



BASS LAKE BULLETIN

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Don't let this be your house!

BLAC HEARS TALK ON FIRE SAFETY

The guest speaker for the May BLAC meeting was Brad Ballinger, Division Chief and Fire Marshall, El Dorado Hills Fire District. Brad has worked with the El Dorado Fire District since 1988. In his presentation he discussed fire extinguishers, carbon monoxide alarms, and generally safeguarding our lives and property from fire.

According to Brad, the most common house fires are caused by ovens, cook tops, dryers, dishwashers (rarely), and automobile in garages. He said that all combustible material should be kept at least three feet away from the stove or cook top. Also, improper disposal of hot ashes from a fireplace can ignite a trashcan sitting next to the house, which then spreads to the house.

Fire Extinguishers

Brad suggested keeping fire extinguishers in the kitchen and in the garage. He said that one should hang a fire extinguisher between the possible sources of fire (ovens, etc.) and the exit (a door to the outside). Of course, when it comes to fire extinguishers "the bigger the better." There is no legal requirement to regularly service home fire extinguishers, though businesses are required to have theirs checked every year.

He explained that a fire extinguisher contains fire-fighting dry chemicals in a powdery form that can get packed down over time. He suggested that homeowners flip their fire extinguishers around periodically so as to keep the powder loose inside.

You should also check the gauge to insure that it is in the green, and replace your fire extinguishers every five years.

In case of a fire when two people are at home, one should call 911 from the home phone while the other person fights the fire. Calling 911 on a cell phone results in a longer wait to be connected with the fire department.

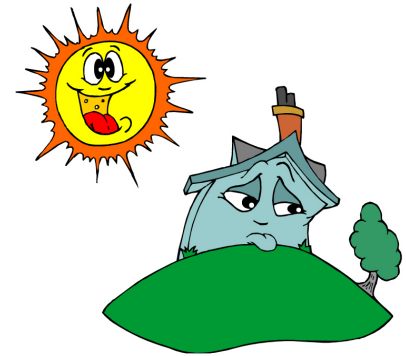
Brad suggested developing a home fire plan. For example, everyone should know how to shut off the electricity and the gas, where the family should assemble in case of a fire, and have a plan for two ways out of every room in the house. He advised against operating ovens, clothes dryers, clothes washers, or dishwashers when you are not at home.

Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Detectors

Regarding carbon monoxide detectors, Brad said that they should be installed between the problem (a stove or a gas fireplace, for example) and each separate sleeping area. Single-family home owners are required to install carbon monoxide detectors in their homes as of July 1, 2011. The County will not inspect homes to see if this has been done, but if any home improvements are made that require a permit, the County will require the homeowner to bring their house up to the new standard. Since air and carbon monoxide mix easily and are about the same density, the height of the alarm is not critical, but homeowners should follow the manufacturer's instructions. Brad suggested not placing smoke or carbon monoxide alarms in the garage because of the good chance of inadvertently setting them off.

Both smoke and carbon monoxide alarms work around the clock and should be replaced every 10 years, because by then their ability to operate properly drops to about sixty percent efficiency. There are two types of smoke detectors: ionization and photoelectric. Brad suggested getting detectors that use both technologies.

After a general discussion and question and answer period, the group gave Brad a round of applause for his presentation. ~



HOUSING MARKET TAKES A TUMBLE

Home values posted the largest decline in the first quarter since late 2008, prompting many economists to push back their estimates of when the housing market will hit a bottom, according to a recent article by Nick Timiraos and Dawn Wotapka in *The Wall Street Journal*.

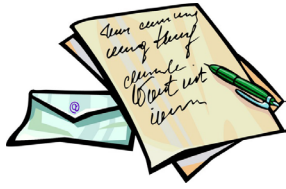
The article reported that home values fell 3% in the first quarter from the previous quarter and 1.1% in March from the previous month, pushed down by an abundance of foreclosed homes on the market, according to data released recently by real-estate website Zillow.com. Prices have now fallen for 57 consecutive months, according to Zillow.

Last year, the housing market showed signs of improving as price depreciation slowed in some markets and stabilized in others. In response, a number of economists began forecasting that housing would hit a bottom in late 2011, then begin to recover. But the improvements, spurred by federal programs that gave buyers up to \$8,000 in tax credits, proved fleeting. Sales collapsed when the credits expired last summer, and prices in many markets have been falling ever since.

