

serra mesa observer

PUBLISHED BY THE SERRA MESA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

VOLUME 29, ISSUE 2 MARCH / APRIL 2015



www.SerraMesa.org

You are invited to participate in the

Serra Mesa Community Council

Wednesday, March 25

6:30 pm

*Serra Mesa - Kearny Mesa Library
Community Room, 9005 Aero Drive*

Serra Mesa Community Council

Wednesday, April 22

6:30 pm

*Serra Mesa - Kearny Mesa Library
Community Room, 9005 Aero Drive*

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<i>Current Issues</i>	
Cindy Moore.....	(858)565-2473*
<i>Special Projects/SMPG</i>	

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<i>Subscription Records</i>	
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<i>Observer Staff</i>	
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<i>Mailing Coordinator</i>	
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<i>Neighborhood Awareness</i>	
Robin Rivera.....	(858)565-2473*
<i>Message Coordinator</i>	
Pat Brownyard.....	(858)565-2473*
<i>Welcome to Serra Mesa</i>	
Elizabeth Rice.....	(858)565-2473*
<i>Marketing/Media</i>	
Brad Beyenhof.....	(858)565-2473*
<i>Webmaster</i>	

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Articles, Ideas, & Upcoming Events for the Observer
are welcome. Editor reserves right to edit articles.

For articles, email Ronda Adams - rondakadams@msn.com

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P.O. Box 23315, San Diego, CA, 92193

<http://www.serramesa.org>

communitycouncil@serramesa.org

SERRA MESA COMMUNITY GROUPS

Serra Mesa Community Council	(858) 565-2473
e-mail: communitycouncil@serramesa.org	
Serra Mesa Planning Group	(858) 565-2473
e-mail: smpg@serramesa.org	

ELECTED OFFICIALS

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Mayor Kevin Faulconer	(619) 236-6330
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Governor Jerry Brown	(619) 525-4641
U.S. Representative Susan Davis	(619) 448-5201
U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein	(619) 231-9712

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Mar 10	Friends of Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library 5:30 p.m., Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library, Sudberry Room
Mar 11	Serra Mesa Recreation Center Council Meeting 6:30 p.m., 9020 Village Glen Drive
Mar 19	Serra Mesa Planning Group 7 p.m., Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library, Community Room
Mar 23	Friends of Ruffin Canyon 6:30 p.m., Taft Middle School, 9191 Gramercy Dr.
Mar 25	Serra Mesa Community Council 6:30 p.m., Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library, Community Rm
Apr 4	Friends of Ruffin Canyon Cleanup 9:00 a.m., Shawn Avenue entrance to Ruffin Canyon
Apr 16	Serra Mesa Planning Group 7 p.m., Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library, Community Room
Apr 22	Serra Mesa Community Council 6:30 p.m., Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library, Community Rm
Apr 27	Friends of Ruffin Canyon 6:30 p.m., Taft Middle School, 9191 Gramercy Dr
May 2	Friends of Ruffin Canyon Cleanup 9:00 a.m., Shawn Avenue entrance to Ruffin Canyon

*Serra Mesa Enhancement Committee meetings -
write to P.O. Box 23315, San Diego, CA, 92193.*

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What can be done to help solve America's Aging Problems?

The Problem: America is aging and City, State, and Federal governments are poorly prepared to meet the challenges. A Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies states that America's older population is in the midst of unprecedented growth. With the aging of the large baby-boom generation and increased longevity, the 50-and over population is projected to increase about 20 percent by 2030, to 132 million. In just 15 years, one in five people will be at least aged 65. To ensure that these older adults have the housing they need to enjoy high-quality, independent, and financially secure lives they need to plan. There is a new urgency not only for individuals and their families, but also for the nation as a whole. This change has already begun to negatively impact our medical care and insurance, housing, family responsibilities, and reliance on the care issues that we have come to expect.

Housing: New York Times Sunday Review editorial states that the next wave of retirees will not have the benefits of current retirees because of lack of pensions, reduction of savings because of job loss, reduced wages due to the recession, and loans on mortgages for those depending on their home's equity for retirement. In addition, one third of adults over 50 and one third of adults over 80 are rent burdened meaning that housing costs exceed 30% of gross income and has a growing effect in retirement savings. As if this was not all it should be noted, the study says that "the number of elderly households eligible for federal rental assistance – 3.9 million in 2011 is expected to rise to 5.2 million by 2020 and grow by 1.3 million in the next 10 years." This taken into account with Education Loans which must be paid back keeps many younger couples from investing in anything. A problem for all in that fewer retirees will be able to afford their retirement and more middle aged persons facing rising educational costs for children will also be faced with supplementing their parent's retirement situations especially with the cost of assisted living increasing.

