

Scott Valley Voice

October 14, 2011

Newsletter of Beautiful Scott Valley

Vol. VII, Num. 2

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT BY FRANCINE MILLMAN

Dear Scott Valley Residents:

Although we are wrapping up 2011, we are just ramping up our efforts addressing important issues directly impacting all of us here in Scott Valley for now and for decades and perhaps generations to come.

Between the upcoming Edna Maguire renovations, the possible reconstruction and opening of the Alto Tunnel and the potential building of 20 condominiums in the open lot across from Gira Polli, your board has been extremely busy representing your interests.

However, we cannot do this alone. As much as we represent you, this is YOUR valley; this is YOUR home and we need YOUR involvement.

We know everyone is extremely busy – and yet these issues are not going to go away. Whether you write letters to our county and city representatives; attend meetings or volunteer your time to assist in other ways – we need to be able to call on you to become involved when things start to heat up regarding any of the issues.

As you read this edition of *The Voice*, we encourage you to learn about the upcoming **SVHOA Annual Meeting on October 25th**; read about updates on the Alto Tunnel and E. Blithedale, as well as a heart-warming article by Bill Buchanan and much more!

Annual Dues - For *only* \$40 a year, the SVHOA can continue to **maintain the landscape, the emergency preparedness box**, as well as send you *The Voice* and maintain the HOA website to keep you informed. **Without your financial support, these projects simply cannot be maintained.**

Please send your \$40 dues to: **Scott Valley Homeowners' Association, P.O. Box 392, Mill Valley, CA 94942**. Your membership gives you the ability to vote for your board of directors each election!

We look forward to meeting you at the Annual Meeting and working with you on our common goals for Scott Valley in 2012.

Have a wonderful holiday season and a healthy and prosperous 2012.

SAVE THE DATE! SVHOA ANNUAL MEETING BY RAE GREENLEE

Please join us for the **SVHOA Annual Meeting on Tuesday, October 25th at 7:30pm** at the **Scott Valley Swim & Tennis Club in the clubhouse**.

It is that time of year again and we look forward to seeing you at the meeting for a very robust and information-packed agenda.

This year, our annual meeting will focus on the proposed expansion and reconstruction of Edna Maguire Elementary School, with speakers from the School District and from the neighborhood group who challenged aspects of the design plan which would negatively impact many residents in Scott Valley. Even if you don't have kids attending Edna, the changes could impact many in Scott Valley.

We will also have updates on the Alto Tunnel, with representatives from Chapman Meadows, the Corte Madera neighborhood on the north side of the tunnel, discussing that neighborhood's efforts to stop the project.

There will be an update on Blithedale Terrace, the proposed 20-unit condominium development at the corner of East Blithedale and Camino Alto.

For many of you, this will be an opportunity to visit the Swim & Tennis Club for the first time or for the first time since the remodel. It is a wonderful facility to have in our neighborhood and a great place to bring your children for fun and recreation.

In fact, the Swim Club is now offering Scott Valley residents a bonus of **3 months dues for FREE** when you join the Club. Read more about this special offer in this edition of *The Voice*.

Come to the annual meeting, meet your neighbors and participate in the issues impacting all of us. Your board of directors will be there to greet you and talk about the issues concerning you. **We hope to see you on October 25th!**

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD –
CONTACT OUR LOCAL
REPRESENTATIVES!**

This issue of *The Voice* provides you with updates on the currently important issues that will impact Mill and Scott Valley residents.

Below is a list of county and city representatives with their email addresses. We encourage you to write so that they know where you stand on these topics.

Please feel free to cc: or bcc: the SVHOA at: info@scottvalleyhoa.org.

SUBJECT: ALTO TUNNEL (EMAIL ENTIRE LIST)	
Judy Arnold	jarnold@co.marin.ca.us
Hal Brown	hbrown@co.marin.ca.us - until a replacement is designated
Steve Kinsey	skinsey@co.marin.ca.us
Susan Adams	sadams@co.marin.ca.us
Kate Sears	ksears@co.marin.ca.us
Cc:	
Leslie Alden	lalden@co.marin.ca.us
Maureen Parton	mparton@co.marin.ca.us
Carey Lando	clando@co.marin.ca.us
SVHOA	Info@scottvalleyhoa.org

JOIN THE SVHOA EMAIL ADDRESS!

