

# Bald Hill Fire Safety Group

May, 2019 – Newsletter # 5

## Hello Friends, Neighbors and even some Malcontents,

A brief preface, then we're down to business because there's a lot to share:

We were wondering about peoples receptivity to this newsletter each month, so we did a poll (Well, I did the poll myself). I asked a random sampling of neighbors which of the following did they enjoy receiving more each month

1. Mortgage Payment statement
2. Target's monthly sales bulliten
3. Requests from College Endowment Fund
4. Sales information from AARP on assisted living centers
5. The Bald Hill Fire Safety Group Newsletter.

Take a guess. The BHFSG Newsletter was a runaway winner. 2<sup>nd</sup> place wasn't even on the list. Notification of your Audible credit from Amazon. Thank you for your support. All those involved in the survey will remain anonymous but their emails will be sold to the National Robocall Sales Corp.

**Business: In the last month a lot has happened that is extremely noteworthy. Please read carefully. This newsletter is shorter than previous editions but packed with info. The normal editorial remarks have been kept to a minimum so you can focus on the important details. It wasn't easy. Details and facts are not my style. Especially false facts.**

**The \$1,000,000 grant we discussed last month was approved:** (see <https://www.baldhillfiresafegroup.com> for details). The money is intended to address the clearing and maintenance of evacuation routes. Out of this total sum, \$200,000 has been allocated to Bald Hill. Todd Lando, the Fire Safe Marin Coordinator, says grant money will pay for 2 crews working on Bald Hill (including Ross) for 60- 80 days. He estimates that they will begin work in June 2020, which means we have an entire fire season to get through first.

**Marin Grand Jury's report on wildfire preparedness is out.** Check it out. VERY useful info (<https://www.marincounty.org/depts/gj/reports-and-responses/reports-responses/2018-19/wildfire-preparedness-a-new-approach>)

**A meeting with San Anselmo's DPW is set for next week .**

We want to discuss whether DPW has any plans to clear dangerously overgrown vegetation and we are concerned that Laurel Fire Road is not being maintained.

**At last Sunday's meeting there were a number of important issues discussed.**

*Next Vegetation Clean Up Day: Saturday July 13, 2019.* We need to raise funds for a chipper and 2 workers which at a cost \$1,600/day. We will be passing the hat and appreciate all contributions. The next section to be cleaned will be: Redwood at Gerlack to Redwood at Fernwood. We need 20 people or more. No excuses about heel spurs or peanut allergies will be considered.

### **Other Issues**

If you have neighbors who are resistant to making any of these changes, please, let's talk about it: Dialogue is first method. There can be solid reasons that are making these changes more difficult for some. Contact any of us and we'll try to figure out a workable solution. **Then**, when that fails is the local Fire Department contacted. Four new dedicated vegetation inspectors are to be hired by the RVFD who are seasonal fire fighters. Our neighborhood is on the list of 3,800 addresses that they are going to inspect this year.

Fire protection improvements (hardening) for your home is as important as vegetation management. It can start with simple measures such as changing the mesh in your vents and clearing under decks, etc.

We are hoping to organize an Evacuation Drill Practice targeted for Mid-September 2019. It will have to be coordinated with the local police, fire department, and Alert Marin. It is critical that everybody, including parents with small children, and non-participating neighbors get involved – it has to be a full scale evacuation or it won't reproduce real conditions. Further notification coming.

### **Further Info**

- CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Training: We recommend that neighbors take the training, not just for fire, it covers any disaster situation and is a lot of fun. (<https://readymarin.org>).
- Our website is up and running and we want to use it for communications, event registration and announcements. <http://www.baldhillfiresafegroup.com>.
- Firesafe Marin is aiming to raise \$100,000 for goat grazing. (huge fire break benefits) San Anselmo is next on the list.
- Homeowner's Insurance: Review your homeowners' insurance to make sure you have adequate coverage. A useful reference is: [www.uphelp.org](http://www.uphelp.org) . Most people have discovered that they are significantly under insured.

**PG&E** will cut the power on very windy days this fire season up to 5 days. **YOU MUST** be prepared to handle being without power for up to 5 days. This means no ATMs, no gas pumps, no refrigeration. Plan accordingly or be prepared to forage.

My last personal comments. I have been living here for a shorter period than most of you. All of my worldly possessions are here. Family photos, valuable mementos of my life, antiques, rugs, IRS records, my pet lovebird and more. Camping equipment. Think about it; what you will have to replace if the house goes up in flames. It is too much to conceive now and will be devastating if you are ever in that situation.

Let's not ignore the reality of a fire. It is unnecessary and unbelievably foolish to do so....and, you ignore your neighbor's homes as well. That is the height of irresponsibility and selfishness. This is a team effort and only a collective mindset will protect us all. Getting this process going has been the effort of a core of individuals but it is spreading fast. We now have over 200 neighbors involved. We have tangible results to show. Let's keep it going. We are amazed how the spirit and response has grown. The cohesion and determination of this group will go a long way to ensure years of safety and protection. Thanks to everyone and if you are not involved, please contact us and we'll find how you can spend maybe 8 hours a year protecting so much.

A few things I'm doing to have most impact

1. Keep leaves off roof and decks...at least once a month
2. Get rid of jute doormats now!! Embers fall on them and up goes the house in flames.
3. Keep Juniper and fir trees far away from the house. They are kerosene!
4. Bamboo As beautiful as it is and a great privacy screen, would you have super combustible kindling by your house? Of course not. Change it, find something else, please, but it really is like having flammable curtains in your living room.

There are other logical things to do with other landscaping but these are no-brainers and not so difficult to do. Let us know if you need help.

That's the news. Thanks for your attention to it and see you all at the next meeting on Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5 PM. Its fire season again. Be careful and vigilant! And remember,

**Only YOU can prevent forest fires!**

