

GREATER MULWOOD HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 1

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WINTER 2016

You're Never Too Old Department

by Ed Albrecht

It was with great pride this June, when Calabasas unveiled our new, two story, 9500 square foot Calabasas Senior Center. It is now a part of our Civic Center Campus, tucked neatly below the hill, between the Library and City Hall. The event was truly a Grand Opening Day that arrived in style with more than 200 people in attendance.

The building is now home to the existing and very successful Savvy Senior/50+ program. Classes, excursions, special events, lectures and luncheons will be offered throughout the year, for 50+ women and men within the City of Calabasas. There are also a variety of clubs in the making, which will provide great get together opportunities for people seeking to make friends with similar interests.

The opportunity to continue learning, advancing personal enrichment and the Center's inviting environment make for unique and special experiences available to all.

Want to take art classes? Visit the specially designed art room with its wonderful natural light. Like sports? Enjoy pool, ping pong and darts? We have just the 'Sports Room' for you.

Want to sit and read the Wall Street Journal as you watch CNN? We have just the room for you, to relax in quiet comfort.

Attention golfers. We have a surprise for you. Adjoining our patio is a professionally designed synthetic turf putting green,

complete with a raised apron to practice your chipping. Lectures, demonstrations, discussion groups and classes focus on entertainment, fitness, technology, music, fine arts, personal development, hobbies, and arts & crafts. Interesting and diverse excursions are offered all year long, including day trips to museums, gardens, missions, nature sites, and special seasonal events. Field trips include lunch and transportation, providing an opportunity to make new friends along the way.

As you can see, the 'Calabasas Senior Center' is a multi-use recreational facility. It's designed to support, enhance and encourage an active healthy lifestyle for Calabasas seniors. Classes and activities can be accessed through the Calabasas Recreational Brochure which the City mails to all its residents.

The Center is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. It can be used on a daily rate basis. Annual individual or family

memberships are also available. Currently, only Calabasas residents are eligible for membership.

Looking for a pleasant atmosphere to rent for a family or private special occasion? Consider the Senior Center.

For more information, The Center can be reached directly by calling 818-224-1777.

The website is: <http://www.calabasasseniocenter.com>





President's Message

by Ed Albrecht

Welcome to our newly restored, semi-annual newsletter. We hope you enjoy the variety of information and history provided. We also hope that through this newsletter we can communicate our mission, help you consider getting involved and obtain your membership.

The Greater Mulwood Homeowners Association is a voluntary organization that represents the interests of the Greater Mulwood community and homeowners. We meet the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm in the Gelson's 2nd floor Community Room, (stairway or elevator to the left of Golden Spoon).

We serve the Greater Mulwood community by offering a unique forum for homeowners to meet, greet and mingle with fellow neighbors, government officials and civic leaders. It is a learning and informative experience that helps bring a better understanding to issues that affect Greater Mulwood, our City and the surrounding area.

Frequent guests include the Mayor of Calabasas, Calabasas City Councilmembers, City Emergency Services Staff as well as Members of the Las Virgenes Water District.

Many of our activities also include sponsoring Candidate forums for the City Council, Las Virgenes Unified School District, the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District and special guest speakers who represent services or needs that impact the community. We also keep a watchful eye to report and cleanup graffiti before it becomes a problem.

Our mission never varies; supporting the Greater Mulwood community. We are a volunteer association. Please consider supporting our continued efforts by joining a well-respected community voice. Membership dues support our costs; 99% of which go to meeting room expenses and insurance. We need everyone's support. Annual dues are \$25, payable through our website or by check. Each membership helps us all.

We appreciate all of our contributing authors contributions to this newsletter. Please note that any opinions expressed by the contributors are their own personal opinions and not necessarily those of the Greater Mulwood Homeowners Association.

www.greatermulwood.org

Flood Insurance

By Richard Cassel



Were you one of the many Mulwood homeowners who found that flood insurance was an astronomical \$2500/year instead of an affordable \$450?

Last year, with heavy rains forecast due to an El Nino pattern in the Pacific, many Mulwood homeowners found themselves unable to buy affordable flood insurance due to an error in FEMA's (Federal Emergency Management Association) flood classification of parts of our neighborhood, specifically homes within 400 feet of Mulholland Highway.

