



UNITED NEIGHBORHOODS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY'S

Neighbor to Neighbor

VOLUME 6: NUMBER 10 - OCTOBER 2003

CALENDAR

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

Thursday Oct 16
6:30 pm
UNSCC Alma Office
525 W. Alma Avenue
San Jose

10TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Saturday October 18
Christian Community Church
1523 McLaughlin Street
San Jose

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday Nov 5
6:00 pm
UNSCC Alma Office

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday Nov 19
6:45 pm
UNSCC Alma Office
San Jose

UNSCC does not endorse
political candidates

525 W. Alma Avenue
San Jose, CA 95125
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unsc@pacbell.net
www.unsc.org

CELEBRATING A DECADE

Will there be another?

On Saturday October 18, United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County (UNSCC) will hold its Annual Neighborhoods Conference, celebrating a decade of promoting and enhancing the creation of strong neighborhoods. Will UNSCC continue its mission after this conference? The answer depends on individual supporters and the membership. Like most non-profit organizations, UNSCC has been experiencing tough times, but the situation has turned critical.

The actions that you as individuals and member organizations take will determine the course for UNSCC. What can individuals and organizations do to insure that UNSCC will continue on into 2004?

Attend the conference - The registration fees can collectively be the difference among a no-time, part-time or full-time staff at UNSCC.

Make sustaining donations - Individually or as a member organization, these sustaining donations will help UNSCC survive and one day prosper. Even in good economic times, foundations, the traditional funding sources for civic organizations like UNSCC, will only fund a non-profit for so long; after which time, the expectation is for the non-profit to find private funding sources to sustain itself.

Membership fee increases, advertising revenues, fundraisers - Will you support these fundraising tools when they are employed? How much of a membership fee increase will you support? Will you participate in a golf tournament fundraiser? What other ways can we raise revenues?

If the mission of UNSCC is worth preserving, then the costs associated with that endeavor must be paid. What else can be done to generate the funds necessary to continue the mission?

Contact UNSCC at 408-286-8661 or unsc@pacbell.net. Send suggestions and donations to: UNSCC, 525 W. Alma Avenue, San Jose, CA 95125.

UNITED NEIGHBORHOODS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County is a coalition of neighborhood associations. Our mission is to promote the creation, preservation, and enhancement of healthy neighborhoods through education, resources and outreach.

Thank you County Supervisor Blanca Alvarado for supporting UNSCC!

Neighbor to Neighbor

CALIFORNIA NATURAL GAS MARKET

Mike Katz and Trista Berkovitz, PG&E

With federal government experts predicting higher natural gas costs this winter, interest in the fuel and how prices are determined has been growing.

Like other commodities, the price customers pay for natural gas is based upon market conditions. Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) does not mark up the cost of buying natural gas but instead passes on the wholesale costs directly to consumers.

The price for gas is set each month after being reviewed by state regulators. The current price, along with historical prices, is published on PG&E's web site at www.pge.com/gasprice. Checking these prices at the start of the month can better prepare consumers for future bills and moderate their gas use if necessary.

PG&E does not own wells or pump gas from the ground, but instead purchases it from a variety of producers in Canada, the southwestern states, parts of the Rocky Mountain region and California. Through a network of high-pressure natural gas transmission lines running to these basins, PG&E can shop around for the lowest price, an option not all utilities have.

In addition to hunting for the best prices from natural gas producers, PG&E utilizes a number of techniques to keep gas bills as low as possible and avoid price swings. PG&E uses a vast network of underground storage facilities that are filled with gas during the summer for use during winter months. This stored gas makes up about 15 percent of the total gas used during the winter and helps to ensure there will be enough gas for residential and small commercial customers, regardless of how cold the weather turns. The utility is also employing a hedging program to mitigate the impact on customers from further gas price increases this winter.

