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HILLSBOROUGH

3RD QUARTER 2012



SOARING WITH THE EAGLES



Members of the 101st Airborne, the unit “adopted” by the Town, were welcomed and honored by Hillsborough, San Mateo and Burlingame on Memorial Weekend. On Saturday, the day began with a “Sore’ With the Eagles” boot camp at Central Park in San Mateo and concluded with a recognition banquet at the Crowne Plaza in Foster City. They were greeted enthusiastically on Saturday at Hillsborough Town Hall mid-day by Mayor Tom Kasten, City Council members, the Town staff and numerous residents who all expressed their thanks to the troops. Thanks also go to the Town’s key committee member LeAnn Thornton, Hillsborough Police Department’s executive assistant who runs the Adopt-A-Unit program, which sends supplies to the 101st Airborne unit in Afghanistan.

TOWN INFORMATION

HILLSBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL
(650) 375-7400
council@hillsborough.net

Mayor Thomas M. Kasten
Vice Mayor Jess “Jay” Benton
Marie Chuang
Christine Krolik
Laurence M. May

TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS
2nd Mondays
6 p.m. at Town Hall, 1600 Floribunda Avenue

TOWN HALL
Anthony Constantouros, City Manager
aconstantouros@hillsborough.net
Administration: (650) 375-7400
Town Hall & Water Department Hours:
Monday – Thursday: 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Friday: 7:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Building and Planning: (650) 375-7411
Finance Department: (650) 375-7400
Public Works and City Engineer: (650) 375-7444
After-hours, Urgent Service (650) 375-7470
Water (service and billing): (650) 375-7402

POLICE DEPARTMENT
Mark O’Connor, Chief
Non-emergency/24 hours (650) 375-7470
Alarm Specialists: (650) 375-7472

The Hillsborough Newsletter is published on a regular basis by the Town of Hillsborough to keep residents informed of local and Town news.
Editor: Barbara Backer • Design: Larry Zientarski • Photography: LeAnn Thornton

CENTRAL COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT
Don Dornell, Chief (650) 558-7600

CENTRAL COUNTY FIRE BOARD
Marie Chuang, Commissioner
Vice Mayor Jess “Jay” Benton

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (ADRB)
Board Meeting 1st and/or 3rd Mondays
4 p.m. – Town Hall
Laurence M. May, Commissioner
Mark Heine, Chair
Christian Huebner, Eric Nyhus,
Julie Tenenbaum, Jerry Wings
Nan Ryan, Alternate

FINANCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Vice Mayor Jess “Jay” Benton, Commissioner
Al Royle, Chair
David Brooks, Kathy Ceremsak,
Josh Cooperman, Maryellie Johnson,
Richard Kuersteiner, David Steirman
Paul Regan, Emeritus Advisor

CITIZENS COMMUNICATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Christine Krolik, Commissioner
Julie Borden, Chair
Suzanne Boutin, Vice Chair
Shawn Christianson, Paul Saffo, Lia Turk
Diana Witzel, Advisor

HILLSBOROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK (HNN) EMERGENCY PREP
hnn@hillsborough.net
Christine Krolik and Marie Chuang,
Co-chairs
Lia Turk, Coordinator

Sue Johnston, John Luongo, Terri Cruce,
Diane Kounalakis, Matt Ken, Area Chairs

HILLSBOROUGH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
(650) 342-5193
Anthony Ranii, Superintendent
Greg Dannis, School Board President

HILLSBOROUGH RECREATION
(650) 342-5439
Tony Giacomazzi, Director
tgiacomazzi@hcsd.k12.ca.us
Christine Krolik, Town Commissioner
Laurence M. May, Town Commissioner
Lynne Esselstein, HCSO Commissioner
Steven Koury, HCSO Commissioner
Michele Bosschart, Member at Large

UTILITIES
COMCAST (800) 945-2288
PG&E (24 hours) (800) 743-5000
PG&E Outage Info: (800) 743-5002

RECOLOGY (650) 595-3900
Hazardous Material: (800) 449-7587



CONCOURS COMING UP

Car lovers and others take notice. Hillsborough’s Concours d’Elegance will take place on Sunday, August 26, 2012, at the Crystal Springs Golf Course. Rob Fisher, who is overseeing the enthusiastic committee of volunteers, states, “The Hillsborough Concours d’Elegance has become an event of national prominence due to the quality of the cars, the beauty of its location and its history – it is now the longest continuously running concours in the world. This year we are featuring the grand and elegant cars from Rolls Royce and Cadillac. Hillsborough residents, don’t miss this incredible event and tradition that is right in our backyard!”

