



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

Issue 127 of your local neighborhood newsletter.

## Notes From the President

This is your newsletter. What do you want to see in it? We try to bring you news about what affects us locally as residents and business people. Are we doing the job? Are there things missing? Are there things you could do without? Do you want to contribute? Contact any board member. You can be as anonymous as you want because our goal is to make sure the communications systems serve us well.

**October was our traditional "what's happening at San Jose City College" meeting and we are glad to say we've reinstated that program.** You can meet new members of the administration, learn what the existing and future construction schedules are, get a better understanding of community college funding and accreditation processes, etc. If you have specific questions that might take some research, send them on ahead so our guests can be prepared.

Our September meeting was public safety night with SJFD and SJPD in attendance. See page 4 for SJPD and burglary updates.

SJ Fire Department sent four of its finest to us, allowing us to get to know our first responders a little better. They also brought us smoke detectors and gave us a refresher on CPR for all ages. For those who aren't certified, remember that you only have 4-5 before permanent damage during a heart attack occurs and it takes 6-8 minutes for SJFD to respond. You can make all the difference if you know what to do. "Our" station is one of the busiest, acting as first responders to many calls and as back up for others. Many thanks to Captain Jeff Welch and firefighters Matt Chekouras, Blaine Willis and Rocky Ling.

**I've been fielding a lot of calls about recent burglaries lately.** Not surprising considering the increase in burglaries and auto thefts. As SJPD pointed out, we had almost 60 burglaries in just a few months and while some of these crimes have been solved, while SJPD has a good idea who the prime offenders are, we are still experiencing a crime wave unlike any we've seen in decades. Solving some crimes doesn't solve them all and we can't assume that all crimes are committed by the same people, even if they have been arrested or convicted of similar crimes.

People call to complain, offer advice and most recently I've received a lot of calls that border on vigilante style offers of assistance. Some residents want us to post the list of homes burglarized to let people know where the hot spots are and we will not do that; it opens up too many problems. All areas are hot spots.

We also won't publish any notice of arrests for several reasons. First, it doesn't protect you and is likely to let people think they can let their guards down. Second, one or two arrests or convictions do not mean the problem is solved; this is ongoing. Third, we don't want to see retaliatory behavior that makes our neighborhood more dangerous.

Recently a flyer was distributed to neighbors as a "call to arms" and a reminder that we all need to protect ourselves and watch out for our neighbors. Unfortunately, the flyer blamed residents at a specific address, something that cannot be proven and, frankly led to a dozen phone calls that suggested we take increasingly more radical action. We've all worked hard in recent years to make our neighborhood a great place; there is no doubt that peace has been disturbed. Let's not make it worse. As one of the first victims in this crime spree I will freely admit I was relaxed about protecting my property. With that said, it in no way absolves anybody of their crime and I will be the first in line to ask for harsh punishment.

We may not be able to stop all crime, but we can reduce or limit our problems by doing three things. First, protect your property at all times; secure your home and car even if you're only going to be gone for five minutes. Second, report everything. Every suspicious act, every crime; people were not reporting crimes! Third; communicate with your neighbors. Talk to them, get to know them, look out for each other. Join our email list so we can keep you updated. *See you at the meetings...Randi*

## General Meeting October 13, 2011

**6:30pm**

- ❖ **Mix and Mingle.** Meet neighbors, enjoy snacks and coffee. This is time to touch base with everyone.

**7:00pm**

- ❖ **Welcome.** Thanks for being here! Look for a list of upcoming events.
- ❖ **Reports from Council Office**
- ❖ **SJPD if Available**

**7:15pm**

- ❖ **San Jose City College Update**
  - **Greg Nelson, Vice Pres of Admin Services**
  - **Dr. Marie-Elaine Burns, Vice Pres Student Services**
  - **Note this is a partial list of potential attendees from SJCC**

**8:00pm**

- ❖ **Wrap Up.** Last minute announcements, clean up and what to expect at upcoming meetings. Get home safely.

