



Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association

Notes From The President

Bill and Lea Adams brought this information to the January SONA meeting. It was so worthwhile we decided to make sure all SONA residents knew about this

When it comes time to prepare and file your 2006 tax return, make sure you don't overlook the "federal excise tax refund credit". You claim the credit on line 71 of your form 1040. A similar line will be available if you file the short form 1040A. If you have family or friends who no longer file a tax return AND they have their own land phone in their home and have been paying a phone bill for years, make sure they know about form 1040EZ - T

What is this all about? Well, the federal excise tax has been charged to you on your phone bill for years. It is an old tax that was assessed on your toll calls based on how far the call was being made and how much time you talked during that call. When phone companies began to offer flat fee phone service, challenges to the excise tax ended up in federal courts in several districts of the country. The challenges pointed out that flat fee/rate phone service had nothing to do with the distance and the length of the phone call. Therefore, the excise tax could/should not be assessed.

The IRS has now conceded this argument. Phone companies have been given notice to stop assessing the federal excise tax as of August 30, 2006. You will most likely see the tax on your September cutoff statement, but it should NOT be on your October bill.

But the challengers of the old law also demanded restitution, so the IRS announced that a one time credit will be available when you file your 2006 tax returned as explained above. However, the IRS also established limits on how BIG a credit you can get. If you file as a single person, with only yourself as a dependant, you get to claim a \$30 credit on line 71 of your 1040. If you file with a child or parent as your dependant you claim \$40. If you file as a married couple with no children you claim \$40. If you file as married with children, you claim \$50 if one child, \$60 if two children.

In all cases, the most you can claim is \$60 **unless** you have all your phone bills starting after February 28, 2003 through July 31, 2006. Do not use any bills starting August 1, 2006. If you have all the bills, you can **add up the actual tax** as it appears on your bills and claim that for a credit. If you do this, however, **you cannot use line 71** on your tax return. You have to complete a special form 8913 and attach it to your tax return. Individuals using the special for 1040EZ - T will have to attach this form 8913, also.

One final point - **this credit is a refundable credit**. This means you get this money, no matter how your tax return works out. If you owe the IRS a balance it will be subtracted from your balance. If you are getting a refund, it will be added to your refund. You can pick up the form at all locations that stock tax return information (e.g. the Post Office) or you can download at www.irs.gov and search for form 1040EZ - T.

Thanks Bill and Lea.....*Michael*

AGENDA

SONA GENERAL MEETING

Thursday

February 8, 2007

6:30 p.m.

Refreshments and Meet the Neighbors

7:00 p.m.

Welcome

7:10 p.m.

SJPD (if available)

7:30 p.m.

**Dr. Julie Henderson
Sherman Oaks Community Charter School;
What's new at our local school.**

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at the Sherman Oaks Community Center, 1800A Fruitdale Ave. SJ CA 95128

Good Neighbor Corner

Neighbors on several streets wanted to thank the anonymous people who made the holiday seasons brighter. It wasn't just the holiday lights, there were many instances of people cleaning up other's sidewalks and streets after storms, chasing windblown debris, dropping off goodies unannounced, sharing extra room in trash bins and sharing their holidays with others. SONA is a great place to live in!

Notes and News

New/renewing members this month helped to offset the costs of printing the newsletter. Thanks to **Lisa & Carmel Johnston, Carol & Ken Cooper, Cynthia & Jon Freedman, Paul Hogan & Randi Kinman, Man-Sze Lam Li & Luen Hay Li, Marion McClellan, John & Sally O'Toole, Victor Jang & Susan Price-Jang and Marj Waggoner**. Almost all renewals came with a little extra donation, allowing us to print our newsletter. Thanks neighbors!

While we may not have a council person in office right now, that does not mean we are not staffed at City Hall. While Mayor Chuck Reed officially supervises our district pending the March 2007 elections, we do have a crew of qualified staff working on the day to day business of District 6. Megan Doyle has taken on the Chief of Staff position during the interim, handling the overall management of the office, working with neighborhoods and business districts and making sure that our issues are brought forward. Adam Byrnes (535-4957) attended our January SONA meeting in his capacity as SONA liaison. Ryan Ford (535-4954) handles other neighborhoods.

Christmas in April is now called **Rebuilding Together Silicon Valley**. This group organizes the repair and renovation of housing for seniors and other low income residents with an eye towards increasing mobility and access. They paint, mend, install safety ramps and other features in one or two day blitzes. Qualifying residents receive services at no cost. For an in depth look at services offered you can visit their website at www.rebuildingtogether-sv.org. If you are interested in receiving these services or want to volunteer your time and energy, you can contact Kevin Heuer at 578.9515 or email him at kherer@rebuildingtogether-sv.org. Applications are accepted year round and the projects usually take place in both spring and fall.

Dog Walkers are asked to remember your neighbor's yard, garden, driveway or porch is not your pet's toilet. Neighbors have been complaining lately about droppings left by pets. This isn't just gross and yucky, it's a health hazard. Seriously, please, please, please curb your pet and pick up after it. You wouldn't like these "presents" left in your way.

There is a free class offered to Spanish speaking residents with **Type 2 Diabetes** who have no insurance coverage for classes. The Community Diabetes Project is a program of the Community Health Partnership. Classes cover healthy lifestyles and diabetes management. The course lasts six weeks and meets weekly. For more information call 556-6605.

