

University of California Cooperative Extension
Richard J. Elkus Ranch



RanchTalk

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A Great Loss to Elkus Ranch

Min Moore, a long time volunteer and Elkus Staff member, passed away January 11, 2005. She taught children who visited the Ranch about wool and spinning, but also loved introducing the young visitors to the animals and gardens; sharing her knowledge of where their food and clothing comes from. She believed in the Mission of the Ranch and worked hard to develop programs that provided hands-on opportunity for all youth.

Chuck, her husband, and son, Eric, shared their memories with friends and staff recently at a memorial gathering at Elkus.

Through the generous donation of friends, we have been able to establish an area on the Dean Trail to honor her contribution. A bench welcomes all visitors, a tree will provide shade and a demonstration flower garden will be used for dying wool.

We will never forget her walking students down the Elkus trails. "Follow me" she would say and like a piper the class would follow, hopping and laughing behind her to the next study area. She gave so much to the Ranch and made it richer for sharing her talents with us. We will all miss Min.



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Elkus Ranch Spinners

The Spinners meet the second Saturday of the month from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM at the "old" Ranch house. We meet to encourage and support each other's interest in the textile arts and to exchange ideas and information. We occasionally plan group dyeing and spinning projects. Newcomers, and novice and experienced spinners are welcome. Please bring your spinning supplies and something to share for lunch.

For more information or questions, contact Laura Schickli at schickli@pacbell.net

Special Events at Elkus Ranch

A Black and White Ball at Elkus Ranch

On the evening of February 19th, the La Honda Girls Scouts led by troop leaders, Helena Pisani and Barbara Metrulas hosted a Father/Daughter Sweetheart Dance at Elkus Ranch.

Girls Scouts from the entire coastside were invited to attend. Fathers in tuxedos and daughters dressed in elegant gowns filled the halls of the Conference Center. Cloe Hussey, Laura Metrulas, Caroline Pisani, Rachael Schneider and Jenna Swanson of La Honda Cadette Troop #2996 organized the music, led the evenings activities and performed a dance routine. It was a wonderful event for the many fathers and daughters who attended the ball.



Pre-School Week

Preschoolers, parents and teachers visited our rabbits and horse, dug for worms, brushed goats, and worked on special projects in the barn and greenhouse.

Everyone went home tired from their Elkus experience. Another successful Pre-School Week!



Elkus Ranch Wins 2005 Honorable Mention

Many thanks to Ricki McGlashan, for nominating Elkus Ranch for this San Mateo County Sustainable Award. The Goals of Sustainable San Mateo are to educate, demonstrate and highlight ways for all of us to improve our county's quality of life—to be an example to others, so future generations can live in a vital and healthy community. This can be accomplished only through the cooperative efforts of all of us living and working in San Mateo County.

Carolyn Battaini, Elkus Board member; Gloria Brown, Ranch Director; and Elkus staff enjoyed a wonderful evening meeting other members in our community who were also honored at this event.

Winter Camp 2004 Activities

Winter Camp volunteers Steve and Carolyn Battaini introduced a new hands-on activity for our Ranch guests. The making of corn feed. The 1901 Buckeye Corn Sheller and the 1902 Dempster Corn Grinder were used to show how ranchers ground their own animal feed.

Each "Ranch Hand" received their own cloth feed sack, which they filled with kibbled corn and fed the chickens and goats. Some even took it home to feed the squirrels, birds, or their own ranch animals.

Also demonstrated at Winter Camp was rope making which is a continuing popular Ranch activity. "Ranch Hands" used the 1902 hand cranked rope-making machine to convert 72 feet of jute twine into almost 12 feet of three-strand rope.

The youth waited patiently (at times for up to an hour) to get their opportunity to turn the handle of the old machine.

Ranch guests went home from Winter Camp 2004 with a pound of kibbled corn, a jump rope, a lucky horseshoe key fob, and a lucky wooden nickel (which was paid to them for their hard work at Elkus Ranch).

Steve and Carolyn would like to thank Christine Lund, Lund's Antiques, for the purchase of the Dempster Grinder and Chancellor Martha Kanter of Foothill-DeAnza Community College District, Los Altos Hills, for the use of the school's shop facilities. Thank you, also, Alan & Jerry Forrest, Alan Steel in Redwood City, for the steel materials used to construct the rope making supports and the stand for the feed grinder.