If you would like to receive periodic emails about SVHOA interests, send an email to: info@scottvalleyhoa.org. Include your name and address and we will add you to this confidential list.

**ALTO TUNNEL UPDATE
BY JOHN PALMER**

There hadn't been much news of the Alto Tunnel for a while when suddenly, and with no notice to any of the neighborhood associations which have been active in the tunnel debate, on August 23rd the Marin County Board of Supervisors voted to spend \$600,000 for additional studies of the tunnel. With the stated goal of determining the feasibility of reconstructing the tunnel, and to gain a better idea of its cost, Supervisors allocated \$180,000 to study the various access issues your Board raised, and another \$420,000 for a geotechnical study.

As you may recall, there was a study, completed just a little over two years ago at a cost of \$250,000, which put the cost of reconstructing the tunnel at just under \$60,000,000, but the Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) presented a lengthy rebuttal in which the writers bitterly attacked the consultants who prepared that bid. Those of us who view politics with a cynic's eye believe that the MCBC, which counts some of the Supervisors as very good friends, was able to lobby successfully for this new study in hopes of getting a more acceptable estimate, one that perhaps stood a chance of being funded.

I was informed about this allocation the night before the meeting, and drafted a letter to the new Supervisor for our district, Kate Sears, with copies to the other members of the Board, requesting that the new study be limited to the access issues. However, the allocation, which was on the Consent Calendar, passed 5-0. Those of us who watch local politics sense a shift in the Board; once committed to incremental steps in furthering a tunnel agenda, the Board now appears more inclined to push to actually get the tunnel built, providing these new studies do not present insurmountable roadblocks.

The one bit of good news I can pass on is that the access issues we raised will be studied before the geotechnical work begins; those issues are complicated, and will be costly for the County to resolve. Fortunately, I do not sense any political will in the leadership of either the City of Mill Valley or the Town of Corte Madera to help the County exercise the

laws of eminent domain to take property from citizens in order to perfect access to the tunnel, especially when there are viable alternatives already in use.

Francine Millman and I met with Kate Sears and her aide Maureen Parton on October 5th. Ms. Sears proved to be a good listener; she heard our position about the tunnel, asked good questions, and I believe she now understands the issue well. I can't speak to how she would vote, of course, but she did hear us out.

Your Board will keep you updated on this very important matter, and if you would like periodic email updates, please let us know by emailing us at info@scottvalleyhoa.org.

**WHOLE FOODS
NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATE**

Last year, we were concerned about potential traffic issues associated with the opening of a new Whole Foods in our neighborhood.

For those who attended last year's SVHOA annual meeting, Whole Foods was there – and they listened to your input and concerns.

Because of significant input from our neighborhood and sincere cooperation from Whole Foods, they are now an integral part of the neighborhood, helping to revitalize business for the entire shopping center.

We thank those who attended last year's SVHOA annual meeting where Whole Foods listened to your concerns. YOU made a difference!

Check out the SVHOA website!

www.scottvalleyhoa.org

Email us at: info@scottvalleyhoa.org

**BLITHEDALE TERRACE UPDATE
BY JOHN PALMER**

Brief history: In 2009, Developer Phil Richardson presented a plan to build 20 condominium units on the lot across E. Blithedale from Gira Polli, about 100 feet from the intersection of Camino Alto and Blithedale, the busiest in the city. Neighborhood groups, including our own, opposed the project, and criticized what we saw was a poorly-prepared Environment Impact Report (EIR) for the project at meetings of the Planning Commission; fortunately, the commissioners also criticized the EIR and sent it back for extensive revisions. The revised EIR was recently submitted to the City, but has not yet been released to the public.

On Sunday, October 2, I attended a picnic sponsored by the Freeman Park Homeowner's Association, at which Mr. Richardson presented his project to the residents of that neighborhood, which is directly across E. Blithedale from the site. Alan Abrams, representing the Kite Hill neighborhood (adjacent to Mr. Richardson's parcel), and I debated with Mr. Richardson about his project. I met with him about 15 months ago, and offered to buy the parcel, with the idea that we could, as a community, raise the money to purchase the property and leave it as open space for the generations to come. At the picnic, I renewed the offer, but he averred, saying he really wants to build this project, so we were left with the feeling that it is going to be another big battle at the Planning Commission level, before maybe, eventually, he could be persuaded to sell.