As much as we hope, the government national, state, and local is unable to pay for all that we require. Young persons are faced with the question of whether social security will be there for them and what are their income options for life after retirement. Once again, planning in all areas is mandatory.

One of the solutions is in the extended family where two and three generations may need to occupy the same housing



unit. I am sure that with many families this is a last resort. Not many living units have the flexibility of enough bedrooms. Sometimes a granny flat makes sense.

Another solution is for retired adults to stay in their current homes longer to postpone the increased living costs found in senior housing. Current estimates for Assisted Care facilities can range from \$4,000 to \$9,000 per month. Not many retirement savings plans can last for any sustained time with such a burden. As

individuals age, many of the single seniors can rent from other seniors to help share housing and food costs. Many extended care benefits will assist seniors who stay at home and are able to still care for their own basic needs. Seniors could have the added benefit of helping each other with simple tasks as well as having someone with them should an emergency occur.

We are seeing a trend in apartment buildings that offer many of the amenities that country clubs offer such as pools, athletic equipment, common entertainment sources, activity groups, and other services. Seniors could pool their income and share in the rent of such buildings making it more affordable. Many of the chores they cannot do are provided yet they still have the opportunity of new modern buildings with elevators and parking conveniences. Sometimes 2 and 3 bedroom apartments are available providing the privacy yet benefit of group living. An added benefit is these buildings could be downtown eliminating some of the problematic issues such as driving at night and location being close to entertainment.

One of the issues we encounter as the Serra Mesa Village develops is how to get people involved. Our surveys have shown that people want to interact with others. Seniors have a lot of energy and ideas but having someone their age to share them with is very important. Health and exercise are something we all need but sometimes the encouragement of another senior gets us to the gym or just walking together to discuss common interests. We are providing social opportunities with our drop in and play meetings every two weeks, weekly friendship lunches, daily excursion trips, longer travel opportunities, Empowering Mind and Body Classes, and monthly meetings run by members of the Village. By getting seniors together to meet and know their neighbors is a wonderful way to stay young and live meaningful lives. If you are 55 or older and looking to get involved in meaningful neighborhood activity, give us a try. You can call me at: 858-565-2473 and leave a message or email me at: communitycouncil@serramesa.org.

Carl Demas, President

CUBBERLEY ELEMENTARY

Hello! My name is Magdalena Ruvalcaba and I am the principal of Cubberley Elementary. I became a part of the Cubberley Family, and by extension, the Serra Mesa Community, this past December. I have been with our district for almost 28 years and have had the opportunity to teach in various schools throughout the city. Most recently, I taught 5th grade at Miramar Ranch Elementary. In addition, I have several years of administrative leadership experience as dean of students, vice principal and principal.

After getting to know the students, staff and parents at Cubberley, I have no doubt that I am the most fortunate principal in San Diego Unified! The parents I have met have shared their love for our school; and I am simply in awe of the talent, effort, and dedication that they bring to the Cubberley community. Our school offers many fine programs which make it, what I believe to be, the best school choice for your child. We are a small family-like school with a low student/teacher ratio. Our teachers challenge and support our students towards personal success and provide responsive and targeted instruction. Our students work hard every day to achieve high academic standards and to become *Peace-Builders* in our community.

If you are considering enrolling your child at Cubberley, I would love to give you a tour of our beautiful campus and to share with you, in detail, the programs that we have at Cubberley. I am available before school, during school, after school, and even on weekends! I look forward to working collaboratively with the Serra Mesa community, in service of our students. Please call or email me so that we can schedule a time to meet (858-496-8075, mruvalcaba@sandi.net).

In the meantime, let me share some highlights of the programs we offer at Cubberley:

Family-Like Atmosphere

- *Low student/teacher ratio*
- *Teachers know virtually all students in our school community by name, this fosters a culture of belonging, accountability, and support*
- *School climate is orderly, safe, student-centered, inviting, and attractive*

Special Programs

- *Robotics – First Lego League*
- *Active PTA*
- *Student Council Leadership Opportunities*
- *Art Corps*
- *Running Club*
- *Student Gardens*
- *Career Awareness Programs*
- *PrimeTime Before and After School Program (including homework help and academic program)*

Academics

- *School-wide focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics (S.T.E.A.M.)*
- *Teachers participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to support implementation of Common Core Standards*
- *Strong Special Education Dept. serving students with disabilities, and providing appropriate support and/or related services to those students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)*
- *G.A.T.E. Certified teachers who challenge and push students towards personal success*

Character Education

- *Comprehensive Counseling Program*
- *PeaceBuilder Program*
- *Kids for Peace Chapter*
- *Early Mental Health Initiative*
- *Positive Behavior Intervention & Support (PBIS)*

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Serra Mesa Recreation Center

9020 Village Glen Dr.
(858) 573-1408

1:00 - 8:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

1:00 - 9:00 p.m. Wednesday

2:00-6:00 p.m. Friday

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Saturday

Closed Sunday.

