

Martin-Fontana Parks Association



WE CAN HAVE SAFE RELIABLE POWER WITH TREES



New Board Members

From left to right are: the TJ Martin Representative, Larry Sasscer, Vice President Mike Kalashian, Secretary Pat Wagstaff, President Linda Wilson; Jeffrey Fontana Representative, Dick Stevens; Treasurer Bob Heldt, and Leslie Dornell, At Large Representative.

PG&E comes to an Agreement with MFPA

HIGH FIVES ALL AROUND

On February 16, 2011, representatives from PG&E and Martin-Fontana Parks Association met and reached an agreement on the phase 2 winter removals, trimming, and plans for the parks under the high tension power lines.

Originally, PG&E had decided to remove 16 trees by the end of February. After three meetings with PG&E, the

number of removals was reduced to 7 trees. By the end of this month PG&E had crews out and working in the parks.

On the 28th of February, PG&E fulfilled their agreement with our Association, by removing 7 trees and trimming others. PG&E spokesperson, Kamran Rasheed said that the trees in the parks will be reevaluated next year.

Beautiful Day Project

In 2010 we joined a particularly exciting project that land-scaped the whole street corner of Jeffrey Fontana Park to honor the slain officer. There was a huge "Hero's BBQ"... Page 3



It All Began While Walking Our Dog

One year ago in Feb, my husband and I were walking our dog at Jeffrey Fontana Park and spotted a notice posted on the dog park enclosure. The community was... Page 4



Reflections from 2010, a Watershed Year for the Community

What an amazing rollercoaster year this has been!! Our community's emotions seesawed between extreme anger to exuberance, definitely an E-Ticket ride. Here are the highlights of this past year starting with December 2009... Page 2

Tree #13- Alive & Well & Saved from PG&E's Ax!!

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Memories Are Made in the Shade

OUR MESSAGE MARCH, 2011

by *Linda Wilson, President*



With the new Board of Directors in place, we are ready to continue our work of protecting the trees in our parks through negotiations with PG&E. The negotiating process has been underway since December 2010, and continued with a meeting held on February 1st. For 2011, approximately twenty trees are under review and discussion. Throughout this process, we remain committed to our guiding principle of "Trim, don't Cut".

In our discussions with PG&E we are striving to reach an agreement on a long-term plan for the trees in the parks covering a three to five year span, and to establish a criteria for tree removal that reflects the park's unique "Community Use" status versus the open space zero tolerance stand developed by PG&E.

Other goals of this Board of Directors for 2011 include:

- Continuing to build membership. Our strength lies in our numbers as we talk with PG&E and the City of San Jose.
- Producing a quarterly Newsletter beginning with a March edition.
- Pursuing grant opportunities to fund enhancement and restoration efforts.
- Continuing our efforts to protect Tree #13. We reached a one year agreement with PG&E to save the tree until August, 2011. We will work to make this a permanent agreement.
- Working with Council member Pyle's District 10 office to further enhance our parks.

REFLECTIONS FROM 2010, A WATERSHED YEAR FOR THE COMMUNITY

by *Dick Stevens and Pier Maggiani
Outgoing Co-Presidents*

What an amazing roller coaster year this has been!! Our community's emotions seesawed between extreme anger to exuberance, definitely an E-Ticket ride. Here are the highlights of this past year starting with December 2009:

- Just before Christmas, a resident neighbor noticed a PG&E contractor tagging many trees in TJ Martin and Jeffrey Fontana Parks for immediate removal affecting ultimately 140.
- In January we demanded PG&E discuss the planned wholesale deforestation of our parks.
- In February and March over 200 residents met with the City and PG&E to express our outrage at the plan to deforest our parks.
- In April a MFPA contingent showed the City Attorney and PG&E we were well within the safety limits. Therefore the proposed tree removals were unreasonable and unnecessary.
- May was very critical to getting PG&E and the City's attention, so ten of us delivered the Tree #13 message at a City Council meeting.
- We picketed PG&E's San Jose HQ and presented a petition signed by over 300 people demanding PG&E prune, not cut our trees all covered in the news.
- In June we sent urgent letters to PG&E's CEO, VP of Operations, VP of the Environment, Mayor Reed, and the City Council.
- In August we celebrated our establishment of a non-profit association with the "Heart in the Park" celebration.
- Efforts have already begun to improve our parks appearance. As Summer approaches, look for signs of the new plantings coming to life! (pg 3)

