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Mountain View, California *March 2010*

MONTA LOMA NEWS

Published and Distributed by the Monta Loma Neighborhood Association



SPRING FLING

(renamed from End-of-Winter Warmup)

Saturday, March 13, 10:00 a.m. – noon
Monta Loma School Multipurpose Room

Chat with old friends and meet new neighbors as you enjoy free Starbucks coffee, hot cider or chocolate, and baked goods. View old-time cars in front. Pick up information about neighborhood activities. Engage in a craft project. Buy a Monta Loma tee shirt. Buy some books at the PTA's used-book sale. From 11 to noon, listen in as a storyteller entertains kids ages 3 and up. (Outside behind the multipurpose room, so dress warmly. Bring a cushion?)

If you can help with this popular event or have a community activity you would like to share, please contact Wouter Suverkropp now at wsuverkropp@yahoo.com or 968-3056.

Bylaws Revisions

The MLNA bylaws were revised in 2006, primarily to allow for absentee voting for the board election. More revisions are proposed for the June 10 election; see page 2. Please save that page until the election.

- MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW FOR:
- April 17 Shredder Day & E-Waste Disposal (p. 1)
- May 1 City-wide garage sale (p. 4)
- June 10 MLNA General Meeting and Election (p. 2)
- August 29 MLNA Ice Cream Social, 3–5 p.m.

Free Document Shredding and E-Waste Collection

By Wouter Suverkropp

Monta Loma will hold its third annual Shredder Day on Saturday, April 17, 10 a.m. to noon in the Monta Loma School parking lot. Bring the papers you no longer need to store (in closed envelopes or boxes) and old hard drives and watch them be shredded.

Also bring your e-waste (TV sets, VCRs, computers, cell phones, cables, etc.) for responsible disposal. E-waste includes any consumer product that contains a circuit board or mercury thermostat, or has an electronic screen larger than four inches. Their lead, mercury, or chromium can pollute the environment, and it's now illegal to put them in the trash.

The state requires ID for e-waste recycling so bring your driver's license. There may a small charge for shredding hard-disk drives, so have some cash if you bring any.

Note: We can't accept household appliances of any kind or size, VHS or cassette tapes, or hazardous waste. These must be taken the county recycling center. For more information on what you can shred or recycle, visit www.montaloma.org or see the City's Resource newsletter (mailed in early March).

Also note: If you choose to recycle your e-waste elsewhere, please determine where it will go. Some waste collectors sell it to companies that ship it to foreign countries for processing. Not only does it make little environmental sense to ship our junk halfway around the world, but in many places the valuable-metals extraction process endangers the workers' health. Our e-waste recycler is certified, and sends recyclables to a reputable California company for extraction.

MLNA Board Members

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wsuverkropp@yahoo.com

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helenwolter@yahoo.com

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MLNA Board Election; Treasurer Needed

The annual general meeting and board election will take place on Thursday evening, June 10. Due to other commitments, several board members (Andy Rose, Oliver Dittrich, and possibly Helen Wolter) must reluctantly retire. Oliver is our treasurer, so we particularly need someone who can balance a checkbook.

The Monta Loma Neighborhood Association keeps us informed on issues that affect our neighborhood and organizes social events to bring us together. Our association is one of the best in the area and has the ear of our city council and other associations.

Please become involved with your neighborhood by volunteering for the MLNA board. We'd like to have a full ballot at our June election. All positions are always open; see list in column at left. For descriptions of the positions visit www.montaloma.org or contact any board member.

To place your name on the ballot, contact Marilyn Gildea so she can include you in the next newsletter (marilyn@gildea.com or 940-1606).

Proposed Bylaws Revisions

By Marilyn Gildea for the MLNA Board

The MLNA bylaws were revised in 2006, primarily to allow for absentee voting for the board election. The Board proposes more revisions, to be voted on at the June 10 general meeting. Please save this page and be prepared to vote on each proposal.

Our original bylaws came from at least two sources; some sections use *association* and *officers* while other sections use *corporation* and *directors* (MLNA is a California 501(c)4 corporation). Board-member-at-large Bill Lambert is a lawyer and has been a great help in clarifying the language and the organization. Our bylaws are used as a model by new neighborhood associations such as Wagon Wheel, and the cleanup will set a better example.