Community Sports Information:

A.Y.S.O. Soccer: (858) 268-5880

N.Y.S. Soccer : (858) 973-6101

SD United Soccer: (858) 457-4625

Serra Mesa Senior Softball:

(858) 279-4283

Serra Mesa Little League: (858) 279-8361

Serra Mesa Recreation Council meets on
March 11 & May 13 at 6:30pm

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*Work with your neighbor who knows the neighborhood.
Jason LaMell - Serra Mesa resident*

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Gloria Espeseth
Pastor

www.gethsemanesd.org

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SERRA MESA PLANNING GROUP NEWS

The Serra Mesa Planning Group (SMPG) is officially recognized by the City and makes recommendations on land use issues to the City. SMPG meets the third Thursday of the month, 7 pm, at the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library, 9505 Aero Drive. The next meetings are March 19 and April 16. To contact us, email smpg@serramesa.org.

Summary of January 15 and February 19 Meetings

Ruffin Road Improvements – Feasibility of providing bicycle facilities on Ruffin Road between Aero Drive and Gramercy Drive. At the January meeting the City's traffic engineers presented the alternatives and answered questions. Input from the audience and discussion followed. All the research, alternatives, pros and cons, and questions and answers were available at <http://www.serramesa.org/2015/02/05/serra-mesa-planning-group-ruffin-road-restripping/>.

At the February meeting after extensive discussion and input from the audience SMPG voted to support Alternative 3 (consists of a parking lane, bike lane, buffer, and two travel lanes on each side of the road and a center turn lane) and secondary, Alternative 2 (consists of a parking lane, bike lane, and two travel lanes on each side of the road and a middle turn lane). Staff will draw up the details of the proposed road configuration for SMPG to review.

Agenda Items for March 19, 2015

Annual Election for six board members for two year terms. Anyone who is at least 18 years old, affiliated with the community as a property owner, resident of Serra Mesa, or a local Serra Mesa business person and who has attended two of the last six SMPG meetings is eligible to be elected. The City provides training. See <http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/resources/cow/index.shtml>. The candidates are Bob McDowell, Bob Crider, Dave Dalton, Matt Hendry, and Mark Perry.

SMPG Bylaws Revisions - The City Council has directed planning groups to revise their bylaws as a result of changes to Council Policy 600-24. The most significant revisions will be in the election procedure.

Update

Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Franklin Ridge Road connection between Phyllis Place and Mission Valley won't be completed until late spring. If this is an item of interest to you, you can sign up to receive email notices at www.serramesa.org/. Once the draft EIR is completed, the public has 30 days to comment. The item will be scheduled for a SMPG meeting. If there is anyone who is an expert in environmental documents and willing to help with the review, please contact us at smpg@serramesa.org.

Sandrock Road Confusion

City staff was asked about the striping on Sandrock Road near the Rancho Serra Mesa Shopping Center.

Here's staff's response: The only time there will be a break (dash lines) is when you are approaching the intersections. It is a design standard that can be found in the Municipal Uniform Traffic Control Manual, Chapter 9. Also, in the California Vehicle Code 21209 vehicles are allowed to drive in the bike lane where parking is permitted, to leave the roadway, or to make a right turn. See below.

21209. (a) No person shall drive a motor vehicle in a bicycle lane established on a roadway pursuant to Section 21207 except as follows:

- (1) To park where parking is permitted.
- (2) To enter or leave the roadway. (This statement pertains to driveways)
- (3) To prepare for a turn within a distance of 200 feet from the intersection.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Abandoned Vehicles & Police Non-Emergency	(619) 531-2000
Airport Noise - Montgomery Airfield	(858) 573-1436
Animal Control	(619) 767-2675
Bus & Trolley Schedules	(619) 233-3004
Canyon Cleanup	(619) 533-4411
Child Abuse Hotline	(858) 560-2191
City Clerk - Docket Information	(619) 533-4000
Crime - General Business	(619) 531-2000
Crime Stoppers	(619) 235-8477
Dead Animal Removal (stay on the line)	(858) 694-7000
Emergency Information - Earthquake	(858) 565-3490
Fallen Trees	(858) 527-7500
Fire Department - Non-emergency	(619) 533-4300
Flies & Vermin	(858) 694-2888
Graffiti	(619) 525-8522
Hazardous Chemicals & Waste	(858) 694-7000
Health Violations	(619) 338-2222
Kearny High Alumni Association	(619) 699-0886
Litter - City Owned/Private Property	(858) 492-5055
Meals On Wheels	(619) 260-6110
Neighborhood Code Compliance	(619) 236-5500
Barking Dogs, Code Violations, Noise, Safety	
Police Department - Eastern Division	(858) 495-7900
Post Office	(800) 275-8777
Poison Control Center	(800) 876-4766
Rape /Domestic Violence Hotline	(858) 272-1767
RSVP (Retired Seniors Volunteer Patrol)	(858) 495-7990
SDG&E Emergencies	(800) 411-7343
Senior Citizen Services	(619) 236-6905
Serra Mesa Library	(858) 573-1396
Serra Mesa Recreation Center	(858) 573-1408
Sidewalk Repair	(619) 527-7500
Stadium Manager	(619) 641-3101
Stadium Security & Noise	(619) 641-3150
Stolen Property/Bicycles - To Report	(619) 531-2000
Storm Drain Misuse	(619) 235-1000
Street Repair - Faded signs, pavement	(619) 527-7500
Traffic Signal Maintenance	(619) 527-8650
Water Emergencies - City & Private	(619) 515-3525
Weeds	(619) 533-4444
Zoning/Permits - Questions & Violations	(619) 446-5000

