

March 2004

## Letter from the President

Best Wishes from Clarence

Fellow Neighbors,

This last holiday season my wife Linda and I yet again watched "It's a Wonderful Life." Well actually, I think it was the only thing on that night and we both rather like the film. The film is basically about a man named George Bailey.

George has somehow, despite his best efforts, spent most of his life helping people. In the end, George realizes, with some help from his guardian angel Clarence, that the contributions of a single person can make a great difference in the lives of many people. If you haven't seen the film (Yeah, right!), I hope this does not spoil the ending. My point in all this is that I have met a few George Baileys here and around the neighborhood. I do not know if they have been visited by angels or not but they volunteer their time to our community and they do make a difference in peoples lives.

What did these George Baileys (these community volunteers) do this year that made a difference? Quite a few things!

### Do you have kids?

Volunteers have been working with the City for nearly eight years to bring the Buena Vista Park to a reality (see *Buena Vista Park* on page 3). Volunteers took pictures of children in costume and distributed safety glow necklaces during our Spirit Night.

### Do you cross the street at Menker & San Carlos?

It was volunteer involvement that led to the building of a safe crosswalk.

### Did you ever wonder what the inside of an 1906 Arts & Crafts Bungalow looks like?

Volunteers presented their houses on the home tour while others acted as tour guides (see *Home Tour* on page 2).

### Got Junk?

Volunteers helped residents unload junk during one of our dumpster days. One man was using his pick-up truck to help his surrounding neighbors bring things to the dumpster. He unloaded his pick-up about ten times.

Volunteers go to speak at city council, development and planning meetings about things that directly effect the neighborhood. Volunteers represent us to other volunteer organizations like United Neighborhoods, Burbank/Del Monte Neighborhood Advisory Committee and West San Carlos Neighborhood Business Association.

Thanks to all you George (and Mary?) Baileys out there. Keep up the good work. You are changing things for the better. Oh yes, and Clarence says thanks for the wings.

*Robert M. Solis, BVNA President*

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## BVNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### President

*Robert M. Solis*

### Vice President

*Ken Henning*

### Secretary

*Robin Rogers*

### Directors at Large

*Sally Henning*

*Jim Peterson*

*Linda Solis*

*Bruce Stevens*

# Buena Vista Historic Home and Garden Tour

## or "Why I refinished my floors"

We are going forward with our plans to have the 2004 Buena Vista Neighborhood Association's Historic Home & Garden Tour. This is a chance to share the character and history of the neighborhood with the rest of the community. Traditionally, tour attendees get to vote for their favorite house and the winning house gets a prize.



After spending two years convincing neighbors to show their houses as part of our Historic Home Tour, I find that most home owners think that their houses are "not ready" to show on a tour. Well, this year, I am going to show my house and I too am "not ready."

Although my house was on the tour three years ago, Linda and I have done a great deal of work moving toward the total restoration of our 1906 Arts & Crafts Bungalow. I have a long list of things to repair or restore that will not be even considered by the tour this June 19, but we will be showing it in its "not readiness" anyway.

There was one thing that we were going to make ready for the tour. We were going to make sure we refinished the original fir floor. Well, let me tell you about it.

We had to remove all our furniture from our living and dining room so the floors could be refinished. This is of course where we keep most of our stuff. My plan was to move everything into the garage but as you may have guessed... the garage was already full.

If I could get rid of most of the junk in the garage (collected over the last ten years), there would be more than enough room for the furniture and

afterwards we would have a cleaner garage. So we rented a dumpster.

We threw out everything we could stand to dispose of. To my regret, my son's old Tinky Winky doll got buried somewhere in the bottom of the dumpster and every time I put stuff on the top of the pile, it would start to sing it's "Tinkle Winky" song. Next time singing toys on top!

After the dumpster was full with treasures of yesteryear, there was still not enough room in the garage. In response, I built new shelves and organized my tools on wall pegs just like they show you in "how to" books. At last, we had a clean organized garage but didn't seem to be any closer to refinished floor nirvana.