Tickets are on sale now. Early bird price for general admission is \$25, or \$30 at the show. For tickets and more information, go to www.hillsboroughconcours.org.



Above, 2011 Best of Show winner, Steven Finn’s fabulous 1934 Duesenberg.



TOWN'S MEMORIAL DAY PARADE



Photos clockwise from top: San Mateo High School Marching Band; CCFD Deputy Fire Chief Mark Ladas in the Town's vintage fire truck; former Mayor John Fannon and four of his grandchildren in Jay Leupp's 1967 Lincoln Continental; Jeffrey Family Singers; and Mayor Tom Kasten and wife Kendra in Concours Chair Rob Fisher's Austin Healey, with daughters.

DON'T DO IT!

If the Public Works Department could issue one strong plea to the residents in Town, it would be this:

Do not put "disposable" cleaning rags, such as Swiffers, down the toilet and do not pour cooking grease down the kitchen sink! Put the cloths, diapers, and wipes in the garbage! Pour the grease in a jar and throw away the jar! Additionally, please be sure to inform your cleaning professionals of these guidelines.

When the "disposable" cleaning cloths first hit the market several years ago, they were touted as biodegradable and easy to use because they could simply be tossed down the toilet after use. However, they are not biodegradable and, after numerous problems, the companies that make the products now have a label showing a toilet with an "X" across it.

The sewage system of Hillsborough, and other cities, too, is not designed to handle either rags or grease, and the amount of money spent undoing damage caused by the culprits is quite significant. Last year alone the Town spent \$85,000 to untangle "disposable" cleaning rags and wet cloths

from pumps that are designed as water pumps. The Town is addressing the problem by changing motor styles and purchasing jetter units, but the equipment is costly. The best solution is to be aware of the problem and modify behavior of those who do the cleaning and cooking.

Hillsborough's sewer system operates by gravity, aided by pumps. The pumps have motors that are very susceptible to becoming tangled by cloths and wipes.

Likewise, the Town's drains build up with grease as time goes by and limit the flow of wastewater. Tens of thousands of dollars are lost in overtime calls required when grease clogs a drainpipe. Public Works crews have removed globs of grease as heavy as 50 pounds. Little amounts of grease, poured down drains over and over, eventually will choke a pipe.

Drains are designed for sewage and wastewater. They are not designed for cloths, diapers, grease, or engine oil and paints. Avoid backup of untreated sewage into your home can occur if a clog forms.

Please be respectful of the system that keeps your Town flowing smoothly!

TURK BRINGS COMMUNICATION SKILLS TO CCAC

If you know about Hillsborough Neighborhood Network (HNN), it is because you have read Lia Turk's prose. Since October 2010, she has helped coordinate neighborhoods throughout Town into a network preparing to address larger emergencies. She has written stories for newsletters, sent countless emails, developed a website and brochure, published information in the school newsletters and set up numerous informative meetings, one of which highlighted ham radio as a backup communication method. Good communication is a way of tying together and strengthening a community, she noted.

Most recently Hillsborough resident Turk has been tapped to lend her communication skills to the Citizens Communication Advisory Committee (CCAC). She will be involved in editing the quarterly publication.

Turk has been involved in newsletter editing and formatting for years, contrib-

uting her time and skill to non-profits, schools and parent groups. She has edited newsletters for North and Crocker parent groups, San Mateo High School (including a short-lived Spanish edition), Hillsborough Lia Turk Auxiliary to Peninsula Family Service, the former Coyote Point Museum, California Geographic Alliances, The Japan Project at Stanford, Hillsborough Beautification Foundation, and San Mateo County Health Foundation, among others.

