



Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association

Meeting Notes

Fall is here and it's been a busy month since we last met...but, SONA has been working to bring you programs you've asked for. Join us for a solar presentation this month and learn from an expert just what a home solar installation would mean for you. You'll also be able to talk to "locals" who have installed solar on their own homes in our neighborhood.

We cannot ignore the recent national emergencies ... are you prepared? If not, come to our November meeting and learn about Emergency Preparedness. You can also pick up your HIFIVE cards and start working on making your small piece of the neighborhood safer. As we've seen, it has been neighbor helping neighbor that makes a difference...and sometimes those neighbors are hundreds of miles away, but most often they are right on your block. SONA urges you to start now with your emergency plans...it's impossible for many people to go out and buy everything they need for independent survival for a short term, but you can add to your kit each time you go to the store.

We also encourage you to check out the advertisers in our newsletter. These are local people who live and work in your neighborhood who bring you a variety of services. From getting your computer fixed to selling your home, having your haircut or working on new electrical issues, SONA residents are here to help. And, for those of you with businesses to promote, you won't find better rates anywhere.

See you at the meeting.....

AGENDA

SONA GENERAL MEETING

October 13, 2005

6:30 p.m.

**Coffee and Social
Come meet your
Neighbors**

7:00 p.m.

Welcome

7:05 p.m.

Police Report

7:15 p.m. Speaker

Solar for Your Home

**Bob Malone of
Malone Controls**

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

Good Neighbor Corner

Thanks to San Jose City College for installing new signs that direct people out of the parking garage and onto the freeway via Moorpark Avenue. Hopefully the students will pay attention and this will cut down on the risky (and very illegal) u-turns that result from people exiting and entering the Leigh Avenue driveway. Neighbors also want to recognize tenants at Richmond and Kingman who have done a marvelous job in landscaping improvements. Thanks.

Police Report

Captain Fairhurst and two officers attended SONA's September general meeting to update us on recent activities in our area. He also responded to last month's questions about the notes left in people's mailboxes.

While crime never goes away, our area is not experiencing any increase. According to the statistics, our area has actually seen a decrease in reported criminal activity. The key to that is the word reporting. If crimes aren't reported, police cannot step up patrols or be made aware of the problems. Talking to your neighbors is always a good thing, but calling 311 and reporting all incidents is the only way for SJPD to stay on top of the problems. SJPD was thanked for the increased presence around SJCC. They were also asked to increase patrols around Del Mar due to complaints about loitering and potential drug activity.

Crime statistics are just numbers until it happens to you...then it's personal and makes you feel unsafe in your own home. Captain Fairhurst offered several suggestions to help make it less likely your property will be violated by crimes:

- Don't leave items in your car that can attract thieves. Purses, laptops, cameras, etc. make tempting targets for smash and grab action.
- Be aware of your neighborhood and what's going on. Report all crimes and suspicious activity.
- Make sure all entrances to your home are secured. Don't make things easy by leaving windows, doors, etc. open or unlocked when you are away.
- Make sure that your home doesn't look like you are away on vacation. Keep mail, newspapers, etc. collected and make sure that your home looks as if somebody is there.

Call 911 if there is a crime in progress or an emergency. Call 311 to report any crime that has already happened or any non-emergency issue such as loud noise, Program your cell phone for SJPD emergency

Cell Phone #s for SJPD

311 = 277-8900

911 = 277-8911

It's the law! If the weather is bad enough to turn on your wipers, you must have your lights on!

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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

Manna from Heaven

I collect manna from heaven every day. I use a passive, silent, and clean collector that requires only that I hose it off once a year. When I bought it two years ago, the State government gave me a tax credit and PG&E gave me a rebate. In addition, PG&E pays me for whatever manna I collect but don't consume.

I'm speaking about solar energy, AKA sunshine, which falls freely on our roofs each and every day. I use it to produce electricity. On my roof are 12 photovoltaic (PV) panels that convert sunshine into electrical current every minute that the sun is shining (even on cloudy days). An inverter (a small box on the side of my house) converts it into alternating electrical current which is what powers everyone's lights, appliances, etc. This electricity is fed into the State power grid. In exchange, PG&E does not charge me for the electrical energy that I use as long as it does not exceed the power that my system produces, which happens to be 1.8 Kilowatts. My electrical bill each month is only about \$5.00 which covers various utility taxes and transmission fees.

