



## Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association is a volunteer group of residents working to make our neighborhood a better place to live work and play. A Community Action & Pride Grant from the City of San Jose supplements newsletter funds.

*Issue 129 of your local neighborhood newsletter.*

### ***Notes From the President***

With over 80 people in attendance, our November meeting was one of the best attended all year. Thanks Cindy Dellas! A follow up article is on page 3 because if you missed the meeting, you can still start a Neighborhood Watch on your block.

We've put together a short year-end survey for you. Please feel free to add to the list. SONA is developing a game plan for next year, common goals or interests. We represent your comments and needs to various groups and organizations, including local government. We are only successful if we have input and participation in some form from all of you. Join us in our online group or simply give us a call.

I was recently confronted with "Why didn't SONA tell us about all of the burglaries in the neighborhood" and was frankly surprised that a six-month effort to put out the word and a meeting two months ago that was identical to the one held last month wasn't "doing my job" well enough. Then I realized that while we've sent out warnings, until it hits close to home, people don't often pay attention. It also reminded me that we need to be vigilant about our outreach and make sure people are actually getting our newsletters. If you want the latest information, you can join us online. We have a new volunteer web person who will help us keep things current.

SONA's mission is to help build our neighborhood ties. We do that by hosting monthly meetings, potlucks, events or parties that allow you to get together with neighbors on an informal basis before we have a crisis. We provide communication tools, we facilitate and we welcome people jumping in. As a gardener, I'll put it this way: Our volunteers prep the soil, supply tools and provide seeds for all of us to grow. If you need materials, we can connect you to them. If you have something to share, we can help facilitate. When we build neighborhood ties, when we know what's going on, when we help each other...that's when we can cut down on crime and help develop the infrastructure we'll need in case of a natural or man made disaster.

The end of one year and the beginning of a new one is time for reflection and each year I am amazed when I look back and see the amount of time and work our volunteers dedicate to our neighborhood and to each other each year. I am grateful to our board of directors and our all-volunteer army of neighbors who work throughout the year. I may be the face and voice of SONA, but it's everybody doing the work that makes things happen.

I am also grateful for the things I see around the neighborhood that have nothing to do with SONA...its just neighbors being neighbors... helping each other, looking out for each other and trying to work out problems rather than create conflict. It is often hard, especially in this economy, to find the blessings in life, but I hope that you can count blessings at the end of this year and that next year you enjoy more.

*.... See you at the meetings...next year...Randi*

### **SONA's Great Neighbors..**

- ...look out for one another.
- ...share gardening tips.
- ...help sweep each other's sidewalks.
- ...volunteer in our schools.
- ...deliver newsletters each month.
- ...organize food drives.
- ...advocate for our community center.
- ...keep pushing for our library.
- ...let each other know what's happening.
- ...share the bounty from their gardens.
- ...pick up trash.
- ...clean up graffiti.
- ...patrol the neighborhood.
- ...check in on our seniors.
- ...drive slowly around the schools.
- ...help organize neighborhood events.
- ...work with San Jose City College.
- ...manage our website and Facebook page.
- ...volunteer at their religious institutions.
- ...donate to food banks.
- ...work with what they have.
- ...appreciate our firefighters and police.
- ...shop locally.
- ...let each other know when a neighbor needs help or encouragement.
- ...allow us to leave for vacation knowing our homes will be watched over.
- ...take care of our stray animals.
- ...can think of many reasons they like their neighborhood; what's yours?

There is no meeting in December. We hope that your holidays are safe and that you enjoy the many blessings of family and friends.

Michael, Layne, Jussi, Lisa, Marlene, and Sheila...your SONA Board members.

## Notes and News

**San Jose City College** has had a busy month. With ongoing construction running on schedule, you'll begin to see major changes on the Moorpark side of the campus. Parking lot entrances are being closed off near the parking garage and the access points near neighborhoods have been closed. The recent concert on November 10 was pulled off with less than two weeks notice. Microsoft did not have a venue for a concert connected with their grand opening of a retail outlet at Valley Fair and SJCC moved Bellarmine games around to accommodate the event. Parking adjacent to the campus on Leigh and Moorpark was blocked off and a traffic plan was enforced in and out of the campus. Thus far, SONA has received no complaints but noise seemed to be a problem over at West San Carlos. Let us know what you thought of the event or if you even knew it was there! And, congratulations on receiving a \$25,000 check from Microsoft. Jeannine Hawk has resigned from the district but **Chancellor Rita Cepeda has announced the appointment of Douglas Smith as Interim Vice Chancellor of Administrative Services** to ensure a seamless transition.