As for newsletter work in general, Turk said, "I appreciate it when people actually read your work and feel they have gained useful, worthwhile information." Specific to Hillsborough, she said informed residents are an essential element of a vibrant community.



Lia Turk

HILLSBOROUGH'S NEW BUDGET BALANCED

City Council approved the operating and capital budgets for 2012-2013 at the June Council meeting. The General Fund budget, which supports public safety, roads and general Town government, is \$18.6 million with revenues, mainly property tax, sufficient to cover expenses to create a balanced budget.

Additionally, the budget for the water operations (\$10 million) was approved. Revenue is provided by user fees, which were raised mainly to cover the increased costs of wholesale water, which the Town purchases from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). The SFPUC has increased the price for water to cover the cost of rebuilding the Hetch Hetchy system, a \$3.8 billion upgrade. Council also approved the sewer operations budget (\$7.6 million).

In addition to the aforementioned budgets, Council approved the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget,

which includes \$3.9 million for the water system, \$8.7 million for the sewer system and \$1.8 million for streets. Funding is from a combination of various road taxes (for streets), fund reserves and borrowings from the State Revolving Fund (SRF). The sewer upgrade is required by a legal settlement between the Town and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQC).

The Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) held three separate meetings to discuss and analyze the budget. "This was thoroughly reviewed by the FAC, who recommended it for approval," said Vice Mayor and FAC liaison Jess E. (Jay) Benton.

"We thank everyone for their leadership, management and cooperation in getting this balanced," said Mayor Tom Kasten. "We greatly appreciate the understanding and collaboration of our Town employees. Their spirit and teamwork is outstanding."

WILLIS IS NEW CITY ENGINEER

Enthusiasm is detectable when Paul Willis talks about his new job as Hillsborough's Town engineer. When he saw the job opening in the Town that he calls the Peninsula's "premier place to call home," he jumped at the chance to interview.

"As I progressed through the interview and found out more about the Town and its goals and challenges, I became even more interested in being involved in the Town's future," Willis said. "The people, the properties, the estates, the infrastructure, the aggressive capital improvement project programs – these were all areas where I felt I could use my talents." Willis started work in April.

Willis comes to Hillsborough following a 12-year stint in Redwood City. Should you have ever enjoyed the inviting courthouse square in that city, you have Willis to thank. He was in charge of the project from design to completion, which involved working with businesses, 100-year-old buildings and the community. "I'm proud of the revitalization of the downtown," he said.

As Redwood City's senior engineer, Willis was in charge of development and utility permits. When he left, there were more than 200 new units under construction, plus the replacement hospitals for Sequoia and

Kaiser. His division managed the requirements, permitting and inspection for all of the infrastructure for those projects.

The hiring of Willis is part of the reorganization of Hillsborough's Public Works Department. For the past 10 years, the Town has contracted with an engineering consulting firm to fill some of its positions, one being the city engineer. Given the enormous scope of the sewer and water pipe repair and replacement projects facing the city, the Town realized it would be most cost-effective to hire a full-time engineer.

"It has become necessary to have someone on staff and available all the time," Willis said, adding that he has a short commute from his home in Redwood City. "It's handy to get here," he said. "Overall, my job right now is to get to know the staff, work on operational efficiency so that these projects are as seamless as possible and have the least impact on residents, and to communicate with the residents so they know what is happening. Since day one, I have been answering questions and addressing concerns."

Willis grew up in Daly City, attended Sacred Heart High School in San Francisco, and earned a bachelor's degree in engineering at San Francisco State University. He is a licensed professional civil engineer and has worked on many public works projects, from residences to hospitals. He is married and has two children, a boy 10 years old and a girl three years old. He loves the Giants, Forty-Niners, golf – and Hillsborough.



Paul Willis

SAVE THE DATES!