You can see the current bylaws, a mark-up copy showing all the proposed changes, and a "clean" new version at www.montaloma.org. Click on "Click here" under the Upcoming Events listing for June 10. Questions? Contact me at 940-1606 or marilyn@gildea.com.

Revision One. Purpose: To resolve duplication and inconsistencies. Changes include moving text dealing with term of office from the *Officers* to the *Term of Office* section, and text dealing with removal, resignation, and vacancies to the appropriate sections. We combined duplicate sections (*Vacancies, Compensation*) and rearranged the order of the sections.

Revision Two. Purpose: To remove "present and" from "members present and voting at the annual election meeting." It's contradictory to the absentee voting provision approved in 2006.

Revision Three. Purpose: To change the requirement to hold three general meetings each year to "shall be held as appropriate."

Revision Four. Purpose: To eliminate the mandated position of Past President. Although the board values past presidents for their experience and institutional memory, and expects to keep future ones on the Board as members at large, we'd like to make this optional, not required. The deletion is indicated by strike-out; insertions by underscore.

There shall be seven members of the Board …, six of whom shall be officers of the Association. The officers shall consist of President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Newsletter Editor. ~~The most recent Past President~~ At least one member at large shall be a member of the Board …. The Association shall endeavor to maintain an odd number of board members.

Home-Foundation Inspections; the Results

By Elna Tymes

Several Monta Loma homeowners joined me in having our homes inspected by civil engineer Kate O'Brien to ensure that they are secure on their foundations and not likely to slip off in a major earthquake. These were her general findings:

1. The Mackays she inspected seem to have a now-not-in-code-compliant version of fastening the house to the foundation, which involves rebar (reinforcing bar) embedded in the foundation that goes up through the mudsill (the piece of wood that provides the base for all the house's framing) and is bent over to return through a parallel hole back into the foundation. The 3/8-inch rebar appears to be part of the original construction. Current code calls for rebar inserted into a hole drilled through the mudsill into the foundation, epoxied in place, and fastened with a bolt. Kate is investigating whether these old rebar solutions offer reasonable protection from earthquake movement.

2. The two Eichlers Kate saw have some earthquake bracing, but it's impossible to tell if that was original or a retrofit. Both homes have finished garages, so it was impossible to tell more without removing some drywall, but Kate spotted bolts in the few places she could see the intersection between the slab and the mudsill.

3. Both Mackays and Eichlers have the same stability problems with large expanses of glass, usually single pane. Those walls are unbraced and in a big earthquake could flex enough to destabilize the house. Kate is looking into whether the framing that comes with double-pane windows could provide enough bracing (doubtful) or if a rod-and-turnbuckle solution might work better (and is fast and relatively cheap).

4. One of the biggest earthquake hazards in Monta Loma homes is the unbraced fireplace. Although I've heard that none of us experienced chimney damage from Loma Prieta, another earthquake could affect us all. The simplest solution is to demolish the brick fireplace and chimney and replace them with a manufactured fireplace and a zero-clearance chimney. Bracing a brick chimney is usually not effective; the chimney can still fall through the roof.

For more information, contact me at Etymes@LTS.com or 969-6650.

Neighborhood Resources

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
Jim Cochran, 207-5518
jimcoch@comcast.net

Neighborhood Watch Coordinator
Open, please volunteer!

Activities Committee
Wouter Suverkropp, 968-3056
wsuverkropp@yahoo.com

Parents' Network and Babysitting Co-op
Verity Chase, 969-6735

MLN Neighborhood Email List
mln@yahoogroups.com
List owner: Peggy Manor
mamm@pobox.com
To get only official announcements, subscribe at www.montaloma.org.

MLNA Websites
www.montaloma.org
Referrals:
mlna.wikispot.org
Webmaster: Cheryl Jasper
webmaster@montaloma.org

OTHER SOURCES OF EARTHQUAKE INFORMATION

Jim Cochran offers to loan a video tape, *An Ounce of Prevention...Strengthening Your Wood Frame Home For Earthquake Safety.* Contact Jim at 207-5518 or jimcoch@comcast.net.

Wouter recommends the book *Peace of Mind in Earthquake Country: How to save our home, business, and life* by Peter Yanev, 2008 edition, available at local libraries. It describes reinforcements that handy homeowners can do.

