

# *Holbrook Heights*

Community Association *Newsletter*

November, 2002

## ***Message from the President***

Doug Lower, President

Hello, fellow homeowners. 2003 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> year of our Association. I've lived here for only 11 of those years, and I've seen many changes. (Mostly good!) I know that there are some original homeowners still living here in the neighborhood. I think it would be interesting to hear from them about how things have evolved over a half century. In the relatively short time I've been here I've seen property values fall and then shoot way up. I was present when the Board of Directors was completely changed at a huge meeting. A Neighborhood Preservation Committee had a huge positive impact on the appearance of our neighborhood. Financially, the Association has gone from very shaky ground to a solid position. The pool was completely remodeled and updated to current code requirements. Our governing documents have been revised and updated from 1953 standards to current standards. Neighborhood Watch signs have gone up at the entrances to our area. Parties have been held at the pool for all the homeowners to come and enjoy. Easter Egg Hunts and Halloween Parties have been thrown. ***(continued page 3)***



***Residents enjoying the newly remodeled children's pool.***

## ***Treasurer's Report***

Melinda Lunn, Treasurer

Our Association is doing better financially and it is time to increase our reserve funding. We paid off the pool loan this year and were able to increase our reserve funding but we are still underfunded. The Board's fiduciary responsibility to the whole membership is to have adequate reserves so that when major repairs need to be done we DO NOT have to get a loan.

Our buildings are approximately 40 years old and rapidly approaching the point where repairing them will be as expensive (or more so) than building them new. Improving our park and pool will increase home values for all of us. Having appropriate reserve funding will give the Board more flexibility to have repairs done in the best way possible not just the cheapest way possible.

Raising the dues is never an easy decision.

***(continued page 4)***

# Board of Directors Meetings

Regular Board of Directors Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30pm in the trailer near the pool.

The Board occasionally reschedules meetings because of holidays. Watch the white signboard on the North 6th Street side of the pool building for notice of rescheduled meetings.

In addition, we sometimes schedule work session meetings of the Board as association business demands. Notice of these additional meetings will

also be posted on the same sign board outside the pool building, visible from North 6th Street.

All Holbrook homeowners are welcome to attend Board Meetings. Meetings begin with a homeowners' forum that appears first on the agenda. Come with your news, questions, suggestions and perhaps get involved with some great neighbors in making our community more attractive, safe and enjoyable.

It is helpful to let us know in advance if you plan to attend simply so we can move to a bigger venue if necessary. The trailer can't seat more than about 9.

## HOME-OWNERS:

Homeowners' issues of this newsletter contain legally required documents. Please keep these for your records

### Upcoming Board Meetings:

November - No Meeting  
December - No Meeting  
January 24, 2003  
February 28  
March 28  
April 25  
May 23

Meetings subject to change. Notification of changes will be posted on the pool sign and on the website at:  
[www.holbrookheights.org](http://www.holbrookheights.org)

#### Board Members:

Doug Lower, President  
Shane Mahoney, Vice President  
Melinda Lunn, Treasurer  
David Kubik, Secretary  
Cyndie Swainbank, Member at Large  
Rob Baldwin, Member at Large  
Marilyn Nicoll, Member at Large

#### Management Company:

Jean Bates and Associates  
Cliff Bates, Account Manager  
P.O. Box 3428,  
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#### Holbrook Heights Newsletter

Fall 2002

Publisher: Holbrook Heights Community Association

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President@HolbrookHeights.org

HHCA Newsletter Editor: Jill Newquist  
Webmaster@HolbrookHeights.org

**HHCA Newsletter** is published quarterly for Holbrook Heights residents and homeowners; a subscription is included in membership benefits. Submissions should be sent to the editor at the email address above or via the postal service to:

HHCA c/o Jill Newquist  
P.O. Box 6782  
Concord, Ca 94524

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## **President**

*(continued from page 1)*

We've hired a professional management firm to help us stay on the right track.

These are just a few of the things I've seen. Can you imagine what more has happened in the rest of the 50 years? If you've lived here for all or most of that time, we'd like to hear from you. Please contact us via Jean Bates & Associates, 925-736-2099 or e-mail me through the website at:  
president@holbrookheights.org.

Work is set to begin soon on the complete replacement of the playground equipment. Many of you have donated money, time and have attended fund-raisers for the project. We will complete this project this year. Plans can be viewed on our website:  
[www.holbrookheights.org](http://www.holbrookheights.org). Thank you to everyone who supported this project and stuck with us while we raised the money to get it done.

