EARTH DAY 2014

A big thank you to over 180 Earth Day volunteers who came out on April 26th to clean up trash, remove weeds and improve landscaping!

Contributing to a successful day of stewardship were community members, organizations and business, including San Rafael Rotary clubs, Terra Linda High School of Environmental Leadership, TLHS Interact Club, San Rafael Chamber of Commerce, Canal Alliance, Gallinas Watershed Council, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Target, Boy Scout Troop 50, San Rafael Clean, Autodesk, and 101 Surf Sports.

PART OF THE PLANNING SOLUTION by Rem O’Donnelley

THE HAWAIIAN shirts worn by Larry Paul complement his friendly, laid-back style. A style that no doubt helps make Larry such an effective member of the City’s Planning Commission. For the past eight years he’s been part of the seven-member commission—made up of all volunteers—and has lived in San Rafael since 1986.

Larry recently moved his architecture business, L.A. Paul and Associates, to San Rafael after being in San Francisco for over 30 years. Larry moved to California from Ohio to go to college in 1965.

With his dad as a carpenter, young Larry was able to get his carpenters’ union card and earn money during high school and college. “I learned how to build and that is really important for an architect. It’s one thing to design a project but then you have to know how to build it.”

In high school he knew he was either going to become a nuclear physi-
PAM DIXON is a truly dedicated and amazing volunteer. The entire City of San Rafael reaps the rewards of her community-mindedness and commitment.

Pam began volunteering with Friends of the San Rafael Public Library more than 25 years ago. At that time, the Friends had a much smaller book sale operation—and no bookstore. With experience in antiques and retail, Pam suggested using categorized book displays at the sales. The strategy was an immediate success. The first sale using these displays garnered a whopping $300.

Book donations from the public continued to flow in over the years, book sales grew, and Pam realized the Friends needed to take the next step and open a book shop. After five years of advocating for a store, in January of 2009 Pam inspired then-Friends President Karen Nielsen to pursue the project. In April 2009, still recovering from knee replacement surgery, Pam led a troop of volunteers to set up the book shop. On May 1st the store had its grand opening and in two days sold enough books to cover the first month’s rent. Five years later, the venture is still going strong, and Pam is still doggedly working multiple days a week to raise desperately needed funds for the Library to offer children’s programs, the annual summer reading program, and books for all ages. Some weeks Pam works six days. Rumor has it she worked 13 days straight before the Special Book Sale earlier this year. Pam sorts books, works in the store, designs publicity, and runs the operations. She is truly tireless.

Named San Rafael Citizen of the Year in 2005, a decade later Pam is still our very special Citizen of the Year—every year, every month, and every day. More amazing is her impressive list of accomplishments beyond her extensive volunteer hours with the Friends of the Library, including volunteering for Davidson Middle School and Marin Academy, running her own business, and raising four children with her husband Mike. Pam always has a kind word for a sick friend or a Library.

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS AT EARTH DAY MARIN by Diana Lee

RESILIENT NEIGHBORHOODS (RN) was a hit at Earth Day Marin held at Redwood High on April 6th! Situated in MWWD’s Water Village, visitors to the RN table learned about the theme of the day—sustainable solutions to climate change—by participating in an exciting “Eco-Jeopardy” trivia game created by Outreach Assistant Diana Lee. Each contestant was asked to answer questions in four categories: Life-styles, Household Systems, Community, and Climate Awareness. Winning contestants won a delectable tangerine!

Several Eco-Team members showed up to volunteer at the RN booth: Maria Ruiz and Marie Kneemeyer, part of a current team called Clean Air Revival, and Mary Cosgrove and Jay Gustafson from a team of graduates, Tam Valley Low-CO2s. One contestant, Cassidy Anton, remarked, “I thought I already knew a lot about the environment, but I learned even more from the game about how my behavior contributes to climate change.” Diana was on hand to let contestants know that participating in Resilient Neighborhoods helps individuals learn even more about how to create a healthier community and planet.

Contestants were most challenged by the Eco-Jeopardy question, “Name the largest residential source of Marin County’s greenhouse gas emissions.” Many answered what turned out to be the easiest question of the day, “Name of a Marin-based program that helps households reduce their carbon footprint and build community resilience by going on a ‘Low-Carbon Diet.’” Post your own answers on our Facebook page: Facebook.com/resilientneighborhoods. Also, connect with us to learn fresh eco-tips from Eco-Team members!

Photo: Tamra Peters
STUDENTS BRING NEW LIFE TO PICKLEWEED PARK by Jennifer Benson

If you’ve recently walked along the east side of Pickleweed Park you may have noticed some new plants growing on the levee overlooking the San Rafael Bay marsh. This beautifully restored area is the work of over 80 5th grade students from Bahia Vista Elementary School and 14 6th grade students from Davidson Middle School who took part in the Students and Teachers Restoring A Watershed-Bird Education and Awareness in Communities (STRAW-BEAC) Program on March 27th. This is the second year of the Point Blue Conservation Science program, which involves students in habitat restoration activities.

Students spent the day planting nine different species of native shrubs and grasses. Gumplant and rye grass are especially important because they provide habitat for endangered species like the California clapper rail and salt marsh harvest mouse. Students were proud of their hard work and learned how it benefits birds, wildlife and the health of the estuary in their area.