Traffic Safety Improvements

By Helen Wolter, MLNA First Vice President

During the bicycle-and-pedestrian-safety portion of the General Plan community meeting in September, Marilyn Gildea brought up the problem of parents and children crossing West Middlefield from Independence to Thaddeus Park not being able to see oncoming traffic. A blind curve hides traffic coming from Rengstorff, and the overgrown bushes in Middlefield's median strip hide traffic coming from San Antonio. Vehicular accidents are common at that intersection, but fortunately no pedestrians have been hit, yet.

I talked with City Traffic Engineer Mike Vroman. A stop sign on Middlefield is not an option, but the City has made several safety improvements. They include trimming the bushes in the median strip, erecting yellow pedestrian-crossing signs at the intersection, and trimming the low-hanging trees that obscure the pedestrian-crossing sign before the curve coming from Rengstorff.

Mountain View has been awarded a Pedestrian Safety Assessment grant, which will bring a specialist to look at specific sites. Mike hopes to include this intersection in the assessment.

Monta Loma Park Improvements

By Wouter Suverkropp

Several improvements have resulted from our meetings with the City Parks and Recreation staff:

- A gate now blocks people from driving their cars through the school grounds and into the park.
- A new trash bin collects trash on the side of the playing field used by the soccer teams.
- Extensive negotiations with the MVLA soccer league has resulted in several concessions on their part to schedule the games to begin later, manage game traffic and parking better, and reduce noise. This is an ongoing process, and we expect improvement over time.
- City staff has been instructed to more clearly demarcate closed field areas. Previously, the entire field appeared to be closed, when only a few areas needed to be fenced off.

The MLNA Board now has a standing meeting set up with the relevant city staff to deal with problems regarding park use. These take time to resolve, but we have made real progress. I thank MLNA board members Helen Wolter and Bill Lambert for their substantial contributions to this ongoing project. Suggestions and comments are always welcome.

City-Wide Garage Sale May 1 & 2

The city-wide garage sale at our homes is on Saturday and Sunday, May 1 and 2. The registration deadline is Friday, April 16; watch the Voice and the City's Resource for information. The more of us who register a sale, the more dots will appear in the Monta Loma section of the map that the city will publish, and the more customers we'll attract.

High Speed Rail

By Wouter Suverkropp

I've attended a number of meetings, both local and in Sacramento, to urge our local and state legislators to pay close attention to the High Speed Rail (HSR) Authority's plans and projections, and ensure that HSR is done well. It will have a big impact on our home values and our community, so I hope that you will stay informed and make your opinion known, too. Information websites are on the Related Links page at www.montaloma.org.



CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Urges Preparedness

By Andy Rose

Recent earthquakes and storms remind us to be prepared for a disaster. FEMA recommends that you have *at least* three days (14 days, if possible), of water, food, and medications plus blankets, shelter, and self-contained toilet facilities for all members of your household, as these are not stockpiled by the City or Red Cross. Assume that water, electricity, gas, and sewers won't work. FEMA projects that it will take at least three days to bring in supplies, and that's only if the roads aren't blocked. Contacting family members will be difficult because in a significant earthquake the cell-phone system will *automatically* turn itself off to normal users. Text messages are much *more* likely to get through.

Supplies: One gallon of water per person per day for adults and kids, plus your pets' needs. Don't count on your water heater unless you have an automatic disconnect. Store foods with low sodium and lower protein (for reduced thirst), long shelf-life, and that can be eaten without preparation or heating.

To learn more, visit www.fema.gov, www.redcross.org, or the CERT display at the Spring Fling. Or stop by the Monta Loma CERT trailer in the school parking lot on the second Saturday of other months, 9–11 a.m.

Car Care Seminars

By Leane Reelfs

Mike and I recently conducted a free car care seminar for teenage drivers at Helming's Auto Repair. Mike explained what can happen if they don't check the oil and add it as needed: a new engine can cost $5,000. We demonstrated how to check the oil and coolant, check and inflate the tires, and change a flat tire. The kids were totally engaged, and we enjoyed providing this service to the community we love so much.

We've had numerous requests for another Teen Car Care Seminar, as well as one for women, so become a Facebook friend of Helming's Auto Repair or contact us at helmingsauto@comcast.net or 988-0460.

