



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The first half of 2011 has been a busy 6 months for ALPS; We have added three new members to our board, Mike Orvis, John Goers and Deb Dight. Their energy and talents have already contributed greatly to our ongoing efforts. Additionally, we are near completion on our multi-year native plant garden and trail project at Stadium Park. The California Conservation Corps, along with ALPS board members, have worked tirelessly to complete the project which should be 100% completed by mid-July. The Atascadero Native Tree Association (ANTA) was instrumental in the success of the project as well as city staff Cory Meyer. This latest phase of the project included additional planting, installation of wood chips, construction of 300' of retaining walls, installing 20 cubic yards of decomposed granite for tread surface and construction of an additional 1400' of recreational trail offering new vistas and a new hiking experience to Stadium Park visitors. Thanks to all who donated money, time and energy to this great project. On May 28, a dedication was held honoring Bill Shepard for his vision and design of the native plant garden.



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Moerman

As reported in our last newsletter, ALPS has been involved in a 4 year process obtaining grant funds in

order to purchase 103 acres on the west side of the city. We are happy to report today, that escrow has closed on that project and ALPS is now the proud owner and steward of this beautiful oak woodland and chaparral covered land. The parcel also borders nearly 2000' of Atascadero Creek. This is a huge event in the history of ALPS and we are honored to be trusted with the management of this property. Future plans include opening the land to public access, installation of an internal trail system with potential for connection to external trails with ultimate connectivity to the Los Padres National Forest. These trails will take a few years to complete but once they are

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website: [www.supportalps.org](http://www.supportalps.org)

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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Mike Orvis  
Deborah Stafford  
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- Board Member in Memoriam: Geri Brasher  
Marjorie Mackey  
Bill Shepard

Place  
Stamp  
Here

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constructed, this will be an incredible and unique opportunity for local trail users as well as an attraction for out of town visitors. Even with the addition of this 103 acre parcel, ALPS remains a small land conservancy, dedicated to preserving some of the special lands and places that are unique to the Atascadero landscape. We are entirely a volunteer organization. While that may change in the distant future, it is very much the truth today. As we continue our planning and development of the new parcel, there will be ample opportunities for volunteering in countless ways: fundraising, mapping, parking layout, trailhead development, equestrian compatibility, fencing, etc. Please contact any ALPS board member to further discuss how you may be able to assist us in the planning and the development of access improvements of this new parcel. Working together, we can and will make this a tremendous asset for our community.

Bruce Bonifas,  
ALPS President

## GERI BRASHER

By Fred Frank and Lon Allan

Geri Brasher was born in Kansas, but by the time she was two years she moved to Atascadero for the first time – in 1931. A great-aunt and uncle came when E.G Lewis was establishing his utopian community. Geri recalls that they (Rose and Ed Currier) lived in Tent City while their Colony Home was being built. Geri's father, Ivan Wiley was in construction and worked for E.G. but Geri soon moved. She lived in many towns in the state while growing up but often visited her Aunts Wanda Frank and Vera Nicholes here in Atascadero.

In the 50's she returned to Atascadero with her husband, Lee Brasher, and operated a jewelry business for several years, which Geri is quick to add, "It didn't last long." Geri lived on Palma near the church her late grandmother Wiley attended.

Geri finished college later in life, earning a bachelors degree in English from CSU San Francisco and later a masters in language arts, from the same school. In addition to getting her teaching credential, she also picked up a school administrators' credential.

For a period she taught English, journalism and media communications, but decided she didn't have the temperament for being a secondary level teacher. She taught at Happy Valley School District and Shasta Community College. She moved into administration and while she enjoyed the work, realized the pay was poor and eventually went into marketing and public relations, and even owning her own business.

The charm of the E.G Lewis Colony called her back again in 1987. She said at the time, "My ties and roots are here. I really love the rural life style and wonderful natural environment we still have here."

