



Rising together to make things happen....

North Hills Phoenix Association

NEWS

Vol. 12 No. 1 January 2003

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NHPA President

Dear Neighbor,

This letter is devoted to our upcoming NHPA Annual Membership Meeting. The meeting is our opportunity to handle some administrative tasks, measure our accomplishments, find out a bit more about what interests us and socialize with each other. This January 23rd meeting will be my last meeting as NHPA President. Our by-laws limit the president's term to two years – a standard I agree with. And in response to many questions, yes, as Past President I do intend to remain actively involved. This is my neighborhood. And I can make a difference. I hope everyone feels as I do on this point.

Last year I received many positive compliments on my slide presentation. I used the brief show to present my view of our accomplishments, our challenges and posit some future direction. Participants seem to feel that it was concrete and they could readily visualize the projects that we were engaged in. So I plan to try the same strategy this year. We have made tremendous gains and grown significantly stronger as a neighborhood organization. I hope I can show you how I see that demonstrated and add additional depth to your knowledge of your neighborhood organization as we leap into 2003.

Among our various and worthwhile projects we are deeply involved in increasing road safety, implementation of the Creek Protection Ordinance,

maintenance of emergency services and possibly the development of a trail to connect Lake Tesescal with the Bay Area Regional Trail system.

For our Guest Speaker we were very fortunate to enlist the service of Toni Renwick, Manager of Inspections for the City of Oakland. Toni is the person who manages the teams of city staff who inspect building construction projects, and investigate complaints involving construction issues, blight, graffiti, housing conditions and more in our city. Obviously she will be able to shed some light on those areas for us and answer our questions.

Finally at the membership meeting you will have the opportunity to hear briefly from Jane Brunner and representatives of the fire and police departments and to review and vote on the proposed bylaw changes and the next slate of officers. The by-laws certainly need the update. The structure of the organization needs to change slightly to ensure stability in our decision making process and other parts need to change to reflect current practice.

The slate of officers nominated is excellent. Each nominee has been actively involved with NHPA for a significant length of time studying the issues, chairing committees, participating in events, working with city staff, etc. In short working in-depth to enhance our quality of life. Each is well-prepared for NHPA leadership.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting: Kaiser Elementary School, Wednesday, January 23. Come at 7:00. We'll have some coffee and cookies for you.

– Respectfully, Anne Seasons

NHPA Annual General Meeting

Thursday, January 23, 2003, 7 pm
Kaiser Elementary School,
25 South Hill Court, Oakland

Proposed Agenda:

7:00 pm Tea, coffee, refreshments 7:30 Program

Welcome– **Anne Seasons**

Welcome to Kaiser School–
Principal, Katie McLane

Invitee Introduction – **Anne Seasons**

Jane Brunner – Councilmember District One

President’s remarks – **Anne Seasons**

Topics will cover road safety, trail, Creek Protection Ordinance and litigation, membership on Steering committee, vegetation management, parking enforcement, etc.

Revisions to NHPA by-laws – **David Kessler**

Election of 2003 officers – **David Kessler**

Nominees –

President – **Barry Pilger**
Vice-President – **Judy Proller**
Treasurer – **Howard Matis**
Recording Secretary - **David Kessler**
Membership Secretary - **Vallery Feldman**

Treasurer’s Report – **Howard Matis**

Service Award – **Anne Seasons**

Guest Speaker– **Toni Holloway Renwick,**
City of Oakland, Manager of Inspections

Claremont Canyon Conservancy Overview –
Bill McClung

Storm Drains Are Fun?

December’s heavy storms remind us all of the importance of our storm drainage system, the lifeline that takes water from where it hits the ground back to the Bay and the mighty Pacific beyond, ready for recycling. Getting the biggest benefit from those raindrops while they’re pelting down upon our neighborhood includes letting appropriate numbers of them soak into the local earth, catalyzing our hillsides to grow rich and beautiful with greenery (and help hold the soil at the same time). But downhill rolls the rest. Making sure that that water, rolling down our slopes or collected from our drains and gutters (which of course we must remember to inspect, clear and repair as needed) does not cause erosion as it flows downhill is our collective responsibility.

