



# Ojai Valley Green Coalition

Monthly E-News

March 2010

## This Month's Community Presentation: *The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil*



Film director Faith Morgan

What would you do if tomorrow you couldn't use your car to go buy food because there was no fuel? How would your neighbors react? What about your doctor, or your child's teacher? On a scale from one to ten, how resilient would you say the Ojai Valley would be in the face of this type of shock?

An entire country found out the answers to these questions the hard way, yet came through the crisis all the better for it. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990, Cuba's

economy went into a tailspin. With imports of oil cut by more than half—and food by 80 percent—people were desperate. This month's film, *The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil* tells of the hardships and struggles as well as the community and creativity of the Cuban people during this difficult time. Please join us to see it at the Ojai Theatre on Saturday, March 27. Plan to get there early, as we'll be starting at 4:30 p.m. sharp. To salute Ojai's power as a community, we'll also be showcasing local for-profit and nonprofit organizations that excel in community building and support.

In the film, Cubans share how they transitioned from a highly mechanized industrial agricultural system to one using organic methods of farming and local, urban gardens. It's an unusual look into the Cuban culture during this economic crisis that they call "The Special Period." The film opens with a brief explanation of Peak Oil, a term for the time (which some say has already passed) when world oil production passes its all-time peak and begins a permanent decline. Cuba, the only country that has faced such a massive reduction of fossil fuels, now serves as an example of resourcefulness and hope.

Speaking before the film will be Santa Barbara Councilmember Das Williams, who spent part of his childhood in Ojai and, through the efforts of his community-active aunt, Suza Francina, has agreed to share with us his own thoughts on the power of community.

Das has a degree in Political Science from U.C. Berkeley, and holds a Master's degree in Environmental Science with a focus in water processes, and land-use Management, pollution, planning law from U.C. Santa Barbara's Bren School of Environmental Science. His community work spans 15 years. He says it was during his early work with Nelson Mandela's African National Congress that he experienced "the power of grassroots action." And, as his website states, a deep belief in the power of community and neighbors reaching out to neighbors has helped Das become an accomplished member of the Santa Barbara City Council.

In addition to his City Council service, Das teaches at Santa Barbara's Antioch University. He is also a community organizer for the Ventura-based nonprofit CAUSE, and he serves as a Trustee of Peabody Charter School and is a national board member of the National Organization for Women. 🌱



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## Two Green Thumbs Up!

Two thumbs up to the Ojai Valley School students who participated in the Green Cup Challenge, a nationwide, 213-school competition. The school's Todd Cossairt is California Coordinator for the Green Cup Challenge. The aim is to not only save energy but also create new lifelong habits for the participants.

And the state government gets two thumbs up for approving a statewide goal to reduce water demand by 20 percent by the year 2020. It requires local water districts to help limit indoor water use to 55 gallons per person per day. The largest percentage of indoor water use comes from flushing toilets; each flush is more or less equal to the average daily amount of drinking water consumed by one person.

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- Cindy Cante, Representative of Supervisor Steve Bennett's Office
- Steve Olson, Representative of the City of Ojai

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This e-newsletter is produced by the Communications and Publicity Committee



## Saying "Vaya Con Dios" to Our Board Member Sue Broidy

The Ojai Valley Green Coalition bids a fond farewell to Sue Broidy, who has been serving on our Board of Directors. Sue jumped right in and helped out on the OVGC's Resource Committee as well.

The Ojai Valley was fortunate to count Sue Broidy as a concerned and involved citizen, and we wish her well in her new home in Colorado. Thanks, Sue, for all you have done for the Coalition and our community as a whole. We'll certainly miss you!

## Meet the Directors and Committee Chairs! Come to Soule Park for Our First-Ever Coalition Social

Here's an opportunity to learn about the Coalition and meet with the Board of Directors, the Committee heads, and many of the active members involved in various projects. On Sunday, March 14, from 3:30 - 5 p.m., we'll be near the baseball diamond at Soule Park.

