



2014 Board of Directors

President

Todd Harris: 408.250.5229

Vice President

Mitch Cipriano: 408.206.8862

Treasurer

David Klenske: 408.829.3283

Directors

Natalie Adee: 408.402.5655

John Csubak: 408.914.5844

Kevin Kessel:

Lloyd Grant: 408.358.4956

Scott House: 408.655.3691

Thomas Martin: 408.416.8868

Facilities Manager

Gina Wagner: 408.358.2229
cabana@belwoodhomes.org

Belringer Editor

Silvia E. Lee: 408.922.9020

President's Message

I'd like to thank everyone who contributed to the **fun** and **productive year at the Cabana in 2013**. I want to personally thank the Belwood Board of Directors for their hard work and dedication, and want the HOA membership to know you have a great group of Directors providing stewardship to our mutually owned facility.

Dave Klenske, our Treasurer, has kept us on track by continuing to build our reserve fund. This is important because a properly funded reserve allows us to maintain and improve the property. In addition, director Silvia Lee took responsibility for the Belringer. Without her intervention you would not have enjoyed a Belringer in 2013. Director Scott House fixed the broken basketball backboards and added padding to make the posts safe. And Director Mitch Cipriano (along with the Heaps') organized the children's Halloween party. The life guards kept everybody safe this year, and also put on a great Fourth of July party for everyone. And we had a couple of fun bingo (thanks Rich Dobner) and movie nights during the summer. I am sure I have forgotten many others that deserve of thanks, so I will just apologize for that now.

But there is one more that deserves special recognition, Director Ed Sharpe. Ed is currently our longest tenured Board member and has served as secretary of the Board for well over a decade. He was instrumental in helping '02/'03 Board(s) get the HOA back on financial track and has been a major contributor to important Board initiatives over the years. As secretary he has not only become an expert on relevant HOA law (Davis-Stirling Act), but has also acted as historian, providing context and rationale for past Board decisions, and thus providing continuity and consistency from one Board term to successive ones. I have always appreciated Ed's "total membership" approach to decision making, and his great contributions at Board meetings. Thanks Ed!

Remember, we are a volunteer organization and the Association activities require the effort and support of our membership to ensure successful outcomes. Thank you to all, for your contributions this year and we're looking forward to another fun and successful year in 2014.

Hope your Holidays were memorable and Happy New Year!

Todd Harris - President

Treasurer Report

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Happy Holidays,

As we close 2013, I'd like to thank departing board members Ed Sharpe and Silvia Lee for their contributions to our community. Ed has been on the board nearly as long (if not as long) as myself, and as the long term secretary he has spent countless hours recording the minutes of board meetings and helping us all remain compliant with California laws. Silvia joined the board recently, but her enthusiasm, commitment to a great neighborhood, and willingness to take on responsibilities such as the Bellringer are much appreciated. Thank you both for your service, I will miss seeing you every month and I look forward to seeing you in Belwood in the future.

Our financial picture is satisfactory, with expenses closely matching budget. In our December Board meeting, we voted to allocate \$50K from our checking account to our reserve accounts to pay for future expenses, which will give us roughly \$100K in reserve funds overall. While our reserves are not fully funded, we are working hard to make sure that money is there to pay for future expenses as they arise.

As you learned from the financial package, the board of directors is once again keeping dues flat at \$480 per unit. We last raised dues in 2012, but felt that we could maintain our financial condition without an increase this year. As previously stated, my goal has been to fully fund all operational items, and have the required annual reserve contribution, for each year's budget.

You will be billed for the 2014 assessment in December, and they will be due in January. By promptly paying, we will avoid spending money to continue to send statements to members, to send registered letters to those who are delinquent past certain time periods, and eliminating extra work by our bookkeeper. As always, if there is a reason why you can't pay your dues or need to schedule a payment plan, please feel free to contact myself or another board member to work out an appropriate arrangement for your personal situation.

If you have ANY questions, I encourage you to come to a board meeting or contact me directly. Thanks,

David Klenske - Treasurer

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.belwoodhomes.org

Secretary Report

2014 Board of Directors Election

The annual election of members for the Board of Directors was held. Ballots were mailed out on October 14th. Of the 285 ballots sent 93 were returned, 88 of which were counted (5 had no signature on the return envelope). Returned ballots were tallied by an independent inspector for the election at the November 19th meeting of the board of directors. There were nine candidates on the ballot for the nine board positions. There was also one additional name written-in.

As a result of the tally the nine candidates on the ballot were elected. The directors for 2014 are Natalie Adee, Mitchell Cipriano, John Csubak, Lloyd Grant, Todd Harris, Scott House, Dave Klenske, Tom Martin, and Kevin Kessel.

Officers will be selected at the January board meeting. Thank you to all association members who cast their votes. Thank you to the board member candidates for volunteering.

