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Carolyn Livengood: Pacifica Beach Coalition to participate in Earth Day of Action

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The Pacifica Beach Coalition invites everyone to participate in an Earth Day of Action being held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 20 to "Take a Bite out of Litter" and to honor sharks.

From 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., volunteers will help with habitat restoration, gardening, and cleaning up organized sites throughout Pacifica and the Central Coast.

Afterwards, an Earth Day Festival -- open to the public -- will be enjoyed from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Linda Mar State Beach south parking lot at Cabrillo Highway and Linda Mar Boulevard.

Keynote speakers David McGuire, shark conservationist, will talk about how most shark species are threatened by finning, long line fishing, and environmental challenges and Lincoln Shaw, Sea Shepherd activist of Whale Wars fame will discuss the Shark Wars in the Galapagos Islands.

Activities include refreshments; live music by Celia Malheiros, Drifting Sand, and Matt Joffe & the Distractions; entertainment by Pacifica's own Sardine Family Circus; kids activities; and 40 booths staffed by environmental and community groups, and local businesses.

An American Cetacean Society whale walk, a Skyline College shark stroll, Segway demonstrations, plantings offered by the Pacifica Garden Club, face painting, and more will add to the fun.

To promote the use of reusable bags, a Tote Bag Exchange and Giveaway -- and an opportunity to decorate the bags - will be held at the Sanchez Art Center booth.

The City of Pacifica, County of San Mateo, North Coast Water District, Pacifica Manor Hardware and Nursery, Pacifica's Environmental Family, Pedro Point Surf Club, Recology of the Coast, and Safeway are the event's major sponsors.

"The Pacifica Beach Coalition mission is to preserve the ocean, coastal habitat and wildlife, and end litter, through advocacy, education, community building, and citizen action," said President Lynn Adams.

Be sure to wear proper clothing (closed-toe shoes, hat, and layers) and bring sunscreen and reusable cleanup supplies to reduce waste (bucket, gloves, water bottle, and more) although cleanup supplies will be available for all.

To learn more, visit Pacifica Beach Coalition at www.pacificabeachcoalition.org.

Burlingame Lions Club to hold spelling competition

The Burlingame Lions Club is holding its fifth annual All Schools Spelling Bee competition from 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday at the Lions Hall, 990 Burlingame Ave., in Burlingame. The event is free and open to the public.

The top 21 spellers from seven of Burlingame's public and Catholic elementary schools -- Franklin, Lincoln, McKinley, Our Lady of Angels, Roosevelt, St. Catherine, and Washington -- fourth and fifth grade classes will compete for the coveted Burlingame Lions Club Spelling Bee trophy.

The trophy is a perpetual award and is placed in the winning school for the entire year. Each school that participates receives a \$250 check, with the winning school earning \$400.

For more details, call Leonard Ma at 650-344-3112 or email leonardma2020@yahoo.com.

Gold Coast Cymbidium Growers to hold orchid show, sale

The Gold Coast Cymbidium Growers will hold an Orchid Show & Sale from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 20 at the Woodside Road United Methodist Church, 2000 Woodside Road (corner of Alameda de las Pulgas), in Redwood City.

Admission and parking are free for this event, which showcases hundreds of orchids from club members' private collections, including rare varieties; beautiful orchid displays; blooming orchids for sale; American Orchid Society and ribbon judging; growing and potting workshops; and a raffle.

Also, every hour, docent tours will provide visitors with expert advice on orchids and their culture.

If interested in learning how to grow orchids, attend a Gold Coast Cymbidium Growers Orchid Society meeting, which is held at 7 p.m. the third Friday of each month September through May at the San Mateo Garden Center, 605 Parkside Way (northwest side of Beresford Park), in San Mateo. May 17 is the date of the last meeting of this season until the new season begins Sept. 20.

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The meetings include a skill session at 7:15 p.m.; general meeting at 7:30 p.m.; orchid plant show and tell; presentations by experts; virus testing; plant and supply sales; cultural information; and raffle tickets.

For questions, email www.GoldCoastCymbidiumGrowers.com or call Vice President Pierre Pujol at 650-255-9012. Marron Honigman is president.

Prudential California Realty to hold paper-shredding day

To commemorate Earth Day, Prudential California Realty is hosting its seventh annual Paper Shredding Party from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 20 at the firm's back parking lot at 180 El Camino Real in San Bruno.

The event offers free shredding of your confidential documents and an opportunity to enjoy a complimentary hot dog, drink, and a bag of popcorn while watching your documents get gobbled up in one of two huge paper-shredding trucks on the premises.

