

Message from the MVNA President:

"There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor."

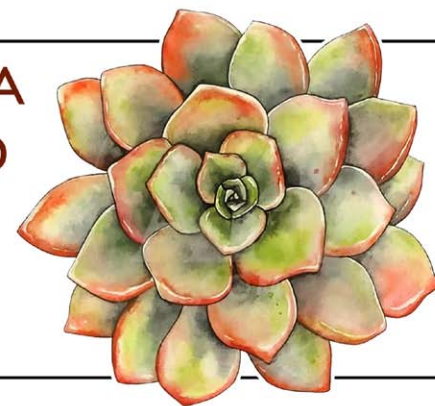
- Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol

This time of year is conducive to introspection and counting one's blessings. It may be the longer nights and long awaited rainy days; enjoying the comforts of home and hearth, and connecting with friends and loved ones. It's a time when giving is foremost in our hearts and minds. Friends, family and even strangers seem nearer and dearer. But for many it can also be a very difficult time so it is also a time to reflect on those less fortunate; those without homes, sleeping in cars or out in the cold; those that are hungry or suffering emotional or physical pain. It's a time we all can find ways to help relieve the suffering of others with acts of generosity and kindness. Every such act is repaid abundantly by the warmth our hearts feel from helping others in need. Opportunities are all around us, even right here in our beautiful neighborhood. It's a good time to let go of ill will and resentments, and open our hearts. That also includes being kind to ourselves.

As your Neighborhood Association president, I join the MVNA Board in wishing all our wonderful neighbors all the joys of the season and a very Happy New Year! Please do not hesitate to reach out to MVNA if there is anything we can do to make life a little better or easier in our little piece of heaven-AKA the Monterey Vista Neighborhood.

MONTEREY VISTA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2019-2020 NEWSLETTER



Here are a few ideas how we might go about helping others (and ourselves) during the holidays:

Volunteer - Give blood - Befriend an elderly person - Invite International students to holiday celebrations - Donate to charities that help the less fortunate - Donate to coat and blanket drives - Put out birdseed - Help out at and donate food to food banks - Perform random acts of kindness - Give a generous tip to a friendly customer service worker like a waiter or barista - Buy a homeless person a sandwich and a hot drink - Help someone who's struggling with their luggage on public transport - Buy your friend chocolate (or a drink in the pub!) when they're feeling down...and listen thoughtfully if they need to vent - Give genuine compliments - Offer to take photos for tourists - Be cheerful and kind to everyone you meet - smiles are contagious - Visit nursing homes, pass out candy canes/gifts and offer an understanding ear - Donate unused soaps, shampoo, toothpaste, etc. to groups that help the homeless - offer pet food for homeless people with pets - Contribute to toy drives for children of struggling families.

Monterey Fire Department Toy Drive and Food Drive

Working in conjunction with the Kiwanis's Santa Project to provide toys to boys and girls, the Monterey Fire Department has begun its annual Toy Drive. They currently have toy barrels at the Fire Stations below:

- FS11- 600 Pacific Street, Monterey
- FS12 - 582 Hawthorne, Monterey
- FS13- 401 De La Vina, Monterey
- FS14- 600 Pine Avenue, PG
- FS15- 6th Avenue, Carmel by the Sea

In addition, the City will have Food Bank of Monterey County barrels around City Hall and the Fire Departments for people to donate non-perishable items. For more information, the Food Bank phone number is (831) 758-1523.

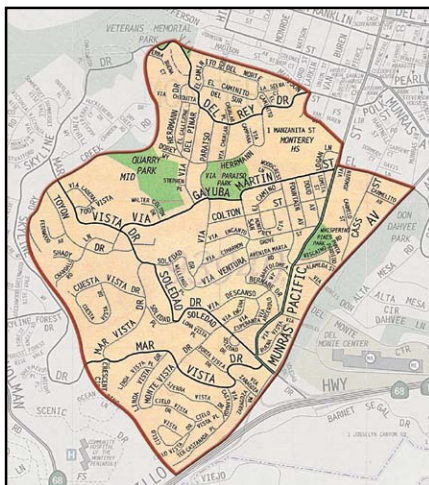
Susan Nine, President of MVNA
mvneighborhood@gmail.com



The Monterey Vista Neighborhood Association (MVNA) is one of fifteen City of Monterey neighborhood associations that represent the residents of Monterey.

Our goal is to preserve and improve the quality and character of our neighborhood areas.

Our services include review and comment on selected city programs, proposed ordinances, and building designs. We provide assistance to members in resolving neighborhood concerns.



