

# DOMINICAN AREA news

DOMINICAN/BLACK CANYON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION | P.O. BOX 151702 | SAN RAFAEL, CA 94915-1702 | SPRING 2015

## DBCNA Annual Meeting at Santa Sabina Center

Wednesday May 20 | 7:00 pm  
Doors open at 6:30  
to "Meet & Greet"

25 Magnolia Avenue

Sodas and snacks will be served

Meeting includes tour of  
historic Santa Sabina

Every resident welcome –  
non-members, too!

Come be a part of your community

Attendees will receive a special  
invitation to a future, fun event!

### Annual Meeting Agenda

6:30 Pre-Meeting, Meet & Greet

7:00 Welcome

**Dominican University Update**

**The New Civic Center Farmer's  
Market Plans, *Brigitte Moran***

**Prepare for a Disaster, *John  
Bruckbauer, SR Emergency  
Management Coordinator***

**Local Birds and Habitat  
Protection Efforts, *Ed Nute,  
Marin Audubon Society***

8:30 Adjourn and Santa Sabina Tour

**Dominican University Commencement**  
Saturday May 16

Students and family start to arrive at  
8am for the 10am ceremony. Festivities  
end around 1pm. Please plan for parking  
issues and traffic!

## New Bridge Over the Canal on Grand Avenue

### Safe Passage for Walkers and Cyclists

For years, pedestrians and cyclists have crossed the San Rafael Canal using the Grand Avenue Bridge with great difficulty. The sidewalk on the current bridge is narrow and dangerous. If a cyclist meets a pedestrian, the odds of a collision, or being forced off the sidewalk into traffic, are great.

A new bridge has been funded to solve this problem. The city has received \$824,000 from Measure A funds (Transportation Authority of Marin—Safe Pathways to School) to build a new bridge next to the current bridge. Only pedestrians and bicycles will use the new bridge, which will be 12 feet wide and have its own lighting. The city needs about \$500,000 to finish the job, but is confident it will find the money from local sources.

Only one change will be made to the current bridge—the sidewalk will be moved from the east side to the west side. This will allow visitors to the office building on the southwest side of the bridge to walk to 2nd street without crossing the street in the middle of Grand. The approach to the bridge and the crossing at 2nd Street will be improved. For example, the delivery entrance into Montecito Plaza near the Rite Aid will be moved further from the crosswalk. The sidewalks up to the bridge and the crosswalks at 2nd Street will be widened and the pork chop pedestrian island near Kinko's will be removed.

Work on the crosswalks will begin in the spring of 2016 and the bridge construction will soon follow. Completion date would be the fall of 2016. Thanks to the city and the Department of Public Works for getting this long needed improvement in gear.

## City and CalTrans Install New Fence Across from Coleman

### Reduced access for homeless camping

The fenced area around the pedestrian overpass, on Belle Ave across from Coleman Elementary School, has long been a favorite camping site for the homeless. Last year the fence was repaired at least three times, but the intruders continue to climb over or cut the fencing again. Council member Kate Colin met with Department of Public Works and asked them if they could prioritize this issue and talk with CalTrans about installing a taller, stronger fence. Surprisingly, this actually happened!

(continued on page 2)

## Help with Open Space Clean-up

The City of San Rafael has been collecting voter-approved Measure A tax money to benefit parks and open space within its boundaries. The fund is believed to be around \$400,000 annually. To put this money to good use, the Dominican/Black Canyon Neighborhood Association has proposed a clean up of litter and construction debris, and the removal of flammable, invasive broom, from three city parcels that are part of Barbier Park in the Mountain View Avenue corridor. The first is at the north end of Mountain View Avenue, and the second is a block away at the end of Cascade Drive. A third area is the trail head at the top of Convent Court.

We plan to mobilize volunteers for the litter and debris removal and have asked the city to provide or fund a truck for hauling away the material. We have also asked the city to engage a contractor to remove the broom at both sites and to maintain the sites after that, in conjunction with the maintenance of other nearby broom removal sites. We estimate the broom removal would cost approximately \$7,000 and we are in the process of obtaining proposals from contractors with experience in this type of work.