56th Annual Hillsborough Concours d'Elegance

Tours d'Elegance
Saturday, August 25, 2012
Begins at 10 a.m. on Lorton Avenue in Burlingame

Hillsborough Concours d'Elegance
Sunday, August 26, 2012
Crystal Springs Golf Course
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
www.hillsboroughconcours.org

Hillsborough Reads
Wednesday, August 29, 2012
Kathy Garver, author of "Family Affair Cook Book"
11 a.m. at Town Hall
RSVP to hwier@sbcglobal.net

Thursday, October 4, 2012
Mary Roach, New York Times best-selling author of the extremely entertaining and informative science books

"Packing for Mars" (the science of life in space), "Stiff" (a scientific exploration of human cadavers), "Spook" (science tackles the afterlife), and "Bonk" (the study of sexual physiology).
6 p.m. at Town Hall

Family Outdoor Movie Night

August 31, 2012
7:45 p.m. live music
7:45 p.m. Q&A with Katherine Serafin, producer of Pixar's summer hit movie, "Brave"
8 p.m. movie begins
Free and presented by Hillsborough Recreation

Hillsborough Rec Programs

Yoga, Bridge, Mah Jong and Zumba classes
Town Hall
Details: check www.hillsboroughrecreation.org or call 650-342-5439



WHAT'S ALL THAT WORK ALONG CRYSTAL SPRINGS?

Last fall, Ranger Pipeline trucks were busy along Sierra Drive and Chelmsford Road. In May, the same trucks showed up to do work along Crystal Springs Road between Skyline Boulevard and El Cerrito, then on Crystal Springs between Skyline and Polhemus Road, and then on Crystal Springs between Polhemus and El Cerrito. In June, parts of Crystal Springs Road were closed for 18 consecutive days.

The construction and road closures are all part of the \$4.6 billion project by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) to ensure a safe and reliable water supply for 2.6 million customers in eight Bay Area cities and the County of San Mateo.

Locally, the project is focused on increasing the capacity of the Crystal Springs reservoir by raising the wall eight feet, which will

allow the reservoir to be filled to the capacity originally intended. Other parts of the project involve the repair, replacement and seismic upgrade of the system's aging pipelines and tunnels. Cities affected by the project, in addition to Hillsborough, are Burlingame, Millbrae, San Bruno, South San Francisco, Brisbane, Daly City and San Francisco.

John Mullins, Hillsborough Public Works superintendent, said the work will continue for months to come.

"The contractor digs up an area and inspects it, then will decide on the work that needs to be done," he said. "They come up against unforeseen obstacles regularly."

Mullins said the Town is working to coordinate with the SFPUC and its contractors and to keep the residents as informed as possible.

CCFD HELPS QUELL FINANCIAL FIRES

These are volatile economic times, but once again the Central County Fire Department (CCFD, serving Burlingame and Hillsborough) is doing its part to protect the budget.

As of the end of May 2012, CCFD consolidated its top administration with the Millbrae and San Bruno fire departments, meaning that CCFD Chief Don Dornell is now chief of the three departments (and four cities). The move is estimated to save CCFD approximately \$150,000 per year, \$60,000 for Hillsborough alone, and is a result of the costs now being shared by four cities instead of two. Details on this are being finalized.

Plans are also continuing to create, with portable structures, a new temporary fire station to replace two existing stations, one in Millbrae and one in Burlingame. The shared staffing and reduction in the number of stations is estimated to result in

an annual savings of about \$450,000 for Millbrae and the CCFD, and \$180,000 for Hillsborough alone. A site has been identified at the intersection of 280 and Trousdale for the temporary station. The goal is to maintain the same standard of service yet have a significantly reduced overall cost. The new station is expected to be open and running by January 2013 and there will be a six-month evaluation period to determine the success of this pilot project.

While CCFD is moving closer to merging with the two cities to its north, no merger will take place until it has been proven that there will be no adverse impact to the communities involved and no noticeable difference in service.

"If the consolidation of administration and the shared fire station prove to be successful, then by the end of 2013 or 2014, we will move forward in investigating a full merger of departments," Dornell said.



Isabel Bernardo, daughter of Assistant Finance Director Marie Bernardo, enjoys her new home built after the San Bruno pipeline explosion. Center photo taken from foot of pipeline.

