

PMPO

Spring 2009 - Volume 20

The Palomar Mountain Planning Organization

Board Members: Heather Beer, Terri Bailey, Glenn & Cecilia Borland, Robert Carlyle, Donna Dose, Bruce Graves, Rob Hawk, Susan Humason, Scott Kardel, Bob O'Neill, Bonnie Phelps, Michael Pique, Alan Serry, John Tainer/Elizabeth Getzoff, Earl Walls

A Message from the Chair

For those of you who are new on the mountain and as a reminder to long-standing residents, the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization (PMPO) is a nonprofit 501c3 public benefit organization whose purpose is to provide planning oversight for the Palomar Community and the nearby Cleveland National Forest. Our fifteen members, drawn from property owners and residents of our Community, are elected to three year terms.

Last May I agreed to step in as chairman to relieve our previous Chairman and

advocate for the Palomar Mountain Community, Jim Hamerly. I, the Board and the Mountain Community thank Jim for his valuable service. As I am a new property owner and have a very long learning curve understanding the various issues on the Mountain, I called upon the knowledge of our vice Chair, Bruce Graves. Bruce has served our community as a board member for at least 27 years. His knowledge of mountain issues, along with Jims', has been invaluable. Other Board Members that have helped bring me up to speed are Tom Burton (Chair of the Palomar Action Committee), Robert Carlyle

(Fire Safe Council), Mike Pique (dual survey and faithful Board scribe) and all the other members of the PMPO that faithfully serve in their various positions.

You will see many of our activities represented in the following newsletter articles so I will not try to summarize them here. As always, we are here to serve the Community and are always open to your suggestions, comments, and feedback.

Glenn Borland



Mark Your Calendars

All Mountain Residents & Visitors are Welcome to Attend...

**PMPO
Pancake
Breakfast**

**Saturday May 23, 2009
Palomar Mtn Vol Fire Dept.**

8am-11am

**The Annual Meeting
follows Breakfast.**



Appreciating Our Walls



Those of us who spend lots of time on Palomar are sometimes (rightfully) accused of "not seeing the forest for the trees." The same could be said for the walls that hold up our roofs, protect us from the heat of the sun and the cold of the snow—all the elements. Appreciation for both the beauties of nature and the blessings of simple things, that are so easy to take for granted, like walls, is something we all could probably do more.

Similarly, we could appreciate on Palomar our other WALLS, Louise and Earl, who do so much for the Community. Earl is legend with his leadership on the Community Center of Palomar Mountain (where he is not only the President of the non-profit, but has done all the design work and is out there multiple times per week building our new Center); on the PMPO; the Action Committee; donating the modular structures to the PMVFD that will become the Walls Administration Building; supporting every Potluck and other Community function.

Less visible, but always there as well is Louise, attending with Earl many of the Action Committee, PMVFD and PMPO meetings; performing computer, calendaring and mailing tasks; hosting CCPM meetings—and perhaps the largest task (which we learn from Earl) supporting HIM!

Our gratitude goes out to this wonderful couple whose giving to this Community is so selfless and extensive it can only be called LOVE! We LOVE you Louise and Earl.

Table of Contents

Article	Page
Message From the Chair	1
Appreciating Our Walls	1
Treasurer's Report	2
Fire Safe Council Receives Grant	2
Groundwater on the Mountain	3
PMVFD Report	4
Update from the Palomar Observatory	5
Country General Plan	5
PMPO Soliciting Board Members	6
PAC: Your Palomar Action Committee	6
Light and Life, Palomar Mountain	6
Palomar Community Center	7
Palomar History Books	7
Palomar Mountain Community Church	7
Community Tidbits	8
Traffic Safety Update	10
Community Emergency Response Team	11

**Palomar Mountain
Planning Organization
(PMPO)**

Box 145

PALOMAR MOUNTAIN, CA 92060-0145

This newsletter is produced annually and distributed in May of each year.

Without the help of many volunteers, this newsletter would not be possible.

Coordinator: Susan Humason

Editors: Elizabeth Getzoff & Michael Pique

Article Contributors:

Glenn Borland, Alan Serry, Robert Carlyle, Jim Hamerly, Rob Hawk, Tom Burton, Scott Kardel, Bonnie Phelps, Bill Leininger, Cliff Kellogg, Andrew Kish, Earl Walls

Assemblers:

Thanks go out to the many individuals that help each year with the assembly and mailing of the newsletter. They all make it possible to get the newsletter out on a timely basis.

