



## Message from the President

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- General Membership Meeting Notice
- Election Notice
- Calendar of Events

Have questions or suggestions regarding this newsletter? Contact any member of the Newsletter Committee below

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 Linda Boston  
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Visit us on the web:

www.modestocma.com

This quarter's newsletter is full of great information, so take a moment and read it from cover to cover. Violet Jakab has a wonderful article in this edition about what she does when she's not Acting City Engineer for the COM. I'm sure you will enjoy it as much as I did.

Also of interest are the upcoming elections for 4 positions on the Board of Directors. Debra Eggerman, who retired and is somewhere in Jamaica or Belize enjoying herself, recently vacated the Treasurer position. The Vice President position is also scheduled for this election as well as two Director positions. If you are interested in running for any of these positions, please contact the Board Secretary, Polly Findlen, for a nomination form.

Speaking of elections, there are also 4 City Council positions up for election in November. As you may know, Councilmember Bob Dunbar is not running for re-election. There are 4 candidates for this position: Robert Farrace, Dave Lopez, Brent Maynor and Robert Stanford. Councilmember Brad Hawn is running for re-election and has one opponent: Tom Maher. Mayor Ridenour and Councilmember Garrad Marsh are both running unopposed. In past elections, MCMA has hosted candidate events such as the Candidate Forum Night in 2003 that was attended by all 13 candidates and a more informal lunch "meet and greet" in 2005. We did not, however, offer endorsements for either of these elections. This year, we're going to try something new. The Board of Directors has decided that MCMA will provide non-financial endorsements to Council candidates. This means we will allow candidates to list MCMA support in flyers, publications and

documents used in their campaign activities. In addition, we will encourage members to volunteer their time for phone banks, walking neighborhoods and other activities of this type. In order to be considered for endorsement, each candidate will be invited to complete a questionnaire and participate in a 30-minute interview with the Board of Directors. The Board will then make an endorsement decision.

Kim Gillingham and I will be attending the Working Assembly of Government Employees (WAGE) conference in Las Vegas November 29 – December 1. This Association promotes networking between independent government employee groups to share information and experiences. We are looking forward to introducing ourselves to the other organizations and find out how they operate within their cities and counties.

The next general membership meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 25 in the Basement Training Room (B300) at Tenth Street Place. There has been record attendance at the last 2 meetings...and we hope to keep the streak going! So, plan to join us for lunch on October 25. And, bring a new member with you!

Laurie Smith



## Holiday Charity Donation

Your Board would like to consider accepting donations for a charity of your choice this holiday season. There are many organizations that need the gift of time or money, especially during the holidays. If you have any ideas or suggestions on choosing a charity or even a specific event to support, please contact Karen Rabb at [rabbk@modestopd.com](mailto:rabbk@modestopd.com) or 572-9523.

## Membership Votes to Amend Bylaws Affecting Membership Benefits

At the July 26, 2007 general membership meeting, members approved an amendment to the Association bylaws affecting membership benefits: specifically, labor representation.

Effective August 1, 2007, employees have 6 months from their date of hire or eligibility for Association membership (promotion or classification change) to complete a membership application and begin paying dues. If an employee chooses to become a member after the 6-month period, the labor representation benefits will not go into effect until 6 months after the first payroll deduction. You can obtain a copy of the amended bylaws on the Association website: [www.modestocma.com](http://www.modestocma.com)



# “In my other life...”

## (Things you may not know about members)

A Place called El Dorado – by **Violet Jakob**

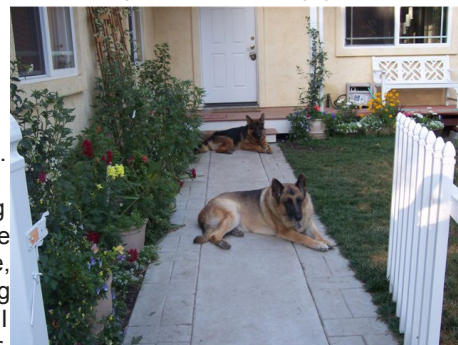
It is night by most standards in Northern California when a pair of intense piercing black eyes awakens me. I glance at the clock-it is 4:30 a.m. The eyes belong to Kimy, the yearling shepherd... it is time to get up and go in search of the treasures of the early morning...

