

**MOUNT
LAGUNA
IMPROVEMENT
ASSOCIATION**

**SUMMER
VOL. 19 ~ No. 78**



**CABIN
NEWSLETTER**

Don't Forget!

Fire Safe Meeting

**June 19
9:00 am
via Zoom**

**July 17
9:00 am
Location TBA**

MLIA Board Meeting

**August 7
9:00 - 11:00 am
Location TBA**

Water for Shrine Tract

The Chariot Fire Recovery Committee is happy to report that, in partnership with the USFS, we have arranged an enhanced, but still temporary, solution for filling the water tank used to service our Shrine Tract members.

In 2013, the Chariot Fire jumped over Sunrise Highway and decimated the mountain community that was the Shrine Camp. Ten USFS Recreational Residence Cabins were burned to the ground along with nearly all of the Al Bahr Shrine Camp. The fire also destroyed the water system (well, reservoir and distribution pipes). Al-Bahr Shrine maintained the water system and supplied water to the recreational Shrine Tract residences.

Seven cabins survived the fire and became official members of the MLIA beginning the slow road to recovery. After nearly two years of being locked out, a temporary water solution was put in place involving a small, 3000 gallon holding tank, a jet pump, and a small part of the in-ground Shrine Camp pipes.

Continued on page 2

Shrine water, *continued*

Since then the MLIA has been trucking water to the Shrine Tract cabins to fill the tank as needed. This solution has allowed the Shrine Tract members to use their cabins once again but it has been problematic in a number of ways and required strict water rationing by the members.

The MLIA and the USFS working together have pursued reestablishment of a permanent water supply solution. Many alternatives have been explored resulting in a current direction to establish a new well within the Shrine Tract with its own pump house.

However, resource limits within the USFS have resulted in some significant delays to this project, so we went looking for an "out of the box" solution to alleviate some of the challenges with trucking in water while we also pursued a more permanent approach.



Current water holding tank for Shrine Tract cabins.

Late in 2020, the MLIA and the USFS brainstormed an approach to use the Laguna Campground water supply to fill the Shrine tank. After refining the idea with various folks in the USFS and MLIA, we have a working solution that now allows us to fill the holding tank without having to truck the water up from Pine Valley. This will save money for the MLIA and improve the water service for our Shrine Tract members.

This is a great example of the kind of partnership that can and should exist between the MLIA and the USFS and we hope to see more of this kind of collaboration going forward.

If you see a USFS person, make sure you thank them!

*Devin Breise
Cabin #17, Shrine Tract*



Wine-a-Bit & Craft Beer Fest
IN-PERSON social gathering!!
Saturday August 21st

Watch for flyer and details.

Thank you, Karen!



In all my years with MLIA there has never been a more important member of the board then Karen Motta. She was truly the backbone of the board. She managed the big job of treasurer in such a professional way MLIA became a model for other associations. Equally important was her "always there" attitude whenever needed. Always a great host for special functions at her cabin with the best food and drink. There are too many special times with Karen and Ralph to put in one news letter but will be remembered for a lifetime. Enough to say Karen has and always will be EVERYTHING to MLIA. She will be greatly missed.

Cal Turner

I will miss Karen's involvement during the annual water meter reading cycle. The first time I participated she provided me with a pail, spade, gloves, clip board, pen and whisk broom. There were a couple of admonitions: "I can't tell you where all the snakes have been found but that is primarily what the leather gloves are for." And, "It is very important that you see and transcribe the meter reading numbers accurately so cabin owners do not scream at me when they get their annual billing. That is what the whisk broom is for!" You'll be missed, Karen!!

Carl Sessions



Joannie Cochran, Karen, and Carl Sessions



Karen and Cookie Ringhand

Frankly, I quake in my boots when I realize Karen actually sold her cabin and will be leaving MLIA. During her 20 years as treasurer, she provided incredibly competent, professional service to the association. She made the complex task of the treasurer appear easy – which it's not. Karen also has an amazing memory, and seems to know everyone on the mountain. In fact, she is the "institutional memory" of MLIA. When I have a question about some past event or procedure, history, or legal compliance, I ask Karen. And I'm not the only one. She also made herself available for all MLIA functions, serving as organizer, greeter, and record keeper. Not to mention set-up and clean-up. Not only will we miss her, but we may not let her go. As for me, I have her on speed-dial!

