



THE Riviera Association

May 2024

www.rivieraassociation.org

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

Letter From the Board

We are shaking up this edition of the newsletter a bit, foregoing the usual president’s letter in favor of some important updates.

To start, the association board would like to express our thanks and gratitude to Shelley Bookspan, our outgoing president. Under Shelley’s leadership over the past two plus years, the association has taken on several major initiatives to improve the Riviera and preserve the character of our neighborhoods. For example, Shelley helped to secure City and Fire Department funding for brush abatement and cleanup in our parks and open spaces, and presided over the association’s efforts to prevent the deployment

of State Senate Bill 9 (the lot split and duplex bill) in our district, which would have increased the risks of wildfire and exacerbated evacuation efforts. Shelley also oversaw a major update to the association’s website and the completion of several member surveys.

Shelley has actually served two terms and a total of six years as president during her time on the board. In her own words: “When I was asked to apply to join the board back in 2012, I had only a vague notion of what the organization was and what it did. Nonetheless, I had been living in the ’hood for upwards of twenty-five years, and it seemed time for some civic engagement. My rewards for stepping in have been innumerable,

but to highlight a few: I’ve been able to see our Riviera neighborhood through a spectrum of perspectives thanks to our speakers, my board colleagues, our members, and my conversations with city and county officials; I’ve gained a better understanding of change over time and its effects, whether good, bad, or frequently, a toss-up; and I’ve grown to appreciate the clout association members have within the city as an important voice of our citizens.

“I’m retiring now, but it has been a privilege to serve for six years as RA president. That seems a long time, but it’s barely a blip in the association’s ninety-four year history. I thank all who’ve given me this opportunity. I will continue my support, and know that you, my neighbors, will do so, too. We are a community after all, and community is really what it’s all about.”

Shelley has agreed to remain on the board while we search for a new president.

Visit Our New Website

We invite you to visit the association’s updated website, where you can browse through our resources section for valuable information, renew your annual membership, and connect with fellow community members

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Riviera Association Spring General Meeting

Sunday, May 19, 4–6 p.m.

Riviera Ridge Campus, 2130 Mission Ridge Road

Shuttle service to/from Mission Ridge & Tremonto parking lots

Keynote Speakers

- Scot Pipkin, Director of Education and Engagement, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden
- Kristen Sneddon, District 4 City Councilmember

Enjoy local wines and gourmet appetizers catered by chef Sally Ruhl. A chance to win a one-year family membership at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, Botanica afternoon tea for two at El Encanto, or a spring bouquet.

The Benefits of a Riviera Association Membership

Your membership in the Riviera Association makes a big difference. Your support and participation, together with the support of our 300 plus other household members, enables the association to help preserve the unique character of our district and improve the safety and beauty of our neighborhoods. Your support also allows the association to stand up for Riviera interests more effectively at the Santa Barbara City Council and with other government bodies, based on the size and strength of our membership.

Your annual dues help to fund our spring and fall general meetings and receptions, where you can mingle with your neighbors and hear from local experts and government officials about local developments and issues that impact the Riviera. Your dues also make possible the informative newsletters we distribute to all members twice a year.

The Riviera Association succeeds based on the strength and participation of our membership. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we rely on your support. We hope you'll join us as a new member or renew your membership for the coming year.
—*Jeff Byrne*

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Managing Your Yard Cuttings Safely and Responsibly

How do you handle the cuttings from your trees, bushes and hedges? City and Santa Barbara Fire officials strongly recommend that you **not** put them in a big pile and leave them to hopefully disintegrate. In fact, it is a city code violation to keep a brush pile on your property for more than fourteen days. Yard cuttings represent a huge fire hazard, and the fire department reminds residents that they may need to get a dumpster from Marborg for large amounts of cuttings. Please keep in mind that pampas grass, palms, ice plant, ivy and some other plants are not chippable, and therefore can't be mixed with green waste. For smaller brush piles of chippable plants, you may be able to cut them up and use the green yard waste can.

The other option is to hire someone with a chipper, and then spread the chips in areas away from your home or use them to make compost. Chip piles also need to be

spread within the fourteen day period to avoid spontaneous combustion. Recognize that composting takes work, and a compost pile can also be a fire hazard if not tended properly. You must keep it moist and turn it on schedule. A quick online search will yield lots of information about the proper way to compost your garden waste.

The City of Santa Barbara sent their Wildland Fire Suppression newsletter to all households in early 2024, and they are well into the spring chipping season. It's important that residents keep their foliage trimmed back to be fire resistant, especially near the home, and the chipping program is a free and easy way to dispose of those cuttings. You can get free chips when the chipping is being done in your area by calling the fire department. Those chips will yield local plant material that is cleaner than what you can get from the dump! —*Laurie MacMillan*



Allen County, IN Dept. of Environmental Management

Once you accumulate your yard waste, use the city's chipping program, or hire a chipping contractor to take care of things for you. Consider joining with a neighbor or two to share the cost and make the task more efficient.

