



Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association

Notes From the President

Not So Expensive Things To Do This Season...

There are all kinds of things to do this season that don't cost money while being fun for the whole family. You can always cozy up with a stack of movies and homemade popcorn, but when cabin fever sets in, take the family downtown.

Using light rail saves you driving around looking for a parking space (and paying for one!) and it's incredibly convenient to get off at the convention center stop for a day or night of fun.

If you have time, head back down San Carlos and walk the path behind the Center for Performing Arts. While we are familiar with the Bufano sculptures out front, there are some hidden gems along the Guadalupe River. Then head down to the Tech Museum. The incredible clanking machine out front has been joined by a 24ft replica of Leonardo da Vinci's Sforza Horse. If you're clever, you'll go on the 2nd Sunday of the month for free admission to the general exhibits. If visiting the da Vinci exhibit, buy tickets ahead of time.

Across the street is Christmas in the Park with dozens of trees decorated by local groups. You'll be amazed at how you can recycle milk cartons and old cds into great art. With activities that include shows, entertainment and music, there is something for everyone day and night. There is also a separate carnival going on around the plaza. And, don't forget ice skating around the palm trees.

Warm up at the Fairmont and check out the gingerbread house and an incredible display of miniature trains set in multiple countries around the world. Visit Europe without leaving home. The Fairmont also has a contest for kids going on for the next few weeks that is tied into creatively working with the chef.

Join us for our holiday get together. Bring a dish and spend a casual evening with your neighbors. Low key, fun and a great break from the hustle and bustle of the season. We had a great time at our summer pot luck, so don't miss the fun this time around...and I hope you have a happy and safe season and a great 2009...**Randi**

SONA
General Meeting
Thursday
December 11, 2008

6:30pm-8:00pm



Winter Potluck



Bring a dish to share and take an evening off to relax and spend time with your neighbors.

8:00pm Adjourn

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

Notes and News

The Bascom Community Center and Library is moving along with an expected fall of 2010 completion date. Community members met with the new artist Ron Baron in a series of meetings. The artist builds site specific bronze installations. He will be coming back to the steering committee on December 15 at the Sherman Oaks Community Center from 6:30 to 8pm. At this point he will present his plan for approval. Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting as observers of the process.

Abandoned or neglected homes create a blighted situation. Unsightly junk piling up does nothing to improve the neighborhood. Abandoned homes can become housing for homeless or act as a holding station for local thieves. The City of San Jose is now fast tracking all complaints of abandoned homes. Recent calls by neighbors in the Buena Vista area brought out a team that boarded up windows, locked doors and secured the site within 48 hours. The city will track down the owner (or, if in foreclosure the bank) and fines can be assessed. You can report abandoned property on the web at

<https://secure.sanjoseca.gov/codeEnforcement/blightReport.htm> OR by calling the Code Enforcement division at 408.277.4528. Once a house has been boarded up, you should call 311 if you see trespassers.

Activity at the San Jose City College ball field on Leigh Avenue is winding down. Staff is taking the time to safely store materials and prevent rain from damaging things while waiting for the

Environmental Impact Study to be completed. There are no meetings scheduled to take place in December 2008 or January 2009 regarding the update of the Environmental Impact Report for San Jose City College

While it is nice to cozy up to a crackling fire, **it will be illegal to burn wood, pellets or manufactured logs during the winter Spare the Air Day** program that runs through 2/28/09. Local air quality management will be monitoring, citing and fining. BAAMQ will email you a notice on 'no burn' days or you can call 1-877-4NOBURN. For more information go to www.baaqmd.gov

The Parks & Rec Department is holding a **Breakfast With Santa** at the Willows Community Center at 2175 Lincoln Avenue. Pre-registration is required and the cost is \$5/child, \$10/adult and kids 18months and younger are free. The even runs from 9:30-11:30am and includes breakfast, holiday crafts, caroling and a special visit Santa. Call 448-6400 for information.

Welcome and thanks to this month's new and renewing members who sent in dues and a "little something extra" : **Elaine Ferris, Woody Wilson and Brenda Brown, Carlos Uribe, Mary Margaret Wedge, John & Sally O'Toole, Lea & Bill Adams, Janet & James Hawkins, Mehran Beheshti and Lois Silva**. All dues proceeds go towards funding our meetings and newsletters.