If you have any information that you would like to contribute to future newsletters, please email the information to:

pimage1@sbcglobal.net - attn: PMPO Newsletter

PMPO

Treasurer's Report

Jan 1, 2008 to Dec 31, 2008

by Alan Serry, Treasurer



Balance Forward		\$41,931.19
Income:		
Donations	\$2,735.00	
Pancake Breakfast	\$365.50	
Interest	<u>\$386.12</u>	
Total Income		\$3,636.62
Expenses:		
Newsletter	\$678.32	
Pancake Breakfast	\$440.76	
General Expenses	<u>\$127.41</u>	
Total Expenses		\$3,044.95
Ending Balance		\$42,552.86

Thank You, Donna!

**A big thank you to Donna Dose for her many
years of service in conducting
the Annual PMPO Pancake Breakfasts.**



Fire Safe Council Receives Grant!

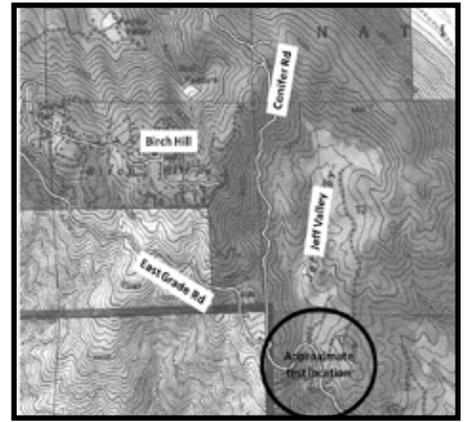
by Robert Carlyle

Palomar Mountain Fire Safe Council has had their grant request approved for the 2009-10 season. That means that there will be funds available starting in the fall for fire mediation on a co-pay basis. Those interested in having work done on their property please contact Robert Carlyle at 760-742-1891 for an on-site evaluation.



Groundwater on the Mountain *by Rob Hawk*

Water on Palomar is our most important resource. Unlike the City, where water is brought in from rivers hundreds of miles away, Palomar's water comes from underground storage of rainwater. Rain falling in the forest percolates through the soil to natural underground reservoirs in cracks and crevices in the rock, called aquifers. Wells drilled deep below the water table pump out this water for our use, like many straws drinking from the same cup. The amount of water in the cup is controlled by the amount of rain- and snowfall (precipitation) we get every year, and the amount of water we pump from wells, or that flows off the mountain to the sea. While this is an oversimplification of a complex system, the point is that if people use more than is recharged from rain, the water levels drop and wells and springs go dry.



Wells provide the only water for people's homes, agriculture and fire-fighting. Lack of water during the recent drought has already killed or weakened many trees in the Cleveland National Forest and elsewhere on Palomar Mountain, causing an exceptionally high risk for wildfire. In order to help understand the complexity of the groundwater system that everyone on the mountain shares, the PMPO is collecting well water level data from anyone with a well that is willing to provide it. This data will be matched with rainfall data to try to understand the sensitivity of the system to drought conditions, and to evaluate impacts by new projects relying on groundwater that may impact the community water supply.

The La Jolla Tribe has recognized the concerns of their mountain neighbors and is working with the PMPO and adjacent land owners in developing their new commercial well on East Grade Road. Preparations are underway for a full-scale pumping test in the next few months to determine potential safe yields from their commercial well project approved by the Bureau of Land Management in 2005. The Tribe's professional staff will be instrumenting wells adjacent to the test well to determine the area affected by the test, and provide a basis for design of the permanent production well. The Tribe and their staff have committed to working with Palomar residents in protecting the Mountain groundwater resources from detrimental effects from their pumping.

In order to have a clear understanding of those effects, we are requesting that anyone who has a well provide monthly or weekly level measurements to the PMPO contact person Rob Hawk (at PO Box 157 by mail on the Mountain, tecdelver@att.net or 619-287-4992). We would also like to get a GPS location of your well from you, or someone on our committee can measure it when we take the water measurements.

The PMPO is funding the Water Company employee to measure wells on a monthly or bi-monthly schedule. If you would like to volunteer your well to be measured, please fill out and sign the attached permission form and mail it to the PMPO. Please include a map showing the location of your well. If you have any questions, please call Rob Hawk or any PMPO Board member.