Practicing Sustainability on the Riviera

Since the first Earth Day was held in Santa Barbara more than fifty years ago, residents of our city have tended to be conservation minded, adopting practices that help to preserve natural resources and protect our local environment. The City of Santa Barbara's Sustainability and Resilience Department and local universities such as UCSB and Santa Barbara City College have also been doing their part, adopting and promoting sustainable practices to reduce their carbon footprint, better manage energy and materials use, encourage the transition to renewable energy sources, and build local climate resilience.

Local companies, too, are taking up the challenge. One Riviera business, the El Encanto, A Belmond Hotel, has recently implemented a number of sustainability measures that help reduce its carbon footprint, enhance the work environment, and make it a better neighbor. Some highlights include:

- The purchase of a separate trash and cardboard compactor to eliminate three out of six Marborg garbage pickups each week, reducing noise and air pollution.
- The replacement of old cooling towers with twelve new high efficiency units to reduce the amount of water and electricity consumed on the property.
- The installation of a building management system that enables the hotel to control heat, air conditioning and lighting in each

of its thirty-eight buildings from a hand held device, conserving energy from the moment guests check out of their rooms.

- The removal of plastic bottles from guest rooms and public spaces. Water is served in aluminum bottles and guest soaps and shampoos are presented in refillable containers.
- All products used on property (cleaning supplies, gardening supplies, paint, etc.) are organic or free of chemicals and parabens.

We are encouraged by the El Encanto's efforts, and hope that other businesses in the city will take similar steps to adopt and foster more sustainable operational practices.

—Janis Clapoff and Jeff Byrne

Join Us for a Geology Walk, June 29



Join Santa Barbara City College Professor of Environmental Geology (and our city council member) Kristen Sneddon at **Rocky Nook Park** for another fun and educational walk through our area's geology. Walking under

the oak and sycamore trees and around large sandstone boulders, she'll discuss the formation of this park and beyond, due to our area's debris flows, stream action and fault lines.

This free event for members only takes place on **Saturday, June 29, at 10:00 a.m.**, and will last approximately two hours.

Sign-ups, including a liability waiver form, will be at the spring general meeting.

—Laurie MacMillan

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Letter From the Board, cont.

through our interactive forums. Visit www.rivieraassociation.org.

Spring General Meeting— Sunday, May 19

Please join us at our spring general meeting, where the theme will be "Springtime on the Riviera." We are excited to welcome Scot Pipkin, director of education and engagement for the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden (SBBG), as our guest speaker. As director of education, Pipkin oversees the botanic garden's educational programs, spanning school field trips, interpretation, digital education, and community classes/tours.

Recently the SBBG has been involved in studies, along with UCSB, on more fire safe plantscape for our area. Scot will be sharing his wisdom on this as well as the garden's strategic vision for native plants in our communities and how the education program is supporting our experiences living on the Riviera and in Santa Barbara.

We hope to see you on Sunday, May 19!

The Riviera Bench Whisperer

Recently I had quite a delightful surprise while walking my dog Oliver along the bluffs at Butterfly Beach. There is a certain spot on the bluffs near the stairs going down to the beach where people stand to enjoy the view. Often there is an old chair placed there to be shared with others. On this day there was a new bench, a lovely bench with sides shaped like a dog sitting and held together by their ears of wood. Several people were sitting on this new bench. What a treat. I noticed the bench had a plaque that read, "In Honor of SBC Search & Rescue Team, The K9 Handlers & Dogs, who responded Heroically to the Debris Flow Victims, 9 January 2018." I wondered who had given us this wonderful bench, and said to the gentleman next to me, "This is such a special gift to our community." He smiled and said thank you. So, this tall gentleman, wearing a cowboy hat and a warm smile, had designed and given this gift to those who

enjoy the Butterfly Beach bluffs. I thanked him, he gave me his card and off I went. I was curious to learn more about this cowboy craftsman Jared Darlington, who just happens to live on the Riviera, so of course I had to write this story for our newsletter.

Among friends, Jared is known as the "Bench Whisperer."

Later that week I met with Mr. D at the Dover Circle, where he has a bench dedicated to his late sister and her husband. We chatted about his life and the inspiration for creating these special benches. Jared said his first bench was inspired by his golden retriever, Ridge.

His neighbor Kim Cantin, a Montecito mud slide survivor and author of the book *Where Yellow Flowers Bloom*, had suggested that he make a bench dedicated to the search and rescue teams and their dogs. The idea to make more benches blossomed from there. Jared's goal is to make seventeen



Diana Washburn

The Darlington bench at Butterfly Beach.

benches. He does the design and woodwork and then has someone make the cement molds for the dogs. Currently he has six benches placed in our community. Jared is working with the Santa Barbara Parks & Recreation Department to place additional benches in local parks.

Keep your eye out for the beautifully crafted benches. Sit for a while and enjoy the beauty of our town. Thank you, Jared.

—Diana Washburn



Diana Washburn

Jared Darlington with the Dover Circle bench he designed.

A Note of Appreciation

The board would like to recognize and sincerely thank El Encanto, A Belmont Hotel, and Riviera Ridge School. Both are association partners that support and help to enable our spring and fall general meetings and other events.