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# the *Big Sur* voice

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**The Big Sur Voice**, by and for the Big Sur community, is a venture of the KL Felicitas Foundation, a private non-profit foundation dedicated to proactively supporting rural community/environment initiatives and social entrepreneurship worldwide.

## *Big Sur Community Non-profits Part One*

It is often said that the only time people really come together as a community in Big Sur is when there is a crisis. Most often those impromptu community gatherings happen when there is a natural disaster such as a wildfire or a landslide and road closing. Yet there are other constant simmering crises that bring locals together in similar fashion, though on a much smaller, and lesser known scale. Issues involving public safety, fire protection, community health, education, literacy, affordable housing, land use, cultural and artistic awareness, spirituality, environment, conservation, historical preservation, are all concerns, to varying degrees, among the residents of Big Sur.

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Alternatively, you can call our writer Michael Standaert at 831-227-8363, and faxes can be sent to 831-646-1244. Michael has also recently launched **The Big Sur Voice Blog** to highlight stories of interest to the Big Sur community, which can be found at: <http://theperiscope.blogs.com/bigsurvoiceblog/> In February, we will concentrate on education. If you would like to voice your opinion or suggest topics for future issues, we would love to hear from you.

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**E**ven with Big Sur's high property taxes, many public needs are not met through government services. These needs are met by the efforts of private citizens, either through their own individual volunteerism, or through joining together as volunteers forming groups to fight for larger causes. In Big Sur, many of these efforts are made possible by the non-profit sector. Perhaps of greatest importance is how these non-profits provide for public safety and health – through such entities as the Mid-Coast Fire Brigade, the Big Sur Fire Brigade, and the Big Sur Health Center. Most of the funding that helps keep these non-profits functioning comes from individuals and through the efforts of other non-profits to raise money in support of their causes. A wide variety of other concerns are addressed through a myriad of non-profits, crossing the lines of community, land, and spirit.

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In this issue of *The Big Sur Voice*, we hope to highlight the achievements, successes, struggles and goals of the various non-profits that function in the Big Sur area. We discovered around 30 non-profits that are either based in or have a direct connection with the Big Sur community. About twenty have responded to our questionnaire. Some questionnaires are reprinted here as Q & A, others reworked into profiles, and many are based off both the questionnaire and a follow-up interview.

Due to the volume of material generated by the interviews, we've divided the material into two issues – December and January. For the December issue, we're focusing mainly on those non-profits that are located in the Big Sur geographic area. Those profiled in the January issue are either based outside the Big Sur area and inside Monterey County, or could not be fit into this edition because of space issues or because the material was not yet ready for publication. If we missed covering your non-profit, please let us know if you would like to be involved in the future. In February, *The Big Sur Voice* will examine the education scene in Big Sur, from kindergarten through higher education. ❀

## Mid-Coast Fire Brigade

A work in progress

The following story is a merge of information gathered about the Mid-Coast Fire Brigade from an autumn interview and the December issue questionnaire.

**M**id-Coast Fire Brigade, officially organized in 1979 in response to citizen concerns regarding a lack of services in the area between Pt. Sur and Carmel Highlands, has long been a work in progress. After 25 years in existence, the brigade will soon have its first fire house. Completion depends largely on funding.

Since its inception, the Mid-Coast Fire Brigade has been primarily funded by local resident donations, says Cheryl Goetz, chief of the Mid-Coast Fire Brigade. When Proposition 172 passed in 1994 the County of Monterey decided to give a large portion of funding to the fire agencies within Monterey County. Since 1994 Mid-Coast Fire Brigade has received a gradual increase in this funding, from \$10,000 initially, to \$25,000 this last year. "Our budget is based on projected Proposition 172 funds and the annual grant we receive for participating in the Big Sur Marathon," said Goetz. "Unlike Big Sur Fire Brigade, there is only one small business [Rocky Point Restaurant] in our response area, which has donated funds over the years."

Since Monterey County does not have a County Fire Department, the only other governmental entity to provide fire protection is the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). CDF is charged with the protection of watershed areas in the State Responsibility Area (SRA). "CDF responds to all types of emergencies including wildland fires, traffic accidents, medical aids and structure fires when the State is in declared fire season which typically runs from late May through the end of October," said Goetz. "When CDF down staffed from fire season, there was no official fire agency to respond to emergency calls. It was then that some civic-minded citizens formed the Brigade to fill the void and provide the basic services afforded to citizens in incorporated areas. The Brigade has always been well received in the community; unfortunately it is generally not something people tend to think about until you need their services."

Annually, says Goetz, funding can approximately be divided between 65% percent Prop. 172 monies, 30% from the Big Sur Marathon, and another 5% through local area donations. Some of this has to do with the makeup of the community that supports Mid-Coast, which consists of around 500 residents, mostly in Palo Colorado Canyon, and one major business, Rocky Point Restaurant. Some residents have said privately that the opportunities to tap into monetary support by the brigade have not been handled as well as they could have, though that may be changing. "Until 2000 Mid-Coast Fire had not sought any funding from other non-profit organizations to my knowledge," said Goetz. "[In that time period] Mid-Coast applied for and received a \$16,000 matching grant from the Community Foundation for Monterey County."

Recently at the autumn Big Sur Multi-Agency Administration Council meeting, Joe Donofrio of the Monterey County Regional Park District presented the fire brigade with a \$20,000 check. "With this money and money that was donated and donations in kind we were able to replace an obsolete piece of fire apparatus with a 1999 Ford F-350 truck," said Goetz. "The company that we purchased the truck from gave us a great deal because it was going to have a new life as a fire truck and the company that we bought the utility body from donated the painting, so it will be fire engine red. The slip on pump that will be installed was sold to us from San Francisco Fire at a fraction of its cost."

Funding, from whatever source, is the utmost importance to keep the Brigade functioning. "When we first started thinking about building the station, there weren't a lot of funds available," said Cheryl Goetz, Chief of the Mid-Coast Fire Brigade. When the building process first started, the brigade had about \$150,000 to dedicate to the fire house – a fire house that had been discussed for over 20 years. Total costs upon completion of the new station could run about \$700,000. Funding has been a long and complicated problem over the time the fire house has been in the building process. It currently stands unfinished, with several more months of work possibly to be done.

**T**he foundation and walls are built. Windows and garage doors are in. The water system is in place now. The stucco could be added outside over the coming months. Paving the driveway is not to be finished in the foreseeable future.



“We are still in need of fire sprinklers, paving, septic and drywall,” says Goetz. “We also need to finish the water, propane, and downstairs bathroom to obtain occupancy; unfortunately we are out of funding at the present time.”

Right now, though, the main goal is to gain a certificate of occupancy for the volunteers, which they hope can come before Christmas.

“We thought if we could get the retaining walls and foundation in, we’d be happy with at least that structure developed and we can keep the engines out of the weather,” said Goetz. “We were hoping a lot would be taken care of before Christmas, but material prices keep going up.”

The volunteers, said Goetz, have been doing about 90 percent of the building work, with other labor contracted from the outside. Currently, the brigade is operated out of Goetz’s house while the two engines and one fast attack vehicle are allowed to park at the not-yet-completed fire house. Some good news was the recent \$250,000 grant from FEEMA to buy a new 4x4 Urban Interface fire engine. The engine should be delivered by June 2006, said Goetz.

The Mid-Coast Brigade is also much smaller than the Big Sur Brigade, with only 6 volunteer firefighters having met OSHA requirements. Three of those six are professional firefighters. An additional six volunteers will start first responder training in the new year.

How sustained funding develops will

“Our success stories are the fires we put out, the homes we keep from burning and the lives we save because we are there.”

Cheryl Goetz

largely depend on the community that supports the brigade, as well as how the brigade might want to structure itself in the future. “I’d love to see a fire district formed,” said Goetz. As volunteers, she sees how important these firefighters are as cogs in the community. “How can we afford not to volunteer to do this?”

Measuring success comes with each emergency call the Mid-Coast Fire Brigade responds to, says Goetz. “Whether it is attending to a tourist or a local who has fallen over a cliff, been the victim of an automobile accident, locked a child in a car, a fire in their home, or had a medical emergency, we know that had we not been there in a timely fashion to intervene the outcome at times would be much different,” she said. “Many times we receive heartfelt thank you letters from these people for being there, acting in a professional manner and showing compassion in there time of need.”

Mid-Coast has been an integral part of the community since it was formed, says Goetz. “The Brigade provides for a safe Halloween for the children of the community with its annual Halloween Trick or Treat Ride,” she said. “During the El Nino storms of 1998, the Brigade organized the community to start repairs on the roads, distribute food, and provide daily information to the community in conjunction with responding to calls for help. Our success stories are the fires we put out, the homes we keep from burning and the lives we save because we are there.” ❁

Those interested in helping out the Mid-Coast Brigade, can mail donations or find out about volunteer opportunities by writing to: Mid-Coast Fire Brigade, Palo Colorado Road, Carmel, CA 93923.

## Henry Miller Memorial Library

Answers provided by Magnus Toren.

*BSV: Could you describe a little about the history of the Henry Miller Memorial Library as well as what your involvement with the community in Big Sur has been like over this time?*

**Toren:** Very soon after Henry Miller arrived in Big Sur in 1944 he wrote a letter to his friend Emil White telling him that he'd found paradise and that the name of the paradise was Big Sur. Very soon after having read the letter White packed his bags and moved to the Coast. Throughout the years Miller lived permanently in Big Sur, Emil was his most trusted friend and assistant. In 1981, a year after Miller's death, Emil, with the assistance of the Big Sur Land Trust, opened up his own home to be the Henry Miller Memorial Library. In 1998 the HML separated from the BSLT and created its own independent non-profit organization, The Henry Miller Memorial Library Inc.

