



The Grapevine



NOV/DEC 2014

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Jim Foley
Vice-President	Michael Toback
Secretary	Laurel Smith
Treasurer	Gloria Felcyn
Director	Anna Scicinska
Director	Dave Katleman
Director	Paula Camporaso

VINEYARDS WEBSITE

www.vineyardsofsaratoga.com

- Vineyards News
- View monthly newsletter
- HOA Board meeting minutes

Want to receive e-mail alerts? Please e-mail your name and unit number, indicating if you are an owner or tenant to register@vineyardsofsaratoga.com

HELPFUL CONTACTS

To report problems with outdoor lights or sprinklers and request repairs please call or e-mail our manager:

Luis Heredia, Association Manager
Community Management Services

Telephone 408-559-1977

Fax number 408-559-1970

lheredia@communitymanagement.com

To report a crime or suspicious behavior to the local Sheriff call 408-299-2311



ANNUAL MEETING & BOARD VACANCIES

If you are a member in good standing & interested in serving your community as a board member, please submit a Statement of Candidacy and a contact phone number to Luis Heredia at CMS before the January 9th board meeting.

Our seven Vineyards HOA directors are elected to a two-year term and three board positions fall vacant in 2015. The nominating committee chair is Board Vice-President Michael Toback. In January all homeowners will receive an information packet and ballot papers for the board election. Even if you are not planning to attend the annual meeting please fill out your ballot and mail it in. This will ensure we have a quorum and are able to hold the meeting. The results of the elections will be announced at the Annual Meeting on February 13th. The list of candidates will be printed in the January newsletter. If there are multiple candidates, a Candidate Forum will be held in late January.

THE NEXT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The next Board meeting is on Thursday Jan 9th at 7:00pm.

The agenda for all board meetings is posted in advance at the entrance to the Clubhouse. Monthly meetings are open to all homeowners. The 15-20 minute *Open Forum* session at the start is an opportunity to have any issues heard by the board, association manager, and others present, and to ask questions about any projects or decisions addressed by the board.

Following *Open Forum*, the meeting is limited to those issues posted on the agenda. Homeowners are welcome and encouraged to stay and observe, but this part of the meeting is closed to owner participation. Minutes of all meetings are posted on the website after they have been approved at the next board meeting.

DECEMBER NEWS

❁MERRY CHRISTMAS! HAPPY HANNUKAH! YULTIDE GREETINGS!❁
This year, December, a month that encompasses the celebrations of Christmas and Hanukkah, also includes spiritually significant days for Muslims, Buddhists, Pagans and Zoroastrians. Best wishes for a wonderful festive season to all as we celebrate with family and friends, and wish goodwill, health, peace, prosperity and good cheer to all.

❁❁❁ HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!❁❁❁

HOLIDAY PARTY

Thank you to Chris Burns and the landscaping committee for a great Holiday party. The beautiful decorations in the Clubhouse make it look very festive! Our social events are a good way to meet with neighbors over drinks, nibbles and music. We extend a warm welcome to all, especially to our new Vineyards residents who moved in during 2014.



WINTER SPARE THE AIR IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

The 2014/2015 Winter Spare the Air season runs from November 1 through February 28. Each day by early afternoon, the Air District will issue an air quality forecast for the next day. If air quality is forecast to be unhealthy, a Winter Spare the Air Alert will be called. The alert will be in effect the entire next day, for a full 24 hours. When a Winter Spare the Air Alert is in effect, it is illegal to burn wood, manufactured fire logs, pellets, or any other solid fuels in your fireplace, woodstove, or outdoor fire pit. During the winter season, wood smoke is the largest source of harmful particulate pollution.

On the website <http://sparetheair.org> Bay Area residents can find information about the health effects of wood smoke, as well as detailed information about the Wood Burning Rule and how to comply with it.

To find out if a *Winter Spare the Air Alert* is in effect, you can do the following: download the Spare The Air app for your smartphone, call 1-877-4NO-BURN (1-877-466-2876), or call 1-800-430-1515 to sign up for a phone alert.

A WORD TO THE WISE ON WOOD SMOKE from Vineyards resident Anthony R. Fisher. Ph.D.

The main adverse health impact of burning wood, manufactured fireplace logs or similar products in common fireplaces is wood smoke, which contains harmful particulate matter (PM) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). In a 2013 article titled *Wood Burning*, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District stated: "The nine counties that surround San Francisco Bay are home to almost seven million residents and an estimated 1.7 million fireplaces and wood stoves. The PM in the wood smoke from these fireplaces and wood stoves has been a health concern in the Bay Area for many years ..." Since the 1980's, many scientific studies have been published that correlate rising PM levels with serious health effects, such as asthma symptoms, decreased lung function, increased hospital admissions and even premature death..."

