



Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association

Notes From The President

I hope everyone had a chance last month to relax and enjoy family time. No matter what our beliefs, religion or feelings, the closing out of one year and the beginning of a new one is always a time to reflect and plan. Like many of you I spent the holidays visiting family and traveling. I was the family "camera pest", but photos can't capture the fun and joy of being together, meeting my granddaughter for the first time or just sitting around and being silly with each other.

Nor can I capture my feelings as I watched parents and families greeting their loved ones in uniform at the airport. While news reports call them the "men and women" of our military, many of them are so young I couldn't believe they even had drivers licenses, much less the responsibility of serving our country. For all those families, my wish for you is that your loved ones come home safe and sound this year.

We all want the same things for family and friends; peace, happiness, health and a safe, warm place to call home. As members of a greater community we can work together to make sure we have a strong network that supports our goals and continues to build the neighborhood we all enjoy with safe streets, secure homes, good schools and affordable shopping. I look forward to working with all of you towards these goals in the coming months and hope that the SONA sponsorship of garage sales and block parties helps all of us get to know each other a little better.

This next year will bring us new neighbors at the old K-Mart site and higher traffic with the opening of the light rail system. For many of us, a trip downtown to work, visit museums, shop or watch the fireworks in July will be a short, convenient hop away. We will also be able to visit the restaurants and stores in Campbell and Los Gatos without having to find parking.

Our neighborhood will see the completion of Phase I of the Richmond Menker project and hopefully the groundbreaking of a new community center. We'll have new commercial developments bringing us more services and will be able to watch the continued growth of San Jose City College. SONA volunteers continue to play an important part in monitoring neighborhood activities and often serve as leaders on oversight committees.

Last year we kicked off a comprehensive traffic calming program along with the HIFIVE program, held several neighborhood cleanups, hosted the dedication of the fire station and held parties. Our residents have continued to develop close ties with governmental agencies, public service employees and neighbors not only for our own, personal benefit, but for the greater good of all San Jose. Congratulations and Happy 2005! Randi

AGENDA

SONA GENERAL MEETING

JANUARY 13, 2005

6:30 P.M.

Snacks & Social

7:00 P. M.

Call to Order

Review Minutes

Treasurer Report

7:15 P. M.

Police Report

7:30 P. M.

Program: Ask

Your Contractor

By Tommy Ellis

8:00 P. M.

Announcements

Adjourn

SONA general meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of each month at 1800A Fruitdale Ave. San Jose CA 95128

Good Neighbor Corner

A special thanks to my neighbors who delivered fruitcake to my door (what a nice surprise!) this year, the ones who toss my newspaper to my porch, the ones who help each other by bringing in trash bins each week and the ones who help keep an eye on each other. rk

Helpful Tips for Home Improvement

Written by Tommy Ellis

Over the next several months, I will be offering suggestions, tips and try to provide useful information to help our residents make their decisions regarding home improvement and remodeling.

This month the topic I chose to cover is **“Things you should know when hiring a contractor”**.

There are many home improvement projects homeowners can tackle themselves and sometimes it is necessary to get a professional involved. Below are some guidelines you should follow when looking to hire a contractor:

Always use licensed, bonded and insured contractors. Anyone performing contracting services, either the actual physical work or as a field supervisor managing subcontractors is required by the State of California to have an active contractor’s license. The only exception is for any job that is worth \$500.00 or less, labor and materials, inclusive. A licensed contractor can also assist you with other needs, such as obtaining permits. You as a homeowner have more rights and options, should a dispute arise during the course of your job by working with licensed professionals.

Ask for references and check them. While it is highly unlikely someone will give you a negative reference list, it is always good to know exactly who you will be allowing into your home and giving your hard earned money to.

Get a contract in writing!! Ask your contractor to be specific and spell out in detail what is included and what is not. Get all change orders in writing as well. Are there any contingencies? What is the schedule of payments and what is the level of progress for those payments?

Know your rights. You have 72 hours after signing a contract to cancel. Your contractor should provide this notice with your contract and explain it to you at contract signing. They should also provide a Notice to Consumer which explains that contractors are required by law to be licensed and give you contact information for dispute resolution. The third notice is the Notice to Owner which explains the Mechanic’s Lien Law.

You can check your contractor’s license status and obtain additional information by going to www.cslb.ca.gov.

If there is a topic you would like to see covered in the future or would like additional information, please email me at tommyellis_hi@hotmail.com.

FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PARTIES!

SONA has funds available for neighborhood block parties! We can help supply beverages, food, permits and bounce houses for you and your neighbors. We can help you set up your party and provide helpful guidelines. This is a great way to get to know neighbors and build relationships throughout the SONA area. The first one is scheduled (see page 8) and funds are limited, so act early!