We moved everything (yes everything just as if your are giving up and moving to Oregon) from the living and dining room and stuffed it in the garage.



Actually refinishing of the floors themselves seemed like too big a job for us, so we used the money we had saved for the painting of the exterior of the house on having professionals do the removal of that ugly brown carpet that we never liked. Under the carpet was a flooring of particle board that had been attached to the fir floor below with copious amounts of glue and three inch long ring shank nails. The particle board and nails did not go without a fight. I found a newspaper flattened under the flooring with the year 1972 on it and wondered if I had really been doing push-ups on a carpet that was installed before I entered high school. (And yes, I do push-ups.)

With the carpet and board removed, I was looking at tongue-in-groove fir

flooring badly stained, pitted and covered with glue, wax and ancient varnish. The contractor said he would try to sand the floor down past the stains, fill all the holes and put a huge patch in the square where the old heater register had been. Soon, I watched workmen with large noisy machines grind down the surface of our nearly century old floor with my fingers crossed. I really began to hope that this was a good idea. In the end everything turned out fine. A lot of character remains in the floor but now its smooth and all the patches have blended in almost seamlessly.



So now I have a great fir floor but I also realized that the colors we painted the living room no longer worked and would have to be repainted, all the old carpet fibers (left over from the last painting) needed to be sanded off all of the baseboards then repainted, we have to buy rugs and new furniture and somebody had to bring in all that stuff back from the garage! I'll never be ready!

We are looking forward to showing our house "ready or not" with its new/old floors but we cannot build the tour around just my house. We need more "not ready" houses on the tour. You don't have to show the things you don't want to. How about your house?

Proceeds from the tour go to support BVNA. If you would like to show your house or garden or just volunteer to be a tour guide, call Bruce & Loree Stevens at 289-1688.

*Robert Solis*

**\*Houses on this years tour so far...**

**#1 Patricia's Garden,**

**#2 "The White House," #3 My House.**

# Buena Vista Park Opens!

“Hey, we have a park!” picnic planned

On a drizzly Saturday morning in December, a group of neighbors, city workers and Councilmember Ken Yeager opened Buena Vista Park. “It is through the sheer determination of the Buena Vista neighborhood that this park is here today. Faced with a real lack of parkland, they persevered until a park was built.” said Yeager. “Buena Vista Park serves as an example of what other neighborhoods can accomplish when neighbors come together and remain persistent.”

One of the other speakers at the event was BVNA

president Robert Solis, “Here at last is not only a place to bring your kids to play but also a place to meet your neighbor. A place that belongs to the whole community.”



Ken Yeager & residents of Buena Vista open the park

“I almost can’t believe it,” said BVNA Director Sally Henning. “We have been waiting for this park for so long, it almost seems unreal.”

On April 10, BVNA will host a “Hey, we have a park!” picnic. The entire community will be invited to be bring their lunch to the park and enjoy a day of “neighborizing.” BVNA will be providing additional food and goodies and hope to have activity and informational booths.

## Promoting Neighborhood Retail Streets

Some of San Jose's most dynamic neighborhoods exist in and around areas of concentrated retail development, such as West San Carlos, the Alameda, and Lincoln Avenue. The mix of historic homes, tree-lined streets, and wonderful shopping districts makes for particularly desirable neighborhoods.

Over the last three years, I have focused a lot of my attention on promoting retail businesses in District 6, with emphasis on Lincoln Ave and our two Neighborhood Business Districts (NBDs) located on West San Carlos and The Alameda. To date, the City and Redevelopment Agency have invested over \$2 million on Lincoln Ave and \$19 million in our NBDs.

On The Alameda and West San Carlos, funding has gone to additional street lighting and to the creation of off-street parking. In addition, the City has supported businesses with façade grants, promoted new commercial and residential development, and given money to help locate and renovate the Billy De Frank Center. The median improvements on West San Carlos and upgrades to the West San Carlos Shopping Center have brought tremendous change to that street.

