



The Riviera Association

September 2011 www.rivieraassociation.org P.O. Box 4235 • Santa Barbara, CA 93140-4235

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The Riviera Association newsletter is published semiannually, in April and September, by The Riviera Association, P.O. Box 4235, Santa Barbara, California, 93140-4235.

President's Letter

Please mark your calendar for our Fall General Meeting on Sunday, October 23, 2011 at Marymount School. Your Board will again host the popular reception featuring wine and hors d'oeuvres. We've invited Santa Barbara City Council candidates to join us at the reception and to briefly address attendees at the meeting. At our last meeting Michael Ditmore presented a plan for purchasing emergency communications systems for the Riviera, Eucalyptus Hill and Montecito. Michael will be back with an update and display one of the new systems. We're also fortunate to have a local historian, Neal Graffy, at the meeting to present a historical perspective of the Riviera. It should be a fast-paced, entertaining event and I hope you'll join us.

The first week of September served as a reminder of just how fast the weather can change in Santa Barbara. After a relatively cool, mostly overcast summer, the temperatures shot up in the 90s and a Red Flag Warning was posted on September 7 for gusty sundowner winds and low humidity in the mountains. The Riviera Association continues to work with the SB Fire Department to deliver urgent communications to the community. If the conditions trigger a Red Flag Alert, the Riviera board and other

participants will be notified by SB Fire and will post signs along major Riviera streets to raise awareness of potentially dangerous conditions.

I am completing my last term as president and board member and will be stepping down at the end of December. I've enjoyed representing Riviera residents for the past six years and working with an incredible Board of Directors. I'd like to thank them for the countless volunteer hours they put in while carrying out the mission of the association. The board relies on input from its members to define that mission and effectively represent the neighborhood, so I would encourage you to share your thoughts on improving our effectiveness and communications with your board and me. Either email or call me at 805-448-9844 and we can meet over coffee. I would also like you to support your association through membership. If you are currently a member, please renew now for 2012. If you're not a member, please join. Thirty dollars in annual dues is the best value around.

Sincerely,

Jim Knight/President, Riviera Association

Fall Association Meeting & Reception

Sunday, October 23

4:30 p.m. Reception • 5:30 p.m. Meeting

Marymount School Auditorium, 2130 Mission Ridge Road

- Please join us for the wine and hors d'oeuvres reception and mingle with City Council candidates while enjoying the beautiful Mediterranean melodies of talented Riviera guitarist Chris Fossek.
- The meeting will feature Neal Graffy, a local historian, who will entertain you with tales of the Riviera's "prominent" place in Santa Barbara history plus you'll receive updates on other issues of importance to the Riviera.

The Utterly Worthless Riviera Looms Over Santa Barbara, Circa 1876

Noted local historian Neal Graffy will be the featured speaker at our Riviera Association meeting on October 23, and share stories and anecdotes of the Riviera as it evolved from a barren hill framing the north edge of the city as depicted above into the beautiful, tree covered neighborhood it is today. The two-story building in the center of the photo, right, is the Lincoln School and the steeple to its right rises above the Congregational Church built in 1869 on the SW corner of Santa Barbara and Ortega. Note the open landscape leading up to the Old Mission in the distance.



Photo courtesy Neal Graffy Collection

Why Belong to Your Neighborhood Association?

The Riviera Association's ability to influence issues and the decisions of city and regulatory agencies is directly proportional to the size of our membership. So in addition to providing financial support, your membership strengthens our ability to perform the work we're here to do.

The association continually works to sustain and improve our Riviera neighborhood as it has for more than 80 years. We keep you updated on important changes impacting the Riviera, such as the El Encanto renovation, via the newsletter, our website, and emails on time sensitive matters. We also provide a forum for community input and discussion on important issues like the Brooks Institute/Santa Barbara Middle School transition.

During fire emergencies in our area we'll keep members abreast of developments through daily or twice-a-day emails just like we did during the recent major fires (Zaca—July '07, Tea—November '08, and Jesusita—May '09).

