

# THE MORNING AFTER

## TOWN OF ROSS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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### Mayor's Corner



Elizabeth Brekhus  
Mayor

The Town Dinner was held on the last Friday of September as is our tradition and once again Ross Recreation did an excellent job organizing the event. It's been fun to see the evolution of the

Town Dinner over the years. For a number of years, it was held in the street in front of the Post Office with a band playing on the steps of the Post Office. The year I helped organized it, we moved it to Marin Art & Garden Center. It was at the Marin Art & Garden Center for two years but that became problematic given the weddings at MAGC the following day. The move back to the Common was also a logical one because the younger residents were particularly hard to supervise at MAGC's facilities. The Ross Town

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### Annual Town Dinner Highlights

The annual Town Dinner held Friday, September 27th drew about 300 Ross residents to wine and dine with their neighbors potluck style under the trees on the Ross Common. This popular community event has been a Town tradition since 2005.

Thank you to all who helped make this annual event possible. A big thanks to Mike Armstrong and his team in the Recreation Department. Mike and his staff work very hard to make sure this event happens flawlessly, and we are very grateful for their efforts! Thanks also to the Ross Police Department, Bob Scott All Star Band, Town Council, Town Manager and Anthony Alcozer. Enjoy photos courtesy of Mike Armstrong and Joe Chinn.



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Dinner is a great opportunity for residents to come together and mingle once a year, and I want to thank Mike Armstrong, the entire Ross Recreation team and Town staff, including the Police Department, for their effort putting it on.

The Council had an important decision to make last night about whether to place the wildfire tax on the ballot, and in what form. Issues discussed include whether the tax should exist until repealed by the voters. Repealing an existing tax is difficult to accomplish and unlikely. Or alternatively, whether the tax should sunset every 10 years or so, so that the voters have to approve it to extend it. Many Marin residents have urged us to consider approving the tax but requiring a sunset provision, an action that San Anselmo City Council supported with a unanimous vote the other night. It is an important discussion and a nuanced issue and a decision we wanted to get right.

I'm sure it is no surprise to you that with October comes our other holiday tradition, Halloween, that transforms Shady Lane every year. Thank you to all the Shady Lane residents who participate in making Shady Lane a fun destination for residents and surrounding communities and we look forward to another great Halloween in Ross.

We are seeing progress on some of the public works projects around Town and we appreciate residents' patience as the projects go forward. ■

## March 2020 Council Election Filing Period Begins November 12



Are you interested in running for Town Council? Do you have an interest in civic issues? The next election to fill three Council seats for a 4-year term will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2020. The terms of Council Members Elizabeth Brekhus, Beach Kuhl, and Rupert Russell will expire at that time.

To qualify to run for Council, you must be a Ross resident and a registered voter. The filing period for Council candidates begins on **November 12, 2019 and runs through December 6, 2019**. If any of the incumbents *do not* file for re-election by December 6th, the filing date is extended to Wednesday, December 11th.

If you are interested in running for a Council seat or have any questions regarding the process, please contact Town Clerk Linda Lopez at (415) 453-1453 ext. 105, or via email at [llopez@townofross.org](mailto:llopez@townofross.org). An appointment with the Town Clerk is necessary in order to obtain the nomination papers that must be completed as part of the nomination process.

## Ross Considers Joining Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority JPA

A countywide coalition that includes the cooperation of all Marin fire and city/town agencies and the county, has proposed a new joint powers agreement (JPA) and funding measure that would raise approximately \$21 million per year dedicated to local wildfire prevention. The JPA agreement would consist of these local fire agencies, our cities



and towns, and the County. The mission of the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority would be to fund and oversee the following efforts: 1) Wildfire detection and evacuation system improvements; 2) Vegetation management and fire hazard reduction; 3) Defensible space and home hardening evaluations; 4) Public education and neighborhood wildfire preparedness; and 5) Local specific wildfire prevention efforts.