Bring a snack, a ball and bat, and a lawn chair, and get ready to meet some green folks, have some fun, and find out more about the goings-on of your Ojai Valley Green Coalition!



- WRITERS: PRESS RELEASES, PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS, CALENDAR NOTICES. 2-3 HRS PER MONTH.
- WEBSITE MAINTENANCE: ONLINE UPDATES. 30-60 MINUTES PER WEEK.
- CONSTANT CONTACT: GRAPHIC LAYOUT OF EMAIL NOTICES. 3-5 HRS PER MONTH.

## ONE DAY ONLY

### Ventura County Water and Sanitation Integrated Waste Management Division along with other County departments and area cities



are pleased to host a

## BACKYARD COMPOST BIN and RAIN BARREL

truckload sale

**Saturday, March 27, 2010**  
**9 am - 3 pm**

RAIN OR SHINE · FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED · WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

a \$100 value for only  
**\$40.00**  
tax included

a \$120 value for only  
**\$55.00**  
tax included



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**NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED**

# Thinking in Green

Deborah Pendrey  
OVGC Executive Director



## A Season of Renewal

Spring and Daylight Savings Time are near—both signaling that it's time to open up the windows and get more done. Sometimes volunteer community work can feel like an “extra” thing to do. But I would suggest that stuffing envelopes, going to an evening meeting, dedicating a weekend to service, or helping out in any of a myriad of ways that nonprofits need should be as much a part of our routine as eating three meals a day.

Good citizenship calls for us to give back to our community and fellow human beings. In environmental work, I see it as a form of carbon credits. I live pretty simply and frugally by American standards, but I'm nowhere near zero-waste or carbon-neutral. So I give back, and try to make my drop in the ocean count . . . only to find out that I actually get more than I give, in the way of new friendships and personal resources. And according to the experts, giving actually has a psychological and physiological health benefit, in that it releases endorphins, which, as you know, are the feel-good peptide hormones in our brains.

As you stretch and breathe in the spring air after winter's hibernation, I hope you'll reach out into our community to be of service. If you need a bit of a nudge, we'll be screening the inspirational film *The Power of Community* on Saturday, March 27, at the Ojai Theatre, along with showcasing some of our local community-building organizations, and Ojai native and Santa Barbara

councilmember Das Williams will be there to share about his experiences in community work. We'll also be holding a Coalition Social on March 14, so folks can meet our Board of Directors and ask questions to see if the Coalition is a good fit for getting involved. We are the Ojai Valley Green *Coalition*, so let's roll up our sleeves together.

### We Thank Our Donors

All are welcome in the Coalition as community members, but it's our supporting members who give us the means to do our work. The following folks contributed in the last quarter. THANK YOU!

Rae Amey  
Joan Blaxter  
Corinne Bourdeau  
Noel Douglas  
Dulanie Ellis  
Elaine Enns & Ched Myers  
Ruth Farnham  
Debbie Fox  
Carol Garramone  
Letitia Grimes  
Bill Haff  
Dale Hodges  
Marleen Luckman  
Julia Pfeifer  
Stephen Pronovost  
Larry & Christel Rogero  
Carol Smith & Lany Yuva  
Nilufer Torun  
Susan Williamson

If you haven't already, won't you join us, too? And please consider giving gift memberships to friends and family members. 🌱

## The Neighborhood Foresters of the Ojai Trees Group

Judging by all the young trees in people's yards this winter, there seems to be a surge of interest in planting them. And Ojai Trees, the valley's volunteer tree-planting group, deserves a lot of the credit, as in 2009 the organization planted 105 new trees.

Under the guidance of landscape architect Tom Bostrom, the founder and president of Ojai Trees, volunteers called “neighborhood foresters” act like block captains within their localities. “Neighborhood foresters currently serve about eight neighborhoods in the valley, and we're actively seeking more,” says Tom. Right now the group is especially interested in developing neighborhood foresters in the Golden West and Descanso neighborhoods.