Please use the enclosed membership form and envelope to send in your dues for 2012. If you're not already a member, please join today! And be sure we have your current email address. You can also join or renew online via credit card at www.rivieraassociation.org. **org.join-now. —John Bedford**

Red Flag Alert

A Red Flag Fire Alert notification is initiated by the SB Fire Department when a high wildfire threat exists. It is based on weather conditions that increase the potential for catastrophic fires. Its purpose is twofold; first it notifies the public to the increased risk of wildfire; secondly it initiates specific measures where fire and law enforcement agencies provide additional fire protection measures.

What does a Red Flag Fire Alert mean exactly? It means that the temperature is over 85 degrees, winds exceed 15 mph and the relative humidity is below 20 percent. The following specific steps are then initiated: 1) All burn permits are cancelled and all burning is banned, 2) Fire agencies will increase patrols in high risk areas, and 3) Public trails may be closed.

When an alert occurs, "RED FLAG ALERT IN EFFECT" signs will be strategically placed by the fire department in high fire hazard areas. When the alert area includes the Riviera, the 15 board members of the Riviera Association will post these signs around the neighborhood.

A Red Flag Alert provides an opportunity for families to get prepared in case of fire.



- Stop activities that have the potential to start a fire (camp fires, mowing, chain sawing).
- Review your family evacuation and disaster plan.
- Have a disaster kit ready to take with you in case of the need to evacuate including important papers, medications, and valuables.

For other useful preparation tips go to www.rivieraassociation.org and click on the "Red Flag Alert Program" link under "Fire & Safety Issues." —Jules Bender

Fall Football Recipes



Whether you're inviting friends over to watch football this fall or for a Cinco de Mayo party next spring, these two recipes will add just enough zip to spice up the event. The salsa has fresh ingredients, and the chile con queso is an easy to make warm cheese dish that is tangy and delicious. Both dips are great with tortilla chips, veggies, or on your favorite Mexican dish and you can sample them both during the wine and hors d'oeuvres reception before the fall Riviera Association meeting on October 23. Recipes can be found on our website at www.rivieraassociation.org. —Julie Franke

Major Project Review

El Encanto Hotel

Progress continues at a steady pace on the reconstruction of this historic property and final approval of all building permits puts the project on track for completion by the end of 2012. The underground parking garage in the NW corner is nearing completion and should be covered over in October clearing the way for construction of staff offices above ground. A similar underground structure in the NE corner is underway. All the new utility systems throughout the property are in place and tied in to city and utility company facilities paving the way for work to finally resume on the main building. A meticulous refurbishing of the historic arbor and pond area to bring it up to code will also begin later this year.

Bella Riviera

Cottage Hospital Foundation's workforce housing project at the former St. Francis Hospital site began in January 2011, and is targeted for phased completion by November 2012. Demolition of the former hospital buildings is now complete and infrastructure improvements are well underway in preparation for construction of 115 town homes on the approximately 5.9 acre site. The Cottage Foundation undertook this project to provide 81 affordable homes for employees. The pouring of foundations and framing of homes in the initial phases is in progress and model homes will be available by October 2011. For information on the project and a live construction webcam go to www.bellarivieranewhomes.com.

Santa Barbara Middle School

Santa Barbara Middle School has begun their thirty-fifth year of operation and their first term as a Riviera neighbor on the former Jefferson/Brooks campus at 1321 Alameda Padre Serra. Several meetings between school officials and concerned neighbors have been conducted over the past few months. The Riviera Association has provided a forum for discussion of the school's plans and Newton Road neighborhood issues at www.rivieraassociation.org. Brian McWilliams, headmaster at SBMS, will make a short presentation at the next Riviera Association meeting on October 23, describing plans, progress, and problems associated with their move to the Riviera. In the interim, interested residents can go to the school website for information at www.sbms.org or call Lili Donner at 805-682-2989. —*Kent Franke/Bob Fulmer*

Riviera Guitarist to Perform at Fall Association Meeting

Guitarist Chris Fossek will play Mediterranean melodies during the reception prior to the Riviera Association's fall meeting on October 23. He grew up in a Riviera home built by California Impressionist painter, Charles Hinkle and was inspired to move to Italy and Spain to study music by watching his mom, talented artist Priscilla Fossek, paint every day. Chris received a master's degree in guitar performance from the California Institute of Arts.



