



SIERRA
CLUB

October 2007
Volume 44 No. 9

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Open House

You are cordially invited to the housewarming for the Chapter's new digs, Sunday, October 14.



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SANTA LUCIAN



Protecting and Preserving the Central Coast

The official newsletter of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club • San Luis Obispo County, California

Regional Energies Unleashed

Planners see the light at historic meeting

On August 23 and 24, for the first time, local governments throughout the county got together to talk about energy policy.

Keynoted by California Energy Commission Chair Jackalyn Pfannenstiel's address on "Land Use and Energy," the two-day Central Coast

Regional Energy Planning Conference at Cal Poly's Vista Grande restaurant was attended by over one hundred elected officials, commissioners, planners, city managers, senior municipal staff and community leaders who came together to advance the cause of regional energy planning in San Luis Obispo.

Exhorted by luncheon speaker Ron Loveridge, mayor of Riverside -- "Hold your electeds responsible. This is not an 'I feel your pain' moment" -- and by leadership roundtable coordinator Tony Ferrara, mayor of Arroyo Grande, attendees left the conference and returned to their communities with a sense of commitment and purpose.

The CEC's Pfannenstiel made the case for regional planning and the connection between land and energy use. Larry Allen, SLO County Air Pollution Control Officer, underscored the point, noting that we lost 2,000 acres of ag land to development in 2002-04, and most development in the county is planned for fringe areas. "Regional planning is necessary if we're ever going to get a handle on emissions," he said.

Smart growth, green building, renewable energy, and energy conservation were the other the key themes of the conference. Here's a summary:

Renewables

The energy generated by the natural processes of wind, sun, water, plant growth, and heat from the earth, converted into electricity, steam and heat is referred to collectively as renewables. Gerry Braun of the California Energy Commission spoke on "Renewable Energy: Shifting the Mix."

"Billions of dollars in private investment are waiting for Congress to



Aeron Arlin-Genet, the County Air Pollution Control District's Planning & Outreach Manager (left) records ideas as fast as her break-out session -- one of ten at the conference-- can reel them off, while at another session 3rd District Supervisor candidate Adam Hill confers with Eric Justesen, CEO of RRM Design Group (right).

Cambria's Lesson

By Andrew Christie, Chapter Director

On the local level, the lessons to be drawn by the residents of Cambria from the September 6 denial of its desalination project by the California Coastal Commission are immediate and political: Cambrians might want to start thinking about getting some new directors on the board of the Cambria Community Services District.

The project unraveled quietly under the gentle probing of CCSD representatives by Coastal Commissioners at the Commission's September 6 meeting in Eureka, and the spectacle was all the more devastating for the obvious attempts by the questioners not to be unkind. The question for the CCSD from Commissioners came down to this: *Why would we grant you a permit to conduct a desal feasibility study at San Simeon State Beach, where you know, having been told, that the construction of a desalination plant is not likely ever to be permitted?*

"I will never underestimate the proponents of projects that diminish coastal resources," said Mahala Burton of SLO

County LandWatch. "The issue we won on is the use of a State Park for an inappropriate project, i.e. drilling. The CSD will be back as they have no fallback plan, and in spite of 400,000 gallons of purified waste water available every day for irrigation, which would solve any water shortage problems in Cambria."

This is not the first time the Cambria CSD board has burned through large quantities of ratepayer money on a project that was destined to capsize at the Coastal Commission. The desal debacle was déjà vu all over again from 2004, when the CCSD sued the Commission over its denial of a water storage tank expansion plan that would have decimated a rare Monterey pine forest and violated the Coastal Act's protections for Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA). The CCSD board spent hundreds of thousands of ratepayers' dollars on its courtroom crusade against the Commission and the County, which included an appeal,

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photo/Karen Webb

It's time for America to get smart about energy and be less dependent on dwindling oil reserves. We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.

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Los Osos: Let's Talk

We're pretty sure we have now heard everything there is to hear about the Los Osos sewer. Lately, we have also heard everything there is to hear about the Proposition 218 vote to fund the sewer, except for one thing: What happens if the vote fails?

In recent years, Santa Lucia Chapter leaders have met with various members of the board of the Los Osos Community Services District, Citizens for Clean Water, the Ocean Outfall Group and CoastKeeper, and with Assemblyman Blakeslee and his staff. We fought for the deal brokered between the CSD and the State Water Board in 2005 that (almost) saved the State Revolving Fund loan. When that deal fell through, Sierra Club lobbied in Sacramento for the passage of AB 2107, the bill that allowed the County to step in when the project was in free-fall. At the August 7 Board of Supervisors meeting, when the County could have asked for an extension of the expiring Coastal Development Permit for the Tri-W site, Public Works Director Paavo Ogren advised the Supervisors not to extend the permit and instead "walk the clean path" of equal consideration for all prospective project sites, and we were right there with him and all the local citizens who spoke in overwhelming agreement.

We've talked to residents. We've heard that the Morro Bay Estuary is not really being polluted by nitrates because the water looks clear (nitrate pollution is colorless). We've heard the State Water Board claim that its 2005 negotiations with the LOCSO were not negotiations (yes, they were) and its negotiator was not negotiating (yes, he was), and we've seen the Regional Water Board brandish the threat of Cease & Desist Orders for all, apparently under the impression that this was a good way to convince people to vote the way it wants them to. (It isn't.)

With the Proposition 218 assessment vote for property owners underway, we are awash in metaphors of pigs in pokes, used car dealers, and mechanics conducting repairs without providing an estimate. Potential pitfalls of a "yes" vote are pointed out every week at the Board of Supervisors by local residents who say that a potential alternative system looks like its getting short shrift, or they don't agree with the County's numbers or the requirements of the California Environmental Quality

Act, or fear that once the County has secured the funding, it will resurrect the middle-of-town Tri-W project.

The County's commitment to provide property owners with a best estimate of costs that includes as complete a picture as possible of design, construction and operation and maintenance, and specific promises regarding the review of proposals and technologies post-218, should alleviate most of those concerns insofar as they can be – i.e. no one can know the outcome of this process until it is complete.

All objections cannot be eliminated. By law, a 218 vote is a public ballot, not a private one. By law, CEQA does not allow elimination of potential project sites prior to an environmental analysis of all of them. The analysis of all feasible sites and collection and treatment methods can't happen until the funding for it has been assessed and secured through... a Prop. 218 vote.

But, again, we've seen and heard nothing in the way of an alternative; some other option that realistically (the key word -- see "Taking Issue," page 6) could be implemented and will achieve the goal. We don't know what will happen if the vote fails – in the same sense that we don't know what happens or where you'll end up if you jump down a hole into an unexplored cave – but we know what's not likely to happen: The Los Osos CSD, in bankruptcy and in default, will somehow convince a lender to lend it money at an interest rate with fewer than two digits in it, and it will build a sewer. That means the state will most likely step in and take direct control. When that happens, all parties can say good-bye to meaningful local input or concerns about reducing the financial burden for the sake of low-income residents, and say hello to "quick and dirty" as the order of the day.

The CSD has not said it has a "Plan B" if the vote fails, or if they do, by what means they would implement it. We conclude that the plan before us is the one wherein resides the hope for a chance of enlightened waste water treatment, the kind that involves reclamation and re-use and curbs saltwater intrusion; the kind that protects both the water supply and our extraordinary and unique National Estuary.

It has been a long, hard road for Los Osos. We will all know soon enough which way it's going to turn.

SANTA LUCIAN

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Cal French
 COUNCIL OF CLUB LEADERS

The Executive Committee meets the fourth Wednesday of every month at 4:00 p.m. at the chapter office, located at 547-B Marsh St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

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Charting the Course

Sierra Club California/Nevada Regional Conservation Committee convenes in SLO

By Letty French

Sierra Club leaders from throughout California and Nevada convened at Rancho El Chorro over the weekend of September 8-9 for the annual meeting of the Sierra Club's California-Nevada Regional Conservation Committee (CNRCC). The committee meets in SLO every year to set Sierra Club policies for the coming year and hold elections for volunteer leadership positions.

Chapters and committees reported on their activities, their biggest issues and what had worked. Santa Lucia Chapter Chair Karen Merriam gave an outstanding report on our chapter's work.

Santa Lucia Chapter Executive Committee member Cal French was re-elected CNRCC Chair by acclamation. Rochelle Becker of our Diablo Canyon Task Force and the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility introduced a resolution of opposition to an upcoming nuclear initiative on the 2008 state ballot, which would repeal California's 1976 Nuclear Safeguard Law barring the construction of new nuclear power plants until a means has been devised and demonstrated for the safe, permanent disposal of high-level nuclear waste. (See "As Goes California" and "A Stupid, Stupid Plan," September *Santa Lucian*.)



Sierra Club Regional Staff Director Carl Zichella (left) makes a point at the CNRCC Energy Committee workshop.