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Water Issues Spark Public Debate By Susan Nine

Water has been taking central stage lately with the community divided on how best to manage this life sustaining resource. A year after the passage of Measure J, the long awaited feasibility study was presented on November 12th to a packed meeting of the Monterey Peninsula Water Management Board at Embassy Suites. The study concluded the public takeover of privately owned Cal Am Water is feasible and would lower water rates. A judicial process to force the takeover by eminent domain will be necessary since Cal Am has made clear they are unwilling to sell, unless a court decision forces the sale. Proponents of the takeover who spoke during public input were pleased by the prospect of lower water bills and local ownership and control, while Cal Am supporters claimed the study underestimates the costs of the takeover and that the likelihood of a forced takeover making it through the courts is slim and the process expensive.



A portion of the overall price of buying out Cal Am is the cost of Cal Am's proposed desalination plant. Although approved by the County Board of Supervisors by a 3-2 vote, Cal Am's desalination plant faced another hurdle getting approval by the California Coastal Commission. The CCC staff report recommended the Commission not approve the desalination project because a less expensive and environmentally friendlier option may now exist resulting from the projected expansion of water output from Pure Water Monterey, the new wastewater recycling plant.



Both sides of this issue went head to head during seven hours of public input at the CCC meeting November 16th in Half Moon Bay. Desai proponents argued that Pure Water One is an unreliable source to meet the Peninsula's water needs. Desalination opponents countered that water from desal is too costly and will double already too high water bills, cause environmental damage to Marina's dunes, beaches, wildlife and aquifers and is not energy efficient. Many noted that recent reports show Pure Water Monterey will be sufficient to meet the Peninsula's water needs more cheaply and efficiently and with far fewer environmental impacts than the proposed thirty five acre desalination plant that will take longer to build.

The CCC put off a decision until possibly March to give staff more time to study the viability of Pure Water Monterey as a primary water source and other environmental concerns raised.

Be a part of Monterey's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

The next CERT training will be **22 February for 3 consecutive Saturdays**. You must attend all 3 Saturdays to graduate.

Through this training you will learn about disaster preparedness for you and your family and if you are so inclined you can join the CERT team to help out in the community at times of hazard and disaster.

Some of the things you will learn are:

- Emergency medicine
- Use of a fire extinguisher
- Disaster Preparedness
- Shutting off your utilities
- Rescue
- Communications when phones fail
- Assessing your home or workplace after an earthquake or storm



Please consider attending this worthwhile training! For more information or to enroll please visit <http://montereycert.org>

Are The Prospects Of Permanent Lights At MHS Dimming?

By Marta Kraftzeck

The issue of whether Monterey High will be installing permanent stadium lighting remains up in the air. MPUSD bent to public pressure and says it will get an environmental impact report (EIR) done before moving forward with the proposed project. MVNA strongly recommended that MPUSD prepare a full EIR. It was the concern of MVNA that the process be transparent and that residents have the information from the EIR to satisfactorily evaluate the lights and other changes to the stadium.

The "lights" issue is not new to the surrounding neighborhoods.. In 2006 Monterey High began plans for renovation of its field, which was long overdue. In 2009 MPUSD and neighbors decided upon a Use Agreement for the field allowing for portable lighting and 4 night football games per year at MHS. At that time MPUSD promised that no permanent lights were planned for the field. However, MPUSD now plans to put up permanent stadium lights and add new stadium bleacher seating for 500 people.

Many residents have expressed concerns about this project and the resultant nighttime noise and light pollution, as well as uncertainty about how the very tall proposed lights would affect views, citing expert studies hired by neighbors of MHS. Other neighbors were concerned about unmitigated parking, safety and traffic issues.

Instead of stadium lights being used for a handful of seasonal football games, Monterey High School has declared its intent to have the lights in use on a nightly basis for the six fall and winter months, impacting surrounding residents well into the evening. Also, the proposed lights could allow all manner of night uses of the football stadium by outside groups at any time due to the 2012 Civic Center Act. This act encourages "all school districts to maximize opportunities to make available and accessible public school facilities and grounds to their communities as civic centers."



Some taxpayers are also expressing concern about the use of Measure I funds for this project, provided by district residents' additional 6% property tax increase. In June 2018 voters approved Measure I to fix the crumbling infrastructure of MPUSD schools and give students 21st century classrooms. To determine priorities, MPUSD sought community input and a facilities survey was done. Upgrading sports fields was ranked the lowest priority with the most important considered to be completion of major infrastructure projects such as sewer, gas and water lines and electric upgrades across campuses in the district.

