

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association...the voice of your neighborhood



Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association (SONA) general meetings are open to all interested parties. General meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of the month at Bascom Community Center, 1000 S. Bascom Ave beginning at 6:30pm. SONA board meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month at the Sherman Oaks Community Center at 6:30pm. Newsletter is partially funded with a Community Action and Pride (CAP) Grant from the City of San Jose.

Issue 164 of Your Neighborhood Newsletter

Notes from the President

November is now upon us and the holiday season draws ever so close. Egad – can you imagine how much fun it will be around Valley Fair Mall and Santana Row, especially with the new interchange that is being built? I had heard on the radio that the contractor (or maybe it was CalTrans) said they'd be done with it by Thanksgiving. Well, we'd all be thankful if that became a reality! For now, Mr./Ms. Postman, FedEx and UPS will be my delivery angels. I will forgo the malls and the crazies and those who actually believe they found that parking space first. I will be most content to shop from the confines of my home office, sitting in front of my computer and spending money (that I don't have) with great resolve while sipping a cup of Christmas cheer (Scotch on the rocks). But, I digress...

The interlude between Thanksgiving and New Year's gives us pause to reflect on a number of things. While I've never been sold on writing my New Year's resolutions, I do believe that in the long run it's a pretty good idea. So, I ask myself: What do I want to achieve? What goals do I plan to work on this coming year? How can I effect change? What would be fun to do?

As 2015 starts we, your SONA Board, in concert with all of its members, will be asking these same questions to formulate new goals. Now, I know that it seems that January is a long way off, but it's really not. So, I'm asking you to spend a moment or two and ask yourself: What would I like to see SONA do this coming year? What would I find engaging, something that would entice me to participate in SONA's meetings and events? What do I want from SONA?

I move to the subject of our November Meeting...

Our speaker for November is none other than our Santa Clara County Supervisor, Ken Yeager. Ken has served as a SCC Supervisor in our district since 2006 and has been an advocate on a myriad of issues, including public health and needed safety net systems, transit services in the valley, air quality, and parks and trails to name just a few areas of his involvement. Ken backs the electrification of CalTrain, bringing BART to San Jose, and building High Speed Rail across California. Ken chairs the CalTrain Joint Powers Authority Board of Directors and sits on the board of the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA).

We invite you to send us your questions for Ken in advance so as to plan accordingly. This meeting is an exceptional opportunity for all of us to meet, learn more about our leaders and to ask questions. SONA has invited several other neighborhood groups to attend, so I am hopeful that we'll have a sizeable audience. Don't miss this SONA event!

SONA General Meeting

Thursday, November 13, 2014
Bascom Library, 2nd Floor
Community Room
1000 S. Bascom Ave

6:30pm Cookies and Conversation.
Come meet your neighbors

7:00pm Meeting Starts!

Welcome

Reports from elected officials
and/or staff updates.

Police Report (when available)

Guest Speaker:
Supervisor Ken Yeager
County of Santa Clara District 4

8:15pm Time to Wrap Up

Door Prizes
Final comments/questions
What's next
Clean up

Get Home Safely!

See you at the meeting!

Bring a neighbor with you... LK

Notes and News

Get up to date SONA news online. SONA is online via a Yahoo group, NextDoor and Facebook. You don't need an invitation to join any of these groups. When information comes in we post to all three groups at the same time. You can join the Yahoo group anonymously by just going to the link. NextDoor is run by a third party and you simply "like" our Facebook page to get our feed on your page. Choose your platform and stay on top of the latest.

Thank you to new and renewing members: Paul Kinyon, Paul Owen, Jessica Endlich, Mark Winkler, Shirley Mata, Michele Bultman-Tracy, Carol Haverty, Mat Lindstedt, Anne Kearney, and Jussi Rajna. If you are receiving this newsletter and haven't joined, please do. We are moving from a yearly formula to a fiscal year formula but will take your dues anytime. You can mail a check or pay online, just go to www.sona-sj.com.

Campbell Union School District is working with KaBOOM! A non-profit dedicated to bringing safe places to play within walking distance of every child. Keep your eyes and ears open because once the contracts are completed, we'll have a great opportunity to help build a playground open to all of our kids all the time. KaBOOM! has built playgrounds around the world and always tries to work with San Jose area schools for early spring builds. The kids design these playgrounds. Plans are created based on the budget and the playground is built by community members in just one day. After a few days to let the cement cure, ribbons are cut and the kids are let loose. SONA members have helped build playgrounds at other sites in the city; it will be nice to have one in our home territory. The adults have just as much fun building as the kids have playing on it later. SONA has lobbied for years and has committed us to this project. So, stay tuned! We have our fingers crossed that 2015 will be the year when our kids quit looking through a fence at a locked playground and have access to a safe place to play.