Resolutions that the staff and club offices become carbon neutral, a request that the State of Nevada re-designate Great Basin National Park as a class-one air basin to preserve its pristine air quality, and support for the designation of the Blue Ridge Berryessa National Conservation Area

were sent to the Sierra Club California Executive Committee for approval.

The CNRCC Chair and Sierra Club California Chair were instructed to meet with Sierra Club president Robby Cox and Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope to express concerns over a program to distribute compact fluorescent light bulbs donated by PG&E.

Three workshops were held on energy, Yosemite, and our political efforts in DC and Sacramento.



Cathy Duval (second from right), Sierra Club's Political Director, came from Washington DC to update the Sierra Club California Political Committee on how things look in the Capitol and to personally thank California members for our help in defeating former Congressman (and major environmental road block) Richard Pombo last year. Duval said that 2008 marks the first time that global warming will be front and center in a national political campaign and that polling shows the issue ranks second only to health care as a domestic priority for voters. "This is the tipping point for what the country's going to do about global warming," she said. "The 2008 and 2010 elections will determine how we get there. It's really going to matter who's in the White House, Senate, Congress, and governor's mansions across the country."

Big Win Against Global Warming

Car makers beaten back in court, California case is up next

On September 12, the auto industry lost its bid to exempt itself from the need to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Judge William Sessions, a federal district court judge in Vermont, ruled against the automakers and for the Sierra Club, other environmental groups and the states of Vermont and New York, and opened the door for states to mandate cutting global warming emissions from cars.

Over the vigorous objections of the automakers, he ruled that New York and Vermont may proceed with enacting the California Clean Car Standards, pending EPA approval. These standards, adopted by California and at least 11 other states, will reduce global warming

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Sacramento Wrap-Up

Progress on energy, air and flood protection; delays on land use, ports and toxics

by Sierra Club California

The California Legislature has sent to the Governor some important bills to make our buildings and fuels greener and guard against floods, but deferred until next year the vital tasks of spurring smart growth, requiring utilities to generate more power from renewables, reducing toxic chemical hazards and cleaning up the filthy air at the megaports of Los Angeles, Long Beach and Oakland.

The big political story of the 2007 session: Water. Sierra Club California is opposed to new dams in California. There are more cost-effective and less environmentally harmful ways to secure and maintain a clean and reliable water supply for the state. We support increased water efficiency in both the urban and agricultural sectors, the use of groundwater storage, and the safe expansion of water reclamation and water recycling. Sierra Club California believes that the state needs better water practices and policies and that

some of the "water crisis" can be solved without throwing huge sums of money at it via the Governor's \$9 billion water bond.

Bright spots for the environmental cause in the 2007 session included:

Cleaner Fuels: SB 210 (Kehoe) would require the adoption of a low-carbon fuel standard by 2010 that achieves at least a 10 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and maintains or improves upon air quality benefits gained by current gasoline and diesel fuel standards; AB 118 (Núñez) would raise about \$150 million annually for clean fuel and clean air programs.

Greener Buildings: AB 888 (Lieu) would set green building standards for com-

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Please Help Us Sue Them

EPA needs a suit pressed

Attention, Sierra Club Member:

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- 2) Live or work next door or have lived or worked next door to a Dry Cleaners, or
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WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Sierra Club and Earthjustice are filing suit against the U.S. EPA over regulations that continue to allow dry cleaners to use perchlorethylene, a hazardous substance that is used by most dry cleaners. We need simple declarations to assure that Sierra Club has standing to make this very important challenge.

Again, we need your help! If any of the criteria above applies to you, please contact:

Ethan Elkind, Instructor, UCLA School of Law Environmental Law Clinic
(310) 206-4033
elkind@law.ucla.edu

you'll **SHUDDER**
as City Hall says "What herons?"

you'll **SCREAM**
as the Dept. of Fish and Game says
"Not our job."

you'll **CHEER**
as the California Coastal Commission
asks "Where's your permit?"



"The public should be made aware that...nest destruction that results in the unpermitted take of migratory birds or their eggs is illegal and fully prosecutable under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act."

-- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Shell Beach versus the Night Herons

3rd big year! Must end soon!! (hopefully)

Night herons are "colony nesters," which means they return to the same nests every year. Unless, of course, those nests aren't there any more.

For the last three years, that has increasingly been the case in the Morro Avenue neighborhood of Shell Beach, where the herons' nesting trees are falling at the hands of property owners who consider the birds a nuisance.

Along with concerned neighbors, local biologist Terry Lilley has been writing letters, making calls and sending e-mails to bring attention to the situation, as well as taking pictures and shooting video of the herons' on-going eviction, confronting tree trimmers, beseeching Pismo Beach City Hall, and alerting the police and state and federal agencies to what's happening to the herons. Lately, he's managed to get their attention (and, in the course of taking pictures, to get arrested for trespassing), but the trimmers continue to target the nesting trees, both out of nesting season, when it is technically legal to remove the nest of a migratory bird, and in season, when it is not.

When Lilley's e-mails to wildlife managers reached the Santa Lucia Chapter last July, we made some calls of our own. We sent a query up the political food chain regarding the no-show of the Department of Fish & Game, which had never responded to Lilley's numerous entreaties to do something about the nest destruction and harassment of the herons. The word came back that DFG did not consider it their job to respond, as enforcement of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act is a federal matter and wholly the responsibility of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

This raised eyebrows at the Fish & Wildlife Service, whose agents replied that state Fish & Game has joint jurisdiction with U.S. Fish & Wildlife on the Central Coast, and they are fully authorized, and equally responsible, to enforce the federal law protecting migratory birds.

We relayed that word back up the food chain. On August 18, Lilley reported half the nesting trees on Boker Street were cut back with active nests in them, and, for the first time, a state Fish and Game official came out to photograph the damage.

Perhaps the worst recent incident occurred over the weekend of August 4, when three large trees with twelve nests and at least 14 chicks were cut back as the chicks fled the nests or dropped to the ground (photo, above left). Incredibly, both Pismo Beach and DFG asserted that nesting season was over and no herons were using the nests. (That should have been true, but it's no longer true in Shell Beach. Under the kind of pressure they're experiencing there, the herons have been forced to build makeshift replacements for their usual multi-year, multi-use nests, and have been laying later in the year.)

On September 13, trimmers cut back a huge Monterey pine tree on Ocean Street on the bluff. "The City said the trimmers were trimming fruit trees!" said Lilley. "I went to the City with the photos. They said the photos were too small to make out and they could not see what trees were being trimmed. But they could see the pines clearly from their office window.

"They trimmed the tree so severely I am not sure if it will live, and there is now no way any bird can roost. Bunyon

Sacramento

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mercial buildings, starting in 2013. AB 1058 (Laird) would set green building standards for new residential construction. AB 35 (Ruskin) would require CAL-EPA to set sustainable building standards for the construction and renovation of state buildings. AB 1109 (Huffman) would require the adoption of energy efficiency standards for all general purpose lights.

Flood Protection: SB 5 (Machado) would require the state to prepare a Central Valley Flood Protection Plan by 2012. AB 5 (Wolk) would reform, restructure and rename the state Reclamation Board, which is the agency in charge of flood protection in the Central Valley. AB 70 (Jones) would provide for limited shared contribution between the state and local governments when local governments approve new developments in previously undeveloped areas, and thereby increase property damages

Brothers tree service cut 95% of the branches out of it."

Lilley is not impressed by the means trimmers use to snip around the borders of the law. "Trimming around nests with heavy equipment will obviously cause the birds to abandon their nests and then will cause nests to fall out of the tree," he says. "This is a 'take' under the law.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Coastal Commission are investigating.

"By destroying their nesting habitat in nesting season, these tree trimmers and land owners will completely destroy the night heron colony in this area," says Lilley. "Many other towns along our coast have tree ordinances and have local law enforcement that knows the wildlife laws. Many towns have an

photos: Terry Lilley



environmental coordinator on staff to help with wildlife issues. This can happen in Pismo Beach if there are enough people who live here that want to see wildlife remain in our area."



Terry Lilley and neighbor Sue Sloan with Nellie, a tree trimming refugee.

resulting from a flood for which the state is liable.

Clean Air: The Healthy Heart and Lung Act, AB 233 (Jones), sponsored by Sierra Club California and American Lung Association of California, would improve enforcement of rules that limit toxic diesel emissions; SB 719 (Machado) would reform the San Joaquin Valley's lackluster Air Pollution Control District by adding expertise and urban representation.

Endangered Species: The endangered California Condor is suffering from lead poisoning, because the birds eat bullet fragments when scavenging carcasses. AB 821 (Nava) would require the use of non-lead bullets when hunting big game within the range of the condor.

We are now asking Governor Schwarzenegger to sign these and other green bills. He has until October 14 to sign or veto the measures on his desk.