While most economists expected sales to decline after tax credits expired, the drag on the market has been greater than many anticipated. Stan Humphries, Zillow's chief economist, expected December and January to be bad as the market reeled from the after-effects of the tax credit. But he said monthly

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Hello All,

Well, here it is Spring—I think. This strange weather has me wondering what to wear every morning. I'm just itching to get into shorts and tee shirt, and the weather won't be consistent.

As I sit here writing, I can see thunderstorms going up the American River, and see the lightning and hear the thunder. No matter, it will be hot soon enough.

Luckily the weather was beautiful for the Fifth Annual Clarksville Day, which was held last Saturday, May 7th, in the old ghost town of Clarksville.

Fran and I were on the event organizing committee, and everyone in the Clarksville Region Historical Society worked hard to give the community a taste of the history of El Dorado Hills.

It was nice and cool as we set everything up in the early morning, and by the time we opened up at 10 o'clock it was very pleasant, and the folks just kept coming all day. As they say, "A good time was had by all."

On another subject, redistricting seems to have degenerated into the old-boy politicking that we all know so well, and I am not going to comment on that here.

I will say that there seem to be a number of public-spirited folks that are holding some of our elected official's feet to the fire, so perhaps some good will come out of all this.

See you all next month.

Sincerely,

John Thomson
President

HOUSING MARKET *(continued)*

declines for February and March were really staggering. Humphries now believes prices won't hit bottom before next year and expects they will fall by another 7% to 9%. Other economists revised their forecasts. In April, the chief economist at mortgage company Fannie Mae, Doug Duncan, said home prices in the second quarter would be 5.3% lower than the previous-year period, down from his earlier estimate of a 2.6% decline.

Prices are declining in large part because the many foreclosed properties that often sell at a discount force other sellers to lower their prices. Mortgage companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have sold more than 94,000 foreclosed homes during the first quarter, a new high that represented a 23% increase from the previous quarter. More could be on the way.

According to the Zillow index, a handful of California markets and Washington, D.C., saw price appreciation last year, but that has since reversed. Mr. Humphries attributes the "double dip" in those markets, which include Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego, to the way in which the tax credit stimulated demand from buyers. When the tax credit went away, markets were left with rising supply from foreclosures but with less demand from buyers.

While some analysts have argued that home prices need to fall to "clearing prices" that will attract more buyers, price declines could also complicate any recovery by pushing more borrowers under water. Zillow estimates that more than 28% of borrowers owe more than their homes are worth nationally. Those numbers are much higher in hard-hit markets such as Phoenix, where more than two-thirds of borrowers owe more than their homes are worth. ~



BRIDLEWOOD CANYON NEIGHBORHOOD YARD SALE THIS MONTH

The Bridlewood Canyon neighborhood will hold their annual Spring Community Yard Sale on Saturday, May 21 from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. The gates will be open

to the public. You may check out their homeowners association's website the day before at www.bridlewoodcanyonhoa.com to obtain the addresses of the houses that have said they are having a yard sale.

The event will include a drive for yard-saleable items by the youth group Young Life of El Dorado County for their June Yard Sale. You may donate some of your "spring cleaning" items to a good cause by bringing your donations to the Bridlewood Canyon Homeowners club house on Devon Way in Bridlewood between 1:30 and 3:00 P.M. on that same Saturday, May 21. Young Life of El Dorado County is a 501(c)3 charity and will give you a receipt when you drop off your donations. All funds they raise from their June Yard Sale will be used to send less-fortunate kids to camp this summer. ~



LOCAL ACTING COMPANY OFFERS MUSICAL FARE

One Way Productions, a non-profit theater organization, introduces an original musical production *From Orphan to Queen: The Story of Esther*, based on the Bible Book of Esther, at Folsom Lake College's new Three Stages Theatre. You are invited to travel to Persia and meet King Xerxes and his royal court, who insist Queen Vashti must pay for her rebellion against his orders. The search then begins for a new Queen of Persia. Who will win the King's heart? The King, lonely and too pre-occupied with his inner troubles, relies heavily on his prime minister, Haman. But what happens when Haman suggests the destruction of all Jews? Will the Hebrew nation survive? Who will save this nation from genocide? Come join us and discover the beauty and gift of Providence, and the one whose courage is still celebrated today.