So is it a Library where you can check out books? Is it a museum? Is it a place exclusively dedicated to housing memorabilia about Henry Miller? What is happening at the HM Library? The answers to these questions come easily when guests of the Library from around the world arrive to pay a visit. Most of them are drawn by the name "Henry Miller," but once here, they discover local artwork, sculpture, poetry, literature, music and, on occasion, poetry readings, lectures, educational fairs, concerts, workshops and other events. But the Library is not, at heart, a place where things are "happening," its greatest asset is the sense it gives of entering an oasis, a symbol of the inspirational, perhaps spiritual, aspect of this magnificent coast. It is a place where thousands of people come to find solace in a world gone increasingly "busy" and commercial. We work hard to keep this place as something that is a reflection of a time when things seemed less complicated, that has the freedom to be

"But the Library is not, at heart, a place where things are "happening," its greatest asset is the sense it gives of entering an oasis, a symbol of the inspirational, perhaps spiritual, aspect of this magnificent coast."

Magnus Toren

personal—a place that celebrates the freedom to be curious, the thrill of learning, the joy of discovery, and that recognizes art as part of the human condition, and, of course, a place where you can learn about the artistic culture and history of Big Sur.

Apart from being an "oasis," the Library is also an important cultural institution. We offer programs to tour groups, school classes, guests at local hotels and resorts (such as the Post Ranch Inn, Esalen and Ventana Inn), Elderhostel groups, special interest groups (our annual Writers Workshops), etc. Many writers, journalists and photographers come to the Library for information and inspiration. It is apparent, both here at the Library and on our website, that Miller has a very large following overseas. The fact that Henry Miller is lesser known in this, his country of birth, than abroad emphasizes the Library's mission to champion Miller's literary, artistic and cultural contributions and to educate people about his life and work. I have no doubt that Miller is, regardless of what opinion one might have of his merit as a writer, a person whose motivations, creed, method and artistic output will, for a very long time, be of interest to a vast number of people. Miller is, and will remain, a cultural phenomenon.

Much like people in the world at large the Big Sur community is divided as to whether Miller is an artist/author worthy of a memorial. This is inevitable, there will be controversy around someone who expresses him or her self unfettered by constraints like political correctness or political affiliations. Miller wrote early on about sex in an open and boisterous

way this put him, for some, including folks in Big Sur, behind a locked door. A door that would remain shut no matter what. There's little to be done to unlock those kinds of doors.

The community events here, like the Poetry Slam, Circus, Memorials, Movies and Concerts (Fred Frith, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Jello Biafra, Patti Smith, Dan Hicks, Loudon Wainwright, et. al.), are all done in the spirit of openness, a wish to create community, to inspire and to have fun. The events have brought many together in the community. It has also introduced many to Miller, shorn of the veils of prejudice, and has lead some to believe that Miller indeed is worthy of a memorial. I think "worthy" mostly because his work is an inspiration and that as a person he had such an omnivorous and huge appetite for everything you can call art.

Watching the world-cup soccer final in '02 on a 12 x 20' screen at 4 in the morning with around a hundred people on the lawn was one of the finest moments of "art" ever at the Library!

*BSV: What organizations support the Henry Miller Library? How many funding dollars do you need annually to keep going and how much of this comes from other organizations, as well as individuals?*

**Toren:** The Library has received funding support from The Cultural Council of Monterey County, The Lannan Foundation, The Threshold Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Woody Harrelson Foundation, Robert Redford Foundation, the Big Sur Marathon, Post Ranch Inn, The Nepenthe Phoenix Corporation, Deetjen's, Esalen, River Inn, Ventana Inn, and many individuals. Funding is augmented by the donations we receive from individuals on a daily basis, at events, and through fundraising efforts, such as Laurie Anderson's benefit concert in 2005, and mailings. The Library needs at least 120K in donations/income and grants each year to be able to continue to operate and grow in depth and quality. In the past

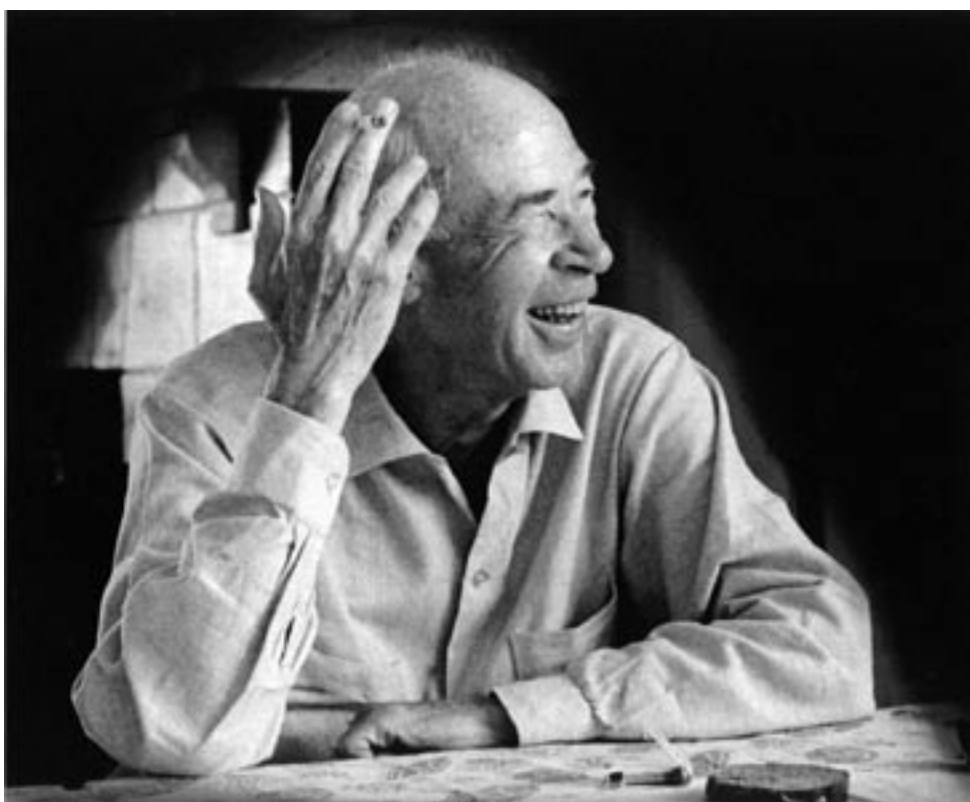


Photo of Henry Miller courtesy of The Henry Miller Memorial Library



a little more than half of the income has come from donations/grants. The shortfall has been made up by retail sales of books and art, and rental of the Library for private events. In the future we are planning to work on increasing the amount of grants and donation to decrease the wear and tear on the property associated with rentals.

**BSV:** *What are the other non-profits or foundations not located in Big Sur that the Henry Miller Library collaborates with?*

**Toren:** University of North Carolina at Wilmington, UCLA, Smith College, Stanford Special Collections (advise on conservation and archiving), The Tor House Foundation, The Steinbeck Centre, Lannan Foundation. The three most active collaborations are currently with Tor House, Smith College and UNC-Wilmington. (With UNC-W we are working on archiving and preserving all audio ever recorded with Henry Miller. It is for this project we have received funding from the NEA).

**BSV:** *In your experience, what needs are being met in the Big Sur community through the activities of the Henry Miller Library? What needs are not being met that you would like to see happen?*

**Toren:** Having a place dedicated to the history and art of the coast without having to be commercially oriented is a good thing. The Library is a gathering place and on occasion it hosts art exhibits and local artist performances. Historic places and archives tell a community where it came from – what previous generations achieved, what they believed, what they hoped to be.

A Big Sur landscape, wild and rural, yet culturally rich, and ecologically striving to be in balance, is probably the most important thing that Big Sur can contribute to our culture – offering a sense of wonder in the face of nature and, I think, within the majority of visitors, help in developing a conviction as to the importance of conservation and history.

We have brought in artists, writers, poets, musicians and teachers from across the country (and, in a few cases, the globe) to offer poetry readings, film screenings, play readings, workshops and musical concerts. The reach-out we do in association with programs, both virtual and physical (mailings, media coverage, website, etc.), brings very significant good will and increase in awareness of this remarkable place, both Big Sur in general and the Library in particular.

Programs have generally been held at the HM Library in Big Sur, but included in programming have also been outreach into the community at large with lectures presented off site – for example a two part lecture at University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

I wish that we had more resources to spend on offering more programs without charge. I am especially hoping that we'll be able to do more theatre.

**BSV:** *How do you measure success for the Henry Miller Library? Are there criteria for defining what has worked and what has not?*

**Toren:** There are no set criteria for “measuring” success. Looking in our guest book, reading e-mails and letters, and listening to many appreciative voices, gives a pretty good indication that something is done right.



Photo courtesy of The Henry Miller Memorial Library

We do of course have to look at the financial results of our activities but fortunately it does not always have to be our primary criterion.

**BSV:** *Could you provide information on how people can donate to the Henry Miller Library and see their dollars go to work directly toward the Big Sur community? Are there specific projects people can donate to that are high on the list of needing funds at the moment?*

**Toren:** Yes, our Archives Project. Started in earnest last summer, the A.P. needs more help, especially the rather expensive proposition of creating temperature and humidity regulated space for our archives. We did receive help from many good people in Big Sur (and elsewhere) in 2005. Next year we'll continue the work and more interns from Smith College will come to help us. We have a special fund set aside for this work and donations to this fund are much needed.

One of the greatest strengths of the Library today is its national and international far-reaching appeal. Deepening the content and improving access to our archives, improving our buildings to accommodate exhibits, redesigning our website, planting a native plant garden, offering valuable workshops and arts programs, etc. are goals we constantly are working towards and financial support is always going straight to these good causes.