**Sherman Oaks Community Charter School is having an exhibition night on December 15 at 5:00pm.** This is the yearly time when kids can show off how they're doing and a good time to drop in and see how the school has changed since you were last there.

**Would you approve a move from the West Valley Community College District to the San Jose/Evergreen Community College District?** While we live adjacent to SJCC, we are in the WVCCD because the old school district lines followed the high school districts. In our case that is the Campbell district that may have made sense when you could only feed from the high school to the appropriate junior college. It doesn't make sense in this day and age and SONA's board is considering asking both college districts to facilitate this during their redistricting. All college, city and other government agencies look at their districts every 10 years after the census is taken to ensure their trustees or representatives have a fairly equal number of constituents. A move from our existing school district would mean an increase/decrease in your property tax assessment. We are currently paying 0.000137 per hundred dollars of assessed valuation and would be paying 0.000254 per hundred dollars of assessed valuation if this were approved. **See the survey on the next page.**

**You don't have to be a dues paying member to be a member of SONA.** Many people come to meetings or take advantage of our resources without paying dues. Dues help us, however, maintain a website and deliver newsletters. We struggle each year to make enough money to keep these resources up and running, so if you have time and the ability, write us a check or visit our website to pay dues, make a donation, or better yet, advertise your business in our newsletter.

**Holidays can be stressful emotionally and financially for you, neighbors or loved ones. When you see a problem and don't know how to find a solution, try 211.org.** This free resource can provide online or phone information and referrals on a variety of issues ranging from domestic violence, elder care, health care, housing, etc. If it's not an emergency, this is your one stop resource in any language. You can go to [www.211sc.org](http://www.211sc.org) or call 211 in Santa Clara County. If the person or people you are trying to help live in another county, you can still use this resource to find a 211 contact where they live. There comes a time when we simply cannot do things on our own or when we are at a loss when trying to figure out how to fix something. This resource, sponsored by United Way is free and confidential.

### ***SONA Contact List***

President, Randi Kinman	408.835.2881	<a href="mailto:randikinman@yahoo.com">randikinman@yahoo.com</a>
Treasurer, Marlene Bird	408.288.9727	<a href="mailto:marlenebird@att.net">marlenebird@att.net</a>
Secretary, Layne Kulwin	408.256.0761	<a href="mailto:SONA@LayneKulwin.com">SONA@LayneKulwin.com</a>
Administrative VP, Michael LaRocca	408.564.2374	<a href="mailto:mlrool@sbcglobal.net">mlrool@sbcglobal.net</a>
Member at Large, Sheila Cvitanich	408.292.2690	
Member at Large, Jussi Rajna	408.291.0202	<a href="mailto:jussirajna@att.net">jussirajna@att.net</a>
Member at Large, Lisa Steingart	408.666.3287	
Website Administrator, Vacant		

SONA's newsletter is published monthly and distributed to 1500 residences. All ad copy is due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Newsletter editor is Randi Kinman. Our all-volunteer group welcomes your participation. Feel free to contact any of us with ideas or questions.

### Neighborhood Watch

For those of you who missed the Neighborhood Watch meeting on November 10, you missed more than 80 of your neighbors coming together to learn how to help each other and ourselves. While the level of crime appears at times to decrease, the reality is, it only moves around. There is no pattern, there are no hard and fast rules about when events occur, but you can expect an increase in evening burglaries during the holidays. The question is, how have you prepared your own home and how can you work with your neighbors?

A big thanks to **Cindy Dellas** for kick starting the Neighborhood Watch program in our area. And apologies for misprinting her phone number. **Cindy's correct phone number is 294-7133. She and Jamie Buckmaster (885-9363)** are recruiting block captains for the Neighborhood Watch program on College, Corliss, Goodwin, Menker and Richmond between Kingman and Fruitdale

In general, Neighborhood Watch groups are organized on a smaller level, block by block or even a single apartment or condo complex. NW works when people take the time to get together and organize or just get to know each other well enough to trade stories. Because the kick off meetings are usually held in a home, this can limit the number of people who can attend. If you need larger meeting space, don't hesitate to contact SONA and we can try to make arrangements at the community center.

