For this year’s Spring Benefit, the Open Space Committee was able to snag a rare and unique species of scientist from the Smithsonian, Dr. Chris Wemmer, where he worked with endangered species. Now retired, Wemmer has a new passion for catching glimpses of wildlife using a method called “camera trapping.” The process of building and placing these cameras in remote areas can take days, but the rewards are stunning images of animal behavior. Chris shared luminous night shots of playful owls, curious bears, and elusive mountain lions. Perhaps the most entertaining images were of a wood rat in his own backyard using contortionist’s moves to get to a dangling feeder, specially devised by our guest speaker. To see more of his work and how to build such contraptions, visit http://cameratrapcodger.blogspot.com, where he proves that “nature is infinitely more interesting than shopping malls.” Thank you, Chris, for such a delightful evening!

22nd Annual Benefit Proves Captivating

Hal Brown’s Lasting Legacy

The Ross Valley is part of Marin County’s Second Supervisorial District. Hal Brown has held this office for 29 years, and has recently announced his retirement from the Board of Supervisors. The San Anselmo Open Space Committee has a long history of collaboration with Hal going back to our first land purchase in 1983. Hal has the distinction of supporting and cooperating in the protection of 1,747 acres of open space and 305 acres of public access easements in our district. The following interview will reveal some of the story of how this great work came to be. We thank you, Hal, for all of your contributions to preserve our treasured landscape, and you will be sorely missed!

Why did you decide to move to San Anselmo, and how long have you lived here?
I moved to Sleepy Hollow/San Anselmo from San Francisco in 1973. I had always loved the area, and couldn’t think of a better place to raise a family. Best decision I ever made.

What inspired you to enter public service, and what has kept you involved for so many years?
My father, though a private attorney, was always involved in public service and deeply committed to community service. He passed those values on to me. I’ve also always had an affinity for politics. I fund-raised for candidates for years before becoming supervisor. I’ve stayed involved because I love it. I love my job. I love the people I serve. I love local politics.

Which of your accomplishments relating to open space in Marin are you most proud of?
All of it! Every single parcel that I was able to help preserve was a victory no matter how large or small the piece. They all had issues that had to be recognized and validated, and lawyers to help them. I think we did fifteen rewrites of the contract.

What was your most challenging open space project, and what were the key factors for its success or arriving at a solution?
There was an effort to preserve about 70 acres in Sleepy Hollow. It was called the Lang Property. The challenging part — after convincing the community to get behind it, and help pay for it — was reconciling the needs of the multiple parties involved. They all had issues that had to be recognized and validated, and lawyers to help them. We think we did fifteen rewrites of the contract.

Check Out Our New Website!
www.SanAnselmoOpenSpace.org
Hal Brown...continued from front

Who were the inspirations or mentors that guided your decisions?
I quickly learned after coming into office, that protecting the envi-
ronment and preserving the quality of life in Marin County were para-
mount not only to my constituents, but also to my longevity. That said, individual property rights have also been paramount; so the key to
protecting open space has always been, and always will be, a will-
ing seller.

Discuss open space goals or projects in Marin you believe are most important for the next 5 years.
Maintaining and protecting our open space lands in the face of ever-
shrinking budgets and ever increasing use. Developing revenue sources to do the same. Charting the course, and getting agreement from all user groups on how we use our parks and open space in ways that are respectful of each other and of the environment.

Do you have a favorite trail or open space area in Marin?
Creekside path — from Ross all the way to the Ban Air Bridge — I love to bike it or walk it, especially on weekends. You see so many other people — all different sorts — using it for transportation, or recre-
ation, or just for the pure enjoyment of being there with friends or family.

What has been the most fun or got you to smile during your years of public service?
I try not to smile, or let people know that I’m having fun. But actu-
ally, except for the long meetings, I love my job. But I have to say, the most fun for me is when I have a school group up at the civic cen-
ter, usually 3rd graders. And I do a mock Board of Supervisors meet-
ing — select kids to be the supervisors, the county administrator, the press, etc. I involve as many as possible. We do a little play-acting. The kids love it, especially speaking into the mic. — bringing the on/off switch. None of them can vote yet, but I think they tell their parents about it when they get home.