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The SONA newsletter is published monthly and distributed to almost 1500 residences. All ad copy is due by the 15th of each month. Our all-volunteer group welcomes your participation and comments.

SONA Newsletter Editor: Randi Kinman
SONA Website Administrator: Sonya Paz

Your Invitation to Participate in Traffic Calming

Written by: Mark Kovich

The Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association has an excellent relationship with the San Jose Department of Transportation and the Traffic Enforcement Unit of our Police. I invite you to participate to get any traffic related concerns addressed in your immediate neighborhood.

If you have a street concern or related matters, please send me an email so that it can be forwarded to the San Jose Department of Transportation.

If you're encountering reckless or speeding motorists in your immediate neighborhood please make a note of the following details. Day and time when events are happening. Type of vehicle(s) causing problems. Is it speeding, reckless driving, or any other hostile activity? If we know when these types of events are occurring we can get the San Jose Police out at those times to catch and cite these motorists. Please send me an email with these details and a SONA board member will contact the Police to have the matter dealt with.

Anytime you call the Police for any service requested please ask the dispatcher for the activity number. Make a note of the day, time, event type, along with the activity number. Please feel free to forward that information to me so that we can keep a log of activities.

It is of paramount importance we document our activities and issues so that it can be used when addressing these matters with the city.

Peace and safety are of the utmost concern to our community. Your participation in this process of making our neighborhood safer really makes a difference.

The City of San Jose department offices, Police, and Fire Departments are here to serve us. They do a fantastic job, and when we communicate with them it builds a tighter bond, and allows them to perform their best for all of us. When we have facts, our traffic related problems do get addressed by the city. The important thing to remember is to communicate. SONA can help you facilitate that process. Be involved and things do work.

Mark Kovich
408.295.7507
mark@sonyapaz.com

Donation Opportunities

With recent events, there have been requests for lists of places to donate either time, money or services. Listed below are several groups who are bringing relief to the victims of the South Asia tsunami as well as groups who provide disaster relief throughout the year both locally and internationally.

Network for Good is a clearing house for online donations. You can pick your group or the type of service you would like to see your money go to, find out what the tax benefits of donations are and register for "gifts" of donations. They have done the due diligence on researching organizations. They can be reached at [//www.networkforgood.org/](http://www.networkforgood.org/)

American Red Cross provides year round training, counseling and support for all types of problems. Donations can be targeted for specific areas. The Santa Clara chapter can be reached at 408.577.1000 or online at www.santaclaravalley.redcross.org.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) can be reached at (800)4UNICEF (800.486.4233) or at the website www.unicefusa.org.

InterAction is the American Council for Voluntary International aid organizations that are accepting donations for the tsunami victims. www.interaction.org is their website which also has guidelines for proper disaster donations.

Research before sending any donation. Most groups request donations of money for international disasters. Cash donations allow the groups to quickly assemble and disperse supplies and can provide the economic inflow necessary to re-establish businesses in hard hit areas.

SONA wishes to thank the new members who joined us in December of 2004: **Patricia Hranilovich, Carol Worley and Adrienne Nowell**. SONA dues pay for newsletters, websites and all SONA activities. At \$12.00 per year that is quite a bargain! Have you paid your dues this year?

Energy Saving Tips and Programs

Even though winter is fully upon us, it is still not too late for you to winterize your home, reduce your utility bills or get cash rebates for appliances and goods you have already bought. A quick run through of PG&E's website shows a host of ideas for both home and businesses. Listed below are just some of the things offered by PG&E. More information can be obtained from their website at www.pge.com or calling their toll-free Smarter Energy Line at 1-800-933-9555.

Rebates Available on Products Bought on or after January 1, 2004:

- ◆ Clothes Washers \$75-\$125
- ◆ Dishwashers \$50
- ◆ Refrigerator/Freezer Recycling \$35
- ◆ Central Air Conditioners \$200-\$700
- ◆ Energy-Efficient Ducted Evaporative Cooling Systems \$300-\$600
- ◆ Whole House Fans \$100
- ◆ Room Air Conditioners \$50
- ◆ Programmable Thermostats \$20
- ◆ Central Heat Pumps \$275-\$700
- ◆ Central Natural Gas Furnaces \$200
- ◆ Variable Speed Motor Air Handler System \$100
- ◆ Efficient Natural Gas and Electric Storage Water Heaters \$40
- ◆ High Performance Dual Paned Windows \$1 per square foot
- ◆ Attic and Wall Insulation \$0.15 per square foot
- ◆ Lighting Products \$1-\$10
- ◆ Pool Pumps and Motors \$125-\$300

All information obtained from
Pacific Gas and Electric website.
Go to www.pge.com or call
1-800-933-9555



