

## Email Confirmation & Renewal Form

Below is a sticker with the information that we have on you in our database. Please take a moment to either confirm that the information is still correct or edit the information in the space below. Included with this newsletter is a self-addressed stamped envelope to return the form to us. If you are paying your dues by check, simply enclose your check for \$125 with this form.

Thank you.

Everything is correct \_\_\_\_\_

**Edited Information** (if needed)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Primary email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary email address: \_\_\_\_\_

# Graystone of Almaden

*A Neighborhood Association*  
**April 2023 Newsletter**

## Renewal and Email Confirmation

RENEWAL AND EMAIL CONFIRMATION	1
PRESIDENT'S LETTER	2
FACEBOOK GROUP PAGE	5
SAN JOSE DISTRICT 10 COUNCILMEMBER – ARJUN BATRA	6
KEEPING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD SAFE	7
CC&R REMINDER	9
LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM	10
FINANCIAL UPDATE	11
2022 PICNIC FUN	12
PICNIC & DUMPSTER DAY	13

Our new fiscal year begins each May, so it is time to renew your membership in our Association. Our landscaping bill has substantially increased – the first increase since 2017. As a result, the Board has approved a \$25 increase in our annual dues, bring the total to \$125 for the year. You can pay using PayPal or write a check. Each year along with getting your renewal payment we ask that you confirm your email addresses so we can update our database ensuring everyone gets timely information. Email is our primary form of communication. We only distribute a hardcopy newsletter once a year.

On the cover page is a form showing your Name, Address, Primary email address (if you provided one) and a Secondary email address (if you have provided us two emails).

Please send in your form in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Enclose your check if you want to pay your dues by check. If paying by PayPal, just click on our website, [graystoneofalmaden.org](https://graystoneofalmaden.org) and click on the **Renew Membership Now** button at the top of the page.

# President's Letter

By Scott Sherwood

Our Association was formed 26 years ago in 1997 to focus on three important topics. In 2022, we finally got back to a more normal rhythm of events including a real face-to-face gathering at our picnic. It was wonderful to see old faces and make new connects with so many new neighbors. We offered the picnic at no charge for new neighbors, and we were glad to welcome so many. We will do that offering again this year.

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***Social Benefits — Having a structure in place to organize, disseminate information about and fund neighborhood activities.***

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- Our Facebook group has continued to grow, and we now have 80 neighbors as members. It is providing another way for us to communicate with one another. We have an article devoted to this topic in this newsletter.
- After cancelling our 2020 and 2021 picnics due to Covid it was a wonderful to finally get to hold our popular event. So many people shared with me how much they missed getting together and reconnecting and meeting new neighbors. We will hold this year's picnic, on Sunday, September 24.
- Dumpster Day was, as always, a big hit. We ordered two dumpsters and pretty much filled them both. And the amount of hazardous waste filled two pick-up trucks. We will hold this event on Saturday, September 23.
- We last published a hardcopy Neighborhood Directory in 2018. In this package we are pleased to include a new directory. As we noted in the cover letter, we use the information in our database to communicate with you throughout the year and print the directory. If we have errors in our database and in the directory, please give us to the correct information. We promise that we will not wait another 4+ years to print a new directory.

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***Economic Benefits — Increasing homeowner value by keeping our neighborhood an attractive neighborhood.***

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- As always, landscaping expenses are our single largest budget item. The annual bill for regular cleanup and trimming has been \$4800. But, after five years of paying that same price, the new cost is \$7200. As noted on the cover page, the Board has raised the dues to \$125 per year to cover this increased cost.
- And, in most years, we complete a special project such as trimming street trees or fixing up the front entrance. This year we are investigating ways to improve neighborhood safety. More on this topic later in this newsletter.