One needn't be an expert on trees to be a neighborhood forester, as a simple training program is already in place. And the time commitment is very modest. Neighborhood foresters are asked to attend two Saturday morning meetings per year, and to spend a little time networking in their neighborhoods to get the word out about Ojai Trees. Current foresters for Ojai Trees speak of how much they enjoy their involvement, citing the great training, the efficient (and infrequent) meetings, the gratification of being part of such a positive and successful effort, and the fun they have at the planting events.

“Planting trees is one of the simplest and easiest things residents can do to improve our environment,” says Ojai Trees board member Linda Harmon. “Trees improve air quality by filtering out pollutants and sequestering carbon dioxide from the air, reducing temperatures during our long hot summers, and holding water in their leaves and roots. They not only add beauty and curb appeal to your home, they also save money. A typical shade tree lowers outside temperatures by 20 degrees or more, reducing the need for air conditioning.”

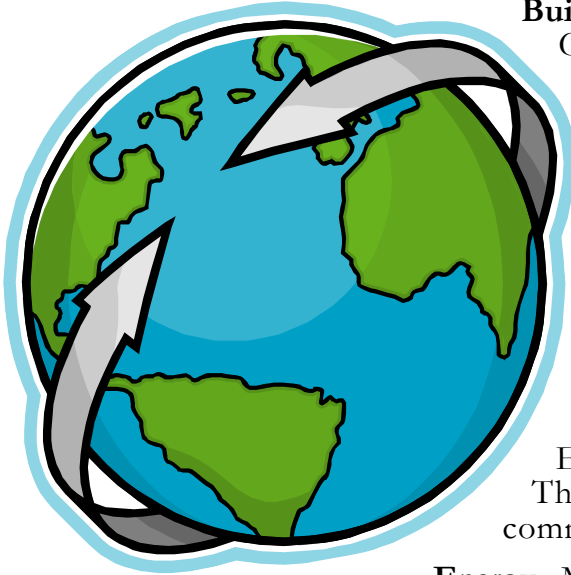
The group will be out planting trees at several locations on Saturday morning, April 10, and more volunteers are needed. Anyone interested in joining in at a planting event or becoming a neighborhood forester can get in touch with Ojai Trees by emailing [ojaitrees@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ojaitrees@sbcglobal.net) or calling (805) 646-2992.

People who choose to have a tree planted by Ojai Trees are pleasantly surprised by the great service they receive. They get expert advice on selecting the right tree for the right place at a good price, and on proper tree care. Then a group of friendly volunteers comes to their home to plant the trees properly for free. They even do a tree naming ceremony! If you'd like to have one or more trees planted, visit the [www.ojaitrees.com](http://www.ojaitrees.com).

Even those who have no need of a tree for themselves can support community reforestation through the Ojai Trees tree dedication program, which allows people to purchase a tree that will be planted in honor or memory of a loved one, or as a gift that shows their personal commitment to healing the environment.

# What's Going on in the Coalition Committees

“Knowledge, Put into Action, Is Power”



**Building and Construction** - Meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 7:00 P.M., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Avenue, in the conference room off the breezeway next to the Administration Building. The committee is partnering with the Energy Committee on a residential efficiency-evaluation program.

**Communications and Publicity** - Meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday at 6:30 P.M., 202 W. Aliso Street. The committee's ongoing projects include website maintenance and the creating and editing of flyers, emails, display ads, and press releases, plus radio interviews, this monthly e-newsletter, and the editing of Coalition members' letters to the editor for the *Ojai Valley News*.

**Event Planning** - Meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday at 5:00 P.M., 221 East Matilija Street, in Suite J. Call 669-8445 for confirmation. The committee is always working on details for the next monthly community presentation.

**Energy** - Meetings have been suspended while the committee is seeking a new Committee Chair.

**Environmental Health** - Meetings have been temporarily suspended, as the Committee Chair is presently working with the OUSD school district's Green Team. Call Marleen Luckman at (805) 279-2101 for more information.