Winter Savings Tips

- ◆ Install a programmable thermostat to automatically change settings at certain times a day. For every degree you lower your heat in the 60-70 degree range you save up to 5% of heating costs.
- ◆ Set your thermostat at 68 degrees or lower during the day, health permitting and save 5-10% of space heating costs.
- ◆ Plug gaps around pipes, ducts, fans and vents that go through walls ceilings and floors to unheated spaces and save 1-3% of space heating costs.
- ◆ Keep furnace clean, lubricated and properly adjusted and clean or replace filter regularly to save up to 5% of heating costs. Dirty filters reduce air flow and make your furnace work harder.
- ◆ Have ducts checked for leaks which can reduce efficiency by 30%
- ◆ Install ceiling insulation of R-30 standards, insulate walls, floors and ducts to save up to 25% of costs. This keeps heat from escaping and makes the house cozier.
- ◆ Caulk and weather strip windows and doors and save up to 10% of heating costs.
- ◆ Use insulating shutters or drapes to save 18-15% of costs. Close the fireplace damper and save more.
- ◆ Use passive solar by opening drapes on southern windows during the day to let natural light and warmth in. Keep windows not in direct light covered and cover all windows at night to save up 15%.

Financial Assistance Programs

Pacific Gas and Electric has many programs for low-income, disabled and senior citizen customers. From one-time problems to long term needs, PG&E can assist those in need. They also have partnership programs with other agencies and groups to make sure everyone's needs are met, no matter what the income level. Listed below are the programs on PG&E's website. More information can be obtained by visiting the site at www.pge.com/res/fincian_assistance/ or calling 1-800-933-9555.

Financial Assistance Programs

- ◆ **CARE (California Alternate Rates for Energy)** CARE is a discount program for low-income households and housing facilities. This program provides a 20% discount on monthly energy bills and an exemption from recent surcharges.
- ◆ **FERA (Family Electric Rate Assistance)** is a rate reduction program for large households of three or more people with low to middle income providing more electric use at a lower rate. Desigend for customers who exceed the income threshold for the CARE program.
- ◆ **REACH (relief for Energy Assistance through Community Help)** is a program for low-income customers who cannot pay their bills due to a sudden unexpected financial hardship. This one time payment through the Salvation Army is provided with the help of donations from the utility's shareholders, employees and customers. You can also donate to this program.
- ◆ **Energy Partners** is the company's free weatherization program. Utility-approved contractors work with low-income customers to make their homes more energy efficient.
- ◆ **LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program)** provides low-income households with financial assistance through the Department of Health and Human Services.
- ◆ **Services for Medical Baseline and Life-Support Customers** are available for customers dependant on life-support equipment and/or with special heating and cooling needs due to certain medical conditions. Customers who qualify may receive up to 500 kolowatthours of electricity and/or 25 therms of gas per month in addition to regular baseline requirements.
- ◆ **Balanced Payment Plan** allows customers with substantial seasonal differences in bills to average bills out through the year. Customers are charged the same amount each month based on yearly average.
- ◆ **Third Party Notification** is a plan for those who are looking after friends, relatives or clients. This allows PG&E to contact a third party if a payment is missed to avoid service interruptions. By allowing this notification, people with illnesses, financial hardships, language or other difficulties have a back up notification. The third party is not responsible for the bill. Agreement must be authorized by the customer and the third party.
- ◆ **Strategic Alliance Program** looks at community, regulatory and political issues affecting the company's low income customers, and works with community-based organizations to determine how these customers can get the most out of the programs.

In addition, there are programs for business and multi-family dwellings. The **2004 Multifamily Energy Efficiency Rebate Program** reopened November 16, 2004 and is currently accepting reservations for all 2004 measures except lighting and thermostats. Income level for this program is based on the tenant income and not the incomes of the owners, landlords or property managers.

Brochures are available by calling or writing to PG&E.



January-February 2005

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

2	3 City Offices Re-Open	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 SONA General Mtg 6:30 pm	14	15
16 National Healthy Weight Week	17	18 SONA Board Mtg 7PM Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday	19	20 Advertising and articles due for newsletter Streetsweeping Day-Move Cars	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 Burbank Del Monte NAC Mtg 6:30pm Sherman Oaks Community Ctr	28	29
30	31	1	2 Groundhog Day	3	4	5

Financial Abuse Specialist Team (F.A.S.T.)

Since Spring of 1999, the County has been providing a wide-range of new services for elders and dependent adults who have fallen victim to physical, emotional or financial abuse. Pursuant to 1998 amendments to the Elder Abuse and Dependent Adult Civil Protection Act (Welfare and Institutions Code Section 15600 et seq.) counties throughout the state were to expand the services provided to this vulnerable population by May 1, 1999. Due to the diligence of the County's Department of Aging and Adult Services, this County was one of the few counties in the state that met the deadline and that decided to expand its services beyond those required by state law.

