



# The Riviera Association

April 2008 [www.rivieraassociation.org](http://www.rivieraassociation.org) P.O. Box 41838 • Santa Barbara, CA 93140-1838

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## President's Letter

Dear Riviera Residents,

When speaking with a new Riviera resident I am often asked, "Why join the Riviera Association?" My reply is simple, "Because we make a difference. We are constantly working to preserve and enhance the quality of life on the Riviera." Your board has been directly involved with fire safety, the Riviera evacuation drill, street and public safety, views, zoning, density, emergency communications, Cottage Hospital housing, building heights, Sycamore Canyon access, El Encanto remodel, Riviera Business Park remodel, Marymount School construction, candidates forums, Web site development, and generally responding to your needs and concerns.

As active as the board is, we recently decide to look inward to see if we can do more for our members. Over the last several months your board has contributed numerous hours to develop a Strategic 3-Year Plan that establishes priorities and action plans for the association. Here are a few of the priorities we've identified:

**Issues** Promote the greater interest of members on issues of utility under ground-ing, parking, roadway and fire safety, zoning enforcement and density in order to preserve the quality of life of the neighborhood.

**Communications** Develop a comprehensive, timely communication and marketing program for our stakeholders, including a state-of-the-art Web site and e-mail distribution of timely information.

**Membership** Build our membership to include every owner within the Riviera district.

**Continuity** Ensure a robust organization

though board succession planning and financial solvency.

Specific goals and action steps, individual accountability and progress reports back each up of these key strategies to the board. Keep in mind we are an all-volunteer organization. I am constantly amazed by the level of commitment and number of volunteer hours given by your representatives.

The Riviera Association is regarded as the oldest and one of the most reputable neighborhood associations in Santa Barbara. We represent in excess of 1,800 residents who own property on the Riviera. We do make a difference in protecting our quality of life. I want to thank those of you who are members. Your \$30 annual contribution is what makes our efforts possible. If you are not a current member, please join! For non-members an application is enclosed, or you can enroll online at [www.rivieraassociation.org](http://www.rivieraassociation.org).

I want to thank Dr. Michael Cooper and Frank Hotchkiss for serving the last several terms as board members. Their contributions in time and energy were significant. I'd also like to welcome Jacques Habra and Steve Kittell as new board members. We are fortunate to have them working with us.

Please join us at the spring general meeting being held at Marymount School Auditorium, 2130 Mission Ridge Road, and 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 18. We look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

*Paul Cashman*

Paul Cashman, President  
The Riviera Association

## The Riviera Association General Meeting

**Sunday, May 18, at 5:00 p.m.**  
**Marymount School Auditorium**  
**2130 Mission Ridge Road**

**Bill Mahan** will speak on the initiative measure to amend the city charter's building height limitations. The measure would reduce certain areas of the city currently zoned commercial 60 foot height to a maximum of 45 feet and impose a new maximum height of 40 feet within the historic "El Pueblo Viejo" district of the city. Bill is a registered architect and came to Santa Barbara after graduating from Iowa State University in 1961. He has served on the City Architectural Board of Review for 13 years as board member and chairman. He has served on the City Planning Commission for eight years as commissioner and chairman. He currently serves as chairman of the City Single Family Design Board. He is recently retired after serving for 12 years as the chief design architect for the redevelopment of the Ojai Valley Inn and Spa.

**Rebecca Bjork**, of the City of Santa Barbara Water Resources Division will speak about our local water supply issues and the city's water conservation program. She will show a power point presentation and is available for a question and answer period.

## Why Join the Riviera Association?

For 77 years, the association has been dedicated to ensuring that the Riviera is a great neighborhood—by protecting and preserving what we have, and by working to improve things throughout the neighborhood.

Current challenges include fire safety, emergency preparedness, zoning density and variances, undergrounding of utilities, roads and traffic, Franceschi Park and restoration of the house, and many smaller matters that come up during the year.

Last summer we sent daily e-mails on the status of the Zaca Fire to all members for whom we had e-mail addresses. These were very helpful because they contained current information from all the public safety agencies—every day and all in one place.