According to the 2018 MPUSD Facilities Needs Assessment the needs at MHS alone are over 43 million dollars. Needs like new windows, HVAC, renovation of the gym and replacement of the portables remain on the wait list as currently all of the twelve million dollar Measure I funds allocated to MHS are earmarked for athletics.

Many neighbors are glad that MPUSD agreed to pursue the EIR to adequately study the effects this MHS stadium project would have on surrounding neighborhoods. However, concerns remain about how their property tax dollars are being spent.

Monterey High Football
Monterey, CA
Lighting System

From Hometown to Professional

MUSCO Lighting
We Make It Happen.

ENGINEERED DESIGN By: Ryan A. Marsh, LC • File #11919981 • 12-Apr-19 PROJECT SUMMARY

MVNA Officers & Directors	
Susan Nine (President)	333-6882
Jean Rasch (VP & NIP Rep)	625-3200
Jeannie Ferrara (Secretary)	236-1111
Charles Martin (Treasurer)	373-0649
Bruce Zanetta (1st NIP alt)	647-1997
Hans Jannasch (Membership, 2nd NIP alt)	373-0872
Kirstin Dottererr (Historian)	262-2301
Pat Venza (Past President)	375-8416
Michele Altman	214-2545
Nickie Bach	747-1613
Jeana Jett	655-0357
Marta Kraftzeck	375-2146
Ray Meyers	375-3045
Mike Pekin	372-9121

Monterey Vista Neighborhood Association board meetings are held monthly, usually the first Monday of each month (except for July and December unless needed), at the Monterey Library community room from 6:15 to 7:45pm. You are welcome to attend, or to suggest agenda items to share your concerns. Please contact a board member for more information.

**Web: montereyvistaneighborhood.org
Email: mvneighborhood@gmail.com**

Neighborhood and Community Improvement Program (NCIP) Report

by Jean Rasch

Established in 1985, the Neighborhood and Community Improvement Program (NCIP) directs tourist-generated dollars directly back into the City's residential neighborhoods. Under a Charter Amendment, at least 16 percent of the money collected through hotel taxes (Transient Occupancy Tax) must be spent on neighborhood and community improvements. Each fiscal year, a committee consisting of Monterey residents considers all submitted projects and recommends which projects should be funded. Several community wide meetings are held and projects are finally voted on by the NCIP committee.



The first item to report is that the name of the Neighborhood Improvement Program has been updated to reflect the words used in the initial Charter Amendment: Neighborhood and Community Improvement Program. So NIP is now known NCIP. I am the representative from the Monterey Vista Neighborhood Association to NCIP, now in my third year as rep, with 3 years as alternate previous to those. Hans Jannasch serves this year as alternate. We honor Bruce Zanetta as our unofficial third alternate as there is tons of work to do on the projects just from our neighborhood alone.

A NCIP project is any public capital improvement (not on private property) that improves streets, storm drains, sewers, sidewalks, walkways, lighting, traffic control devices, landscaping and beautification, parks, recreational facilities and other public building improvements. The program begins each year in the fall. The NCIP Project Nomination Form is for residents to propose neighborhood or citywide improvements. All the qualified proposals are reviewed, sorted, and cost estimated.

NCIP is accepting project nominations this year until February 7, 2020. Please visit <https://monterey.org/Residents/Neighborhoods/Neighborhood-and-Community-Improvement-Program> and click on the project nomination form to submit a project online or print and submit to me (625-3200) or the Engineering office at (831) 646-3887. If you want to receive updates to this year's NCIP, please go to the link above and subscribe to the NCIP Email updates by clicking the top box labeled as such.

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Gas Powered Blowers-A Public Health Menace?

By Susan Nine

I happened to be helping friends pass out flyers to homes in the Golden Triangle section of Carmel recently. Residents were up in arms about the prospect of cell towers mounted on utility poles proposed by Verizon to be installed near homes throughout this uniquely charming and beautiful neighborhood. I am happy to report the Carmel City Council unanimously denied the towers, but a different issue impressed itself upon me as I walked up and down those quiet Carmel streets. It was a glorious Saturday and each