The City's Parks Commission has indicated it will pass our idea forward to the City Council, who holds final approval.

## City and CalTrans Install New Fence Across from Coleman

(continued from page 1)

Crews came in and cleared a number of shrubs away from the neighbor's fence and installed a taller cyclone fence. This has a heavier gauge and smaller openings (harder to get your shoes in it to climb!). Along with the increased visibility, we are hopeful this will no longer be a camping destination.

Many thanks to Kate for pushing this solution and following up. Thanks to our now retired DPW Director, Nader Mansourian and to CalTrans for making this small area a priority.

## SRPD Surveillance Camera Registry Program

In their continuing effort to involve our community in problem solving partnerships, the San Rafael Police Department launched a surveillance camera registry.

The registry allows residents and business owners to voluntarily register their surveillance cameras with SRPD. **Police will not have access to the camera systems,** but will be aware that a camera exists when investigating a crime in or around their neighborhood.

### How it works

If a crime occurs in the vicinity of a registered surveillance camera, investigators may use the provided contact information to request surveillance footage. Camera footage may include the actual crime, or an escape route which can provide descriptive information that can lead to the identification and ultimately the prosecution of a suspect.

If you'd like to register your surveillance camera go to: [srpd.org/onlineservices/cameraregistration.php](http://srpd.org/onlineservices/cameraregistration.php) or call them on the non-emergency number, 415 485-3000.



# The Birds in the Backyard

## Caution needed in the feeding of feathered friends

By Jim Harrison

Many of us like to feed the birds of our neighborhood. With me, I guess it's kind of a family tradition. I put out a big heavy plate with seed on the porch most days, along with a water bowl, and bring them in at night.

There was an article in the Santa Cruz Sentinel in March titled: Yard feeders sickening Bay Area songbirds. There are periodic outbreaks of two diseases in the bird population - mycoplasmosis and salmonella. The thought is that the unnatural grouping of birds at our little feeding stations facilitates the spread of these two illnesses and until the sickness lessens, which usually happens every spring, people should stop feeding the birds. The drought may be making this situation worse.

Then the IJ had an article in late February noting that "mycoplasmosis, a bacterial infection that causes eye inflammation and respiratory problems is being seeing primarily in purple finches and house finches throughout the Bay Area." The disease is much like the flu in humans and is often not fatal.

There are no distinctive signs associated with salmonellosis in wild birds. Different species and ages may exhibit different signs even when infected with the same strain. Commonly reported signs include ruffled feathers, droopiness, diarrhea, and severe lethargy; chronically infected birds often appear severely emaciated.

There are some things we can all do to lessen the spread of these diseases. I spoke to Alison Hermance, communications manager at Wildcare in San Rafael ([www.wildcarebayarea.org](http://www.wildcarebayarea.org)). Alison said the instances of sick songbirds has fallen in the spring to just a couple of birds per month, but precautions should still be taken as the migration of various species can drastically change the dynamics of the illnesses.

## Clean your bird feeders!

She recommends cleaning bird feeders, water containers, and bird baths at least once a week. First wash with soap and water and then scrub down with a mix of 9 parts water and 1 part bleach. I make up this mixture in a spray bottle. You also have to clean up seeds that have fallen on the ground near the feeder. The cleaning can be hard to do with a bird bath, and there is a risk of having soap residue on the ground around the bath, but it is still essential.

Allison pointed out that tubular finch feeders with their small holes may aid the spread of mycoplasmosis because it can be spread from the eyes and the birds eyes rub on the small holes. She also emphasized that humming bird feeders should NOT be cleaned with bleach. Instead, use vinegar in the same 1 to 9 water mixture.

Bird feeders should be brought in at night so they do not attract rats, who can also spread disease.

I have seen a lot less birds in my yard this year, but two people at Wildcare said they are seeing more than ever this year. Guess I'm just not a preferred destination. Maybe I need to do some marketing.