Big Sur has lost some of its opportunities for free expression in the arts due to a steep increase in cost of living. To have a non-profit community cultural venue appears more and more valuable as an alternative to the more commercially directed establishments. Continuing our arts programming, while keeping cost down for participants, is important for the Henry Miller Library and our community. The assistance, association, collaboration and dollars donated from the Big Sur community members mean everything.

**BSV:** *If you can, could you describe some of the success stories you have had as a non-profit in Big Sur? Could you relate any stories of the challenges as well that you may have?*

**Toren:** The biggest success story is simply being here. One of the events that stand out is The Circus Arts Workshops, probably the most “community building” of all our events. (The Circus Contraption, who gave us their workshops, is becoming very successful, good for them, but not so good for us. It is now harder and harder to afford having them come here – any ideas/dollars for “Bring The Circus to Big Sur Fund in 2006 will be much appreciated.”

Another huge success story is the purchase, in 1999, of The Emil Schnellock Collection.

As the Library is today, it is challenging to provide enough space for both Miller material and local art and history. Incrementally we're improving the use of the already existing space so that we'll be able to do better justice to both and so that we can house our collections here, on site. (The HM Library's Miller collection is the second most extensive in the world, next only to UCLA's). We own a close to complete collection of Miller's published work in the English language (more than 1000 items) and the very significant Emil Schnellock Collection, containing several original manuscripts, hundreds of letters and ephemera from the early twenties through the forties. These collections are currently housed elsewhere. The Big Sur Collection of books, letters, art and ephemera is also significant and constantly growing as we receive donations from neighbors who do the occasional “spring-cleaning.”

The Henry Miller Library is a valuable asset, an oasis that serves visitors to, and residents of, Big Sur. It is a resource for Big Sur residents, providing services not available anywhere else in Big Sur – free coffee and internet! It has an educational mission, which goes beyond Henry Miller to the literature, history and ecology of the Big Sur area. ❀

If you are interested in hearing more about the Libraries programs contact Magnus Toren, Henry Miller Memorial Library, Highway One, CA 93920 or call 831-667-2574 or check out their website at [www.henrymiller.org](http://www.henrymiller.org)

## New Camaldoli Hermitage

Seeking spiritual and facility sustainability

In 1958, two Camaldolese hermits came to the United States from Italy, searching for the perfect combination of solitude, natural beauty and spirituality suitable for the contemplative life in the Catholic Benedictine tradition. They found this magic in Big Sur. In building the New Camaldoli Hermitage near Lucia and establishing a presence in America for the first time, they created over those years a village of hermits, together, yet in solitude.

“Big Sur has a magic all its own,” said Father Michael Fish, vocation director and master of novices at the New Camadoli Hermitage. “It attracts people who have a concern for the beauty of nature.”

The New Camaldoli Hermitage has seen its share of tranquility during its 47-year presence on the Big Sur coast albeit periodically interrupted by chaos. The first structures on the property burned down in a fire. Over the years wildfires, landslides, high winds and heavy rain have made their brief appearances to serve as a reminder of the precarious nature of existence on this coast for the monks. The last El Nino severely damaged the property, much of this due to the settling of foundations and aging of monks’ and workers’ living quarters. Severe mold problems in monk cells have become a constant health risk. “This place is falling apart,” appealed Fr. Fish in a video made to raise awareness of the Hermitage’s mission and property dilemmas. “We want to keep this place alive, sustainable, livable, so that we can do our work in the world.”

Currently 20 monks live on the property, each with

his unique vocation and program of study. Worldwide, there are only about 90 Camaldolese monks, and 90 nuns. Around 600 lay people, mostly in the United States, have also attached themselves spiritually to the Camaldolese way. Monks practice as artists, writers, sculptors, painters, musicians, celebrating their creativity while also delving deep into the spirituality the focused life of contemplative meditation brings. Prayer, mass, ceremony, silence and meditation are central to maintaining balance in life for this village of hermits. “Meditation is the symbol of what our whole life is about,” said Fr. Fish.

Although monks must be Catholic, the hermitage is more ecumenical in scope. The monastic tradition here is based on philosophies of mysticism from the West as well as the East. Activities that focus on building relationships and inter-religious dialogue between faiths are common. As well as Catholics and other Christian denominations, Buddhist, Hindu, and a variety of other faiths come to New Camaldoli for retreats. The Hermitage hosts one of the few Alcoholics’ Anonymous meetings in the Big Sur area, an opportunity for residents and tourists alike who battle this affliction to keep up on their 12-steps. An idea that

has yet to fully develop is to partner the infirmary at the Hermitage with the only other health center in Big Sur and possibly provide hospice care on the site.

In the four decades the Hermitage has been open to outside visitors, over 150,000 people have made retreats at the property and nearly a half-million have visited in one form or another. The natural beauty of the property, the monastic life there, and the Hermitage chapel have long had a profound impact on those who visit. The Hermitage has been associated with writers such as Henry Miller and Jack Kerouac. Writer Pico Iyer, who returns to the Hermitage three or four times per year, comes to reflect, write and refill his creative well. Most of all, the Hermitage attracts individuals on their own independent spiritual quests.

“People are looking for meaning and purpose,” said Father Raniero, prior at New Camaldoli. “They are looking for that energy within.”

Fr. Fish echoes these sentiments. “People who have lost faith with religion as it is today find their way here to discover their inner monk,” said Fr. Fish. “I see this little community on the top of the hill in Big Sur, as a stone in a lake with ripples that go throughout Big Sur, out into the U.S., and out into the world.”

With the constant threat of natural disaster, as well as the slow deterioration of the property, the Hermitage is looking toward a sustainable future for its monks and retreatants. That means restructuring the current buildings on the property. They are now in the process of visioning what that master plan would look like. The Hermitage has hired architect Michelle Kaufmann, who has revolutionized the design of modular buildings, to draft master plans on how the Hermitage will transform.

One of Kaufmann’s draft pictures contains the phrase, “Buildings are of the land, not on the land,” – an appropriate vision for Big Sur. The Hermitage is hoping for community input and support for these upgrades which



Pictured: Jean Darragh (left), Tony Staude and Fr. Raniero

could see everything but the chapel replaced, says Fr. Raniero. The Hermitage hopes to present these ideas to the Big Sur community over the next several months, after the plans have been approved by the resident monks themselves.

“Unfortunately, the costs of maintaining a spiritual facility on the California coastline have escalated in recent years, in part due to natural disasters of water and fire, in part due to the realities of 21st century economics,” writes Fr. Raniero. “Facility renovation becomes more expensive. Government regulations and licensing requirements require that work formerly done by monks be carried out by outside contractors. Facilities open to the public must meet strict federal and state standards.”

In order to raise money for the upkeep of the property and the continued existence of the monks’ way of life, a variety of revenue streams are utilized. First there are the retreat facilities themselves, with retreatants asked to donate \$60 a day, covering their lodging and food costs. The bookstore and gift shop also functions as another source of revenue, with many of the items sold there produced by the monks themselves. Books by resident monks, CDs of their daily vespers and chanting, and also postcards, prayer benches, paintings are sold to keep the Hermitage self-supporting. Some of the monks also venture out into the world to hold retreats and workshops as part of fundraising and outreach. Finally, New Camaldoli sells fruitcake and date nut cake throughout the year as another way to keep the place going. ❀

For more information about the New Camaldoli Hermitage, please visit their website at: <http://www.contemplation.com/Hermitage/home.html>. Phone: 831-667-2456

Website for following construction details at New Camaldoli Hermitage: [www.bigsurhermitage.com](http://www.bigsurhermitage.com)

Daily Schedule (Public welcome):  
5:30am Vigils; 7:00 am Lauds;  
11:30am Eucharist (Sunday at 11:00am); 6:00pm Vespers followed by Meditation (Sunday 5:00)  
Bookstore hours: 8:15 to 11:15 and 1:15 to 5:00pm.

## Deetjen’s Big Sur Inn Preservation Foundation

Working to keep an historic landmark a vital part of the community

The following interview is with Bruce Neeb, General Manager of the Deetjen’s Big Sur Inn. The Big Sur Voice spoke with Bruce about the day-to-day operations of Deetjen’s, which functions as a not-for-profit business. For more information on the history of Deetjen’s and the Deetjen’s Foundation which preserves the buildings on the site as a registered non-profit foundation, please visit [www.deetjens.com](http://www.deetjens.com).

**BSV:** *How long have you been working as General Manager at Deetjen’s?*

**Neeb:** I’ve only been working on site here at Deetjen’s the last two years.

**BSV:** *And before that?*

**Neeb:** Related to this place, I was on the Board of Directors for Deetjen’s for about eight or nine years. I was also a landscaper up and down the coast. I did some landscaping around the front of the Big Sur Health Center. Before that I was involved with the Big Sur Land Use Advisory Committee. So for me, this is a relatively new job. Prior to that I was at Esalen for about twelve years. From one organization to the next, with a nice long break of landscaping in between.

**BSV:** *Can you give people an idea on what it takes to run Deetjen’s on a daily basis?*

**Neeb:** We’ve got a staff of thirty to thirty-five people, broken into various departments. We run a twenty-unit inn, and breakfast and dinner for restaurant services. Year round. Our direction, and goal, is to keep the prices at a point where the general public can visit here. We’ve got Ventana and Post Ranch and the River Inn and Glen Oaks, we’re right between those, the high and relatively low end of prices. What we offer is the unique experience that this is the way it was. We try to hold onto that as much as possible. In regards to staffing, one of my objectives is to try to keep the crew here local. Hiring off the coast as much as possible. We have our Spanish speaking crew, they all live here. Our two cooks come from the East coast, but have been living here the last four or five years, living locally. So that’s primarily our objective, to keep the look the same, to introduce bits and pieces of technology behind the walls, and to provide a comfortable place for people to relax and enjoy themselves.

