



The Riviera Association

April 2010

www.rivieraassociation.org

P.O. Box 4235 • Santa Barbara, CA 93140-4235

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President's Letter

Now that the rainy season is subsiding, the resulting green grass is already getting a golden hue: Time for summer planning. Last week I pulled out my emergency evacuation checklist to review with my family to make sure we had the important items handled. Which boxes do we grab on short notice? Where are they stored? My family had to evacuate for the Tea and Jesusita fires so we are getting a little better at these drills. This year, because few family members remember where the list is kept, I decided to post copies near the front and back doors.

Several weeks ago I met with Paul Cashman, current chairman of the Santa Barbara Fire Safe Council, and Ann Marx, wildland specialist from City Fire to talk about suitable landscaping for use in a high risk fire area. Ann was concerned that some highly combustible plants were going back into yards being rebuilt after the last two fires. She offered to help generate a list of recommended plants and trees for use in high risk areas and look into possible training for landscape architects on design considerations. You will find a partial list of undesirable plants in this newsletter. We will post the recommended plant and tree information on our Web site as soon as it becomes available (www.rivieraassociation.org).

Homeowners living on the Riviera truly are the eyes and ears of the association. You are the first ones to see a hazardous road condition, a tree poised to fall on power lines or perhaps to raise concerns about a large

construction project. As observations and questions come up, we would like to hear from you. The contact information for all our board members can be found on our web site at www.rivieraassociation.org. If I can answer any questions about the Riviera Association and our charter, feel free to contact me at jjknight3@cox.net.

The City Fire Department has been leaving green Notice of Vegetation Chipping door hangers on many homes on the Riviera. This is the best opportunity you will have to clean unwanted tree trimmings and brush and have it chipped and hauled away. More information is available on the city's chipping schedule or defensible space requirements at (805) 564-5702.

Please join us at the spring Semi-Annual Meeting scheduled to be held at the Marymount School Auditorium, 2130 Mission Ridge Road, at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 23. We will hear from several board members on current projects the association has been supporting and then our city fire chief, Andy DiMizio will talk about the city's efforts to balance the budget and still maintain an acceptable level of public safety. I look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Jim Knight

President, The Riviera Association

In the Riviera, Safe Driving is Everyone's Responsibility

Lately, I've noticed a lot of fast moving cars in the Riviera. APS is a unique east/west thoroughfare that commuters use all day. Speeds often exceed 45 mph, especially on the few straight-aways. Given the often instantaneous changes in slope and the curvy roads, this is a recipe for disaster.

The entire Riviera community should be aware that the speed limit on APS is 30 mph and all surrounding neighborhoods are limited to 25 mph. This Riviera Association member cannot even fathom how one can maintain speeds close to 25 mph in most of our tightly wound neighborhoods.

If you have neighbors that regularly speed in our neighborhoods, please inform them of the danger. You will be doing them, and all of us, a big favor. —*Jacques Habra*

A Message from Orient-Express Hotels

“Orient-Express Hotels is making positive progress on the redevelopment of El Encanto, with each stage of the planning process achieving a successful outcome to date. Orient-Express worked hard with the aid of public officials to reach consensus with neighbors and gain final planning commission approval.

“The company is in the process of identifying a joint venture partner and anticipates commencing development later this year so that this local icon can once again be a place for the local community and Orient-Express' international travellers to enjoy.

“When renovations are complete, El Encanto will feature 92 guest rooms with historically restored original cottages, some dating from 1905, a new main building with bar, gourmet restaurant and outdoor terrace with sweeping views of Santa Barbara bay, full service spa, fitness center, and the hotel's signature landscaping which is being meticulously restored. Orient-Express hopes to reopen the hotel in early 2012.” —*Orient-Express Hotels*



Photo by Charles Croninger

Firewise Landscaping Creates Defensible Space That Can Save Your Home

Riviera residents are aware of the wildfire threat to our community, but do you really think about defensible space when you're planning and installing your landscaping?

The Fire Department requires 100 to 150 feet of defensible space around your home. People tend to think that defensible space applies only to native chaparral, dry grasses, and open space parks and areas. However, defensible space applies to landscape vegetation as well. Creating defensible space using landscape vegetation is called “firewise landscaping.”

Firewise landscaping with fire resistant plant material, proper plant spacing, and maintenance can impede the progress of a wildfire, reduce its intensity, and provide a safe buffer to protect your home. If you are looking at relandscaping your property you must use the concepts of firewise landscaping to create defensible space. Resources available to the homeowner on firewise landscaping are located on the Fire Department's Web site at www.santabarbaraca.gov/wildland.

There are also certain landscape plants that should not be planted in your landscape. They are listed in the table below. If you have any of these plants in your existing landscape you should know they can be a hazard. Special attention should be given to maintain these high hazard plants to reduce their flammability and exposure to your home and neighbors.

You can contact the Fire Department if you have any questions regarding appropriate landscaping in your area at 965-5254, go to the Fire Department Web site at www.santabarbaraca.gov/wildland, or visit the Firescape Demonstration Garden located at the intersection of Mission Ridge Road and Stanwood Drive (across from Fire Station 7).

