. In order for the asphalt to adhere, however, the potholes have to be filled when the ground is dry. You can help by letting us know about potholes that need to be filled.

If you see a pothole that needs filling, please call the crew at 258-4601.

## **Goodbye to Doug Long**

Community Services Director Doug Long is leaving the San Anselmo Recreation Department to assume the role of Parks & Recreation Director for the City of San Carlos.

Doug has been with San Anselmo since 2005. He has ably led the Recreation Department through the last four difficult fiscal years. In addition to running the Recreation Department, Doug served as the Executive Director of the Red Hill Community Park JPA, phase one of which is nearing completion. Congratulations to Doug on his accomplishments in San Anselmo and best wishes in San Carlos.

## **Speeding on Sir Francis Drake Blvd.**

The Police Department regularly receives complaints about drivers speeding on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. The speed limit on Drake Blvd. is between 30 and 35 miles per hour, depending on location. It is critical that drivers observe the posted speed limit to avoid accidents involving others cars and pedestrians.

In order to accommodate two lanes of traffic in both directions on Sir Francis Drake Blvd., there is no room for street parking on Drake Blvd. from the Hub to the Fairfax border. Due to the volume of traffic regularly experienced, these lanes are much needed to accommodate traffic. Unfortunately, this means that there is no buffer zone between the traffic on Drake and the sidewalks accessed by pedestrians.

**This week there were two separate accidents involving collisions with utility poles in the 1400 block of SF Drake. This is a residential neighborhood and it is imperative that drivers slow down and drive carefully.**

In the interest of residential, pedestrian and vehicular safety, please **carefully** observe the posted speed limits on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. Your cooperation will ensure a safer San Anselmo for residents and for our children.

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February 20, 2009

### Shop San Anselmo

The Town's Economic Development Subcommittee, Ford Greene and Peter Breen, meets regularly with leaders of the Town's business community. Attendees include representatives from the Antique Dealers Association, the Downtown San Anselmo Merchants Association, the San Anselmo Chamber of Commerce, the Red Hill Merchants Association and the Greenfield Merchants.

The intent of the meetings is to work together to explore common problems and find solutions. During these tough economic times, San Anselmo's business community is really struggling. We can all help by shopping locally whenever possible. Shopping locally helps the local economy, keeps our shop owners thriving and keeps your local sales tax dollars in San Anselmo.

### Library News

The Friends of the Library will hold their **monthly book sale** on Saturday, March 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the lower level of the library. Come shop for bargains on kids books, cookbooks, novels and more.

Teens are invited to come to the San Anselmo **Library Teen Advisory Board** on Tuesday, March 10, at 7:30 p.m. Come eat pizza, and give your advice on books, movies and music you'd like to see in the library. It's your chance to tell us what kind of teen activities and programs you'd like to see, meet other teens who enjoy libraries and earn community service while doing it!

The Library **book discussion group** will meet on Tuesday, March 24, at 7:30 p.m. in the Library, 110 Tunstead Avenue. The group will be discussing Dave Eggers' book "What is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng." This book is the 2009 selection for the One Book One Marin program.

**Book Babies** will start up again on Monday, March 30 and will continue every Monday through May 18.

The Library's annual **Poetry Night** will be held on Thursday, April 9 at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers. This is an evening of poetry with readings and recitations of original poetry and favorite selections by citizen poets and other San Anselmo celebrities. Admission is free and refreshments will be served at the end.

The regular Library hours are as follows:

Monday	12 noon to 8 p.m.
Tuesday	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Wednesday	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Thursday	12 noon to 6 p.m.
Friday	Closed
Saturday	10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday	Closed

## **Joint Meeting: Town Council/Planning Commission**

On Wednesday, February 19, the Town Council and the Planning Commission met jointly to discuss the formulation of a green building ordinance in San Anselmo.

The purpose of the workshop was to bring the green building ordinance idea forward to the Town Council, along with the Planning Commission's preliminary thoughts regarding a green building ordinance.

Green building conserves natural resources in order to reduce negative impacts on the environment. The sun and site are used to the building's advantage for natural heating, cooling and daytime lighting. It includes landscaping with native, drought-resistant plants and water efficient irrigation. The construction of long term, durable structures is accomplished with salvaged, recycled and sustainably harvested materials, thereby reducing demolition materials. The green home uses energy-efficient and water-saving appliances and fixtures and healthy products.

A green building ordinance establishes green building certification guidelines or requirements, typically on a point basis. A checklist is created with various green building materials and practices and each is assigned a certain number of points. This creates a basis for which individual projects can be evaluated and certified.

The following questions were discussed:

- Should the Town adopt a green building ordinance?
- Should a green building ordinance apply to new homes, remodeled homes or commercial buildings?
- Should the program be voluntary or mandatory?
- What kind of rating system should be used?
- What concerns should be addressed regarding costs and benefits?
- How can we best facilitate public involvement and education?
- How would the program be staffed?