HOME AGAIN, HOME AGAIN

On March 5, 2012, the Town's Assistant Finance Director, Marie Bernardo, and her family returned home after being away for more than a year. It was a bittersweet homecoming. On September 9, 2010, their original home was completely destroyed in the PG&E pipeline explosion in San Bruno. They returned in March to a brand new house on the same lot, 150 feet from the disaster's epicenter. And soon, a beautiful tree will be planted on the lot thanks to donations from Hillsborough residents.

It was not an easy year, Bernardo reported. They moved into an apartment after the explosion and lived there while they oversaw construction of their new house. She said they started off with a positive attitude, but it was difficult to maintain as they dealt with costly change orders and negotiated with the bank for funding reimbursements.

"The construction process was tough," Bernardo said. "We had done kitchen and bathroom renovations in the past and thought it was such a nuisance, but building from the ground up is so much more exhausting mentally, physically and emotionally. I hope I won't have to go through the same process again."

Bernardo said the children were excited

about moving in once the construction was done. Son Matthew was honored by the American Red Cross last year for saving his sister Isabel's life when fire broke out in their home as a result of the explosion. At the time, Bernardo spoke about how grateful she felt to have her family intact, especially when six of the eight people who died in the disaster lived on Bernardo's street. She said she still feels the pain her neighbors are going through while trying to rebuild their homes and lives.

When the family opened the door to their home on March 5, Bernardo relaxed a bit and with a big smile said, "We're home, finally!"

FIRE BLOTTER

For the second quarter of 2012, the Central County Fire Department responded to:

- Fire calls: 47
- Explosions: 0
- EMS/Rescue: 612
- Hazardous Condition: 102
- Public Assistance: 252
- False Alarms: 107

TOWN BRIEFS

During the past quarter, the City Council:

- Set the amount of the special tax for police and fire protection at \$496 for each residence. The special tax was approved by the citizens in 1998. The maximum fees allowed by the original authorization have been assessed since 2005-06. Annual revenues from the tax are \$2.2 million.
- Approved spending \$223,000 on sewer pumps and motor replacements, and design work for water tanks, sewer pipe testing, sewer repair and street resurfacing as part of the capital budget.
- Following a three-hour Council discussion and numerous Architecture and Design Review Board (ADRB) meetings, adopted a mitigated negative declaration and mitigated monitoring and reporting plan and design review approval for 39 Glenbrook Drive. The project involves the demolition of an existing single story residence and construction of a new multi-level French Provincial style home and detached single story guest house and associated landscape plan.
- Allocated \$41,000 for emergency street repairs for approximately 26 locations throughout Town. The majority of street repairs are needed due to base failures and uplifting of the roadway due to roots from adjacent trees.
- Allocated \$56,000 for emergency sewer pump repairs at the Hayne sewer lift station where many thousands of gallons of sewer water are captured and pumped to lower sewer mains 24 hours a day. The Hayne pit has three large separate sewer pumps which are designed to alternate pumping duties depending on sewer flow. All three pumps need repair due to unexpected contamination by plastic bags, products such as "Swiffers," sanitary products and small roots that had gotten into the sewer system. It was presumed that most of the materials were flushed into the sewer system by residents. (See related story, "Don't Do It!" on page 2.)
- Authorized the purchase of two in-car digital video recorders for two new police vehicles to be compatible with the existing backup system, at a cost of \$11,000, funded through a grant.
- Authorized sewer service charges and water and sewer connection fees effective July 1, 2012. Earlier this year, the Town adopted a maximum sewer service charge for the next five years to support the long-term financial health of the sewer enterprise operations. The Town may charge rates at or below the maximum sewer service charge (\$2,325 per unit) in the intervening years. This resolution authorizes implementing a sewer service charge of \$1,898 per unit for fiscal year 2012-13. It represents a 7 percent increase from last year's rate.
- Called a general municipal election, to be coordinated with the statewide general election, for Tuesday, November 6, 2012. Three members of the Hillsborough City Council will be up for election. Deadline for filing was August 10, 2012.
- Amended the Town's design guidelines regarding roofs to keep current with

evolving roofing materials and promote applicant flexibility. New guidelines allow non-reflecting metal roofing and materials simulating slate and shake. The guidelines also encourage residents to re-roof the entire residence when doing an addition unless an addition has limited visibility and matching of existing and proposed roofing materials is demonstrated. Muted or flat rather than shiny colors should be used. Roofing should be appropriate and complementary to the architectural style of the residence.