**Food and Agriculture** - Meeting dates and locations vary. Email Dulanie Ellis-La Barre at [dulanie@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dulanie@sbcglobal.net) for information on this committee or on its Grow Food Party Crew and Culinary Club subcommittees.

**Resources** - Meets on the 2nd Monday at 5:00 P.M., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Avenue, in the conference room off the breezeway next to the Administration Building. The committee is creating a unified calendar for every income-generating event held by the Coalition. Besides fundraising, its ongoing responsibilities include obtaining grants and keeping tabs on the Coalition's budget.

**Transportation** - A new Committee Chair has stepped forward to reactivate this committee: Suza Francina. The monthly meeting time has yet to be announced. If this is an area of interest to you, please contact Suza at [SFrancina@aol.com](mailto:SFrancina@aol.com) for more information.

**Waste Management** - The committee meets on the 2nd Thursday at 7:00 P.M., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Avenue, in the conference room off the breezeway next to the Administration Building. The next Day Without a Bag event has been postponed until the spring of this year, pending sufficient sponsors.

**Watershed** - Meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday at 7:00 P.M., Chaparral High School, 414 E. Ojai Avenue, in the conference room off the breezeway next to the Administration Building. Email Brian Holly at [brian@biorc.com](mailto:brian@biorc.com) for further information. The committee was awarded a grant by the Community Wetland Restoration Grant program for a creek-restoration project to eradicate invasive non-native plants and restore the ecosystem of the Ojai Creek riparian corridor within Libbey Park (see page 5).

# Field Notes on the Ongoing Ojai Creek Riparian Habitat Restoration from Brian Holly, Biologist and Project Manager

Our work in February involved the removal of nine mature Canary Island date palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) and two Mexican fan palms (*Washingtonia robusta*) from the north end of the restoration site. Members of our group have since noticed more available surface water in the north end of the stream channel, which we believe is directly attributable to the removal of these trees that tend to use more water than the native trees.

surprisingly large volunteer turnout despite the rainstorm. Fortunately, we had the Libbey Park gazebo as a “dry reprieve” from the heavier rains. On this day, the group focused on the south end of the restoration site and we planted about 100 more mule-fat and willow cuttings, as well as continuing to remove invasive species regrowth. I followed up with continued broadcasting of a native riparian seed mix.



*A butterfly enjoys a specimen of native mule-fat (Baccharis salicifolia).*

On Saturday, February 20, we continued the removal of invasive species regrowth and planted approximately 150 willow and mule-fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) cuttings. About 35 volunteers, consisting of community members and students, came out in support of the project. Work mostly focused on the north end of the habitat restoration. Erin Marnocha instructed a group of students in planting acorns along the banks, and I worked with two volunteers as we broadcast a native riparian seed mix throughout the site.

This past Saturday, February 27, we had a

All of you good volunteers, please take note that the invasive removal and native planting will continue on April 3 and April 17.

This creek and riparian habitat restoration project is being made possible by funding from the Earth Island Institute and by support from the Wetlands Recovery Project and the Coastal Conservancy of Southern California. Meiners Oaks Ace Hardware helped with supply purchases, and Consolidated Disposal Service is donating the removal and recycling of green waste. 🌱



## In and Around the Valley in March

**March 11,** Arbor Day celebration, Libbey Park gazebo, 10 A.M.; see page 6

**March 14,** Coalition Social, Soule Park, 3:30-5 P.M.; see page 2

**March 20,** “Planting What You Cook”, 2-4 P.M., at the Ojai Community Garden, [ojaigarden.com](http://ojaigarden.com)

**March 22,** Indoor Air Quality with Bau-Biologist Larry Gust, 5:30 P.M., USGBC C4 at Patagonia Firehouse Community Room, 259 W. Santa Clara Street, Ventura, [usgbcc4.org](http://usgbcc4.org)

**March 27,** Coalition screening of The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil, with Das Williams speaking. 4:30 P.M., Ojai Theatre, 145 E. Ojai Avenue; see page 1

**March 27,** Household Waste and E-Waste Collection Day: Call (805) 658-4323 for an appointment

**March 27,** Compost Bin/Rain Barrel Truckload Sale event, 9 A.M.- 3 P.M., Ventura County Government Center; see page 2

## Save the Date

**April 24,** Earth Play on the Meadow: A Community Earth Day Celebration organized by the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy, working with the Green Coalition, the Rotary Club, and Oak Grove School.

