

# The Grapevine

The Newsletter of George Ranch

July, 2006



## President's Letter

by Harold Marsh

Neighbors:

I'm sure you share my relief that summer has finally arrived after such a long, wet spring.

This summer the Board is working very hard to complete a number of projects, including implementing the water tank project, reviewing the George Ranch Rules and preparing for the Annual meeting in September.

Construction for the water tank project began (finally!) in May. At this writing, we have completed construction for the two tank sites and have installed all water lines and the electrical and communications lines to the new tank sites from the existing sites.

The tanks are scheduled to be delivered in the next week or so and are expected to take approximately 3 to 4 days per tank to assemble. Once assembled, we will connect the tanks to the new water lines and test for integrity. If all goes well, we hope to cut over to the new tanks by the end of July and then complete the

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## Excitement at Brady Junction

by John Brady

For sixteen years John and Libby Brady have enjoyed their home at the "hot spot", Brady Junction (Baytree and White Alder), where, from their front porch so much of the daily – and occasionally nightly – drama of the George Ranch takes place.

On a recent Saturday afternoon, for instance, a young couple tried to make that left turn from Bay Tree on to White Alder at something like 50 miles an hour in a beautiful, red Lamborghini. (Lamborghini's have almost enough horsepower, 400 or so, to qualify for Dick Kahler's garage!)

Anyway, the red Lamborghini and its occupants found themselves off the road and only inches away from the six foot deep drainage ditch below Fallen Leaf vineyard.

Libby was in Denver on family business, so John put down his wine glass and left the porch to see if the driver's attractive blond companion was alright. She was. So, it appeared, was

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## President's Letter (Continued.)

project by dismantling the old tanks and restoring the tank sites to their natural conditions. As some of us will be affected when we cut over to the new tanks, we will provide future communications as the project moves forward

In our May 20<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, we discussed and approved budgets for the new fiscal year 2007 beginning July 1, 2006, as well as the reserve studies for both the Association and the Water Company. We were able to keep our operating expenses held essentially to the cost of inflation. However, we have some important capital expenditures anticipated with

our roads. After looking at our reserves for future capital expenditures, we approved increasing both the Association annual dues and water company rates next year to address the capital expenditures and reserve shortfalls.

Karen Ury, together with her team of Pam Klonsky, Jan Stanley and Andy Massie have reviewed our current George Ranch Rules and have had one open meeting to discuss changes or issues which should be addressed. The proposed changes will be discussed in the next two Board meetings (July 15<sup>th</sup> and August 19<sup>th</sup>). We would like to conclude the review by late summer,

and approve the revised George Ranch Rules at the Annual meeting in September.

Last, and most definitely not least, we have a summer party planned on the afternoon of July 15<sup>th</sup> @ 3:00 at the Clubhouse. Diane Kahler and her Social Committee of Florence Garvie and Nancy Sheppard are planning a summer regatta party to bless our fleet of two new paddle boats (now both "in the water"). Please plan to join us and bring your family.

I hope you and your family enjoy this spectacular summer.

## Excitement at Brady Junction, (Continued)

the car – license "0-200MPH." It's just that Lamborghini's have a minus two inches of clearance on a flat road and, despite four wheel drive, aren't worth much at backing out of rough terrain. Soon the Lamborghini, the driver, the lady and John all more or less had their posteriors up in the air, looking under the car, trying to figure out how the machine could possibly be retrieved from its predicament.

The earnest driver first used his cell phone to exhaust the possibility that any Lamborghini approved tow trucks live in Sonoma. He then shared the ignominy he was about to experience as all the other folks leaving the party he had been attending were going to drive by this ego-destroying scene. John, of course, salvaged his tormented soul with a stern lecture on reckless speeding along gentle country roads lined with houses, children, deer and other turkeys.

Well, all the other party goers cruised slowly by in their Mazdas and Toyotas and took in the scene. Imagine the pure fun the driver experienced in

telling fifteen times how he got into that silly situation!