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## Are You on NextDoor.com Yet?

We continue to build our NextDoor.com community and currently 46% of households in our neighborhood are on the site. It is an excellent way to communicate about immediate crime and safety situations (such as suspicious persons), upcoming meetings or events, or get a recommendation for a plumber.

If you find the email notifications are irritating, **please don't quit**, let us know and we'll help you set your preferences to stop all but the most critical emails.

If you are already on NextDoor invite your neighbors! Let's increase these numbers so we have a comprehensive channel through which to communicate.

To sign up, go to [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com) or send an email to: [info@DominicanAreaNews.com](mailto:info@DominicanAreaNews.com) and we'll send you an invitation.

**555**  
of residents

**46%**  
of homes on site

## Energy Rebates Available

### Save up to \$6800. Not bad!

Have you been looking for ways to make your home more efficient and comfortable?

Right now, Marin County residents can take advantage of up to \$6,800 in incentives from Energy Upgrade California® Home Upgrade and Marin County for completing a home improvement project that will help save money on utility bills and improve home comfort and air quality.



Free assistance is available by calling the Home Upgrade Advisor service at (866) 878-6008. The Home Upgrade Advisors are there to provide homeowners with free, third-party assistance with understanding the building systems in their homes, selecting a contractor, reviewing project bids, and answering general questions.

You can read more about the Home Upgrade program and other energy-efficiency programs from the County at [www.marincounty.org/energyupgrade](http://www.marincounty.org/energyupgrade) or you can call the Marin County Sustainability Team at (415) 473-2698.

## Marin Municipal Water District Drought Regulations

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) recently announced emergency conservation regulations to implement Governor Brown's Executive Order calling for a statewide 25% reduction in water use. This cutback mirrors MMWD's current request for a reduction of 25% passed by MMWD's Board of Directors in January 2014 and still in effect.

For the period June 2015 through February 2016, however, the SWRCB regulations specifically request MMWD to reduce water use by 20% compared to 2013.

The following is prohibited, effective April 7, 2015:

1. Irrigating between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., except for system testing and repair
2. Irrigating ornamental landscape areas or turf areas more than three days per week
3. Irrigating ornamental landscape areas or turf areas during, and 48 hours *after* rainfall
4. Using a hose without a shut-off nozzle

## When Is My Membership Due?

We appreciate all of you who support us with your membership contributions—memberships have helped pay for diverse neighborhood activities ranging from “Slow Down” signs to social activities, from Chipper Day activities to French Broom removal along area trails, and for our semi-annual newsletters and annual meetings.

Our memberships run on an annual basis, from the date of joining or renewal for one year. Most neighbors join soon after receiving one of our newsletters (Spring or Fall); but we welcome people during whichever month works best for them, and they can simply renew during that month the following year.

Unfortunately, we do not have a staff or the ability to personally notify each household when their renewal date arrives. However, if anyone is wondering if it is time to renew, they can email [dbcnamembership@yahoo.com](mailto:dbcnamembership@yahoo.com) and we would be happy to look up their renewal date. To show extra support for the organization, there are some generous members who routinely renew every six months, but this is a bonus we do not expect.

For your convenience, we include an envelope in each newsletter. However its arrival is not meant to be a dated reminder for any individual member's renewal, it is simply to use one whenever your annual membership is due.

Thank you again to everyone who contributes to our activities!

5. Allowing irrigation water to run off or overspray the irrigated area
6. Hosing down sidewalks, driveways, and other hard-surfaced areas
7. Using non-recirculating decorative fountains



925 Belle Avenue

Is Your Neighborhood Venue for Tennis & Swimming and Much More!!

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[www.marintennisclub.com](http://www.marintennisclub.com)

## Don't Use Highly Flammable Mulch

Mulch is excellent at helping to conserve water, lower soil temperature, suppress weeds, reduce dust and erosion, and promote overall plant health.