Email us:

hoa@belwoodhomes.org

Cabana Contact:

Gina Wagner

408.358.2229

cabana@belwoodhomes.org

HOA Mailing Address:

Belwood HOA

P.O. Box 1372

Los Gatos CA 95031

The board is responsible for oversight of facility maintenance, supervision of employees, and financial planning and tracking. Board members participate in a monthly meeting and spend a modest amount of time outside of the meeting.

Being a board member is a rewarding way to get involved and make a valuable contribution to the Belwood community. No experience is necessary. If you would like to become a candidate for the Board of Directors, please contact the board secretary or any board member anytime. Another way to contribute is to help out with cabana activities. Contact any board member (or specific event coordinators) if interested. Your participation is appreciated.

Ed Sharpe – 2013 Secretary

Neighborhood Crime

Our neighborhood continues to be frequented by criminals. Below are some tips for your review.

Residents report incidents on **Nextdoor.com** and the town of Los Gatos uses **Nextdoor.com** to send notices to its members. It is recommended that you sign up and become a participant in **Nextdoor.com**.

TIPS

- Make your home look occupied, and make it difficult to break in.
- Lock all outside doors and windows before you leave the house or go to bed. Pushbutton locks on doorknobs are easy for burglars to open. Install deadbolt locks on all your outside doors. Secure patio doors. A steel or wooden rod in the guide will work. A pin type lock may also be used for added security.
- Keep your garage door closed and locked. Keep garage door openers out of sight or hidden in your car.
- Leave drapes and shades open. Closed drapes and shades indicate an unoccupied house.
- Leave lights on when you go out. If you are going to be away for a length of time, connect some lamps to automatic timers to turn them on in the evening and off during the day.
- Have adequate exterior lighting. A motion-sensitive light is recommended for backyards.
- Install a surveillance cameras or install a security system.
- Have your lawn taken care of. Dry uncut grass says you are away.
- Trim trees and shrubs so that they cannot be used as hiding places for intruders.
- Don't allow daily deliveries of mail, newspapers or flyers build up while you are away. Arrange with the Post Office to hold your mail, or arrange for a friend or neighbor to take them regularly.
- Do not keep expensive jewelry at home unless you have a secure safe.
- Make an inventory of items in your home. Take photos of valuable items. Keep one copy and give a copy to your insurance company. Video tape the entire interior of your home showing your property.

Diane Sharp is taking a break but will resume her column "Belwood, Back in the Days" in the next issue.

Christmas Traditions

America is my adopted country and I very much love it here. But around Christmas time I am always getting sentimental and a bit homesick. I am from Germany, the Black Forest to be precise, and there, the Christmas traditions are different than here in America.

While the tradition of gift giving to loved ones on Christmas is the same in both countries, in Germany, "Christkind", Christ's child, not Santa Claus, brings the gifts on Christmas Eve. When I grew up, the Christmas tree was put up on the 24th of December by my parents and the door to the living room was locked until the "Christkind" came and brought the presents. (Most German older houses are "not open floor plan" and each room has a door.) My mom would always cook a smoked ham shank for dinner, with potatoes and a green salad. After dinner a bell would ring, indicating that we were visited by the "Christkind". And when my brother and sister and I got older, we would go to Midnight Mass afterwards. There is something special about going to Mass at midnight. We would walk to church together surrounded by crisp, cold air and snow covered streets. In church, the smell of incense greeted you and the traditional Christmas songs, "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht", "Silent Night, Holy Night" or "Oh Tannenbaum" – "Oh Christmas Tree" transformed you in that magical Christmas spirit. There is something about these songs that to this day make me reminisce of childhood, excitement, warmth, family...

In the US, Christmas is celebrated with a visit from Santa Claus on Christmas eve. But is there a Santa Claus in Europe? Yes, there is. And Santa Claus has his own holiday. It is on December 6th, Saint Nicolaus Day.

How did Saint Nicolaus become Santa? Saint Nicolaus is believed to have lived in the 4th century A.D. in Myra what is now Turkey. He was a kind bishop and many legends surround him. One of the stories that I was told is that he saved three poor sisters by providing them with a dowry so that they could marry. While they were asleep, he would throw gifts and coins through an open window. Over the course of many years, Nicholas's popularity spread and he became known as the protector of children and sailors. In Europe, traditionally, the children put their shoes or boots outside the front door on December 6th as soon as it is dark outside. They would then gather their boots before going to bed and would find sweet treats from Santa Claus.

Here in America, Saint Nicholas was first mentioned at the end of the 18th century. In December 1773, a New York newspaper reported that groups of Dutch families gathered to honor the anniversary of Saint Nickolas death (December 6th). The name Santa Claus evolved from Nick's Dutch nickname, Sinter Klaas, a shortened form of Sint Nikolaas (Dutch for Saint Nicholas). In the early 19th century stores began advertising Christmas shopping and soon newspapers created separate sections for holiday advertisements, which often featured images of Santa Claus. The Salvation Army and yes, the Coca Cola company were instrumental in creating today's image of Saint Nick: the jolly, bearded man in a red suit. In the early 1890s, the Salvation Army needed money to pay for the free Christmas meals they provided to needy families. They dressed up unemployed men in Santa Claus suits and sent them into the streets of New York to solicit donations. In 1930, Coca Cola asked illustrator Haddon Sundblom to create Coca Cola advertising using jolly Santa Claus images.