Kateri Tekakwitha Fund to hold pasta dinner fundraiser

The Kateri Tekakwitha Fund invites the public to its annual Pasta Party, a spaghetti dinner fundraiser, being held from 6 to 8 p.m. April 26 at St. Peters CCD Center, 700 Oddstad Blvd. in Pacifica.

The evening will feature the spaghetti dinner catered by Cheryl Fulton, of Casual Catering; live music by Pacifica resident John Hall and the Montara Mountain Boys; a silent auction; and door prizes.

Tickets for people 13 and older are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door; tickets for children 5 to 12 years old are \$5 in advance or \$7 at the door. Children younger than 5 get in free.

For tickets in advance, call Cheryl Fulton at 650-255-0757. Tickets will be held at the door.

Kay Sweeney, managing director and also a Pacifica resident, founded Kateri Tekakwitha in 1997 when she learned that indigenous Guatemalan women needed to earn money to provide for themselves and their families. Proceeds from the dinner help provide scholarships for these women to attend school.

To learn more about the fund or to donate if unable to attend, visit www.mission-guatemala.org.

Samaritan House in San Mateo to hold Food and Nutrition Program event

Samaritan House in San Mateo will honor its Food and Nutrition Program at its 21st annual Main Event -- Feeding the Hungry in our Community -- being held from 6 to 9:30 p.m. May 11 at the San Francisco Airport Marriott Waterfront, 1800 Old Bayshore Hwy., in Burlingame.

U.S. Congresswoman Jackie Speier will be master of ceremonies of the event and State Senator Jerry Hill will conduct a live auction and a Fund-A-Need.

Fine dining, a raffle, a video produced by George Uibel, music and dancing by the Reed Fromer Band, and other surprises will also highlight the evening.

The fundraiser helps the community-supported, nonprofit organization assist more than 12,000 low-income San Mateo County residents each year. More than 2,000 volunteers help provide food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, worker resources, and counseling services -- all free of charge -- to improve lives, promote self-sufficiency, and preserve dignity.

Jennifer Fisher is the event committee chairwoman, and Joan Cassman and Robert Grassilli are co-chairs of the honorary event committee.

Tickets cost \$150 per person or \$1,500 for a table of 10 until April 30. From May 1 to May 8, tickets cost \$175 per person or \$1,750 for a table of 10. Sponsorship opportunities are also available ranging from \$1,000 to \$20,000.

For tickets, sponsorships, and questions, call Susan Kavet at 650-523-0817, email susan@samaritanhouse.com, or visit www.samaritanhouse.com.

Kiwanis Club of South San Francisco to hold 'Aloha Spirit' event

The Kiwanis Club of South San Francisco will share its "Aloha Spirit" with everyone at its annual Hawaiian Night Fundraiser that will start at 6 p.m. April 27 at the South San Francisco Scavenger Co., 500 E. Jamie Court, in South San Francisco.

Cocktails will be served at 6 p.m. followed by Hawaiian Night dinner and dancing with entertainment by the South San Francisco Hawaiian Cultural Center's Halau 'o Keiki'ali'i and disc jockey Sabrina Bortoli beginning at 7 p.m. Aloha attire is encouraged.

The evening will also include a silent auction and an exciting raffle (must be present to win).

Tickets cost \$45 per person. For tickets, make a check payable to Kiwanis Club of South San Francisco and mail to Kiwanis Club of South San Francisco, P.O. Box 292, South San Francisco, Calif., 94083 or online at www.ssfkiwanishawaiianight2013.eventbrite.com. No on-site ticket sales.

For questions, contact Lisa DeMattei at lisa.ssfkiwanis@gmail.com or call 650-588-0727.

USO Bay Area to hold golf tournament to benefit local centers

The USO Bay Area will start its Tee Off for the Troops Charity Golf Tournament at 10 a.m. May 17 at The Golf Club at Moffett Field (near Mountain View), 934 Macon Road, to benefit its three centers at San Francisco International Airport, San Jose Airport, and Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, Calif.

"For the first time in many years, the USO will host a golf tournament in the Bay Area to generate resources that will enable us to operate our centers and extend our programs to those without a USO center in their community," Jeff Herndon, center director, USO Bay Area, wrote in an email.

"In 2012, USO Bay Area served 62,000 troops and their family members -- 38,000 in our centers and nearly 24,000 through programs at various locations from Fresno to San Bruno to Redding. Multiple factors, including our Travis center being closed for renovations for over half of 2012, decreased Department of Defense funding for military family support programs, and increased deployments to the Asia and Pacific regions, dictate that we will definitely exceed that number in 2013.

- Unspecified
- Not stated
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"Providing support to more troops and their families means, plainly and simply, that we need more support from our local communities."

The individual player fee is \$200 and sponsorship levels range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Raffle prize donors are also sought. The registration deadline is May 10.