On Lincoln Ave. funds have been directed to various streetscape improvements. The sidewalks have been steam-cleaned and more trash cans have been installed. In addition, pedestrian crosswalks have been upgraded so shoppers can more easily and safely cross from one business to another.

Just as importantly, the City has worked with property to promote shared parking agreements. One of our latest success stories is the recently signed public parking

agreement with the Bank of America on Lincoln Avenue. B of A's lot will soon be open to all shoppers, not just bank patrons. This provides even greater parking opportunities to all those coming to Willow Glen.

I believe that the money the City provides to our retail streets has been well spent. Promoting vibrant shopping areas not only adds a lot to the quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods but also brings more jobs and revenue to San Jose.

The City estimates that the total investment in San Jose by new commercial and housing development on The Alameda and West San Carlos alone represents \$336 million by the private sector. While Lincoln Avenue is not one of the Redevelopment Agency's Neighborhood Business Districts, local investment there has resulted in 90 new firms and over 300 jobs. Sales tax revenues from Lincoln Ave. continue to grow, generating \$3.8 million from 1988 to the present.

The RDA has recently renewed its commitment to the development of retail within NBDs. The Agency will be expanding its retail strategy to target neighborhoods beyond the Downtown. Staff will be focusing on filling retail vacancies and identifying opportunities with neighborhood serving tenants who can enhance the overall mix of businesses.

I'm encouraged by the progress that has been made and look forward to continued success.

*Ken Yeager*  
*Councilmember District 6*

# Somewhere over the Freeway

If you drive down Parkmore and look to your left as you pass Leigh Ave, you will see an open space over Hwy. 280. The area over 280 between Leigh Avenue and Leland may someday be a community park. The Burbank/Del Monte NAC has secured funding for a feasibility study to see if a park can be built over the freeway. "Parks built over freeways are nothing new," said NAC president Randy Kinman. "Cities like San Diego and Seattle have already constructed freeway parks." "It seems like a good fit for the area," said BVNA president Robert Solis. "There is very little open space and no areas are big enough to develop a park of this size. We would have to tear down houses and displace residents to get the same space."

The park would be about 4.5 acres and could have a soccer field and play equipment and relink the neighborhoods that were split by the building of 280.



Future Park Location?

## April 24, Neighborhood Dumpster Day

In April, we hope to have another day where dumpsters will be brought into the neighborhood and residents will be able to dispose of family heirlooms that have outlived their usefulness. The dumpsters will be provided by your local Burbank/Del Monte NAC as part of a NAC wide clean-up day. We are currently looking for volunteers to act as Dumpster Captains and to help get things out of people's cars and into the dumpsters. If you can help... give us a call at 295-9342

## O'Connor Park is Public

Some neighbors have asked me if the park near Safeway is public or just for the use of residents of the housing complexes that surround it. O'Connor has always been a public park for use by all the residents of this area. After the Midtown Housing development is complete, the street will be closed and the second half of the park will be completed. It's your park. Use it!

There was a question at the latest NAC meeting as to whether it was a good idea to spend money at this time when funds are so tight on a project that might not ever be built. The NAC decided that this preliminary study was the course of action that they had been working on for the last two years and their priorities were set. To change where this funding was to go might set in motion the review of the NAC's priorities and funding might be lost. Already granted funding for projects often are limited to only those specific projects. If a project changes, funding can be withdrawn. Put simply no park study... maybe no funding. Also, if the funds are not used within the defined time limits, the funds might have to be returned.

"I feel that it is a good use of the funds," said BVNA Vice President Ken Henning. "We need to know whether this park can be built. Once that roadblock is out of the way, we can start working on where we will find the money to actually build it. We cannot do anything until this first step is complete."