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***Political Benefits — Having a united voice when dealing with City and the County.***

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- Last year we engaged with the City on our intersection at Graystone Lane and Camden Ave. As you may know, the City is now planning to improve the crossing of the trail on Graystone Lane by the bridge. Initially, we expected the improvements to be completed last fall, but we now find that the improvements are scheduled to be completed this spring. So, soon, we should see much Improved markings at the trail crossing and improvements in the intersection design to slow down traffic. Other improvements are still under discussion. We will keep working with the City and D-10 staff to come to an agreement on what else we can do to make that troublesome intersection even better.
- We have continued our dialogue with the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (SCCOSA) and stay connected since they are the owners of much of the open space land that surrounds our neighborhood. So far, they have been good and responsive stewards of the land.
- Malcolm Bordelon, a Board member, is our point person staying connected to our D-10 Councilperson. He has a separate report in this newsletter giving us some information on our new councilperson, Arjun Batra, who replaced Matt Mahan, our new mayor.
- We attend the Almaden Valley Community Association (AVCA) meetings to keep in contact with our local, state, and federal officials.

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## **2023 Focus** - *Keeping our activities impactful and easy to administer.*

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- Our regular landscaping work, plus continuing to address our ever-growing trees that seemingly always need of a good trimming. Our super wet winter has made this topic very timely.
- Helping to address the neighborhood crime issues by providing ideas and a forum for addressing this tough challenge. Board member, Joe Del Rio has an article on this topic in this newsletter.
- Communications with our neighbors by monitoring and improving our Facebook Group. Our Board member, Joe Del Rio has an article on this too.
- Holding the ever-popular dumpster day – September 23rd
- Offering our fully catered family picnic – September 24<sup>th</sup> – Take a look at the pictures from this past September at the end of this newsletter. If you were there, you experienced the fun. If you missed it, join us this year and see what you missed.
- Explore how we might re-establish a revised “progressive dinner” event for adults.

In conclusion, we hope you appreciate the benefits of our voluntary neighborhood association. For only \$125 a year, we make a big difference. Our Board is a voluntary board, and we depend upon neighbors to raise their hand to help. If you are willing to explore how you can help, please contact me at [scottwsherwood@gmail.com](mailto:scottwsherwood@gmail.com).

Thanks in advance for filling out the database information form so we can ensure that our communication efforts are successful.



# Facebook Group Page

By Joe Del Rio

## The “Graystone of Almaden Neighborhood Association”

Facebook group page has been up and running for two years now. Eighty of your neighbors have joined.

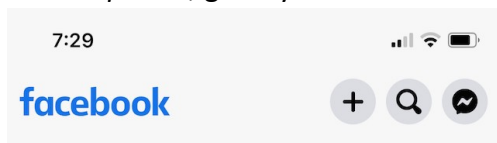


What do we talk about?

- We share recommendations on contractors.
- We help find reliable babysitters for our kids.
- We have our own buy and sell “market”.
- We help find owners of lost pets and enjoy talking about our own furry family members.
- We exchange information on situations such as recent fires and petty thefts.
- We provide the opportunity to meet candidates running for local offices such as mayor and our own council district 10.
- We are the rallying point to prompt action by our elected officials on matters of importance to the community.
- Most importantly, we extend a hand of welcome to new neighbors to our community.

What don't you do not see on the group page? - the extraneous clutter of non-neighborhood chatter. Maybe you were once a Facebook user or never been because of your concern regarding the Facebook social environment. We understand and share that concern. Only homeowners and renters, together with our residing household members, are admitted as we keep the group private. The tone of interaction is respectful and welcoming, just like our neighborhood. We hope you will give the page a look and decide for yourself.

Here is how you join. Signup for a Facebook account if you don't already have one. If you are on a *smart phone*, go to your Facebook homepage. It should look like this along the top:



Click on the magnifying glass icon. In the search window. Type “**Graystone of Almaden Neighborhood Association**”.

If you prefer to use a PC click on this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/854908331926138/> Alternatively, log onto your FB account, click on the groups icon and type in the group name into the search window. Need more help? Send us an email with your questions.

# San Jose District 10 Councilmember – Arjun Batra

By Malcolm Bordelon

Sworn into office on Jan 31, 2023, District 10 Councilmember, Arjun Batra was appointed by the City Council to fill the seat previously held by now Mayor of San Jose, Matt Mahan. Councilmember-Appointed Batra has had a distinguished career working in leadership roles at IBM and Intel Corporation and has worked closely with city leaders on important issues such as overseeing tax measure spending. You can learn more about him and his priorities through some of the content from his Council application excerpt below.