The production will have a limited seven performance run. The play's run time is two hours, with an intermission, and is appropriate for all ages. Tickets are on sale now, and to prevent on-line purchase fees, tickets are available at Three Stage's Box Office on the Folsom Lake College campus. Tickets are also available online at threestages.net. There is designated seating, so theatre-goers are urged to get their tickets early. ~

CLARKSVILLE DAY 2011 HIGHLIGHTS



One of the three wagons that offered visitors free rides to and from the parking lot



Display by the Model T club after the auto parade and the Lincoln Highway tour



John and Fran Thomson visiting the Clarksville Pioneer Descendants picnic in period costume



Kit Carson Mountain Men of Amador County exhibit with examples of wild animal pelts and traps



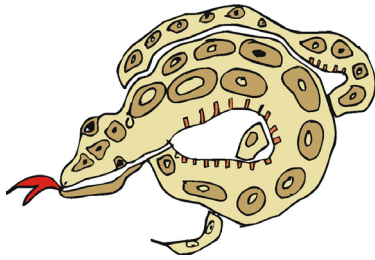
Pony Express equestrians on their horses with the Red Barn in the background



Historic model railroad exhibit with real steam engines by On the Brink, Live Steam Group

The Clarksville Region Historical Society celebrated its Fifth Annual Clarksville Day at the site of Old Clarksville on Saturday May 7. Visitors to Clarksville Day were treated to horse-drawn wagon rides, exhibits of historical nature, and demonstrations of pioneer crafts such as blacksmithing, old-time music, and re-

mounts by the Pony Express Association. The event was free due to the support of local businesses and generous local residents. It was estimated that several thousand visitors came to see this year's Clarksville Day celebration in the ghost town of Clarksville, now located on private property off Silva Valley Road. ~



ANNUAL RATTLESNAKE WARNINGS ISSUED

Foothills residents are cautioned to watch out for rattlesnakes, which are now active. Rattlesnakes hibernate for several months in the crevices of rock accumulations. The springtime is when most snakes come out, including rattlesnakes.

The rattlesnake is California's only native venomous snake. They have a distinctive, triangular head shape, which is a key characteristic in their identification.

Rattlesnakes generally forage for prey in or near brushy or tall grass areas, rock outcrops, rodent burrows, around and under surface objects, and sometimes in the open.

While seldom fatal, bites are extremely painful and can lead to severe medical trauma. It is important to never handle rattlesnakes, not even dead ones.

If you are less than one hour from the nearest emergency room, initial treatment

is relatively simple: Try to calm the victim, AND gently wash the area with soap and water. Apply a cold, wet cloth over the bite, and call 911 to transport the victim to the nearest emergency facility for further treatment. Fire department paramedics and nearby hospitals are trained to treat snakebites. ~



MAY BLAC MEETING HELD, JUNE MEETING DATE, SPEAKER SET

The regular monthly meeting of the Bass Lake Action Committee was held May 2, 2011, and was well-attended. The guest speaker was Division Chief/Fire Marshal Brad Ballanger from the El Dorado Hills Fire Department. See the article on page 1 for a summary of the guest speaker's presentation.

The next BLAC meeting will be held on June 6, 2011, at 7:00 PM at the home of Fran and John Thomson, 501 Kirkwood Court, Woodridge, El Dorado Hills, 530-677-3039. The guest speaker will be John Skeel, General Manager of the El Dorado Hills Community Services District. All BLAC members are cordially encouraged to attend. For further information contact Kathy Prevost, 530-672-6836. ~



PROPANE UPDATE

Propane prices on the West Coast fell somewhat recently, no doubt as a reflection of decreased demand from the Midwest and the East due to warmer weather, though gasoline prices continued to climb higher throughout most of the nation.

The Targa San Ramon wholesale price of propane on May 8 was \$1.60 a gallon, making the JS West per-gallon contract delivered price \$2.16 per gallon to Bridlewood Canyon, Woodridge and Sierra Crossing.

The benchmark Mont Belvieu, Texas, wholesale price of propane on May 8 was \$1.53. Data from the US Energy Information Agency is not available outside the winter heating season, which ends in March. ~

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The Trees

The trees are coming into leaf
Like something almost being said;
The recent buds relax and spread,
Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again
And we grow old? No, they die too,
Their yearly trick of looking new
Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles throb
In fullgrown thickness every May.
Last year is dead, they seem to say,
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.



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