Sierra Club California and our allies had pushed the Legislature to act in other vital areas, but many key bills stalled toward the end of session due to opposition from powerful special interests. SB 974 (Lowenthal), the Clean Ports bill, was deferred until January at the request of Governor Schwarzenegger. Both SB 375 (Steinberg), which seeks to reduce vehicular emissions through smarter land use patterns, and SB 411 (Simitian), which would require utilities to generate 33% of their power from renewable sources, failed to clear the Assembly Appropriations Committee, and AB 558 (Feuer), which would have generated information on the use of toxic chemicals, died by a close vote of the Senate Appropriations panel. The Legislature's failure to pass these important bills leaves substantial unfinished business to be taken up next year.

Oaks & Climate Change

By the California Oak Foundation

California Attorney General Jerry Brown has reached a landmark lawsuit settlement with San Bernardino County involving the extent to which the County's environmental impact report for its General Plan update should address impacts on climate change. This is the first time any California jurisdiction has entered into a legally binding agreement to look at the overall impact of its planning on global warming.

The agreement solidifies climate change as an impact to be addressed in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental review documents. Significant impacts to oak woodlands must be addressed in CEQA green house gas reviews because oak impacts uniquely combine carbon capture and carbon emission issues.

According to the AG, discretionary approvals must provide: (1) An examination of a project's impact on climate change and the adoption of all feasible mitigation measures to reduce such impacts, and (2) such analysis can – and must – be done today even absent established thresholds of significance or impending regulations under Assembly Bill 32. The state's California Climate Action Registry, which will guide AB 32 regulations, recognizes that converting oak woodlands to development is a carbon emission due to lost forest photosynthesis. Moreover, many municipal and county codes have general or specific tree-related provisions that reference air quality, air pollution or climatic conditions.

Consistent with the CEQA opinions of the AG, where significant oak resource impacts occur, project air quality analy-



ses must consider three oak resource factors: (1) How much carbon is sequestered in the impacted oak trees?; (2) How much potential carbon sequestration will be lost due to oak seedling, sapling and tree impacts?; (3) How much sequestered carbon will be released if the impacted oaks are burned?

California is in the process of establishing a carbon credit market system with offset mitigation measures. These offsets will include credits for off-site forest restoration and conservation, further enhancing economic opportunities for local landowners interested in the benefits of oak woodlands mitigation banking.

Update

Attorney General Jerry Brown has reached a \$10 million settlement with oil-giant ConocoPhillips regarding mitigation offsets for greenhouse gas emissions caused by an expansion of its refinery in Rodeo, 25 miles north of San Francisco. To avoid a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lawsuit, Conoco will provide \$7 million to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District for local offset projects, \$2.8 million to the California Wildfire ReLeaf Fund for reforestation to sequester an estimated 1.5 million metric tons of greenhouse gases and \$200,000 for Audubon to restore San Pablo Bay wetlands.

The Conoco accord affirms California Oak Foundation's position that CEQA reviews by cities and counties must consider long-term impacts due to emissions attributable to a change in land use, including impacts to oak resources. The state views the cutting and the burning of oak trees as separate carbon emissions, therefore both must be addressed in CEQA where impacts to oak resources occur.

from *California Oak Report*
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North County Meet-Up

By Gerry Manata

On Sunday, September 9, fifteen Sierra Club members attended a get-acquainted meeting in Paso Robles. We sat in a circle and went around the room introducing ourselves. The introductions included a brief autobiography, with special emphasis on one's history in political thought and activism, especially environmental activism.

We were free to ask each other questions. We all stated what issues were most important to us and what we would like to see happen in north county and the nation. This interesting exercise took up an hour and a half. We felt comfortable with each other by then and discussion followed until it got too late to continue.

Action items that came up at the end included writing up a petition to present to the local theater owner, asking for progressive Palm Theater-type movies to be shown here. There was also a request for everyone to write our major, asking him to sign the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

To be informed of future Paso meet-ups, e-mail gmanata@2003.com

Who Are You?

By Bill Denneen

I've been called an "eco-extremist," "radical environmentalist," "enviro-wacko," and "eco-hooligan"—a title given to me by *New Times'* Steve Moss—my favorite. Letters to editors have said many negative things about me, but the one I like most said "Denneen, get a haircut, shave and shut-up" -- it inspired me to continue being an eco-hooligan.

Who were your role models, who inspired you, who are your heroes?

Some of mine were Rachel Carson, John Muir, H.D.Thoreau, Ralph Nader and an early biology teacher, Fred Avis. I wanted to go back and tell him how much he inspired me, but he had died. Don't wait.

Kathleen Goddard Jones (KGJ) inspired me so much. She kept a nuclear power plant from being built in the Nipomo Dunes -- a unique bio-treasure. Her leadership inspired me: If you believe in a cause, hang in there, do not waver, stand firm. Powerful corporations may now control our country but apathy destroys.

I formed a group, "Citizen for a Vehicle Free Nipomo Dunes," to protect Oceano Beach and Nipomo Dunes from vehicles that should not be there, vehicles that make the air over the Nipomo Mesa polluted with dust and exhaust. The Dune Center is silent on vehicles on the beach and dunes. To me, this means they approve this insult to what must be protected.

I had eco-groups while teaching. One of the leaders at Hancock was Virginia Perry Souza who became an investment counselor for Morgan Stanley. In 1993, I invested \$50,000 in an Environmental Award Trust. The interest from this investment has been going to eco-activists ever since.

The awards consist of a Plaque, an enviro-book, a Nipomo Dunes Photograph, and a variable amount of cash (\$100-\$500) depending on the interest from the \$50K investment, now augmented from a fund created by Bob Shanbrom. The large black & white photographs are by a Nipomo artist, David Stroup, who sells them to the trust for \$100, while selling the same photographs commercially for \$1,000, winning many awards nationally.

Enviro-activists do not make money and are typically outnumbered & outmaneuvered. Protecting habitat is important but does not pay like the activities of real-estate agents, developers, tract-home builders and speculators. However, eco-activism makes you feel good inside. You know that if there is to be a future for our species, your concern for seven generations, like the Chumash, is vital.

My enviro-awards since 1992 have gone to 56 eco-activists. Five Nipomo High School seniors received this award last June. They represent the hope for a future for our species:

Crystal Costa: "It is amazing that the oil companies have a complete monopoly over our world."

Jennifer Brown: "I fully believe in the importance of keeping our environment clean and healthy for all—whether it be wildlife or humans."



Ian Wells: "I had known pollution was bad, fossil fuels destroy the earth and increasing population is devastating, but Enviro-Science class at Nipomo High School taught me what these can actually do...."

Justin Tucker: "My current ambition is to work on alternative methods of energy production and zero-emission alternatives for automobiles."

David Gonzales: "I believe we are at the most critical juncture in civilized human history."

David also wrote a letter to the editor which said: "Can our species walk



David Gonzalez (second from right) and family with Enviro Award.

blindly to the slaughter, keep occupied and content with our increasingly destructive ways & numbers? Surely, the argument that Mr. Denneen puts forward is striking, save for one flaw: his seeming pessimism. It is not a problem for someone else; it is much more than an exacerbating disaster for our posterity. It is my problem, it is your problem, today."

These Nipomo High School seniors give me hope -- participate !!

MOTHERS for PEACE Solar Tour

As in the past, this year's Solar and Green Building Tour is coordinated with the National Solar Tours held across the country during the first weekend of October.

On Sunday, October 7th, we will visit the award-winning Solar Decathlon structure that competed in Washington, DC; the Education and Administration building of the Botanical Garden; a mixed-use commercial/residential facility in Los Osos built by Semmes and Co.; Congregation Beth David Synagogue on Los Osos Valley Road; and the home of Tom Jones, Dean of the College Architecture and Environmental Design at Cal Poly. Join us and find out how your neighbors are trimming their utility bills and increasing their energy independence.

In the spirit of conservation, we are approaching the tour differently this year. The transportation will be done in vans holding 22 people, with the assembly point being the Solar Decathlon building on the Cal Poly campus. There will be five departure times, with the first van leaving at 12:00 and every 30 minutes thereafter, and will take about 3 hours.

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Taking Issue

problematic environmental coverage & commentary in our local press

“Cambria hung out to dry on desalination,” editorial opinion of *The Tribune*, Sept. 12, 2007.

Summary: The California Coastal Commission should not have denied the Cambria Community Services District a development permit for its desal test project.