Critter's Corner (Rabbits at the Ranch)

Elkus Ranch has a variety of domestic rabbits for our educational programs. We are home to five female, or doe, rabbits in all. Our collection includes two large Himalayan Rex's which have what appear to be large sacks under their chins called dewlaps. No one knows the cause of dewlaps but they have no ill effect on the rabbits who have them. The Himalayans are the shyest of our group and will be the most likely to hide from their eager visitors. We also have one large, solid black doe with upright ears and one large gray lop with droopy ears and mid length hair. These two are both willing to tolerate visitors when pressed. And last, one dwarf butterscotch colored rabbit who is the star of the group as she is the most patient when being handled by people. Many visitors believe that the dwarf rabbit is a baby because of her small size. Rabbits are vegetarians and help us turn excess plant matter from the garden into little "pebbles" for the compost heap. Over time, that compost ends up back in the garden, in the soil, growing more plants. The rabbits serve as a wonderful example of recycling here on the Ranch!

*See you at the Ranch
Amy Kruckewitt*

Perspectives of a Master Gardener Trainee

A stack of reading material I could hardly lift made me realize this was going to be like a college course! Seven of us from San Mateo County had been graciously accepted into the 2005 Santa Clara County Master Gardener Program.

Every session begins with announcements--upcoming events, garden tours, pruning demonstrations, and a myriad of ongoing projects. Our heads are swimming, and our fingers are itching to get out there and help.

But first, Basic Botany--different plants have different types of roots, and so that's how grafting is done! Fruit Gardening--Citrus trees are evergreen, but it looks like Avocados can't grow here, so skip Chapter 19! Vegetable Gardening--Let's try growing Mache! Weeds--But Oxalis and Bindweed are so pretty! Diseases--The instructor's enthusiasm for fungal leafspots was downright exhilarating! Irrigation--The wrong type of irrigation for the wrong plant will lead to those fungal leafspots, and worse! Next class is House & Garden Pests--eeeww!

*Bobbi Benson
(Master Gardener Trainees will be graduating in May)*

Navajo Weaving

The Ashtl'i Weaving Guild invites you to join us and share the art of weaving the Traditional Navajo Way. Ashtl'o meets at 1:00 PM on the second Sunday of the month at Elkus Ranch. Membership is \$10/year. Membership includes the Ashtl'o Newsletter, published quarterly. Visit us at: <http://www.redshift.com/~bcbelknap/ashtlo.html>

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You...For All Your Help



To Castalaja Community Service volunteers for helping to build "Min's Garden"



Visitors enjoying the gardens



To Tassajara 4-H Sheep Club for taking care of our livestock and helping with parking cars for a special event.

Thank You Donors...since our last issue

Jin Choo ~ Frank & Margaret Carney ~ Ted & Ann Kaye ~ Charles & Barbara Erle ~ Diane Brosin & Tim Machold ~ Bonnet Meihoefer ~ David Katz ~ Don Shalvey ~ Miss Odie B. Cook ~ GMC Distributors ~ Bank of America United Way by way of Carolyn Battaini ~ Janet Schwind ~ Custom Handweavers ~ Jesselyn Foot ~ Ruth Wilkins ~ Patricia Gilgin ~ Laura Schickli ~ Katherin Watts ~ Karolyn Burkhart-Schultz ~ D. Ruth Stadnik ~ Bonnie Liebhold ~ Marcie Brown ~ Vanguard Charitable Endowment by way of The Quenelle Family Fund ~ Mary Mitchell ~ Jean & Duan Atkinson ~ Jean Thompson

Calendar

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|----------------|----------------------|
| May 14 | Spinner's Guild |
| May 15 | Weaver's Guild |
| June 11 | Spinner's Guild |
| June 11 | Sheep to Shawl |
| June 12 | Weaver's Guild |
| June 19-24 | Range Camp |
| June 27-July 1 | Discovery Day Camp 1 |
| July 9 | Spinner's Guild |
| July 10 | Weaver's Guild |
| July 11-15 | Discovery Day Camp 2 |
| July 25-29 | Discovery Day Camp 3 |
| August 13 | Spinner's Guild |
| August 15-19 | Discovery Day Camp 4 |

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Sheep to Shawl

Saturday, June 11, 2005 ~ 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

A special day has been planned for you and your family at Richard J. Elkus Ranch! Pack a lunch and prepare yourself for a day of fun-filled learning. Our professional sheep shearer and our blacksmith will show their remarkable skills. Elkus Spinners will be available to demonstrate how to spin, card and dye wool. Elkus Master Gardeners and Youth Docents will guide you through this entire event. Admission is free but reservations are required. Please call today to reserve your spot 650-712-3158.

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