

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Fitch Mountain Association, July 12, 2009

Pres. Laura Rodriguez welcomed the 37 attendees to the 30th Anniversary of the FMA at 12:10 pm.

Guest speakers were John Sloat, a public information officer with the California Highway Patrol; Rebecca Goodsell, speaking on sudden oak death; Laura Tietz of Fire Free Fitch; Randy Collins of the HFD; and Donita Proctor, FMA Trustee and archivist. Summaries of their talks appear below.

Treasurer Maryanne Murray reported that there is \$579.83 in the FMA checking account and \$946.81 in savings.

Pres. Rodriguez moved to donate \$100 from savings to Honza Ripa Fund, to help with the medical expenses of a young man recently injured in a river accident. The donation was unanimously approved.

The minutes of the January 2009 membership meeting were approved as distributed.

Trustee Al Pucci reported that the input from a small-group brainstorming activity in January resulted in the following mission statement: "The mission of the Fitch Mountain Association is to: (1) Disseminate relevant information to the membership; (2) Encourage community; (3) Maintain the unique nature of our locale; and (4) Establish a positive identity within the public sector."

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25.

Sloat: The CHP has instituted special patrols on weekends to target DUI's and crime issues. The CHP does not have authority over parking on private roads (this is a trespassing issue). They will tow if a vehicle is blocking a road, but if you have a car towed on your own, you'll have to pay for it. The Santa Rosa CHP office # is 588-1400. If you know someone's drinking and driving, call the Sheriff's Dept at 565-2121; the Sheriff's patrol desk # is 565-2650.

Goodsell: The outreach program for which Goodsell is a volunteer will help residents identify "high-value oaks" on their property. A new program/preventative treatment is available for healthy oaks. The bad actors in the spread of sudden oak death (SOD) are bay laurel trees, especially during the rainy season. Black sooty mold on bay leaves is not a problem, but little yellow lesions are. Suspect bay leaves gathered on your property during the winter can be analyzed for you. Contact Goodsell at bgoodsell@sbcglobal.net or 473-9360.

Tietz: Fire Free Fitch (FFF) is a grass-roots organization founded a year ago on the principle that you're only as safe [from fire] as your neighbor is. They started with a demonstration project at Villa Chanticleer on the hillside behind the picnic area. FFF supports neighbors getting together in mutual groups to make their neighborhoods fire-defensible, and has successfully worked with more than 16 groups. The back side of the mountain, starting with Madrone, is the next targeted area.

Fire Chief **Collins** observed that Tietz, through FFF, has done more for Fitch Mountain than anyone he's seen in his 23 years here. Then he did the annual review of the eight items in the brochure about fire safety on Fitch Mountain, with a special reminder to pet owners to use a pet carrier during an evacuation. He also spoke briefly about Fitch Mountain's fire history. The last significant fire here was in September 1945. Eleven homes on the east slope burned down in the wind-abetted blaze. All the damage occurred in just 1 hour.

Proctor added some historical notes about the Association itself. The residents of CSA #40, the utility district on the mountain, originally organized the FMA because they were desperate for fire safety. Water was the other issue. FMA trustees used to have more power to negotiate fees for water, etc.