**BSV:** *How difficult is it to keep the prices level where people can afford it? And what are those prices?*

**Neeb:** Given that we’re a not-for profit, one of the board mandated things is to keep it affordable as long as we

head towards the break-even point. We’re not here to make money on the operations. We need to cover salaries and cover insurance and cover our bills, but the goal is not for any one person or group to profit by it. The board is volunteer. Our non-profit lease holder, is just that, non-profit.

**BSV:** *So the board is the not-for profit side and the lease holder are the non-profit side?*

**Neeb:** The lease holders are the non-profit side. I’m directly controlled by a board that runs this business part of it, the operations here. They’re volunteers. In fact both boards are volunteer. The room rates go from \$75 to \$190, which is right in between the upper and lower end.

**BSV:** *How difficult is it to keep the staff here? Are people finding housing a problem?*

**Neeb:** What’s surprising is that the turnover rate here is really low. Since I’ve come on board, there has been maybe four or five percent turnover. A majority of the staff have been working here at least five years and some as long as twenty-five years. So the turnover rate, from what I understand, a lot different than several of the other places up and down this coast. There’s something about this place that makes people say, if I’ve got a place to live, I’d like to work at Deetjen’s. Something happens, I’m still not sure what it is. The housing is always an issue in Big Sur. That’s been the case since forever. It’s been getting a bit more squeezed as more sophisticated buyers come in and take up residential properties and instead of a small rental unit, they keep their guesthouse empty. So that’s been a trend over the last five years, especially. I know about this as a landscaper, I dressed up these houses that people buy. From that place it’s awkward. We have housing for nine or ten people here on the property, which we subsidize for the employees that are lucky enough to get into it. Again, we’re not doing it to earn income, but we’re trying to keep the harder to replace people housed.

**BSV:** *Where is that at?*

**Neeb:** That’s just up the hill, you can’t see it from here. It was one of Grandpa Deetjen’s hideaway houses that he kept for himself and his wife. We subdivided it and broke it up into rooms.

Continued on page 14 ...



Photo: Dr. Armando Arias

## Big Sur Arts Initiative

For nearly eight years, the Big Sur Arts Initiative has been a non-profit leader in providing art education and artistic programming for children and adults in Big Sur. Its original inception began with the El Nino of 1998 when landslides and closed roads in Big Sur cut off many children from their normal school activities. Out of the Captain Cooper Parents Club's efforts to provide instruction to students and give them a place at the table with all the other community concerns, BSAI was born.

"We noticed that there was no one representing the kids," said Tom Birmingham, co-director of the BSAI along with his wife, Erin Gafill. "We realized that not only was there a need for enrichment and educational activities for our kids, but they also needed advocacy. So we formed the Big Sur Arts Initiative specifically to both create programs that give kids the opportunity to enrich their lives, and their families, as well as to literally give them a seat at the table in the community."

The BSAI is no longer an emergency response. Its mission has become part of the fabric of the always simmering, low-level crisis of providing education and cultural opportunities to children in Big Sur. Seed money from the Turner Foundation's "Turner Youth Initiative" helped get the BSAI started, and continuing support from the Packard Foundation, the Irvine Foundation, the Community Foundation of Monterey County, and the Harden Foundation have aided in the sustainability of the organization during these start-up years.

"Collaboration is something we really believe in," said Birmingham. "There's not an agency in Big Sur that we haven't worked with in some extent. Whether it is for grant writing workshops that have been attended by other organizations, or providing venues at the annual Hidden Gardens Tour, or directly aligning with them to put on an event or help something happen, or share resources and technical support. I don't think you could come up with an organization in Big Sur that we haven't had some interaction with."

As well as the summer theatre program called StageKids, the BSAI has developed a number of other community learning programs over the last eight years, such as the Children's Garden at Captain Cooper School, the JazzMasters Development Music Workshop, the Big Sur Teen Team, and After School Enrichment Programs, and the Hidden Gardens Tour annual fundraising event that draws over 100 volunteers and serves a total of around 450 people every year.

"There's a huge amount of learning from ecology, recycling, plant growth, living in nature," said Birmingham, in reference to the Children's Garden. "This day and age, kids in our schools are being asked to fit in a box, as far as standardized testing. In a classroom of kids, there are kids that thrive on an academic environment, and those who don't. The Children's Garden is an opportunity to get out and have a different type of experience, and maybe those kids who don't thrive so much in an academic setting can have an experience there."

Besides attempting to enrich the lives of children in Big Sur, the BSAI also is reaching out to the adult artistic community. Through the program Arts Bridge, the BSAI structures workshops and classes that help artists become more professional and marketable. Exhibitions of these artists works

are planned in the future, including one at the Pacific Grove Arts Center in the summer of 2006. "In the last year we have had opportunities to expand in that area, with program grants that were targeted specifically at support for professional artists," said Birmingham. "Not artists as teachers, not artists as something else, but artists as artists. Trying to give artists the opportunity to do their work."

Thirty-eight Big Sur artists are featured on the BSAI website, along with biographies, selections of their work, and contact information.

"We find that individual artists are getting 50 to 100 unique visitors a month on our website," said Birmingham. "One of the things we are trying to do is provide support for professional artists and have that go hand in hand with children's programs, where if you're supporting the creative arts, hopefully it will support the idea a young person has that it is viable. It's modeling for the young person that you're having success in a creative lifestyle."

One of the areas Birmingham said he hopes the BSAI can have impact is as a bridge between the various social, geographic, economic and cultural communities of Big Sur. Sixty-five percent of the students at Captain Cooper School, for example, speak English as a second language and thirty-five percent live at or below the poverty level. It is estimated that fifty-percent of the students at Pacific Valley School are from families at or below the poverty level.

"Our community is changing dramatically right now," said Birmingham. "Fundamentally, our organization is about community building. Our goal will be realized when we find the best ways to serve the broadest sectors of our population – not by working to make the population homogenous, but by making sure our organization is serving each individual geographic, cultural and economic subset in such a way that it is meaningful for their lives, to where they feel this is their voice for their creative and youthful part of their lives." ❁

For more information about the BSAI or to donate time or money, please visit the webpage at: [www.bigsurarts.org](http://www.bigsurarts.org), or contact Tom Birmingham or Erin Gafill at: Big Sur Arts Initiative P. O. Box 459 Big Sur, CA 93920. Calls can be made to: 831-667-1530. E-mails: [Tom@bigsurarts.org](mailto:Tom@bigsurarts.org) or [Erin@bigsurarts.org](mailto:Erin@bigsurarts.org)



## Coast Property Owners Association

Protecting the rights of Big Sur property owners

Answers provided by Michael Caplin,  
President of the CPOA.

**BSV:** *Could you describe a little about the history of the CPOA as well as what your involvement with the community in Big Sur has been like over this time?*

**Caplin:** The CPOA was formed in 1962 to fill the need for an organization to represent the unincorporated community of Big Sur on issues affecting the area. Over decades the organization has contributed to multiple rewrites of various Monterey County plans and ordinances, and to the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan. CPOA provided input on CalTrans' Coast Highway Management Plan. CPOA commented on drafts of the Forest Management Plan for the Los Padres National Forest in 1986 and 2004. All of these plans have real impacts on the Big Sur community as a whole and on individuals in our area.

In 1980 and 1986, CPOA helped defeat numerous attempts to federalize the entire Big Sur area by creation of a national park or similar entity. Such status would have eliminated the Big Sur community, forever regimented the experience of millions of visitors who travel the area, and adversely impacted the infrastructure, economy and quality of life on the Monterey Peninsula. CPOA helped draft language in proposition 70 in 1986, which was passed by California's voters, providing 25 million dollars to Monterey County to compensate critical viewshed landowners who lost the use of their land. CPOA organized a water seminar with authoritative hydrologists that demonstrated the lack of need for a water management district in Big Sur. Voters on the Monterey Peninsula recently voted to disband a similar district after decades of waste and non-productivity.

Similar efforts continue. The Monterey County General Plan is currently being revised. CPOA is working with labor unions, affordable housing advocates, the Farm Bureau and other organizations to try to ensure that the next iteration of the County's General Plan is

compatible with the continued existence of the Big Sur community. CPOA has members participating on the vision project, to try to ensure that the statement of a vision for the next 50 years includes clear language that the buyout of private land in Big Sur by public agencies will end. CPOA is working to inform the community about the consequences of Congressman Farr's proposed redesignation of the northern portion of the Los Padres as a Big Sur National Forest.

**BSV:** *What organizations support the CPOA? How many funding dollars do you need annually to keep going and how much of this comes from other organizations, as well as individuals?*

**Caplin:** The CPOA does not actively solicit donations or grants from other organizations. Income generally comes from membership dues and donations from our members. CPOA's expenses vary substantially depending upon costs associated with the projects we are involved in. Our regular expenses are the cost of mailings to property owners and residents in the Big Sur area, and costs associated with holding our annual general meeting. All of our directors are volunteers who freely contribute their time, energy and financial support. We have no paid staff.

**BSV:** *What are the other non-profits or foundations not located in Big Sur that the CPOA collaborates with?*

**Caplin:** The CPOA is currently collaborating on input into the Monterey County General Plan Update process with the following non-profit organizations: Monterey County Farm

Bureau, CHISPA (Community Housing Improvement Systems and Planning Association), Common Ground Monterey County, Center for Community Advocacy, Monterey County Vintners and Growers Association, Carpenters Local 605, Grower-Shipper Association of Central California, Independent Growers' Association, Monterey County Cattlemen's/Women's Association, Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce, Monterey County Association of Realtors, and the Monterey County Hospitality Association.