What is my own family's tradition now? Our children, when they were younger, always put their boots outside the front door on December 6th for a visit from Saint Nicolaus, and for Christmas, we do a hybrid celebration - each of us picks one gift on Christmas eve and we open the rest of the gifts on Christmas morning followed by a big breakfast. We hang stockings but just for decoration since the boots were filled on December 6th. Because my husband's family lives in LA, we alternate celebrating Christmas at home and with his family in LA. There, they have their own Christmas traditions. Perhaps more on that next year...

Keep up the traditions or create your own, new traditions. But most of all enjoy time with family and friends this Holiday Season!

Best Wishes! Silvia E. Lee – Belringer Editor

Winter Wonderland

If you have interesting neighborhood pictures or stories to share, please send them to bel.editor@gmail.com.

Belwood Winter pictures captured by Betty Auchard.



Community Board

Monthly Events

Belwood Homeowners Board Meeting

Open to all Belwood members - Cabana Club - 7:30 pm, third Tuesday of the month unless a **change** is posted on the bulletin board.

Santa Clara Valley Mineral /Gem Society:

Fourth Tuesday of the month.
Please call Kathy McChristian (Junior Program) 408.258.8400 or Frank Mullaney 408.266.1791

Cabana Club Schedule

Gina Wagner: 408.358.2229

Community Ads

Neighborhood Piano Lessons

I am a pianist who loves to teach students of all ages. I have over 20 years teaching experience. If you or your child(ren) would be interested, please call: Kathy Hendrix-Levy, 408.821.0930

Gutters, Roof, Plumbing, Tree Trimming

You name it! I have a list of workmen who can help you. Call Gail Bordi, 408.356.4624 or email gailbordi@yahoo.com

Precision Locksmiths, Inc.

I have heard through Bellringer that there has been vandalism and burglary throughout the neighborhood. I own Precision Locksmith, Inc. and as your neighbor I would like to waive all trip charge fees with a free home security check. Please contact me with any of your security needs. Precision Locksmith, Inc. 408.377.5625, Robertgolter@yahoo.com

Guest Speaker

Betty Auchard is an author and speaker. She lives in the Belwood neighborhood and is available as a guest speaker. You can email her at btauchard@aol.com or check out her website or current blog: <http://bettyauchard.com/>.

Rentals

BEACH HOUSE:

Aptos Beach House, spacious 3BR/2 bath, short walk to Rio Del Mar/Seacliff Beach. Available year-round for monthly, weekly, mid-week, weekend rental. Call Sheryl at 408.348.3237.

OAHU LUXURY TOWNHOME:

Fabulous, newly furnished Oahu townhome for rent. 3 BR, 3 BA + den, 1700+ square feet, 5 min walk to beach in the luxurious Coconut Plantation in Ko Olina. Perfect for families. See our website for pictures, details and contact info: <http://www.koolinahome.com>.

TAHOE DONNER RENTAL

Beautiful, spacious home in Tahoe Donner available for rent: 3 bedrooms, 2 bath & large loft (sleeps 6-11). The home is also available for ski lease. Corner lot amongst pine trees, green belt behind & 700+ sq ft decking. Amenities: premiere golf course, fitness club/pools, tennis courts & more. Info & pictures go to: VRBO.com # 323668 , or call Sue Ahmadian at 408.356.5276.

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE RENTAL

Beautiful home for rent: 2 BR + Den, 2 BA, 1600 sq ft, sleeps 6. Large open concept living/dining room, fabulous views, spa tub, fireplace, wifi, close to lake, heavenly, casinos. Pets considered. For details go to: <http://www.vrbo.com/451904>.

VW EUROVAN FOR RENT

Interested in traveling with a Eurovan for summer camping? Eurovan Weekender Westfalia available for rent - see the possibilities here: <http://www.roadtriporegon.com/campervans/westfalia-configuration>. Fully maintained, new tires, insured, sleeps four, foldout table, and cooler. Not a camper van, so no stove, but Coleman stove available for outdoor cooking. 25% discount compared to these competitive rates: <http://www.roadtriporegon.com/rates>. Call 408.692.5080 or email: opusCdev@gmail.com.

Editor's Note

The purpose of a newsletter is to inform the Belwood neighborhood about board news, community events, offer free advice,

and advertise skills and rental postings. **Article submissions for the Belringer from the community are very much encouraged.**

The spring edition of this newsletter will be published in March 2014. Please send your contributions or ideas to Silvia E. Lee at

bel.editor@gmail.com by **March 1, 2014.**

Thank you! Silvia