Neighbors and Friends

OVER 40 TREES PLANTED IN JEFFREY FONTANA PARK

On December 11th, the tree planting in the Jeffrey Fontana Park in South San Jose, was very successful. There were about 50 people participating from all over the valley (Cupertino to South San Jose) and all 40 or more CA Native trees were successfully planted. We all owe a debt of gratitude to David Poeschel for organizing Phase I of his planting scheme and to [Our City Forest](#) for providing the support necessary to get the job done! Thanks again to all that helped and especially to the MFPA members who braved the cool morning to assist in the plantings.

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY PLANTING ON NOVEMBER 19TH

In 2010 we joined in a particularly exciting project that landscaped the whole street corner of Jeffrey Fontana Park to honor the slain officer. There was a huge "Hero's BBQ" for everyone (approx 500). More than 100 volunteers from South Hills Community Church, the Boy Scouts and Eagle Scouts, San Jose Police Officers Association, San Jose Adopt-a-Park, Martin-Fontana Parks Association, and several park neighbors, braved the weather that Saturday to participate in the event. What a beautiful enhancement to your park! Great job everybody!



BEAUTIFUL DAY-NOV 19



REFLECTIONS FROM 2010 CONTINUES...

The capstone to all the hard work was the formation of the Martin-Fontana Parks Association (MFPA)! We are now beginning to realize the significance of taking this step as we find PG&E is now making an effort to work with us, as evidenced by their removal of only four mature trees this year. PG&E is also assisting us with efforts to make improvements to those areas that were most decimated by the July 2010 and Feb. 2011 tree cuttings.



All of this would not have been possible without the help and support of an amazingly talented community of neighbors and friends with a "can do" and "get it done" attitude. Our heartfelt thanks to all of you who supported this noble effort.

The new Board has exciting things planned for our Parks this year. Stay tuned for more news as these plans are realized. Go to SaveOurParkTrees.com for full coverage of our activities.

Mature Trees Provide Shade for Us and Habitat for Wildlife

IT ALL BEGAN WHILE WALKING OUR DOG

by *Pat Wagstaff*

One year ago in February, my husband and I were walking our dog at Jeffrey Fontana Park and spotted a notice posted on the dog park enclosure. The community was invited to a meeting with PG&E to learn about their plans to remove 140 trees from Jeffrey Fontana and TJ Martin Parks due to their proximity to power lines in that area. We joined local residents at the Almaden Winery Community Center to listen to PG&E's presentation and came away from the meeting determined to fight the utility company's plans to remove so many healthy trees from one of our favorite parks. We joined with friends in forming a 'Save our Trees' group and the following month my husband and I found ourselves at a City Council Meeting where several members spoke during Open Forum about the issue with PG&E's plans. A second community meeting with PG&E occurred in mid March and I'll never forget one resident's remark to PG&E that night: 'You've underestimated the residents of Almaden Valley'. This same group of concerned citizens has officially become the Martin-Fontana Parks Association and I'm proud to serve as their first elected secretary—the battle has just begun and it all started with a dog walk.



CONTINUE TO ORGANIZE

by *Larry Sasscer, TJ Martin*
Neighborhood Director

I've been living on Weimar Ave, facing the park, and watching it slowly deteriorate since moving here in 1995. Even before the economic slowdown the city has been reluctant to repair irrigation equipment and provide for general maintenance other than mow the turf. It's unfortunate the neighborhood didn't have a better understanding of the City's obligation to PG&E and tree maintenance. The current situation was compounded by the City's (Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PNRS) reluctance to communicate PG&E intentions in a timely manner. I have seen that the work to-date has fostered better communication lines with the City and has brought pressure on PG&E to review, validate and limit tree removals, at least so far. Continued organized neighborhood pressure will keep us on this path.



RESTORATION & BEAUTIFICATION

by *David Poeschel & Patrick Pizzo*

The restoration & beautification of the TJM & JF parks' depends on the negotiations with PG&E. We are committed to the "prune - don't remove" strategy, but the new landscapes of the park will be different from the current landscapes, since restoration efforts will have to accommodate PG&E guidelines. There will be shrubs under the lines & trees will be planted where possible away from the lines.