Well Monitoring Permission Form

Mail Your Form to:
PMPO
PO Box 145
Palomar Mountain, CA 92060

I, _____ (print name),

or submit it to the PMPO
at the Annual Meeting

legal owner of parcel No. _____

herein grant permission for an individual authorized by the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization to enter my property solely for the purpose of measuring water levels in my well.

(Signature)

(Date)



Report from the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department *by Cliff Kellogg*



It's been a busy year at the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department. Progress is being made towards the completion of the first phase of converting the original house into the Palomar Mountain Community Center. Thanks to the hard work by Earl Walls, Bruce Graves, Pete Weisel, Doug Lande, Jerry Johnson, Tom Fortney, and many others the community will soon have a dedicated place for meetings and special events. Plans are in the works for an addition to enlarge the Community Center and we hope to eventually get the old well up and running and install backup generators for all the buildings.

Grant funds and donations have made it possible for the fire department to add an administration and firefighter sleeping quarters. Once the portable office trailers, currently stored at the helicopter landing pad are in place, the work will begin on interior modifications for bunking firefighters including restrooms, ready room, office, and kitchen facilities. Thanks to our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the Palomar Radio Club, the current office inside the fire station is being upgraded to a sophisticated communications room. In addition to the dispatch center in El Cajon, we will soon have the capability, in an emergency, to communicate via radio with the Observatory, the School Camp, the Palomar Christian Conference Center, and all ham channels.

Monday nights are training nights at your fire department. We have just completed vehicle extrication classes and are currently conducting our annual wildland fire exercises. An important addition to our training has been the participation of the La Jolla Reservation Fire and CALFIRE Station 70. We work side by side with CALFIRE and La Jolla Reservation on numerous calls every year. Training together allows all of us to increase our proficiency and form important bonds between the crews.

Currently the fire department has 28 members, including 13 Emergency Medical Technicians. Each member brings their own unique background and work experience. Several of our members are employed by the U.S. Forest Service. Several others are employed by the Observatory, various ambulance services, and the State Park. Some of our members live off-mountain and drive up for training and station staffing. It's very rewarding to volunteer your time to your community and we are always on the lookout for new members. If you are interested in joining the department please contact the fire station at (760) 742-3701.

Finally, May 28th marks the 15th anniversary of the dedication of the Firehouse and mortgage payoff. All equipment, land, buildings, and fire engines are owned outright by the department. That's pretty unique compared to other volunteer fire departments in San Diego County. We are grateful to the former and current community members who worked so hard to form, organize, and run the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department starting way back in 1975. The members of the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department intend to carry on that dedicated tradition, at the same time providing the community with the best emergency services possible.

Cliff Kellogg
Battalion Chief
Administrative Assistant

21610 Crestline Rd., P.O. Box 235 Palomar Mountain, CA 92060
Phone: (760) 742-3701 – Fax: (760) 742-0574



An Update from the Palomar Observatory

by Scott Kardel

It has been another busy year at Palomar Observatory. Astronomical research is continuing and visitors are flocking to the observatory in record numbers.

Our people counter in the stairway in the Hale Telescope's dome recorded its highest number ever--118,248. Compare that count to the 44,733 people that were recorded in 2003. In just the last half of 2008 the observatory recorded visitors from all 50 states, including Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and Guam. Our international visitors came



from 56 countries and all continents, except Antarctica.

Increasing numbers of visitors have been good news and bad news. The good news is that we have more people than ever interested in astronomy and the observatory. The bad news is that with our increasing numbers of visitors, particularly those that come for snow play, come complications and potential problems.

Astronomical research continues to advance. 2008 saw the introduction of a new camera for the 200-inch Hale Telescope designed to find planets that orbit other stars and a new 100-megapixel camera for the 48-inch Samuel Oschin telescope. A new five-year observing program has just begun on the 48-inch telescope. Astronomers are very excited about this particular program. Look for it to grab some headlines soon. A new instrument, designed to probe the matter located between distant galaxies, will be installed on the 200-inch in early summer. This should give astronomers a look into the early universe and

the nature of its unknown constituents: dark matter and dark energy.

In April 2009 over 100 astronomers from around the world gathered at Caltech in Pasadena to discuss the results of their research all of which was performed at Palomar Observatory.