Do you have any advice for those seeking to bring about the pres-
servation of open space in our community?
Don’t underestimate the value of small parcels. Little pieces can really add up.

by Jonathan Braun

Friends of Fauéd Park

Fauéd Park is a lovely but little-known 14-acre hilltop park, known to
generations of Drake students as “D” Hill. It was donated to the Town by C. Fredrick Fauéd in 1973. Accesssed from the south at the corner of Oakland and Alderney Avenues or from the north from Tomahawk Drive, this hidden jewel of a park invites exploring or just admiring some of the best views in San Anselmo. Over the years the trails had become over-
grown and erosion and soil slumping had caused major problems, especial-
ly at the south end of the park, where a particularly steep and slippery section had become dangerous.

In October of 2010, new resident to the neighbor-
hood René Voss decided to do something about it. He contacted the Open Space Committee and was put in touch with vol-
unteer Brian Crawford, who lives on Oakland Avenue directly across from the park. The two decided to form a neighborhood volunteer group, the Friends of Fauéd Park, modeled on the successful and long-running Friends of Sorich Park. Town Administrator Debbie Stutsman and Public Works Supervisor Dave Craig agreed that the Town would provide the needed materials. Randy Wood, Brian Crawward, René Voss, Jon Poindexter, and Peter Lavaroni install steps.

The Friends of Fauéd Park meet at 9 AM on the fourth Saturday of every month at the corner of Oakland and Alderney Avenues, just a block from Sir Francis Drake and San Francisco Boulevards. To help or for more information, contact René Voss at 446-9037 or Brian Crawford at 454-3439.

by Brian Crawward

Preserving Open Space — Jake Luria’s Generosity

Hiking trails and open space are common in Marin County, and they are two things that we are very fortunate to be able to enjoy. A well-known landmark is Bald Hill in the Ross Valley. It offers an abun-
dance of trails and spectacular view points. However, the summit is still privately owned. Without this pristine natural hilltop, Marin wouldn’t have the beautiful and stunning appearance it does today. In order to keep these spaces looking their sharpest we need to raise money.

Jake Luria, an 8th grader at St.
Mark’s School in Terra Linda, lives right next to Bald Hill and gets to appreciate the beauty of Bald Hill every morning. A regular hiker and dog walker, he uses the trails every couple of weekends during the school year but more often in the summer time. As a frequent user of Bald Hill, he decided that

the money he received from his upcoming Bar Mitzvah would be donated to the San Anselmo Open Space Committee—specifically to preserve Bald Hill. Jake’s generous donation of $2,500 will go directly to the fundraising for Bald Hill and will help continue the SAOSC efforts to preserve another natural attraction.

Jake’s generosity is something that many of us in the commu-
nity can learn something from. Appreciating the beauty of our open spaces is something we all do when we are actively enjoying what they have to offer. What can we all learn from Jake, is that sometimes that beauty needs to be appre-
ciated in a tangible way. His gift to the Open Space Committee is just that kind of admiration.

SAOSC Welcomes Its First Student Representative

This summer, the Committee was pleased to expand its membership to add Spencer Galli as the first student representative. The Committee had considered opportunities to reach the community’s younger generation, and it jumped at the chance to include Spencer when he volunteered. A long-time San Anselmo resident, Spencer is a junior at Drake High School. He was very interested in working to promote open space in the Ross Valley, and he has already volunteered to write an article for this newsletter as well as help with the new website. He enjoys hiking and fishing with his family and friends, provided he is not too busy studying or playing on the varsity water polo team. Spencer says, “I joined the Open Space Committee because the open space in Marin brings a unique aspect of beauty and fantastic scenery, and I believe it’s important that we help preserve it.” Welcome Spencer, and we know you will be a great addition!

by Danny Krebs

The San Anselmo Open Space Endowment Fund

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Please make checks out to: San Anselmo Open Space Fund of MOC Your gift is tax-deductible.