We are very proud to highlight Andree Jansheski’s achievements in this edition of our newsletter. Andree is the owner of Bellam Self Storage and Boxes in San Rafael. She has been an active member of the San Rafael Clean Coalition since 2007 and a driving force behind many local cleanup efforts.

Volunteer Andree Jansheski preparing to clean Simms Street in San Rafael.

Andree moved to Greenbrae in 1989 and has called Marin County home after a long career in Southern California and Arizona in the retail department store business. She wrapped up her 24-year career in retail as Vice President of Macy’s Department Store in Scottsdale, Arizona. She now volunteers her time to keeping San Rafael clean.

Her first environmental foray was a horseback ride in 1970 to save the Santa Ana River, as part of the Coast to Crest ride that went from Newport Beach up to the mountains in the town of Big Bear. Andree continues her dedication to the environment focusing on San Rafael. She enjoys volunteering for the San Rafael Clean Coalition. Andree’s energy is endless when it comes to generating and supporting programs that encourage people to turn over a new leaf and clean up their act. “It’s too bad; people don’t realize there’s a responsibility factor that should carry over to our everyday life to not litter on the streets.”

Andree was highlighted in a 2009 Marin IJ article featuring her personal effort to eradicate litter near her business on Bellam Boulevard. In 2012 she helped create the “No Butts Program” which encouraged the collection of cigarette butts in cooperation with the St. Vincent de Paul Society’s Free Dinning Room and the Downtown Streets Team. This program has resulted in the collection of more than one million butts in 18 months. Those butts were recycled and ended up being made into new pallets rather than polluting our bay.

Fast forward to today where Andree averages six hours per week on various volunteer clean up projects. She enjoys, “…working with other volunteers and seeing our success, one piece of litter at a time.”

Her latest anti-litter idea, “No Litter in Baseball” came to her this past summer while watching a ballgame on TV. Her idea has resulted in a campaign between San Rafael Clean, Marin Clean Energy, Marin Sanitary Service and the San Rafael Pacifics. Fans at Pacifics games were asked to sign a pledge to not litter and in return they received a “No Litter in Baseball” wristband. With seven appearances at the park, 1,225 fans took the pledge. See the pledges and photos at www.nolitterinbaseball.com.

— Rem O’Donnelley

Thank you Andree for keeping San Rafael Clean and Green!
Volunteer Burk Braun

COMPUTER TUTOR EXTRAORDINARE

For those new to computers or just having trouble with a specific software program there is one man in the city who can help. That man is Burk Braun, a patient tutor that volunteers weekly at the San Rafael library.

While he is known officially as a computer tutor, Burk thinks of himself as a “computer assistant” as he aims to address each individual’s questions. He has a calm demeanor and is very good at explaining what can be complex to a person with a program issue or coming to grips with a new phone or tablet.

He has even introduced some people to the internet which he finds incredibly rewarding. “Showing a person the internet for the first time is just a fantastic thing.”

He has been a resident of San Rafael for 15 years. Before that he was living near UCSF but then he discovered San Rafael. “When my wife and I were looking for a house we came through here and I saw downtown and I thought it was just fantastic, a very attractive place to live.”

Burk has been volunteering up to twice a week for the last two years. For work he telecommutes from home as a computer software programmer for a bioinformatics company that produces databases of genes and gene functions for academics and pharmaceutical companies.

He finds volunteering rewarding. “I love the library a lot, it’s like a temple. Volunteering is a way to give back to some degree. I was an Eagle scout so this continues the idea of service.” He also finds it a nice way to get away from working alone and be social. “I’m at home full time. So it’s nice to get out and meet some people and I enjoy helping these people a lot.”

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Success by the Numbers!

Our volunteers clean the bay shoreline, inland waterways and adjacent paths. This year we collected 4 times the amount of trash from 2014 and doubled the amount of recyclables collected thanks to the addition of a “landing boat” donated by Parker Dive Service and Friends of the Canal.

In 2015 we counted:

3 Groups Cleaning in Watercraft
8 Locations
13 Miles Cleaned
28 Youth Volunteers
142 Adult Volunteers
879 Pounds of Recycling, and
4,290 Pounds of Trash Removed from Our Waterways!
TIRE REMOVAL SUCCESS — VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION!