I've been on the Board of Directors since 1995. I've been president since 1999. I'd like to retire! Is there anyone out there who would like the opportunity to serve the community as a Board Member? None of us get paid. This is strictly a volunteer position. I joined the board because I like to know what's going on. Do you like to know what's going

on? Give us a call!

Thank you for your support of the Association. As always, we welcome anyone who wishes to volunteer. We need someone to take charge of Neighborhood Preservation. The city has a pretty good program, but it still relies heavily on citizens reporting problems. That's where our own preservation committee could help out. Anyone interested? Let us know via the management company or e-mail me at: president@holbrookheights.org.

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## **HOLBROOK PLAZA UPDATE**

*Shane Mahoney  
Vice President*

Our continuing effort to mitigate the dysfunctional Holbrook Plaza shopping center has paid off. Most residents have noticed that the property's appearance has greatly improved in the last year thanks to new landscaping, parking lot repairs, compliance with sign ordinances, and other measures the owners have had to take to make the property comply with use-permit conditions and city ordinances. Most recently the parking lot was resurfaced and restriped, and a fence was installed around an unpaved area to prevent commercial trucks and equipment from  
*(continued page 6)*

## **Pool Problems and Solutions**

*Marilyn Nicoll, Board Member*

This past summer season at the pool we had a lot of fun, but also a few problems. One of the problems we had was with the "Blue Cards", your information cards. First, these cards are for your protection in case of an emergency. They are also a way for us to keep track of who is a member and who pays the day use fee.

If you are a member your name will be on that card. No one else may use that card number unless his or her name is listed. If you bring a guest, then they pay the three dollars day use fee. We will try and mail these cards to you before the new season opens but if you don't receive one then we will have extras at the Snack Shack. If a child comes in to swim and does not have a card on file, that child will be sent home with a card for the parent to sign. No child coming alone will be allowed to swim unless we have that emergency information on file, whether they are 10 or 17.

We also had some problems with children and, unfortunately, some adults being disrespectful to the lifeguards. These lifeguards are there for your protection. They are there to save lives. Hopefully  
*(continued page 6)*

# **NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP ON THE ROCKS**

Shane Mahoney, Vice President  
Jill Newquist, Editor/Webmaster

The much-ballyhooed Neighborhood Partnership between our neighborhood and the City apparently has come to an anticlimactic end, despite the promise it seemed to hold when it was launched last year to fine-tune City service delivery to the particular needs of our community.

The circumstances aren't clear, but the best we can make of them, and the most coherent thing we've heard, is that the City ended the partnership because its policy is not to work with Homeowners' Associations. This despite the fact that City's website touts its Neighborhood Partnership Program as a link between such associations and City departments. It seems to us that it's only *some* associations to which this previously-unknown policy applies as several associations are listed as having partnerships whereas our association name was recently removed from the list & map on the city website.

Since we're entitled to services anyway it's not a major loss but a clear explanation would have been nice. We will be informing the City Manager of this new policy and its apparent application to us.

We have been very grateful for City-sponsored events such as the recent Dumpster Day, however, behind the scenes, getting them this year wasn't as smooth as in years past. If it were not for the persistence of certain board members the event may not have happened.

Proactive Neighborhood Preservation enforcement was one of the promised benefits of the partnership but recently we have had reports from residents that calls to Neighborhood Preservation have gone unanswered or, worse, residents were advised that (valid) complaints would not be enforced. With things going in the direction they have been we decided we needed to take action.

We are now currently working on an area of our website ([www.holbrookheights.org](http://www.holbrookheights.org)) where residents will be able to locate municipal codes and file complaints using an online form. Complaints filed in this manner will then be reviewed by a board member or volunteer for accuracy. Valid complaints will then be filed with the city with supporting municipal codes and digital photographs (if available) via a standard format. Keeping track of complaints and the City's enforcement actions, or lack of them will be a valuable tool if we find ourselves in the position of *(continued page 8)*

## **Treasurer's Report** *(continued from page 1)*

We know that times are hard for some right now but, in the best interests of our Association, your Board has decided on an increase.

Your Board volunteers their time to help make Holbrook Heights a better place for us all to live. The time commitment is not horrendous and if you want to see changes in how the Association is run and operated please consider serving on the Board.

Information on Board Meetings can be found on page 2 of this newsletter. Residents are always welcome.