Joanne Odenthal

I was on the MLIA Board for many years as a member, VP and President and Karen Motta was Treasurer the whole time. She is a great friend and so very organized. It made the job so much easier with her being on top of things. Her personality made the job of Treasurer just the perfect spot for her in our little community and she helped all of us through things by always having correct numbers and remembering things from the past to help make decisions moving forward. Now life takes her away from the great community of Mt. Laguna and as one who has also moved away there are great memories of good times and projects that were done as a group of great people working together for the community good!

John Wallar



Kerry Anderson, proud auction winner of a quilt made by Karen. Stan Jaesck & Frank Kalinoski helping.

~ Mt Laguna Fire Safe Council ~

This month's MLFSC meeting is scheduled for Saturday June 19th at 9:00 am via Zoom.

An invitation will be emailed prior to this meeting. Our meetings will continue to be held on the 3rd Saturday of the month and via Zoom until we are able to safely return to the Roost.

Forest Service and Cal-Fire inspections will start soon, so make sure home, cabin and property is ready. This all helps to reduce the wildfire fuels in our beautiful forest. Thanks to the US Forest Service, the community-only **brush pile and dumpster will continue to be located at the Camp Ole Fire Station.**

Doug Reed, MLFSC President

Camp Ole is now open for our use 7 days a week from 9:30am to 5:30pm only.

Please follow these rules when using the dumpster and brush pile.

1. The dumpster is for leaves, grass/weed cuttings, pine needles and pine cones only. Unload to the back and up to the edge of the dumpster first. **No bags.**
2. The brush pile is for native shrubs, brush and branches up to a maximum of 6" in diameter only. Unload toward the back of the brush pile first.
3. Please keep the site clean, and no trash, bags or construction debris is allowed at this site.
4. This site is for Mt Laguna community members only, no contractors allowed.
5. Follow the signs that are posted to and from the brush pile and dumpster only. No entering of any buildings. Drive slowly while in the Fire Station.
6. While on this Government facility, COVID-19 precaution masks are required to be worn at all times.

Equipment Available for Community Members

- Gas powered weed whackers for \$10/1 or 2 days.
- Gas powered trimmer and pole saw at no cost.
- Pick-up truck for hauling approved debris to and from Camp Ole only, for a \$10/day donation.
- Gas powered wood splitter for \$20/day.

Contact Jack Splinter (858-472-4368) or Richard Willis (619-990-1404) for availability and schedule the equipment usage.

Thank You for your donation!

If you wish to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Fire Safe Council, please mail your check to:

Mt. Laguna Fire Safe Council
P O Box 292
Mount Laguna, CA 91948



*Log splitters Dave,
Matt, Justin & Libby*

Log Splitting Party!

The Vellone/Baer family gathered at cabin 318 to use the Mt. Laguna log splitter and catch up on clearing downed wood. To our surprise, a rattlesnake decided to join us...he was sunning himself at the edge of the cabin facing the log pile. From then on, the dogs were chained a safe distance away, and there was a designated "snake watcher" on duty.

Connie Baer

... surprise visitor!



Benja helping Justin!

Proposed Forest Service Permit Renewal Changes

In an earlier newsletter I mentioned that the National Forest Homeowners held a meeting to discuss concerns with a number of proposals by the Forest Service that would impact our cabin permits. While the details are far too great (dense?) to go into, here are some key issues involved.

This is NOT a "Call to Action" on our part – just a heads up.

1. Substituting the term "Termination" for "Revocation" when canceling a cabin permit.
 - "Termination" offers no recourse/right of appeal whereas "Revocation" does.
2. Limiting cabin ownership to a sole buyer.
 - Over 40% of cabins have multiple owners including family members.
 - What is unclear are questions such as is the withdrawal of the "sole owner" for any reason to be treated the same as a sale? Or to what extent does the FS have the right to determine how we title our personal property?
3. Use of term "License" rather than "Permit"
 - "License" has fewer legal protections than does a permit.

These points should give you a broad sense of just a few of the issues. The key takeaway is that the Forest Service proposals, if implemented, could reduce some of our legal rights as cabin owners and/or have unintended consequences. The wording of some proposals is vague. In others it appears they have no practical application to cabin permits yet including them there could be issues of interpretation or enforcement, etc., etc.

Because the NFH is deep into the process of working with the Forest Service on these proposals, has reached agreement to modify some of them, and continues to work on others, it is *very important that we NOT take any individual action with the Forest Service or contact our government representatives.* This could only disrupt the efforts of NFH's team of cabin owners and legal advisors.