Additionally, the California Air Resources Board in its *Wood Burning Handbook* states: "... Wood smoke also contains VOCs which include toxic and/or cancer-causing substances, such as benzene, formaldehyde and benzo-a-pyrene, a polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH). Manufactured fireplace logs, for instance, are not recommended for burning because they produce toxic fumes, including PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls)..."

Also, in order to minimize the levels of indoor combustion pollutants emitted from older types of fireplaces, like the original fireplaces installed at the Vineyards, large volumes of indoor air must be exhausted up the chimney during burning. As a result, furnaces usually have to run longer in order to heat and replace such exhausted air, thus increasing utility bills.

In summary, one of the best ways to protect yourself and your neighbors from the adverse effects of toxic air pollutants and possibly save money, is to avoid burning wood or manufactured fireplace logs in any fireplace at the Vineyards.

This article was submitted and written by a Vineyard resident, and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Vineyards of Saratoga.

NEXTDOOR

Deputy Aleksandra Ridgeway from Santa Clara County Sheriff recently posted this on community website Nextdoor:

Planning the holidays away from home? Here is a checklist to help you protect your home while you are away. Also another reminder, if you are planning on being away from your home or business for an extended period of time and would like the Sheriff's Office to come check your property, you can now request a patrol check online. Go to www.sccsheriff.org and click on "Services" then "Patrol Check Request." Once you have submitted your request online, we will notify the deputies that patrol that area to check your property during the time that you are away. While we try to fulfill every patrol check request that comes in, higher priority calls will be given priority over the patrol checks.

UNDER LOCK AND KEY

- Have you locked every door including garage doors?
- Have you double-checked sliding glass doors?
- If you have a home security system is it activated?
- Have you locked up ladders, tools and lawn furniture?
- Have you put your valuables in a safety box?
- Have you removed "hidden keys"?
- Locked your car in the garage?



KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR

Have you asked a trusted neighbor to:

- Watch your house?
- Hold onto emergency contact information?
- Collect newspapers and packages from your porch?
- Keep an eye on your cars parked outside?

ANYONE HOME?

- Have you considered putting lights or TV on timers?
- Have you installed a motion sensing light?
- Have you avoided posting travel plans on social media?

HOA DOCUMENT PROGRESS UPDATE

Laurel Smith, Secretary

Your Vineyards Board of Directors has been conducting, on a nearly weekly basis, additional meetings to study and edit the Governing Documents of the Vineyards of Saratoga Homeowners Association. Once the documents are considered to be complete, (next year) they will be made available to the membership to discuss at special forums. Only after that, will a vote of the membership be taken. The Board appreciates your good will and patience.

HOA DOCUMENT PROCESS UPDATE

Anna Scicinska, Grapevine editor



In preparation for bringing the changes to the Vineyards Governing Documents before the membership, we are publishing a series of monthly articles in the Grapevine newsletter. The third piece of this series identifies some of the changes we need to make to our documents.

Document changes due to the Davis-Stirling Act – some of the changes to our Governing Documents are as a direct result of Davis-Stirling. We are obliged to include these by law.

These revisions are intended to make the law more user-friendly and easy to understand. Some of the organizational changes to the new Davis-Stirling Act include changes to the annual "budget" package, shorter Civil Code sections, a separation and regrouping of subjects, and the inclusion of standardized terminology. Most of these changes can be summed up as bringing greater transparency and an operating procedure uniformity to HOAs.

The following list highlights a few examples of the more notable departures from current law:

Associations must follow standardized rules of notice and delivery. New Civil Code requirements will help avoid a conflict of interest when conducting board business, so Board members will not be able to vote on some matters that concern themselves. An association is required to hold a properly noticed hearing before the board of directors before the board can levy a reimbursement assessment against the accused member for repair costs related to common area damage. The Association is not responsible for any temporary relocation costs, including lodging, meals, and transportation incurred by a member during relocation for common area maintenance or repair.

A good source of additional information is The Educational Community for Homeowners (ECHO)
<http://www.echo-ca.org/article/what-you-need-know-new-davis-stirling-act>.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO PROTECT PROPERTY VALUES THROUGH OUR CC&Rs?

Maintenance responsibilities

The existing CC&Rs set out the responsibilities of the Association and Owners in several paragraphs that are very hard to understand and decipher. The Board's proposal is to largely replace this section with an easy to follow reference table, clearly defining the responsibility for maintenance, repair and replacement. From garage doors to roofs, from light fixtures to exterior faucets, the new table will make it much easier to check if the home Owner or HOA has the responsibility to solve a problem. Greater transparency and ease of reference are very important in a community living situation.

HOA Responsibilities – the key tasks of a homeowners' association are to protect property values and its member's quality of life.