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## **Did You Know?**

**RECREATIONAL VEHICLES** - Trailers, boats, campers, airplanes, etc. may not be stored in front yards or on driveways. However, driveway parking is allowed for a 24 hour period, for loading and unloading purposes only. One recreational vehicle may be parked in the rear or side yards behind a six foot high, opaque fence.

If it's not a sight obstruction, the City requires complaints from two or more nearby neighbors. Visitors may park recreational vehicles on a paved surface for up to one week in any consecutive six-month period. For more information, or to report violations please call **Neighborhood Preservation at 671-3454.**

# *Resident's Corner*

## *Opinion Column*

### Why Raise Dues and Other Possibilities

It appears to me, as a board member, that the only resistance on our association's Board of Directors with regards to the upcoming dues increase, is the dread that comes with knowing there will be a very small, but vocal, percentage of homeowners who will complain. Typically, this complaint is expressed as something along the lines of "I don't use the pool, why should I have to pay?" I would like to express my reasons for why that viewpoint does not make sense.

Like it or not, use it or not, the pool and park are assets to the community and everyone who owns a home in Holbrook Heights. The maintenance, operations, repairs and renovations of the pool and park are the main thing that your annual homeowner's dues pay for. Even if you do not use the facility, it is still a great feature for families that do use it and for people who are looking to buy a home in the area. In supply and demand economics, this adds value to living here for those who would want to use it. This increases demand for a home here as opposed to what demand for a home here would be if we did not have a park and pool. Since the supply of homes here is fixed, the only other variable that can be affected is price, which in case of a higher demand, goes up. It also follows that the nicer the asset, the greater will be the increased demand. I have noticed the supply and demand forces upon real estate in the Bay Area (bless them, for they are great) have resulted in a phenomenal and fabulous increase in equity for all of us that have been homeowners here for one year or more.

Personally, I think it would be wise to tap a little bit of that equity. I would be in favor of a substantial commitment by the association to upgrade the pool/park property. The old building is just that, old. Although functional, it's outdated, looks cheap and needs work, likely major work, in the near future. The chain link fence and barbed wire look awful. Something along the lines of a one time assesment or financed commitment of \$500 per residence, I am going to guess, could accomplish things like a completely renovated, redesigned, updated, and expanded building at the pool. A good-looking wall or some other type of *attractive* barrier could replace the fence and barbed wire. The new playground equipment is already online for the near future, but I think we are missing the boat by not considering a most basic and beginner level skateboard ramp/rail of some sort. I also think the southwest corner could use a nice Holbrook Heights sign and landscaping. I believe that upgrading Holbrook Heights, by remodeling our park/pool into a neighborhood jewel, could easily increase the value of my home by \$10,000. Making a 20 fold return on the investment for a monetary benefit, in addition to the quality of life issues gained by having a *much* nicer facility.

Obviously, ideas to make it better are easy. Probably the biggest hurdle is the required unpaid volunteer hours that would have to be given by someone to promote and administrate a project of this scale. If you are out there please show yourself. In lieu of my own particularly ambitious desires, the association has had to raise the dues \$28 so that we can just keep going as we are now.

Oh, and by the way, I don't use the pool either.

By David Kubik, accountant, Holbrook Heights homeowner and board member



## **HOLBROOK PLAZA** (continued from page 3)

parking there overnight. We can thank the City of Concord's Ken Nichols for seeing to it that all of this happened after our letter to City Manager, Ed James, pointed out the gross violations at the Plaza, and our successful one-day "fix it or sell it" picketing got the attention of the Chronicle and the Transcript. Ken worked tirelessly to force the owners to comply despite foot-dragging and stalling over the property's pending sale, and dealt with us frankly, openly and often about the process. Hats off.

We recently learned that the Plaza was sold to new owners, Mason-McDuffie Financial. We have been told that they have plans for a makeover and additional square feet at the south end and on the corner. We were also told that they have a supermarket lined up. It appears that this is essentially the same deal that almost happened last year but with different players.

Further news is that the empty storefront south of Bradley Video is already rented and they are trying to rent the other space north of Bradley. Both are month-to-month and they expect them to be available for use for about 9 months to a year until work can start on the redevelopment.

Although no plans have yet been submitted to the city, this is an exciting development in the ongoing events at Holbrook Plaza. We will watch for a Planning Commission hearing on the redevelopment. If you hear something before we do please let us know.

Many thanks to all those who have been working hard on this, especially to those who took the time to picket last year. Special thanks to Marcus O'Connell, who found some time for his old 'hood and helped organize.