I respect him for reaching out to the neighborhood, where he received a polite but ideologically icy greeting, but unfortunately, this is going to be a long process.

I personally feel that the site could hold 3 to 5 homes, maybe 4 if one or two were built with second units to provide an affordable component, but I hope that we can persuade him to sell the property so that we can proceed with the open space proposal. Both the Freeman Park and the Kite Hill associations seem to be in agreement with me as to how they would like to see the parcel developed, if development must come.

We will issue an update when the EIR is released to the public, and when the public meetings to discuss the project are scheduled.

SWIM & TENNIS CLUB NEWS
BY PATSY LOVE,
GENERAL MANAGER
SCOTT VALLEY SWIM & TENNIS CLUB

ATTENTION ALL SVHOA RESIDENTS!!

Join Scott Valley Swimming and Tennis Club, your “neighborhood” club and **receive your first 3 months dues FREE!** For more information about this special offer contact General Manager, Patsy Love at 383-3483 or patsy@svstc.com. Visit our website at www.svstc.com for more information about our club. Come enjoy the club your neighbors are already enjoying!!

WILD CRITTERS IN
SCOTT VALLEY
BY BILL BUCHANAN

Of all the communities in Mill Valley, Scott Valley enjoys a special relationship to open space. Rising on the western flank is Camino Alto Open Space. Alto Bowl forms the northern horizon, and Horse Hill nurtures the morning sun. These ridgelines support classic California ecotones of coast live oak, toyon, oat grass meadows, coyote brush, Pacific madrone, and a host of wildflowers including lupine, poppy, tar weed, and wild mint. They also provide a corridor for wildlife. The Alto Bowl Horseowners Association leases Horse Hill Preserve for pasturing around a dozen horses. Who among us commuters to the city has not enjoyed the early morning tableau of sunlight spilling across the emerald crest illuminating grazing horses, or the sight of young girls riding pell mell across the meadows, hair and manes streaming in the wind?

This matrix of wild country supports a surprising menagerie of critters: owls, red tailed hawks, turkey vultures, foxes, coyotes, raccoons, skunks, wild pigs,

valley quail, rattlesnakes, king snakes, gopher snakes, fence lizards, field mice, black tailed deer, wild turkeys, bobcats, coyotes, even a breeding pair of cougars. Most of these critters are furtive and remain unseen. It was not always this way. Over a decade ago, a bunch of coyotes decided they liked the Twinkies and peanut butter sandwiches they found near Edna McGuire School better than gophers and quail chicks. Normally nocturnal, they sashayed down our streets in broad daylight, raided trash cans, stalked domestic workers, attacked dogs, and killed and ate cats. Francine Millman watched coyote pups cavorting in her back yard with an adult male. A homeowner on Greenfield Court found the body of Cassie, his Bichon Frisee, chewed up on Horse Hill. Something had to be done. Law enforcement and wildlife agencies were stymied until a U.S. Department of Agriculture team euthanized an aggressive male who had attacked a German shepherd and stalked a female runner. The rest of the pack got the message and moved back into open space where they remain anonymous, except for moonlight serenades and the occasional ghostly outrider.

Francine Millman’s unfenced back yard serves as a sort of African wildlife observation lodge. As she tells her recent evening ‘show’ from her back deck,

“Well, that was just amazing – it’s 9:35 pm and I just finished watching first two, then a third buck with beautiful antlers on two of them and smaller ones on what I think is the “teen.” They all were playing in my backyard tonight: the “father” and the “teen” were locking antlers—playing, pushing each other back and forth. It was like dad was teaching the teen how to use his newly grown adornments. Then the teen would trot around a little awkwardly and playfully as the ‘father’ watched. Then they would repeat. This went on for about 15 minutes. Then, the father and a new arrival began playing. Then, all three! This went on for more than half an hour. I didn’t want to move to ruin the moment – barely breathing the entire time. Fortunately, the light from my deck and the full moon illuminated enough for me to watch this amazingly beautiful show. I was relieved that the coyote I had seen sauntering through my backyard a few hours earlier did not return to ruin the moment. It is moments like this and so many others that make me grateful I live in Scott Valley.”