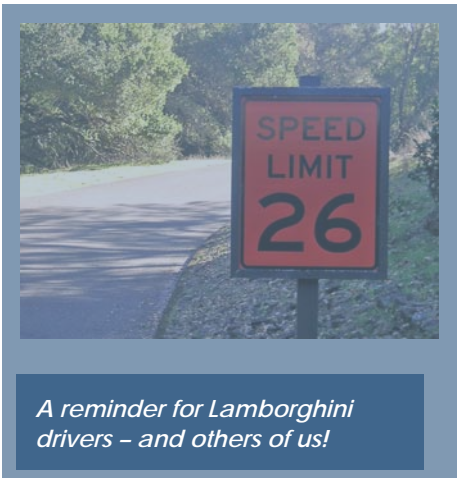
A great big tow truck (in UCLA blue and gold) did its thing. The Lamborghini disappeared down White Alder, and John returned to his captain's chair and wine glass on the porch at Brady Junction.

More from your correspondent in another 16 years.

## "Wow – What a Ride!"

This year's Sonoma County Fair (July 25-August 7) will focus on the automobile with the theme "Wow! What a Ride!"

There will be lots of car displays, a destruction derby, car-related contests such as veggie car races and an ugly pick-up competition, and car stuff everywhere. The Hall of Flowers will integrate classic cars (the real thing) in gardens with the overall theme "Petal to the Metal". There will also be the usual carnival rides, flower show, rodeo and headline entertainment shows.



Single admission tickets at the gate are \$7.00 for adults. Children under 12 are admitted free. Parking ranges anywhere from \$5.00 to \$8.00, depending on the lot. Wednesday, July 26, and Wednesday, August 2, are senior citizen days when everyone age 60 and over will be admitted free. For further information on the price of individual events and advance ticket purchases, go to <http://www.sonomacountyfair.com>.

# Meeting Blanchette

by Maria Biaseto

Some time ago, an acquaintance of mine who lives in Sonoma asked me when I moved to the George Ranch and I replied, "How well I remember my first experience to my new kingdom after living in Marin County for nearly twenty-eight years."

My first time here, after closing the escrow, I was confronted with an extremely large and, in my opinion, very handsome hare who stood in the middle of my driveway and was unwilling to let me proceed to the house. I talked to him with a whispering tone and let him know that I was a harmless and caring person, and above all, loved all the earthly creatures and I intended to ask his permission to share with me his beautiful paradise. I believe that he understood me because he jumped to the side of my driveway and let me proceed to the house.

I remember how peaceful and beautiful this place was in 1985. There were few cars, trucks, or pollution and no human disagreements. The evening was delighted by the songs of the nightingale and the melodious chorus of the frogs or toads who were so willing to serenade the newcomer.

Shortly after my arrival, I met George Ranch's First Lady, Blanchette George, whom I met at the mailbox. She checked me out from head to toe as if I were on the market for sale.

I drove a 1963 Chevy Nova station wagon that possibly needed some improvement. My beloved dog, Nina, was with me, patiently waiting inside the wagon for me to conclude my encounter with Mrs. George. Then Blanchette proceeded to ask me what I was doing at the Ranch, was I someone's housemaid? I softly informed her that I was the new owner of the

newly built house to the left of White Alder. I admit that I enjoyed being a bit of an eccentric in as far as my lifestyle, but with my permission. I was not aware how effective my personality was, at least to her.

She was a person of extravagant affluence and quite accustomed to her appeal. Suddenly she became almost speechless and with an air of superiority, asked me why I was driving "that old station wagon?" I tried to inform her that I liked old cars and for me it was just what I needed at that time. She then said, "Maria, I respect your choice of cars but why don't you leave this wagon at home in the garage when you are here?"

I realized then that the expectations of my new lifestyle were not going to be a picnic as I had previously predicted. Of course I was concerned over her statement and opinion but chose not to be swayed and continued to exercise my comfortable lifestyle as it was.

