

HIDDEN TRAILS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2005 NEWSLETTER

Spring Training Underway in Hidden Trails' Avocado League. Baseball Season is Upon Us! This time of year many of us living in Hidden Trails recall the athletic years of our youth. While attending the University of San Diego High School (I've seen some decals on cars in Hidden Trails!), I recall seeing many trophies and banners from hard-fought victories during years in the Avocado League. Back then I had no idea what an avocado tree was, and thought it was rather quaint to have "avocado trophies". Now, with these beautiful groves surrounding our homes, it begins to make sense.

Spring Fever. As the chill of winter recedes and our days grow increasingly longer and warmer, many of us seek to rise from our couches in search of more outside activity and satisfying involvement. For some, this means getting out their baseball mitts and bats. For others, it means increased gardening. And for a special few, it means getting more involved in our homeowners' association.

Team Effort - Involved Players Make the Team a Winner. Your Homeowners' Association functions best when members are and involved. The Architectural/Design Review Committee ("AC") is composed of dedicated homeowners who meet monthly to review and approve applications for landscape and architectural applications. AC members have reviewed approximately 150 applications in the past two and a half years. Members are appointed by the Board. A one to two year commitment is requested. Some of our original members have been on the committee for nearly three years.

Step Up to the Plate. The AC is currently has openings for three members. This is a co-ed team, so interested men and women are encouraged to join us. The ideal candidates will have good people skills, be well-organized and able to devote a couple of hours a week to AC business. Having knowledge of landscaping or construction is a plus, but not necessary. Training will be provided. Unless homeowners step up, most future applications will be sent to a retained architect for review, costing applicant homeowners \$125 - \$175 for the review. If you have questions about the position, please contact Brian Swanson (see below for contact information).

First String. The Homeowners' Association ("HOA") Board offers another opportunity to get off the bench. The Board's officers act much as the officers of a corporation, meeting periodically to make decisions on behalf of our HOA. Officers are elected for three year terms, although vacancies can be filled by appointment by the Board. Currently, one officer was elected and two were appointed. Elections for all three positions will be held in June. If you are interested in learning more about the Board functions, please contact any Board member (Brian Swanson, Pres., John Lindsay, V-Pres., Joe Esther, Sec.-Treas.)

Pinch Hitters Needed. Some of us may want to help out but don't want a regular commitment. The Board has need of occasional "pinch hitters" for various small, focused projects. Recently, one homeowner volunteered to follow up with the City to obtain "No Outlet" signs for the community. Do you have typing skills? The Board has a project which would require several hours for an experienced typist, and which would be of great benefit to the HOA. We are in need of someone to revitalize and lead our Neighborhood Watch program. Other, smaller opportunities also exist.

Don't be a Bench-Warmer --- Join our Team. Homeowners are invited and encouraged to attend all HOA meetings. The AC typically meets the first Tuesday of the month, 6PM - about 7:30PM at a members' home. Come meet your neighbors, learn what we do, provide your input. We have a lot of fun helping make our HOA run efficiently, and get lots of positive feedback from the homeowners we meet. For a larger turnout, we'll arrange to meet at a nearby restaurant or community center. If you come to the AC meetings you'll quickly see that the AC is a hard-working team. You just might find that you'll want to join us.

The AC meets 6 - 7:30PM the first Tuesday of each month (next = March 1st). Please call AC Chair Brian Swanson (619) 699-5115 to confirm your visit, and to confirm meeting location (location may vary depending on number of participants).

Wrap-up. Your neighborhood team needs your involvement! Both small and large opportunities exist. We especially need help on the Architectural/Design Review Committee. Without more involvement, plans will need to be sent to the retained architect, costing applicant homeowners \$125 - \$175 each. If you questions, comments or would like to volunteer, please contact outgoing AC chair and current HOA president Brian D. Swanson. (w) (619) 699-5115; (h) (760) 739-5451; bswanson@sempra.com

SLOW DOWN and save our Kids! Time and again homeowners express their concern about the many speeding cars in our community. True, some are delivery persons or contractors, but all too many are residents or their friends. Please be aware that this is a neighborhood, and slow down. Speeding cars can also be noisy, and all of us like a quiet neighborhood, so please slow down.