**EDNA MAGUIRE
RECONSTRUCTION UPDATE
BY ANN GATES, P.E.**

On November 3, 2009, Mill Valley School District (MVSD) voters passed Measure C to perform various modernization projects. Measure C authorized the MVSD to issue up to \$59.8 million in bonds to pay for Phase 1 of the Facilities Master Plan in order to “reconstruct and modernize Mill Valley elementary and middle schools, including installing and constructing fire safety, emergency communications, seismic and disabled access improvements; providing sufficient space for students; and repairing or replacing outdated plumbing, electrical and other vital systems and facilities.” The Facilities Master Plan identified the replacement of the existing Edna Maguire Elementary School facilities with a new campus to accommodate anticipated enrollment growth.

The proposed project involves the demolition of the existing Edna Maguire Elementary School and associated facilities, and construction of a new elementary school on generally the same site occupied by the current school. Total building size would increase to 78,181 square feet from the existing 51,132 square feet. Other buildings located on the campus and currently leased from the MVSD by the Marin Day School and Marin and Robin’s Nest Pre-School would also be demolished as part of the project. While Marin Day School and Marin EDS would continue to provide educational services on the campus at project completion, Robin’s Nest Pre-School would no longer operate on the campus. The Ring Mountain Day School also leases building from the MVSD on the eastern portion of the campus. The Ring Mountain Day School facilities would remain on the project site as currently configured and are not included as part of the proposed Edna Maguire reconstruction project.

The proposed new Edna Maguire Elementary School would include four classroom buildings, an administration building, a combined library/art/

exploratorium building, and a multi-purpose building. The enrollment at Edna Maguire would increase from approximately 480 students to an estimated 600 students. The multi-purpose building is expected to include a basketball gym. The capacity of the multi-purpose room is expected to increase from its current capacity of 175 to a seated capacity of 350 or an unseated capacity of approximately 850 people. In addition to using the new multi-purpose room for MVSD events, the MVSD plans to lease the multi-purpose room for non-MVSD events. The number of classrooms would increase from 21 to 28. In addition to new playground, recreational facilities, and landscaping improvements, parking areas and site access would also be modified. Onsite school parking would increase from approximately 80 parking spaces to 120 spaces; however, 10 to 20 spaces would be removed from Lomita Drive because of modifications to the traffic circulation plan for the new school. To accommodate construction of the new school, the MVSD plans to remove approximately 80 mature trees, the majority of which are from the perimeter of the school. The school construction plans also show construction of an extensive exterior lighting system. The lighting system includes parking lot light poles approximately 25 feet high and lights along the exterior of the buildings. The two highest buildings for the proposed new school are the multi-purpose building at 37 feet high and a two-story classroom building for the 4th and 5th grades, which is 38 feet high.

MVSD, serving as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), completed the required environmental review of the proposed Edna Maguire Reconstruction Project pursuant to CEQA. In accordance with the CEQA *Guidelines*, MVSD prepared an Initial Study to determine the potential environmental consequences of implementation of the proposed project. This Initial Study is supposed to provide the necessary information to inform MVSD, other responsible agencies, and the public of the nature of the project and its potential effect on the environment. The

Mill Valley School Board approved the MVSD Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Edna Maguire project on June 15, 2011.

A group of residents who live near Edna Maguire School filed a lawsuit against the MVSD on July 14, 2011 over its plans to rebuild the school's campus. Under the name Designers, Engineers, Constructors for Better, Safer Schools, four neighbors allege the MVSD's environmental review process for the \$36 million project didn't sufficiently address their concerns over parking, traffic, building heights, lighting and the aesthetics of the proposed new school. A second lawsuit was filed on July 18, by an Edna parent on behalf of Citizens for Educated Government. The lawsuits ask the court to order the district to void its adoption of the environmental review documents and direct it to either revise those documents or to expand the scope of the review to an environmental impact report (EIR), a broader and more expensive process.