We are soon to have a new and improved Web site ([www.rivieraassociation.org](http://www.rivieraassociation.org)) with current and archived information, links to other resources, and online dues paying capability. We have two general membership meetings a year—one in the spring and one in the fall to which we invite speakers on subjects of current importance to our neighborhood. The board meets bimonthly throughout the year, and its committees meet as often as necessary.

Our association's ability to influence issues and the decisions of our local government and regulatory agencies is proportional to the size of our membership. Our ability to monitor issues and protect neighborhood interests is dependent on adequate funding. We depend on membership dues of only \$30 per year per household.

If you are not already a member for 2008, please join today – either using the form enclosed with this newsletter, or online at [www.rivieraassociation.org/join.php](http://www.rivieraassociation.org/join.php). We need you!  
—*Bob Johnson*

## Utility Undergrounding

The Riviera Association has made a commitment to facilitate the undergrounding of utilities on the Riviera. Montecito unsuccessfully attempted to do this several years ago for the entire community and we have tried to learn from their errors. Our approach is to encourage neighbors to form small groups to underground in their immediate areas. This effort has already begun with four separate projects. Utilities are being undergrounded by nine homes on Mission Ridge just north of the El Encanto Hotel. There are 17 homes involved in undergrounding on Ferrello Road. Another effort on Arbolado involves 15 homes. Yet another on Roble Lane involves 17 homes. The City has now designated someone to help coordinate the process, including the determination of how costs should be allocated among homeowners. Also, there are various options to pay for the undergrounding, including spreading the cost over 30 years. Please contact Jules Bender at 805-882-2107, if you would like to discuss further. —*Jules Bender*

## Riviera Association Sponsors



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## I'm a Member, Are You?

Community is often defined as a group of people with common interests living in a particular area. I'm proud to be an active member of the Riviera Association allowing me to contribute and enjoy the benefits of community right at home.

I purchased my home in Santa Barbara, on APS, in late 2006. Over the last year, I have grown to truly love Santa Barbara and especially the lifestyle in the Riviera. I was honored that the Riviera Association approached me to join the board in mid-2007. When I first joined, I appreciated the benefit of a group of citizens that carefully monitors my neighborhood. As I spent more time discovering the diverse areas that the Riviera Association penetrates, my appreciation only grew. I had no clue the Riviera Association works so closely with City organizations to protect our neighborhood during critical times like the Zaca Fire, or keeping us safe during serious inclement weather.

I began to realize after my first board meeting how much I take for granted. In one board meeting, we achieved the following:

- Organized a campaign to prevent the utility company from placing a utility box above ground
- Designed a plan to keep members informed of emergency issues via e-mail
- Responded to member concerns regarding vehicles parked on APS
- Setup a meeting with fire officials to review planning for adverse conditions
- Coordinated for trimming and removal of hazardous trees on the upper Riviera
- Discussed pros and cons of proposed development plans in the lower Riviera.

What's remarkable is not just the progress we make or what we accomplish. What's remarkable is that we do this with pride of ownership and a sense of personal/social obligation to maintain this beautiful environment and healthy peace of mind.

Although we have approximately 15 board members, it is clear that every member is an important part of the association. The members guide the priorities and keep the entire association informed. The association is a conduit of communication, action, and advocacy. The more households joining the association, the safer, cleaner, and stronger the entire association becomes. Be sure to ask your neighbors, "I'm a member, are you?" —*Jacques Habra*

### How Ready Are You For an Emergency/Disaster?

Members: Remember to watch the Riviera Web site ([www.rivieraassociation.org](http://www.rivieraassociation.org)) and member e-mails for upcoming neighborhood meetings to help us all prepare better for disaster and emergencies.

## Coming to a Neighborhood Near You



An aboveground transformer on lower Mission Ridge Road, similar to the one referenced below.

For the last three months, residents on Paterna, Lasuen, and Dover roads have been in dispute with Southern California Edison over its proposed placement of an aboveground transformer between the sidewalk and Paterna Road.