**St. Columba Parish**

3327 Glencolum Drive
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 277-3863

Sunday Mass	7:30, 9:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.
Saturday	8:00a.m. & 5:30p.m.
Mon-Fri.	7:00 a.m.
Holy Days	Please call the church for schedule



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IS SERRA MESA A “FOOD DESERT”?

One of the first things that struck me when I moved to Serra Mesa was the lack of a grocery store. I moved to Serra Mesa about two years ago, after living in Hillcrest for many years. I was sad to leave Hillcrest, one of the most walkable, colorful, and interesting communities in San Diego! I lived within a mile of not one, but FOUR grocery stores, and could also easily walk to the weekly Hillcrest farmers market. While I missed these amenities, I started to appreciate the charms of my new neighborhood. Serra Mesa is quieter and less crowded; I could afford to rent a house with a yard for my two dogs, and, similar to Hillcrest, Serra Mesa is very centrally located with easy access to several freeways.

But I kept thinking about that key missing ingredient – the availability of fresh foods within a close and convenient location. I thought and complained about this problem regularly, at times even referring to Serra Mesa as a “food desert.” According to the US Department of Agriculture, a food desert is “an area where a significant number or share of residents is far from a supermarket, where “far” is more than 1 mile in urban areas and more than 10 miles in rural areas.” Based on this definition, Serra Mesa qualifies as a food desert. According to Walkscore.com, a website that can tell you how walkable a neighborhood is by entering a specific address, the closest supermarket to my house is a Safeway located 1.1 miles away, as the crow flies, on Murphy Canyon Rd.

While an inconvenience to me, this problem is a bigger issue of health and well-being for senior citizens and others who either cannot drive or don’t have access to a car. Needing to always drive to a market is also bad for the average person’s health and for the environment. Think of the great exercise and relaxation you can have, and how much pollution you are reducing, by being able to walk or drive shorter distances to a market. Serra Mesa residents cannot rely much on public transportation or bicycling to reach supermarkets. Out of a possible score of 100 on Walkscore.com, Serra Mesa rates a paltry 21 on transit and a slightly better score of 25 on biking.

As I settled into my new community, I became more curious about why there is no supermarket here. When I moved in, there was a little mom-and-pop market selling a small selection of groceries, including some imports from Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, this little market soon closed, joining a history of other, larger grocers that have left Serra Mesa over the years. As I researched the issue, I learned that the last large grocery store to operate in Serra Mesa was the Food Choice market, which closed in 2007. However, distracted by my job and the incessant petty demands of daily life, I never went any further than complaining and wondering and researching.

Then one day I saw a large banner that read something like “Help Bring a Fresh and Easy to Serra Mesa!” I thought “That’s great! I’m so glad someone is working on this issue!”

Then several weeks later someone knocked on my door, bravely facing the barking German shepherd rushing toward him. It was a representative from the Serra Mesa Community Council gathering signatures to bring a Fresh and Easy market to the Rancho Serra Mesa shopping center. I happily signed the petition, and chatted briefly with this man about why it’s been difficult to bring a market into the community.

Serra Mesa residents responded to the petition with an outpouring of support, with nearly 4000 signatures collected on paper and online. However, for reasons not entirely clear to me, the effort did not materialize in a deal. I have heard varying explanations. The man who came to my door with the petition had mentioned that the CVS holds exclusive liquor vending rights, which discourages any other company from opening a market nearby. Another explanation attributes the failure to the precarious financial situation of the Fresh and Easy company.