As a result, when natural gas prices are low nationwide, as they were for much of the past decade, PG&E gas customers received the direct benefit of those low prices. On the other hand, when natural gas prices are high nationwide, as they are now because the growing demand for gas has not been matched by increased production, customers' bills will reflect those higher costs.

This fall, natural gas prices for small commercial customers are approximately 30% higher than a year ago. Predicting how expensive gas bills will be this winter is like predicting the stock market – nearly impossible. What is known is that the natural gas market in California is intrinsically linked to the rest of North America. If a prolonged cold snap hits the Midwest or northeastern states, causing demand for the fuel to increase, the price California pays for natural gas will go up.

There are many things PG&E customers can do to help manage their costs, and reduce their usage of natural gas. PG&E offers a variety of rebate programs, energy audits and financial incentives designed to help businesses cut their gas bill. Consumers can also opt to use a different natural gas supplier, known as a Core Transport Agent (CTA), instead of PG&E. A list of these CTAs is available at www.pge.com/gaschoice. Large users of natural gas also have the option of becoming a noncore customer. Noncore businesses purchase the fuel directly from producers and arrange to have it shipped over PG&E pipelines.

For more information about how the natural gas market is structured in California and tips on how to reduce natural gas use, visit www.pge.com/foryourbusiness. Please contact Teresa Alvarado, PG&E Government Relations representative for the San Jose Region, at 408-282-7311 or TAA7@pge.com with any local questions.

Neighbor to Neighbor

Tenth Annual United Neighborhoods Conference

CELEBRATING A DECADE AND MOVING FORWARD

Saturday, October 18, 2003
Christian Community Church
1523 McLaughlin Street
San Jose, CA

United Neighborhoods Annual Conference is ideal for anyone wanting to improve his or her community. The conference will feature workshops on common community issues and give suggestions on how to solve these issues in your own community.

Promoting and Enhancing the Creation of Strong Neighborhoods

That's what UNSCC does best - with workshops on how to start a neighborhood association, fund its activities, and recruit volunteers. Additional workshops will teach how to develop partnerships, communicate with government officials, and come together as a community. A panel of experts will discuss how best to interact with different cultures.

First Time Home Buyers Orientation Workshop

From 10am - noon with free admission - this workshop does not require you to register or attend the whole conference, you're welcome to do both if you like. Hosted by Neighborhood Housing Services Silicon Valley (NHSSV), this special workshop will take individuals thinking about buying their first home through the pros and cons of home ownership. The agenda includes an overview of NHSSV's programs and services, the home ownership process as well as key players in the process, mortgage payments and costs of ownership, credit, affordability, readiness, and next steps.

Test Drive the New Voting Machines

Did you vote in the last election using a punch card? Attend the UNSCC Annual Neighborhoods Conference to test drive the new voting machines that will be used in future elections. The Santa Clara Registrar of Voters is also looking for opportunities to demonstrate the new voting systems at neighborhood meetings and public events. Contact Diane Moore at the Registrar of Voters at 408-299-VOTE or Registrar@sccvote.org to schedule a demonstration today.

Get Information on the Next Community Foundation Grant

The deadline for the next Community Foundation Silicon Valley - Neighborhood Grant - is Friday October 24, 2003 at 5pm. Stop by to pick up an application or talk to a Community Foundation representative during the lunch time Resource Fair at the conference.

Contact United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County
Phone: 408-286-8661 Email: unsc@pacbell.net

Neighbor to Neighbor

NO BEARS IN THIS NEW PARK!

from the office of County Supervisor Blanca Alvarado

In 1998, the County Parks and Recreation Department purchased the Bear and Mendoza ranches near Coyote Lake Park. The park, now known as Coyote Lake-Harvey Bear Ranch County Park, is located in southern Santa Clara County just east of Gilroy. The County increased the size of the park to over 4,000 acres making it the second largest County park.

For two years, a Task Force and the County Parks and Recreation Commission grappled with the future of the park through a master plan study. To offer a wide variety of uses at this large park, the plan created four distinct areas: the Lakeside Area, Mendoza Area, Slopes and Ridges, and the Western Flat Area.