Homes along this strip, running from Declaration Avenue to Freedom Drive, are considered to be in FEMA Zone D flood insurance ratings, resulting in a price of \$2500/year as opposed to a Zone X rating (\$450/year), when you go about three houses west of Liberty Bell Road. FEMA set the flood zone classifications of these homes to be the same as that of the Santa Monica Mountains across Mulholland Highway. This is an error that representatives of FEMA readily admit to

but say they will not change unless there is a review of the entire Santa Monica Mountains region.

Anyone affected by this error should reach out to their state and federal representatives. This is a strength in numbers issue: if the numbers are great enough and loud enough, we might be able to get Flood Panel 1288F reclassified. The issue is referred to as a letter of map revision or "LOMR." More information can be found at <http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program-2/letter-map-revision>.

Assemblyman Matt Debabneh stated at his September 10th town hall meeting that his office is always there to help constituents reach the appropriate federal agency for issues that are beyond local and state jurisdiction. This might be a great opportunity to take him up on his offer.



Emergency Preparedness

By Karmen Brower



The fire in June was a graphic demonstration that dire emergencies can touch even Calabasas. Try as we might, we are still a part of the real world subject to all the problems, foibles and joys as everyone else is.

And boy, were we lucky that no one was injured or killed, and no houses burned. Because we can't depend on luck to protect us, we are much smarter to plan as much as we can for what could come. That's why we are going to have a preparedness column in this newsletter as well as on our website (greatermulwood.org). We will provide information on a continuing basis that residents can use to create a comprehensive emergency response plan.

First, find each and every significant document in your life. That includes insurance policies (don't forget if you have more than one property), medical information on each family member including your pets, your last tax return, credit card numbers and contact information, birth certificates, divorce decrees, car titles/lease agreements, wills, trusts, etc. Either copy each and every page and/or convert the information to a thumb drive or two. Put one copy off site in a safe deposit box or send it to a

relative or friend who lives outside the area who is unlikely to suffer from the same disaster. Keep one copy at home with your emergency supplies.

Go through your home taking pictures of everything you own. Don't forget dishes, food, cosmetics, jewelry, tapes in cabinets, etc. in short, anything you would want replaced if you lost it. Don't forget the garage and patio furniture. Include copies of your purchase receipts in your documents above, if possible, scan them and store digitally. Remember, insurance companies will only replace what you can prove you owned.

Next designate a family emergency supplies place. Some people elect to use a closet near the front door. I recommend having two. One inside so you can grab and go with a backpack with clothing for each person, and a hard plastic container with documents, quick food supplies, computers, tools, etc. The second one is outside in a garbage can with food and sanitary supplies, etc. Remember to periodically (probably annually) change out your emergency food, water and batteries.

Remember: Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

Spotlight on Education

By Aaron Scott



People are drawn to Mulwood for a multitude of reasons but for many families the local schools are a major factor. Having three very good schools within walking distance of most Mulwood homes creates a very special neighborhood. Chaparral Elementary is the gateway to the community for many families to

quickly meet and bond with other parents in the area. Extracurricular activities like the Boys & Girls club, school carnival, ice cream socials and movie nights make it easy for families to meet others and feel at home.

A.C. Stelle Middle School is often considered the best Middle School within the Las Virgenes School District and many of the surrounding areas. The facility, opened in 2004, is attractive and spacious and is a central hub for many youth sports programs on

the weekends. People from all over L.A. County relocate specifically for this school.

Highly rated Calabasas high school offers a strong education and competitive sports programs which are attractive for students and neighbors alike. The school is not only a great education facility but also a gathering place for community events such as our very popular July 4th celebrations.

Not only do these great schools strengthen the community, they are also great because of the community. Mulwood is a community that cares deeply about local education and the families that move here hold that in high regard. It is that passion for excellence that keeps our schools great and motivates new residents to move to our community.

The Howling

By Karmen Brower

Coyotes are our neighbors. In fact, some are even crowding us just a bit. About any early morning or late evening, we can see coyotes jumping our fences, walking our streets, investigating garbage cans, sniffing for pets and generally making their presence known if we care to look.

Lest we forget, they are just as entitled to share our area as us because they were absolutely here first. Nonetheless, it's a bit disconcerting to see this not quite dog, not quite wolf, animal

loping down the street or chasing our cats and dogs while ignoring our shouts, screams, arm waving or other human gestures.