The lack of a grocery store in Serra Mesa continues to frustrate and challenge Serra Mesa residents. It could take a long time before the conditions are right to bring a grocery store into Serra Mesa. It is a long and complicated process. In the meantime, the desire and need is obviously there. Just recently residents raised the issue on the Nextdoor Serra Mesa online forum. I jumped into this conversation, and proposed that we channel our desire for fresh foods into establishing a farmers market. In addition to the obvious benefit of providing fresh foods, a farmers market can also stimulate business in nearby stores, create a sense of community vibrancy and bonding, and serve as a venue for friends to gather and for local artists, musicians, and others to share their creations.

Several residents responded to my Nextdoor posts about starting a farmers market. How exciting, I thought, maybe this could really work? The time has come for me to stop complaining and wondering, and to start doing something. Will you join me? If you want to learn more or want to volunteer with this effort, please let me know.

Debbie Lou
debbiewonglou@gmail.com

Celebrate This New Business



Rancho Serra Mesa Shopping Center at 3212 Greyling Dr

Hours: 9:30-6:00 pm, Monday-Saturday

Phone: 858-268-8388 Fax: 858-268-8380

Email: partyboxstore14@gmail.com

Website: <http://partyboxstore.com/>



Come visit this inviting, fun, and colorful store located at the car wash end of the shopping center. The store, which opened in December 2014, is well-stocked with a variety of items including an extensive supply of balloons. When I visited before Valentine's Day I met the very friendly owners and left with a singing "love" helium balloon for my husband (a well-received gift for the person who has almost everything). The owners spent three years looking for the right location for their store and it's obvious that they take great pride in it!

Here's the owners' description of their store: "Party Box Store is a retailer of party supplies, birthday supplies, and other party products. Our goal is to make it as effortless as possible for you to host fantastic parties that are fun, easy, and affordable. We know how hectic life can get, so we want to make your party planning as simple as possible. Our vast inventory of party themes allows our guests to choose from a variety of fun party topics. From SpongeBob to Star Wars and more, you should conveniently be able to find everything you're looking for. We pride ourselves on our high level of customer service. Whether you're having a small gathering for 8, or a large function for 500, we're here to help you have a successful party. Please feel free to contact us for party tips or to help you in any way with your party planning questions."

Cindy Moore, Serra Mesa Community Council

Stop and Smell the Flowers - Garden Tours

A great landscaping resource!

Inexpensive spring garden tours are offered March through May by organizations and in many communities (e.g., Clairemont, Point Loma, Mission Hills, La Jolla). To find a tour, go online using the terms "san diego garden tours 2015". Examples of tours are the California Native Plant Society, <http://gardennative.org/tour.html>, 858-344-0315 and San Diego Horticultural Society, <http://www.sdhort.org/GardenTour>. Remember to bring your camera - it helps preserve the memory of that perfect plant or yard!



Pictured is Liz Saidkhanian, City Councilmember Scott Sherman's representative, along with Cindy Moore, Serra Mesa Planning Group Chair, and Carl Demas, Serra Mesa Community Council President. At the annual SMCC meeting Liz received a Certificate of Appreciation from SMCC, SMPG, the Serra Mesa Park And Recreation Council, Inc. and the Friends of Ruffin Canyon in recognition of outstanding support shown to Serra Mesa.

A letter describing her attributes (communication and rapport, resource, professionalism) and her accomplishments (e.g., joint use projects, water main break in Birdland, etc.) accompanied the certificate.

Development Permit and Code Enforcement Information Available Online

The City provides the following information at <http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/opensd/>:

Land development permit – application, issuance, inspection, and completion dating back to 2003; timelines, scope, decisions, and costs

Code Enforcement – cases dating back to 2011. Provides information on date of complaint, description of complaint, source, close date, close reason, inspection due date, investigator contact information.

Search options include browsing by a specific address or by the map (exact address not needed). There's a tremendous amount of information available and the site is user friendly. The Code Enforcement information is easy to understand. The Land Development information is more complicated and difficult for the person unfamiliar with the construction field. The City provides FAQs on the website. If you're interested in what's happening in your neighborhood, you may be interested in the website.

The following information regarding the website is copied from the City's website:

Benefits

Community and Neighbors

- Can get an understanding of past, present and future development activity in the community.
- Can choose to get involved earlier in the development process.
- Can conduct research regarding neighborhood construction.
- Can verify or get status on neighborhood code enforcement issues.

Property/Project Owners/Design Professionals

- Can cancel and schedule appointment for inspections online.
- Can pay PTS invoices online.
- Can get up-to-the-moment status of events transpiring in their project.
- Can monitor inspection activity.
- Can confirm development process timelines.
- Can research whether or not the design professional/contractor has pulled appropriate permits.
- Can validate permits when selling property.