The observatory would like to remind its mountain neighbors that their outdoor lights can have an adverse affect on our observations. Please turn off any unnecessary lights. Make sure that they are pointed downward and only use as much light as you really need.



For more information on the observatory visit our website at:
<http://www.palomar-observatory.org>

County General Plan *by Tom Burton*

Your PMPO has been following the County's actions toward a new General Plan since its inception—over ten years ago.

The County has a preliminary draft that is in the Environmental Review phase. They will be making a presentation before the Planning Commission on May 8th, and give the Board of Supervisors a status report on May 13th. More information and the County's calendar is available on their website: www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu.

The PMPO has made a mantra of our three "C's" approach to how we believe the proposed plan should impact Palomar: restore our Commercial Property; allow Clustering—or greater densities around the Commercial properties; and recognize us as we are and have been since the late 1800's as a Country Town—thereby exempting us from the Forest Conservation Initiative (due to 'sunset' or expire at the end of 2010—just about when the new General Plan could come into being).

We are in good company with other 'back country' communities who have similar issues and concerns—and who are also largely ignored.

This year's major accomplishment was getting still another set of comments to the County on their Draft General Plan. The whole PMPO was involved. We reviewed all the past materials and this time supplied the County with a map. There were several full community meetings attended by County personnel. We heard what we wanted to hear from them—but it has yet to be written into the Draft Plan. Hence the call to vigilance, yet again!

Other similarly situated Communities feel our REAL impact will be turning out masses of articulately objecting folks at the public hearings. Stay tuned. The PMPO and the Palomar Mountain News will bring you advance warning of when these meetings will be. Without that outpouring of public support, our issues and concerns are likely to be ignored by the more vociferous large community and planning trendy concepts espoused by the County's staff.

PMPO Soliciting Board Members for May Election

Volunteers are solicited for PMPO Board seats to be voted on during our Annual Meeting following the Pancake Breakfast on May 23rd. Contact Glenn Borland if interested.

Membership on the PMPO Board is open to any individual resident, property owner, or business person in the Palomar Mountain area of the county of San Diego interested in contributing time and effort to achieve the purposes of this Organization. Members may be re-elected for more than one term. Members serve without compensation.

You can find out more at the PMPO web site, which list the various Committee activities, the Articles of Incorporation, and By-Laws. Members must agree to and fill out a Conflict of Interest Policy Statement.

Five current Board seats expire May 2009; those eligible for re-election include: Rob Hawk, Bob O'Neill, Michael Pique, Alan Serry, and Earl Walls.

Glenn Borland
PMPO Chairman
gborland@idafab.com



PAC: YOUR Palomar Action Committee

PAC, now a subcommittee of the PMPO, meets about every other week to investigate and act upon issues of concern to the Palomar Mountain Community.

Originally formed with two PMVFD members, two CCPM members and one independent, the group is about five years old. During that time its initial focus of facilitating the Community Center, bore fruit. Countless person-days of work yielded untold tens of thousands of dollars of benefit for the PMVFD and CCPM as it solicited and realized donations of cash, real and personal property. The group was responsible for the elimination of a cloud on the title to the PMVFD property, procured a free survey of the PMVFD site and days of valuable professional expertise in building design, law, tax and real property areas toward the improvement of the PMVFD properties and the manifestation of a more functional, and now nearly completed Community Center.

Last year the PAC was 'adopted' by the PMPO so that it could supplement its quarterly meeting schedule with a subset of its members; Earl Walls, Bruce Graves and Bonnie Phelps, joined by 'independents:' Jerry Fisher and Tom Burton.

The PAC task list has over fifty completed projects or investigations.

Currently on its 'plate' are: working to resolve the Dual Survey problem; tracking the County's General Plan Amendment; exploring alternatives to the proposed SDGE power outage in times of high fire risk; investigating the proposal for a Pala race track; the Palomar Easement Project; collecting information on the Pooma-cha fire; and Volunteer Fire Watch program institution.

If you have ideas or pet peeves that someone should ACT upon—let any of the members know. Our webpage will be open real soon at: www.mypalomarmountain.com/pac. You will be able to find there contact coordinates for the PAC members, minutes of the meetings and our "To-Do" lists. The PAC is PMPO's way to be more available and responsive to the needs of the Community.