The Association worked with the Beautiful Day project to landscape the west entry into Fontana off McAbee. Three red oaks and three sycamores were planted along The Strand and more shade-canopy trees are envisioned for this area. We, also, planted 47 seeds, seedlings, and small trees on the east end of Fontana.

Jean LaMarca on media: We have received media coverage from the Almaden Times, the Almaden Resident, the Mercury News, CBS, ABC, and KKUP. Some of the covered events include park rallies, protests & vegetation plantings. (jeanlamarca@sbcglobal.net)

Tree #13 - Alive and Well and Saved from the Ax!

by Dick Stevens

The venerable and beloved native Coast Live Oak continues to live in Jeffrey Fontana Park! Thanks to the efforts of the Association to get an independent arborist's review, followed by letters to PG&E's Vice Presidents of the Environment and Operations, Tree #13 was not only spared from the July 1 cut, we have also received written assurances from PG&E VP Mark Johnson. He said that going forward, PG&E would continue to prune Tree 13 and they would do their best to keep the tree within safe distance from the power lines. That way Tree #13 can continue to live where it planted itself over 40 years ago.

As evidence that PG&E is keeping their word, the tree was pruned in October to shape the tree and

remove some growth spikes. The Association has also begun discussions with San Jose Parks Manager, Don Zonic to redirect water away from the tree. This action is intended to slow the tree's rate of growth. We are also asking the city to add mulch around the tree to preserve the moisture it does get. Both of these actions were recommended by an arborist as a means to improve the viability of the tree.



We will continue to monitor the tree each year. We will take measurements and track the tree's growth rate to insure that the tree will not interfere with the power line while allowing the tree to continue to thrive!

EDITOR'S CORNER

by Valli Sharpe-Geisler

I am pleased to announce that we received our formal 501(c)(3) classification from the IRS in time for this tax period. It's official we are a tax exempt charity.

For updates, events and planting schedules visit our Blog site below

IMPORTANCE OF ACCURACY

by Vince Piazzisi

One of my passions and interest was the actual clearances that really existed between the trees and the transmission lines. I was concerned that PG&E never wanted to talk about clearances of the trees to the lines. To pursue this interest, I joined forces with Tom Morse. Since he had a laser measuring device he used in golfing, initially it became a very useful tool for making these measurements. We started taking these measurements way back in March of 2010. We did extensive measurements on the large Coast Live Oak Tree #13, which I believe was instrumental in the saving this tree from removal.



Since we became the MFPA Association, we have purchased a laser instrument dedicated for measuring tree heights and wire clearances. This laser is a Opti-Logic 400LH, which is the same instrument used by PG&E. I have found that many of the trees which PG&E wanted to remove have sufficient clearances according to Federal and State mandates. With this instrument we now have the ability to compare measurements with PG&E and to challenge them when we differ.

WE CAN HAVE SAFE RELIABLE POWER WITH TREES

MARTIN-FONTANA PARKS ASSOCIATION

THE PASSION TO GET INVOLVED

by *Vince Piazzisi*

I, like many other residents, became passionate and involved in protecting and preserving trees in our parks. Many of us were outraged in the very first meeting by the City and PG&E declaring that 120 trees had to be removed. Since that event many of us in the Community were involved in writing letters, sending e-mails, and making phone calls to the City and PG&E. The many concerns of residents who became personally involved showed that the City and PG&E will listen when many residents are expressing the same thoughts. We may not be able to save every tree but we need to fight for those that are reasonably safe from any wire contact.

One particular example is an area of 4 to 5 groups of unique multi-stem Oak trees located just east of Meridian, between Oakglen Way and the Villa's. In July of last year a recommendation was made to the City to place these trees on the City's Heritage Tree list. This proposal was sent to the city arborist, Ralph Mize, whose job is to submit it to the City Council for approval or disapproval. I have been in communication with Ralph several times by phone and e-mail's. The latest date that this proposal will be brought before the City Council is sometime in March. I was told that the City has been going through some changes in regards to the overall policy of Heritage Trees and that may be the reason for the delay. I encourage others to get involved and support my Committee by attending the City Council Meeting when this issue is brought before them.

MARTIN-FONTANA PARKS ASSOCIATION

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www.saveourparktrees.com

Save the Date

for the

Heart of the Park

Celebration

August 14

2 PM to 4 PM