***Serra Mesa Community Council Welcomes
January / February New and Renewed Subscribers***

Mary Lou Allgire
Joseph & Sandra Amador
Kathleen Andrews
Carolyn Barr
Patricia Barton
Pat Baumgartner
Larry & Sharon Bay
Tom & Sally Benge
Tamara Bentz
Doris Boyd
Jan Brooks
Ray & Evelyn Buttles
Sherrie Caradonna
Bart Caravantes
Keith & Purita Chambers
Doug & Kathie Conklin
Marcy Debates
Vicki DeNardo
Lorraine Freeman
Faye Geilfuss
Jack & Asako Goddard
Shirley Hendrix
Barbara Holt
Bonnie Hough *
Jo Ann Jeffries

Douglas Johnson
Warren & Mary Johnson *
David & Helen Johnston
William A. Jones *
Everett & Anne-Marie Kaukonen
Arno & Else Kikillus
Marjorie Kramer
Michael & Susan Lauer *
Dianne Laviolette
Larry & Billie Little
Marcia Malone
Paul & Geraldine McClure
Brian & Dolores McPherson
Wally & Dawn Moeller
Cindy & Paul Moore
Robert Moore
Wolfgang & Trudi Muilwijk
Kevin & Luz Munnelly **
Bonnie Myles
Joe Neff & Linda King **
Karen & Steve Niemela *
John & Barbara Pephens
Edward & Jacqueline Renger
John & Naomi Ritz *
Patricia Robison **

Susan Rooney
Elise & Mike Savage
Frank & Ruby Scott
Maria Seabourne
Duane Shockey
Craig Smith
Donald & Dorothy Smith
John & Patsy Smith
Larry & Kathy Sterling *
Mike Sumber
Justin & Sara Turner *
Pat Warner & Geer Morton
Trevor & Suzanne Wells *
Charles West *
Steve & Geralyn White
Ruth Whitehead
Gary & Kim Yadach
N.R. Yocum

Donation: **Benefactor *Sponsor

Observer Renewal

When it is time to renew your Observer, the renewal date is highlighted and stamped, "to be renewed." Also, a postcard will be mailed and, if possible, a phone call is made to remind you. It is greatly appreciated if you pay as soon as you notice it's time to renew.

Maybe you have a special neighbor that you'd like to say "thank you" to, or maybe you have a new neighbor that you'd like to say "welcome." We highly recommend giving a subscription to the Observer (six editions/year). A post card will be sent to the recipient.

Please fill out the enclosed form and send it with your check to P.O. Box 23315,
San Diego, CA. 92193.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

How would you like an opportunity to help the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) prevent and solve crimes in your neighborhood? Is an active volunteer job with a flexible schedule right for you? Are you over 50 and able to donate three days a month for your community? Then the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol (RSVP) program just may be of interest to you.

This vital group of men and women work as an active partner to the SDPD enhancing the safety and well being of your community. They learn non-hazardous, non-confrontational police procedures. The two person uniformed teams conduct daily patrols driving clearly identified cars. They perform routine police tasks such as homeland security, witness checks, visiting the homebound, vacation house checks, helping with traffic control when needed, enforcing handicap violations, patrolling schools and churches in the area, lifting latent prints and many other duties. This allows sworn officers to concentrate on crime fighting and other prevention. The RSVP volunteers are always in contact with police dispatchers on SDPD's communications system. The police department is careful not to allow RSVP volunteers to engage in activities which may place them in any confrontational situation. Although the work is not very demanding physically, a volunteer must frequently get in and out of patrol cars and occasionally climb stairs. Patrol schedules are prepared monthly and are planned around the needs of the volunteer and the community. Members are allowed to switch days to accommodate unforeseen events. Each patrol is approximately eight hours in duration.

We invite you to take a "ride along" on either a half or full day patrol to experience what RSVP is and what we do. There is no obligation. For more information, please call 858/495-7990. If you need to leave a message, please state the best time for one of our RSVP administrators to return your call.

News from The Serra Mesa Village...

"a neighborly network of seniors for seniors"

Our activities are picking up. There is much to see in San Diego with local excursions in the planning stage. These will be low cost (entry fees, if any) and sharing of gas with the drivers...and maybe lunch. Ideas include new Central Library, Old Town, Balboa Park museums, Seaport Village for lunch, Mission Trails Park Visitor Center, and more. A day trip to Anza Borrego Desert, being planned through DayTrippers Tours, is scheduled for March 12, leaving from Mission Valley at 8:15am, returning at 7:30pm. The cost is \$85 and make your own reservation at (619) 299-5777. Other possibilities for day trips include the Getty Museum, Pageant of the Masters, Reagan Library, and more. You do not need to be a member to take these trips.

Next up will be the development of a Care Committee to provide information on what services are available in Serra Mesa and the wider San Diego community to help seniors remain in their homes/apartments as long as possible. An exchange of services with a «TimeBank» is a part of most villages and that too is in the planning stage.