## Notes and News

**SONA E-mail List:** We looking to add you to our list of online members for several reasons. First of all, it's expensive to deliver newsletters and our grant funding for this has been drying up. Second, it's the right thing to do. We need to reduce the amount of paper we use and become a leaner, greener community. Third, we need to expand our ability to contact each other and stay in touch. Because our newsletter is delivered monthly, we miss sending you vital information about your neighborhood. We also miss the general "chat" that makes life interesting and fun, so we'll be sending you requests to join our Yahoo group as well. Plans are in the works to launch our Facebook page and re-vamp our website. Who's having a garage sale, who needs a gardener or plumber, who's looking for a babysitter, who's having a block party, who's selling their home? Online forums will allow us to build these neighbor-to-neighbor ties. **At no point will your information be given out or sold to anybody, at no point will your info be published.** If you have the skills and are interested in helping us grow our e-presence, contact Layne Kulwin (see below).

**PayPal is available on SONA's website!** You can pay your yearly dues with just a few clicks, make donations and contribute to SONA's success. We simply cannot afford to mail out reminders to people, so we are hoping that you will use the PayPal option on the website's front page and make your contribution count. This is a secure and easy way to pay your dues each year and you can also opt to have your dues deducted every year from now on. What a great way to support your neighborhood from the comfort of your own home. **The SONA website is located at <http://www.sona-sj.com/>.** You can also sign up for easy to use yearly renewals or add a little extra to support SONA.

Thanks to our new and renewing members who really came through last month! If we get ten new members a month we can stretch our grant funds to cover newsletters. If twenty people pay dues a month we can cover most of our expenses. We had so many this last month, there is not enough room to print all the names! Thank you, thank you!

**SONA Board members Jussi and Lisa will be conducting another recycling pick up day soon.** Save your cans and bottles! Give either of them a call and let them know you want to be on the pick up route.

**The playground at Sherman Oaks Community Charter School is open to the public.** Most of us don't realize we have a play space for kids that is available on weekends. The custodial staff unlocks the pedestrian gate on Sherman Oaks Drive after children have left the after school program each day. Only the playground is open, so people who jump the fence or use the courtyard for skateboarding are subject to trespassing violation penalties. The playing fields are not open for soccer or organized activities and continued use of the fields could jeopardize the neighborhood access. The school has taken a big hit with vandalism and graffiti lately, so please use according to the rules and report all fence jumpers and trespassers.

**SONA will soon have space at the Sherman Oaks Community Center.** The City of San Jose has vacated the office space previously used by staff which has allowed the user groups to move into the space. Second Harvest, the after school program, the Burbank/Del Monte NAC and SONA will now have a small shared space to store materials and supplies, work one on one with clients or stage community work. We can no longer store inside the community center, so this is a great move for all of us. Among the things we look forward to is being able to stock/store neighborhood clean up materials that will allow us to eliminate graffiti and blight.

**Newsletter carriers needed in the Princess Ann area.** If you have an hour or so a month, SONA needs somebody to deliver newsletters each month. Great community service project or simply a way to make sure your neighbors are well informed.

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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.

**Sherman Oaks School  
Capital Improvement Plan  
Meeting October 11, 2011**

**6:30pm**

**Sherman Oaks Community Center**

Recently SONA residents discovered that new plans for improvements at the Sherman Oaks Community Charter School were in the works. We were surprised to find out that a new multi purpose room was being planned along with a complete playground renovation on the Sherman Oaks side of the campus. Additionally, a new food service preparation facility for the entire district is being planned along the back fence area adjacent to the Kimberly Woods Apartment complex.

The Campbell Union School District will be holding a public meeting to reveal the plans and update the residents.

We strongly urge you to attend this meeting as it will affect all those who live in the area. It is important to have your input before plans are finalized.

Phase 1 of the project calls for a complete renovation of the playground area and prep for a new multipurpose facility. The new facility will allow the kids to eat and play indoors while providing a large meeting area. The 8,000sqft building will be located on Sherman Oaks Drive, adjacent to the fence line where the playground area begins.

Phase 2 of the project calls for a 12,000 sqft building that will house the entire food preparation activities for the district. The preliminary plan is to locate this facility where the open space on Leigh is behind the playing fields. This will require CEQA clearance and more meetings because it significantly impacts traffic and the environment. While schools are exempt from many things, they cannot simply choose to violate local zoning regulations and build a commercial enterprise, new parking lots and driveways, etc. in a residential area.

This is one time where you have a voice early in the process instead of being caught unaware by new development. This is your money being spent. If you need assistance or an interpreter at the meeting, contact Supt. James Crawford at 341-7214 or [jcrawford@campbellusd.org](mailto:jcrawford@campbellusd.org).