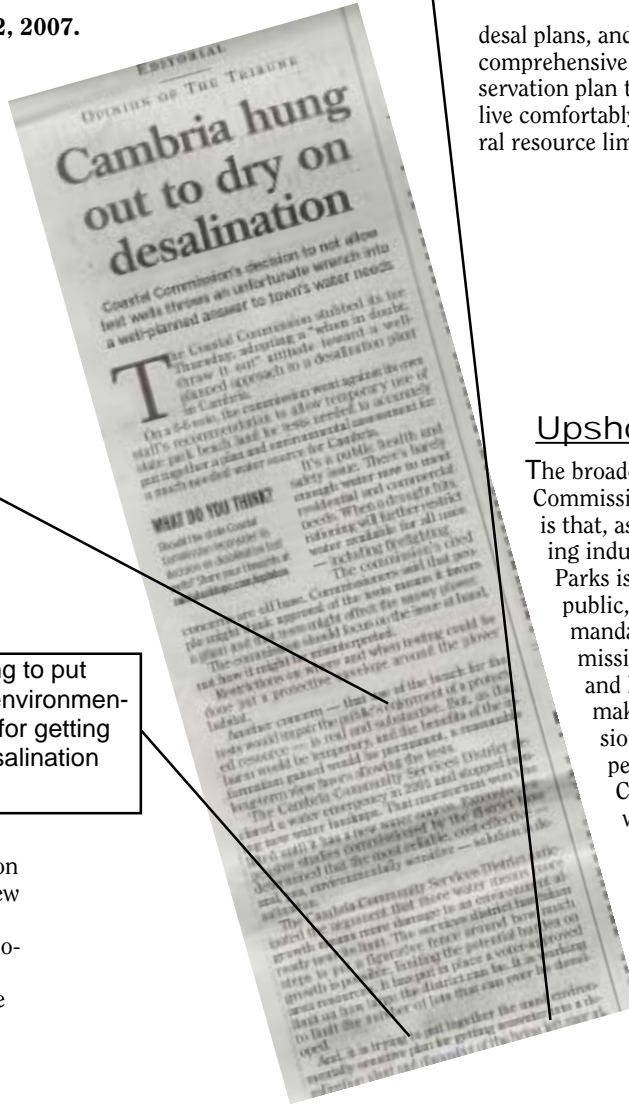
The temporary test wells would not have provided information that could be useful for anything other than replacing them with permanent wells to feed a new desal facility. How is it possible to support a temporary project whose only purpose is to produce information leading to a permanent project that would “impair the public’s enjoyment of a protected resource”?

“[Concern that] use of the beach for the tests would impair the public’s enjoyment of a protected resource is real and substantive. But as that harm would be temporary, and the benefits of the information gained would be permanent, a reasonable long-term view favors allowing the tests.”

Had the test wells proven productive, that would have obviously led to an application to install permanent well heads on the public beach to supply salt water for a new desalination plant. It would have made no sense for the Commission to approve a temporary project that would lead directly to an application for a project that is unapprovable under the Coastal Act.

[The CCSD] is trying to put together the most environmentally sensitive plan for getting seawater into a desalination plant....

It’s not fair, it’s not wise, and it should be reconsidered by the Commission.



Instead of encouraging the Commission to re-evaluate its action, the Tribune should be encouraging the CCSD to redirect the voluminous amount of rate-payers’ dollars they have been spending on lobbyists, engineers and

desal plans, and spend those resources on a comprehensive reclamation, reuse and conservation plan that will allow Cambria to live comfortably and safely within its natural resource limits.

Upshot:

The broader concern behind the Coastal Commission’s rational, sensible decision is that, as a matter of public policy, placing industrial development in State Parks is not in the best interests of the public, nor is it consistent with the mandates of the Coastal Act or the mission of the Department of Parks and Recreation. Yet attempts to make development-driven incursions into public lands are happening all over the state. The Commission will shortly decide whether to allow a toll road to be built through San Onofre State Park at the world-famous Trestles Beach. Let’s hope the Commission applies the same rationale there that it did in Cambria.

“Voting ‘no’ on Proposition 218 shows a real freedom of choice,” by Ed Ochs, *The Tribune*, Sept. 15, 2007.

Summary: In the event of the failure of the Prop. 218 vote to assess the funds that will allow the County to oversee the design and construction of a sewer for Los Osos, the town can get a better deal elsewhere.



If the 218 fails, another equally compliant project would still be underway by 2011.

Unlike speculative, hypothesized scenarios, the County has the capacity to build a real project on time and on budget.

The district will be in no position to do anything but sign off to a private company...transferring ownership to the district after the 20-year loan is paid off.

The County will get the most competitive project bids because, unlike the LOCSB, it is highly credit-worthy. The bankrupt LOCSB is in default, and its high-risk rating means it is ineligible for a loan at anything but the highest interest rate.

Sure, the water board will probably express its displeasure by papering the town with unenforceable cease & desist orders...

The RWQCB has delayed its enforcement threat temporarily, only at the County’s urging. The Water Board has sweeping powers to protect the aquifer and the bay.

Low- and fixed-income residents...can’t possibly bear the burden of a city sewer costing as much as \$210 million....

There are no cheap public works projects. Costs are mitigated through favorable financing and grants.

...the Los Osos Community Service District’s precarious financial position presents a unique opportunity for the community to reverse the county takeover and issue a request for proposals to Ripley/Orenco, or anyone else with a bona fide solution, for millions less than the county’s mega-sewer.

The County is eligible for low-interest financing and grants that are unavailable to the LOCSB or any private enterprise projects. AB 2701 provides the

County, and the County alone, with unique standing to advocate for Los Osos before regulatory bodies. The County has repeatedly said that all project options, including STEP, on-site, and regional, are on the table.

Upshot:

“Better, Faster, Cheaper” is a mantra with a long history in Los Osos. Such promises have proved easier to make than to keep. Now, after an unprecedented (and likely never-to-be-repeated) rallying of state, regional and local partners, Los Osos has a chance to move forward. It would seem a mighty shame to choose to continue wandering in the wilderness when the County is offering a road map.

Mr. Lenthall Protests

By Andrew Christie, Chapter Director

In an editorial I wrote for the August 30 SLO *New Times* headlined “Viewshed Outcome is Insulting,” I reported on the lowlights of the August 21 Board of Supervisors hearing on the Cayucos Viewshed ordinance, at which the board majority, after two years and six continuances, arrived at the worst possible decision and the least protective ordinance for the 53 square miles of oak woodland and ranchlands between Highway 1 and Paso Robles. Barring major last-minute changes or repeal, nothing now prevents land speculators from building unscreened starter castles on top of ridgelines throughout the area, thanks to the votes of Supervisors Ovitt, Achadjian, and Lenthall.

I noted that Charlie Daugherty, the attorney for Protect Our Property Rights (POPR), the author of that worst possible ordinance and a major donor to the re-election campaign of Supervisor Jerry Lenthall, had his speaker request slip called by Chairman Lenthall at the end of the six-hour public comment period, and that shortly after getting the last word Mr. Daugherty was summoned back to the podium by Lenthall to help make fixes in his ordinance so as to render it at least minimally in compliance with the law before the Board voted on it.

My article resulted in an interview on the September 7 edition of Dave Congalton’s KVEC talk show, during which Supervisor Lenthall called in to say that it was “absolutely false” that he had deliberately given Daugherty the last word at the hearing.

At any public meeting, the Chair is in control of the speaker request slips, and therefore the order in which people speak. He is also free to cut off the period in which requests to speak will continue to be accepted – as Chairman Lenthall has done before – or to extend that period all the way to the end of the hearing – as Chairman Lenthall did with the Cayucos Viewshed ordinance – thereby allowing, say, a preferred speaker who may have privately made a prior request, to put in a slip at the last minute so as to be assured of



Prominent ridgelines: We are facing the prospect of unfortunate future additions to the Cayucos Viewshed.

the last word.

Both practices are common, impossible to prove and fully deniable. What happened in public view at the August 21 hearing remains the same: At the very end of a six-hour hearing, Supervisor Lenthall pulled the speaker slip of a major donor to his re-election campaign and the author of the ordinance on which the board was deliberating, and for which Lenthall would be casting a vote in favor some twenty minutes hence. Lenthall wishes us to believe this happened by chance.

When Lenthall called into Dave Congalton’s show to dispute this point with me, Congalton asked Lenthall a more pertinent question: How could he have accepted a large check from the self-same Charlie Daugherty prior to deliberating on an ordinance Daugherty had written?

Lenthall professed to be unaware that

Daugherty was a major donor or to know when he had received the money or in what amount – surely the worst kind of amnesia that can befall a candidate for public office.

Daugherty’s donation was officially reported on April 6, three days after Lenthall asked the board to delay a vote on the Cayucos Viewshed ordinance yet again so as to allow him to assemble a discussion group and “put [his] credibility on the line” in seeking consensus on the issue. A representative of Mr. Daugherty’s organization was one of the five participants in Lenthall’s discussion group, which was stacked 3 to 1 in favor of the least protective ordinance.

Lenthall failed in his quest for compromise between a good viewshed ordinance and a bad one. He subsequently used the power of his board chairmanship to block even the agendizing for discussion of the Planning Com-

mission’s simple request for enough time to properly review the ordinance.

As we go to press, the Planning Commission has not yet reviewed the ordinance. How much surgery they may do in an attempt to undo the wrongs the Board has wrought, we do not yet know. When the ordinance returns to the Board for final reading, we don’t know how much of the work of the Planning Commission will be undone by the Board majority as they seek to please the real estate/development interests they routinely serve. But if the ordinance that comes out of this process is substantially the same beast that the Board brought into being on August 21, multi-million dollar estate homes with 360-degree views will come to adorn the ridgelines from Cayucos to Paso in the near future.

Those houses may be soundly constructed, but they will be Jerry-built.