Western Flat Area

Covering 320 acres of grassland, the Western Flat Area once had row crops, hayfields, and cattle pastures. The Plan envisions this area as a mix of recreational activities. An existing red barn may house an **Equestrian/**

Agricultural/Education Center with nearby **equestrian event camping** and a **fenced dog off-leash area**. For informal recreational play like soccer or volleyball, an irrigated turf area is proposed.

Lakeside Area

The existing Coyote Lake Park has camping and group picnic use, fishing, and opportunities for power and non-power boating along the west side of the 635-acre lake. The master plan proposes various improvements like a small amphitheater close to existing campgrounds and better regional and park trail connections.

Mendoza Ranch Area

A beautiful natural habitat of California oat grass and several stock ponds is the best description of the rural setting of the Mendoza Ranch Area. To protect this rural setting, the preferred use is to convert the existing Mendoza house into an Environmental Education Center and limit camping to youth and equestrian users. A proposed amenity to our County Parks system may be the introduction of a landing site for hand gliding and paragliding.

Slopes and Ridges

An oak woodland oasis with serpentine grasslands, blue oak forests, vernal basins, and riparian corridors make up this area.

To maintain the natural habitat, the only planned recreational activity is to convert existing ranch roads to trails. This trail system will connect to the Bay Area Ridge Trail.



What's Happening Now

On December 17, 2002, the Board of Supervisor selected an 18-hole public golf course with a clubhouse, support facilities, a fishing pond, and naturalized buffer areas between fairways as the preferred alternative on 176 acres of the 300-acre Western Flat. In addition, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to include in the environmental review phase a second alternative consisting of a 500-person event pavilion, 50 to 100 car

and RV campsites, and expanded grassland restoration which would replace the golf course.

On June 4, 2003, the Parks and Recreation Commission endorsed a proposed Master Plan that includes the Golf Course and the 200-person event pavilion as the preferred alternative for the Western Flat Area.

The second alternative consisting of a 500-person event pavilion and recreational vehicle campground in lieu of the golf course was rejected by the commission.

Next Steps

The Parks and Recreation Commission and Department will forward the Draft Master Plan and the Draft Environmental Impact Report to the Board of Supervisors in the fall of 2003. Once the Board approves the project, the Department plans to open the new lands of the park for public use within three years of the Master Plan approval.

For more information about this new County Park or other parks, please visit the Department of Parks and Recreation's web site at www.parkhere.org or you can reach the department at (408) 358-3741.



Neighbor to Neighbor

6TH ANNUAL WALK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Friday October 17, 2003 from 9am to noon
San Jose City Hall, San Jose

DAY IN THE PARK

A MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

Saturday October 18, 2003 from 10am to 4pm
Lake Cunningham Park, San Jose

FREE celebration with live music, dance, foods, pumpkin patch, BBQ. Incredible prizes. Support some fundraisers. Contact Phung Pham at 408-277-5242 or phung.pham@sanjoseca.gov for more information.

11TH ANNUAL WASHINGTON

HAUNTED HOUSE AND FESTIVAL

Saturday October 25, 2003 from 6 to 9pm
Washington School, San Jose

Black, plastic-covered 8' x 8' booths are available for participating groups to decorate in a scary fashion or Halloween-theme to scare the people that will walk through the maze path. Contact Mark Lopez at 408-535-6261 x17 or mark_lopez@sjusd.ca.us to reserve a booth or for more information.

KIDS AND PARENTS HALLOWEEN

TRICK OR TREAT IN JAPANTOWN!

Friday October 31, 2003 from 5 - 7:30pm
Jackson and 7th Streets, San Jose

Performance by San Jose Taiko at Okita Hall on 6th Street, Safety Tips by SJPJ Japantown Officer followed by Trick or Treating in Japantown! Sponsored by San Jose Taiko and Japantown Business Association.