Thanks to Nita and Susan for cleaning up the pedestrian overpass between Moorpark and Parkmoor!

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SONA Chat Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/talk2sona/>

Facebook: Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association (San Jose)

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sherman-Oaks-Neighborhood-Association-San-Jose/151383304945052?fref=ts>

Nextdoor Neighborhood: www.Nextdoor.com

Website www.sona-sj.com

SONA's newsletter is published monthly and distributed to 1000 residences. All ad copy is due by the 15th 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.

San Jose City College

Beauty on a Budget is available at SJCC through the Cosmetology Program. Whether you're looking for a basic haircut (starting at \$5!) or a full spa treatment, you can't beat the prices or convenience. The Cosmetology students provide every hair and scalp treatment you can think of, facials, mani pedis, waxing and even make up treatments. The aestheticians and cosmetology students' work under direct supervision of the instructors. Prices are even lower for seniors and they generously classify anybody 55 and older as a senior. For those who are at a keyboard all day or are feeling the first twinges of arthritic joints, try the paraffin wax hand treatment. Salon hours are Wednesday-Friday 9-3 and appointments can be made by calling 288-3710. The Esthetic Skin Care services (which include waxing, facials and skin assessments for men and women) can be reached at 288-3766 and they have Saturday hours for make-up treatments.

Thanks to the Kinesiology Department and Lamel Harris for turning down the volume during games. The last few weeks have been delightfully unobtrusive. While many of us enjoy a great football game, the noise level has intruded far into the neighborhood at times. While we have long lobbied for a complete analysis to show how far the sound travels, whatever switch, knob or button was activated did the trick.

The **Mansfield/Sherman Oaks area** reports a significant drop in after hours partying and the noise and mess that seems to bring since the gates to the parking lot have been locked on the south side of campus. While students still have pedestrian access via the "people" gates during school hours, eliminating the open access has made life much better for folks. Sheila has already walked over and thanked Gilbane Construction for taking care of this.

Demolition of the wing building is currently on hold with no known date established to start this project. Delays during the summer pushed this back, school started and a project of this size, with the truck traffic it generates, is done more safely when students aren't around.

Other projects are currently on hold (again) as a new administration settles in (again) and figures out where they stand (again). We said goodbye to Seher Awan who was acting as the chief wrangler of all the projects for the last year and who kept things rolling along. She left for a great position elsewhere but each change is a step back for us.

SJCC is developing new safety master plan along with their landscape and signage master plans. SONA has asked for better integration with SJCC crime issues. Long term plans need to include better communication between the campus and neighborhood when there is a problem. Security cameras in the future plans should ensure the campus police can determine who is coming onto the campus and allow them to monitor the areas that are remote to the buildings but adjacent to neighbors.

RLEI - Slow but Steady Progress

The SONA board has been meeting with Jaime Angulo of the Responsible Landlord Engagement Initiative (RLEI) regarding issues in the Richmond/Menker (R/M) apartment area. The conversations and discussions, held over a brief period of time, resulted in an agreement to move forward as the sponsoring neighborhood association.

We asked several questions at the initial meeting with RLEI in expectation that we would get a fairly immediate response from the R/M community. Tasks were assigned and we were off and running. We congratulate SONA resident, Susan Price-Jang, for all the legwork done by her in collecting signatures on the required petition for RLEI assistance.

Layne Kulwin was asked by the SONA Board to represent SONA. He continues to be the SONA lead, meeting regularly with RLEI.

Several weeks went by and the requested information was not forthcoming. This significantly hampered SONA's ability to engage in discussions with the landlords or the tenants, etc. It became clear to us that the "normal" process wasn't going to work. So... we went to plan 'B,' wrote a formal request for RLEI involvement, signed the RLEI forms and followed the movement towards progress.

While not seeing results as quickly as we'd hoped, we have seen a small, but steady positive change. It helped that, years ago, the landlords were locked into legal joint easement agreements. This meant that there were tools to use, allowing compliant landlords to put pressure the other non-compliant landlords to "step up to the plate." The failure to make changes could potentially expose all of the landlords to face litigation and significant financial penalties!

SJPD Crime Prevention and Code Enforcement have worked with tenants and landlords throughout this entire process. Over the last few months we've seen a reduction in some of the problems, and the area in general is starting to look better. A recent visit noted that graffiti has been significantly eradicated. While looking good is nice, it's the underlying response to maintenance and upkeep that is the key component.