However, Marin has experienced fires in median strips and residential landscapes that were using mulch made from the wrong material. Sometimes referred to as "monkey hair" or "gorilla hair," shredded bark is highly flammable and, once ignited, creates airborne sparks that can travel long distances while spreading fire. In tests conducted by the UC Cooperative Extension and others, mulches made from monkey hair, pine needles and shredded rubber all burned hot and fast. Shredded rubber (often dyed to look like bark) reached temperatures over 630° four inches above the mulch and produced flame heights averaging over three feet.

There are more ignition resistant wood mulches, especially when used over irrigated soil, that are comprised of larger pieces of wood: wood chips, chunks of Redwood bark, and composted mulches all fared better in tests. The safest ground coverings of all are those that simply do not burn, such as inorganic mulches like rocks, gravel or bits of broken brick, and are good choices for use within 5' of a structure. Plantings of well irrigated low groundcovers also resist ignition.

## Sprouts Farmers Market Opening in San Rafael

This year Wednesday, April 15 is not only 'Tax Day', but is also the grand opening of San Rafael's latest new grocery store – Sprouts Farmers Market. We are very excited to welcome Sprouts to San Rafael – the new store is located at 655 Irwin Street next to Staples (in the former Pacific Sales space). Sprouts Market focuses on healthy food choices at affordable prices.

## How can I tell if my trees have Sudden Oak Death?

### Come to the SOD Blitz May 30!

Sudden Oak Death kills oak trees; we know it is in our neighborhood. The deadly fungus that causes it is spread primarily through the leaves of California bay laurel, and the best indicator the disease is nearby is by identification of diseased bay leaves. Knowing how close the disease is to your property may help you decide whether to treat prized trees this fall.

In the spring of each year, the UC Berkeley Forest Pathology and Mycology Laboratory hosts the **SOD Blitz Survey Project** where you can learn to spot SOD infections, collect leaves on bay trees, and have them tested for SOD. If you have a little extra time, take an hour on May 30 and also sample trees in other neighborhoods or in the open space. Look at the SOD Blitz map to see results from 2014: [http://nature.berkeley.edu/garbelottowp/?page\\_id=1458](http://nature.berkeley.edu/garbelottowp/?page_id=1458).

Come to the SOD Blitz Training  
May 30, 2015  
Dominican University, Joseph R Fink Science Center  
Room 103  
10:00 – 11:00 a.m

For more information, contact the local coordinator Wolfgang Schweigkofler at [wolfgang.schweigkofler@dominican.edu](mailto:wolfgang.schweigkofler@dominican.edu).

### Sign up for Nixle to Receive San Rafael Police and Fire Updates

A new web service called Nixle, lets you receive updates from the San Rafael Police and Fire Departments on matters such as Amber alerts, nearby road closures, fugitives on the loose, etc. To subscribe, just go to [Nixle.com](http://Nixle.com) and sign up. You'll receive periodic text messages when something important happens.



You can choose to receive updates via email, text messaging or voice message from the Police and Fire Departments.

Give it a try and stay plugged in to your community. Go to [Nixle.com](http://Nixle.com).



## MARIN BALLET

*Marin's Leading Dance Training Center for 40 Years*  
Cynthia Lucas, Artistic Director

- Ballet Program provides comprehensive year-round dance training with performance opportunities for ages 3-18.
- Morning adult classes available.
- Studio rentals available.

100 Elm Street  
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(415) 453-6705  
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## CERT Disaster Drill in Dominican Neighborhood

On Saturday May 2, Marin County CERT conducted a disaster simulation drill in the Dominican Black Canyon neighborhood. Following a morning of skills review, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members practiced their skills in the afternoon in a simulated major earthquake scenario. CERTs were told that all communications were down, no electricity or water supply. They were tasked with setting up an incident command post, medical triage area, and responding to incidents in the neighborhood.

There were 12 volunteer victims, complete with injury makeup, placed throughout the neighborhood. Signs posted on mail boxes indicated property damage. Five teams of four people responded to injuries, returning victims to the medical triage area. All communications were done on the radio via neighborhood Channel 3.