NEW LAW TO AFFECT HOMEOWNERS GROUPS

San Jose Mercury News

Millions of Californians who live in neighborhoods governed by the private rules of homeowners associations will have new rights to inspect their association's financial records, according to a bill Gov. Gray Davis signed into law Thursday (September 18, 2003).

Davis' action gives approximately 8 million Californians in more than 36,000 neighborhoods greater access to records showing how their dues money is spent for salaries and services. Supporters called it a consumer victory for California homeowners who pay more than \$200 million a year in association dues.

"They have every right to know how their millions of dollars of homeowners fees are being spent," said Marjorie Murray, lobbyist for the Congress of California Seniors.

The new law goes into effect Jan. 1 (2004).

UNSCC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair	Tom Clifton
Secretary	Meg Stein
Treasurer	Tom Freeman
Board Members	Helen Bliven
	Bob Dhillon
	Ken Henning
	Bill Hughes
	Judd Murkland
	Edward Rast

UNSCC STAFF

Executive Director	Jacqui Carr Gouveia
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GENERAL MEMBERS

Alma Neighborhood Association	Northside Neighborhood Association
Berryessa Citizens Advisory Council	Olinder Neighborhood Association
Blossom Valley Neighborhood Association	Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association
Buena Vista Neighborhood Association	Plata Arroyo East Gate Neighborhood Association
Burbank Community Association	Rancho Narvaez Neighborhood Association
Campus Community Association	Redwood Estates Community Club
Canoas Garden Neighborhood Association	Roosevelt Park Community Action Team
Casa Loma-Loma Chiquita Neighborhood Association	Rosemary Gardens Neighborhood Association
Cory Neighborhood Association	San Jose Downtown Residents Association
Crescent Park Neighborhood Association	San Miguel Neighborhood Association
Cuesta Park Neighborhood Association	Santa Teresa Citizen Action Group
Eden Neighborhood Association	San Tomas Neighborhood Association
Edenvale Roundtable Community Association	Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Association
Friends of Santa Teresa Park	Silver Leaf Neighborhood Association
Goodyear/Mastic Neighborhood Association	South University Neighborhood
Guadalupe/Washington Neighborhood Association	Spartan Keyes Neighborhood Association
Horace Mann Neighborhood Association	Sunnyhills Neighborhood Association
Japantown Neighborhood Association	Sunnyvale Neighbors of Arbor Including LaLinda
Julian/St. James Neighborhood Association	Sunrise Valley Neighborhood Association
Lakewood Village Neighborhood Association	Thousand Oaks Neighborhood Association
McLaughlin Corridor Neighborhood Association	Warner Heights Neighborhood Association
Monta Loma Neighborhood Association	West of Fourth Street Neighborhood Group
	Willow Glen Neighborhood Association

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

College Park Neighborhood Association	North Murray Neighborhood Association
Dobern Community Action Team	North Willow Glen Neighborhood Association
Eden Hill Neighborhood Association	Park Pleasant Neighborhood Association
Fairview Drive Neighborhood Association	Primrose Neighborhood Association
Glenview Drive Neighborhood Association	Rogers Lane Neighborhood Association
Haven Neighborhood Association	Rose Garden Neighborhood Preservation Association
Hyde Park Neighborhood Association	Santa Teresa Foothills Neighborhood Association
Independence High Neighborhood Association	Seven Trees Neighborhood Group
IOOF/San Ysidro Neighborhood Association	Shasta/Hanchett Park Neighborhood Association
Joaquin Miller Neighborhood Association	Southgate Neighborhood Association
LeyVa Community Action Team	South Skyline Association
Lyndale Neighborhood Association	Summerhill Neighborhood Association
Mayfair Improvement Initiative	Tamien Neighborhood Association
Mount Pleasant Neighborhood Association	West Evergreen Neighborhood Association
Newhall Neighborhood Association	Westside Property Homeowners' Association