

Graystone of Almaden



A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

October 2007

Association Update

By Scott Sherwood, President

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Much has happened since our last newsletter update in July. As usual, your new Board is busy.

Directory & Email

First off, we hope you find your updated 2007 Neighborhood Directory, which is attached to this newsletter, valuable. I know that I use it all the time. Thanks to Russ Dietz for making this happen.

Additionally, we have taken the extra step of printing this newsletter and distributing it with the directory to help ensure that everyone knows that we publish a newsletter 4-6 times a year. We distribute the newsletter via email in PDF format. If anyone is not getting the electronic newsletter, please contact Ron Mak, our Treasurer and keeper of the email distribution list, to correct the problem. Ron can be contacted at ron.mak@willardlowe.com or by calling 323 1144. Communications is very important and the newsletter and email in general is our most used method.

Update on Goals

As we published in our last newsletter, we decided that our focus for this year would be in five areas. Below we have listed the goals and a progress comment under each goal.

- Maintain the quality of our core programs that benefit all
 - Landscaping of all common areas
 - Dumpster Day
 - Kids events
 - Picnic
 - Progressive Dinner

This is going well mainly as a result of Leslie Saviage's hard work in leading these efforts. As you will see in the separate article and photos, Dumpster Day was another hit. Landscaping and mowing continues on a regular basis. Please see Leslie's update on the Picnic in this newsletter. Your help is needed!

- Complete the Phase 1 of the hillside beautification project located above our new wall on Pfeiffer Ranch Road
 - Apply for a CAP grant
 - Install a watering system and water meter
 - Work with the Boy Scouts to assist in the installation

Steady progress on this goal. We are getting a bid on the work that must be contracted out and plan to apply for the CAP grant in the upcoming cycle, this December.

- Continue to work with the City on amending the General Plan to protect our Open Space

We are staying in regular touch with Nancy Pyle's office, Lee Wilcox specifically, and keeping ourselves well aware of discussions and issues. Additionally, every week we review all applications for permits in District 10, our district, to ensure that all development proposals are scrutinized early in the process. Our goal is "no surprises!"

- Investigate the feasibility of augmenting the Park maintenance program

In August, we attended a City sponsored meeting called "Public Private Partnerships" to learn about more this issue and specifically discuss their "Adopt A Park" program. As you may have read quite recently in the Mercury News, if we want to pay for any work to be done in our Park to augment normal maintenance, a key issue needs to be resolved. Specifically, the City has to decide if the "prevailing wage" law pertains to this program. Simply put, if this law does apply, we cannot afford to help. Even Abode Systems, who helps to maintain the City Park next to their HQ building downtown, has said that they will have to stop helping if this law applies. Additionally, we are in the early stages of looking at options for the grassy area of the Park. Clearly, something needs to be done about the grass.

- Continue to work to increase attendance at events to better drive our sense of community – helping everyone get to know one another

We could really use your help on this goal. We have not been terribly successful on this goal over the past couple of years with the exception of the Nancy Pyle meeting. A crisis does bring out attendance! We have discussed various events and actions that might help us all get to know one another better. Ideas include, movie night, cooking with Chef Dane, ice cream socials, neighborhood block parties, block based progressive dinners, web-based discussion/chat rooms for contractors and the like. Ideas and suggestions? Please contact Leslie Saviage at luvgarlic@sbcglobal.net with your ideas and thoughts. Also, we need volunteers to help lead these activities or they won't happen. Leslie Saviage and other Board members cannot be expected to run every social activity.

Next, many of you have asked about all the work going on in Alamos Creek. Attached is an article published by the Santa Clara Valley Water District discussing the creek bank repair program. Also, we have included a couple of photos for those of you who have not ventured down into the construction site.

Finally, we have some good financial news to report. We exceeded our target of 105 Association members, reaching 110 paid members. This is great news. Your renewals make us believe that all our work is appreciated. Expenses are running at or under budget as you can see from Ron Mak's expense update listed below.

As always, please contact any of the Board with your questions or suggestions.