Part of the vital contributions we can make is to insure that the City’s storm drains are kept clear so that water flows freely, minimizing flooding as storms continue to pound us. You can become a part of the city’s “Maintain a Drain” program by contacting Public Works at 434-5131. You can get a free bright yellow rain slicker and other tools and gears to do the job. Or, you can just pitch in on your own by keeping an eye on your local drain and clearing away minor amounts of debris and leaves by yourself.

If you find a storm drain problem has developed that you can’t solve by yourself, call the City at (510) 615-5566.

If you go to the City of Oakland Public Works Department Home page, [/www.oaklandpw.com/](http://www.oaklandpw.com/), not only will you will find that number but you will find contact information to address virtually every problem you might have! You can also link to the Maintain a Drain Program (and other programs designed to keep Oakland working) by linking to the “Beautification Initiative - Get Involved!” from the Oakland City Website: www.oaklandnet.com, or go directly to www.oaklandnet.com/oakshines/HTML/home.html.

You can start all these web adventures, of course, from NHPA’s own incredibly informative website, www.nhphoenix.org.

– David Kessler

Parking Enforcement to Begin in North Hills

The Steering Committee of the North Hills Phoenix Association has been working with the City of Oakland to see that parking regulations are better enforced in the North Hills.

The city will begin enforcing No Parking areas, in particular, immediately, but will probably only be issuing warning notices through January 10, 2003. After that date, parking violators will likely get a ticket.

City parking enforcement staff has agreed to work with Public Works to replace the many missing No Parking signs in our neighborhoods as well.

You can help this effort to make our neighborhoods safer as follows:

1. Please email me (barrypilger@yahoo.com) with locations that have missing No Parking signs. I will forward this information to our city staff contact.
2. Please email me with 'hot spots'....that is, addresses, intersections or sections of streets with a history of violations (I will forward them to the city along with other hot spots reported to me over the past few weeks.)
3. Report any parking violations to the Parking Enforcement main number (staffed 5 days a week during business hours – except the lunch hour) 510-238-3099.
4. In case of problems, do not hesitate to contact the Parking Enforcement Supervisor for the North Hills, Anthony Boxdell. His email is Aboxdell@oaklandnet.com and his direct phone is 510-238-6536. If he doesn't answer his phone you may call the main number (above) and ask the dispatcher to contact him by radio.

The Parking Enforcement staff only works five days a week during daylight hours, however.

I would appreciate any feedback you may have in working with Mr. Boxdell or other parking enforcement staff.
– Barry Pilger

Save Our Buses - The 6 and 6A

Even though we recently voted to pay for a bus bond, AC Transit has just announced that it wants to stop the 6 and 6A bus, our only local public transportation. AC Transit says that the ridership is too low and wants to take our buses to increase service on other routes. When I looked at their numbers, I discovered that they forgot to count 46% of the buses that come here. Apparently, AC Transit can neither count nor run buses. I have observed many times that when they have problems, they cancel buses to our area.

There are many people in our area who do not have cars and rely upon the bus as their only independent means of transportation. If there is no bus, then Kaiser and Bentley school children will have to walk on Highway 13 for a short distance. By saving the bus you will help those who cannot use a car and those that do not want to use a car. Please address written comments to AC Transit, District Secretary, 1600 Franklin Street, Oakland, CA 94612, by fax to 510-891-7157, or by e-mail to planning@actransit.org. It is also important to attend the public hearing on January 23. For more information, go to our web site, www.nhphoenix.org
– Howard Matis

Caldecott Tunnel - Fourth Bore

The proposed fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel will affect our neighborhood. It is important for everyone to register their opinion. For information on the proposed bore, see Caltrans's official page at www.caldecott-tunnel.com or go to our web site, www.nhphoenix.org. At our web site, you can see a letter that the North Hills Phoenix Association wrote to Caltrans, www.nhphoenix.org/News2002/FourthBore.html.