### Why practice?

There are, at the most, 27 firefighters and 7 police officers on duty in all of San Rafael on a shift. There are 57,000 residents which balloons to about 100,000 during the day. In a major event, our first responders will be immediately overwhelmed. We have to learn to take care of ourselves. The CERT training teaches us how to organize and establish a chain of command. This will reduce the chaos in what could be a very chaotic situation.

The main objective of the exercise was to practice this chain of command, called the Incident Command System. This is a FEMA-supported and implemented nationally. The ICS teaches us to document events so when the first responders do arrive, we can direct them to those incidents and injuries that are most critical. We are the eyes and ears in neighborhoods throughout the County.

CERT also teaches basic first aid, search and rescue, and fire suppression. The CERT training is 18 hours of training over two successive Saturdays. The next San Rafael training is September 12 and 19 at Fire Station #2. You can learn more and register for CERT at [ReadyMarin.org](http://ReadyMarin.org).

### Neighborhood Organization

It is critical that neighbors know each other and understand what to do after a disaster. The CERT Incident Command will be established at Conlan Recreation Center in the event of a disaster. Plan and prepare!! Take CERT and be a part of the team.

## Marin Shakespeare Company

We are fortunate to have the Marin Shakespeare Company in summer residence in Forrest Meadows Amphitheater at Dominican University. Under the leadership of Robert Currier and Leslie Schisgall Currier, this incarnation of the company has been offering lively productions of Shakespeare's plays and other classics here since 1989.

The company operates year round, including their popular summer camp program with age group sessions for young people from 5 years through teen years, in addition to an Actor Training Intern Program and Technical Intern Program. During the school year, they have a Teen Touring Company, school programs and many activities aimed at other groups. Check out their website at [www.marinshakespeare.org](http://www.marinshakespeare.org).

Starting in June, come picnic under the stars and enjoy this year's productions:

### **CYMBELINE by William Shakespeare**

June 26 - July 26      A magical romantic comedy with a wonderful surprise ending

### **DON QUIXOTE by Peter Anderson and Colin Heath**

July 31 - August 30      The U.S. premiere of a new adaptation

### **RICHARD III by William Shakespeare**

September 4 – 27      The ultimate exploration of human ambition and the politics of power, Richard III is one of Shakespeare's greatest masterpieces.

Gift certificates are available.

## International Festival –More Games, More Food, More Music, More Fun

Coleman Grade School's Annual International Festival will be held on the school grounds on Saturday, May 30 from 11:00 - 4:00 pm. The International Festival is a fun event for the entire neighborhood and showcases food, games, and crafts from around the world. International dance performances will include Chinese lion dancers, Irish step dancers, Ballet Folklorico (traditional Mexican dances), as well as student performances. The International Festival also features raffles with fabulous prizes and a silent auction.

Bring your family and friends to enjoy many new festival games, a delicious lunch and celebrate the cultural diversity that hallmarks both Coleman and the city of San Rafael. Coleman School is located at 800 Belle Ave. near Rafael Dr. and Dominican University. Admission is free. Proceeds benefit music, art, and physical education at the school.

## Garbage Cans Left in Public View Can Lead to Citations

San Rafael's municipal code states that no containers for garbage or recyclables can be left in front or side yards **within view** of a public street. Visible cans are labeled a public nuisance and can lead to warnings and a citation.



In addition, refuse containers may only be left on the street, in the designated pick-up location, for the day of the pick up (or the night before).

## Coleman Library: Books & Volunteers

The Library at Coleman Elementary School and is accepting donations of children's books if they are in good condition. Bring the books to the library at 800 Belle Ave.

Also, if you have the time, volunteers who want to help out in the library can contact Librarian Sara Sonnet at 415-485-2420 Ext. 144 or [sbsonnet@hotmail.com](mailto:sbsonnet@hotmail.com).