Initially I debated on whether to get a hybrid car (like the Prius or Honda) or to get the solar PV system. Cost was the deciding factor. My solar PV system's up front cost less was half the price of a new Prius hybrid (which is not produced locally, and, like most other cars, a product which depreciates in value). In contrast, my solar PV system is an investment and improvement to my house and saves me dollars every month. Plus, the installation provided good jobs for local workers. And, who knows, I might even be producing power for your house.

What are the advantages of solar power? Solar PV panels use light (not heat) to produce electricity. It is renewable and clean and does not contribute to global warming, unlike burning oil and coal or using nuclear energy to produce electricity. It is local and decentralized (because it is on community roof tops) so there is less transmission cost, and less vulnerability to terror attacks because there is no power plant than can be attacked. And, it provides energy security - we don't have to depend on foreign countries to sell us sunshine. Plus, with a solar boom, we would see a growth in jobs with good pay that can't be outsourced - because solar PV panels have to go up on the rooftops in the community.



According to the Co-op America Quarterly (Summer 2005) if California encouraged more policies to promote solar panel production and solar R & D, the solar industry could take off like the cell phone business has. We could have a boom that would make the tech-runup of the 1990s look like peanuts.

Susan Price -Jang Call me at 287-0769 for more info.

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Join our on-line group by contacting any board member or e-mailing: talk2sona@yahoogroups.com

SONA Membership Dues

Join the Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association and become part of a network of residents working to improve and maintain the neighborhood quality of life (safety, property values, aesthetics) and represent SONA neighborhood interests before local governments.

Dues \$12.00 per year, payable yearly. You will receive a free SONA hat with each membership.

All residents, businesses, elected officials and organizations within SONA's boundaries are eligible for membership.

Meetings are held from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at the Sherman Oaks Community Center, 1800A Fruitdale Avenue, San Jose, CA 95128.

Membership dues help fund projects and social events working towards SONA's mission of moving in a positive direction for the improvement of our neighborhood.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE and/or EMAIL: _____

Sign me up for the following committees:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paint Out Graffiti | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Preparedness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Delivery | <input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic/Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> SONA Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Block Watch | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) |

Mail to:	Membership Dues:	\$12.00
SONA	Additional Donation:	_____
PO Box 59146	Additional Hat (\$5 ea)	_____
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Comments:

NAC Notes

The Burbank/Del Monte Neighborhood Advisory Committee is looking for community members interested in a range of projects. There are two projects that have special interest to SONA members. One is the potential to reduce traffic along Fruitdale Avenue and put in connecting bike lanes. The other concerns traffic calming and a street-light at Kingman and Leigh in response to many neighborhood requests. Committees meet at different times and some of the projects and contact info are:

Fruitdale Ave Traffic Calming

Susan Price-Jang
341-7000 ext 4957

Traffic Calming Menker/Moorpark

Traffic Calming & Signal Leigh/Kingman

Randi Kinman
835-2881

Highway 280 Freeway Park

Robert Solis
688-0111

Planning and Land Use

Randi Kinman
835-2881

Bascom Ave. Community Center And Library

Michael LaRocca
289-8449

Sherman Oaks Community Center

Randi Kinman
835-2881

There are also committees for O'Connor Park (behind Safeway), a new park on Scott Street, master planning a new park along the Los Gatos Creek trail and other issues that affect SONA and surrounding neighborhoods. The NAC meets each month, but the committee work rotates on a schedule that fits the committee members. The B/DM NAC is a group of multiple neighborhood and business organizations.

Notes and News

By the time you get this, the Vasona Light Rail should be operating. Many thanks to Charles Crowder for working on making sure we aren't going to be listening to the train horns all day. Thanks to a letter writing campaign VTA has received a waiver on the requirement to have horns sounding at each intersection. The "no horn" waiver will be phased in along the line with the hopes that our area will be affected by the end of October. While this waiver affects both trains and light rail, drivers are not required to keep horns silent and may use them if they feel it is necessary.

The United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County annual conference is Saturday, November 12 at the new city hall. There will be workshops on the role of neighborhoods, special events planning, successful business districts and a variety of planning/development issues. Speakers from around the city will also speak on historical preservation, land use, ethics, code insurance and other issues. The event starts at 8:00 with registration, includes lunch and ends at 3:00 p.m. You can attend the entire day or pick and choose from two dozen workshops and seminars. Registration forms can be downloaded from the UNSCC website at www.unscc.org or by contacting them at 525 W. Alma St. San Jose 95125.