Income Tax Season is just around the corner and you should know that the IRS has **extended the Federal filing deadline to April 17** this year because the District of Columbia is celebrating Emancipation Day with a recognized holiday. On April 16, 1862 Abraham Lincoln signed the Compensated Emancipation Act which freed the slaves in the District of Columbia. While not recognized as a Federal holiday (Federal offices will be open), holidays celebrated in WaDC affect the entire nation. The central IRS processing center located in Massachusetts that serves WaDC and six eastern states will be closed on April 16 for Patriots Day. This combination means a two day extension for this year. This does not affect your state taxes.

SONA's HIFIVE cards were a big hit at a recent SNI NAC/PAC meeting. People liked the idea of being able to trade information with neighbors in case of emergency. Other neighborhoods are looking at adopting the program. Have you picked up your cards and traded info with your neighbors? If not call one of our board members.

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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

Community Center/Library Meeting 2/7/07

The design team for the Bascom Avenue Community Center and Library will be holding a public meeting on February 7, 2007 from 7-9pm at the Sherman Oaks Community Center.

Working with input from previous meetings, the team has developed initial drawings and a mock up of what the building could look like. You will be able to walk around the working model and peek inside the building. Because this is still the earliest stage of the design process, you have a chance to see how all the pieces fit together. You are going to be the ones using the site, so it is important that you speak up now and determine if it's going to be easy for you to access and use.

While the building is two story, the Del Mar side will step down to single story height to create minimal impact on the residential street. The building is also situated so the quieter uses (library) will be on the Del Mar side with the more active (gymnasium) on Bascom. There will be pedestrian and auto access from both sides.

The library will be equipped with state of the art computers and equipment. There will be separate areas for children, teens and adults as well as smaller meeting and study rooms. A computer room can double as both class and study area.

There will be a full gym with additional fully equipped fitness room and locker/changing areas. There are several meeting rooms and a large multi purpose area with an attached kitchen so you can plan on cooking and baking for fundraisers, weddings or other special events.

There is a proposed café in front with a large open patio area. An additional enclosed patio is upstairs. Residents have asked for extra spaces for bikes.

You will see how public art can become part of the site, how landscaping will fit in and how your ideas are being translated into reality. This will be the last chance to make major changes before construction documents begin, so don't miss it!

What to Do During February

While the calendar says winter and while we've certainly had some cold spells, we are not getting the rain necessary for some trees and plants. Make sure that your gardens (especially those citrus you saved!) and lawns get water. There are numerous coastal redwoods and Monterey pines that were severely stressed this summer. They could use a weekly deep watering to stay healthy. Now is the time to trim back your roses to make sure they have a dormant period. Spray for peach leaf curl, trim the hedges and put the last of the bulbs in.

Around the house make sure your gutters are clear and double check your windows and doors to make sure they are sealed. It may be time to check your furnace filter, also.

Have some free time and want to take free or low cost classes? The Metropolitan Education District offers classes in just about everything. There is a wide range of vocational and certificated courses. There are courses in parenting, photography and consumer awareness. Special classes for both high school and the over 50 crowd are available as well as free yoga and exercise programs. For more information call 723-6464 or visit the website at www.metroed.net. Classes are held at various sites around the city.

The City of San Jose has an ongoing recreational program for kids and adults. You can join teams, take classes, pick up some new skills or participate in a number of social events. Opportunities for education and enrichment are available throughout the city. For more information you can call the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services at 535-3570 or visit the website at www.sanjoseca.gov/prns/ to see a list of programs, recreational spaces and parks.

Guadalupe River Parks and Gardens is 150 acres along a 3-mile stretch of the river with orchards, ball fields, play areas, trails and 3700 roses in the Heritage Rose Garden. Get information at the new visitor center at 438 Coleman, call 298-7657 or go to www.grpg.org to find out about ongoing events, classes and demonstrations for kids and adults.

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Tax Season Help

With tax season upon us, it's good to know that there are services for seniors in tax preparation and filing. The Retire Senior Volunteer Program recruits, trains and places volunteers in community centers for low income individuals and seniors. This is an opportunity for you to either volunteer your time or receive assistance. They can be reached at 979-7906.

AARP is providing free tax preparation services for seniors only at the Willows Senior Center on Lincoln Avenue in Willow Glen. This services is provided by appointment only by calling 448-6400.

Catholic Charities is providing free tax filing assistance to all low income people throughout the city. The low-income ceiling is \$38,000 or less. They operate drop and appointment only tax clinics in various locations and conduct these sessions in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. You must bring in all of your W-2s or 1099s, a photo ID and other related documentation. While services are provided in multiple languages, you can bring your own interpreter. You can obtain more information and a list of tax clinics by calling their main number at 468-0100 or visiting their website at www.ccsj.org.

While this isn't a complete list, we hope it helps.



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Advertise Here!

You can reach 1500 households every month by advertising in the SONA newsletter. For as little as \$120 you can purchase a full year of business card size advertising.

Our newsletters are delivered door to door each month around the first week of the month. The date varies as it is timed to reach our neighbors the week prior to our regularly scheduled meeting.

You can purchase a year of advertising or one time advertising. We also will add your inserts to our newsletter for a cost of \$50 per month. Whether you have a one time special event or want a year long advertising campaign, all you need to do is supply the 1500 copies. We'll insert them and deliver for you.