The General Membership meetings are held on the third Thursdays of each month at the Library on Aero Drive from 3-5pm. We feature a speaker each month, and the meetings are open to all. At the March meeting, members will vote for an initial Board, and at the April meeting the amount of dues will be voted upon. (Note: the Library isn't available in April so that General Meeting will be at Mission Village Christian Fellowship at 2650 Melbourne Drive.)

On the second and fourth Tuesdays, there is a "Drop In" time in the Meeting Room at Gethsemane, 2696 Melbourne Drive, for games, crafts, or just visiting. Until we can get space for our own Senior Center, we will be borrowing space for meetings.

For more information, email villageatserramesa@gmail.com or leave a message at the Serra Mesa Community Council, 858-565-2473.

5TH ANNIVERSARY FOR THE SERRA MESA FOOD PANTRY

The Serra Mesa Food Pantry marks its 5th anniversary on May 15, 2015. To celebrate, one of the volunteers is making cupcakes for all the clients which will be served on Wednesday, May 13.

Thanks to everyone who has donated food or funds or volunteered over these past five years. It truly is a community venture. The Community Council especially salutes Food Pantry Manager Luisa Johnson for her faithfulness and gifts of good cheer and hospitality. A shout out goes also to the Serra Mesa Community Garden and Orchard from which an amazing amount of fresh produce makes it way to the Pantry. We also salute the San Diego Food Bank and grocery stores in San Diego who donate extra or near expiration produce. Volunteers go to the Food Bank on Tuesday mornings and pick up whatever is available which then is distributed on Wednesday.

Want to be a part of the celebration? The whole Serra Mesa community can help celebrate these 5 years of neighbors helping neighbors in one of these ways:

1. Bring 5 (or a multiple of 5) cans or packages of basic foods stuffs (cans of vegetables or fruit; soups; breakfast cereal etc.) to the Food Pantry at 2650 Melbourne Drive any Wednesday between 10am and 2pm or on the second Saturday between 10am and 2pm. Another drop off location is the Preschool at Gethsemane, 2696 Melbourne Drive, between 7am and 6pm Monday through Friday.
2. You also can send \$5 (or a multiple of 5) to Serra Mesa Food Pantry, 2650 Melbourne Drive, SD 92123. Make the check payable to Mission Village Christian Fellowship and put "Food Pantry" in the memo line. These gifts are welcome because the Food Pantry can buy in bulk at a greatly reduced rate at the Food Bank.
3. Serra Mesa Food Pantry night at the Padres is Saturday, August 8, vs. the Phillies. The tickets are \$38 with half of the proceeds going to the Food Pantry. For more information on this call 858-277-6572.

Finally, do you have produce from your garden or trees that goes to waste? Consider what it might mean to the Food Pantry. Locally grown donations are welcome!

SERRA MESA COMMUNITY GARDEN & ORCHARD IS 4 YEARS OLD!

Focused and dedicated efforts over the past four years have yielded an amazing amount of fresh vegetables and fruit at the Serra Mesa Community Garden & Orchard. Begun four years ago with seed money from the San Diego Food Bank and free space from Mission Village Christian Fellowship and Gethsemane Lutheran Church, the green-thumbed gardeners have worked hard to make a piece of barren land produce food for residents and the Food Pantry. You can visit the garden at the back of 2650/2696 Melbourne Drive or come on the 2nd Saturday of any month between 9am and noon to see the garden or to help out.

Recently, the last space was used for more garden beds. Ready to go, there is an initial one-time fee of \$100 for the bed with its plant-ready layered soil plus \$5 per month for water. Each year thereafter, a gardener pays \$60 for water for the entire year.

For more information about the Community Garden or the new beds, email karl@smcgo.org.

Why are there palm trees in the bottom of Ruffin Canyon?

Palm trees have not been a normal part of Southern California's native plant life since the Miocene epoch some 5 million years ago. Later European settlers introduced new species of palms, and their descendants brought *W. filifera* out of the oases for use as ornamentals.

If you walk in San Diego, you have danced around thousands of seeds dropped by ornamental palms. Birds carry the seeds to open spaces, where they roll down to the streambeds and thrive. The extra moisture in these scarce riparian areas normally support the richest variety of native plants in our canyons. Under a mature palm tree the seeds act like mulch to smother native seedlings and gobble up water, space, sunlight and other resources. Furthermore, palms do not attach to mycorrhizae, the network of fungus filaments which allows native plant communities to share water and nutrients. Where there were dozens of species of plants, each making unique contributions to the web of life, now there is but one, forcing survivors to perch precariously on an ever narrowing base.