Undesirable Plant Species

Natives

- Adenostoma fasciculatum*—Chamise
- Adenostoma sparsifolium*—Red Shank
- Artemisia californica*—California Sagebrush
- Baccharis* species—(low growing form OK)
- Eriogonum fasciculatum*—Common Buckwheat
- Olneya tesota*—Iron wood

Domestics/Exotics

- Acacia* species
- Casuarina* species—Beefwood
- Cortadera* species—Pampas Grass
- Cupressus* species—Cypress
- Eucalyptus* species—Eucalyptus
- Juniperous* species—Juniper
- (except species which grow less than 1 foot)
- Pennisetum*—Fountain Grass
- Pinus* species—Pine

—*Ann Marx*

The Riviera Association General Meeting

**Sunday, May 23, at 5:00 p.m.
at Marymount School Auditorium, 2130 Mission Ridge Road**

City Fire Department Update

City of Santa Barbara Fire Chief Andy DiMizio—Review of current activity, and balancing budget questions with public safety.
Wildland Specialist Ann Marx—Review of fire resistant plants compatible for planting in high risk fire areas.

Please join us for an informative evening. Admission is free to all members. Nonmembers, \$15 each.

The Riviera Association

For 80 years, The Riviera Association has worked to make this beautiful section of Santa Barbara a great neighborhood. Your membership can help us increase the influence and impact of this historic organization in dealing with issues of safety, aesthetics, and community. Family membership is \$30 for a calendar year, running from January through December. Since attending one of the semi-annual meetings costs \$15 per person, family membership is a real bargain. More importantly, you become a contributing member of an active, important community organization that works to promote the common good of our neighborhood.

To join the Riviera Association please contact Bob Fulmer, membership chair, at bobfulmer@cox.net. —*Bob Fulmer*

Volunteers Needed for Franceschi Park Annual Community Clean-up Day

Franceschi Park holds a unique place within Santa Barbara's fifty-seven parks and open spaces, providing panoramic views of the City and the surrounding natural beauty of its South Coast setting. It is the crown jewel of our Riviera parks and our neighborhood has established a tradition of pitching in once a year to assist the Santa Barbara Parks Department in the maintenance and upkeep of this seventeen-acre park. It is a great opportunity to socialize with friends and neighbors while providing a service to your Riviera community. This year's Franceschi Clean-Up Day is scheduled for Saturday, June 12, from 8:00 a.m. to Noon.



Photo by Charles Croninger

We will serve a continental breakfast for volunteers at 7:30 a.m. and provide you with an opportunity to socialize with Riviera neighbors and meet with Parks Department associates who will be on hand to direct our clean-up efforts. There will be tools available for you to use, so all you need to do is show up with work gloves and pitch in and help us with a variety of tasks designed to keep our park beautiful and hazard free.

We would like to get a volunteer headcount in advance so that we can ensure that we have ample refreshments, tools and clean-up activities prepared for you. Please contact Kent Franke, our Riviera Board clean-up day coordinator, to volunteer and ask any questions you may have by e-mailing kentfranke@cox.net or calling (805) 966-5050. —*Kent Franke*

Helpful Fire Season and Reverse 911 Tip

Last year, while driving home, I was stopped and told I couldn't go any farther because the Riviera had been evacuated. This presented a problem because I did not have a chance to get medications and other important items needed in case of an evacuation. It would have been helpful to get the reverse 911 call on my cell phone in order to get home before the area was blocked off.

As most of you know, in a fire emergency you will be notified by reverse 911 on your home phone. The county has access to all listed land line phone numbers. But what if you are not home when the reverse 911 call comes in? How are you to know whether there is a warning to evacuate your area or an actual evacuation notice? At the county Web site you can register all your phones, including your cell phone.

This can be a little tedious, but here is what you need to do:

- Type in "County of Santa Barbara" on your computer web search browser.
- Click on "County of Santa Barbara Services."
- Click on "Contact County" on the bottom of your screen.
- Select "Sheriff-Coroner." There is a pull down menu under "contact us"—click on "reverse 911 registration."
- Click on "Santa Barbara County Reverse 911 Portal" on the bottom of the screen and fill in the requested information under "registration." —*Jules Bender*

Hydromulching

Have you ever wondered what that green stuff is that helicopters are dropping on the mountains after a fire? Recently the Forest Service and the County gave a joint presentation on their use of hydromulching. The primary purpose is erosion control. The mulch itself is water based, contains mostly wood chips and dries to a crust. It contains no seeds but does allow seed in the ground to grow thru it. The cost of hydromulching for the Jesusita and Gap fires was \$6 million and most of the cost was paid for by the federal government. —*Jules Bender*



The Riviera Association
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St. Francis Hospital, 3–2–1

Cottage Hospital's residential real estate development is stirring. Late last month Cottage Hospital hosted a neighborhood update meeting



Photo by Charles Croninger

St. Francis Hospital.

to present a time line for the 115 unit condo project taking place on the former St. Francis Hospital property.

The current plan calls for the demolition of the existing hospital buildings to take place in an April–July 2010 time frame. Construction of the condos would begin in July and the entire process would encompass two years.

This development will likely be the largest residential project to take place in the city for decades but don't expect to see the city's goal of underground utilities be realized here. Those 11 power poles are gone only in the architect's pretty renderings. —Charles Croninger

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