We grab the bag of carrots, the tangle of leashes... there is scrambling of feet as the three large shepherds lunge into the open night air up the hill on the century old mining road running along the creek. The first stop of this noisy procession is the horses-they are the only ones awoken by the tongue lolling trio-their smiling faces bobbing over the eons old barbwire fence while receiving the first treats of the morning: carrots. The dogs are impatient in “down stay” while the horses eat...then we start to the top of the hill and back, every morning.

The players are always the same: the shepherds and me. The scenery is as varied and magnificent as only nature can create in the Sierra Nevada foothills: trees in full bloom of the spring with the bubbling creek in background; hills with a hint of gold of the summer and the smell of drying grass; fall with the frightening smell of distant or not so distant wildfires; winters with its storms, snows and beautifully bright night sky. This is my home of twenty years...El Dorado... or Mountain Ranch, California.

You don't know where it is? Good... I am selfish and possessive in my love for it and I do not want to share with anyone but this band of spirited shepherds and a few folks like me: dropouts of the urban rat race.

Actually, many immigrants lived here before me, along the same creek on the same road looking for a treasure just as I: they looked for gold and I look for peace, calm, beauty and freedom. They made a living mining gold in the hills and canyons of the Mother Lode... I make my living down in the valley as a civil engineer currently at the City of Modesto. There were others before the miners on this land I live on. They were the Indians whose grinding rocks in the creek and the huge oaks on the banks are testament to times I will never know. Today, I am the lucky inhabitant of this beautiful piece of land...my shepherds and me.



You may ask how did I get to live on this land in this country of USA and that is a very good question: I am a Hungarian immigrant born in Transylvania in a quaint village of a few hundred people, perched on a mountain pass in the Carpathian Mountains in Eastern Europe. I was told as I was growing up that my people, the Transylvanians, were left in those mountains by Attila the Hun and he gave the place the name ‘Stay There’, the name of my town. He wanted the people of ‘Stay There’ to guard the mountain passes and guide the others in their journey from Asia to Europe over 1000 year ago.

So, what am I doing here in Mountain Ranch and Modesto, California?

I am here driven by the very basic desire of all and every being to be free. I escaped from Transylvania, part of Ceausescu's communist Romania, 10 days after graduating in civil engineering. I escaped inside a toolbox under a refrigerator truck bound for Italy from Romania. My belongings were very few and the only choice I had in my mind for a country to immigrate was America-America the symbol of freedom and equity at that time for all people behind the Iron Curtain. America is also the land of opportunities and choices. After getting my graduate degree and registration as a civil engineer while living in Southern California, I realized that happiness in my case, in addition to freedom, is also peace, calm, and open hills, which I found in Mountain Ranch- El Dorado in the rural Calaveras County. I realized how deep my roots are into the environment: you can take the girl out of the mountains, but you cannot take the mountains out of the girl-ever!

After the early morning roam with my companions, I take on the mountain roads and then the daily work as a civil engineer. Did I ever tell you how important the civil engineering profession is? It is one of the oldest professions: by using simple laws of nature, working with water and soils, we must provide shelter, transportation, and clean water...and our actions and decisions today are as everlasting as those of the early builders of Rome or Egypt.

## “In My Other Life” - *continued*

Even more important today, because with our technology we are changing the air we breath and the weather that served and/or destroyed us humans for a very long time. And all of that can be helped or hindered by all of us civil engineers.

The workday goes by fast and I am one lucky person since I love my work. Time to go back to the peace of the hills, to my El Dorado and band of shepherds-or up to the mountains and down the rivers during weekends and vacations.

The ones I do not mind to share the beauty of the Sierra Nevada with and its crystal clear rivers are children. It is paradoxical but true, that places we wish to be protected and to remain wild cannot become so, unless known and loved by the next generation. This is my aim when I take a child down a river in a raft or up on a trail with a pack... of course with shepherds tagging along for protection, fun, education and love, love for all that is not a TV, a game or a shopping mall. Love for all that is really important in life and unfortunately, needs protection.