street was lined with several landscape maintenance crews, doing a stellar job of manicuring the lovely cottage gardens for which Carmel is famous. So many gardeners in a single square mile, and absolutely no noise from leaf blowers. No clouds of dust or the toxic stench of exhaust. Crews were using leaf blowers, but they were all low powered, and quiet battery operated versions of the exhaust belching, air and noise polluting gasoline powered engine versions that abound in my otherwise peaceful Monterey Vista Neighborhood. When I pointed out the absence of noise and fumes, my Carmel friends reminded me that gasoline powered blowers are outlawed in Carmel. They seemed surprised to find out they are still allowed in Monterey, pointing out PG also has an ordinance limiting their use as well. "Why not Monterey?" I thought. If Carmel can maintain this most perfectly beautiful neighborhood landscaping with nary a decibel of noise, and no choking emissions, why can't these same landscapers who serve the Peninsula generally, do the same in Monterey? I began to research the issue. These are but some of the facts I was able to uncover:

- **Uncontrolled Exhaust** - The California Air Resources Board reports that the gas engines powering leaf blowers exhaust as much as 30% of their fuel unburned into the air. The major pollutants from a gas leaf blower engine are oil-based particulates, a

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Gas Powered Blowers-A Public Health Menace?

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mixture of hydrocarbons from both burned and unburned fuel, carbon monoxide (CO), and other toxic air contaminants in the unburned fuel.

- **Worse Polluter than a Large Pickup Truck** - An Edmunds emissions test showed that a gas leaf blower emitted 23 times the CO and 300 times more hydrocarbons than a Ford Raptor pickup truck.
- **Harmful Particulates** - A landscaper's blower is in almost continuous use for the entire work day, spewing the fuel, brake dust, feces, pesticides, fungus and molds into the air at 200 miles per hour. Think about what these particulates do to our lungs. These pollutants are especially harmful to expectant mothers and their fetuses, infants, children, pets and the elderly.
- **Unregulated Smog** - Cars require periodic smog checks. Leaf blowers are not subject to any regulations. They just blow all the pollutants into the air at greater than hurricane wind speed.
- **Worse Polluters than Cars** - The California Air Resources Board reports that in one hour, a gas-powered leaf blower emits 26 times the amount of CO, up to 49 times the amount of particulate matter, and 498 times the amount of hydrocarbons than an average car running for the same amount of time. Stated another way, the leaf blower's CO emissions are equivalent to 880 miles of automobile travel and the hydrocarbon emissions are equivalent to 15,400 miles.
- **Negative Effects on Cognitive Performance of Children** - Noise pollution is not just a nuisance, it's a real threat to human health more serious than just hearing loss. Numerous studies have shown that loud noise has negative effects on humans generally and on children's learning and cognitive performance.



As I sit at home writing this, indoors, windows closed, the intensely loud sound of a gas leaf blower has been disturbing the peace on my street for over twenty minutes. Such an unnecessary nuisance when there are safer alternatives to get the job done. Electric blowers are cheap, less powerful and quieter than gas blowers. Battery operated models are more quiet, raise less dust, and are cordless. Good old fashioned rakes not only work, they provide exercise. Studies have shown that rakes can get the same job done in approximately the same amount of time as gas blowers with little or no pollution.

<https://nonoise.org/quietnet/cqs/leafblow.htm#grandma>

Gasoline-driven leaf blowers have been banned in scores of California counties, including Los Angeles and hundreds of municipalities across the U.S. and Canada, and none of the horrors that were predicted by landscapers- untidy lawns, escalating costs, declining property values- has ever come to pass. In fact just the opposite seems to be true. The cities that have banned them have some of the highest property values in the country and the most elegant landscaping.

It goes without saying that gas leaf blowers pose the greatest threat to the health and hearing of the untold numbers of landscape workers who use them on a daily basis, in most cases without adequate protective equipment, for intervals that far exceed OSHA guidelines.

If you agree that gasoline powered blowers should be restricted or banned in Monterey neighborhoods, I'll be asking the MVNA Board to follow up with a neighborhood survey and/or petition to determine neighborhood support for getting this issue before the City Council. A post on Nextdoor last year favoring regulation of gas powered blowers had over one hundred twenty replies, the vast majority of which favored a ban on these noisy, polluting devices. Until a ban or regulation is considered, at least for residential districts, please be good neighbors and ask your landscape service to only use electric or battery operated blowers or rakes. These crews also work in PG and Carmel and have alternatives readily available and will comply with your request just as my gardener did. Your neighbors will thank you for it.

