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Sonoma West Times & News
May 6-12, 1998

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how important is really is to our community."

Edelheit said the purpose of the event was "to continue the awareness of the importance of the Laguna, and not just the portion of the Laguna right in our city, but the entire Laguna de Santa Rosa ... so that if Santa Rosa wants to build a golf course, people have a better idea of why we need to protect the Laguna."

Santa Rosa's plans for a golf course on the Kelly Farm east of Santa Rosa have been a hot political topic lately. Active in opposing those plans are not only the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, but Sebastopol Tomorrow. The latter group had a booth at the event and enlisted golf course opponents to send postcards to the Sebastopol and Santa Rosa city councils voicing their opposition. About 100 postcards were collected, Edelheit said. The event also included

recognition of several recent donations to the efforts at preserving and restoring the Laguna, donations that raised hopes and boosted conservation efforts. The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation honored the Chilotti family for its donation of the Palm Terrace property to the foundation. Family members honored included Diane Chilotti Ongaro, Linda Chilotti, Richard Chilotti and Jim Chilotti.

Also honored was Emmett Blincoe, a Sebastopol resident who recently donated \$200,000 to the Foundation for work on the city's Laguna Park Master Plan.

Efforts at halting pollution of the Laguna are also providing hope, according to Peter Otis, who manages the Animal Waste Reduction program for the state Regional Water Quality Control Board. Aimed at dairy and other animal waste producers, Otis said the results have been positive.

"I'm very encouraged at the direction the Laguna is taking," said Otis.

He said there are about 20

dairies in the Laguna. A Sonoma-Marín Animal Waste Committee made up of dairy and other animal ranchers, meets regularly.

"We're getting ranchers to voluntarily comply with the regulations, as opposed to having to do enforcement. It's been very effective in our region," he said.

"Most of the ranchers in the Laguna are complying," said Otis, adding that "this program may be used as a statewide model. I think the dairy community in Sonoma and Marin has been very responsive to this type of thing. I'm really encouraged."

The day concluded with a Maypole dance, organized by DeAnna L'am, a priestess and leader of the Graton Groves. She explained that the "tradition of the Maypole is to celebrate the hope of spring ... and life."

She said the Laguna event and the Maypole "are both celebrations of the Earth. People came out to celebrate the earth in all its aspects, and to honor the Earth being in balance."