Lower Sycamore Canyon— Is There Finally an Open Road Ahead?

The two mile stretch of road known as lower Sycamore Canyon Road, or California Highway 144, between Stanwood Drive (CA 192) and the turning circle at Salinas and APS was once a very convenient way in and out of town and an important evacuation route in the event of fire for residents of the back side of the Riviera. However, the road has been closed for the last six years due to multiple landslides on the eastern hillside just below CA 192 which occurred between 1995 and 2005 and spilled onto the pavement below. Caltrans is responsible for this two-lane road because it is designated as a state highway and they deemed it too perilous to allow through traffic and installed two locked iron gates on either side of the slide zone.

This state highway happens to traverse through the City of Santa Barbara, but below an unstable hillside lying within SB County. So which of these three government entities is responsible for eliminating the landslide problem and getting the road reopened? None of the above as it turns out. Another entity called the Landslide Repair Foundation (LRF), a nonprofit born out the settlement of a lawsuit between the 37 hillside property owners incurring slide damage and Caltrans, is charged with responsibility for the repair, stabilization and restoration of the hillside. \$50 million of the \$70 million Caltrans' lawsuit settlement payment is being used by LRF to fund the repairs. Ron Stronach, the LRF president, stated that "the stabilization project is being done right" and utilizes sheer pin walls anchored by nine concrete mega pins measuring 4' in diameter and buried 115' deep along with supporting steel cages. He indicates that six of the seven phases of the multi-year project are now complete and phase seven should be finished by the end of October, 2011.

Once LRF notifies Caltrans that the slope repair project is complete, Caltrans' spokesman Jim Shivers said they will conduct an inspection to ensure highway safety and do repairs to the roadway as needed. Just when Sycamore Canyon Road will reopen remains an open question and appears to be a function of how quickly and effectively the various parties in this unusual marriage of private and public agencies communicate and coordinate. Let's hope Riviera residents will be driving down the open road by year's end. —*Kent Franke*

A Tale of Two Park Benches

A little over a year ago, Riviera resident Eva Menken decided that she wanted to sponsor a bench in the Sheffield Open Space in memory of her late husband, Bud, who used to accompany her on walks around the oval pathway. Heretofore, the only place to sit, rest and enjoy the view was on the ground, or a rock located off the beaten path. Eva called the city to inquire about how to proceed, but soon decided she needed to solicit the help of her friend and neighbor, Sheila Lodge. Sheila happens to be a master at navigating through all the various city departments who must approve a project of this nature having been mayor of Santa Barbara from 1981 to 1993.

Sheila enlisted the help of city staffers from parks, public works, water resources and planning including Nancy Rapp, Rebecca Bjork, Jill Zachary, Santos Escobar, Catherine Taylor and Jaime Limon. She also received support from the Riviera Association and Susan Van Atta, a landscape architect, who suggested that the city may have some benches in storage that would be ideal. Who was it that said it takes a village? Anyway, thanks to all of the above, we now have two attractive benches situated on opposite sides of the park on which to relax and enjoy the beautiful surroundings.

—Kent Franke



Neighbors Sheila Lodge (left) and Eva Menken worked to install two benches in the Sheffield Open Space.

A Job Well Done...2011 Franceschi Park Clean-up



Park clean-up crew members (l to r) Sheri Parker, Santos Escobar and Welch Thorpe.

Many thanks to the 40 volunteers who showed up for the Riviera Association's annual clean-up day at Franceschi Park on June 4. Following a power breakfast, this hearty band pruned, clipped, sawed, raked, shoveled, hauled and managed to have fun while giving the park a major makeover in just four hours. Additional photos of the crew members are posted on www.rivieraassociation.org. —Kent Franke

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