You can also send comments to

Cristina Ferraz, Project Manager
Department of Transportation, District 4
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660
– Howard Matis

Communications in the North Hills

Over the past few months there has been an effort underway to establish a comprehensive emergency communications system for the north hills. Dan Grasseti has been working with the Upper Alvarado (UA), Norfolk-Buckingham (NB), Vicente Canyon (VC), and Hiller Highlands (HH) neighborhood groups to develop both radio communications and telephone notification systems.

On the radio side what has been put together and tested is a system using FRS (Family Radio Service) radios to facilitate emergency communications within each neighborhood, (which in some cases was already in place), between neighborhoods, and ultimately connecting up with the Ham radio emergency communications network, also known as ARES/RACES (Amateur Radio Emergency Services/Radio Amateurs Civil Emergency Services). ARES/RACES groups are

well organized and routinely provide emergency communications services linking Hams and public safety entities throughout the region, state, and country.

The North Hills communications architecture calls for using Fire Station 7 as the central control point (incident command) for linking the four neighborhood groups up and to the Ham system. In recent weeks, working with Glen Hammonds of NB, Sue Mattman of VC, Sue Piper of HH, and various folks in UA we have established and tested a coordinated system as depicted in the following diagram.

Note: FRS channel assignment convention is: channel #/privacy code #.... 13/13= channel 13 with a privacy code of 13. For Ham and Fire/Police frequencies (in megahertz) are listed.

At this time we are using the NB-originated schedule of 8:00 on the first Wednesday of each month to test out the system. All persons residing in the North Hills are invited to participate. Simply tune your FRS radio to the appropriate channel/privacy code and you will have an opportunity to be part of this. We encourage all North Hills residents to purchase these inexpensive FRS radios (less than \$50 per pair) as they provide an effective emergency communications tool and have many other non-emergency uses.

On the telephone side, we have been provided with the free use a system called Surfsimple as a means to broadcast voice messages to both the neighborhoods and to the region as a whole very quickly.

The way this system works is that people with internet access and the appropriate permissions are able to access a web page that allows for typing in a message and having the system speak this message to a large number of telephone numbers very quickly. (currently about 50 calls/minute)

At present there are two levels to the Surfsimple hierarchy. UA, and soon NB/VC and possibly HH will each have their own Surfsimple webpages that can be used as each neighborhood sees fit. It is expected that at the neighborhood level everyone within the neighborhood will have access and may use the system to advise of matters as diverse as suspicious activity to neighborhood events. At the NHPA level the system will be under strict control of a select few to be able to broadcast messages of great importance to the entire community. It is envisioned that these will be messages advising residents of fires, earthquakes, storms, and, in general, things that are of interest to the whole community. The current plan is to give all NHPA members the opportunity to either be included in this system or to opt out.

The long and short of it is that, as of today, the emergency communications capabilities existing within the North Hills are considerably advanced from what they were just a few months ago and will hopefully allow the region to respond to emergencies in a much more effective manner than has been the case in the past.

– Dan Grassetti

Converting the Eucalyptus Forest

Converting the Eucalyptus Forest in Upper Claremont Canyon into a Cool, Moist, Relatively Fire-safe Redwood Grove

Presentation by Joe Engbeck to the Claremont Canyon Conservancy General Membership Meeting, November 17, 2002

Many people in this part of the world have vivid memories of the wildfire that swept through the Oakland/Berkeley Hills in 1991. That fire burned just about the same portion of Claremont Canyon that burned in 1970, though not so many people remember the earlier event. Still fewer people remember the big freeze that occurred in December 1972, though that event was, in its quiet way, quite startling. It killed most of the eucalyptus trees in the upper part of Claremont Canyon. Thousands of dead tree stems were left standing stark and colorless-like so much kindling waiting for a spark.