For more detailed and comprehensive information about gas leaf blowers, use the links below:

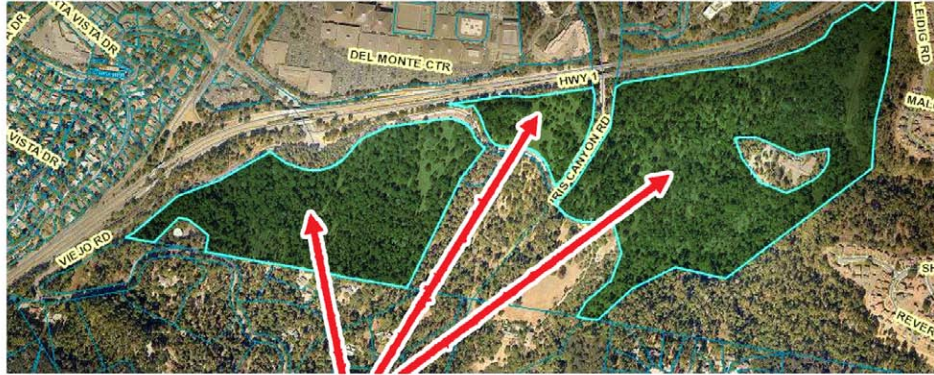
<https://www.nonoise.org/quietnet/cqs/leafblow.htm>

<https://youtu.be/Lf-RxgPTflk>

Monterey Takes Over Ownership of Old Capitol Site

In November, the Monterey City Council voted 4-1 to take over ownership of the 135 acre Old Capitol site from the Pebble Beach Company. Situated roughly on the southeast side of Highway 1 across the freeway from Del Monte Shopping Center. Several failed attempts were made to get the City of Monterey to approve major developments on the site since the eighties. In 2012, as a condition for getting permits from the County to develop open spaces within Pebble

Project Site – General Plan Map Amendment from Very Low Density Residential to Parks and Open Space and Zoning Map Amendment from Planned Community to Open Space



Beach, the PB Company agreed to eventual transfer of ownership of the Old Capitol site to a public agency that would be required to maintain it as open space park land. The City of Monterey decided to take it over even though it could cost millions each year to maintain and develop as a park. It currently has homeless encampments throughout the forested parcel and will also require considerable green-belt clearance to mitigate fire risk.

The decision was supported by several environmental groups, while affordable housing advocates made strong arguments against taking on the expense of policing and maintaining the parcel without dedicating some acreage for possible future use to provide necessary affordable housing. Others asked why the City is taking on the ongoing expense of maintaining the site while claiming to be in a fiscal crisis and asking the community to support another sales tax increase measure.

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MVNA Membership Special

If you are already an MVNA member, we really appreciate it. Your membership goes a long way to not only fund our annual MVNA Member BBQ/Picnic at Via Paraiso park, but also funds our MVNA website, clerical supplies, and other efforts in support of our neighborhood. Our annual household membership dues of \$10 per year per household have remained the same for over the past 30 years, and we've only been able to stay on budget by slowly increasing our membership numbers. Although we now have 164 memberships, this is still far short of the 1400 homes within Monterey Vista. We've thus simplified our recordkeeping by having all memberships run Sept 1st to August 31st and will send reminders to those with expiring memberships.

If you are not a member, and would like to join, we are running a "President's Special" of only \$5 (good through Aug 2020) or \$15 (good through Aug 2021). Please consider joining not only to for the BBQ/Picnic, but also for everything else we offer. The MVNA is made up of neighborhood residents just like you. We all have a stake in protecting the quiet enjoyment of our homes, promoting the health and safety of our environment, and preserving and improving the quality of life for all Monterey Vista residents. Our member elected board meets monthly, generally the first Monday of each month in the library at 6:00. We have open meetings and are here to help address any neighborhood related problems or issues you may have. MVNA also runs special informative meetings on current topics such as water, power, and our Candidate Forums during election years. See our web page at montereyvistaneighborhood.org for more information.

Stay informed! Be involved!
Join the Monterey Vista Neighborhood Association!
 Yearly dues are only \$10 per household.

President's Special: \$5 (good through Aug 2020)
 or \$15 (good through Aug 2021).

Print and fill out the form below.
 Make your check payable to MVNA & mail to:
MVNA 532 Herrmann Dr. Monterey, CA 93940

Name _____

new member returning member

Address _____

Phone _____

Email address _____

Please include Yearly Dues: \$10.00 per household.