She retired from her private business in 1992. But that retirement didn't last long as she involved herself in civic activities, especially those that served to preserve Atascadero's rural atmosphere. Being an environmentalist, she served on the

city's planning commission, was an early member of ALPS and served in several offices on the Board of Directors. Geri was instrumental in the acquisition of both Stadium Park and ALPS Stadium Lane properties. Just a couple of weeks ago, in spite of serious illness, she was writing thank you letters for ALPS.

Geri also took over the treasurer's duties with the Atascadero Historical Society, a post she held for almost 17 years. She was very involved in the restoration of the Historical Society's historic 1919 Colony House that included a demonstration garden surrounding it. She was involved in the hard work of planting plants, flowers and trees and even chipping the cement off used bricks that were used in a pathway in the Colony House gardens. She has won both the E. G. Lewis Award of Excellence and the Marj Mackey Award of Continuing Excellence, both attesting to how she fits into E.G. Lewis' description of the "Ideal Atascaderan." Lewis wrote, "The Ideal Atascaderan is, in part, the person who can be happy and high-minded in the midst of the most menial and trying drudgeries of whatever place he finds his duty."

Geri is a vital member of the local chapter of the American Association of University Women and served as President of the local Democratic Club and is an advocate of wildlife and domestic animals and has long supported the North County Humane Society. "I am an environmentalist," she proudly boasts.

Her hobbies and special interests include gardening, reading, traveling, being a political activist and going to the theater. She even took up canoeing late in life. When pressed for a response, Geri said of her life, "I've made the world a better place." Geri is a shining example of community spirit. Sadly, Geri passed away June 22.



## TRAIL DEDICATION

By John Goers

Visitors to Stadium Park, a natural open space near Atascadero's city center, are greeted by a botanical trail initiated and designed by Bill Shepard, a long-time ALPS member. On May 28, 2011 the trail was dedicated as the "Bill Shepard Native Plant Garden" to commemorate Bill's vision in promoting native plants. Bill's community spirit for this and other projects is evident from his volunteering in a number of groups including the SLO Botanical Garden, the California Native Plant Association, ALPS, and the Park4Pups. Representatives from these groups reminisced about Bill's contributions over the years and commended his energy, gentle personality, botanical knowledge, and especially his "can do" attitude. The trail's construction was supported by the City of Atascadero, the California Conservation Corps, and the Atascadero Native Tree Association in addition to ALPS.

Bill's trail consists of California native plants along a winding path up the east side of the entrance to Stadium Park. The trail eventually extends into the park providing a link to other trails and provides examples of mature native plants which may be used for both residential and commercial landscaping. Most of the plants are native to the local area and require little or no water during the summer months. As the plants mature they will provide examples of flowers, foliage, and size to help people appreciate the utility of these plants in their landscape gardens. The plants are identified by numbered posts associated with a name list on either the kiosk at the start of the trail or downloaded from the ALPS website. Brochures will be available on-site in the near future.

## MARJ MACKEY MEADOWS

By Deborah Stafford

Marj would have been pleased; the event was held at one of her all time favorite places. And, the rain stopped long enough to have a wonderfully warm gathering of friends. In spite of heavy early morning rains, on Saturday June 4th at 10:00 a.m. the bowl at Stadium Park was officially named "Marj Mackey Meadows" Marj was the concerned citizen that began the conservation process by the purchase of the park between the City of Atascadero, ALPS and ANTA.



Photo courteously of the City of Atascadero

The dedication was spearheaded by Brady Cherry the Atascadero Community Services Director. The beautiful sign was custom designed by high school student Kelsey Lach. The event was attended by friends, relatives, and city and county officials alike. There were several speakers that shared their memories of Marj and Stadium Park. Lon Allen explained the history of the park and the many owners of the past. It was well remembered that Stadium Park is a special place that deserves special efforts and events. Other speakers included County Supervisor Jim Patterson, Atascadero Mayor Tom O'Malley, former Mayor Ellen Beraud and ALPS President Bruce Bonifas. The last part of the event included "yummy" refreshments including rum cake thoughtfully provided by Barbara Waheed. ALPS would like to thank all who participated in this worthy event. Hope to see you in the future!