A Letter from Bill McKibben

Dear Friend—

There are occasional moments in history when we desperately need leadership, and this is one of them. If we’re going to deal with global warming, then we need to go beyond politicians who say the right words and find champions who will actually do the tough work to transform our energy economy.

And you could play a key role in bringing those leaders to the fore. This is an invitation to take one Saturday this fall and use it to build a movement, a movement strong enough to finally put this issue on the table where it can no longer be ignored.

Here’s the idea. **On November 3, a year before the next election, we’re asking people to organize rallies large and small in their communities.** Each one should take place in some spot that commemorates great leaders of the past. People have already committed to climbing New Hampshire’s Mt. Washington and gathering in Nashville’s Wilson Mall. Others will gather at the Rhode Island church where John F. Kennedy was married, or in front of a site honoring Navajo elder and activist Roberta Blackgoat. But we need hundreds more, gatherings in places that bear the names

of national leaders or of locally celebrated men and women who did the right thing in a moment of great need. You’ll know the person that makes sense in your city or town—they don’t need to be saints, just true leaders, the kind who, faced with the great issues of their day, didn’t punt or compromise.

Once you’ve got your rally registered on our website, we’ll help you gather a crowd, and invite the politicians from your neck of the woods. We want to ask every Senator and Representative, and every candidate for those offices, to come to these rallies, along with state and local officials. Once they’re there, we’ll present politicians with the three “1 Sky” priorities prepared in the last few months by climate campaigners across the country. They are: an **80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050**, a **moratorium on new coal-fired power plants**, and a **Green Jobs Corps** to help fix homes and businesses so those targets can be met.

Basically, we want to find out who is simply a politician, and who’s ready to be a leader.

Basically, we want to find out who is simply a politician, and who’s ready to be a leader.

We know these gatherings will be effective. In April, with the help of thousands of people (most of them brand new to organizing) from across the country, we organized 1,400 rallies in places that showed how climate change would affect our lives. But a movement needs to keep moving, and calling for real leadership is the next step.

Don’t worry if you’ve never organized anything before—you’re not putting together a March on Washington, just a gathering of scores or hundreds in your town or neighborhood. It needn’t be slick; homemade is just fine.

This is a celebration of leadership, and a celebration should be joyful—as focused on the new economies and communities we can create as on the threats we must avoid.

These rallies will be local, but they’ll also have national impact. The website will help

draw people to your action, and then on Nov. 3, we’ll be gathering pictures and video from around the country so that by nightfall we’ll have a good online slideshow of how America feels. We’ll do our best to make sure that every candidate is firmly on the record about their plans. By the time the day is done, you’ll have helped change the political landscape.

The best science tells us we have barely a decade to start the fundamental transformation of our economy and to lead the world in the same direction or else, in the words of NASA’s Jim Hansen, we will face a “totally different planet.” A decade’s not very long—we’ve got to get going.

I know you’ve already done the obvious things, like changing some of the light-bulbs in your house. **Screwing in a light-bulb is important; screwing in a new federal policy to deal with climate change is crucial**, especially if we’re ever going to regain enough credibility to help lead the world toward a stable climate. November 3 will be a powerful day, and you can play a vital role. **Go to www.sierraclub.org/stepitup to start or join an action**—and thank you so much for caring enough to be a leader yourself.





Global Warming Win

continued from page 3

emissions from cars by 30 percent when fully implemented in 2016. This case was a watershed moment in the legal battle over the California Standards and will undoubtedly have an important impact on similar cases pending in California and Rhode Island. The California case raises the same challenges to the identical California law. Environmental groups said the Vermont ruling shows there is no need for a trial in the California case and that the suit should be dismissed. A hearing is scheduled in Fresno on October 22.

"This decision should put the nail in the coffin of the failed arguments of the auto industry," said Sierra Club attorney David Bookbinder. "In this trial they used every tired argument about safety, job losses, lack of technology, and doubts about the science of global warming that they had—the same things they have been saying to the public and to Congress for decades. We have long known these arguments were not true, and Judge Sessions' ruling indicates that he did not believe them either. His ruling is rock-solid and based squarely on the facts—setting up a difficult legal situation for the automakers should they appeal this case.

"Instead of the automakers thinking of excuses, it's time for them to put their immense know-how toward solving some of our most pressing problems. This ruling will compel the U.S. automakers to make the kind of clean, efficient cars Americans want—the kind that foreign automakers have used to surge to record profits as the U.S. auto industry buckled under the weight of its gas guzzlers. This ruling is good for the environment, good for America, and, ultimately, good for the automakers."

"The victory means that states can now move forward with the kind of bold, visionary action necessary to protect their citizens if we are to prevent the most catastrophic effects of global warming. Along with the continued success of the Sierra Club's Cool Cities campaign (almost 700 cities have now pledged to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions), it shows that we don't have to wait for the federal government to finally take action."

For two years, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has been considering California's request for a waiver that would allow the state to enforce its emissions law, which is more stringent than federal standards. While the importance of the Vermont victory can't be overstated, the laws in California, Vermont and 10 other states that have followed the California model will become unenforceable if the EPA denies California a waiver allowing the state to impose controls on air pollutants that are more strict than the federal government's. It's time for the Bush Administration's EPA to get out of the way and grant California the waiver it and other states need in order to move forward with these landmark standards. Congress should also take note of this momentous decision and give great weight to the judge's important findings regarding the automakers' claims as it weighs its own action in this area.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has threatened to sue the EPA if it doesn't act on the California waiver by October 25.

"Today, we won in court, and yet the victory will be a hollow one if EPA succeeds in stalling and ultimately denying our request," said California Attorney General Jerry Brown, who argued California's case to the federal agency earlier this summer.



Welcome to our Open House

at the new headquarters of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club

Please join your chapter leaders and fellow volunteers for an afternoon get-together at 547-B Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, Sunday, October 14, 2007, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Meet our Chapter Director, Chapter Chair, Outings Leaders, members of the executive committee, committee chairs, Empower Poly Coalition leaders, and our student interns.

See where the *Santa Lucian* is produced and where many of our activities are planned. Learn about our ongoing local and national environmental campaigns: Smart Energy Solutions, Building Healthy Communities, and preserving America's Wild Legacy.

Share a little wine, cheese and music. Enjoy the beautiful gardens and charming "carriage house" at our new location adjoining the historic Ketzal house, opposite the Jack House on Marsh Street.

Take pride in your Sierra Club membership. (If it isn't current, we'll help you bring it up to date.) Show your support of the Santa Lucia chapter by attending this special event.

Letters

send to: sierraclub8@gmail.com, or P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. Letters may be edited for space.

Since my birth our planet has added 5,000,000,000 more people -- a massive people glut. The Sierra Club deals very well with enviro-issues but I find little mention of the enviro-degradation caused by the "people glut." The Audubon Society has a very active population section -- why doesn't the Sierra Club?

Bill Denneen
Nipomo

Good news, Bill: Sierra Club recognizes that all of our environmental successes may be short-lived if they do not in-

clude efforts to address population growth. Our Global Population and Environment Program is dedicated to protecting the global environment and preserving natural resources for future generations by advancing global reproductive health and sustainable development initiatives. Working with domestic and international coalition partners, the program seeks to increase universal access to voluntary family planning services and comprehensive sex education; advance women's and girls' basic rights, including access to health care, education and economic opportunity; promote youth leadership; and raise

public awareness of wasteful resource consumption in the context of social and economic equity.

The program's objectives are:

- Make the Population-Environment Connection
- Promote Voluntary Family Planning Around the World and in the U.S.
- Advance Sustainable Development Solutions that Address Poverty and Gender Inequity
- Empower Youth, and
- Curb Our Ecological Footprint.

Check it out at www.sierraclub.org/population/

Reflections on an Uncelebrated Anniversary

By David Weisman, Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility

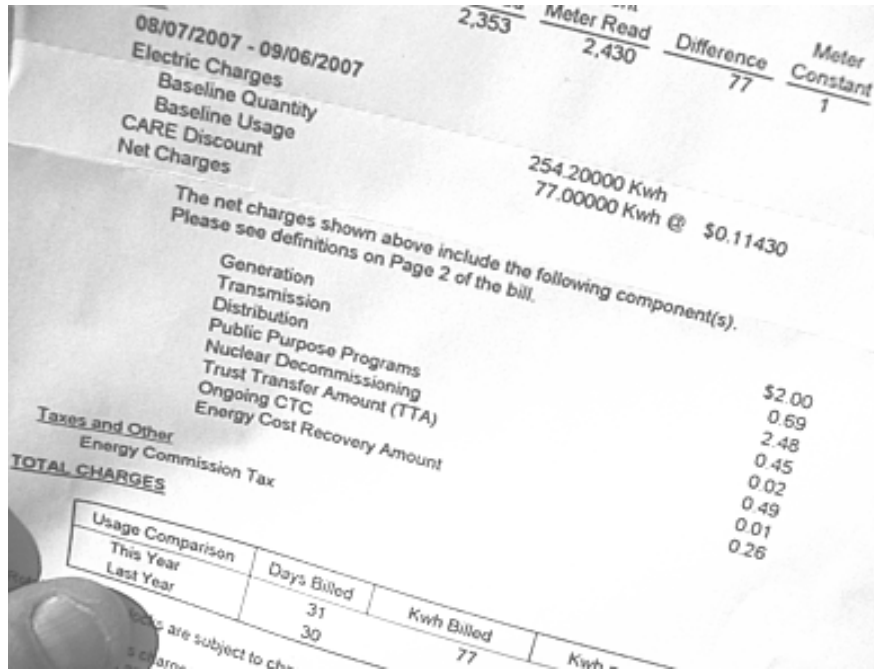
“Too cheap to meter”—I practically whistled this jaunty refrain from the post-war era, as I sat with checkbook and pen, paying my monthly electric bill last September 16. Full disclosure: I am single, live in a small house and don’t have an air conditioner, so my bill isn’t *that* expensive.