Critters in our Yards

By Wouter Suverkropp

Though normally nocturnal, opossums have been seen strolling along our fences in broad daylight, and someone asked whether they are dangerous or destructive. Shy animals, opossums offer no danger to humans or pets. In fact, they're famous for playing dead when threatened. The only marsupial in the Americas, opossums are quite common in urban areas.

Sarah Doxiadis on Adele reports, "We have had possums living under our garden shed for decades. Despite the occasional encounter — with hissing from both species — our cats have maintained a truce with them. Youngsters about three months old venture out on their own in March/April."

Possums are omnivorous and will visit your yard for fruit, vegetables, and pet food. They have an acute sense of smell, so if one is raiding your garden, try ammonia-soaked rags or natural deterrents such as garlic, pepper, or cinnamon, or ask OSH about non-toxic deterrents. (A dead possum found in a backyard in January was thought by the SPCA to have been poisoned; a good reason to keep your cats indoors.)

Less pleasant visitors are raccoons, which will attack to get to their food, and rats. To avoid inviting them, keep pet food inside and compost enclosed.

Rats love palm trees and dense non-deciduous trees such as cypress; dense ivy; and cozy spots under a shed or house. Trees can be banded with flashing and ivy can be thinned. Sheds and homes can be rat-proofed with flashing and steel mesh or steel wool; close off any opening larger than half an inch.

Holiday Progressive Dinner

Pat Jordan, Silke Gurlich, Karima Pezzini, and Maria Hamoto organized the very successful holiday potluck progressive dinner held in December as a fundraiser for the Second Harvest Food Bank. Nadine and Kevin O'Leary hosted the appetizer course, and Karima and Walter Pezzini hosted the dinner course. Desserts were scheduled for Debbie and Scott Cunningham's, but due to sudden illness were served at Pat Jordan's instead. A good time was had by all as they made new friends and shared recipes. Photos are on the Activities page of www.montaloma.org. The $25 donations from the twenty participants were matched by the Adobe Foundation for a total contribution to the Food Bank of $1,260.

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Keeping Monta Loma Safe...and Clean...and Green

Too Much Fruit?

Tired of watching the squirrels strip her orange tree, Leane Reelfs on Dell called Village Harvest. Their volunteer gleaners came, picked all the fruit, and took it to the local CSA (Community Services Agency of Mountain View and Los Altos) food pantry. Fresh fruit is hard to come by at many food pantries, so consider sharing your bounty with people who need it. Contact Village Harvest at www.villageharvest.org or 888-378-4841.

Food donations are also welcome at the food pantry located at the back of the St. Athanasius Church building on Rengstorff. Canned and dry goods (pasta, rice) are welcome; outdated or opened food is not. Drop-off times are Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 3–4 p.m.; Fridays, 4–5 p.m.; and Saturdays 8–9 a.m. Anna Panadero Ortiz on Benjamin volunteers there and can provide further information or help if you can't pick your fruit (215-8722 or anna.panadero@gmx.net).

Discourage Door-to-Door Salespeople

Alerts about door-to-door salespeople appear frequently on the neighborhood email. It's always risky to buy from them, and it's best to discourage them by asking for their city license. If they can't show this, call the police at 903-6395, or 911 if you feel threatened. Describe the looks and clothing of the person(s). If a vehicle is involved you'll be asked for the license number and the make, model, year, color, how many doors, and any distinctive features.

Census Fraud Alert

By Wouter Suverkropp

It's very important that we all get counted in the U.S. Census to ensure that we have the political representation we deserve, and that our city, county, and state receive the funds to which they are entitled. However, identity thieves will take advantage of the census to attempt to obtain your personal information.

Door-to-door census workers will have a badge, a Census Bureau canvas bag, and a confidentiality notice. Ask to see their identification and don't accept excuses such as "I left it in my car." As always, be very cautious about inviting someone you don't know into your home.