Coyotes just go about their mostly nocturnal business of hunting food and looking for water for themselves and their families, basically ignoring these odd beings who now share their habitat. They've found they can't get rid of us, so they've acclimated themselves to our presence taking advantage of our tendency to leave our pets, their food, and sometimes even our small children, out for easy pickings.

GOVERNMENT CORNER

By Lucy Martin

Former Mayor, City of Calabasas



Nestled at the foot of the Santa Monica Mountains, the city of Calabasas is home to roughly 25,000 residents. Calabasas city government consists of five city council members elected by the residents and forty city commissioners who are appointed by council members. One city council member, elected by

fellow council members, serves as mayor each year.

Council members serve four-year terms and elections are held on even-number years with three seats contested during one election cycle and two seats contested during the next. City Council meetings are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays monthly at 7:00pm and residents are encouraged to attend and participate.

The city has eight commissions: Communications and Technology, Environmental, Historic Preservation, Library, Parks, Recreation and Education, Traffic and Transportation and Planning and Public Safety. Residents are encouraged to attend commission meetings and apply for appointments to commission seats.

The day-to day business of the city is run by the city manager who oversees five departments: Community Development, Community Services, Public Works, Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness, Finance, and Media Operations. To contact City Hall, call (818) 224-1600.

There are many wonderful events held by the city such as the annual October Pumpkin Festival, the Fourth of July celebration and the spring Fine Arts Festival. Volunteers are welcome and needed. Speaking of volunteers, the new Calabasas Senior Center is always looking for residents to lend a hand.

There are many opportunities for you to help shape your city. To learn more about what's happening go to CITYOFCALABASAS.COM and sign up to receive the e-newsletter.

NO DARN FOOLING AROUND

By Karmen Brower

Thanks to the famous/infamous Proposition 13 (1978) - depending on your point of view - property taxes are only 1% of assessed value at the time of sale, subject to valuation by the county assessor. Because bonded indebtedness is not regulated by Prop. 13, our tax assessments are usually more than 1%. School districts, flood control districts, and a multitude of other taxes can be added on. However, the basic assessed value cannot be raised by more than 3% per year as long as the property remains under the same ownership.

Some people don't agree with the way Proposition 13 works. But for people who lived in California before 13 was passed, it

was a miracle. Previously, the city and county would simply create unlimited budgets. Budgets were then divided into the assessed value of people's properties. The budgets were unlimited as were the amount the assessments could be increased every year. If the assessments didn't cover the budgets, they were simply increased to meet the amount needed.

In 1977, the year before the passage of Proposition 13 people in Los Angeles County paid some of the highest property taxes in the nation. For example, a two-bedroom, one-bath home south of Ventura Boulevard in Tarzana was assessed over \$1200 per year. People across the state were shocked, then hysterical or depressed, and finally angry with a roar upon receipt of their property tax bills. The result; passage of Proposition 13 by a huge majority.

Pay your property taxes in two payments: November 10th - December 10th for the first payment, and February 10-April 10 for the second. Of course, you can always make the second payment before December 31st if you are looking for an early deduction on your Federal taxes.

MULWOOD BACK WHEN

By Karmen Brower

The earliest development began in the 1920's and 1930's with a developer named Victor Gerard Kleinberger. In fact, Woodland Hills was originally named "Gerard."

Settlement began, believe it or not, as a vacation community with "cabin" lots (20'x40') which were sold to people who built tiny cabins in the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains for use in the summertime. There were also ranches of considerable size dotted here and there including most of the area we now know as Mulwood.

Along what is currently Valmar/Old Topanga is the area known as the "Bird" streets, which was a Gerard-developed year-round artist colony. It flourished during the 1920's and into the 1930's as home to a number of well-known artists and craftspersons until it fell into decline around World War II.

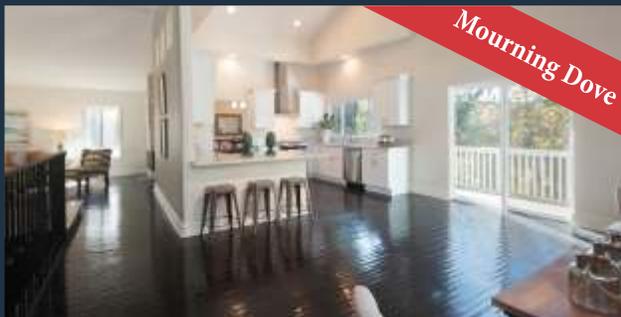
Areas we know as Old Topanga and the Calabasas Highlands remain as examples of subdivisions which is why more than one lot is required to build a house, and why that legal status bedevils city planners today. After lot size, the ability of the lot to "perk" or drain water via cesspools and septic systems has always presented the most difficult building standard that must be met when building homes.