# Longtime Resident Mary Long Writes on Ojai's Arbor Day Celebration 2010

My memories of growing up in Ojai include dirt clod fights from high in the branches of massive oak trees, tree houses built in gigantic walnut trees, and climbing the old, arching sycamore at Libbey Bowl. I also remember the rope swings at Thatcher School, dense groves by the Art Center that gave Libbey Park the romantic aura of a mysterious grotto, and the hitching post oaks where students at San Antonio School once tied their horses for shade.

Lines of trees used to grace Ojai Avenue, so that heading east toward the Topas was like driving through a leafy arbor. These are my memories of growing up in an Ojai Valley rich with varied species of trees. High above Rancho Drive still stands



*This tile plaque marks the cedar grove planted by Edward Drummond Libbey. (Photo by Mary Long)*

a small forest of cedar trees imported by Edward Libbey in the 1920s. Today, many of Ojai's historic trees and groves are aging. It's important that new trees be planted and protected for the enjoyment and use of future generations.

On Thursday, March 11, starting at 10 a.m. at the Libbey Park gazebo, everyone is

invited to come celebrate our community forest. Join Ojai Trees, the City of Ojai, the Ojai Valley Green Coalition, the Ojai Tree Committee, and local schoolchildren in celebrating Arbor Day 2010 and congratulating the City of Ojai.

Tucker Adams and Kathy Nolan of the Ojai Planning Commission will introduce the various constituents present. Brian Holly will speak about the riparian restoration project, and Tom Bostrom will give a brief talk about Ojai Trees. Kathy and Tucker will make a few comments about the newly adopted Community Forest Management Plan and its role in receiving the Tree City USA designation.

The CAL FIRE Regional Urban Forester for Ventura and Los Angeles Counties, Thomas Shoots, will then present Mayor Olsen and the City Council with a plaque recognizing Ojai as a Tree City USA, in a program sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters.

There will be a traditional tree blessing by Chumash elder Julie Tumamait to honor the new trees being planted. She will also honor a couple of people for their long-time work with trees in Ojai., followed by a ceremonial planting in the east barranca area now being restored by the Green Coalition's Watershed Committee (see page 5).

After this part of the event, everyone is invited to continue to Libbey Bowl, where Julie will tell the story of the Wedding Tree and a short program on tree facts will be presented for the children.

California's Arbor Day is actually on March 13 (and the national observance is always on the last Friday of April, although different states observe it on different days), but Ojai's observance is being held on a weekday so that schoolchildren can participate with their classmates. Children from Ojai Valley School, Oak Grove School, and the Ojai Valley Unified School District, including grades pre-K through the 3rd grade, will be attending.

Tree City USA provides direction,

technical assistance, public attention, and national recognition for thousands of urban and community forestry programs. Ojai has been designated a 2010 Tree City for having met these requirements: a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita, and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

Arbor Day celebrates the planting of trees. It's also a story of successful activism and how one man, Julius Stirling Morton, journalist and founder of the *Nebraska City News*, inspired a tradition now observed nationally. While he used his editorials to inspire Nebraskans to get out and plant, he imported hundreds of varieties of trees from all over the world to test their suitability for the flatlands of the Great Plains. The trees not only beautified the state and increased property values; they served as windbreaks, controlled erosion,



*Chumash elder Julie Tumamait will perform a tree blessing ceremony on March 11 at Ojai's Arbor Day observance in Libbey Park. (Photo by Mary Long)*

and produced marketable crops, enhancing the state economy. Morton became Secretary of Agriculture and then acting Governor of Nebraska. The Arbor Day he created became a legal holiday in Nebraska in 1872. 🌱