Blanchette was a very generous and caring person. She had many outstanding qualities that made her

## "Necessity is the Mother of Invention" (or Many Thanks to Carl Rogge and James Huff)

The photo on the right is an adjustable crowfoot wrench," the conception of Ranch Manager, James Huff, as executed by Carl Rogge.

The "necessity" arose from the need to tighten the connections between the inch water lines and water meters on each George Ranch lot. In the past, it was necessary to dig up every concrete water meter box to access the connection, tighten it, and then reset the concrete box and the soil around it. It took a lot of time.

While a crowfoot wrench could be purchased, at \$200 or more, it seemed a bit pricey. Instead, for \$15, James and Carl made the one at the right. A task that historically took days now can be done in an afternoon. It is a fine example of community problem solving. Thanks, Carl & James!!

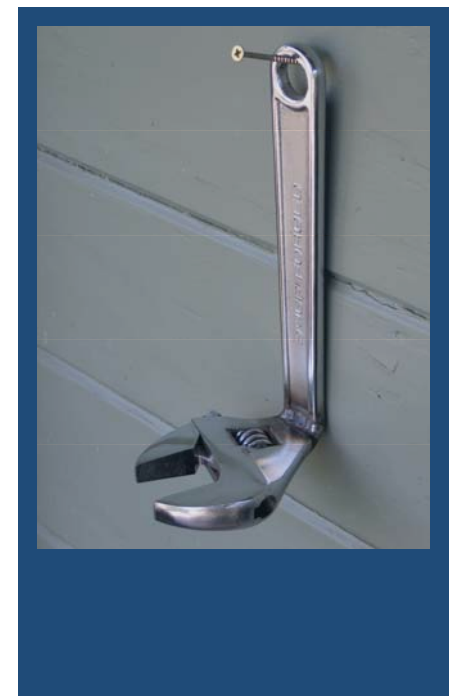
Manv thanks to Carl and James!



The George Ranch Clubhouse is on Lake Blanchette

stand out among those who knew her. She loved to shower me with gifts; not because she wanted me to like her, but because she wanted me to look like her, which I never could. We remained good and close friends for over 12 years until I found her nearly dead in her home.

The many years of kind relationship left me with a cavalcade of wonderful memories that are extremely precious to me and I am willing to share some with you



# Sonoma Valley's Hospital

Your newsletter editor has asked for a status report on efforts to build a new hospital in Sonoma, following the defeat of Measure C and the emergence of a possible new site on Broadway, south of Napa Road.

It is a tough assignment with no clear answer.

For now, the work to see if a consensus can be reached is in the hands of the Sonoma Valley Healthcare Coalition. This is a group of roughly 70 of the Hospital's strongest supporters and critics working to see if they can come up with a compromise proposal they believe might get the required two-thirds vote to fund the new hospital. Coalition meetings are open to the public and are held Monday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00, typically at Ramekins.

One of the Coalition's critical tasks is led by its "Options Committee", which will evaluate the alternatives. With the aid of experienced hospital financial consultants, the Options Committee intends to detail the financial ramifications and the pros and cons of each alternative. They will also emphasize: 1) provision of a basic emergency room; 2) financial viability (at least likely break-even operation); and, 3) high quality

health care. Following its review, the Options Committee expects to recommend one or more alternatives to the Coalition. It, in turn, will review those recommendations and survey the voters to see if the recommended alternative(s) can garner the needed 67 percent vote. If so, the favored alternative will be recommended to the Hospital Board and probably placed on the ballot.

Pending receipt of the Options Committee's recommendations, the Coalition uses its public meetings to educate itself. On July 6<sup>th</sup>, the experts who wrote a report (Plan B) suggesting six possible options for Sonoma to explore, met with the Coalition for three hours of questions and answers about their report. There have also been presentations on California's requirements for emergency rooms, the operations of our emergency room, Sonoma Valley's FireMed Ambulance service, and our Community Health Center.

In the end, its all a bit like herding cats. Working to get people with such strongly held and widely divergent views to compromise is fraught with problems. The efforts over the next one to two months will tell the tale of whether a compromise can be reached. Only then will it be possible to begin projecting dates for Coalition and Hospital Board action and a likely district wide vote.