## Help Control Housing Development in the Neighborhood

Do you get notices in the mail about someone planning to develop new buildings in the area? BVNA wants to know! Because Buena Vista is a mish-mash of city and county pockets, we don't always get notified of new developments in the area. Sometimes only the residents within 300 feet get any notification at all.

"We are trying to work with developers/landowners to control the type of housing development built in this area," said BVNA president Robert Solis. "Many areas of Buena Vista are already overcrowded with people and cars. We would like any new development to take that into account. Also, we are trying to maintain the historic character of the area by asking developers to build within the styles of the surrounding houses." In this way, the BVNA hopes to use new development to help improve the area rather than add to its existing problems.

"BVNA is not anti-development, we just want to be sure when things are developed, they are done in the correct scale and reflect the character of the neighborhood," said Solis. "There is a good deal of history in these houses and it would be a shame if they were destroyed to make room for some boring apartments."

You can either send these notifications to BVNA through their P.O. Box or call Robert at 295-9342.

# Time to Renew Your Membership

or time to join!

March is the month we ask you to renew your membership dues. Remember your membership dollars help the association continue to run. It helps pay for the printing of the newsletter, postage, copies and food at events. If you are not already a member, please consider joining.

Did you know that 81% of the people that live in our neighborhood are renters? All renters qualify for BVNA membership. Membership is open to all residents of the Buena Vista Area as well as those residents that border Buena Vista.

## IMPORTANT DATES

**MARCH 30**  
BVNA Meeting

**APRIL 10**  
"Hey, we have a park!"  
Picnic

**APRIL 24**  
Neighborhood  
Clean-up

**JUNE 19, 2004**  
Burbank Jamboree  
BVNA Home Tour

**AUGUST TBA**  
Neighborhood  
Night Out

## Coffee Anyone?



Last September, Ruth White started meeting with the women on Menker Ave. once a month for what she calls "Coffee at the White House."

"We don't have an agenda," Ruth says. "We just sit around my dining room table eating a treat and drinking coffee or tea. You can learn a lot about your neighbors by just spending time around a table."

If you would like to start a similar "Coffee" group on your street, you can give Ruth a call at 287-6246.

### THE BUENA VISTA NEIGHBORHOOD



## 2004 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please enclose ( \$15.00 individual, \$20 family)  
Check payable to Buena Vista Neighborhood Association

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City : \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

2004 Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Mail Check & form to:

B V N A

P. O. Box 26953

San Jose, CA 95159-6953

Phone # (408) 295-9342

## Important Phone Numbers

Emergency	.911
Non-Emergency Police	.311
San Jose Police Dept. (file a report)	.277-5300
San Jose Police Dept. (sex assault unit)	.277-4102
<b>City Hall Call Center (24 Hours)</b>	<b>.277-4000</b>
San Jose Streets & Parks	.277-4691
Councilperson Ken Yeager	.277-5166
Code Enforcement	.277-4528
Airport Noise Complaint Line	.998-0707
Vehicle Abatement	.277-5305
Supervisor Jim Beall	.299-3924
<b>Buena Vista Neighborhood Ass.</b>	<b>.295-9137</b>
Operation Spotlight Contact No.	.951-0603
Group Home Complaint Hotline	.1-800-447-1161
District Attorney Kathy Wells	.792-2530
S.C.O.P.E. Hotline	.299-3969
Crime Stoppers	.947-STOP
Auto Theft Unit	.277-4051
Anonymous Drug Hotline	.293-DRUG
Anonymous Gang / Graffiti Hotline	.293-GANG
Graffiti Hotline	.277-2758
Anti- Graffiti (Free Paint)	.277-5827

The BVNA is a volunteer organization dedicated to protect, maintain and enhance the Buena Vista Neighborhood community.

If you would like more information about the BVNA or would like to attend one of the membership meetings you can contact us at (408) 295-9137 or E-mail: [bnacasj@yahoo.com](mailto:bnacasj@yahoo.com).



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