The lawsuits claim the MVSD environmental review fell short on several fronts, especially with respect to the analysis and mitigation for traffic circulation, traffic safety, lighting, and parking. The lawsuits allege that the proposed configuration of the drop-off/pick-up area for cars will increase traffic in the neighborhood and create a hazardous condition for pedestrians, bicyclists and cars. The lawsuits also allege that the proposed school lighting plan will cause significant light trespass issues to adjacent neighbors and that there is not enough onsite school parking given the expansion of the school and multi-purpose building. The lawsuits also allege the MVSD didn't properly study the impact to the neighborhood of the project's new multi-purpose room, which will hold up to 350 (seated) to 850 (unseated) people especially considering that the MVSD plans to rent it out for non-MVSD events outside of school hours. The lawsuits also objected to the aesthetics of the project, saying that the height and slopes of some buildings, particularly a two-story classroom building, would be higher than other structures in the area. Lastly, the petition noted the MVSD environmental study found the presence of some serpentine rock in the ground

beneath the project, and that serpentine rock potentially contains natural asbestos. The MVSD has not yet determined, as required by State regulations, whether asbestos may be present in soil that will be disturbed during school construction activities.

In mid-August, settlement negotiations were initiated between the petitioners and the MVSD. These negotiations are currently ongoing. If you have concerns about the project, feel free to contact Paul Johnson, MVSD superintendent or *Anne Gates, P.E- Designers, Engineers, Constructors for Better Safer Schools, A California 501(c)(3)Non-Profit Corporation* at: agates@environcorp.com

**BECOME A SVHA MEMBER
FOR ONLY \$40/YEAR**

 **It's that time again! Dues are due!**

For *only* \$40 a year, the Homeowners' Association can continue to **maintain the landscape and emergency preparedness box**, as well as send you The Voice to keep you informed. **Without your support, these projects cannot be maintained!**

Your membership also gives you the ability to vote for board members each year. Please send your check to: **Scott Valley Homeowners' Association, P.O. Box 392, Mill Valley, CA 94942.**

**BECOME A SVHOA
BOARD MEMBER**

We are seeking one additional SVHOA resident interested in to serving on the SVHOA board.

The term is two years, with a commitment to attend approximately five - six board meetings a year.

We have a lot of issues on our plate and we welcome someone who would like to be involved.

If you are interested, please contact us at info@scottvalleyhoa.org.

**ADD YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO
OUR CONFIDENTIAL EMAIL LIST**

While it is still our goal to keep you informed via The Voice a few times a year, there are always things happening in our quiet little valley we would like to communicate.

The best way is via email. Please send an email to info@scottvalleyhoa.org with your name, your email address and your address.

This list is 100% confidential and will never be used for any purpose other than to keep you informed We keep these emails to a minimum and respect your privacy.

LOCAL ADS!

If you are a local small business or baby-sitter and would like to place an ad in the next issue of *The Voice*, email us at: info@scottvalleyhoa.org.

Dinner's at the Table

Busy juggling kids, career and housework? Let Dinner's at the Table help. Using fresh, seasonal, organic ingredients, local personal chef, Denise Ravizza, will shop and prepare delicious dinners in your own kitchen or deliver them to you!

- Beef Bourguignon with Tagliatelle
- Herb Roasted Chicken with Ginger Glazed Carrots and Mashed Potatoes
- Butternut Squash Pizza with Balsamic Glazed Onions, Goat Cheese and Walnuts



Host dinners, Culinary Parties, Events and more!
Gift Certificates available.

Denise Ravizza
415.944.0727
www.dinnersatthetable.com

**SVHA FINANCIAL REPORT
BY KEN CAMPBELL, TREASURER**

Below, you will find the financial report for 2011.

	2011
Opening Balance	\$3,871.31
Memberships	\$2,410
	<u>\$6,281.31</u>
Expenses	
Landscape maintenance	(\$1,400)
Other*	(\$979.20)
	<u>(\$2,379.20)</u>
Balance	<u>\$3,902.11</u>

*Other expenses include: photocopying of The Voice, postage, website domain renewal, PO Box rental.