**BSV:** *In your experience, what needs are being met in the Big Sur community through the activities of the CPOA? What needs are not being met that you would like to see happen?*

**Caplin:** Given that Big Sur is an unincorporated rural area with relatively few votes, the area needs to constantly remind rulemakers that the Big Sur community exists, and has values and needs that differ from other places. Without constant reminder, the Big Sur community tends to "fall off the radar," and rules that may make sense in other areas tend to be applied to Big Sur, even if unreasonable in our context. CPOA helps provide a voice for the Big Sur community. CPOA has no full-time staff to advocate for Big Sur. This often places CPOA at a disadvantage. There seems to be an ever-growing stream of paid professionals from outside our community attending meetings to make plans that will impact our community and our lives. CPOA would be much better equipped to advocate for Big Sur if it had full-time paid staff. This would substantially increase our annual expenses, which would require a shift in fundraising emphasis, which we have thus far avoided.

**BSV:** *How do you measure success for the CPOA? Are there criteria for defining what has worked and what has not?*

"Without constant reminder, the Big Sur community tends to "fall off the radar," and rules that may make sense in other areas tend to be applied to Big Sur, even if unreasonable in our context."

Michael Caplin

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**Caplin:** It is hard to gauge success in the types of activities CPOA engages in. No single organization engaged in the type of public processes CPOA engages in can expect to have everything go its way. Moreover, the process never ends, at least not so long as there is a community to advocate for. As was said during the multiple attempts to federalize Big Sur, federalization proponents can afford to lose again and again, but Big Sur need only lose once and all is irrecoverably lost. Success for CPOA is to be able to continue to advocate for the Big Sur community.

**BSV:** *If you can, could you describe some of the success stories you have had as a non-profit in Big Sur? Could you relate any stories of the challenges as well that you may have?*

**Caplin:** Some of CPOA's clearer successes were the defeat of numerous proposals that would have federalized all of Big Sur and extinguished our community. A current challenge is to inform those who did not live through overt attempts to federalize Big Sur about the significance of the ongoing buyout of private land in the area. As the buyout progresses it becomes ever less expensive to again propose federalization of the entire area. The slow progression of the buyout makes it difficult for those who did not live through past federalization attempts to see that our community is under attack. We are now like a lobster in a pot of cold water, with the heat being turned up so slowly it is almost imperceptible. The challenge is to get people to feel the changing heat. ❀

The CPOA is a non-profit corporation. Donations are tax deductible and always welcome and appreciated. CPOA's mailing address is P.O. Box 59, Big Sur, California, 93920. You can also contact Michael Caplin, President, at mcaplin@mbay.net, or (831) 624-5418. Though CPOA is actively involved in a number of projects, none of them currently require substantial funds. However, please keep CPOA in mind, and respond generously if we send out a plea for financial assistance. Please also let us know if you are willing to have CPOA contact you directly when funds are needed.

## Moving Ventures

Combining spiritual and social missions through movement arts

Though she'd probably shy away from the description, Ellen Watson, the founder of Moving Ventures could be appropriately described as a social entrepreneur – someone who is a change agent, a person who combines a social mission with an economic mission to maximize potential change.

Watson, a twenty-two year resident of Big Sur, established the business of Moving Ventures School in 1996 as a production organization for teachers from Esalen Institute and other recognized leaders in the fields of human potential. Moving Ventures School offers trainings in Esalen® Massage, "The Art of Essential Touch," various meditation forms, and movement arts.

The non-profit end of Moving Ventures, formed in April of 2005, serves as an outgrowth of the original business, producing workshops, retreats and training in the fields of movement, meditation and massage arts. This unique non-profit accepts donations for educating people in developing countries in the same manner as would the business side, except that the social mission outweighs the business mission.

"Most of our offshore retreats take place in developing countries," said Watson. "Our trainings draw students from many countries, and the nature of the courses we offer fosters cross cultural appreciation, and allows the local students to attend at no cost." That social mission allows people in developing countries the opportunity to learn a marketable skill, in this case Esalen® Massage and other techniques. Plans are being developed to bring workshops such as the one in Indonesia to Venezuela, and possibly Vietnam and Senegal.

"We do this in inspiring locations," said Watson. "Esalen is one of most inspiring locations in the world. It fosters healing if you just go hang out on the land for a while and don't take any workshops." Bali is Moving Ventures current inspiring location for these non-profit educational workshops. "We educate Indonesian students for free, people donate to educate an Indonesian in massage," said Watson. "That changes their lives. It takes someone who was maybe making \$800 a year and turns them into someone with the ability to earn \$10,000 a year. That's huge for someone from there."

Moving Ventures also offers a way to bring people together who otherwise have been possible enemies in the past through the arts of touch. "Where we should go is Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, though it's not quite safe there yet," said Watson. "There's a cross-cultural blend to what we do in Bali. We bring Balinese, Indonesians, Japanese, Chinese, Singaporeans, Europeans, and Americans all together. Most of these countries have been at war at some point in their history, and have a lot of prejudice. Our workshops erase all of that. We have Muslims and Hindus together with Buddhists and Christians, a mixing pot, racially and culturally. There's not a lot of talking so it fosters an amazing appreciation because they touch each other, or they move with each other in some way. I've learned at Esalen how to facilitate the deepest contact possible. So people go away with illusions shattered about whatever they had illusions about."

There had been thoughts of bringing students from developing countries directly to Esalen itself for training, but this has been blocked due to concern at the U.S. Consulate in Jakarta of immigration and terrorism possibilities. "We flew students to Jakarta so [the U.S. Consulate] could see them, and they're just afraid the students won't come back," said Watson. "They're afraid they'll get here and get lost or blow something up. We're not the most open country right now, especially toward Muslims. Balinese aren't Muslim, they're Hindu, but [the

"It takes someone who was maybe making \$800 a year and turns them into someone with the ability to earn \$10,000 a year. That's huge for someone from there."

Ellen Watson

## Central Coast Lighthouse Keepers

Preserving Point Sur's Lighthouse

Answers provided by Doug Williams, Chairman, CCLK.

Consulate] doesn't think about that. We were trying to bring women and men."

Asylum is one of the main things that drew Watson to Big Sur and Esalen in the first place. "I came to heal myself," said Watson. "I needed asylum from the world. I loved what I found. A few months became a year and a year became two." Eventually she became a staff member at Esalen, using the experience over these two decades to give herself an education in a variety of healing modalities and philosophies.

"When I first got to Esalen, I said this needs to go everywhere," said Watson. "World leaders need to do this before they have a meeting. They need to come have a massage and get in the hot tub before putting on a suit and having their coffee and go talk about peace. What I learned there about presence and contact and the ways to communicate, I realized that once everyone's basic simple feelings are dispelled, expressed, let go of, and we're not holding on to the past, we're all basically really nice people."

Only recently has the non-profit side of Moving Ventures started to take donations. "We have received donations from individuals as well as one foundation, The Elizabeth Gordon Foundation, in San Rafael," said Watson. "A donation of \$500 educates one student in Esalen® Massage at the basic certification level. Upon satisfactory completion of the basic training, the student is issued a California State Approved Certificate as a Massage Practitioner, enabling most to be accepted as bodyworkers in spas, cruise ships, and gyms." ❀

For more information on Moving Ventures write to: Ellen Watson, Moving Ventures School and Productions, Box 572, Big Sur, CA 93920. Call 831-667-0477 ph/fax office. Or visit: [www.movingventures.org](http://www.movingventures.org)

**BSV:** *Could you describe a little about the history of the Central Coast Lighthouse Keepers as well as what your involvement with the community in Big Sur has been like over this time? What is the mission of CCLK?*

**Williams:** Central Coast Lighthouse Keepers (CCLK) was formed in May, 1993 as a non-profit corporation with a mission to preserve the maritime history of the central coast and especially the aids to navigation, the lighthouses. The founding members were drawn from the Big Sur Historical Society and the Big Sur community. CCLK is membership-based, with most members living in Monterey County but many from other States. It is an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff. CCLK's primary role is as the Cooperating Association for Point Sur State Historic Park. In that capacity we work closely with State Parks (Big Sur Sector) to raise money to fund the restoration and preservation work, and run the volunteer docent program. The major challenge is the restoration of the historically-significant Point Sur lightstation and the need to preserve this jewel of the Big Sur coast for the education and enjoyment of future generations. The interpretive walking tours which began in 1987 are led entirely by volunteers trained by CCLK. A number of our volunteers come from the Big Sur community, e.g., long-time residents, teachers at Captain Cooper School, workers in the hospitality industry, etc. The lightstation has been an important part of the Big Sur coast since 1889.

**BSV:** *What organizations support the CCLK? How many funding dollars do you need annually to keep going and how much of this comes from other organizations, as well as individuals?*

**Williams:** Our financial support comes from many sources – from members' annual dues and donations, periodic grants from Federal and State sources, grants from foundations and donations from private individuals on the central coast. The funds needed to support the educational and preservation activities of the volunteers at Point Sur are mostly derived from the members and the visiting public through tour charges and profits from the sales in the museum/gift shop on the top of the Rock. The restoration and preservation projects are large and open-ended, requiring the investment of major sums of money. Historical restoration work, particularly at a site as forbidding and remote as Point Sur, is very difficult and expensive. Such projects are usually funded by some combination of grants from State Parks and private foundations in Monterey County, and donations from individuals.