You can also join and pay dues online by visiting
<http://www.montereyvistaneighborhood.org/join>

Monterey Takes Over Old Capitol Site

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The site, previously private property within Monterey, was zoned for low density residential, but it was changed recently to a City owned open space district. Lest the spelling create confusion, a “Capital” is the most important city in an area, region, country, etc., and generally refers to a governmental seat. “Capitol” means a building where legislators meet and have session. It is said the land got its name when some hoped it may serve as the location of the State Capitol. However as it turned out Monterey has never served as State Capital although it served as California’s capital under Spanish and Mexican rule. On July 7, 1846, Commodore John Drake Sloat raised the American Flag over Monterey’s Custom House



and officially claimed California for the United States. In 1848 the “Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo” ceded California and other Mexican territories to the United States. In the same year James Marshall arrived in Monterey with samples of gold discovered near Sacramento. In 1849 The first American public building in California, Colton Hall, was completed in Monterey. On September 1 the California Constitutional Convention began in Colton Hall. On October 13, the delegates ratified the new Constitution. San Jose was chosen as the new state capital, ending Monterey’s 75 years as California’s capital. It wasn’t until September 9, 1850 that California became the 31st state of the Union. After 1850 the legislature met in San Jose until 1851, Vallejo in 1852, and Benicia in 1853, before moving to Sacramento. In the Sacramento Constitutional Convention of 1879, Sacramento was named to be the permanent state capital.

So to this day, the 135 acre site remains an undeveloped forested parcel. It seems to be the intention of the City Council to eventually develop most of the site as a public park and nature preserve.



Prevent Neighborhood Flood and Tree Hazards This Winter

Submitted by Pat Venza

Drainage on Our Streets:

Last winter the MVNA was made aware of a problem caused by residents throwing yard waste (tree and bush branches, grass clippings, etc) into the numerous creeks in our area. This practice had actually caused the backup of a creek and the flooding of a home in the neighborhood.



If you have a creek behind your home, please to make sure the creek beds and banks are free of debris. Creeks on your property are your responsibility to keep clear.

Similarly, the ditches that run along many of our roads in the area need to be kept cleaned out to allow the flow of rain runoff to stay in those ditches, that go to the street storm drain system, and not go across the roads. Leaving the ditch may not look to hazardous, but in causes added potholes in the roads and the water goes where it does not belong causing possible flooding issues.

You may say that this is the City of Monterey's responsibility and the street crews try to come by before the first rain to clean out the ditches, but unfortunately, the street department is less than 10-person strong. With a crew that size covering the clean out of all the street ditches can not always be done. It is recommended by the Street Department that residents do their best to open the flow within the ditches. The City is not responsible to clean out drainage pipes that run under driveways. If homeowners keep the drainage ditches free of debris the less likely the pipe under a driveway will plug.

If you are elderly or disabled and can not get out to clean out a ditch let the City of Monterey Street Department know and hopefully they can make it to your area to clean it out. That number is: 831-646-3927. If that doesn't work, contact one of the MVNA officers and we will get a neighbor to help you.

Tree Removal:

If you have dead or unhealthy trees around your home please consider having them taken down. During storms it is more likely that these trees will fall and do damage. If they are on the edge of your property, near the street, they may be a City tree. Report it to the City of Monterey Forester at "prouty@monterey.org". Send a picture and Mr. Prouty will evaluate it and give it a priority for removal. I personally had a very quick response on a tree that died very quickly and would have fallen on a busy road. If the tree is on your property you need to complete a permit application. Once again a picture is required and an arborist report from an ISA certified arborist. You can read all about the tree removal process and get the permit application online at: <https://monterey.org/services/parks-and-beaches/trees-and-urban-forestry>



WIRELESS & UNDERGROUNDING NEWS

Carmel and Seaside Say No to Residential Cell Towers

By Kristin Dotterer

In a dramatic turn, the City Councils of Carmel and Seaside unanimously turned down Verizon's applications for wireless cell facilities in strictly residential areas of their cities. Many residents complained that the proposed facilities were unnecessary, inappropriate and out of character in residential districts, next to people's homes. The City councils agreed that residential wireless facilities would negatively impact the aesthetics of the neighborhoods, block views, and lower property values. Some neighbors expressed concerns



about constant exposure to nearby microwave radiation at untested frequencies and power levels. Others noted there were no significant gaps in service coverage being experienced that would require the cities to deviate from code requirements for placement in only non-residential areas. The vast amount of public comment urged their representatives to deny the applications.

Two years ago the Monterey Planning Commission rejected applications for residential towers in the Monterey Vista Neighborhood. Verizon had claimed that a significant coverage gap justified an exemption from code compliance. This claim was contradicted by countless MVN Verizon customers. Two years later and Verizon customers report they are still experiencing reliable cellular service within MVN without the claimed need for embedded residential towers.