Adult Protective Services (APS), the County agency charged with the responsibility of investigating most reports of known or suspected instances of abuse, has expanded its services significantly. The agency installed a toll-free telephone hotline **(800-414-2002)** that allows members of the community to report suspected instances of abuse or neglect on a 24-hour basis. In addition, APS hired new social workers and continues to hire new staff to assist with expanded case management duties that include conducting home visits in the evenings and on weekends.

The Department of Aging and Adult Services has also assembled the "Financial Abuse Specialist Team" (FAST). This team is composed of representatives from Adult Protective Services, the Office of the Public Guardian, the District Attorney's Office and County Counsel's Office. The mission of FAST is to identify, investigate and prevent financial abuse of elders and dependent adults in an efficient and expedited manner.

The Santa Clara County model differs from other financial abuse prevention teams in Los Angeles and San Diego in that "rapid response" by the team members is a central component. "Immediacy is important to freeze assets and to prevent financial destitution," says Betty Malks, Director of the Department of Aging and Adult Service. When APS receives a call through their telephone hotline, APS immediately determines whether the case is appropriate for FAST. A referral to FAST triggers a prompt visit to the elder or dependent adult by at least two members of the team.

This multi-disciplinary team approach has already yielded results. Earlier this year a person suspected of wrongfully acquiring title to an elder's home agreed to rescind the sale of the house after an investigator from the District Attorney's Office, an APS social worker and a Deputy Public Guardian visited the elder and interviewed the suspect.

One of the reasons for creating FAST at this point in time is a recent increase in the number of financial abuse cases. The sharp rise in real estate values in the Bay Area coupled with an often trusting and vulnerable senior population has resulted in an environment that is ripe for abuse. Cases with a financial abuse component are often complex, containing other forms of abuse including emotional or physical abuse. As a result, it is not unusual for FAST to find elders facing situations such as the following:

An elder's adult child is residing in the senior's home, isolating the elder from friends and relatives. The senior has become very dependent, surrendering all control over her checkbook and enduring constant emotional abuse. She knows something is wrong but does not believe she is a victim of elder abuse, refusing help from Adult Protective Services or any other agency.

An elderly widower residing in a home worth more than \$700,000 is befriended by a younger person. The person promises to be his care-giver if allowed to live rent-free in his home, but leaves shortly after accruing significant credit card debt in the elder's name.

A woman in her nineties is residing in the house she purchased more than 30 years ago. Her relatives, who now hold the house in trust for the elder, refuse to provide adequate care to the elder, allowing the elder to go without medical treatment for long periods of time.

The inclusion of the County Counsel's Office and the District Attorney's Office facilitates the early identification of complex legal issues that arise in financial abuse cases. Team members meet on a regular basis to discuss the legal remedies available to abuse victims. Remedies that FAST has utilized to date include the filing of criminal charges against the suspects by the District Attorney's Office and the filing of civil actions by the County Counsel's Office on behalf of the Public Guardian's clients.

This article reprinted from the Santa Clara County Website. For more information about County programs and services, visit www.sccgov.org or call the offices of Supervisor James T. Beall, Jr. at 408.299.5040.

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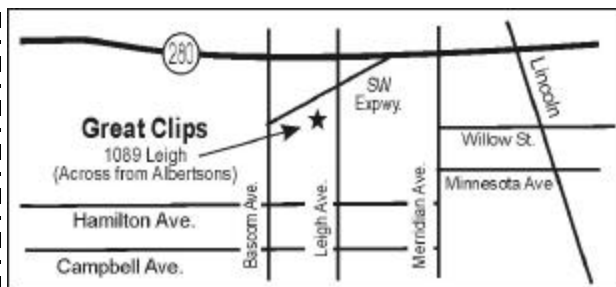


Sherman Oaks Resident Special

Valid only at Great Clips At 1089 Leigh Avenue

(408) 298-8685

Expires February 28, 2005. Not Valid with any other offer.



Come One-Come All

Neighborhood Garage Sales & Block Party
Meet Your Neighbors
Review Traffic Calming Plans
High Five Program
Enjoy Food & Beverages or Just Hang Out

Garage Sales Date: Saturday May 21, 2005
Time: 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Locations: Randolph Drive, Rexford Way,
Kingman Drive, Mansfield Drive, and Sherman
Oaks Drive South of Fruitdale Avenue

Block Party Date: Saturday May 21, 2005 Time:
3:00 PM to 6:00 PM Location: Mansfield Drive
between Randolph Drive & Rexford Way

For more information about hosting your own
garage sale or block party contact SONA board
members Michael LaRocca or Sheila Cvitanich.