- Adopted the much-discussed private sewer lateral ordinance, which allows residents to have their laterals tested and repaired or replaced, if necessary, in priority areas at a reduced cost in conjunction with work being performed by the Town in the same area.
- Authorized the mayor to enter into an agreement with a consulting firm to recruit for a new city manager. The current manager is retiring as of December 31, 2012.
- Authorized payment of the Town's unfunded actuarial accrued liability for police and miscellaneous plans by authorizing an advance of \$7 million from the General Fund and the Asset Replacement Fund reserves instead of borrowing funds. The Town will then pay back its own funds over the next several years, which will save the city \$1.7 million in total.
- Learned from Councilmember and Airport Roundtable Liaison Larry May that air traffic will increase at SFO to approximately 43 million this year after a low of 29 million in 2003.

People

- City Council awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to Mark Heine, who served on the ADRB, as chair from January 2009 through March 2012 and as committee member from April 2006 through March 2012.
- Edna Masbad and the Finance Department were honored with a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association – for the 10th consecutive year!
- Police Department Executive Assistant LeAnn Thornton was recognized by the City Council for her dedicated public service to the Town's Adopt-A-Unit program and the USO's Families of the Fallen Response Team. This year Thornton was responsible for mailing 1500 care packages to troops in Afghanistan.
- Councilmember Christine Krolik thanked numerous individuals, including Police Chief Mark O'Connor, Public Works Superintendent John Mullins, City Engineer Paul Willis and Public Works Director Matt O'Connor, for their work in making the Memorial Day parade a success. "It was a great day and a great event," Krolik said. She added that funds for the parade were privately raised. Mayor Tom Kasten thanked Krolik and co-chair Lilli Rey for their tireless work on the parade.

LOTTERY SCAM CAN HIT ANYWHERE — HILLSBOROUGH A POOR BET

Due to the unrelenting pursuit by one tenacious Hillsborough police officer, an elderly victim of a lottery scam has been rescued and the perpetrators of the crime – and their network of fraudulent businesses – have been seized.

Hillsborough residents, and the elderly in particular, are not immune to lottery scams and telephone fraud. This story serves to raise awareness of the crime. “What is incredibly uncommon about this incident is the outcome. It’s fortunate for the victim, and terribly unfortunate for the criminals, that Officer Dave Agee was on the case,” said Captain Doug Davis, who warns residents to call the Police Department immediately if they find anything suspicious about a phone call requesting money.

In the spring of 2012, an 89-year-old woman who lives in Town received a telephone call telling her that she had won \$7.5 million in the Australian lottery. She was told she needed to set up an off-shore account to shelter the winnings and that the account needed to have an initial deposit of \$120,000. She confessed that she had only \$70,000. The criminals began to establish a relationship with the victim and eventually told her she had won \$18 million. Through several calls, they set up wiring directions and gave and received other information. The victim wired funds to the Bank of Montreal in Vancouver, British Columbia.

After several days, the victim began to question her actions, realizing she had not played any lottery, let alone one in Australia. She called the Hillsborough Police Department (HPD) and got Officer Agee, who swung into action like a super

hero. Officer Agee asked the victim to call her local bank and have them assist her in freezing the account at the Bank of Montreal. He called the Bank of Montreal and verified that the freeze on the account was due to fraudulent action.