**BSV:** *What are the other non-profits or foundations not located in Big Sur that the CCLK collaborates with?*

**Williams:** CCLK collaborates with the Big Sur International Marathon, the Monterey History and Art Association (particularly, the Monterey Maritime Museum), the Pacific Grove Natural History Museum Association, the U.S. Lighthouse Society and many lighthouse-based non-profits across the US. The foundations include the Community Foundations for Monterey County and Santa Cruz, the Monterey Peninsula Foundation (AT&T Charities) and the Harden Foundation of Salinas.

**BSV:** *In your experience, what needs are being met in the Big Sur community through the activities of the CCLK? What needs are not being met that you would like to see happen?*

**Williams:** CCLK and the Point Sur volunteers enjoy excellent relations with the Big Sur community. Our docent-led walking tours of Point Sur State Historic Park cover the natural and human history of the Big Sur coast and the role that Point Sur played in the maritime heritage of the central coast.

**BSV:** *How do you measure success for the CCLK? Are there criteria for defining what has worked and what has not?*

**Williams:** Our educational and interpretive programs are judged by the visitors who take the three-hour walking tours of Point Sur. CCLK works hard to help the docents improve their knowledge and presentation skills. Our preservation and restoration successes are obvious to any visitor to the Rock. Since 1999 we have completely restored five of the original seven buildings of this turn-of-the-century light station. The remaining two buildings are the impressive sandstone dwellings that housed the families of the Head Keeper and the three Assistant Keepers. This a formidable task and a great financial challenge. The remarkable progress of the last 6 years

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is an excellent example of what can be accomplished through the efforts of Federal, State and community organizations working together. CCLK is the fund raiser and catalyst in the mix.

*BSV: Could you provide information on how people can donate to the CCLK and see their dollars go to work directly toward the Big Sur community? Are there specific projects people can donate to that are high on the list of needing funds at the moment?*

**Williams:** All of the funds raised by CCLK are used at Point Sur to advance our educational and restoration missions. CCLK has no paid staff. The Board members and all the volunteers are unpaid.

At present, CCLK is raising money to rebuild the historic trail and stairs that the lighthouse keepers used to go between the lighthouse and the dwellings. After this project we will focus on the long and difficult challenge to restore the sandstone buildings in which the keepers' families lived.

*BSV: If you can, could you describe some of the success stories you have had as a non-profit in Big Sur? Could you relate any stories of the challenges as well that you may have?*

**Williams:** CCLK's partnership with State Parks (Big Sur Sector) has been extremely successful. Since 1997 we have raised \$2.5 million which has paid for the restoration of the lighthouse and many of the support buildings on Point Sur. Historical restoration and preservation work is very challenging and expensive, particularly at such a wild and remote site. This work has been accomplished by a combination of volunteer labor and contractors.

Our costs would have been much greater without the donated services of a civil engineer whose grandfather was a keeper at Point Sur. Working from his office in Morro Bay he has designed and prepared the detailed specifications and drawings for almost all of the restoration projects including the collapsed Barn, Redwood Tower, the trail, roof and seismic retrofitting work on the dwellings, the water cistern and proposed fire-suppression system. All of this work was done pro bono!

We have to be quite creative in our fund-raising efforts. Here are two examples.

1. After the El Nino storms of 1998, AT&T/Cellular One received permission from State Parks to erect a temporary antenna on the Rock to provide cellphone communication between the many work crews distributed along Hwy 1. CCLK approached AT&T with the suggestion for a permanent solution. We

requested that they provide \$110,000 to allow us to rebuild the historic redwood water tower on the Rock. In return they could mount their repeater equipment in the tower out of public view. This was a win-win situation for everyone – CCLK, AT&T and all their cellphone users, visiting or living along the Big Sur coast.

2. In 2000, CCLK was attempting to raise \$300,000 for a contract to restore the upper portion of the lighthouse, interior and exterior. Our campaign got a tremendous boost with the extremely generous challenge grant of \$150,000 from a Big Sur resident. The balance of the money came mostly from donations of \$1,000 each from private donors under our Prism Project. The lantern room deck has holes for 182 glass prisms which helped to light the keepers' work room before electrification. When the lighthouse was automated in 1972 and the Coast Guard personnel left Point Sur only two of the original prisms were left glued in place. After considerable research we found a glass maker in New Jersey who could make replacements in the manner of the late-1800s. We then thought that people might be willing to donate \$1,000 to "own" a prism that would be forever a part of the historic lighthouse. The project has been very successful; only 10 slots remain unfilled in December, 2005. The necessary funds were raised and International Chimney Corporation, Buffalo, NY performed the restoration work in 2001. ❀

"Historical restoration and preservation work is very challenging and expensive, particularly at such a wild and remote site. This work has been accomplished by a combination of volunteer labor and contractors."

Doug Williams

People can send donations to CCLK at P.O. Box 223014, Carmel CA 93922. We can be contacted by e-mail at [cclk@pointsur.org](mailto:cclk@pointsur.org); or by telephone at 831-372-2879.

## Grants Available to Neighborhood Groups

\$87,500 in community-improvement funds

The Neighborhood Grants Program of the Community Foundation for Monterey County will grant a total of \$87,500 to grassroots groups conducting community projects in Monterey County. Some of the funds come from First 5 Monterey County to support programs and services that benefit local children from the prenatal stage to age 5 and their families.

The Neighborhood Grants Program is currently accepting grant applications from groups that wish to carry out projects to improve the well-being, safety, and overall quality of life in their neighborhoods. Project objectives include increased community participation and a renewed sense of community identity and vision. Applications must be received or postmarked by February 24, 2006.

The mission of the Community Foundation for Monterey County is to improve the quality of life in Monterey County by raising, managing, and distributing charitable funds to worthy organizations and by creating positive connections between donors and their interests. First 5 Monterey County, also known as the Monterey County Children and Families Commission, was established in 1999 to distribute Proposition 10 revenues in Monterey County to programs and services that meet local needs of children to age 5 and their families. ❀

For an application, guidelines, or more information, contact Amy Allard at 831-754-5880 or [amy@cfmco.org](mailto:amy@cfmco.org).





## Big Sur Health Center

First class health services for remote rural community

**T**he Big Sur Health Center was created in the late 70's at the Grange

Hall and has been a growing community fixture ever since. In the early 80's, with the help of All Saints Church, the BSHC moved to its current location. The Community Hospital of Monterey Peninsula provided the Health Center with two old modular buildings for the move to the All Saints property and a group of local volunteers cobbled together these buildings to form the skeleton of a rural Medical Facility, says BSHC board member Butch Kronlund.

For over twenty years the staff provided quality health care, seeing progressively more and more patients while the facility continued to age.

"If I were to identify the biggest success story the BSHC had to tell the community it would have to be the work that led to the purchase and installation of the new modular building for BSHC," said Kronlund, who joined the board in 1998 and helped the construction project as the general contractor, collaborating with members of the community to improve the facility.

"There is a large and diverse tapestry of organizations and individuals who support the BSHC," said Kronlund. "Frankly, people and organizations that see this local institution for what it is understand the urgent need and respond by being supporters, both with funds and on-going in kind donations."

"Often, BSHC is the first responder to disease and is there to facilitate recovery of local patients who are on the mend – from the winter flu to their last breath in life and everything in between. Our staff is very professional and handles all of the above in a way that I am humbled by."

Butch Kronlund

In general, more than half the annual operations budget is made whole through fund raising efforts, says Kronlund. "Those efforts include our annual Gala [this year at Ventana Inn and Spa] and other individual responses to our annual solicitation letter," he said. "In the mix are local employer and employee voluntary monthly contributions that reflect the sense of importance local businesses and their employees place on having ready, reliable health care close at hand.

"That local, homegrown fund raising effort, which incidentally seems to run year round, handles about fifty percent of the deficit," he said. "The rest is raised by way of grants from foundations, tobacco tax money, and grant monies that reward BSHC for

being involved in programs that target underserved segments of our society."

As well as the traditional and emergency health care services provided by BSHC, Kronlund talked about new directions the center is taking based on feedback from the community. This includes bringing in alternative healthcare providers such as physical therapists, acupuncturists, and chiropractors who would rent space in the facility as private contractors. The Board of Directors and Administrator of BSHC are currently interviewing practitioners to fill these needs.

"We have interviewed practitioners," says Kronlund, "with a special concern for finding practitioners who are bi-lingual."

This different direction in health care developed several years ago when the BSHC brought in a facilitator to help with a visioning process to identify short, medium, and long term goals, said Kronlund. "[We were asked to] let our imagination run wild, and see what [the BSHC] would look like," he said. "The number one thing that came out of the workshops and retreats was that we needed a new facility. The other piece of that was the need for different healing modalities."

"Clearly, each of these disciplines is complementary to the other and when added to the Health Center's primary care focus, results in a more comprehensive holistic approach to being well," says Kronlund. "Providing these types of alternative services are a big part of serving the elective health care needs of this community and by choice, the direction the Board would like the BSHC to move towards."

But besides these new ventures, BSHC's main mission is to cater to the every day health care needs of the Big Sur community. "What BSHC, as a rural Medical Facility, can provide is positive, informed health care that is excellent at diagnosis, excellent at treatment," said Kronlund. "Often, BSHC is the first responder to disease and is there to facilitate recovery of local patients who are on the mend – from the winter flu to their last breath in life and everything in between. Our staff is very professional and handles all of the above in a way that I am humbled by."

At this time, the biggest need for the BSHC is funding the day to day operations, says Kronlund. This includes salaries, prescription drugs, accounting and insurance costs. ❁

For those interested in donating to the BSHC, contributions can be sent to: Big Sur Health Center, 46896 Highway 1, Big Sur, CA 93920.