However, I live eleven miles from a nuclear reactor, and as I wrote this check it was with some irony I noted the date, and recalled this little celebrated but often referenced landmark in the history of nuclear power. On September 16, 1954, Lewis L. Strauss, chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission uttered those famous words in a speech before the National Association of Science Writers: “It is not too much to expect that our children will enjoy in their homes electrical energy *too cheap to meter*....” He went on to mention many other hopes, like the ability of our children to “...travel effortlessly over the seas and under them and through the air with a minimum of danger and at great speeds....” Happily, fifty years after Charles Lindbergh pattered across the Atlantic on a wing and a prayer, humans had visited the moon and a Parisian can—for a reasonable price—leave Paris after breakfast and be in New York for lunch. Fifty years ago, a computer equal to the laptop on which I type this would have required a building the size of Home Depot. These technologies have evolved into their promised hopes. Sadly, this has not been the case for nuclear power.

“Too cheap to meter?” How can it be, when cost over-runs have been the rule at nuclear plants? In California alone, Diablo Canyon and San Onofre ended up costing nearly 10 times their original estimates—mostly due to errors in planning and construction. Is the situation any better with today’s “newer” generation of reactors? Not in Finland, where the French company Areva is already two years and \$1 billion over budget on the newest reactor—faced with flaws in the foundations and concrete mixtures, safeguards that could never be left to chance on California’s seismic landscape.

What other promises has the nuclear industry failed to deliver? How about an answer to the problem of high-level radioactive waste? Currently, 77,000 tons of it—with components needing to be shielded from the environment for a quarter of a million years—is lining our rivers and shores. For decades, residents have been promised that the waste would be taken “somewhere” or treated with “some” process, none of which have materialized for reasons both scientific and political. That’s why California passed its nuclear safeguards act in 1976 stating that no new reactors could be built in the state until a demonstrated and approved method for disposing of the radioactive waste was at hand.

It’s an intractable problem, but not one that seems to have stopped a state assembly member from submitting a ballot initiative to overturn California’s moratorium on new nuclear power. Though the initiative is masquerading cleverly as an answer to global warming, California’s Attorney General saw through this charade, and titled the initiative what it really is: REMOVAL OF PROHIBITIONS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS. What will this cost Californians? A little further into the Attorney General’s fiscal analysis, we find the potential



impact of this initiative:

Potential, unknown financial exposure to the state in the long term, potentially in the millions of dollars in environmental cleanup costs at each new nuclear power plant site, and potentially in the billions of dollars in the event of a major radioactive release.

“Too cheap to meter?” Well, let’s find out. In 2006, the state legislature overwhelmingly passed AB 1632 (Blakeslee) which mandated our state’s California Energy Commission (CEC) to do the first ever top-to-bottom full cost/risk/benefit analysis of nuclear power and determine whether it is in the state’s best fiscal interest to continue to rely on our aging nuclear power plants. The study is under way, and taxpayers should let their assembly members know they support this prudent and far-sighted study.

And while I’m sealing the envelope on my electric bill, there are a few other letters I’m putting in the mail. I’m letting my U.S. senators know that I oppose the current federal energy bill, which includes \$50 billion dollars in 100 percent loan guarantees for the nuclear industry. I’m also going to let the California Energy Commission know about some cost concerns I have for inclusion in their study, including evacuation and rebuilding expenses, should something go wrong. Readers can visit the web site for the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, www.a4nr.org, a clearinghouse for more information and action letters on this subject.

The nuclear power industry has had over half a century to compete in our free market, and has failed to do so in spite of massive government subsidies—subsidies that dwarf the amounts doled out to the renewable energy sector. In fact, had *that* kind of money been put into solar and wind research, we’d have a working renewable energy system today—without the waste, without the terror threats, without the seismic dangers. Utilities are spending a good deal of ratepayer money advertising their “clean energy” goals—but is this merely *greenwashing*, or will they put their (and our) money where their hype is? Will these alternative energies live up to their promises?

In a world of increasing problems and diminishing solutions, we’ll never know if we don’t allow them to compete on a fair and level playing field.

Of this much I am sure: Through my

kitchen window, the sun is shining; the wind is rustling the blinds. I can feel them both, and I’m willing to give them a chance.

David Weisman is a media producer and the outreach coordinator for The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility, PO Box 1328, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. (805) 704-1810. davidweisman@charter.net

Becker Wins Sierra Club National Award

San Luis Obispo’s Rochelle Becker has joined a former vice president, a *New York Times* reporter, and a California Assemblyman and Congressman who have helped raise awareness of global warming as a recipient of the Sierra Club’s 2007 environmental awards. The awards were given out at the Sierra Club’s Annual Dinner in San Francisco on September 29.

One of 24 recipients of awards in various categories of service to the environment, Becker received the Environmental Alliance Award in recognition of her work in raising awareness of issues related to nuclear power. The Chair of the Diablo Canyon Task Force for the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, Becker has dedicated herself to nuclear power issues for three decades, most of that time as a leader of San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace. She founded the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility in January 2005, and was named to the Sierra Club’s national Radiation Committee in 2006.

“With nuclear energy being peddled by the industry as a false panacea for global warming, the work of the Club and its allies on this issue has never been more critical,” said Becker. “Replacing nuclear power plants with renewable domestic energy sources and redirecting nuclear subsidies to energy efficiency and new technologies is part of the investment in a smart energy policy. I am honored to be receiving this award, and look forward to working with my colleagues on this issue in the crucial months ahead.”

Honored along with

Solar Tour

continued from page 5

This tour and the alternative transportation is the outgrowth of a partnership among the San Luis Sustainability Group, Air Pollution Control District, Pacific Energy Co., REC Solar, Cal Poly, Mothers for Peace, and, of course, the generous hospitality of the owners opening their doors for us.

All proceeds will be donated to the Mothers for Peace Educational Scholarship Fund, which every year gives two scholarships to a high school senior and a college student who have shown leadership in environmental issues.

Tickets are for a seat reservation at a specific departure time. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students and can be purchased through Elaine Holder, 541-6310, e-mail bastien54@earthlink.net; Evy Justesen, 546-8907, e-mail evyjust@gmail.com; and Pacific Energy Co., 2121 Santa Barbara Street, San Luis Obispo, 544-4700. You will need to contact one of the above to confirm that your preference of time is still available. Your ticket will be mailed to you upon receiving your check. At Pacific Energy you can go in person and buy the ticket. Departures are at 12:00, 12:30, 1:00, 1:30 and 2:00 p.m. Vans leaving after 2:00 will be added as needed.

We know that it is a bit more complicated than in the past, but the energy savings from using group transportation makes up for this. Besides, this way you will have a group to share ideas with and a docent to answer questions as you travel!

Becker was former Vice President Al Gore, who has spent 30 years making the world aware of the dangers of global warming and received the Sierra Club’s top honor, the John Muir Award. Tom Friedman, foreign affairs columnist for the *New York Times*, received the David R. Brower Award, which recognizes a professional journalist for stories pertaining to the environment. Fabian Núñez, speaker of the California Assembly, received the club’s Distinguished Achievement Award for pushing through the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, the strongest measure ever enacted in the United States to curb global warming. California Congressman Mike Thompson, who represents the first congressional district, received the club’s Edgar Wayburn Award. Thompson helped pass legislation last year that guaranteed protection for 431 square miles of wilderness in Northern California.

For more information on the Sierra Club awards program, visit www.sierraclub.org/awards.



Rochelle Becker

Energy Conference

continued from page 1

make tax incentives available for longer periods," he said, noting that Germany is adding 600mW of solar power every year due to their enlightened government policies that make renewables attractive to producers and consumers.

California enacted its Renewable Portfolio Standard law (SB 1078) in 2002, with the object of progressively decreasing our dependency on fossil fuel while increasing our use of renewables to meet current demands for electricity. California's current goal is to generate 20% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2010, and 33% by 2020.