Volunteers are needed for our October dumpster day at the Del Mar site. This doesn't take a lot of work, but we do need people to direct traffic and monitor what goes in the bins. Without volunteers we can't clean up the neighborhood. All interested parties should contact Michael at 289-8449.

Since fall is here, now is the time to do that pre-winter maintenance. Check the gutters and roofs, make sure you are ready for the rains that will be coming our way. PG&E will come out and check your appliances, re-light your heater and conduct a safety inspection for free.

And while you are at it, can you all check the drains and street gutters near your house? Make sure that all drains are clear. If not, contact the Department of Streets and Traffic at and they will send a crew out now before the rains hit. If we can all take a few minutes to do this, those first new rains won't mean we're driving through semi-flooded streets.

The new City Hall grand opening is October 15, 2005 from 10am to 4pm at 200 East Santa Clara Street. Parking is underground at the Sixth Street entrance. If you haven't been there yet, it is quite impressive. The one-stop center in the main lobby allows everyone access to all departments when building, remodeling or doing anything that requires permits and sign off from more than one department. You can pay all city bills at once instead of going from department to department. Check out the historical and artistic displays while you are there. One great thing is validated parking is available on each floor so if you are running around you only have to have your ticket validated once (usually good for a four hour block) and don't have to worry about parking meters or parking in other garages. The celebration will include tours of the entire facility, activities for everyone, music and displays from our Sister Cities around the globe. For more information you can call the new central number 535-3500.

At press time we did not have all the ballots in and counted concerning the permit parking behind San Jose City College. Ballots were due and to be post marked by mid-month. Staff noticed that they were trickling in after expected and planned on waiting an extra week to make sure all ballots were received and counted.

Fire and Home Safety

For those of you who missed our September meeting, we had an excellent presentation by Joy Weyerr of the San Jose Fire Department. We are especially grateful because Joy had less than 24 hours left in her employment with SJFD. She packed the evening with entertainment, information and helpful hints.

If you are a senior (60 and over) you have a five times greater chance of being injured in a home fire. The most important thing is to have a plan and stick to it. Make sure everyone knows what the plan is and practice. Most people who die in home fires do so because they have gone back in to rescue belongings or put the fire out and are overcome by smoke. Once an alarm is sounded the fire department will be there in 2-4 minutes and they recommend you not go back in. **You are more valuable than anything in your home. Always get out.**

The two major causes of home fires are cigarettes and kitchens. If you don't smoke and don't cook, then be careful with candles ; never leave them burning even in a fireplace. Never place them near curtains or where they can be knocked over. Make sure space heaters have plenty of clearance and unplug them while not in use. Call PG&E for a free home inspection and they will check all areas for potential fire and carbon monoxide problems, make sure your appliances are safe and check out your heater before winter sets in.

If you do smoke, smoke outside or make sure you are standing up. You will have a hard time falling asleep on your feet. Ashtrays should be deep enough to hold a cigarette and not let it fall out. Make sure your ashtray is damp, or before dumping the contents wet them.

No matter how small the cooking fire, it has the potential to become larger, so call first. Most fires start because you've left something on and left to answer the phone, the doorbell or go do a chore. If you walk out of the kitchen carry a towel, spoon or pot holder to remind you that there's something on the fire. Handles on pots should always face into the stove, not towards you. Always open lids from the back to avoid any escaping steam. Do not use blankets or towels to put out a fire in a pot; they're flammable. Your best bet is the lid; come in with the lid at an angle because that will prevent you from feeding the fire by pressing more air into it.

If burned or scalded, use cold water, not ice as ice can adhere to the skin and pull it off. Don't use creams, ointments or the butter that grandma recommended. If you catch fire, stop, drop and roll.

Closing bedroom doors gives you an extra 20-60 minutes of extra time in house fires. The most important thing is not for you to fight the fire, but to get out safely. If there is a fire you should crawl to the door, keeping your head 12-18" from the ground and touch the door to see if it's warm. If not, **SLOWLY**, crack the door and check out the situation. If you are on the second floor, crack the window a little. Always keep shoes, glasses and a phone close to the bed for an easy escape.