Light and Life, Palomar Mountain... *Our Little Mountain School*

Things have been great up here at our little mountain school! This year we have had 5 students Kindergarten, 1st, 4th, 5th, and 7th. We have had many adventures in this time. We were "adopted" by the mammal department of the Wild Animal Park and were allowed to go "behind the scenes" and even out into the field to learn about their animals, and have a lot of fun feeding them! We have also had a lot of fun exploring the mountain. We have visited the observatory, the volunteer fire department, local ranches, and historic places. We are all very appreciative to the friendly people on this mountain that have let us explore their properties, and donated items to us. This community has been amazing! Not only have we had a lot of adventures, but because of the small class size, our students have excelled beyond expectations, some of them even starting on next year's work already!

We are currently enrolling students for next year, with options for homeschool assistance for those on the mountain who are currently homeschooling. If you are interested in a true adventure in education please feel free to contact me anytime! We are looking forward to next year, and we hope to see more kids involved in our educational program!

Thanks,
Andrew Kish

760-742-8930 • 760-580-3944
<http://lifeonthemountain.wordpress.com>



The Community Safety Center *by Earl Walls*

Thanks to limited number of great volunteers, many of whom are mountain construction professionals, we have made fairly significant strides towards completing the remodel of the house at the fire station towards its use as a Community Center. The inside will hopefully be complete within the next several months, which by that time will have weather that will permit us to complete the work on the outside. For all who have participated, a great big thank you.

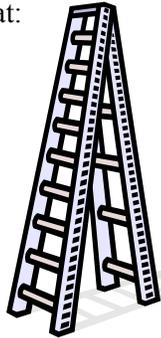
Our hopes for securing a grant to add the addition to the west side of the house were dashed when the County advised us that there were insufficient funds available to even consider starting the project. Our goal was for \$200,000. We were advised that we might get as much as \$38,000. Consequently, I worked with Captain Cliff Kellogg, of the PMVFD, in the revision of the grant request to provide funding for the addition of emergency generators for each of the houses, the apparatus building, and the soon to be located administration/dorm building (the gifted modular buildings on the heli-pad); and the activation of the old well on the fire station site.

To be honest, I have been somewhat disappointed in the general response of the community in the participation of the remodel effort. Had it not been for the pros and some off mountain volunteers we would not be anywhere near completion of the inside, let alone any progress on the outside. I realize that most of the community has limited construction expertise, but there were a lot of things the inexperienced could have done. But, with only a few exceptions, the offer was not forthcoming. There is still work to be done to make the site one we can be proud of. I hope that what has been accomplished will instill in the community in general an attitude of wanting to contribute.

If you want to, feel free to contact me at:

wallspalomar@aol.com
760-742-9993

Or, in person.
Earl



Palomar Mountain Community Church

“A Place to Share, Grow
and Strengthen your Christian Faith.”

You are invited to worship with us every Sunday at 10 AM in the Recreation Hall of the Palomar Observatory. We sing praise music, have group prayer, and study God’s Word, (Communion is observed on the first Sunday of each month). Our website has all the latest messages available to “listen” or “download” @ www.palomarmcc.com. You can also sign up for our “Weekly Email” which will keep you up-to-date on Events, Guest Speakers, Weekly Bible Studies, News, our Prayer List and the Missionaries we support.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that WHOEVER believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

Palomar Mountain Community Church
PO Box 25
Palomar Mountain, CA 92060



Palomar History Books



Another book is in the works with history of our favorite mountain. The latest edition will include photos in Darby’s Palomar Ski Resort. How fun is that!

Do you have stories and photos to contribute of days gone by? More material is always needed and will increase everyone’s appreciation of Mountain history.

We’re in the process now of finishing up corrections to the first three books that we printed so plan a second printing soon. Proceeds benefit the Fire Safe Council with thanks to all. Check out www.mypalomarmountain.com/historical/books and we’ll let you know when the next book is hot off the press!

Community Tidbits... *from Bonnie Phelps*

Burn Permits

A couple wind storms this winter brought down a tremendous amount of branches and some trees too. Wondering what to do with all the trimmings after ‘parking up’ your property? Would you like to have a campfire or burn your cut brush? A permit is required. Permits are available only when the Forestry feels it is safe. After a rain or snow is often a good option. Call the US Forest Service 782-3472 or 788-0250 to help keep our forest green and fire safe.