John and Jean Starkweather Shoreline Park is a narrow path that runs from Pickleweed Park south to the Marin Rod and Gun Club, featuring bay views and an accessible trail used by thousands of walkers, joggers, dog owners, bikers and wheelchair riders. Many of these individuals and volunteer groups clean the path regularly, including Coastal Cleanup and Earth Day.

Some years ago during a shoreline cleanup San Rafael resident Dan Sonnet noticed more than 40 tires at low tide. The tires were an eyesore in the otherwise scenic mudflats. Don hatched a plan with another San Rafael resident Roger Roberts to remove the tires. Both men were board members of the Marin Conservation League and Don had been a San Rafael Planning Commissioner, so they had a good knowledge base for what they were about to undertake.

This would not be a quick and easy project. Many agencies that protect the Bay were involved and required permits. Key partners such as Christina Toms, an environmental engineer, Derrick Cavasian, a contractor and Paul Jensen, Director of the San Rafael Community Development Department helped them obtain permits. After one and a half years of planning, conversations and meetings they obtained the necessary permissions and access. Crucially, Tom Cronin, the now-retired operations chief of the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD), offered the use of his crews and equipment to remove the tires.

The timeline stretched to two years because tire removal had to take place on minus tide days, which occurred during the work week, in the summer or fall. So the removal began in 2014 and ended in the summer of 2015. The plan included the good will of many organizations and agencies working together, donating staff time and equipment.

In July 2015 the last of forty three abandoned tires, (including two tractor tires) and 3 metal rims were removed. The out of pocket expenses were $500 to $600. Additional volunteer “people power” came from Conservation Corps North Bay and staff from JHS Properties. To minimize habitat disturbance volunteers laid a plywood path to walk to each tire. Digging by hand to secure each tire with a cable, they were separately pulled to shore by an excavator located on land. The crews returned aquatic animals to the bay. Native bay oysters were scraped from the tires and put into mesh bags that were secured to the Marin Rod and Gun Club dock. According to Christina Toms the work days also included impromptu identification of mud flat animals and discussions of aquatic ecology with volunteers.

The vista from the path at low tide is now free of tires, and full of shorebirds and waterfowl. Another triumph for community volunteers! — Ann Bauer

Remembering Jean Starkweather

Jean shares her passion for birds, wetlands and open space. Her legacy is honored and enjoyed daily by thousands who walk the John and Jean Starkweather Path along San Rafael’s shoreline.

As this newsletter was in production we were saddened to hear about the passing of our beloved Jean Starkweather. Jean gave so much to all of us in Marin, and to the planet at large. She will be sorely missed. Rest in peace, Jean, and thank you for your kindness, inspiration and passion. More about Jean can be found in her Marin IJ Obituary on December 15th and an editorial about her legacy on December 7th.

Volunteers Dan Sonnet, left, Roger Roberts, and Christina Toms remove aquatic animals from a tire.

Photo: Alan Dep/Marin Independent Journal

Jean shares her passion for birds, wetlands and open space. Her legacy is honored and enjoyed daily by thousands who walk the John and Jean Starkweather Path along San Rafael’s shoreline.

Volunteers Dan Sonnet, left, Roger Roberts, and Christina Toms remove aquatic animals from a tire.

Photo: Alan Dep/Marin Independent Journal
The personal connections are special to him as well. "It's nice to help people out and you meet all types. (There have been) some very warm and friendly people." According to Librarian Marilyn Boatright “Burk is absolutely wonderful! There is no computer question that he cannot answer or find a solution for.”

— Rem O'Donnelley

Happy Holidays from everyone at the City of San Rafael!

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Keep Marin Green volunteers pick up e-waste at City Hall.

Keep Marin Green (KMG), is a local program operated by residents with developmental disabilities who participate in day programs at Casa Allegra Community Services. KMG has cooperative contracts with Marin County businesses and individuals to collect universal e-waste. The waste is then sent to licensed recycling facilities and the day program benefits. The City of San Rafael is a proud participant of the KMG program. A bin in City Hall allows employees and volunteers an easy way recycle e-waste!

For more information or to inquire about the service visit their website.