Agee then phoned the Vancouver Police Department, which latched onto the crime as ferociously as Agee did. Investigators from that Department eventually made several arrests. But more importantly, they uncovered a questionable organization that had been operating a telemarketing firm for six years and had a network of businesses and an accounting firm that had operated for 10 years. Initial evidence indicated that the businesses were involved in fraud and forgery. More search warrants were prepared for additional family members, employees, businesses and religious-based establishments. Vancouver police were successful, through their civil forfeiture office, in obtaining court orders for the seizure of three bank accounts and four properties (three houses and the suspect business building).

“This is a huge hit to this crime family and we are certainly doing our best to ensure that the suspects involved are prosecuted,” Vancouver investigators stated in a note to the Hillsborough Police Department.

The unraveling of the criminal business began because a resident in Hillsborough became suspicious and phoned police, and because Officer Agee would not let go of the case. Currently the victim’s money is safe and secure. She will be getting a portion of it back and the investigators are working on retrieving the remainder of the funds.

POLICE RAISE AWARENESS OF SUICIDE PREVENTION

One of the most tragic things that can happen in a community, especially a tight-knit community such as Hillsborough, is when a family member takes his or her own life. Unfortunately, it does occur. The statistics are startling:

- Suicide is considered to be the second leading cause of death among college students.
- Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for adults between the ages of 18 and 65.

Suicide ranks as high statistically in cause of death as cancer and diabetes, but it is rarely talked about. To be respectful to families, the press does not report suicides. It is a taboo subject in many cultures to the extent that some families will hide a suicide note so that the cause of death is hopefully not discovered by the outside world. As a result, people do not recognize signs that could lead to life-saving intervention or know where to seek help for themselves or others.

The Hillsborough Police Department (HPD) has investigated a number of suicides in Town. Hillsborough does not have more than the average number of suicides but even one is devastating. Therefore, when San Mateo County’s Community Service League asked to use Town Hall for a Teen Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention program this past spring, the HPD not only agreed to the venue but offered to co-host the program.

“In addition to adult residents and children, every counselor from every Hillsborough school attended, which is very encouraging,” said HPD Chief Mark O’Connor. “We work with the counselors on a regular basis and they are very well trained and are in the right spot to notice signs. HPD officers are also well trained about the subject. But

we need to raise awareness everywhere,” he added. “I feel if more information is out there, people will be better armed to deal with this.”

For instance, contrary to what many people might think, one event does not cause a suicide. Psychological autopsy studies conducted in various countries during almost 50 years report that 90 percent of people who die by suicide are suffering from one or more psychiatric disorders – a major depressive or bipolar disorder, alcohol or substance abuse, schizophrenia, or a personality disorder. An upsetting event could be “the last straw.” Prevention may be a matter of having a caring person with the right knowledge being available in the right place at the right time. Experts also emphasize the importance of being willing to ask someone you are worried about if they are thinking of suicide, rather than skirting the issue.

Risk factors during depressive episodes include desperation, hopelessness, anxiety and panic attacks, previous suicide attempts, recent hospitalization for depression, major physical illness or chronic pain, being bullied, being a smoker.

O’Connor emphasized that there are many ways to get help. Call the Hillsborough Police Department for immediate help or for resources. StarVista in San Carlos, runs a suicide hotline available 24 hours a day. Their number is 650-579-0350, or youth can go to www.onyourmind.net. They work with individuals, can recognize signs of risk and have the tools to deal with the situation.

While the spring crisis prevention workshop was the first held in the community, O’Connor said it will probably become part of the annual line-up in the future. “The more talk there is about suicide, the more we can raise awareness,” he said.

SMITH’S WORK DEEMED ‘EXCELLENT’

Liz Smith has had jobs where she liked the work. She has had jobs where she liked the people. When she came to Hillsborough, she said she was delighted to find a position that combined both qualities.

“There is always so much going on in Public Works and my co-workers are great. I really appreciate the combination of good people and an interesting job,” Smith said enthusiastically, adding that she will forever be grateful to the Town for bringing her on part-time in 2006.

As a Service Clerk II in Public Works, Smith works to stay on top of events that change quickly and hourly, as is the case when dealing with the pipes and pumps that keep the Town running. From behind her desk at the Corporation Yard, she interacts with residents, stays in contact with the maintenance crews in the field, works with contractors, and handles the paperwork for various projects.

