



*The news and more for rural West Sonoma County*

## **WEST COUNTY BUZZ**

By Elisabeth Parker for the *Russian River Monthly*, April, 2009

**Too Good to Be True ...** On Apr. 1, 2009, Sonoma County Controller Rod Dole and the Board of Supervisors held a 9:00 a.m. press conference in front of the Employment Development Department (EDD) building in Santa Rosa to announce a moratorium on property taxes.

"Tough times call for tough choices." Dole proclaimed tearfully before a cheering throng of recently laid-off citizens filing unemployment claims. "Budget deficits have forced Sonoma County to cut back on tax collection services. For this, I deeply apologize from the bottom of my tiny, cold heart."

5th district supervisor Efren Carrillo elaborated, "My West County constituents demand innovative and cost-effective solutions to the complex economic and environmental challenges we face."

**April Fool!** Alas, the County expects local residents to file and pay their taxes as usual.

**There are three kinds of people: Those who can count, and those who can't.** Speaking of our tax dollars at work, nine local residents (who apparently believe themselves able to count) showed up at the Guerneville Library at 11:00 a.m. on March 3<sup>rd</sup> to apply for \$20 per hour jobs with the U.S. 2010 Census. These temporary positions require employees to go door to door and conduct interviews with anyone who happens to be home and isn't brandishing a weapon.

First, Recruiter Robert Mitchell gave an overview of the job requirements and hiring process, then he passed out the rather lengthy application forms, which asked questions like whether applicants have served time in jail or held elective office (the former should apply for banking jobs). Catherine Young, a public relations consultant and member of the Russian River Redevelopment Oversight Committee (RRROC) asked, "Should I check 'Yes' here?" (for holding elective office, not serving time in jail). Alas, even Mitchell felt uncertain about whether serving on RRROC officially counts as holding an "elective office".

Qualifications for census takers include a working vehicle, valid driver's license, high scores on the 30-minute test, and the ability to correctly fill out copious quantities of forms. According to the [www.2010Census.gov](http://www.2010Census.gov) Web site, the Federal Government uses information gathered from households to allocate spending on public projects like roads, schools, public safety, parks, and housing. According to Mitchell, job-seekers with the highest test scores will be notified by the end of April. Since Young scored 98 out of a possible 100 on the 30-minute, 28-question test, she'll probably land one of these coveted jobs.<sup>1</sup>

**Exit, stage left ...** At least one person won't be home when Young knocks on his door. Long-time resident John DeSalvio, who many folks regard as the suave and cheerful "Mayor of Guerneville." will soon leave us after 28 years on the River. DeSalvio has served our community in various functions, including a recent stint on RRROC. He was also among the original founders of this publication when it launched 12 years ago, and continues contributing as managing editor, designer, and advertising sales representative.

**I Left My Heart in ... Downtown Burbank?** DeSalvio happily explains that he's moving to Burbank, CA to join his boyfriend, Ross, and to pursue a new career in screenwriting, playwriting, and doing voice-overs. "I'm working with a few people on various projects," notes DeSalvio, but can't reveal anything more due to those pesky non-disclosure agreements. Friends can bid DeSalvio farewell at his 68<sup>th</sup> birthday bash on May 8<sup>th</sup> at Main Street Station in downtown Guerneville. For a modest cover charge of \$5.00, the evening's entertainment features DeSalvio singing pop standards and Broadway show tunes, and performances from other local talent including Kit Mariah and Lois Pearlman.

**Outdoor Barbecue, rain or shine ...** Apparently, Vesta Copestakes of Forestville isn't the only Russian River resident who revels in rain. On Saturday March 21, about 20 neighbors in Rio Nido gathered at Bruno Farnocchia Memorial Park at 4:00 p.m. for a potluck, barbecue and marshmallow roast in the pouring rain! Thanks to the tarps, which Domenic Farnocchia (the deceased Bruno's grandson) and Matt Bedford cleverly hung from trees prior to the event, the majority of celebrants stayed reasonably dry. Notable exceptions consisted of local children, who – fueled with immense quantities of sugar after consuming burnt marshmallows, chocolate and graham crackers – frolicked around the adjacent playground and shallow creek. "This is fun. We definitely needed to do this," concluded Farnocchia.

**Blast from the past:** Here on the Russian River, even our water agency's utilitarian booster station (which pumps our water supply uphill) in Guerneville Park has a colorful past. When asked why locals call the booster station "Handy Andy's", Sweetwater Springs Board Member Gaylord Schapp explained, "A handy man named Andy used to live there for years, above George's Hideaway. He was a

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<sup>1</sup> Alas, she DIDN'T get one of the census jobs. It turns out that veterans are given preferential treatment and start out with an extra 10 points, for a potential perfect score of 110.

colorful character with lots of kids.” Since then, a fire destroyed the house. Handy Andy was also a popular toy tool kit from the 1950’s, which now fetches \$69.99 and up on eBay. Later, “Handy Andy” evolved into a slang expression for poor or generic workmanship, similar to today’s “Home Depot Nouveau”.