



Yosemite West Property &
Homeowners, Inc.
www.YosemiteWest.org

In the West
Newsletter
August 2007

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Notes from the Editor

by Tom Lambert, Newsletter Editor

Does a Neighborhood Matter?

This past weekend a group of seven Yosemite West residents and friends got together to reshingle a neighbor's roof. Since the homeowner didn't have the cash or the youth to do it himself, younger and abler neighbors stepped up and got it done, including people who own no property in the West, but who work here and consider themselves part of the community. After two days of hard work, one of the participants then came by with his truck and helped

me move some appliances that I had in storage. Those appliances were given to us by yet other neighbors who wanted to help us lower the expense of furnishing our new house. No sooner were the appliances in place, than there was a knock on the door. Still another neighbor was delivering strawberries scored at a two-for-one sale in town. New homeowners and those who have little time to spend in Yosemite West may not realize what a strong sense of community can exist here. Despite the challenges posed by the lack of any community center and a high proportion of transients and part-time residents, Yosemite West is a tight community, like a dysfunctional family, as the local joke goes. Of late, this newsletter has tended to play a bit like a broken record with respect to fire safety, but it's worth it to remember that apart from the massive drop in property values that would result from a fire, the damage to the community would also be tragic and it would take years to rebuild. Fire safety therefore remains a crucial focus of YWPHI.

Cleanup and Chipping Recap

Once again, the neighborhood work day coupled with the chipping program sponsored by YWPHI resulted in a significant reduction in ground fuels in our neighborhood. Special thanks go to those who volunteered trucks, the muscle to fill them or both. Having misplaced my notes, and at the risk of leaving someone out, I want to thank some of the folks I saw helping other property owners clear their lots: Jeff Beranek, Harry Hagan, John Mock, Ken Owens, Bob Skrdla, Ken Wall, Steve Yates, and two young guests of Kelly Rich's, whose names I seem to have misplaced. Thanks also to everyone who put together a great picnic that served for breakfast, lunch and dinner for at least one of us. There was a bit of confusion this year about how the cleanup works, but in essence, it's like this: some people volunteer to help out others, but if you are not there to help load your pile, no magic elves are going to stop at your house and make it disappear. This is a participatory event.

The chipper program works a bit differently. For the past few years, YWPHI has hired professional crews to come through and chip the debris that property owners stack by the road. It's a great service, but as Kay pointed out in the last newsletter, YWPHI takes in less money in membership dues than these services cost and we will not be able to offer them forever. This is a stopgap solution to help us get rid of the overgrowth caused by decades of fire suppression. Eventually, it will be incumbent upon property owners to keep up their land on their own.

Chuck Sikora to Manage Fire Safe Grants

At the picnic, we had a chance to meet Chuck Sikora, the professional forester who will be managing the \$56,000 in grant money from the California Fire Safe Council that will go towards creating a Community

Wildfire Protection Plan and towards hiring contractors to cut a shaded fuel break below the neighborhood. Visit www.yosemitewest.org/grants.htm for the latest updates on the status of these grants. Chuck has been working the forests of Henness Ridge since back in the days of the lumber companies and is an expert consultant on forest management. Chuck said at the meeting, that he would be willing to meet with any property owner in the neighborhood to assess the fire risk to their property and to make recommendations. You should expect to receive information from him later this year.

We also learned that the new law governing defensible space, that created the reduced fuel zone out to 100 feet, was inadvertently written in such a way that it prevented federal authorities from enforcing the state requirements. Since our area is overseen by the US Forest Service, that has meant no enforcement of the defensible space requirements over the last couple of years. YWPHI is looking into options for reestablishing inspections of our neighborhood to help ensure that vegetation is thinned appropriately to make our neighborhood as safe as possible. Meanwhile, Mariposa County is considering ordinances that would place the same responsibilities on lot owners that currently apply to homeowners. It's certainly not clear whether or not this ordinance will pass, but if it does it will be a huge step toward improving the overall fire safety of our neighborhood.

YWPHI Board Minutes

Minutes from previous YWPHI Board of Directors' meetings are archived at www.yosemitewest.org/board.htm. Minutes from last year's general meeting of the membership will be available to all at this year's Labor Day meeting (see page 3).

***In the West* Publication**

Archived issues of the newsletter are available to download as a PDF at www.yosemitewest.org/archive.htm. If you wish to be notified when new issues are available for download, please send a request via email to treasurer@yosemitewest.org. Your willingness to obtain the newsletter electronically will save YWPHI money on printing and mailing, allowing us to use that money for community projects.

In the West

Want to Know More About What the YWPHI Board Does? Please Serve!

Between normal terms expiring and some members of the board having moved away or otherwise ended their terms early, we are in need of a few willing YWPHI members to help out by serving on the Board. As a board member you will meet more of your neighbors, have a greater say in the way the board uses your dues, and learn more about what's happening in the neighborhood. The Board is open to all YWPHI members, whether homeowners or lot owners, new residents or old, full-time or part-time, including **you**.

Time to Renew!

You will soon be receiving a mailing asking you to renew your membership. Please, take a minute to send in your check. All of your dues stay in the community to work on issues that benefit everyone. YWPHI is working hard to make our neighborhood better and safer. We've had a great year, having secured major grants to add a shaded fuel break and having once-again sponsored free crush chipping for members. Without continued support from existing members and, hopefully, increased participation from new property owners, we will simply not be able to continue programs like the chipper program.

So please, when you get your renewal notice, deal with it before you forget. No doubt many members will be in a hurry to pay as soon as possible. For those who simply can't wait to receive the form in the mail, you can always download it at:

<http://yosemitewest.org/members.pdf>

Now would be a good time!

About YWPHI

YWPHI was established to promote and protect the best interests of the owners of land used for residential purposes in Yosemite West. YWPHI shall strive for the improvement and betterment of all facilities and services within the area, and shall promote and encourage maximum community and civic spirit, and foster good will and friendship among all residents of Yosemite West.

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Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc. Labor Day Picnic & Annual Meeting

Sunday, September 2, 2006

10:30 a.m.

The YWPHI Labor Day picnic and annual meeting starts at 10:30 a.m., Sunday, September 2, 2006 behind Ken Wall's house on the south side of Henness Circle. Everyone in the community is welcome to attend.

YWPHI will provide plates, napkins, cups, soft drinks, beer and wine. Please bring your own chair(s). As always, we appreciate your bringing a dish to share at the potluck brunch:

If Your Last Name Starts With

A–H

K–P

Q–Z

Please Bring

fruit or vegetable, whole or in salads

sweet rolls, coffee cake, Danish, muffins

main dish (e.g., quiche, frittata, etc.)

Annual Meeting

The YWPHI annual meeting will take place following the brunch. The annual meeting includes the election of the YWPHI Board of Directors to serve for 2007-2008 and the approval of minutes from last year's annual meeting. A draft of the minutes from the September 3, 2006 annual meeting will be handed out at the meeting for review and comment. Anyone wanting to review the draft of the minutes prior to the meeting can do so online at www.yosemitewest.org/board.htm; the minutes will be posted online in mid-August.

Please email president@yosemitewest.org or contact Kay Pitts (209-372-4775) with any questions, comment or suggestions you may have.

Door Prizes Again This Year !

YWPHI Board of Directors (2006–2007)

Kay Pitts, Vice President; Debby Hagan, Secretary; Members Jim Andrews, Jody Brady, Tom Lambert, and Kim O’Neil.

YWPHI Committees (2006–2007)

Tom Lambert, Newsletter Editor; Kim O’Neil, Webmaster and Acting Treasurer; John Mock, Fire Safety.

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