**Bascom Community Center and Library**

A memo approved by the City Council has placed the community center portion on the "reuse" list, allowing the city to solicit service providers in the hopes that one of them will come forward and offer a plan that will bring services and activities to the Bascom site. This reuse program has been implemented at several sites owned by the city but closed due to budget impacts. Groups like the YMCA or Catholic Charities take over the facility and bring programming that is based on the wish list devised by the affected community. This only covers community centers and not libraries. Prior to putting the facility out to bid as a reuse site, the city holds a public meeting.

**On Wednesday, September 7, just one day before our SONA meeting, several of us discovered accidentally that a community meeting had been set up for September 28.** This obviously did not allow us to reach out to SONA residents and we also knew that other neighborhoods had just released their newsletters or held their monthly meetings and would not have the ability to reach out to their neighborhoods. We protested and asked for a second meeting but were told this was the only available date for our councilmember, Pierluigi Oliverio and Councilmember Pete Constant of District 1 (this is a shared facility). When we asked how residents would be notified, we were told the councilmembers had sent out information in their electronic newsletters and the city would flyer some of the immediate area. Flyers were distributed to several blocks adjacent to the site and a few random flyers were left on some of our board members doorsteps. District 1 has an extensive email contact list system that was activated. SONA residents spread the word and Susan Price-Jang did a yeoman's job of reaching out to our Spanish speaking Madres group as well as local schools.

The September 28 meeting was the biggest community meetings held for a reuse site, but unfortunately, the neighborhoods who have been working on this project for over a decade were missing. With close to 100 people in attendance throughout the evening, a list of activities and services was developed and prioritized. As with all meetings we have held over the last 12 years regarding our community center, the priorities came out in a similar ranking with requests for children's programming, youth programming and adult/senior programming. The attendees asked for computers, classes enrichment programs. They asked for educational opportunities, senior lunch programs, pre-school and access to the gym and recreation space for everyone. Residents wanted the café opened and the site available for rental/leasing. Allowing SJPD and law enforcement space to take a break, write reports or touch base with residents was also encouraged.

The list will be coordinated by the city and sent to potential service providers the first week of October. A citizens group will be developed to help choose the provider. For more information, contact Ed Solis, Reuse Program Manager, at 793-5550 or [ed.solis@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:ed.solis@sanjoseca.gov)

SONA board members are still concerned that our residents were, for the most part, left out of this process and will continue to monitor and report back to you.



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### SONA, Crime and San Jose Police Department

With almost 60 residential burglaries in one area of our neighborhood in recent months, residents are upset, aggravated and afraid. Our SJPD portion of the September meeting kicked off with an overview of our local crime wave and how some of it is solved, some is still under investigation and what some of the problems in proceeding are. Unlike TV shows, DNA results take 18 months here.

The only reason some of our residential burglaries have been solved is because we have officers who took their own time to investigate according to (NEED NAME). Steve Kline continued to update SJPD about the ongoing burglary problem. Or, we could use the word "hounded", but it worked. SJPD does not have teams to work these problems anymore and we had several officers take it upon themselves to come in on their time off, canvass neighbors and, using sound investigative procedures, develop a list of suspects that reached from Fremont to Campbell. Officers xxx and xxx deserve our thanks. They discovered unreported incidents, established a list of suspects and continue to work these cases.

Kimberly Gaddis then proceeded to discuss how we can make ourselves safer via the Three Ls : **Lighting, Landscaping and Locks.**

Exterior landscaping should deter people from climbing through windows yet not be enough to hide them. Walk your perimeter and see if there are hidden spots or hiding places. If you can't see the exterior from the street, trim things back. Landscaping close to the house that is thorny or prickly keeps people from accessing your home.

Light your exterior, front and back with motion sensor lights or low wattage landscaping lights. These are easy to come by. Test them by walking your perimeter in the evening. Can you see every inch of the perimeter of your home? Adjust them so your back, front and side areas can be lit. Make sure your security cameras are working if you are using them and prominently display your alarm system signs.

Secure all windows, doors and other points of entry, including large pet doors. Windows should have latches or be secured in a manner that keeps them from being opened. Close curtains or shades to keep people from looking in when you aren't around. Don't forget those small bathroom windows. Make sure your gates all have latches you can secure.

Use timers on inside lights and radios when you're gone. Make sure your house looks occupied.