Legitimate census workers will not ask for any financial information, Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers, or solicit donations. They may also contact you by telephone or mail, but not by email, so never click on a link or open any email attachments supposedly from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Safe Sidewalks

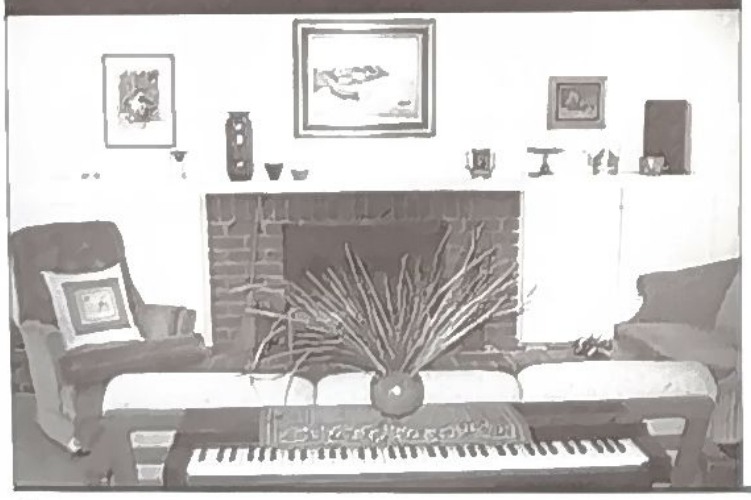
Is your sidewalk clear of overhanging bushes and trees, so that two people walking abreast, adults pushing strollers, and children riding tricycles can pass easily without ducking or detouring into the street? Please check your sidewalk, and also encourage your neighbors to make any needed trims and clean-ups. Rosebushes are particularly threatening to passersby.

Medication Disposal Day is held in conjunction with the City's Arbor on Saturday, March 13, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Pioneer Park near the Library. To safely dispose of old and unwanted prescription pills, drugs, and other medications, place medicines in zip lock (sealed) bags. To safely dispose of old mercury thermometers (unbroken), place them in zip lock (sealed) plastic bags and receive a new thermometer in exchange while supplies last. Please do not put medications and thermometers in the same plastic bag. Sorry, no other household hazardous wastes will be accepted. Call 408-299-7300 for information on where to recycle other household hazardous wastes.

MOBILE LIBRARY

The library's mobile unit stops on Jane at Fay on these Fridays: March 26, April 23, and May 21 from 9:45 to 10:15. It stops at Redwood Villa (on Montecito) from 3:00 to 3:30 on these Thursdays: March 11 and 25, April 8 and 22, and May 6 and 20. For more information or special requests, email mobile.library@mountainview.gov or call 526-7029.

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THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to those who delivered the November newsletter: John Canata, Donna Clarke, Jim and Alice Cochran, Martha Elderon, Grant Grundler, Maria Harnoto, Chuck and Cookie Henderson, Isabella Hill, Paul Kostka, Bill Lambert (2), Allison McGill, Hanneke Meijer, Shelly Ostman, Victoria Perry, Melba Reiling, Wouter Suverkropp, Elizabeth Wee, and Pat Young. We welcome more volunteers, even those who can help only occasionally. It's a good way to get to know your neighborhood and get an hour's exercise. Contact the editor to learn more.

BIRDING IN THE MONTA LOMA NEIGHBORHOOD: TELLING RAVENS FROM CROWS

by Dotty Calabrese

Neighbors often ask me, "Are those big black birds ravens or crows?" We have both, but most are crows. Several large families of American Crows live in Monta Loma. Occasional Common Ravens fly over or are seen at the edges of the neighborhood. Here are the differences between the two:

The raven has a thicker bill that is slightly down-turned, while the crow's bill is thinner and straight. The crow's tail is fan-shaped when spread, and flat at the tip when closed. The raven's tail is wedge-shaped, and longer with respect to its body. Ravens tend to be larger, but American Crows do vary in size. The largest American Crows can be as large as a Common Raven, so size is not always diagnostic.

Email your bird questions to me at dottycala@aol.com.