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**BSV:** *Is there a road up there, or do people have to hike up?*

**Neeb:** There's a road. Limited parking. Fortunately because of the duration of some of the other staff members, some are caretakers, others are renters, they have established themselves on the coast for a long period of time. They've found their cabins, their niches, their little studios. We subsidize one of our chef's housing off property, so we keep her a bit sane. So she doesn't have to be with the staff here all day working and when she's not.

**BSV:** *That's probably wise.*

**Neeb:** Yeah. And I own my own house on the coast. For us, the housing isn't as critical. I'd like to see more available. As long as turnover doesn't kick into high-gear we should be okay. I know places like Post Ranch and Ventana, they struggle with how to house the people and how much to charge rent and how many they can house, and for us that's not an issue. Again we're not a corporation that's here to turn a dime, and see the profit margin always going up. That makes it easier for the organization to balance the expenses for housing people against the income of what we're earning. Deetjen's itself has a following of guests and tourists that have come back over and over again, some for forty years. They've been coming to this place when it was really funky and they keep coming back anyway. There's some niche there that this place satisfies. So that's a big plus. And our restaurant is good enough that we get recommendations from places up and down the coast, 'If you want a great breakfast, come down here' or, 'You're looking for an alternative to some of the high-end places, come over here.'

**BSV:** *Yes, I'd seen some well-known jazz vocalist mention Deetjen's in the Los Angeles Times that it was her favorite place to go in Big Sur.*

**Neeb:** Yeah, that's the kind of stuff. That's it. That's it. That kind of drops out there and it hits. Our website brings in a lot of people from Europe, they see Deetjen's and say, 'Hey, that sounds Norwegian, must be European, let's go there.' That kind of stuff. We don't do a lot of advertising. With twenty rooms it's not hard

to keep up above the ninety percent level, even through the season, which should have ended about two weeks ago [this interview was on November 16, 2005] but it hasn't. I think that's part of the political situation out in the world. Let's not go overseas or to a foreign country right now, Bush is scaring people with his stance, so they go a bit closer to home.

**BSV:** *What is your normal day here like?*

**Neeb:** My normal day as a General Manager? Well, typically it's upstairs in the upper office, working with insurance and employee questions, setting up projects that we have to deal with. Typically this revolves around stuff that happens to fifty, sixty year old buildings. Maintenance, maintenance, maintenance. Old wiring, old plumbing, old structures, a very old septic system. Staying on top of that kind of stuff. Scheduling employees. And working with the chef's on menus. Sometimes I go into rooms and see if everything's all right.

**BSV:** *How often do those menus change?*

**Neeb:** Some things haven't changed for over ten years and other things we look toward changing. What I'm endeavoring to do is to get the chefs to be more creative about their entrees. What I find that happens though, is that the people who are used to the place come in and say, 'Where's my ... dot, dot, dot ...?' Or 'Where's the lamb,' or, 'Where's the pear salad?' things like that. So that kind of history and familiarity is part of what draws people back here. It's comfortable and people know what to expect. You start getting feedback sheets that say 'I really miss my ...' whatever it happens to be.

**BSV:** *Are any of these entrees old Deetjen's family recipes?*

**Neeb:** The lamb would be about the closest one. It's been here the longest. In Deetjen's day, it was different. There may have been lamb on the menu, but it wasn't served this way, it was lamb stew, or something to that effect. Back then it was much more of a country kitchen than a restaurant kitchen. They would serve whatever was in the kitchen at the time. Actually it wasn't Grandpa

and Grandma Deetjen's who turned it into a restaurant, but a lady that leased this building with a specific intention of creating a restaurant. Because it was at the end of the road, they caught a lot of traffic, and people would get down and not be able to get back before the end of the day, so they'd knock on the door and ask 'Do you have a place for me to stay' so from that it grew up into an inn. We've done some refinements to the menus to the point where it's actually fixed cuisine. After that, experiment, exploring.

**BSV:** *As far as maintenance and upkeep, do you run into a lot of issues with the planning department or permitting issues?*

**Neeb:** We don't go through a lot of physical changes. We're obligated to keeping the buildings looking as they are. We've got the restrictions of don't blow out the walls, don't change the windows, keep the gray patina. Some of the interior changes are relatively minor. We had a foundation problem in one building that was starting to settle into the canyon, so we fixed it. We just fixed it. We've got a septic system issue, we will get permits for. We don't go through a lot of construction here, it's just a matter of fixing little things. So it hasn't been much of an issue as far as working with the county. Fortunately. I know it's not true up and down the coast. The kind of work I did before I came to Deetjen's, suggested that it is extraordinarily difficult. Particularly for the first time buyer or resident. The rules that they have here and the fees that they charge to get those things done, in my opinion, is outrageous. That's on one hand, as a home owner. On the other hand, thank goodness for some restrictions. Otherwise we'd have houses Saulsalito style up our hillsides. So that wouldn't work for this place either. It's a delicate balance. Having been on the Big Sur Land Use Advisory Committee, where we guide a perspective builder, owner, to something suitable for the environment, that role is important. We found, that in most cases, if you had enough money and a good enough lawyer, you could get away with just about anything anyway. I know I'm going on both sides of the fence on this.

**BSV:** *I think a lot of people are*

*on both sides of the fence on this, because it is such an issue that they don't want rampant building, but they also have their every day problems and upkeep that needs to be done.*

**Neeb:** Yeah. Yeah, you're not supposed to paint the wall of your house without getting a permit. Excuse me? Excuse me, my roof is leaking, I have to go spend \$1000 or \$5000 dollars to get a piece of paper that says I can fix my leaking roof. That doesn't make sense. I think one of the things that's a bother for me is that the restrictions or the rules are not specific to the area. It's completely county wide, and it is really distinctly different, what you face down here in Big Sur than it is in Monterey or Salinas or in the Valley or something like that. It's becoming more homogenous, as far as the regulations go, which I think is ridiculous. It doesn't take into consideration the special nature of the coastline down here. It's on the order of things like the water treatment issues. When there's a perfectly good stream or spring source that's been utilized for decades, but someone got sick in Milwaukee or somewhere from a water treatment system, everybody's got to comply with these regulations that don't make sense here. Or even just the matter of testing that water over and over again, the rates have gone up from like \$40 to something like \$1200 over the last five, ten years. It's an easy thing for them to do. If it's good for one, it's good for everybody. So that way they have one set of rules and everyone has to check off on those rules. The politics and the bureaucracy of that I understand, but it doesn't fit the unique situations that this county finds itself in. That's awkward and a little chaffing.

**BSV:** *Do you get a lot of local clientele coming in for morning coffee, breakfasts and dinners, things like that?*

**Neeb:** Absolutely. We have a regular clientele that comes in for breakfast, and a lot of the locals with check in at various times for dinner. One of the things I instituted here was a free dinner on your birthday, a free meal, just to reestablish that we are local friendly. We were already that. Any given morning you'll see people lined up at the bar, they come in for their

## Big Sur Vision Project Update

Continuing discussions on the future of Big Sur

coffee and a bite from up and down the coast. That's something I'd like us to continue to be and consider it our mandate. We are local, we all live here and it's just good for business. In slow times we can count on our locals to come in and have a dinner with us. That makes it straightforward for us. We'll pick up on the part time locals, those who come in from all parts of the world and live here for a couple months and then go back. Typically one of their stops is to come out for a bit to eat here. It's a unique place. It's too close to the highway, it's ramshackle, and it's delightful at the same time. ❀

Public agencies and conservation land trusts active in Big Sur met with the Vision Project group twice over the last two months to discuss past, present and future public land acquisition and achieve consensus about further acquisitions. The meetings, held on October 21 and November 18, were a continuation of a process the Vision Project had started early in the year. Officials and representatives brought maps and handouts outlining their strategic plans, acquisition criteria, as well as tables showing purchases in recent years.

The Vision Project began early in 2005 with community members gathering to discuss a common future vision, and more recently, inviting outside agencies in to provide the rationale for their acquisitions in order to better understand how that affects the culture, economy, land use and natural environment in Big Sur. Further meetings are scheduled for the third Friday of each month to be held at the Grange (unless otherwise noted) on January 20, and February 17.

Specifically, the November 18 meeting centered largely on agencies that hadn't yet presented their materials to the group, then moved into a loose debate on ra-

tionale for agencies purchasing private land. The second half of the meeting refocused on what specific goals the group would address in December, which included getting a bird's eye view Big Sur land acquisition priorities.