I truly believe that Transylvania gave me birth but USA and Mountain Ranch gave me life. For without the freedom of choices and the freedom of hills. you do not live. You only exist.

## Excuse me, but is that a MCMA member walking by?

With 142 MCMA members ~~ yes, 142! ~~ there are many of us walking around all of the City offices. This represents an increase of 32% since January of this year. But, did you know that there are actually 208 employees who are eligible to become members? So, that means there are 66 of your fellow management employees walking by who are **not** members.

In order to achieve our goal of 100% membership, many of you have asked for a Membership List so you can know who is not a member and begin a discussion about joining this great and growing organization. For your information, the Membership List will now be listed on the MCMA website at [modestocma.com](http://modestocma.com). And, if you haven't visited the website, please do! We think you will be impressed and we are always open to input for the improvement of both the website and this newsletter.

Let's make it our goal for 2007 to reach a 100% membership of 208 vital and interested management members!!! We have made great strides over the past year. We are in intense discussions with the Retiree Health Coalition, including all of the other five City unions, for the Retiree Health Trust for all units and Enhanced Retirement for the miscellaneous units. Your Board and your fellow members are putting in many hours on your behalf for the benefit of both the City and the employees.

So, next time a management employee walks by, ask yourself, “Are they a MCMA member?” Then, just jump on the website and check it out. There's no time like the present to add another great name to our growing list of all-stars!

Linda Boston

### IMPORTANT MEETING NOTICE!

Please make plans to attend the next  
**MCMA GENERAL  
MEMBERSHIP  
MEETING**

Thursday,  
October 25, 2007  
12:00 noon  
Tenth Street Place  
Basement Training  
Room (B300)

**Lunch will be  
provided**



### NOVEMBER ELECTIONS 4 Positions Open

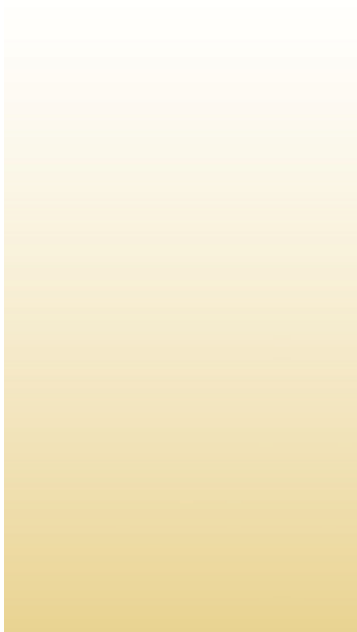
There are 4 positions up for election this November: Vice-President, Treasurer and 2 Directors. Nomination forms are available on the website, [modestocma.com](http://modestocma.com) or by contacting Polly Findlen, MCMA Secretary.

**The deadline to submit nomination forms is October 15, 2007.** If you are interested in serving as an officer or director, complete the nomination form and submit it to Polly **no later than October 15, 2007.**



*May you and yours be blessed  
this coming holiday season!*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## 2007 Upcoming Calendar of Events

### Board of Directors

*President*  
Laurie Smith

*Vice President*  
Linda Boston

*Secretary*  
Polly Findlen

*Treasurer*  
vacant

*Directors at Large*  
Leslie Curtin  
Tami Dodge  
Aaron Trott

October 16	11:45 a – 1:00 p	MCMA Board Meeting
October 17	11:45 a – 1:00 p	EAP – with Negativity in the Workplace
October 24	By appointment	ICMA Representative on site
October 25	12:00 p	MCMA General Membership Meeting Basement Training Room Lunch provided
October 26	10:00 – 11:00 a	Quarterly Employee Recognition Ceremony
November 13	By appointment	CalPERS
November 15	11:00 a – 3:00 p	Flu shots in Room B300
November 20	11:45 a – 1:00 p	MCMA Board meeting
December 13	5:30 p	MCMA Holiday Party at Dewz
December 18	11:45 a – 1:00 p	MCMA Board Meeting



There are many class opportunities in the upcoming months. Please contact the Training Division at extension 75490 for a complete list or to sign up. To make an appointment with the ICMA representative or CalPERS representative, call extension 75481.