*Thanks,
Brock Houston
Cabin 807*

CABIN ACCESS

The primary focus, at the moment, is the SDG&E pole replacement project as it winds down. I am told all remediation will be completed by Sept. 1, 2021. My expectation, based on numerous discussions with on site SDGE workers, when restoration begins it is done quickly, efficiently, and thoroughly. We need to be hopeful that the Forestry will be supportive of the utilities' efforts and allow them to work some magic on our roughed up "trails".



We are filing specific claims for damage to water lines, and, in the one case in Boiling Springs Tract that I am aware of, the utility inspected within 24 hours and has accepted responsibility. So, the next quarterly report should be full of great news about completed remediation and happy campers (cabin owners) throughout Mt. Laguna. Until then, have an awesome Summer on the mountain!!

*Carl Sessions, VP-MLIA
(619) 571-2284*

Laguna Mountain History

Native Americans were present on Mount Laguna for at least 1,500 years prior to the arrival of the Spanish in California. The native people, known as the Kumeyaay, used mountain, coast and desert terrains in a seasonal round of occupation throughout the year coming to the Laguna mountains from the deserts from late spring to early fall, and returning to the desert for winter and early spring. The Kumeyaay and their ancestors were masters of their environment. They



used the plant and animal resources readily available in the mountains, desert, foothills and coast for all their needs including food, medicine, tools, shelter, clothing, and ceremony.

The Kumeyaay also used fire to manage the landscape. In the mountains annual fires were set after the acorn and pine nut harvests to reduce leaf litter and pine duff to nutrients for the plants. Controlled burns reduced fuel and inhibited undergrowth reducing wildfires. Small fires reduced massive wildfire danger and increased the diversity and productivity of the plants and animals. Fires prevented the development of dense tree stands, especially pine trees, which were of less value to the Kumeyaay than the acorn bearing Black Oak trees.

Today we can acknowledge the Kumeyaay as the original people of Mount Laguna. These traditional homelands are rich with their heritage and cultural tradition and their stewardship of Mount Laguna from time immemorial enriches all of us who share the mountain today.

Eugenie Newton

The Oaks of Mt Laguna

Can you imagine Mount Laguna without oak trees? It's not possible. In particular, the iconic oak of the mountain is the black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*). This is the oak that gives us shade in summer, gold and red displays in autumn, and oh so many leaves that fall in winter. Right now, you might be raking up those leaves, preparing your cabin for fire inspection, and cursing the bountiful piles you've gathered and need to move to the dumpster. But the benefits of oaks far outweigh the effort it takes to live with them.

The oak was called the "black oak" by botanist Albert Kellogg because of the dark colored bark. Black oaks can live over 200 years, given the right conditions. Sadly, with our continuing drought, we're now losing many of our oldest oaks.

Douglas Tallamy in his book *The Nature of Oaks*, states that oaks "produce enormous root systems over their lifetimes... [providing] soil stabilization, carbon sequestration, and watershed management." The root system of an oak can extend more than three times the size of the crown. Between the roots and the fungal network that extends from the roots an entire hillside is penetrated by an interwoven system. Tallamy makes a case that oaks are our most important tree, across the continent.

Oaks nourish a "diverse web of life" including birds, rodents, squirrels, raccoons, caterpillars, butterflies and other creatures. One oak tree can drop up to 3 million acorns during its lifetime. The acorns serve as food for many animals and have served as food for humans for centuries. According to Pavlik, et.al. in *The Oaks of California*, the black oak acorns seem to have been preferred by the California Indians as a food over other acorn species.



Bare in April



Budding in May

The leaf litter from oaks serves as a natural fertilizer, soil protector, and mulch. Although we need to remove oak leaves around our cabins for fire safety, it's best to leave the leaf litter on the ground from late fall to early spring. Decomposing leaves nourish the soil prior to raking the leaves next spring.

Take a good look at the oaks near your cabin and on your walks. Who is living in them?

What plants are nearby? What animals might use parts of the tree for food? At this time of year, watch for caterpillars, butterflies and moths, in addition to all the birds that hang out in the oaks. Your oaks are supporting a huge network of life, above ground and below ground. We'll explore more of this in the next newsletter.

Joanne Odenthal



Founded in 1935,
the Mount Laguna
Improvement
Association acts as
liaison between cabin
owners and the Forest
Service addressing
water, roads and
wood removal.

MOUNT LAGUNA IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

New Contact Info?

Send your new email, address,
or phone number

to

Joanne Odenthal

at

joanne6336@gmail.com

Water System Problems?

Immediately contact
MLIA Water Supervisor

Dan Fritz

at

(619) 405-1452

Thanks Nola, as always, for your photographs!!

*Eugenie Newton, Editor
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