Councilmember Batra has been getting up to speed on council process, procedures, and priorities and, most importantly, putting together his staff. From a recent District 10 newsletter (2/13/23):

“My biggest obligation is to attend to the needs of our constituents during this transition by building a highly responsive team, which currently consists of:

- **Michele Dexter**, Chief of Staff and responsible for Community Relations/Community outreach.
- **Shirleyn Cannon**, Community Events Planner, currently working on the Winter Walk (occurred February 24<sup>th</sup>), and the 4th of July Fireworks Festival.

Councilmember Batra encourages residents to relay their thoughts and community concerns: “I want to assure residents that within District 10’s office, you have a team dedicated to listening to residents and responding promptly to requests & suggestions. As I continue to build my team, I look forward to meeting everyone and hearing their feedback.

Feel free to reach the office at (408) 535-4910 or [district10@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:district10@sanjoseca.gov). “

## **Why are you interested in representing this district on the City Council?**

My family and I have deep roots in District 10, and we have always cared deeply for our neighbors and this community. We have lived, worked, and raised our family in District 10 since 1987. We have personally experienced every aspect of life in District 10, from its schools to its civic spaces and its employers and have seen the huge growth and development through the years. I will draw on that lifetime of experience and commitment to my community by representing District 10 to promote fair and effective governance of the city of San Jose and to improve the life of our current and future residents.

## **What do you think is the biggest challenge the City of San José faces?**

Increased homelessness and the lack of affordable housing for all, exacerbating unsustainable income disparity, public safety, and deferred infrastructure investment. In a city as wealthy as San Jose, it is an unfortunate reality that many of our citizens lack affordable housing, and are forced to live in unhygienic, unsafe, and unsheltered unsafe conditions. While homelessness is a complex problem, addressing this issue is critical for the future of San Jose.

## **What is the biggest challenge specific to the council district you aspire to be appointed to represent?**

Maintenance and improvements to District 10 infrastructure (roads, streetlights, sidewalks, bike lanes, libraries, parks, and recreational facilities) along with service levels for critical San Jose City Services to District 10—i.e. police, fire, utilities (power outages)

# Keeping Our Neighborhood Safe

By Joe Del Rio

You may have heard several homes in the neighborhood were recently burglarized, including a break in through a back door into the house and a smash of a garage door window allowing for easy access to bikes in the garage. We know this news is disturbing and we want to help address the issue. We feel the best solutions will come from community input and involvement. The board will host a zoom meeting soon to discuss ideas and share some research on viable options. If you would like to participate in this discussion, send your name and contact information to me at [jdmjndr@comcast.net](mailto:jdmjndr@comcast.net).

What kind of the solutions we will talk about? Some neighborhoods, for example, have supported the installation of advanced security cameras, as noted in this recent news story. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qP3tyT-fPX8>. This turnkey license plate reader camera is certainly an option we can investigate. And there may be a lot of other good ideas to explore too.

## What can we do in the meantime?

Burglary is a crime of opportunity. The chance of property crime can be reduced by controlling access, providing visibility, and maintaining our properties. Here are some useful steps we all can use to reduce the risk of theft in our neighborhood.

**Garage Access:** The most recent incident of burglary occurred when a thief gained access to garages.

- ***Keeping garage doors and side entrances locked are important, but not enough.*** Thieves manually open garage doors by breaking the small windows near the emergency manual pull cord. They then reach in to pull the cord and raise the door. The solution? Remove the pull cord from the disconnect mechanism. If you need to manually open the door, have a straightened coat hanger handy to hook on to the disconnect mechanism. Or invest in a new garage door opener that has built-in battery backup. All garage door motors made after 2019 have them. Many come with a phone app to operate the door.
- Consider fogging or tinting garage windows and glass areas that only allows diffused light to enter.
- Lastly, move the push button switches away from exterior doors.