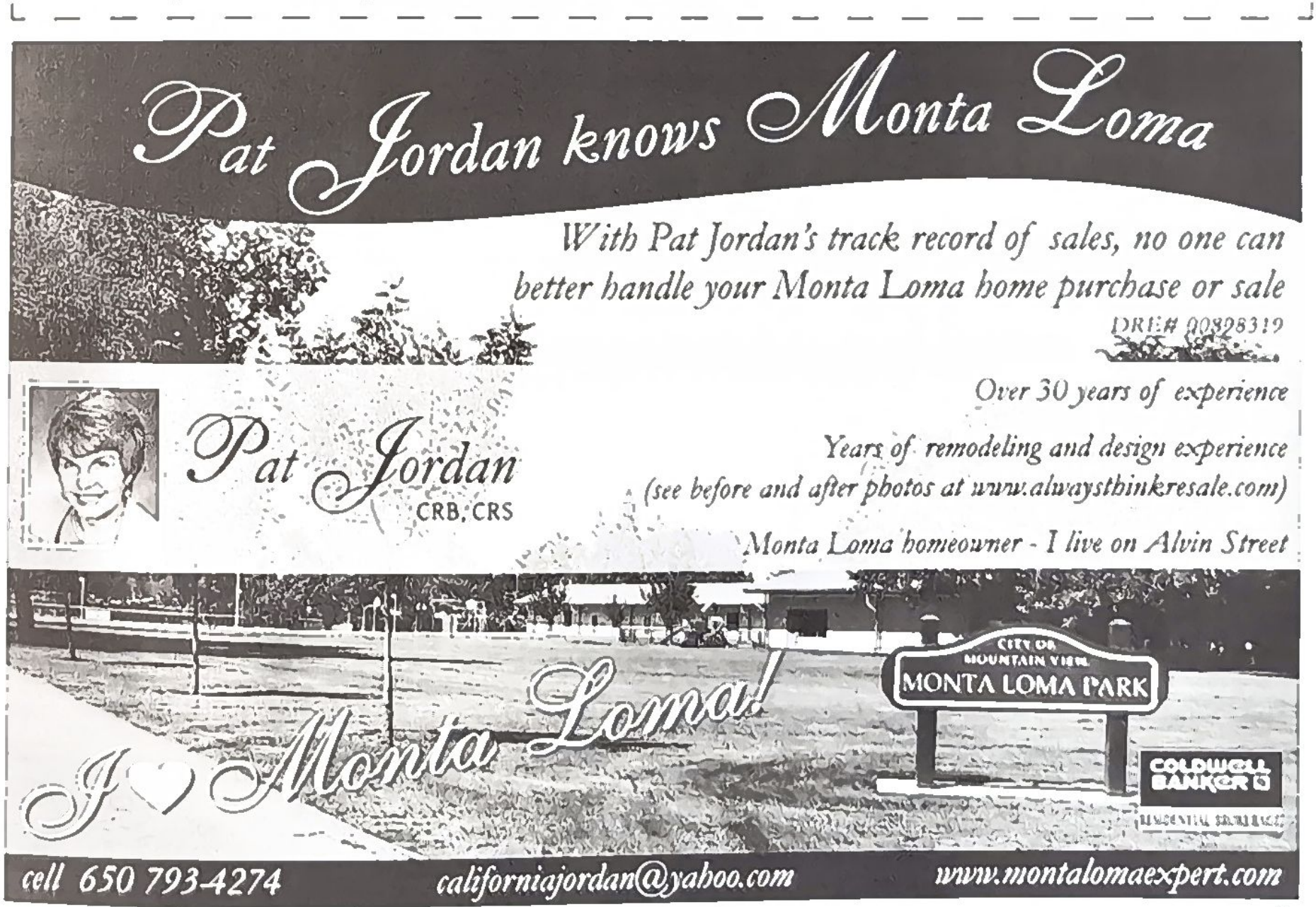
Fundraising

In April, I will again participate in the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society's Annual Birdathon, a fundraiser for environmental education in Santa Clara County schools. Last year, our three-woman team identified 120 bird species in Santa Clara County in one very long day, and raised over $4,000, including $760 from Monta Loma neighbors. This year, we are attempting to raise even more money. Please consider sponsoring me in this event. Your tax-deductible donation can be as little as $5. For more information, visit www.scvas.org/ then click on Spring Birdathon. To donate, make your check payable to SCVAS and mail it to me, Dotty Calabrese, 2465 Richard Court, 94043. (Or drop the envelope in my mail slot; it's the Eichler across Thaddeus from Thaddeus Park.) Thank you!

PLAN A BLOCK PARTY

It's not too early to begin organizing a summer block party. It's a great way to meet your neighbors, build camaraderie, and recruit a Neighborhood Watch (NW) Block Captain, if you don't have one. To encourage Neighborhood Watch, MLNA will help pay for your party. Pick up a flyer with the details at the Spring Fling or contact any board member.

If your block does not have a NW Block Captain, now is the time to volunteer or recruit one. To learn more, visit www.montaloma.org and click on Neighborhood Watch and on Block Parties.



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Good news for sellers: 2009 ended with an increase in activity that has continued into January. Call for details.

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