PRESIDENT, Randi Kinman	835.2881	randikinman@yahoo.com
ADMINISTRATIVE VICE PRES, Marlene Bird	288-9727	mbird@cbtnorcal.com
SECRETARY, Nancy Moritz	993-1059	
TREASURER, Michael LaRocca	564-2374	mlrool@yahoo.com
BOARD MEMBER, Sheila Cvitanich	292-2690	
BOARD MEMBER, Roberta Emerson	297-9093	
BOARD MEMBER, Jussi Rajna	291-0202	
BOARD MEMBER, Lisa Steingart	666-3287	
BOARD MEMBER	Vacant	
Website	www.sona-sj.com	

SONA's newsletter is published monthly and distributed to almost 1500 residences. It is partially funded by a City of San Jose CAP Grant. 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: Patrick Solomon

Holiday Shopping Safety Tips

Make your holiday season safer by following these tips:

1. Park your car in a well lit area when out shopping. Before you get out of your car, look around and have your keys and “carry out” items organized. Check all doors and windows before leaving your car.
2. Shop with a friend or family member; it’s more fun and safer, too.
3. If alone at a mall, use valet parking or ask mall security to escort you to your car.
4. Avoid carrying large sums of money or numerous credit cards.
5. If you carry a purse, carry it on your shoulder and not around your neck. Keep the purse close to the front of your body. Never carry a backpack with your wallet, cash or valuables.
6. Carry your wallet in your front pocket. Wrap a rubber band around it to keep it from slipping out of your pocket.
7. Carry an extra car key. Downsize a spare key ring with just your house and car keys.
8. Do not carry packages that obstruct your view. Many venues will let you “check” packages while you shop. Larger stores will hold items near loading docks so you can drive over and pick them up.
9. When returning to your car, have your keys out and check all around it and underneath while approaching. If there is somebody “hanging out”, walk back to the mall.
10. Once in your car, don’t get out to clear paper or flyers off your window.
11. If approached while in your car, do not get out. If it feels safe, roll your window down 1” to hear the person approaching.
12. Do not leave anything in open view. Store all packages, coats, etc. In the trunk or covered on the floorboard.
13. Even if you nailed a great parking space, do not make multiple trips back and forth to your car. Move it every time you load it.
14. Keep all receipts on you, not in the bags. Your homeowners, renters or car insurance may cover any loss of personal items, including recently purchased gifts.

Home Holiday Tips

Simple steps can make your home a safer place during the holidays. Taking the time to prevent problems is well worth the effort.

- If using mail order or shopping online, have your packages delivered to your work site or work with a neighbor to make sure somebody is there when packages are delivered. It has become routine for thieves to follow delivery trucks around neighborhoods and take items off the front porch. Most residential burglaries occur during the day.
- Most of your packing material can be recycled. Keep bags on hand to separate out packing materials. Packing “popcorn”, for instance, can be recycled but it cannot be loose in the bin. Same for shredded paper.
- Check all of your decorative lighting before installing it. Toss out any with frayed cords or plugs that have been bent.
- If using a fresh cut tree, make sure the bottom is sawed off to create a fresh cut on the trunk. Let the tree sit in a bucket of water outside for at least a day before moving in the house. Make sure your tree holder has room for continued watering.
- Cut trees should spring back if you gently crush the needles. Needles that are brittle or showing brown can become fire hazards.
- Anchor large trees with fishing line to your baseboard. While it’s funny to watch TV shows where the tree topples onto grandma or a kid, it’s not so funny when it’s your grandma or kid.
- Check plants that you bring into the house to make sure that they are not poisonous to children or animals.
- Keep candles away from trees or other flammable material.
- If your home gets a new TV, computer or other large item that comes in a large box, don’t advertise your new things on garbage day. When breaking down the box you can open it on one end, turn it inside out and have only the brown portion of the box showing.
- Use timers to turn lights on and off if leaving for the holidays. Stop mail and have somebody checking on your house if you are gone for an extended period.

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Local Getaways

Whether you have kids or are long retired, there are times when you just need to get out and shake off the cabin fever. We are so lucky to be living in an area that allows us to get outdoors without fighting snow and sleet.

One hidden gem is the Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge just north of here. While the heavy migration of birds occurs in fall and spring, there is an incredible array of wildlife there year round.

A hop over the hill to Santa Cruz will allow you to visit the monarch butterflies at their winter home at Natural Bridges Park. If you park outside the gate you can walk in free and take advantage of a short hike through the trees to watch tens of thousands of monarchs. The staff conducts tours, daily talks and will show you how to watch the butterflies during all phases of their life.

Guadalupe River Parks and Gardens is our local gem that has miles and miles of quiet paths running through San Jose. You can drop in at the visitor center for a list of classes, events and exhibits.

"First Fridays" happens the first Friday night of every month downtown. Local galleries and museums open their doors to allow you a rambling walk through the local arts scene. You can top that off with a round of opera, jazz or other music at Café Trieste or visit one of the other local watering holes.

Let us know what your favorite local getaway is!