Stay tuned.

## Neighborhood Watch

Around 7:30 PM on Sunday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, as Maria Biassetto took her dog, Jack, for his evening walk, she noticed five men at her pond. Asked what they were doing, they said they were fishing while visiting a neighbor. When Maria expressed doubt, one said his mother lived here making Maria even more skeptical. She suggested they leave and called the neighbor to see if they had houseguests. The answer was "No."

When Maria noticed one of the

men walking around the back of her house, she called the sheriff and went back outside (with Jack, on his leash) to tell them she had called the police.

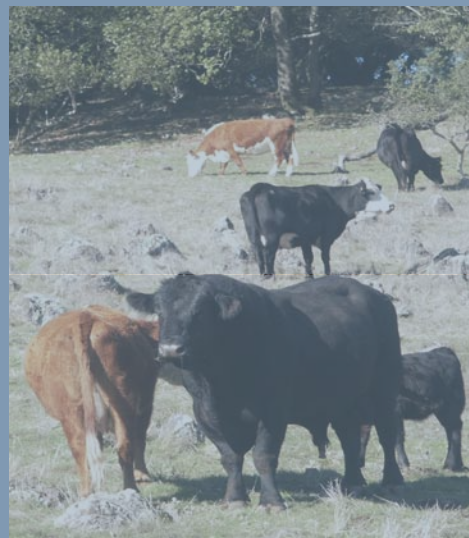
They took off running but one apparently injured his ankle and was unable to move fast enough. One of his friends stayed behind while the other three got away.

Though the two pleaded with Maria to let them go, she told them to "stay put" as Jack bared his teeth

and snarled. Maria and Jack held them at bay for 25 minutes until the sheriff arrived.

As it turned out, one of the two had a warrant out for his arrest for burglary and drugs. The sheriff handcuffed him and took them both away. Jack, the real hero, was rewarded with a sugar cookie topped with a scoop of toasted almond ice cream.

Moral of this story: Be careful about who follows you through the gate!



*We are blessed with critters of all kinds on George Ranch*





*Dr. Juliana Sorem*

*Kudos to James Huff for the photos on pages 1 and 3!*

*Always wanted to be published? You can! Write an article for The Grapevine!.*

## Neighborhood News

Granny-San and Paah (Sandra and John) Leland are having their 5<sup>th</sup> annual Camp Hawksreach July 19-25. They invite their combined families which consist of 7 sons with 7 spouses, partners or fiancées, and 12 grandchildren, ages 2 to 8 years. They're praying for warm weather and an absence of yellow jackets

The proud Peases attended the graduation of daughter, Juliana Sorem, from the U.C. Davis School of Veterinary Medicine on Friday evening, June 16<sup>th</sup>. Family and friends celebrated the event with a party at the George Ranch club house the following day. Juliana will intern for the next year in San Rafael at the Pet Emergency & Specialty Center of Marin.

Alycia and Casey are thrilled to announce the arrival of the newest grandchild. Nobu Kainoa Kagami was born April 27<sup>th</sup> in San Francisco to daughter Susie and husband Tad. At 8 lbs. 4 ozs., Grandpa Case has already contacted Coach Nolan in efforts to negotiate a multi-million dollar starting position contract with the 49ers for 2026. Meanwhile, Nobu hopes to attend the First Annual George Ranch Regatta in July!

Alycia Case was the first (and only) person to catch the difference in the PDF and Word versions of the last issue of The Grapevine. In one version, the picture of White Alder near Maria Biasetto's property was the postcard made years ago and the other, a photograph taken by a resident. Good eyes, Alycia.



*Nobu Kagami, the budding linebacker!*

*Tell us About What's Happening In Your Family:*

*Got a vendor who you think is particularly good?*

*Let us know and we will share it with your neighbors.*

*Send your ideas, thoughts and questions to Joyce*

*Pease at*

*[www.jpease@vom.com](mailto:www.jpease@vom.com)*



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