SONA will continue to work with RLEI on this project and Layne will be working directly with the landlords. The landlords want help and to establish a relationship with the greater SONA community. They, as much as anyone of us, want to make their units safe and attractive for their tenants. There is still a lot of work to be done, but experience tells us that once the wheels start to turn, momentum takes over and this positive movement forward actually speeds up.

RLEI is currently taxed to its capacity. But, we look forward to starting the next round of work in other SONA areas. Portions of our neighborhood are experiencing similar problems and they were initially included in our original request for assistance from RLEI. Having collected the required documents for those other areas, the next projects should be easier to get up and running.

***If you have any questions about this project, contact
SONA President Layne Kulwin.***

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Parking and Permits

In case you are wondering why some areas have signs and others don't, here's a quick rundown of how. New parking permit zones are not being initiated by the City of San Jose due to budget constraints. In the past, if your neighborhood was over run by vehicles, the city would come out and do an analysis. Vehicles must be from outside the area (not just the houses two blocks away) and the parking must be during a significant portion of each day. Once data was collected, it was up to the neighborhood to initiate a petition and gather signatures, which triggered a voting process. Residents were actually mailed ballots that were counted by the city and if a threshold was met, the process went to the city council for establishing a legal parking permits zone.

This process could be amended if health and safety issues were at play. For instance, the accumulated garbage and debris that collected around the area around Kingman, Richmond and Menker was never removed during street sweeping days. During the day the streets were solid with cars from San Jose City College (the parking garage wasn't done) so the city analyzed how far that problem went and posted signs.

On the south side of the campus there has been some form of parking control but at first it wasn't an all day issue. Residents eventually had people parking in front of homes all day, garbage and recycling bins were moved and not picked up and they began the process to become a full time parking zone area. This was a contentious project but eventually the votes were taken and the permit zone was established according to the guidelines.

One of the most interesting areas was Corlista. In 2001 residents were complaining about significant cut through traffic and overflow parking from the apartments several blocks away. They began working with the city council office to determine how to control the parking because vehicles were being left all weekend and the noise of nighttime activities was significant. Most of the vehicles on the street did not belong to residents. A limited program was established and a "temporary" island was created to control the cut through traffic. When you have a long stretch of street that is conveniently located near a bottleneck, your front yard quickly becomes something that resembles the viewing stands at a NASCAR rally. The solutions reached in this case did not push the problem onto adjoining streets and the residents are still enjoying their "temporary" island.

SONA has advocated in the past for traffic mitigation, safe crosswalks and other features but the downturn in the economy and an unwilling council has held those plans at bay. With the economy slowly changing, new developments opening up and the regional push for safer pedestrian and bike routes, you can be assured we'll be starting those conversations again.

Holiday Happenings

It's November, we are done with elections and it's time to start thinking about the holidays. First and foremost we ask that you be safe during the holidays. If you are leaving for a few days, let your neighbors know. If you are out shopping be aware of your surroundings.

Downtown Ice is already being set up under the palm trees downtown, so those who want to experience skating for the first time or polish up on your skills only have a short time to wait.

For those of you new to the area, Christmas in the Park is a downtown tradition that has been around for 30 years. The plaza is given over to all things holiday with snowmen, Santa, singing frogs, a carnival, caroling and more than you can imagine. They also have a program for classrooms, groups, businesses and clubs that allows you to decorate your own downtown tree. There are some incredibly creative decorations and a reminder of the diversity of our community. You can find out more at www.christmasinthepark.com

Keep an eye out for holidays at the Bascom Library and Community Center. The staff always puts together a fun event and we have to admit some of the pictures of kids with Santa are pretty funny. Last year the library gave out free books as part of the program.

There are a number of programs that allow you to give to those with fewer resources. InnVision, for instance is one of our stellar operations that houses and feeds individuals and families, moving them out of the cycle of poverty. A number of organizations make sure our neighbors have great holidays with Catholic Charities supplying thousands of turkeys and food to families around the area. If you want a smaller and more local group, check out Santa Maria Urban Ministry. And a stellar local group called Good Karma Bikes can always use financial assistance to keep supplying free bikes to homeless and low-income folks.

Korean American Community Services (KACS) always has a free holiday breakfast and toy give away at Sherman Oaks Community Center for locally referred families. SONA has participated for years in this event and if you want to join the fun contact Santa Layne.

Want to have an environmentally friendly Christmas? It's not too early to plan ahead. Our City Forest has a program that allows you to "rent" a tree for the month of December. They pick up and deliver, you get a hassle free holiday and you get the pleasure of knowing your tree will eventually find its way to a park or school. For more info: www.ourcityforest.org

No matter how you celebrate in the coming winter months, SONA wishes you a Happy Holidays!