With the memory of the disastrous 1970 fire still painfully fresh in everyone's mind, it was obvious that the freeze had created an unacceptable risk. The University of California at Berkeley took bold action. U. C. Chancellor Albert Bowker approved a logging plan for the hill area including the eucalyptus trees in upper Claremont Canyon. The result was quick and brutal. The logging involved bulldozers and tractors and other heavy equipment that left the area looking terrible-like a war zone. It was difficult to even walk through. After the logging, the area was seeded from the air to minimize erosion, but the area still looked bad.

At that point, volunteers came forward to help restore the upper part of the canyon. The Piedmont Rotary Club got permission from U.C. to plant pines and redwoods. Today, the best available records indicate that on a Sunday morning in April 1975 some 550 Monterey pines and redwoods were planted in the upper canyon. The seedlings were

small, about 12 inches high in one-gallon containers. It has not been possible to identify all the people who helped with the planting, but it appears that the event was planned and led by “the Scotch Gardener,” Arthur “Bert” Bertolero, Joe Howard of Howard Tours in Oakland, and Malcolm Reynolds, an Oakland-based architect. All three of those public-spirited men were also involved in other good works, including the founding of Oakland’s Fairyland.

By the way, if you have information about the tree planting effort (who was there, who provided the seedlings, who did planting, etc.) it would be wonderful to hear from you. Contact Joe Engbeck via email at jhengbeck@aol.com or call (510) 841-0339.

Now, some twenty-seven years later, conditions in upper Claremont Canyon have changed dramatically. Sprouts have come up from almost all of the old eucalyptus stumps so that now, where one large eucalyptus tree used to stand, there are four or five or six new eucalyptus stems-some of them as much as 80 feet tall and 12 to 18 inches in diameter (dbh).

Recently, in an effort to reduce the roadside fire hazard, U.C. has cleared brush and eucalyptus from the roadside near Grizzly Peak Boulevard, leaving only redwoods and other native trees. In the rest of the upper canyon, even without clearing and despite competition from thousands of rapidly growing eucalyptus sprouts and other vegetation, many of the pines and redwoods that were planted in 1975 have also survived and are now beginning to assert themselves.

The Monterey pines, perhaps 100 of them, have reached middle age and look a bit dry; they’re not in their favorite near-ocean environment. On the other hand, more than 200 redwoods have also survived. In fact, most of them are healthy and full of youthful enthusiasm and just beginning to prosper and grow rapidly. Down in the canyon below the paved road, a few redwoods are trapped beneath the brush and eucalyptus. They are stunted but surviving, some as small as three feet high with

main stems no thicker than an ordinary pen or pencil. Many more of them are 10 to 20 feet tall with main stems that are 10 or 12 inches in diameter. Quite a few are as much as 60 feet tall and growing taller by four to six feet per year. A few of them have trunks that are over seven feet in circumference (28 or 29 inches dbh).

But here is the most interesting thing of all for those who are especially concerned about fire safety and the build-up of fuel in brushy areas: *As coast redwoods grow larger and taller they overwhelm the brush. They capture the sunlight and the moisture and suppress the coyote bush and the poison oak and poison hemlock and all the other sun-oriented shrubs.* What redwoods create instead is a cool, moist environment that is both beautiful and relatively fire-safe. And once established, they maintain their own environment without help for hundreds or even thousands of years.

That’s why some of us would like to see the whole upper part of Claremont Canyon converted from what is now a very dangerous eucalyptus forest into a cool, moist, relatively fire-safe forest of redwoods, oaks, laurels, and other native trees and shrubs. It would be a magnificent and enduring accomplishment that we could all enjoy and be proud of for many years to come, and proudly leave to future generations.

High Speed Internet in the Hill – Part 2

In last issue of the newsletter, I described several North Hill experiences with high-speed Internet connections. Subsequent to writing that article, I discovered two other ways to speed up your line. I learned that AT&T cable has penetrated certain parts of our neighborhood. I have confirmed that it exists on my street-Sherwick Drive. Caveat emptor. Two people in Berkeley, whom I know, have found that download speeds from AT&T cable can be slower than telephone. When one asked a technician to come to his house, AT&T said, “Fine, the tech will be there in a month.” The problem with cable is that when too many people use it, download speed crawls.