A Wireless Ordinance Subcommittee was formed last year by the City Council to draft a revised ordinance to maximize protections from residential towers. This Committee is finalizing its draft to recommend to the Planning Commission and City Council this month. However at its last meeting, the Subcommittee voted 4-1 for a draft that eliminated protections against residential facilities within residential neighborhood rights of way that do not have utilities underground, alarming many residents and the MVN resident member of the Committee, who claimed this last minute change would weaken the current ordinance instead of strengthening it as originally directed by the City Council who formed the Committee. Two other original MVNA members of the Subcommittee are no longer on the Committee; one because of health reasons and the other having moved away from Monterey.

Whatever version of a new ordinance moves forward from the Committee will require approval by the Planning Commission and the City Council in public meetings subject to public input.

Strategies for Emergency Backup Power

By Ray Meyers

In late October, due to extremely high winds and temperature, PG&E intentionally shut off the power to approximately one million homes and businesses for several days, affecting 2.3 million people. The Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment states the economic impact of the recent PG & E power shut off was 2.5 billion dollars. PG & E now predicts intentional power shut offs could go on for the next ten years or more.

PG & E warnings are ominous, *"If you rely on electric or battery-dependent medical technologies such as assistive technology, breathing machines, a power wheelchair or scooter and home oxygen or dialysis, it is critical that you have a plan in place for an extended power outage"*. But, is there a reasonable plan that most of us can put into effect before the next shut off? The following is a review of a range of options that can keep you out of the dark and your important electric devices operating.



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Strategies for Emergency Backup Power

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The Current Situation

Let's start by defining a few simple terms you will need to know about electricity to do these simple calculations -- AC vs DC current, volts, watts, and amps.

There are two types of electric power, DC (direct current) that comes from batteries and solar panels, and AC (alternating current) that is on the utility lines that feeds into your house. Many of the devices, like your TV and computer actually use DC, but they need a transformer (little box on the power cord that converts the AC to DC) to do this. Solar panels create DC electric power, but also go through an inverter to change the DC current to AC so you can use it in your house.

Watts Up with Volts and Amps?

The first step in determining which backup power strategy you choose is to know how much power your devices use and which ones you need to get by.

Two useful formulas to know: (Volts=Amps x Resistance) and (Watts=Volts x Amps).

Electricity Explained: Volts, Amps, Watts, Fuse Sizing, Wire Gauge, AC/DC, Solar Power and more! (video)
<https://youtu.be/cX4s-bxn4fs>

The easiest way to help you understand the relationship of these terms is to think of electricity as the flow of water (electrons through a conductor, like a wire). The rate the water is flowing is like the electric current (amps); pressure (volts) is what makes the water flow (gravity or a water pump). In electricity a battery or generator would be like a pump creating the pressure for the current (flow). Resistance in a conductor (wire) is like the size of the pipe in plumbing -small pipe, slow flow.

The best way to determine your energy needs is to count the total watts needed. Most devices will list how many watts they use, however if you only know the amps, you can easily determine the watts by multiplying the voltage (household AC current is between 110-120 volts) by the amps.

There is a third option – a inexpensive device called a Kill A Watt Meter™ (about \$20). If you plug your device into this handy meter it will register the amps, watts and voltage for you.



Go around the house and make a budget and come up with a figure of the total watts needed. You should avoid using vacuum cleaners, toasters and hair dryers, as they can use well over 1000 watts.

- 1. Lights;**
Hopefully you use LED bulbs (8-20watts), because they only use a fraction of watts
- 2. Refrigerator/Freezer;**
All electric motors will use more watts when they start-up, but the running watts for a mid-size refrigerator is 175 to 600 watts (energy star units average 100-400 watts)
- 3. Television, VoIP (voice over internet phone) Phones and Computer Equipment;** Please remember, your Internet based phone and some land line phones that plug into AC will not work without power. LED flat screen TVs, computers and monitors are energy efficient (80-150 watts).

My house is only 1100 square feet and my total budget is less than 800 watts, including my furnace, whereas some homes it may be up to 5,000 watts.