What’s Happening on Palomar?

Check out our interactive calendar of events. When your organization has something coming up, you can go into this new webpage and enter the event yourself. <http://my.calendars.net/palomarmountain> It is simple, and fun to do, and will keep us all up-to-date on the latest happenings!

Palomar Mountain News Broadcast

Since 1998, property owners and residents have been able to subscribe to a free e-news broadcast. Serving the Mountain in a way similar to a newspaper, you receive messages to keep informed of the happenings of our community. Simply visit: www.palomarmountainnews.com to subscribe.

Changed your e-Mail address lately?

The spam blockers are a lot more aggressive the past year or so. Do you have sbcglobal or att? You might not get the Mountain News at all since they consider it Spam. Try adding my e-dress to your “white list” or your address book, or get a free g-mail or hotmail e-dress and the news should get through to you.

Palomar Mountain News Website

A growing website is available to serve the needs of the community. It is very user friendly. Click around and you will find links to search the archives or visit community websites and webpages. You’ll find a new link for our School, a link to see photos of the latest Snow, and a whole lot more! If you have a website that is not linked, please feel free to send it along. Or, if you would like a free ‘Mountain News’ webpage, just let me know. www.palomarmountainnews.com

Would you like to cut wood?



If you are interested in cutting your own firewood, I often know of properties that have downed trees that could be cut for firewood. This could be a plus for you and it would help clean up the property at the same time. There is a LOT of oak for the cutting. Just get in touch with me, I will head you in the right direction with your chain saw. 760 742-1742

Debris Suggestions —What to do with Trash? Oil? Recyclables? Old TVs?

No trash pick up on the mountain! Weekenders and folks who work in the city take their trash down when they go. Recycle your aluminum cans at the Volunteer Fire Department bins. Closest dump is in Ramona www.ramonadisposal.com They also take old paint, TV’s and buy-back CRV recyclables. Some people share a dumpster with neighbors through Ramona Disposal 789-0516 or see info at www.ramonadisposal.com Free drop-off for old oil and oil filters. See convenient locations: www.wastefreesd.org/oil Contact Our Planet Recycling to get rid of old TV’s computer monitors, scrap steel, metal 747-7775 ourplanetrecycling.com

Poppies for Palomar

With a beautiful spring on the way a new community project is blooming! Poppies for Palomar! There are two collection cans, one at the PO and one at the Store for donations so that lots of poppy seeds can be purchased and planted all over the mountain, like we did a few years back with the daffodils. It will be awesome to see even more color on the mountain and help further beautify the mountain. A planting party will be announced once the seeds are purchased and have arrived. A big thanks to coordinator and our Postmaster, Lisa Di Paolo, lisa.a.dipaolo@usps.gov



PMPO Needs Your Financial Support...

All property owners, residents, and any parties interested in the Palomar community are members of the Palomar Mountain Planning Organization. PMPO is recognized by both Federal and State Taxing Authorities as a tax-exempt organization. This means that your gifts are income tax deductible.

If you have followed our activities over the years, you know we get a big bang for each buck. There are large threats on the horizon most of the time. We need to be ready. Your financial support represents our readiness. We study issues of importance to Palomar Mountain and communicate them to our community along with involved governmental agencies. These efforts have produced significant results.

Palomar Mountain Planning Organization -- 2009 Contribution --

RETURN TO:
PMPO, Box 145
PALOMAR MOUNTAIN, CA 92060-0145
PMPO IS RECOGNIZED BY FEDERAL
AND STATE AUTHORITIES
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YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

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Thanks to All of the
PMPO Board & Volunteers
for their ongoing dedication and
support in helping to better our
Mountain Community!



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Traffic Safety Update

by Alan Serry, PMPO Traffic Safety Officer



Motorcycle and Vehicle Safety

Motorcycle and vehicle safety issues on the South and East Grade roads are of major concern to residents and visitors to Palomar Mountain. Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department spends countless hours and dollars attending to avoidable accidents on the South and East Grade roads. The CHP has been approached on several occasions in the past 6 years. It has been determined that the CHP is unable to address the issue and has informed the PMPO that there is a shortage of manpower and funds to accommodate effective patrols.