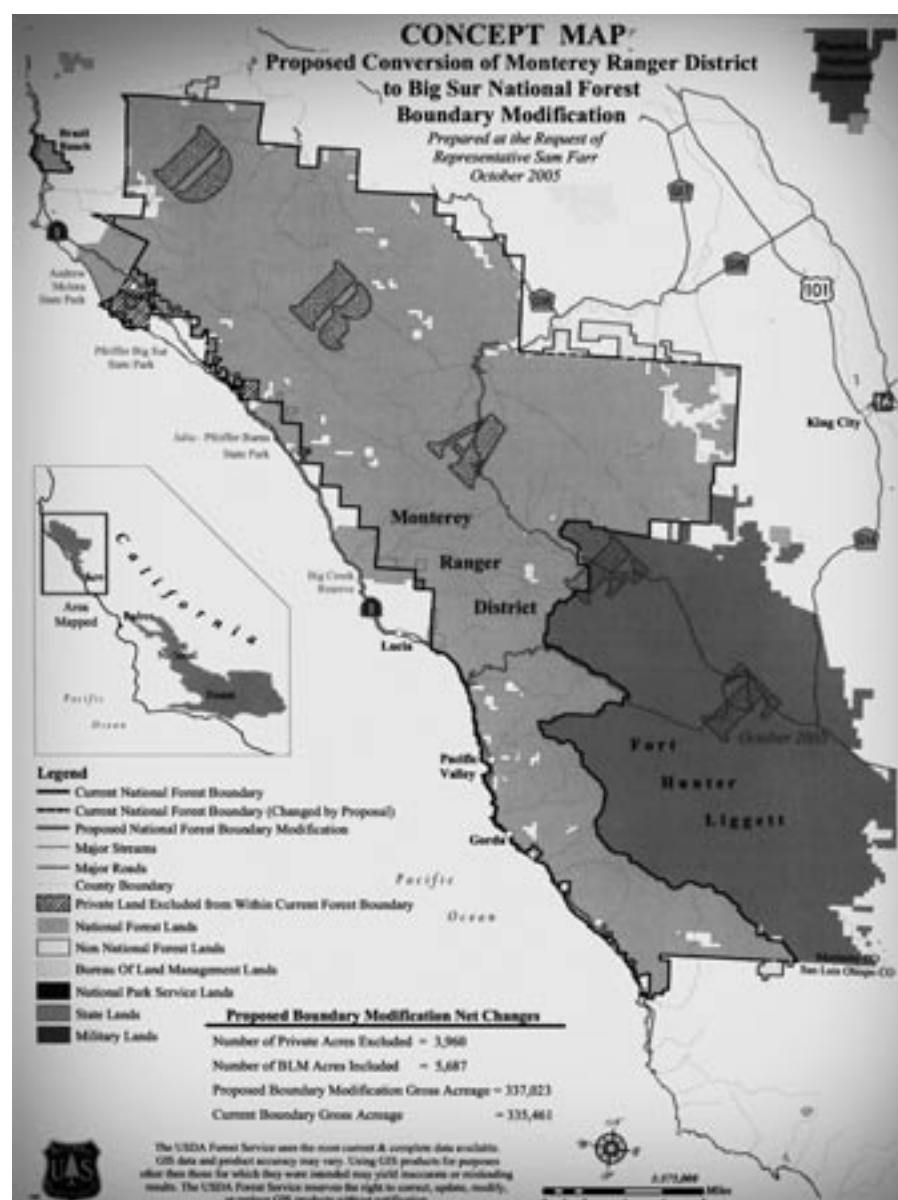
Participants agreed that at the December 16 meeting, community members and conservation agencies would lay out a map in order to get community input and discuss potential solutions over areas of concern. Andy Nusbaum helped summarize what the discussion surrounded for the group and outlined what might be addressed at future meetings, including designating specific areas of acquisition and protection, rationale for acquisition, the possible beneficial functions of acquisition, specificity and inventory about acquisition, and questions about how this all folds into the land use plan's goals. "It won't be easy, it won't be quick," said Nusbaum. "This is a long term process."

The meeting ended with Congressman Sam Farr's district director Alec Arago submitting a revised concept map proposing boundary modifications to the Monterey County Ranger District that Farr believes will address community concerns over acquisitions in Big Sur and also help public agencies fulfill their acquisition needs away from community areas.

Earlier in the meeting, Lee Otter of the Monterey County Planning Commission presented figures that 150 square miles of the total 210 square miles within the Big Sur Coastal Land Use Plan are within public ownership, or around 75%.

Others said that the Big Sur Planning Area is a larger and better measurement. Possibly more applicable is the Vision Project's view of Big Sur as everything from Malpas Creek south to the Monterey County Line and inland to the coastal divide. In this area, figures like 95% of the land being under public ownership were bounced around. Mike Caplin remarked that in the past 20 years, one-third of the historic private land in Big Sur had been acquired by public agencies and land trusts. Part of the problem, Caplin and others believe, is the land trusts acting as middle-men between private sellers and the eventual public owners, essentially banking a profit for continued land acquisition and conservation around the country.

Trust for Public Land denies this claim. "[TPL] does not pay above market prices, we are prohibited from doing that," said Marc Landgraf, representing TPL at



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the meetings. Landgraf was defending TPL against accusations that it was running its operation as a business like any other land buyer and that its purchases in the area brought the group a profit. "We're not the ones with the decision about where the land should be protected. Landowners, interested in protecting their property, often contact us to sell their land. That happens very often, even in Big Sur."

From the data provided at the meeting, TPL appears to be the exclusive go-to land trust for the Los Padres National Forest. Between 1986 and 2002, 15 out of the 16 listed land acquisitions detailed by the Los Padres National Forest representatives were facilitated by TPL. Over 4,600 acres transferred to the LPNF were acquired from land outside the existing LPNF boundaries. Of the almost 6,000 acres purchased by the LPNF since 1986, only 6 acres (Cypress Point) were not first acquired by TPL.

While there were many vocal voices calling for a complete halt in future land acquisition by agencies and land trusts in Big Sur, other reaction ranged from more cautious to supportive. Ned Callihan remarked that he believed there were valid reasons for possible public acquisition, including finding solutions for affordable housing, the potential community service functions of some acquisition, and protecting the property rights of those agencies themselves.

John Bradford of the Los Padres Forest Service wondered how possible it would be to get as detailed as some participants wanted about future acquisitions. "We can do this in a general way, but we can't go parcel by parcel and give an inventory for that beyond what our general criteria are."

Toward the end of the meeting, Barbara Hoyt helped bring debate around to a centered and less contentious level, focusing on solutions and ideas for the next meeting. "I think we're talking about the survival of the community," said Hoyt. "I don't think we should be hung up on form for form's sake." She also stated that by identifying and clarifying the community needs as well as the agency needs, it would be possible to eventually blur the lines that divide the communities and agencies, especially regarding issues such as affordable housing, health care and education.

While much of the debate throughout these meetings seems to have been positive and productive, participants are still hoping the process will help bring about concrete proposals over protocol surrounding future land acquisitions in Big Sur. ❀

For further information on the Vision Project, you may contact Martha Diehl at [mvdiehl@mindspring.com](mailto:mvdiehl@mindspring.com) or Alan Perlmutter at [fronthill@aol.com](mailto:fronthill@aol.com).

## *CPOA meets with Congressman Farr over proposed Big Sur National Forest*

**N**early 70 residents and property owners of Big Sur met with Representative Sam Farr on November 29th at a meeting of the Coast Property Owners Association to discuss proposed changes to the Monterey Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest.

In October, Rep. Farr requested an updated draft plan for a proposed boundary modification to convert the Monterey Ranger District to an entity called the Big Sur National Forest. The new draft, an updated version of a proposed concept map that was leaked to the public in 2004, was first presented to the Big Sur community at the Vision Project meeting in November by Farr's district officer Alec Arago.

The first draft first seen in 2004 had included within its boundaries nearly all the land from near Bixby Bridge south all the way through the 82,000 acre Hearst Ranch property. The new, leaner version, Farr explains, is meant to address both the needs of the community in Big Sur and the public agencies. The Hearst Ranch is not included in the October 2005 draft, nor are coastal areas that had, according to Farr, been mistakenly mislabeled in the 2004 draft.

The proposed boundary modifications would add an additional 1,562 acres of land to the proposed Big Sur National Forest, which is currently the northern part of the Los Padres National Forest, under the auspices of the Monterey Ranger District.

In the new proposal, most of the new lands added would be sections to the north, east, and south of the current LPNF boundaries plus inholdings. Certain segments of private land currently within the National Forest boundaries would be removed from those boundaries, including the large section of 'Big Sur proper' between Andrew Molera State Park and Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, as well as smaller sections down the coast. The modifications would move the National Forest office to King City. Farr's position is that splitting away from the LPNF and creating a Big Sur National Forest with its offices in Monterey County would give locals more control and easier access to officials who deal with them on a daily basis, an idea that was initially applauded by some.

To other residents, however, Farr's proposals didn't make sense even after they'd heard him out. "I don't understand why Farr is doing this if is only bringing the office from L.A. [up to Monterey County]," said Jeanie Ford. "Why go through all the hoops to achieve these benefits if they couldn't just do it that way now?"

**D**uring the meeting, Mike Caplin, President of the CPOA, gave a power point presentation to the group outlining the history of public acquisition of private land and how this is in conflict with the Weeks Act which states that only 3,000 acres of land could be added outside of National Forest boundaries after the formation of a national forest. Caplin drew from historical documents in the congressional record, maps of acquisition over the past 20 years, and tables from recent meetings of agencies with the community at the Vision Project to outline how the LPNF and local lawmakers have been

going beyond the bounds of what is arguably allowed by law.

Since 1986, the Los Padres National Forest has acquired around 5,900 acres of land in Big Sur, 4,610 acres of which have been outside the LPNF boundaries. There is some concern that if the LPNF in Big Sur was renamed the Big Sur National Forest, the historical 3,000 acre limit to acquisitions outside the National Forest, which has already been passed anyway, would be voided. Farr, according to attendees at the meeting, initially stated that the 3,000 acre limit could be retained, but then later stated that he could not prevent further acquisitions.

During the meeting Caplin challenged Farr to pledge that there would be no further public acquisitions of private land in the Big Sur area, something Farr said he couldn't promise because it wasn't up to him. "The bottom line, Sam said, was that none of this is in stone," said Paul Lesniak, regarding both the proposed Big Sur National Forest and further acquisitions of private land. "The bottom line is that Congress can legislate around it."

**F**ord remarked that it didn't seem clear why Farr was proposing the modifications, and that his position was that if the Big Sur community wasn't willing to go along with the modifications, he didn't seem willing to do anything about continued public land acquisitions in the area. "Here [the community and the agencies] are trying to be open and honest with each other, and Farr didn't seem to be telling the whole story," said Ford. "He basically said he can't do anything to stop the acquisitions."

After the formal meeting with Farr, the group watched a documentary called "For the Good of All" produced by PBS's Frontline which detailed how a community between Akron and Cleveland, Ohio was systematically dismantled after a national recreation site was introduced to the area. ❀