As each block is organized, SONA can keep track of the captains on each block. This will allow SONA to refer people to the appropriate person and give us an overview of where we need to step up recruitment. It will also allow us to help you coordinate, because if you and a neighbor are organizing at the same time, you can join forces and share the load. If you are organizing a group in your area, let us know. You'll still be doing the organizing; SONA can act as a clearinghouse for information. We can also provide website access for each block.

SONA has always held potlucks, ice cream socials, National Night Out, block parties and other events to help neighbors find an informal way to get together before we are in crisis mode. We remain committed to continuing these events while bringing you meetings that help inform us on a variety of subjects. We distributed most of our HiFive cards at the Neighborhood Watch meeting, so if you need more, let us know and be patient while we get some printed. We'll also have an online version on our website for you to download.

Kim Gaddis from SJPD and Lt. Ta echoed their presentation from several months ago and enhanced it with flyers and NW signs. Kim is our "go to" person at SJPD for these meetings and can give you a great run down on securing your home, bringing information on landscaping, lighting and locks for any door or window specific to your home. If you want a meeting for your block, contact her at

Lt. Ta let us know that while things run a certain way on all of those TV shows, the reality is in San Jose, our resources are limited at best. There is no instant fingerprint analysis in San Jose and to be honest, there are few resources for burglary investigations. In the meantime, take pictures of your valuables and make sure you get serial numbers for everything.

### SONA Year End Poll

- \_\_\_\_\_ I think SONA should move into the San Jose/Evergreen Community College District
- \_\_\_\_\_ No, I do not want to move from the West Valley Community College District
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in supporting the library and/or community center
- \_\_\_\_\_ I would attend pot lucks or ice cream socials in 2012

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like meetings that cover \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I do/do not attend SONA meetings because: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I think SONA should: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I can help deliver newsletters  
\_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ Each Month

- \_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in:
 

__ Litter pick up	__ Graffiti clean up
__ Traffic calming	__ Block Parties
__ Neighborhood Watch	__ Can/bottle drives
__ HiFive Program	__ Neighborhood Clean Up
__ Community Center	__ Library

\_\_\_\_\_ Our Neighborhood needs: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to support SONA by paying yearly dues of \$15 and/or contributing \_\_\_\_\_ to offset SONA expenses.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: You will be added to our email list that is never released, sold or distributed.



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### Peach Leaf Curl

If you missed spraying your peaches and other trees that are susceptible to peach leaf curl over the Thanksgiving weekend, it's not too late to start the first phase of spraying. Ideally you will be spraying three times, about six weeks apart between the time the trees drop leaves and start sending out flowers. An easy way to remember is Thanksgiving, New Years and Valentine's Day.

Our Master Gardener presentation earlier this year covered this subject because a number of people wanted to know what to do with peaches and other fruit trees that developed curled and puckered leaves. Peach leaf curl is a fungus, so the first step is cleaning out the ground around the tree itself, picking up old leaves and debris and laying clean mulch around the tree.

You can get non-toxic spray at any store that sells gardening supplies. Pick a day with no rain in the forecast, don your gardening clothes and grab a pair of goggles because even on a non-windy day you don't want this stuff in your eyes. Read the directions on the container carefully and then read them again. Apply, mark your calendar and then wait six weeks. Here's to a bountiful harvest in 2012!

For more free info from the Master Gardeners on this or any subject, call 282-3105 M-F 9:30am-12:30pm or go to [www.mastergardeners.org/scc](http://www.mastergardeners.org/scc)

### Holiday Safety Tips

Even as neighbors stood across the street and applauded SJPD while they were arresting a juvenile for some of our recent burglaries, we all commented on the fact it is easy to let your guard down. One arrest or several arrests won't make you safer if you don't follow some easy rules.

- Always lock everything every time. Remove valuables from your car and close curtains so people can't see inside your home when you're gone.
- If leaving during holiday season, alert neighbors, park cars in the driveway, have mail and garbage attended to, leave lights on rotating timers. Don't alert people to the fact you're not home, even if stepping out for an evening party. When leaving and coming home, take a quick glance up and down the street for suspicious activity.
- When shopping, be alert going to and from your car and store purchases in the trunk, not on the seats. Look around before opening the door and if you are parked out in the back forty, ask for mall security to escort you. Many stores have pick up areas for your convenience.
- Do not burn gift wrap; place it in your bins. Attend to all candles, fires, cooking areas; one unattended pot can destroy an entire home.
- If you have a lot of cardboard, turn the boxes inside out for recycling instead of announcing your new flat screen purchase.