At the request of the US Marine Corps, when a Marine is involved in an accident they would like to be informed. The reason for this is that the USMC has a requirement that all troops wear a colored safety vest both on and off base when riding a motorcycle. The PMVFD has a form to report these incidents to the USMC.

There has been a noticeable increase in night time auto racing on the South and East Grade Roads.

Please report any violations to the CHP Oceanside office at 760-757-1675. When immediate response is needed, call the San Diego CHP Dispatch at 858-637-3800. REMEMBER IN THE CASE OF AN EMERGENCY CALL 911

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Palomar Mountain CA



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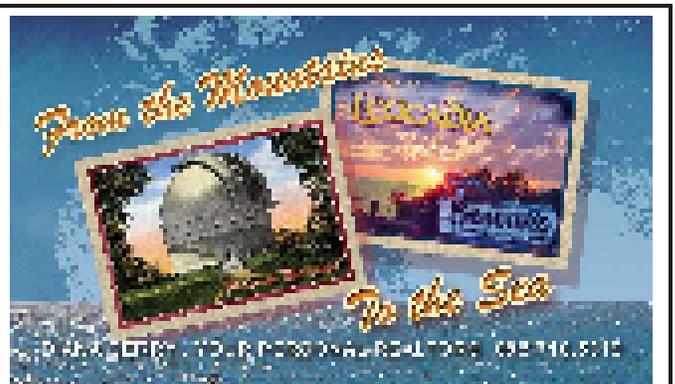
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PMVFD CERT Hosts a County-wide Exercise During AMGEN Tour of California Bike Race *by Bill Leininger*

On 22 February 2009, the AMGEN Tour of California Bike Race, featuring over 70 professional cyclists including Lance Armstrong, held its final leg in San Diego County. The highlight of this leg included a 4000 ft ascent to the summit of Palomar Mountain, and created an ideal opportunity for a county-wide CERT exercise. Hosted by the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Dept (PMVFD) CERT, the exercise focused on developing both Incident Command System (ICS) and Communication skills.

Palomar Mountain, in northern San Diego County, rises to 6,140 ft in elevation, and has only 2 paved roads of access. It is home to a state park, campgrounds, and the world famous Palomar Observatory of the California Institute of Technology. The southern face burned completely during the



Poomacha Fire in October 2007. On race day, snow persisted to the 4500 ft level. And, the mountain community of about 200 residents expected

as many as 5000 visitors to crowd the course, with no motorized traffic permitted on the roads while the race came through the 29 mile section around the mountain.

In planning support for the PMVFD during the exercise and race, the Fire Chief needed CERT to be its “eyes and ears”. So, for the Communication portion of the exercise, the course was divided into sections to be covered by groups of 4-6 participants. Depending of the section size, topography, and crowds, volunteers patrolled on foot, bicycle, or car. All groups used HAM and FRS radios for communication, and would regularly report in on crowd and traffic conditions, race progress, and any notable events, using selected radio bands.

For ICS practice, CERT and HAM volunteers were co-located with the PMVFD Incident Command Center, on the mountain summit. In addition to Fire Dept. resources, California Highway Patrol, EMS, and a Life Flight helicopter were also positioned here. The HAM’s maintained communication with all the teams across the exercise area. Wall maps of the area (invaluable!) were posted, with identification of the sub-sections and team locations, call boxes, mile markers, and other references. Logistics activities for team resupply and a lunch run were sched-

uled and announced. Concurrently, the Fire Dept. was able to use the CERT communication network to maintain awareness of conditions over the entire course.

At the conclusion of the 10 hour exercise, all the volunteers felt much more comfortable with their radio skills, and how they fit into the ICS. Concurrently, professionals in the fire dept and law enforcement learned about the resources that CERT’s bring to an event. In planning for the exercise, use of self-created Google websites (<http://sites.google.com/site/pmvfdcert/Home>) were immensely convenient in coordinating volunteers from multiple groups across the county, and then posting photos and collecting post-exercise feedback.





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Annual Pancake Breakfast & PMPO Annual Meeting

Breakfast 8am-11am • Annual Meeting immediately follows Breakfast

Saturday, May 23rd, 2009

at the Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Station

Breakfast Menu:

Fresh orange juice, strawberries,
hot mountain pancakes,
bacon & sausage and steaming coffee

\$3.00 - Adults
\$1.00 - Children



Come on out, meet your
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