Consensus was reached on all of the above items, with support being expressed for a green building ordinance for new and remodeled homes, leaving commercial for a future effort. A mandatory effort would be more effective, and more in line with what our counterparts in other cities are doing. Utilizing the "Build it Green" rating system would provide consistency with other Marin cities. It is imperative that the public be involved in the process from the beginning and concerns addressed. Educational materials should be provided throughout the process. Finally, plan checking for the green point features would be done by an outside plan checker paid for by fees.

The Planning Commission will begin hearings on this ordinance in March, and the date will be announced in the newsletter. If you have questions regarding this issue, please call Planning and Building Director Lisa Wight at 258-4616.

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February 27, 2009

### Green Business Program

The Quality of Life Commission is sponsoring a workshop to help businesses understand the steps necessary to become a green business.

The Green Business Program is a voluntary partnership among business leaders, government agencies and nonprofit organizations. It recognizes and promotes businesses that:

- Demonstrate continuous compliance with applicable environmental regulations.
- Conserve energy, water and other materials.
- Implement sound environmental practices that prevent pollution and waste generation.
- Share environmentally responsible practices with other businesses in our community.

The presentation will provide a brief description of the process for becoming certified, a question-and-answer session and comments on the benefits of certification from businesses already certified in San Anselmo.

The workshop will be held on **Thursday, April 30, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers.** Jamie Tuckey, a member of the Marin County Sustainability Team, will make the presentation.

All San Anselmo businesses are encouraged to attend to find out more about this exciting program. For more information, call 258-4600.

### Goodbye to Rabi Elias, Public Works Director

The Town's Public Works Director, Rabi Elias, is retiring from public service. Rabi has served the Town of San Anselmo in the Public Works Department for 12 years. He began his San Anselmo career in 1983 as an engineer, leaving in 1987 to join the Town of Ross. We were able to lure him back to San Anselmo in 2001!

Rabi is well known in Town for his kind and generous demeanor and his ability to find compromises in seemingly impossible situations. We'll miss him greatly, but wish him the very best in retirement.

### Creek Level Gauge

After the flood of 2005, the Town installed an automated monitoring system on the creek in order to track more precisely the level of water flowing in the creek during storms.

The creek level monitor measures the height of the creek at 15 minute intervals. The data is transmitted to the Ross Valley Fire Department, where it is carefully monitored. It is also posted on the Ross Valley Fire Department website at [http://www.rossvalleyfire.org/sa\\_creek.html](http://www.rossvalleyfire.org/sa_creek.html).

Over the last series of storms, I have received emails from residents who are concerned that the website is not regularly updated or that the updates are an hour apart. The website is updated every 15 minutes. If you are

logged onto the website for a period of time, you must “refresh” the screen in order to see the most recent information.

While the creek level data is updated every 15 minutes, the data reflecting the previous 24 hours is shown on the monitor at 53 minute intervals, in order to reflect historical data for a full day. When you refresh, your browser should show the most recent 15 minute reading and then historical data for the preceding 24 hours, reflected in 53 minute intervals. Some browsers may not have that capability, but most do.

## **AM Radio Station 1610**

Radio station AM 1610 broadcasts local news items specific to the Ross Valley. In case of emergency, it allows public safety officials to broadcast news of traffic disruptions, power outages, hazardous spills and other critical local information not readily available from commercial radio and television stations.

In addition, the station also broadcasts during non-emergency times with information on disaster preparedness, local public meetings, fire prevention and other public safety messages.

Because the station is licensed by the Federal Communications Commission to broadcast only within the Ross Valley area, the signal is best obtained in your car radio on main thoroughfares.

## **Fairfax to San Rafael Bicycle Project**

A public meeting is scheduled to hear public input on how Fairfax, San Anselmo and San Rafael can be better connected for bicycling.

The Fairfax-San Rafael Bicycle Connector Feasibility Study will establish a consistent bicycle connection from the western town limits of Fairfax to San Rafael’s Transit Center and Andersen Drive in the Ross Valley Corridor. The project includes a study of the alternatives to determine the best location of the connector. The primary objective of the study is to determine how to provide safer access for a wide variety of bicyclists in the east-west corridor between Fairfax, San Anselmo, Sleepy Hollow and San Rafael.

This study is a follow-up to the Fairfax, San Anselmo and San Rafael bicycle and pedestrian plan updates in 2008, all of which include preliminary recommendations for the corridor intended to address historic obstacles to nonmotorized travel and establish a consistent bikeway between the communities.

Funding for this project is from Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program (NTPP), a \$25 million federal grant provided to the County of Marin to help make Marin more healthy, livable, and environmentally sustainable by encouraging walking and bicycling for everyday transportation. More information about the NTPP can be found on the website: <http://www.walkbikemarin.org/>.

**The meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 3, at 7:30 p.m. in the San Anselmo Town Council Chambers, 525 San Anselmo Avenue.**

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