If using a fire extinguisher, first make sure your back is to an exit. Stand 6-8' away and aim at the base of the fire. Extinguishers only last 15-30 seconds. Discharged extinguishers or ones that are old should be disposed of through the county's HAZMAT program. If you have an old one and are replacing it, train yourself with a pretend fire and discharge it into a garbage can. **EVEN IF YOU'VE SUCCESSFULLY PUT OUT A FIRE, CALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.**

Smoke detector batteries should be changed each time you reset your clock for daylight savings. Ideally you should have one in each hallway and bedroom. If they are more than 10 years old they should be replaced.

Vial of Life

If there is an emergency how can the first responders find out important information about you? Rather than trust you will be able to tell them everything that's important about you or a loved one, rely on the system in place with the San Jose Fire Department called the Vial of Life.

The vial is a prescription bottle that contains all the emergency information for your family. It is kept in your refrigerator and comes with magnets to alert the fire department. If there is an emergency at your home, they will look for these magnets on your refrigerator while assessing the problem. They will know that you have placed the vial inside the door of the fridge closest to the handle and will be able to use this information to assist you.

Inside the vial is a form for a list of medications, allergies and other vital information. Each person in the house has their own list. Medication lists should be reviewed periodically and kept up to date. Because we wind up going to different doctors for different ailments, this master list of medications, allergies and health concerns could save your life. Many pharmacies will print out a list of current medications for you.

The vial of life program also comes with stickers for the phone with the 911 emergency number. It is not uncommon for people to panic during an emergency and dial 411 or 311 instead of the emergency line. Once you dial 911 you will stay connected, so even if you drop the phone you are assured of a response team. Whenever possible use your landline and not a cell phone during home emergencies.

Emergency responders don't want you to hesitate to call. They are there 24 hours a day waiting for you. It's better to call and not have an emergency than to not call and suffer.

SJFD also recommends that you dispose of all outdated or unused meds by taking the label off and putting the bottle in the garbage. Do not flush down the toilet.

The Vial of Life can be picked up at any fire station.

Supervisor James T. Bell Jr.

The following is excerpted from Supervisor Beall's recent e-newsletter.

Many vulnerable residents of our area will be financially safer with California's new "financial Elder Abuse Reporting Act of 2005." The new state law requires employees of financial institutions, including banks and credit unions, to report any suspected financial abuse of our older and more dependent residents. Employees of financial institutions are often the first to witness cases of financial elder abuse. This law now adds them to the list of "mandated reporters" whenever they suspect any scam that may be defrauding a senior citizen or dependent adult. Bank employees now join with other mandated reporters, including health care professionals, social workers, nursing home employees and clergy, who are required to contact the County's Adult Protective Services or local law enforcement.

The new law, Senate Bill 1018, was authorized by our own State Senator Joe Simitian. It was signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger on August 29. It goes into effect in January 2007, giving financial institutions time to properly train personnel on how to identify likely elder abuse. The law also protects financial institutions and their employees from any liability when reporting cases of suspected abuse.

Elder abuse continues to be a terrible problem for our most vulnerable residents. Over 200,000 Californians are reported to be victims of elder and dependent adult abuse each year. More than 30% of these cases are financial abuse. Trusting and vulnerable people are losing vast amounts of their life savings as criminals look for any opportunity to steal their money.

This new state law will help Santa Clara County protect our older and most vulnerable residents. It will provide Adult Protective Services, a division of our Department of Aging and Adult Services, with more evidence and information as we continue to fight to protect the precious financial assets of our senior citizens. If you ever suspect any form of elder abuse, including neglect, please contact the County's Adult Protective Services at 408-2928-3860 or 800-414-2002.

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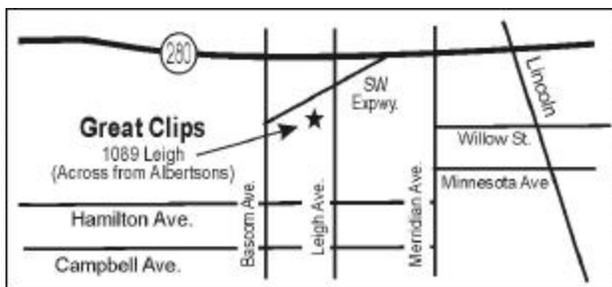


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