Generator or Batteries (or both)



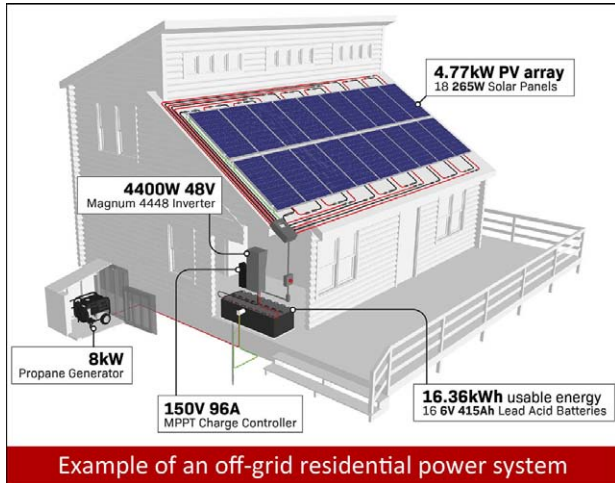
There are two basic ways to provide your home with power when PG & E is down – you can produce and use it as you go (generators), or you can store it and use it when you need it (batteries), or perhaps you can get creative and use both to become your own micro-grid!

Generators convert kinetic (moving) energy into electric current. Wind or water pushes blades on a turbine, or an internal combustion engine turns a shaft to spin an electric generator to create current. In practical

Strategies for Emergency Backup Power

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terms, you can purchase a portable gasoline or propane generator for a select amount of home appliances, or you can have a stand-by natural gas generator kick in to run your whole house when the power goes down. All of these types of generators must be run outside and hooked up to your appliances either through extension cords or a transfer switch that will disconnect your home circuits at the subpanel (circuit breaker box) and route the incoming power from your generator throughout your house. The cost of a gas generator ranges from \$400-\$1200 based upon the output of wattage. A typical six circuit transfer switch costs around \$350-\$450 and eliminates the need for cords. Most stand-by natural gas generators include transfer switches and range from \$2,500-\$4,000, plus installation.



Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels use the electromagnetic energy from the sun to excite silicon atoms in the panel, actually knocking the electrons free to create an electric current. This clean and endless resource of power only works when the sun is shining, so we can either use this energy, sell it back to PG & E, or store it in batteries. Most people who have solar panels will sell it and not use it directly, as the generation of power is too inconsistent. Imagine the frustration of a home with solar panels generating enough energy to power their homes in the day, but unable to use it because PG & E has cut them off. There are some solar systems that include a single 2,000-watt AC outlet that will run directly off your solar panels during the day. However, the best solution is to outfit your home with batteries.

Battery Backup Systems

Keep in mind, if you choose to go the route of batteries without a means to charge them, such as solar or a generator, you will be running on a finite time line, based upon the size and number of batteries. This may be fine for a short power outage, such as a downed power line in a storm that lasts a few hours. But, if PG & E has intentionally shut off the grid, it may be three or four days before they restore normal power to your home.

Short term portable units, like the Yeti Power Station™ range from 400 watts to 1400 watts (costs \$450-\$1,800) and employ lithium ion batteries that can run a range of appliances, including your refrigerator, TV, computer, etc. for many hours. These units have a built-in power inverter (converts the DC batteries to AC house current) and a battery charger that can accept solar current. So, if you have a solar panel system on your house, you could charge and run this unit during the day from the solar input and run a minimum amount of power at night off the batteries.

Another very inexpensive option is to purchase your own batteries (\$175-\$900 each) and a combination inverter/charger/transfer switch (\$350-\$600) that can accept solar input or any other AC source, such as a generator. A simple system like this starts up automatically when the power goes down and can keep most small wattage homes running for up to 6- 8 hours with just four 12-volt solar batteries. With the addition of more batteries, and/or solar charging, it can go on much longer.

Of course, the top-of-the-line solution is a Tesla Powerwall™ (typically \$7,100, plus installation), which is a high capacity lithium ion battery unit that is intergraded to your home electrical panel and automatically kicks in to run your home for up to a couple days without a charge, but most people that have these systems also have solar panels and charge their Powerwall™ during the day and use the stored power when the sun is not shining. If combined with a solar system that is setup to charge the batteries, and the excess directed to the grid, there are government incentives for this system. California offers the Self Generation Incentive Program (SGIP), where you can receive a rebate up to \$4,600, if Tesla installs the unit.



Another creative solution is to route your electric or hybrid car to your house with the aid of an inverter connected to the 12-volt accessory battery. Any non-electric car will also provide power this way, but must be running to re-charge the battery. All electric cars have very large capacity lithium batteries that are equal in size or larger to a Tesla Powerwall™ and can operate a small home for a couple of days without a re-charge.

By choosing one of these options you need not feel powerless – but remember, don't expect PG&E to help out. We are on our own to come up with the best solutions.