Contact Shane Mahoney (691-9037, [shanemahoney@astound.net](mailto:shanemahoney@astound.net)) with questions or information about the Plaza.

## **Pool**

(continued from page 3)

they will not have to do this, but they are trained to do just that. When pool goers question or ignore rules or are just downright rude it makes it hard for the lifeguards to do their job. Just remember that they may have to save your life someday! If parents have questions about the rules, please take it up with the management or the Community Association board, NOT the lifeguards. They are there to enforce the rules, not debate them.

We are now working on a new Discipline Policy for next year. Every emergency card that is on file will have a copy of the Discipline Policy attached to it. We will now also require that a parent or caretaker read and sign the Discipline Policy. When you receive these in the mail, please talk over the rules with your child(ren). If your child is having a problem at the pool, we will be sending a letter to the parent or caretaker to advise you of the situation. The details of the new policy will be communicated via the newsletter and website before the 2003 season.

Let us all have a SAFE and fun summer next year.

## ***New Pool Manager for 2003 Season***

*Marilyn Nicoll, Board Member*

**Kerry di Lorenzo** will be our new pool manager next year. Many of you know her through Holbrook School and I am sure you will agree with me that we are very fortunate to have her. Kerry has experience in accounting and management. She has a bright spirit and lots of patience.

Along with Kerry will be Kelly Martin as our Head lifeguard. These two women will be a wonderful team. They will strive to make sure we have a great staff and to make sure everyone has a safe summer, with lots of fun thrown in.

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## ***Playground Update***

*Rob Baldwin, Board Member*

The new the playground is right around the corner. We are planning on construction to begin sometime in November or December. By installing the playground during these months, that are considered the "off months", we will be saving thousands of dollars.

We had success with our recent Round Table Pizza fundraiser.

The amount donated from Round Table was almost \$148.95 which means the residents of Holbrook Heights bought over \$700.00 of pizza the evening of our fundraiser. Along with saying thanks to Round Table Pizza, we would also like to recognize all of the individuals who took the time to participate in this fundraiser. We would like to thank those who have made personal contributions (please see next column) both recently and during past fundraising efforts.

We have been trying to get this playground project off the ground for several years and finally, with the help of many dedicated people, this project is nearing completion. We will have a wonderful place right here in our own neighborhood for our children to play, for us to enjoy, and for our community to come together.

We will keep the website updated so that everyone can follow along with the progress of the playground. We are planning a Grand Opening at the park this spring. What a great way to celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> year! Details will follow and also will be posted on the website.

Thank you for your continuing support on the project.

## ***Special Thanks!***

We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to these companies and individuals for their recent contribution(s) to the playground fund. We realize many more individuals have given time and money over the years and though you may not be listed by name, know your efforts are recognized and appreciated. It has taken us all to get where we are with this project.

Thank you to these individuals:

**Dana Claire  
Jim Meyer**

And these Companies:

  
**Diablo Valley Realty**  
4691 A Clayton Road  
Concord, California 94521  
(925) 682-4663



**Terry Oelschlaeger**  
Broker / Owner  
Professional, Ethical Representation



# Holbrook Heights

Community Association  
P.O. Box 3428,  
Danville, CA 94528-3428  
[www.holbrookheights.org](http://www.holbrookheights.org)

*The quality of life in Holbrook Heights depends on you.*

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## **COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK**

Jill Newquist, Editor/Webmaster

We have started to compile email addresses of Holbrook Residents in an effort to expand communications within our neighborhood. We have used it for keeping residents aware of social events at the pool but expect to use it if we need an immediate community action. This list was started when a resident wrote and asked why we had not done more for a family who lost their home to a fire. We want to have a network in place in case we need it. We respect your

privacy. Email addresses will not be given or sold to any other parties. All emails are sent "BCC" so that recipients cannot collect any addresses. If you would like to be a part of the network or have questions, please email:  
[webmaster@holbrookheights.org](mailto:webmaster@holbrookheights.org)

***Visit us  
on the web***

***[www.holbrookheights.org](http://www.holbrookheights.org)***

## **ON THE ROCKS**

***(continued from page 4)***

having to follow up with the City.

Some longtime residents will vouch for the fact that certain homes have been allowed to remain in a state that violates numerous codes for years. This is not acceptable.

If you get a few moments, check the organizational chart on the City website. You may be surprised to see who is in the top spot.

We continue to work on a solution with the City. Watch for updates.