### Kindergarten

Coleman Kindergarten Orientation: June 2

Coleman Kindergarten Camp: August 10 – 14

## SMART Train Update

The Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) train is chugging ahead:

- Workers have been installing track on the other side of the freeway opposite our neighborhood, from Terra Linda to downtown San Rafael. You may have noticed periodic street closures as they put in the long rail, reputedly quieter track.
- A two car "train" arrived from Japan and began testing between Novato and Petaluma in May. Train testing in our area is scheduled for this fall.
- The San Rafael City Council approved Quiet Zones for our area, so the trains will not blast their horns continually through our neighborhood—only as they leave the downtown station or if the engineer sees something/someone on the track.
- Thanks to all those who attended the many city meetings to express their views on Quiet Zones. You carried the day. It was quite unusual to see a boiling controversy on which everyone agreed!
- Train operation is still scheduled to begin at the end of 2016. No one has yet determined the price of a ticket, or the design of the area immediately surrounding the downtown station. However SMART has agreed to use the Clipper system of passes to integrate with Bay Area transportation services.
- As a reminder, the train will run in each direction, north and south, from Santa Rosa to downtown San Rafael from 5:00 am till 9:30 pm on weekdays, about every 30 minutes. There will be a few trains daily on the weekends. Each train will consist of two cars with 158 seats. Average speed will be 40 mph.

### Election of Officers

The following residents of the Dominican/Black Canyon Neighborhood have agreed to serve as Officers and Board Members of the Dominican/Black Canyon Neighborhood Association for the year June 1, 2015 to May 31, 2016. All DBCNA members who attend the Annual Meeting are eligible to vote to confirm these Officers and Board Members.

President—Daniel Sonnet

Secretary/Treasurer—Carol Goepp

Corinne Bartshire

Paula Doubleday

Cheryl Douglas

Jim Harrison

Sandy Miller

If you are interested in becoming a Board Member, please contact [dansonnet@yahoo.com](mailto:dansonnet@yahoo.com) for more information. We would ask that you attend meetings for a period of time and participate in the workload before receiving an invitation. All residents are welcome to attend the monthly Board Meetings.

### 2015 Membership Dues

#### Dominican/Black Canyon Neighborhood Association

Please support our annual meeting, fire safety program, social events, newsletter and other activities by sending in your Annual Dues of \$20 today. Use the enclosed envelope.

New Member

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_  CHECK BOX IF THIS IS A NEW EMAIL

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

YES! I would like to help:

- Social Events
- Like to be interviewed for a story on the web?
- Deliver newsletters
- Write newsletter or web articles
- Disaster Preparedness Planning

### Dominican/Black Canyon Neighborhood Association

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dan Sonnet, *President*

Carol Goepp, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Jim Harrison

Paula Doubleday, *Webmaster, ReadyDominican*

Sandy Miller

Cheryl Douglas

Corinne Bartshire

#### Upcoming Board Meetings:

Please join us at our Monthly Board Meetings. All residents are welcome! Meetings are held at 7 pm at the Ballet School Board Room on the second Wednesday of the month. We don't meet in July and August.

#### Are you on the email list?

Send an email if you want to join the list at: [info@DominicanAreaNews.com](mailto:info@DominicanAreaNews.com) and STAY INFORMED!

We usually send out one email a month, and never share our email list. If you unsubscribed at some point and want to re-subscribe, send us an email at: [info@DominicanAreaNews.com](mailto:info@DominicanAreaNews.com)

#### Are you on NextDoor.com?

Please join [NextDoor.com](http://NextDoor.com) to build our neighborhood communication channel. You can go to [NextDoor.com](http://NextDoor.com) to register (watch the video tour too!) or send us an email at [info@DominicanAreaNews.com](mailto:info@DominicanAreaNews.com) and we'll send an invitation.

**Ever wonder how this newsletter arrived on your doorstep?**

**Volunteer to Distribute the DBCNA Newsletter**

Twice a year a team of volunteers walk the Dominican neighborhood and deliver 1000 newsletters. We need some volunteers! No experience needed.

**Exercise, Meet Neighbors & Do a Good Deed!**

If interested, email [info@dominicanareanews.com](mailto:info@dominicanareanews.com)



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