Financials Year to Date

Expenses (May '07 thru April '08)	YTD Actual	FY Budget
Dumpster Day	\$ 918	\$1500
Landscaping	\$1000	\$2000
Activities		\$2000
Progressive Dinner	\$ 447	
July 4 th Parade	\$ 184	
Other		\$ 800
Bank charges	\$ 14	
Office supplies/copies	\$ 134	
Directory printing	\$ 278	

Traffic Safety Update

Over the past few months there has been quite a bit of conversation about traffic safety on our neighborhood streets. High speed seems to be an ongoing problem and we have had some parking issues that make site lines difficult. Additionally, ever since the horrible accident that resulted in four deaths on Graystone Lane, worries have intensified. In the SJ Mercury News on October 3rd, the lead editorial spoke directly to this ongoing concern. Frankly, it seems that we all drive too fast on neighborhood streets, be it in Willow Glen, Graystone Lane or Pfeiffer Ranch Road.

As your Homeowners Association, we take this issue very seriously. Traffic safety and the safety of our kids playing in front yards and on sidewalks is required if we want to live in an outstanding neighborhood. Just ask the people in Willow Glen that are considering selling their homes because of their traffic issues. After some preliminary work on this issue, it is clear that real solutions are not going to be easy. Let's bring you up-to-date on past work.

- Prior Boards have studied this issue, discussed options with the City and tried various educational campaigns including standing on Pfeiffer Ranch Road with signs pleading for us to slow down. Given the number of speeders on this street, education hasn't yet worked.
- Alkesh Choudhary, a Graystone resident, recently requested a City traffic study to determine if stop signs were needed on our streets given some near accidents at our intersections. Given the traffic levels on our side streets, according to City guidelines, stop signs are not considered an answer for our side streets. Additionally, stop signs on Pfeiffer Ranch Road are not within guidelines since it is the main thoroughfare.
- We have had conversations with neighbors to encourage changes in parking patterns. We find these discussions go quite well.
- More aggressive "traffic calming" actions include speed humps. Unless we push extremely hard for this solution, even if we offer to pay for them, Pfeiffer Ranch Road does not ordinarily qualify for this treatment. An exception would need to be made. To achieve an exception, a vast majority of us would need to agree to this solution.

So, what is next? We will participate in many of the upcoming events planned by the City to further explore this issue and work to develop a plan for our streets. You are encouraged to attend any or all of the following upcoming meetings to learn more about this complex topic. Stay tuned for more information.

Upcoming City events

- Council district meetings on traffic calming. Councilman Pierluigi Oliverio will hold these meetings between October 18 and November 29. The schedule will be posted on his website (linked from www.sanjoseca.gov) or call 408 535 4906.
- The Graystone Community Forum will be held on October 22 at the Almaden Community Center at 7:30 p.m. The forum will focus on Graystone Lane but will also explore solutions to aid traffic calming in general. For information, email safe.graystone@gmail.com.
- Almaden Valley Counseling Service, Councilmember Nancy Pyle & Leland HS
How to Keep Your Children Safe - Talking to Teens about Driving
Wednesday, October 24, 2007, 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Almaden Community Center

Learn about:

- Top ten causes of teen crashes
- Strategies for talking to your teen about driving
- New legal requirements on teen drivers, including provisional license regulations and cell phone laws
- Tips on safe driving

Dumpster Day

Once again, Dumpster Day was a success! Approximately 50 families took advantage of the opportunity to clean out their garage and backyard. We discovered the most popular unwanted items of 2007 were outdoor patio umbrellas with 12 broken and torn umbrellas tossed into the dumpster. The dumpster showed up at 8am and immediately neighbors began filling it up with their unwanted, hard to dispose of items. By 10:30, the 40 cubic yard dumpster was filled to the top! Happy neighbors, clean homes and yards...what a great neighborhood we live in!

In addition, a hazardous waste removal service was offered. Neighbors disposed of old batteries, florescent light bulbs, motors, paint and chemicals. A big thank you to all of the neighbors who consolidated their paint cans. We saved a lot of money this year since we pay "by the can". Your extra efforts are appreciated. We estimate that we saved over \$250 in disposal fees.