### March 2020 Revenue Measure

The coalition is proposing a new revenue measure to be considered by countywide voters in March of 2020 to support vegetation management, evacuation plans and perform thousands of wildfire defensible space evaluations

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# HALLOWEEN EVENTS



**Annual Halloween Window Painting**  
Friday, October 18, 2:45 pm - 5:00 pm  
in Downtown Ross



Pre-registration is required. To pre-register contact Gaby at (415) 256-1112, or by email at [artabloom@comcast.net](mailto:artabloom@comcast.net).

What to bring: Your creativity! All paint and materials will be supplied by Gabriella Drake of

Art Abloom Studio & Gallery. For more information, contact Gaby Drake at (415) 256-1112, or Bonnie Bibas at (239) 287-1414.

**Halloween Night, Thursday, October 31**  
**5:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

Shady Lane will be closed for trick or treaters from Norwood Avenue to Bolinas Avenue. Join the fun!

## Steps to Lower Pension Costs

There are many stories related to rising pension and retiree healthcare costs that will challenge cities and other government entities to either cut services or raise taxes and will likely push some California jurisdictions towards bankruptcy in the future. The Marin IJ recently had stories about a study recently published by the Marin County elected officials which showed that Marin's eleven cities and towns have a combined \$300 million in net pension liability and \$100 million in OPEB (other post-employment benefit) plan liability for retirement health coverage.

The Town of Ross has been very aggressive in taking measures to reduce our pension and OPEB liabilities to assist in being financially stable and reduce total and long-term costs. Related to OPEB retiree health care costs, the Town has no liability for two reasons-

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## Preparing for Winter

Thank you to all the volunteers who participated in the annual creek clean-up on September 28th. Now that Fall has arrived, we know that rainy weather can't be that far off. Property owners are reminded once again what can be done now to prepare for the rainy season.



1) Leaves are the main reason a catch basin or culvert becomes plugged and causes localized flooding. Rake leaves off any sidewalk, path, ditch or gutter in front of your property and place them in your recycle container. Do not rake them in piles and leave them in the street. The street sweeper is not equipped to pick up large volumes of piled leaves.

2) If you have an open ditch or other waterway crossing over your property you are responsible for keeping it clean and keeping the flow line at its required depth. If you change the grade of a swale passing over your property you could cause yourself and your neighbors to flood unnecessarily. Also, if you have a culvert or drainage pipe under your property, it is your responsibility to keep it clean and repair or replace it as necessary.

3) If you live in the hills it is very important that you keep the edge of the roadway in front of your property clean and free of leaves and dirt. This debris and build up can cause the water to cross over the roadway and wash out the bank. Also, the dirt and leaves wash down to the Town drainage system and cause major blockages.

4) If you live along the creeks, please remove any debris that may be obstructing the channel. Remove all downed branches and wood from the creek entirely. If you have a dead or dying tree along the creek where it may fall during a storm, please obtain a tree removal permit at Town Hall to get it removed.

### Trees, power lines, and fire safety

In response to the growing risk of wildfire in our state, PG&E crews and tree contractors have recently been working in Ross and other communities addressing trees and vegetation that may pose a higher potential for wildfire risk. If you see a potential issue with trees and powerlines (usually the thinner, upper-most 3 wires running between poles) or if you have questions about the vegetation and tree work happening around the overhead utility lines in Town, please contact PG&E directly by email at [wild-firesafety@pge.com](mailto:wild-firesafety@pge.com) or by phone at 1-877-295-4949.



## Joining Wildfire JPA

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per year to educate property owners across Marin to keep all residents safe. A revenue measure approved by Marin voters will provide improvements to alert and warning systems, evacuation planning, and protect critical infrastructure - including emergency communications, schools, police and fire facilities - to remain functioning in a disaster. With longer and hotter fire seasons, Marin needs to be proactive to reduce its vulnerability to wildfires.

Based on a study, the recommendation is for a tax rate of up to 10 cents per building square foot for improved commercial and residential parcels; \$75 per unit for multi-family residential (3+ units); and \$25/\$100/\$150 per parcel for unimproved parcels based on acreage. It is estimated that this tax structure will result in approximately \$21 million annually after accounting for exemptions for low-income seniors.