The neighborhood was designed and built over ninety years ago with all utilities underground, including transformers. The proposed transformer would be the first such structure on the street and decidedly out of character with the curving road, cut stonewalls and balustrades. The existing older transformers were placed underground. Contrary to the franchise agreement that the utility has with the City to maintain the existing underground systems, Edison prefers the ease of installation of dropping a twenty-seven cubic foot steel box (3' x 3' x 3') next to the sidewalk. (See photo of a similar installation made on lower Mission Ridge in early April.) This is justified as a "savings to ratepayers." What is not said is that 70% of "the system load distribution," i.e. 70% of the power, goes to industrial and commercial users and such a benefit is primarily to industrial and commercial users.

Edison has indicated that much of their infrastructure in the Riviera is old and needs upgrading. Thus, this issue will occur again and again. Regardless of the type or location of your current utility delivery (e.g., from the street or from backyard easements, using poles or underground), you should watch Edison construction activity for the installation of new transformers. Edison plans to use aboveground transformers at the side of the street as their standard practice.

The Riviera Association is in discussions with the City on the issue of maintaining underground utilities that are already underground. The immediate objective of the discussion is to create a process to assure timely advance notice to neighborhoods when utility structures are planned and to facilitate the airing of homeowner views on the proposed projects.

For more information or questions contact Chuck Croninger at [c.croninger@cox.net](mailto:c.croninger@cox.net) or 966-2024.

—*Chuck Croninger*



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## Fire Safe Council

Members of your Riviera Association board have been actively involved with the Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council. Our Riviera Association Board President Paul Cashman, a Fire Safe Council board member, and I have been providing additional support to cover meetings along with Riviera board member Steve Kittle. The Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council is a nonprofit community organization focused on reducing the impact of wildfire in our area through community involvement, outreach, and training projects. It is made up of homeowners, homeowner associations, insurance companies, businesses, and emergency service agencies, all with the common goal of developing a fire safe community.

The council is in the process of refining its long-term community plans which will focus on education and improving communication before and during a wildfire event. Current projects include getting grant money to remove excess brush and fuel load from the upper Mission Canyon area and conducting an evacuation drill in the Montecito area in late April. As more training opportunities and material become available, information will be included in our newsletter and posted on the Riviera Association Web site ([www.rivieraassociation.org](http://www.rivieraassociation.org)). The best protection against a wildfire is to make good use of the local resources, get the best training available, and have a plan. —*Jim Knight*

## Sheffield Reservoir Park Traffic

The Riviera Association board is seconding efforts by residents on Mission Ridge, Hillcrest, and the W. Mountain Drive area to get reduced speed limits on Highway 192, allowing traffic to exit Hillcrest Road more safely, and to install some sort of pedestrian protection for residents walking to the park. Caltrans is currently studying the corner as a result of these efforts, and we hope to see improvements in safety soon. —*Muriel Ridland*



## Franceschi Park and House

Since 1998, the Riviera Association has been a member on the many different committees trying to restore the park and rehabilitate the house.

In 2001 the City entered into an agreement with the Pearl Chase Society to rehabilitate the house and to raise the necessary funds for this project. The agreement specified a one-year time frame for fundraising, with an additional one-year extension if so desired by either party to the agreement.

In 2004 the City accepted the Franceschi Park master plan, defining the improvements to and the usage of both park and house. A \$450,000 state grant was allocated to initiate a phase one grounds rehabilitation plan. The repavement of the driveway and parking lot, at a cost of \$220,000, was finished in 2007. The remaining \$230,000 funds have been redirected for needed upgrades at other City parks. Without additional funds, any further master plan implementation will be delayed.

At the January meeting of the Franceschi Park Advisory Committee, Mr. Robert Hughes, representing the Franceschi Park Foundation, offered to help secure a \$25,000 grant for implementation of the demonstration bed. If successful, this would enable the planting of some of the many horticultural species introduced to the area by Dr. Franceschi.

In the past ten years many residents have been involved with this project. Unfortunately, due to the lack of funds, not much has been achieved. The house continues to deteriorate and, aside from the annual vegetation clearance for fire safety, there is only one day a week allocated for park maintenance.

If you love this park in our neighborhood, ask that the city council provide much needed information regarding the status of both park and house rehabilitation. —*Brigitte Forssell*

**Save The Date!**  
**Franceschi Park Clean-up Day**  
**Saturday, June 7, 9 a.m.–Noon**