**Make your home look occupied:**

- Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away for a length of time, connect some lamps to automatic timers to turn them on in the evening and off during the day.
- Don't allow daily deliveries of mail, newspapers or flyers build up while you are away. Arrange with the Post Office to hold your mail or arrange for a friend or neighbor to take them regularly.
- Ask neighbors or a friend to put back garbage receptacles after collection day.

**Discourage the temptation:**

- Have adequate exterior lighting. A motion-sensitive light is recommended for backyards.
- Trim trees and shrubs so that they cannot be used as hiding places for intruders.
- An alarm system is excellent for home security especially while on vacation.
- If you have a home alarm system, use it! Activate your alarm system — Alarm systems are only useful when you remember to activate them.
- Many individuals have alarm systems but do not arm them because it is inconvenient. Many burglars know this and will not be deterred by a window sticker or sign indicating that the home has an alarm system.
- Add a lock or dead bolt to your side and backyard gates. Even the least bit of deterrence goes a long way.
- Add security cameras and camera enabled doorbell. There are many retail solutions for every budget and specific set of needs.

**Help the police catch a thief:**

- Thieves often use on-line or flea markets to move the goods such as bikes. Keep a record of VIN numbers on your bikes. Undercover police have caught many unsuspecting thieves by matching VIN numbers to items for sale.
- Consider using an air-tag embedded in your other high value items.
- Register your security cameras with the San Jose police.

**Things not to do:**

- Don't challenge a thief. The consequences could be tragic. **Call the police.**

# CC&R Reminder

All Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&R) documents are posted to our website, [graystoneofalmden.org](http://graystoneofalmden.org). The CC&Rs were established in 1993 by the developer, Pinn Brothers Homes, and are valid for 35 years (2028) and are automatically extended for successive 10-year periods unless revoked.

Below is a summary of the key items:

- Only detached single family homes are permitted, not to exceed 2 1/2 stories and a garage for 3 cars.
- No buildings, fence, or wall nearer the street than the minimum building setback
- No temporary structures, trailers, tents, garage, barn or outbuilding shall be used at any time as a residence.
- No animals, livestock or poultry shall be raised or kept on any lot except for dogs, cats or other household pets.
- No trailer, boat, truck (other than a pickup) or inoperative vehicle shall be kept or stored on any lot unless enclosed in a garage.

When you drive through many other neighborhoods, you see the consequences of a lack of CC&R's — boats in front yards with blue tarps, commercial trucks parked in driveways, chicken coops located in back yards and tents covering RV's. Our CC&R's are a real benefit to our home values and our daily living enjoyment.

# Landscape Maintenance Program

The Association maintains five (5) different “open space” areas within our neighborhood boundaries. They are:

- Front entrance - Graystone sign and wall area
- Pfeiffer Ranch - block retaining wall area and hillside
- Pfeiffer Ranch - property between the trail and the street
- Stonehill - the hillside adjacent to the open space
- Boulder Mountain Way & Rocky Crest - the hillside adjacent to the open space



As noted, this maintenance now costs us \$600 a month.



# Financial Update

**Income** (\$100 dues x 114 members)      **\$11,400**

**Expenses**

Landscape Maintenance	\$4800	(\$400 per month)
Dumpster Day	\$1250	(rental fee)
Picnic	\$5185	(net; catering, tables & chairs, rental truck)
Legal	\$ 0	(very nice!)
Website	\$ 40	
Technical support	\$ 633	
Directory	\$ 706	(printing)
Administration	\$ 212	(printing, stamps, PO Box, tax filing fees)

**Total Expenses**      **\$12,826**

**Surplus/Deficit**      **\$1,426 (deficit)**

**Reserve fund**      **\$15,805 (current bank balances)**

It has always our goal to maintain a reserve fund to allow us to manage cash flow and meet unexpected or unusual expenses, such as taking care of fallen trees and legal expenses.

Our Association is in good financial shape!



## 2022 Picnic Fun



## Picnic & Dumpster Day

### Our Big Weekend Save the Dates!

**Dumpster Day**  
*Saturday, September 24*



**Neighborhood Picnic**  
*Sunday, September 25*  
Picnic starts at 4:00 pm  
Dinner served at 5:30 pm