Scott Valley Voice

This is a collaborative effort of the
Scott Valley Board of Directors & Friends

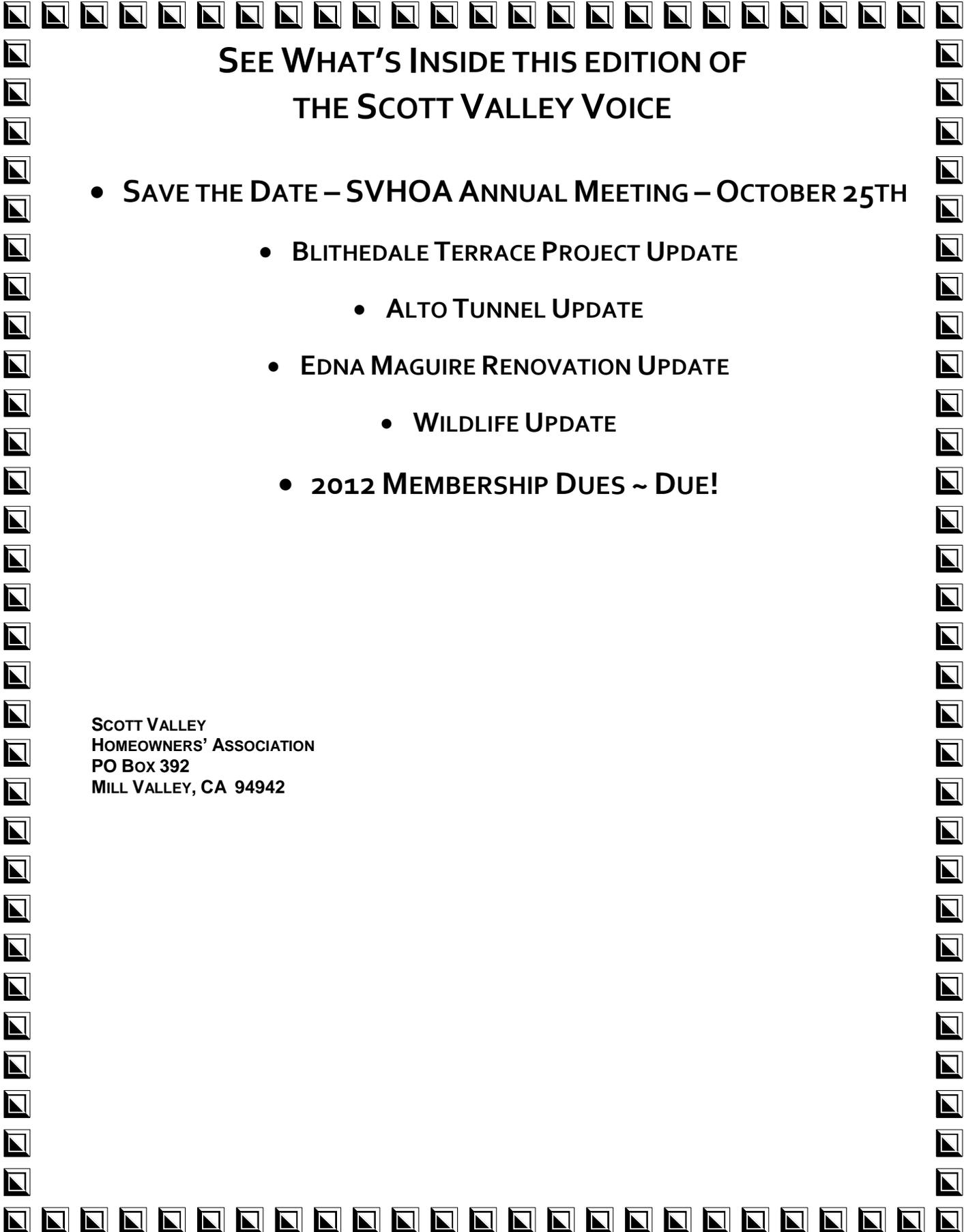
Editor **Francine Millman**

Contributors:

<i>Letter from the President</i>	Francine Millman
<i>Annual Meeting Announcement</i>	Rae Greenlee
<i>Blithedale Terrace Update</i>	John Palmer
<i>Alto Tunnel Update</i>	John Palmer
<i>Treasurers' Report</i>	Ken Campbell
<i>Swim & Tennis Club Info</i>	Patsy Love
<i>Scott Valley Wildlife</i>	Bill Buchanan

Special Thanks to Haley & Mimi Fretes for folding, stapling and stamping your copy of this newsletter.

Layout & Design **Francine Millman**



**SEE WHAT'S INSIDE THIS EDITION OF
THE SCOTT VALLEY VOICE**

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 - **ALTO TUNNEL UPDATE**
 - **EDNA MAGUIRE RENOVATION UPDATE**
 - **WILDLIFE UPDATE**
 - **2012 MEMBERSHIP DUES ~ DUE!**

**SCOTT VALLEY
HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION
PO Box 392
MILL VALLEY, CA 94942**