Sign Language. Many of you may have noticed the new "No Outlet" signs that went up in January. Thanks go to homeowner David Milne who volunteered to contact the City and follow through on this project. This shows how one homeowner, volunteering a few hours, can make an important contribution to our neighborhood. When you see David, be sure to thank him yourself!

Oh, POOP! Please clean up after your pet! Most of us enjoy our yards, the trails winding through our neighborhood, and the nearby parks. While most of us are responsible, the behavior of a few dog owners really stinks. It is disgusting to see or smell dog poop left behind by irresponsible owners. It is in very poor taste to allow your dog to run free, knowing that dogs do their business anywhere they can, especially on someone else's property.

Some owners let their dogs out every morning or every evening. Regardless of the location, be it on a neighbors' lawn, on the trail, in the park, on the road, the owner is responsible for cleaning up after their pet. Reminder: Plan ahead. ALWAYS CARRY A PLASTIC BAG and clean up after your dog. If you know of a dog that leaves its mess behind, please notify Menas Realty, providing a description of the dog and, if possible,

Architectural Guidelines

Each of us received a copy of the Architectural Guidelines (revised June 2003). Please take a few moments to review it. It spells out the requirements and procedure from submittal to approval, completion and refund of deposits.

Page 8 of the Guidelines states that the Architectural Committee has 45 days to make a decision after receipt of all required materials by the Architectural Committee. Required materials include not only the basic application, plans, check, etc., but detailed plans and drawings of all improvements (see Guidelines). Height, dimensions, materials, colors of patio covers, walls, pergolas, etc. are necessary for the Committee to make a decision. Currently, complete applications are being processed within just a few days. If you have questions about the process, please call our property manager Julie Menas.

Hidden Trails - a gated community?

Many times homeowners have inquired about making Hidden Trails a gated community. Your HOA Board and AC members are homeowners just like you, and handle a variety of responsibilities. If you would like to volunteer to gather the information necessary to make a decision on gating our community, please call Julie Menas to volunteer.

Trails. Many of us have seen the terrible condition of the trail along Hidden Trails Road. I'm sure you'll agree that they are a real eyesore. There are a number of reasons for this condition. The trails and HOA-maintained slopes are being assessed for repairs, and determination whether O'Connell or Lyon Homes is responsible for repairs. We don't want to spend HOA money to repair damage caused by poor installation or maintenance. Watch for updates in this newsletter.

FYI, the trail at the bottom of Oak Valley Lane will eventually link up with other trails, leading towards Cloverdale Ranch and the San Pasqual Valley. There will also be a trail leading around the edge of Ryan Park, near the base of the hillside, and running towards Lake Wohlford Road. Funding is probably going to wait until the Wohlford family citrus groves are turned into a (approved) housing development.

Holiday Lights. No excuses. By now your lights should be down. Please be considerate of your neighbors and don't wait for a Notice of Violation.

Snake Season. Escondido is home to about two dozen species of snakes. Snakes are good. They eat mice, rats and other tasty critters that otherwise would overrun our homes. With warming weather they will become more active, especially here in the country. All snakes are afraid of people and will bite in fear, and try to hide. Only rattlesnakes are poisonous. They all have fattish bodies and rattles on their tails.

They are mostly active during the day, but can be out on warm nights. If it has a pointy tail (not a rattle), it is not poisonous. When I find a rattlesnake near my home or at a neighbor's home, I sweep it into an empty trash can and remove it to a wildland area away from houses and roads. The fire department and animal control will also remove and kill rattlesnakes. You might do an internet search to find pictures so you know what they look like before you happen upon one.

The next meeting will be held March 3, 2005 at the Escondido Community Center in the Citrus Room.

Ideas for articles? Talent for writing? Please contact Brian Swanson (619) 699-5115 days (best), (760) 739-5451 evenings.