A key strategy for accomplishing this goal is Community Choice Aggregation, in which municipalities band together to buy, generate and sell their own electricity while partnering with the investor-owned utilities for distribution and billing.

Fifteen cities and counties in California are exploring ways of doing this. We heard at the conference how, by implementing a CCA program, Marin County plans to meet half its demand for local power from renewable sources in ten years -- while meeting or beating current utility rates and managing risk and price volatility better than current supply portfolios.

"CCA is the most promising thing we have in Marin to really increase our use of renewables," said Alex Hinds, Marin County's Community Development Director, and former SLO County Planning Director.

Conservation & Efficiency

At the heart of energy conservation is energy efficiency: the techniques and processes used to reduce energy demand and carbon emissions. Common

examples include efficient lighting, heating and cooling systems, fuel-efficient transportation systems, and energy management.

The average cost of energy efficiency programs is about half the cost of generating base-load electricity: a dollar invested in energy efficiency yields twice the kilowatt-hour benefit of a dollar invested in energy generation. Energy efficiency programs are also the cornerstone of California's efforts to reduce carbon emissions. California's energy efficiency programs have been principally responsible for the 30 percent decrease in per-capita emissions since 1975.

Energy conservation and energy efficiency support economic development and create jobs by lowering energy costs, which allows businesses and households to make greater investments in non-energy goods, equipment and services, and reduces the outflow of money spent on imported energy supplies.

Green Building

Thus is the practice of designing and constructing buildings that meet prescribed standards for energy efficiency, indoor air quality and resource conservation. Buildings are our biggest drain on energy, consuming half the energy in our country, compared to transportation, which consumes roughly one third of our energy.

While the environmental and human health benefits of green building are widely recognized, much of the green construction going on today is being driven by economics in the construction of commercial buildings. These economics were studied in a report

submitted in 2003 to California's Sustainable Building Task Force, a group of more than 40 state government agencies. The principal finding of the report was that minimal increases in upfront costs of about 2% to support green design would, on average, result in life-cycle savings of 20% of total construction costs: more than 10 times the

Such growth in our state and in our region will severely tax already constrained energy resources and the associated infrastructure, and challenge our ability as local governments to provide the energy that new communities, schools, industry, and other workplaces will require. This rapidly advancing scenario shines a spotlight on a relationship that, until now, has received little attention: the profound impact of land-use decisions on every aspect of energy and how these choices, in turn, affect California's ability to achieve its statewide energy goals.

In its 2006 year-end "Integrated Energy Policy Report Update," the California Energy Commission devoted a full chapter to statewide deficiencies in land-use and transportation planning relative to energy. It found:

"To date, land-use planning has not incorporated energy considerations to any significant extent. In fact, the planning for land use has been essentially independent of the planning and delivery of energy."

At the Leadership Roundtable wrapping up the meeting after lunch on August 24, Arroyo Grande Mayor Tony Ferrara challenged his fellow mayors to continue meeting regularly to advance the above ideas and meet the challenges of regional energy planning.

The conference was organized by the Strategic Energy Alliance for Change (SEA Change), which is comprised of Central Coast business interests, environmental groups, the Cal Poly College of Architecture and the County Air Pollution Control District. Collectively, we are dedicated to promoting public awareness and best practices in the conservation, generation, distribution and use of energy.

initial investment. In other words, an initial upfront investment of up to \$100,000 to incorporate green building features into a \$5 million project would result in savings of \$1 million in today's dollars over the life of the building.



SLO County Senior Planner James Caruso (standing) moderated "Overcoming Barriers to Smart Growth: Political, Educational and Community-Based Solutions" at the regional energy conference.

Watch the Conference at www.slo-span.org
"Central Coast SEA Regional Energy Planning Conference"
August 23, 2007 - August 24, 2007

The 2030 Challenge asks us to adopt public policies and best practices that will move us incrementally toward the construction of zero-energy, carbon-neutral buildings by the year 2030. California's Title 24 energy-efficiency calculation for construction gives us a 30% head start over other states toward meeting the 2030 Challenge goal. Within SLO County, every municipality has agreed to support a green-building program based on incentives and voluntary compliance.

Land Use & Smart Growth

California's population is projected by some experts to grow by 20 million people during the first half of this cen-



Santa Lucia Chapter Chair Karen Merriam conducts a final check of the buffet table at Chapter h.q. for the reception the night before the conference.

Cambria

continued from page 1

cross complaint, and outside legal firms. They talked about serving subpoenas on citizens who dared to criticize the project in public hearings (a threat the necessity of which a board member defended as similar to "investigating a terrorist"), and throughout, the board loudly blamed the Coastal Commission for the mounting costs and delays.

In the end, the CCSD designed and built the tanks the way the Coastal Commission told them to in order to comply with the Coastal Act.

Burton noted that the desal decision was a win for the statewide Organization of Regional Coastal Activists (ORCA). "Besides SLO ORCA lobbying on our behalf, the Orange County, San Diego and Mendocino County groups all lobbied as well. There were several well thought-out letters as well, one from CoastKeeper Gordon Hensley and another from Mendocino Marine Life Conservancy in Mendocino. This effort proves that numbers count and that collectively we have power over the \$\$\$ that the developers seem to have no shortage of."

CCSD board chairman and real estate lawyer Greg Sanders is a partner in the law firm Nossaman Guthner Knox & Elliott. On its website, his firm boasts of its ability to "overcome the raft of legal, environmental and political obstacles that stand in the way of development" and successfully defend "development projects against environmental challenges."

Maybe not so much. Not that we're complaining: Our appeals of both the ESHA-killer super-tanks and the doomed desal tests helped secure the review of those projects by the Coastal Commission, which in both cases did its duty and protected the coast. But haunting questions persist: Why not design the water tanks correctly in the first place? Why spend years on securing permits for a desal test project at a site where you know you will not be allowed to build a desal plant? Does the CCSD board know what its doing?

We leave those questions to Cambria's voters. (And we note that, as might be predicted from the above-described behavior, the District is seeking a rehearing of the desal project by the Coastal Commission.) Meanwhile, other central coast communities considering desal as a silver bullet for their water woes should be taking a reflective pause. The question before them: Is an extremely expensive, energy-intensive technology for drawing usable water from the sea, a technology that has never performed as advertised wherever it has been attempted at full scale anywhere in this country, really the best way to go?

This is a teachable moment. Cambria's setback and seeming predicament is an opportunity for realistic assessment of the most urgent questions in the county: How much water do we need? How much water are we wasting? How much can we reclaim and re-use? Is there a better way?

We'll gladly participate in that dialog, and we'll be happy to help get it started before more ratepayer dollars get washed out to sea.

SLO Gardners' Seed Exchange

Hear Barbara Spencer of Windrose Farms on *Saving Seeds*.

Monday, October 22, 7-9 p.m., in the SLO City/County Library Community Room
 Bring your seeds and seedlings to exchange with other gardeners!

Thanks to sponsors: SLO Parks & Recreation, Cal Poly's SARC, Nature's Touch Nursery & Harvest, ECOSLO, and Hope Dance. Information: 543-5364.



Classifieds

June issue ad deadline is **Sept. 14**.
To acquire a rate sheet or submit
your ad and payment, contact:
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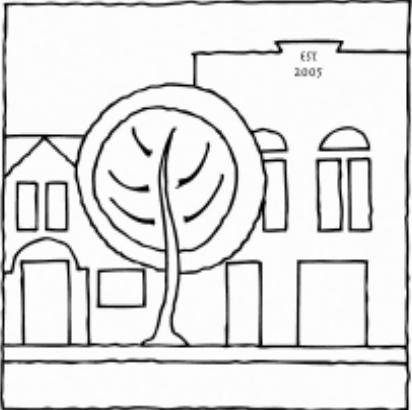
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ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Local Government Meetings

- City of SLO--1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 781-7103
- Arroyo Grande--2nd and 4th Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 473-5404
- Atascadero--2nd & 4th Tues.; 466-8099
- Cambria CSD -- 4th Thurs.; 927-6223
- Grover Beach--1st & 3rd Mon., 6:30 p.m.; 473-4567
- Grover Beach Planning Commission-- 2nd Tues.
- Morro Bay--2nd & 4th Mon.
- Paso Robles--1st & 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m.; 237-3888
- Pismo Beach--1st Tues., 5:30 p.m.; 773-4657
- Los Osos CSD board-- 1st Tues. & 2nd Mon., varies
- California Coastal Commission-- 3rd Tues., varies
- SLO County Board of Supervisors-- every Tues.; 781-5450
- SLO Council of Governments; 781-4219
- SLOCOG Citizens Advisory Committee-- 1st Wed. every other month, 6:00 p.m.
- SLOCOG Board--1st Wed. every other month, 8:30 a.m.