By October 31, all 19 Marin agencies with fire suppression responsibilities will formally consider a resolution to join the new JPA, and to request the County put a Marin Wildfire Prevention Initiative Parcel Tax Measure on the March 2020 ballot.

At the October meeting, the Council voted 4-0 to join the Wildfire JPA on the condition that the proposed ballot tax measure have a 10 year sunset clause. ■

## Pension Costs - continued from Page 3

Ross's retiree health care program is and has been the minimum state allowed retiree health benefit to retired employees and the Town established and fully funded a trust fund for all future retiree health costs. Related to the pension liability, the Town has taken a number of steps to reduce our CalPERS pension costs such as: 1) Over the last several years, the Town made an additional \$2 million of payments to CalPERS to reduce our liability that saved the Town a net of \$2.1 million by reducing costs by \$4.1 million; 2) Reduced the amortization schedule for PERS costs resulting in higher costs in the short run but much lower total costs in the long run; 3) Established and funded a pension trust to diversify and further reduce long-term pension debt.

We will continue to look at ways to be financially responsible and stable so the residents can receive more services for your tax dollar. ■

## RECREATION NEWS

Fall programs will continue through December. Most programs are full, however, there are a few spaces available in the art and game design classes at Ross School. Youth Tennis classes at the Ross tennis courts in Allen Park continue to be popular. The classes offer an introduction to tennis through the use of special equipment designed for younger players. The instructors utilize simple activities and games that are fun and encourage early motor skill development.



Ross Recreation continues to partner with All West Lacrosse to introduce children to the fastest growing sport in America. Each session offer drills that help players work on the fundamentals of the game including cradling, scooping, throwing, shooting and catching. Sessions conclude with games that reward players for their participation. All West Lacrosse staff encourages each child to build self-confidence as they develop hand-eye coordination. Teamwork, good sportsmanship and "living RAE" (Respect Attitude, Effort) are reinforced throughout the program which is comprised of Pre-K and Kindergarten age children.



Register for Ross Recreation programs at  
[www.rossrecreation.org](http://www.rossrecreation.org)

# ROSS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## OCTOBER 2019

Oct 10	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
Oct 18	2:45-5	pm	Halloween Window Painting, Downtown Ross <i>(see Page 3)</i>
Oct 22	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall
Oct 31	5:00-9	pm	Halloween - Shady Lane Road Closure <i>(see Page 3)</i>

## NOVEMBER 2019

Nov 7	6:00	pm	Special Council Meeting, Town Hall
Nov 11	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for Veterans Day
Nov 12-Dec 6	--	--	March 2020 Election Filing Period for Council Candidates <i>(see Page 2)</i>
Nov 14	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
Nov 26	7:00	pm	Advisory Design Review Group Meeting, Town Hall
Nov 28-29	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for Thanksgiving holiday

## DECEMBER 2019

Dec 8	4:00-6	pm	Annual Winter Sing, Ross Common
Dec 9	7:15	pm	Ross Property Owners Association Meeting, Town Hall
Dec 12	6:00	pm	Council Meeting, Town Hall
Dec 23-Jan 1	--	--	Town Hall offices closed for Christmas/New Year's holiday

## RECURRING EVENTS

Thursdays, May - October      Ross Farm Stand, 11:30 am - 7:30 pm, Ross Common

## CONTACT US

Administration	415.453.1453 x105	Public Works Director	415.453.1453 x115
Building & Public Works	415.453.1453 x106	Recreation	415.453.6020
Bldg Inspection Hotline:	415.453.1453 x170	Ross Valley Fire Dept	415.258.4686
Planning	415.453.1453 x116	Town Manager	415.453.1453 x107
Police	415.453.1453, Option 2		

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Visit us at [www.townofross.org](http://www.townofross.org)



We welcome suggestions for future issues. Email [llopez@townofross.org](mailto:llopez@townofross.org)

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