We have been considering holding an additional Dumpster Day in January or February, (the perfect time for after-the-holidays cleaning) and if you have any thoughts on this, please email Leslie Savage at luvgarlic@sbcglobal.net.



Halloween Parade

As usual, we will be holding the neighborhood Halloween Parade on Halloween afternoon. The parade will be fun for kids (and adults) of all ages. We will have a costume parade and then snacks and a costume contest. More information about this fun event will follow shortly. We are looking for neighbors to bring yummy snacks like cookies, brownies, cake, or fruit to the parade. If you can help out, please email Donna Miller at drellim@pacbell.net

Neighborhood Picnic

The neighborhood picnic has been cancelled for this year due to a lack of volunteers to help make this event a success. It takes quite a few people to organize this big event. Please see the earlier request for ideas, suggestions and volunteers in the President's Letter. Events don't just happen!

We will revisit this issue soon, hopefully after helpful input from many of you and some additional volunteers.

Neighbor Recommended Businesses

Gourmet Appliance services the Bay Area and is a Factory Authorized Repair Service for many companies, especially the high-end appliances. They are based out of Half Moon Bay, but go all over. I have had them out here twice and both times they were prompt, reliable and fair. In the first incident, Becky (the owner) instantly diagnosed the problem with our U-Line Refrigerator after two other repair companies had failed to correct the problem. I had them out again last week to install a part on my oven that I had ordered and unsuccessfully tried to install myself. In the process, Nano (Becky's husband) discovered another part that was defective, and knowing I ordered the original part online to save money, told me what part to order and showed me how to install it so I would not have to pay for them to come back out.

They charge \$60 for a trip charge and \$60 per hour (minimum of one hour). And the best part, the repair people are both owners. You almost always get better service from an Owner/Operator.

Gina Freitag

Neighbor Advertising

Jardinier Garden Design

Full range of services - coordinating and designing, from beginning to end. Specializing in the fine European style. No project too big or too small. Treat yourself to the lush garden of your dreams! Free Consultation.



Bill & Karen Frederick's Home (corner of Stonehill & Pfeiffer Ranch Road)

- Fountains
- Hardscape
- Walkways
- Patios
- Flower beds
- Front Porch Staging
- Plant selection
- Landscape plans
- Lighting
- Irrigation Systems



Steve & Genny Huhn's Home (Vista Del Roble and Graystone Lane)

Melissa Powell
(Graystone Neighbor)
and Cindy Wampler
(408) 835-3315

Alamitos Creek Update

Reprinted from the Santa Clara Valley Water District website

Alamitos Creek Bank-Repair Project

Project Area:

Creek bank, Graystone Meadow Circle, Graystone Meadow Dr, Pfeiffer Ranch Rd

The Santa Clara Valley Water District will be in your neighborhood performing bank repair along Alamitos Creek, between Graystone Meadow Drive/Circle and Creek Bank Court.

Work is expected to start in early August* and take approximately 40 days to complete. Project. Work hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. In the unlikely event of delays, it may be necessary to extend work hours or schedule some work on Saturdays.

A five- to seven-person crew will be working at the project site. Equipment used for the project will include an excavator, crane, loader, compactor, water truck, street sweeper and 10-wheel dump trucks. Typical construction noise can be expected during work hours. A generator, designed to operate more quietly, will be used continuously to pump water around the project site and back into the creek farther downstream.

Trucks and crews will access the creek from Camden Avenue and Pfeiffer Ranch Road, across the east bank of Alamitos Creek Trail. No road closures are expected, but some temporary road blockage on Camden Avenue and Pfeiffer Ranch Road may occur during the transporting of equipment and materials.

Part of the voter-approved Clean, Safe Creeks and Natural Flood Protection Plan, this project is repairing 2,300 feet of creek bank to minimize erosion. Securing banks protects homes and property along the creek, while maintaining a stable creek ecosystem. It also minimizes sediment build-up, improving the creek's capacity to carry floodwaters.