The restoration project was designed to withstand weather extremes such as drought and flooding, provide wildlife with access to food throughout the year, and enhance groundwater storage. Point Blue’s “climate-smart” restoration approach is essential to students’ educational experiences, giving them a rare opportunity to be part of a solution to challenges posed by climate change.

Point Blue, a nonprofit dedicated to conserving birds, other wildlife and ecosystems through science and outreach, has been teaching students about birds, ecology and conservation in the Canal neighborhood through classroom, field, and afterschool programs since 2004. Point Blue staff have been excited to provide students with hands-on restoration experiences since 2012. Learn more at www.pointblue.org/straw.

PART OF THE PLANNING SOLUTION (from p. 1)

Larry has a wife, son and a daughter (now deceased) plus seven grandchildren. Recent additions to his household are two Weimaraner puppies, a brother and sister. “They are growing leaps and bounds; they grow about four pounds a week. They’re just real cute.”

Some of Larry’s hobbies include rock music, scuba diving, and tropical beaches in far-flung places like Hawaii, the Caribbean, Mexico, and the South Pacific. “Any place that is warm and tropical” he says. He doesn’t shy from the cold, though. An avid skier, Larry “found the holy grail [for the sport] in Big Sky, Montana. It is now on my top ten if not my top three list.”

Given all that activity it’s unsurprising that food is something Larry savors, especially “anything to do with chocolate. I’m kind of a chocoholic.” He also enjoys helping his community. “I’m trying to lend my professional expertise as an architect and a planner on the planning commission. Our job is to come up with a solution that works best for everyone.”

The most memorable project Larry has been involved in as part of the planning commission was the San Rafael Corporate Center, which was purchased from PG&E. “It was probably the biggest project here in San Rafael in terms of square footage and dollar amounts. It was really well designed,” he said.
YOU COULD SAY that Raffi Boloyan is all about planning. As Planning Manager for the City of San Rafael, he oversees both the Planning and Code Enforcement sections.

Raffi grew up in San Rafael and left town for Cal Poly San Luis Obispo where his major was City and Regional Planning. Before joining San Rafael in 2000 he was at the City of San Bruno as an assistant planner.

Raffi has a wife and two children, a 10-year-old daughter and an 8-year-old son. They have a dog, Louie, and a cat, Zipper, that share their home in American Canyon.

He enjoys the variety that comes along with his job. “It’s different every single day. There are new issues and different ideas from people that want to try and do development in the City. That takes some creative thought and I try and figure ways to help them achieve their goals while still maintaining the City’s desires and policies.”

To meet this creative challenge, planning staff obtain help from two tremendous resources: the San Rafael Planning Commission and Design Review Board. Raffi works closely with both groups of volunteers.

“They are true professionals who dedicate hundreds of hours a year to making sure San Rafael is the best it can be.”

These volunteers offer an invaluable perspective that comes from years working as professionals in the field. “We as staff planners get very involved in the details of projects and sometimes, we lose out on the bigger picture. Many times, the Planning Commission and DRB ask questions or point out ideas that we may have not thought of given our involvement in the details. This is a beneficial relationship as it provides some checks and balances and ultimately helps make projects better.”

For fun, Raffi enjoys getting outdoors. One favorite place is the Las Gallinas Wildlife Ponds off of Smith Ranch Road. He relishes the view of the bay and Mt. Tamalpais. “I enjoy the rolling hills that surround San Rafael. I used to do a lot of hiking up there.”

Other favorite activities include backpacking and fly fishing at Lake Lagunitas. Raffi also likes to play basketball and softball but is currently out of action due to an injury. Asked what his favorite ice cream flavor is he says mint chip without missing a beat. He says his favorite food changes but, “I’m partial to Indian food. I like the spiciness and the variety of flavors.”

One particular photo of Raffi gets a lot of attention in the department. A few years ago he was chosen as “employee of the month.” A recognition plaque with his photo went up on the first floor of city hall. After that the photo moved upstairs to the wall of the Planning Department, and the fun began. “My picture came (back) up here, and the director hung it on the wall. A few people started decorating that picture every month. For Thanksgiving I became a pilgrim, I’ve been Cupid, I’ve had Giants’ paraphernalia (I’m a big Giants fan), Santa Claus…Right now there’s a band-aid over my shoulder” because his arm is currently in a sling.

Luckily for the City, Raffi’s injury has not hindered him from being the go-to guy in Planning!

**THANK YOU!**

Diana Lee
Rem O’Donnelley
Sarah Houghton
Jennifer Benson

---

**SAN RAFAEL’S PLANNING GURU** by Rem O’Donnelley

staff member expecting a baby. Her smile and energy truly bring sunshine into the room.

As Karen Nielsen said, “Pam marshals volunteers to move and sort mountains of books to raise money for the Library with her boundless energy and enthusiasm. How can you say no to someone who gives 100% and thinks it’s fun?”

**Planning Solution**

(From p. 1)

enjoys cooking. “I love to make Mexican food, that’s one of my specialties. But BBQ is probably my ultimate specialty.”

All in all, the City is grateful that Larry has chosen to dedicate his expertise and seemingly boundless energy to San Rafael.