One of the major achievements of the Board in the last couple of years has been to get FHA Certification for the Vineyards. This benefits the entire community and helps keep property values higher, as it opens the community to a larger pool of buyers. (For more info see the Aug 2013 newsletter) In order to make future Vineyards buyers eligible for FHA and other mortgages, and to facilitate easy re-financing for current owners, we need to actively keep the number of rented units below 25%. Although this seems to be a significant change, the good news is that existing owners and renter will not be affected at all, and family members of an owner occupying a unit do not count in a quota of renters for this purpose. *This change will just apply to those buying in 2015 onwards, after the new governing documents are approved.*

There are two more very good reasons to cap the total number of renter occupied units. First, an increased number of renters in a community brings up the cost of our insurance and makes insurance policies much harder to obtain, giving us less choice between different insurance plans. Second, we need to bring in measures to protect ourselves, as strongly as we possibly can, against a recent worrying trend in suburban construction.

Since one of our goals for 2014 was increased community awareness, we have been monitoring proposals for the neighborhood Quito, Abrams properties, as well as other information from the City of Saratoga. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is responsible for allocating housing needs to each jurisdiction in its region, including Saratoga. Builders have a quota of affordable housing units they must include in each new development, however *instead of building these units within their developments, they may choose to buy existing units in the local community.*

Our property values could fall if property developers are able to buy up Vineyards units for rental or re-sale to meet their quota for affordable housing units. According to a draft document published by the City of Saratoga in August 2014, *439 such units need to be found in Saratoga over the coming years.*

The City of Saratoga recently recommended changes of use to high-density residential and mixed-use development on several land parcels in Saratoga. The current zoning and height limits on the undeveloped Abrams site next door to us are 20 units/acre and there is a 2 story/30 foot height limit. Mr. Abrams is holding on to the property and wants the site to be used for office development. The City of Saratoga wants to build 108 housing units at Abrams site. (Source: ABAG Data for Bay Area Housing Elements 2015-2023) Whatever happens on the Abrams site in future, the responsibility of the Board is to implement strategies that strengthen our house prices and stop Vineyards units being used to meet housing quotas. To further discourage strategic property buying we are looking at restricting unit rental to one year after purchase. *Again, this change will just apply to those buying in 2015 onwards, after the new governing documents are approved.*

The Association is required to maximize the quality of life its members can enjoy. We are one of the few communities in the area that allow two cats or dog with no size restriction. This is a major reason why many of us chose to buy a unit in The Vineyards, and want it to stay that way! Our pets Fifi and Fido love the shade trees, walking paths and open spaces in the Common Area as much as we do. However this has also made us quite a magnet for renters with one or two pets. Over the past few years there have been multiple problems with irresponsible renters letting dogs off leash, not picking up dog waste, allowing excessive barking, and generally causing a nuisance to the people living around them. Some of these have resulted in warning letters and fines to the landlord. A pet restriction on future renters will go a long way to ease this problem. Current renters and their existing pets would be welcome to stay indefinitely. *As before, this change would only apply to future renters moving in, whose lease starts after the new governing documents have been approved.*

The entire Board and the Document Committee have been meeting weekly, most recently braving wind and rainy weather, to update our governing documents. It has taken us many hours so far, and there is more work still to come, but the end is in sight. A soon as the documents are ready to review they will be made available to the membership and put to a vote. Meeting dates are posted on the mailboxes for anyone who wants to attend and listen to our deliberations first hand. Hopefully these document updates will help not only us, but future Boards, and future Owners for many years to come.



CONTRACTORS USING VINEYARDS DUMPSTERS

An owner (non-resident landlord) received a suspended fine of \$200 last month after their contractor left a domestic water heater in one of our dumpster enclosures. The reason the Board decided to suspend the fine for 6 months was the owner's prompt response in remedying the situation. Please remind your contractors that the Vineyards dumpsters are for domestic trash only and for use by residents. Contractors need to haul all construction trash away.

GUTTER PROBLEMS?

The work of the company who cleans our gutters twice a year is under warranty. If you have any problems with blocked gutters after the recent rainstorms, please call Luis at CMS to report the problem. With such heavy rain the gutters may get clogged with debris and start to overflow. Luis will coordinate with Commercial Gutter for their technicians to come back and fix any problems. Our next gutter cleaning is scheduled for February 2015.

THE NEWSLETTER AT A GLANCE

Report any gutter problems to CMS

Work on HOA document updates continues

Next Board meeting – Thursday Jan 9th @ 7:00pm

Send in statements of candidacy for board elections

NEWSLETTER

We welcome all input into our Vineyards newsletter. If you are interested in joining the newsletter committee or contributing to future newsletters please contact Anna Scicinska at newsletter@vineyardlane.org. Letters and articles from residents will be published in the next newsletter to go to print.

Anna Scicinska, Dave Katleman, Linda George and Paula Camporaso