It turns out that water is very close to the surface being only as deep as 12' or 13' in many areas, making sewage systems a real operational challenge. That is in large part the reason Mulwood suffered a lot of liquefaction damage after the 1994 earthquake. It could happen again, so think about keeping your earthquake insurance coverage current.



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Here are some our recent transactions in your Calabasas neighborhood.



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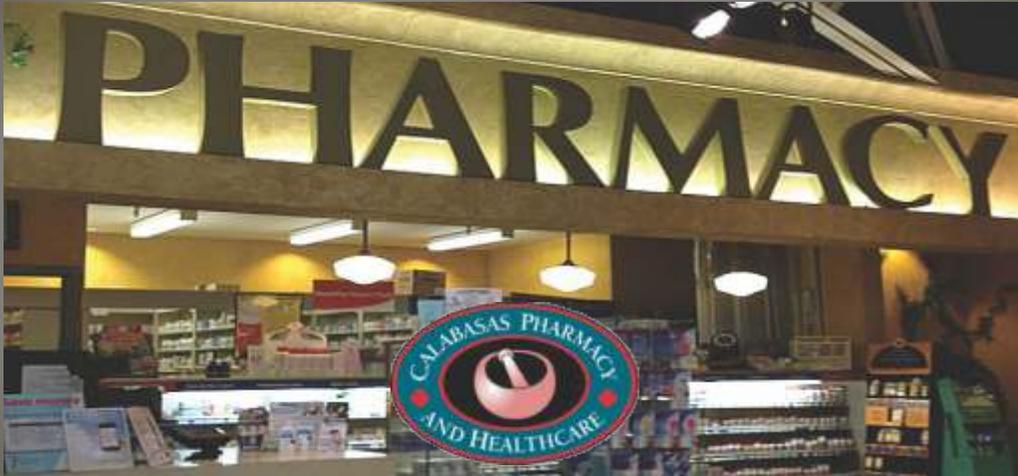


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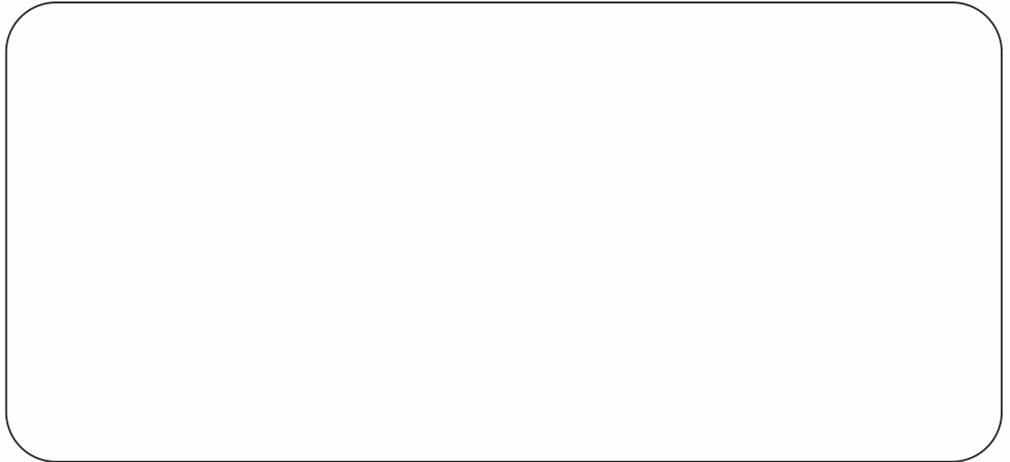
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In this issue:

New Senior Center!
Valuable Flood Insurance Info
Emergency Preparedness
The Howling!
and much more ...



Membership Form

You may fill out the form below and mail it to our post office box with your check for **\$25**. Or you may go to our website: www.greatermulwood.org, fill out the form there, pay dues through PayPal, and e-mail the form to us. Membership is based on the calendar year of January 1 through December 31.

Greater Mulwood Homeowners Association Membership Form for 2016
My/Our Dues of \$25.00 is enclosed

Please Mail To: GMHA, P.O. Box 8921, Calabasas, CA 91372-8921

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