

2011 in Rancho Santa Fe: July-December in review

By Karen Billing

July

- RSF Library's children's librarian Debbie Wilson retired after 14 years in the Martha Glasgow Children's Wing. "I know for sure that I'll miss the people I work with and the kids," Wilson said pausing to think fondly about the little readers. "I feel so fortunate that I had the ideal, positive staff and friends to work with. It's just time." "She is the light of the library," said fellow children's librarian Laurie Knodle. "The kids love her, everyone loves her."
- The Rancho Santa Fe Patrol finally found its permanent home, moving out of its temporary trailers on the Dacus property to its new headquarters in the RSF Fire Protection District station on El Fuego. The patrol moved into the largest space its ever had at 2,700 square feet. "This allows for our officers to have more elbow room and space and we're not going to be looking for a new facility or to remodel," RSF Patrol Chief Matt Wellhouser said. "It's a plus for the community because we're close to the school, right next to dispatch and we have a really good relationship with the fire department. Working with all those folks is a good thing."
- The RSF Association denied a covenant modification for Quantum Villas, a proposed senior housing community off Del Dios Highway in a 5-1 vote. The board sided with the Art Jury's recommendation that the Quantum Villas project was too dense and would negatively impact the rural character and ambiance of the community. RSF Association President Jack Queen said approving the 38-unit project would be a "complete violation" of the recent Covenant-wide survey's results in which 61 percent ranked preserving community character as the Association's highest priority.

August

- Erin Weidner is named the Rancho Santa Fe Community Center's new executive director. Weidner grew up in Rancho Santa Fe and graduated from the Rancho Santa Fe School District and Torrey Pines High. Weidner also boasts a strong non-profit background.
- The Association received the results from its Utility Undergrounding Interest survey, which found that just 25 percent of the respondents were willing to participate in an undergrounding district. Of the people who do have a line on or near their property, 41 percent would be willing to participate. When asked if they would pay a fair share portion of an engineering assessment study, about \$2,000, 478 people answered "no." Only 198 said they were interested in participating in an assessment district. Very few people had interest in being a district captain, leading the charge for their neighborhood: 12 said they would be interested, 631 said they would not be.
- The new \$1,873,992 artificial turf field at Rowe school made its debut on Aug. 16.
- Horizon Prep opened the school year with a new campus, complete with a new 18-classroom building, two state-of-the-art science labs, a large art studio with outdoor kiln and a 12,000-square-foot gym. In the next phase of its renovation project, the school plans to put in a competition-size swimming pool, and a new administration building, which will involve removing the current campus' portable classrooms, a process that is bittersweet as some will be sad to see the charming green and white cottages go.

September

- The RSF Association voted 4-1 to approve a renovation of the Osuna Ranch's riding arena, not to exceed \$48,000. The arena at the ranch was in poor condition, with the sand breaking down. The renovation project removed the top layer of sand, repaired the base layer with three feet of DG and brought in new sand. "The new arena is amazing," said Christine Praefke, a Hap Hansen instructor told the Review in early December. "Everyone's super excited about it, it couldn't be better."
- A public interview session with six candidates was held to find a new RSF School Board member to replace Jim Cimino, who moved out of state. The board selected R. Roger Rowe graduate Tyler Seltzer. Seltzer and his wife grew up in Rancho Santa Fe and moved their family of three children back to the area a year-and-a-half ago for their youngest to attend Rowe.
- The RSF Association voted to chip in for half of the \$44,000 repair cost of the RSF Golf and Tennis Club parking lot in a 5-1 vote. The club's lots had deteriorated due to use, water erosion and invading roots of large trees growing adjacent to the lots. The last improvements were done in 2007 and the lot was in need of repair, seal coating and re-striping.

October



• **Hundreds of supporters attended the Rancho Santa Fe Foundation's 30th Anniversary Community Celebration Oct. 20 at The Inn at Rancho Santa Fe. Foundation directors, staff, community sponsors, partners, donors and grantees were recognized. The event included a video presentation that captured highlights of the foundation's work through three decades, with narration by sports commentator Dick Enberg.**

- Eamon Callahan was sworn in as the new director on the RSF Association Board. Callahan beat out five other candidates in a secret ballot vote on Sept. 15 to fill the seat left vacant by Jack Dorsee (who left the board due to professional time demands). Callahan is a 17-year Covenant resident who holds several degrees in electronic engineering and was a vice president of four different defense companies. He also owned four retail businesses.
- Longtime RSF Golf Club General Manager Steve Nordstrom resigns due to "personal reasons." Association Manager Pete Smith is serving as interim golf club manager while the search continues for Nordstrom's replacement.
- The Occupy movement, a top story in 2011, hit the Village. Although RSF was warned that as many as 1,000 protesters could show up, only about four protesters came to the Village with signs and a bullhorn.

November

- The Santa Fe Irrigation District Board voted 3-2 to approve a 6 percent rate increase to take effect on Jan. 1. The board was divided over the decision, with some members wanting a larger increase to maintain district reserves and pay for capital improvement projects, while one board member wanted to avoid any increase. The vote means 2012 will be the fifth year in a row that Santa Fe Irrigation has raised rates on customers, by a total of 68 percent.
- A mother of five children, Heather Slosar, got as far as anyone ever had on the quest to get a playground in the Covenant. She proposed a wooden play structure on the 88 acres of Association-owned open space known as the Arroyo property. At a well attended meeting, the board granted \$25,000 to purchase play equipment, but the board was not sold on Arroyo as the location, directing staff to look for an alternative location. "It's a subject that keeps coming up," said Dick Brockett, director of field operations. "The problem is no area in the Covenant is zoned for a playground." Plaza de Acacias is proposed for the corner of Avenida de Acacias and El Tordo.
- The RSF Association gave preliminary approval to a new retail center, Plaza de Acacias, slated for the corner of El Tordo and Avenida de Acacias. Plaza de Acacias will be 6,170 square feet of commercial space in a Lilian Rice-style architecture, leaving the current parking lot intact. Director Roxana Foxx said she was impressed at the sensitivity the developers employed with the project. "It looks a lot better than what's there," Foxx said. "It looks like it belongs in the original batch of buildings."
- Solana Beach School District Superintendent Leslie Fausset announced she was retiring after a nearly 40 years in the education field and six years leading the district. The district is currently conducting a search for a new superintendent.

December

- The RSF Association considers using more e-mail communication with members, giving staff the direction to move forward with the provider Constant Contact. According to the Association's 2011 survey, e-mail communication is a high priority for Covenant members, with 71 percent of residents saying they're interested in receiving urgent communication from the Association; 59 percent would like to receive general communication; and 39 percent would like to see Association bills in their inbox.
- RSF gears up for another great year in 2012!

excerpted from

<http://www.ranchosantafereview.com/2011/12/27/2011-in-rancho-santa-fe-a-year-in-review/>