According to Public Works Director Matt O’Connor, she handles her responsibilities extremely well – so well that she was honored with the most recent Employee Excellence Award.

“Liz was selected because of her positive, steadfast attitude and great performance,” O’Connor said. She always represents Public Works in a professional light when speaking with or contacting our residents, which is the hallmark of our Town. She is a joy to have here at the Public Works office and I’m glad to work with her.”

Smith hails from the mid-Peninsula. She grew up in Redwood City, attended Sequoia High School and earned an Associate’s degree at Canada College. For more than 12 years, she worked for the San Mateo County



Liz Smith

District Attorney’s office in the Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit. For two and a half years she was with the Victim Restitution Unit, but working with victims took a toll. She moved to the Coyote Point Museum where she was assistant to the executive director until finances dictated a cutback. She then began working part-time in Hillsborough, filling in for employees on vacation. “I was pretty happy when the job became permanent because I knew this is what I had been looking for,” Smith said. While the job suited her perfectly, she said it was not until a major storm hit in 2009 that she gained her first introduction to how Public Works manages the Town’s infrastructure. “Frantic calls were coming in, PG&E wires and trees were down, streets and properties were flooding. It was pretty overwhelming.”

Outside of work, Smith enjoys hiking, working on home projects, and especially gardening.

POLICE BLOTTER

For the three-month period of April, May, and June 2012, the Hillsborough Police Department (HPD) responded to 3,486 calls for service. In those three months, HPD arrested 19 adults and three juveniles, responded to and investigated nine non-injury and three injury vehicle collisions, and completed 144 police reports. Some of the notable calls for service that occurred during this period are listed below:

- HPD received a call of two solicitors going door to door. Upon contact, the solicitors became uncooperative and refused to identify themselves while detained. They were arrested for obstruction of justice and soliciting without a permit. The pair was booked into the San Mateo County Jail.
- An officer responded to a call from a jogger who reported that an adult male had punched her in the face. Responding officers located the subject in the creek. He was arrested and booked into the San Mateo County Jail.
- Officers responded to a residence on the report of a verbal dispute. They determined that two renters were arguing over a civil issue. One of the renters was in violation of a restraining order and was arrested.
- Officers responded to a 911 call about an unwanted subject. The adult male met with police in the front yard of the residence where he became uncooperative. The male was arrested for being intoxicated in public and was booked into the San Mateo County Jail.
- During a traffic stop on a suspicious vehicle, officers determined that an occupant of the vehicle had a \$50,000 warrant. The subject was arrested on the warrant and was booked into the San Mateo County Jail.
- A number of traffic stops this quarter resulted in drivers being arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol. Please remember to drive responsibly.
- During this quarter, HPD broke up a number of juvenile parties that involved underage drinking. Some juveniles were arrested for alcohol-related offenses. In one case, paramedics were called for a juvenile suffering from the effects of alcohol poisoning. Please keep in mind that the HPD treats under-age drinking and parties as a serious public safety concern and will respond appropriately.

*Police Blotter Prepared by Sgt. Nelson T. Corteway
Send Comments to ncorteway@hillsborough.net*

Traffic Safety Tips

Hillsborough’s narrow streets can foster a challenging dynamic for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers. In almost all circumstances, it is safest for pedestrians to walk or jog closest to the left side edge of the roadway (facing oncoming traffic). Be extra careful if you are wearing headphones, as you may not hear traffic approaching you. Don’t become distracted by texting (police recently observed a texting pedestrian walk into a tree on Eucalyptus Avenue).

If you are out with your dog, please make sure to keep it on a leash. Dogs can’t be off leash anywhere in public around Town, including the schools. Bicyclists are bound by the same laws as other vehicles when on the roadway, including stopping at stop signs.

Those driving vehicles should be mindful of good driving habits and be aware of others on the roadway. Being alert and aware of your surroundings will help to avoid potential conflict between pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers.

If you have any questions regarding traffic safety, contact Hillsborough Police Corporal Peter Scatena at 650-375-7598.