One of our neighbors, Pete Kranz, moebius@darkersun.com is creating a local network in our hills. He has a T-1 (1.544 Mbps line or 12 times faster than IDSL) to his house. He beams his connection via an antenna to a neighbor who relays the signal to another. The cost is \$450 for equipment and \$100/month for service. A member of the North Hills steering committee dumped his IDSL service for Pete's. He estimates that he gets better than 1 Mb/sec for both uploads and download, which is much faster than DSL He is very happy with his new service. If more neighbors join his network, Pete will upgrade his T-1 line.

– Howard Matis

Oakland City Councilmembers

Mailing Address: #1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, City Council, 2nd Floor, Oakland, CA 94612

Council Member	District	Telephone (510)
Ignacio De La Fuente, Pres. idelafuente@oaklandnet.com	5	238-7005 Fax: 238 6910
Jane Brunner jbrunner@oaklandnet.com	1	238-7001 Fax: 238 6910
Danny Wan dwan@oaklandnet.com	2	238-7002 Fax: 238-2296
Nancy J. Nadel nnadel@oaklandnet.com	3	238-7003 Fax: 238-6129
Jean Quan district4@oaklandnet.com	4	238-7004 Fax: 238-6129
Moses L. Mayne Jr. mmayne@oaklandnet.com	6	238-7006 Fax: 238-6129
Larry Reid lreid@oaklandnet.com	7	238-7007 Fax: 986-2735
Henry Chang Jr. (at large) cityochang@aol.com		238-7008 Fax: 238-6938

On-Line Discussion Groups

The North Hills Phoenix Association has two on-line discussion groups and invites you to join both.

OpenForum@nhphoenix.org is for the use of members of the North Hills Phoenix Association and others who are interested in our issues. Its intent is to provide a forum for the discussion of issues of concern to our neighborhood. Its focus is on topics that impact on the quality of life in our area and the City of Oakland. Some subjects that seem especially pertinent are zoning laws, pending permits for construction, the proposed fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel, vegetation management, emergency preparedness, traffic and parking problems, and the Claremont Hotel's expansion proposal. We invite our members to use their judgment in initiating discussions, and look forward to the free flow of information and frank exchange of opinion.

If you do not get communications from the North Hills Phoenix Association, we also urge you to join 'Neighbors@nhphoenix.org'.

To join these groups, please go to our home page, <http://www.nhphoenix.org> and click on <Open Forum> and <neighbors>.

We welcome contributions or suggestions about our website. Please send them to me.

Howard Matis: info@nhphoenix.org
Webmaster for nhphoenix.org

Dues: Dues for the NHPA are \$35.00 per calendar year. All memberships are renewable each January. Since we are an organization that lobbies the dues are not tax deductible. We thank you for your support.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE NHPA

The NHPA is a community-based organization. We like and need to hear from you. There are several ways to contact us. Call (510) 273-9111 to leave messages and receive recorded information.

E-Mail: Use info@nhphoenix.org if you have questions, ideas, suggestions etc. For membership inquiries use membership@nhphoenix.org. To contact the newsletter use newsletter@nhphoenix.org. The newsletter is always looking for article suggestions and for writers.

<http://www.nhphoenix.org>, our web page, is a great source of information about the NHPA, activities and links to other sites of interest to Oakland residents.

Postal address is NHPA, P.O. Box 20784, Oakland, CA 94620

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NHPA Annual Meeting 7pm
Thursday, January 23, 2003
Kaiser Elementary School
25 South Hill Court, Oakland

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NHPA Newsletter editors – Marc and Vallery Feldman

Yes! I want to join/renew my membership with the North Hills Phoenix Association. I have enclosed my annual membership fee of \$35 payable to the North Hills Phoenix Association. New _____ Renew _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone –Home _____ Office _____

Fax: _____ E-Mail _____

North Hills Phoenix Association, P.O. Box 20784, Oakland CA 94620 Phone: 510-273-9111
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