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-Beverly Engel, M.F.T., psychotherapist
and author of *Breaking the Cycle of Abuse*

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- 10/15, 7p.m.: Catching Out
- 10/19, 24, 7p.m.: Ten Questions for the Dalai Lama
- 10/27, 2-7p.m.: HopeDance 10th Anniversary Party
- 10/30: An evening with Van Jones

HopeDance

All films at SLO Library. Schedule subject to change. For trailers, info, reviews, go to www.hopedance.org

Outings and Activities Calendar

All of our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter's outing policies or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Leader Gary Felsman (473-3694). For information on a specific outing, please contact the outing leader. Outings Leaders please get your outings or events in by the 1st for the next month's outings.

Hiking Classifications:

Distance: 1 = 0-2 mi., 2 = 3-5 mi., 3 = 6-9 mi., 4 = 10-12 mi., 5 = 12 mi. or more.

Elevation Gain: A = 500', B = 1000', C = 1500', D = 2000', E = 2500', F = 3000' or more.

Wed., October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31(?), 5:30 p.m. Informal Hikes around SLO. Typically 2 hours or so. Details call 473-3694 or e-mail Gary Felsman for location.

Sat.-Mon. Oct 6-7 Service Trip in the El Paso Wilderness (South of Ridgecrest, CA). Help install tortoise ramps in two guzzlers. Desert tortoise can become trapped in these watering spots; ramps will enable them to drink and to get out safely. BLM will supply ramps and tools. Two and a half mile hike on Saturday to work site, carrying tools. Visit to interesting archeological site along the way. Sunday, shorter hike to work site, visit to historic area afterwards. BLM Wilderness Coordinator Marty Dickes will direct the installation efforts. Car camp Friday and Saturday nights. Happy hour and potluck dinner Saturday night. Ldr: Kate Allen 661-944-4056, kjallen@qnet.com

Sat., Oct. 6, 7:30 a.m. Prewitt Creek Loop Exploratory Hike. Come join us on this challenging trek that many of us have wanted to do in its entirety, but have only done portions of. This will be an all day walk of about 12 miles and at least 2,400 ft. of elevation gain. There is always the possibility of a shorter hike if you want to go part way. An early start will give us time to go at a slower pace and take advantage of the daylight. There will be unavoidable poison oak. The trail is indistinct at the farthest points from the road. Bring the usual gear

for a hike plus a flashlight or headlamp if we get out late. It is recommended that you camp at Plaskett Creek or Kirk Creek Campgrounds the night before. We will start at the south trailhead at the Pacific Valley C.D.F. station which is a mile north of Plaskett Creek Campground. For any additional info call Carlos at 546-0317.

OCT. 7, 0930, Sun. BLACK LAKE CANYON: Meet at junction of Leguna Negra & Guadalupe Rd to hike into canyon seeing erosion, euke forest and Coast Live Oak habitat, poison oak and Xenon Way. Call 929-3647 or <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before to confirm and for details.

Sat.-Mon., October 13-15, Carrizo Plains Service Trip: Explore and Serve in the Carrizo Plains National Monument: Pronghorn antelope will not jump fences to escape predators but rather attempt to crawl under. Our service on Saturday will modify several sections of fence to facilitate this mobility. Sunday will be, at the choice of the group, either a hike in the Caliente Range or else a tour of popular viewing areas in the plains. Those who can stay on Monday will continue assisting in fence modification. This is an opportunity to combine carcamping, day hiking, exploring, and service in a relatively unknown wilderness. Contact Ldr: Craig Deutsche, (310-477-6670), deutsche@earthlink.net CNRCC Desert Com

OCT. 14, 0930, Sun., BIKE WOODLANDS. A bicycle tour of the "instant city" with many stops. Meet at junction of Willow Rd. & Albert Way. Must wear helmet. On bikes we can go on golf cart trails with many stops—very easy ride. Call 929-3647 or <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before to confirm and for details.

Sat., Oct. 20. 8:00 a.m. Cruikshank Trail to Lion Den Camp. Join the leader on this moderately strenuous hike to Lion Den. The hike is a 12 mile round trip with about 2700 ft. of elevation gain. Fall is a great time for this hike in southern Big Sur. We will hike up to Upper Cruikshank Camp which is the site of an old homestead. From there we head east to Silver Camp, the rocky outcropping, and ultimately Lion Den. There is a possibility of poison oak and ticks. Bring plenty of water, lunch, snacks, and dress for the weather. Meet at the Washburn day use area just north of Cambria on Highway 1. There is an optional refueling stop at Main Street Grill in Cambria after the hike. For info, call Chuck at 441-7597

Sat., October 20, Tamarisk Removal in the Santa Rosa Wilderness: Work with the BLM to help clear Devil's

Canyon of this invasive plant. Meet 8 AM in Indio, at the Mobil Station at the corner of Highway 111 and Jefferson St. Caravan to Boo Hoff trailhead and hike 2 miles to the work site. We will cut down the tamarisk with loppers and hand saws, then herbicide will be applied to prevent resprouting. Chance to see Native American rock art and native fan palms along the moderate hiking trail. Ldr: Ralph Salisbury, ralphsalisbury@charter.net (preferred) or 951-686-4141. Day of outing use 951-522-2993. San Gorgonio Chapter/CNRCC Desert Committee

Sat., October 20, Equestrian Trail Hike - Joshua Tree National Park:

People say the best way to keep a secret is to publish it. Here goes: this is a breezy five or six-mile hike on a seldom-used horse trail in a very scenic and seldom used area of the park. Bring a couple of quarts of water and a lunch, wear comfortable boots and maybe a camera. Being as I'm writing this in July I have no idea of what the weather will be in late October. We will discuss clothing when you call. Moderate to difficult. See you there! Al and Ann Murdy (760)366-2932 or aemurdy@eee.org

Sat.-Sun., October 20-21, Wild and Scenic Amargosa: We will travel by car and foot to visit a number of sites in the Tecopa/Shoshone area immediately south of Death Valley: fossil sites, rock alignments, mining relics, pioneer graves, and the outstanding riparian area along the Amargosa River. We meet in Baker and will conclude in Shoshone. Saturday evening will be a car camp with a potluck dinner and campfire. One of the local residents will talk with us about the past and future of this historic area. High clearance 2WD sufficient. Group limit, 12 persons, Contact leader Craig Deutsche (310-477-6670), deutsche@earthlink.net CNRCC Desert Com.

Sat.-Sun., October 20-21, Ghost Town Extravaganza. Come with us to this spectacular desert landscape near Death Valley to explore the ruins of California's colorful past. Camp at the historic ghost town of Ballarat (flush toilets & hot showers). On Sat, do a challenging hike to ghost town Lookout City with expert Hal Fowler who will regale us with tales of this wild west town. Later we'll return to camp for Happy Hour, a potluck feast and campfire. On Sun, a quick visit to the infamous Riley town site before heading home. Group size strictly limited. Send \$8 per person (Sierra Club), 2 sase, H&W phones, email, rideshare info to Ldr: Lygeia Gerard, P.O. Box 294726, Phelan, CA 92329; (760) 868-0979. CNRCC/Desert Committee.



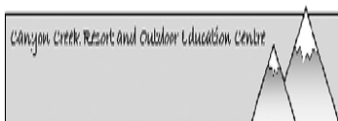
Photo by Joaquin Palting

Sat., October 21, 0930, Bike tour of Nipomo. See Nipomo on an easy bike ride with many stops. We'll probably stop at Nipomo Native Garden and a new special bikeway. Meet at Nipomo Library. A great way to spend a Sun AM. Kids welcome. Call 929-3647 or <bdenneen@kcbx.net> a few days before to confirm and for details.

Sat., November 3rd, 8:00 am, Hazard Peak Trail - Montana de Oro. Come help California State Parks and the CCCMB. Maintain trails in Montana de Oro State Park. Meet at Camp Keep across from Hazard Canyon Parking lot, MDO SP.

Sat., November 10th, 8 a.m. Tentative - Big Sur Coastal Traverse. Come take a 9 mile hike from the Cruikshank Trailhead to via Buckeye Camp the return via the Soda Springs Trailhead. There is a possibility of poison oak and ticks. Bring plenty of water, lunch, snacks, and dress for the weather. Meet at the Washburn day use area just north of Cambria on Highway 1. There is an optional refueling stop at Main Street Grill in Cambria after the hike. For info, call Gary @ 473-3694. Rain or threat of rain cancels.

Thanksgiving Day Hike, Thursday, November 22, 2007 10am-12pm, Black Lake Canyon, Nipomo/Arroyo Grande. Bring family and friends to start this special day with a mildly strenuous trail hike, through dunes scrub and sand. You'll be treated to a behind-the-scenes tour of a special Land Conservancy restoration site and to a relaxed hike around Black Lake. Bring water, wear comfortable shoes, layered clothing and sun protection (hat & sunscreen). Binoculars and camera are also welcomed. This event is rain or shine. Event meeting place is located on private property at intersection of Hwy 1 at Randy Lane. View location map. Carpooling is encouraged. Follow signs for parking. For more Information call 544-9096. Sponsored, by the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County.



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This is a partial listing of Outings offered by our chapter. Please check the web page www.santalucia.sierraclub.org for the most up-to-date listing of activities.