For registration, sponsorship, and raffle donations, call Jeff Herndon or Amy Eilts, programs manager, at 650-821-7615 or email usobayarea@uso.org.

Local high school students fill acting roles for Youth Government Day

Marcus Ismael, El Camino High School senior, was chosen to serve as acting mayor during the 33rd annual Youth Government Day, a cooperative, multi-day event held by South San Francisco's City Council and Unified School District.

Recognized as a model program for the State of California, it was developed by former South San Francisco Mayor Roberta Teglia and former government teacher and Assemblyman Gene Mullin.

The purpose of the program is to provide graduating seniors from local public and private schools a chance to role play their city counterparts, prepare staff reports, and run a televised mock City Council meeting so they become more familiar with the operations of local government. It also encourages future participation as City employees, elected officials, business leaders, active citizens, and informed voters.

"This is a great program," said Ismael. "I didn't know what to expect but what I have experienced so far is very rewarding. The skills and knowledge we have learned are very helpful and I hope to use them in my life."

Other El Camino High School students and the positions they held were Mikka Yamamoto, councilwoman; Andrew Crilly, city manager; Gabrielle Alcantara, city attorney; Nicole Corpuz, director of finance; Alex Garcia, fire chief; Toni Ann Sicat, library director; Shannon Zurawski, director of parks and recreation; and Keith Wong, director of information technology.

From South San Francisco High School Ryan Martin, mayor pro tem; Axl Blanco and Hamir Mahal, councilmen; Erin Lovelace, city treasurer; Winnie Chan, city clerk; Cindy Li, chief of police; Roko Smiljanic, director of economic and community development; Joe Gu, director of public works; Shara Jantoc, director of human resources; and Andrea Sanchez-Lopez, assistant to the city manager.

From Baden High School Michael Raudes, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees shop steward; from Junipero Serra High School Louis Langi, city planner; and from Mercy High School Cerena Miravalles, assistant public works director and city engineer.

The youth shadowed their counterparts for half a day, discussed their issues, and then on March 20 they went with their partners to a community lunch attended by more than 70 people at the Best Western Grosvenor Hotel in South San Francisco.

There, they were welcomed by Mayor Pedro Gonzalez, and given a brief overview of the program's history and goals by Steve Simondi, a social studies teacher who retired from El Camino High School in 2011 after a 42-year career. He also read the inspirational poem, "The Man in the Glass," written by Peter "Dale" Wimbrow Sr. in 1934.

Keynote speaker San Mateo County District Attorney Steven Wagstaffe provided insight into his role as district attorney and explained why he feels service to others is the noblest profession on the earth.

"You don't want to be a chess piece, you want to be the player," said Wagstaffe. "There hasn't been a day that I haven't been excited to go into work. When I retire, I want to feel that I never once stood in court and argued a case that I didn't believe in."

After lunch, the students returned to City Hall to complete their staff reports, with recommendations on their respective issues, which they presented and "took action" on at a mock City Council meeting on March 27.

Sustainable San Mateo County honors sustainability, green building winners

Sustainable San Mateo County honored the seven winners of its 14th annual Sustainability and Green Building Awards on March 21 at a dinner attended by 270 guests at the South San Francisco Conference Center.

The theme of the event, which was held in memory of Ruth Peterson, a longtime SSMC supporter and former board chairwoman who died last June, was Education--The Root of Sustainability.

The Sustainability Award honorees are Bruce Greenstein, environmental science professor at Skyline College in San Bruno; Sonrisas Community Dental Center in Half Moon Bay; RAFT, or Resource Area for Teaching, in Redwood City; and Recology San Mateo County in San Carlos.

The Green Building Award recipients are Education -- Lower and Middle Schools Project, Sacred Heart Schools in Atherton; Industrial -- Shoreway Environmental Center of Rethink Waste in San Carlos; and Multi-Family Housing -- 636 El Camino Real of MidPen Housing in South San Francisco.

Also, Rosalyn Koo, who served on the Sustainable board of directors from 2006 to 2012 and was a vital part of its development during the years as well as a close friend of Peterson, is the first recipient of the inaugural Ruth Peterson Award. The award is given at the discretion of the board of directors to an individual who has contributed significantly to the mission of Sustainable San Mateo County.

Shelly Masur, president, Redwood City School Board, was master of ceremonies of the event, which also featured a reception, a video highlighting the accomplishments of each winner, a silent auction, and a live auction conducted by state Senator Jerry Hill.

Pacific Gas & Electric Company was the event's global sponsor. Visit www.sustainablesanmateo.org/awards for the full list of sponsors, award winner videos, and more.

If you have any news tips about our county communities, call or fax Carolyn Livengood at 650-355-5533 or e-mail her at carolynlivengood@sanbrunocable.com.