This is the principle guiding of all our efforts to control invasive non-native plants in Ruffin Canyon; biodiversity is the best protection for our beloved wild things and ultimately for ourselves.

Why are there dead palm trees in the mix?

Ruffin Canyon Natural Park is the property of the City of San Diego and the City is concerned about the abundance of Palms there. While the destruction of the human race from loss of biodiversity could be an adequate reason, I don't believe that's it.

Fire punctuates the encroachment on wildlands of rambling, poorly planned human habitation. This dramatic loss of new, popular investment and the heavy demands made on city services by fires push politicians to act. While I believe city brush management policies and practices do more harm than good, the focus on palm trees is based on solid science. Accumulation of dry palm fronds catch fire easily and throw embers right into the engine which drives the fire- the wind! So much focus has been put on protecting structures from fire in the building next door or the backyard, but in fact, wildfires progress in leaps and bounds, skipping large swaths of land. Only flying firebrands could be responsible for that pattern.

If dry fronds are so dangerous, why are dead trees left standing so long?

The other constraint driving city policy is limited funding. Green wood is ever so much heavier than dry wood. The equipment required to haul it away would not only be prohibitively expensive, but would do significant damage to the environment which it intended to protect. When fully dry the trunks can be cut into pieces small enough to be hauled out by volunteers or by public works programs.

I hope this has answered some of your questions. If I have not convinced you that palm trees have it in for San Diegans, pit your strength against a few palm seedlings next time you visit the canyon.

If you have questions or concerns about the canyon, bring them to one of our monthly meetings at 6:30pm on the 4th Monday of each month. That's March 23rd, April 27th, May 25th, etc. We will be meeting at 3132 Pasternack Place pending acquisition of insurance to cover us meeting at Taft.

In March 2015 FRC will resume taking Taft MS students into the Habitat Garden on Wednesday afternoons to introduce, explore and care for the urban-wildland park.

This year the previously named "youth day of service" will be separated from San Diego River Days as "River Kids Discovery Days" on March 13-14. The Friends of Ruffin Canyon will host students from Kearny HS for a special gps-driven canyon restoration event.

Canyon Care events: March 7th 9-12 is the next Canyon Care event, meet in the parking lot of Taft MS. April 4th meet at the Shawn Ave entrance of the canyon. May 2nd meet at Taft, and so on, alternating, from 9 to noon on the first Saturday of every month.

ILACSD Creek to Bay Cleanup April 25th, 9am-12pm

Submitted by Bonnie Hough, Chair for FRC

SMCC Subscription Application or Renewal Form & Interest/Volunteer Survey

If you are interested in being contacted about any of the organizations listed below and/or you wish to receive a bi-monthly newsletter **or renew** your subscription, please fill out the following information. Return this form to the Serra Mesa Community Council, PO Box 23315, San Diego, CA 92193.

Last Name _____ First _____ E-mail _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Occupation _____

Subscription Form - Enclosed is my check payable to the Serra Mesa Community Council to subscribe at the following level:

Household (\$15) ____ Sponsor (\$25) ____ Benefactor (\$50) ____

How did you hear about us? _____

Need More Information	Want to Volunteer	Brief Description of Serra Mesa Organizations
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Council. Sponsors clean-ups, publishes newsletter, liaison between elected officials & the community, meets 10 times/yr. Volunteers needed: Board & special projects. Commitment: varies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planning Group. Advises the City on the Serra Mesa Community Plan and land use issues. Volunteers needed. Trained & indemnified by the City. Commitment: 3.5 hours/month.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation Council. Plans, promote, publicizes & helps provide recreation opportunities for citizens in Serra Mesa. Volunteers needed: Council. No training needed. Commitment: 1.5 hour/month
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhancement Committee. Sends educational letters to residents requesting code compliance. Promotes community improvement. Trained & indemnified by the City. Commitment: 3 hours/month.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Friends of the Library. Provides summer reading program, extra books & tapes, & sponsors special library events for the Serra Mesa Library. Volunteers needed: Board. Commitment: 5 hours/month.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Friends of Ruffin Canyon. Friends of Ruffin Canyon removes invasive non native plants from the canyon and replaces them with natives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Serra Mesa Food Pantry. Staff the Food Pantry, pick up donated food, coordinate food drives, organize community sponsors. Commitment: varies.

To volunteer for one of the groups listed below call 858-565-2473.

Churches. Volunteer needs, training, & commitment varies with each church.

Education & PTAs. Volunteers needed: school based parent groups, readers/listeners in the schools, & various projects at schools. Training & commitment varies with activity.

Sports (Soccer, Baseball, Basketball). Volunteers needed: referees, managers, coaches, scorekeepers, etc. Training & commitment varies with activity.

Youth Activities (Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts, etc.). Volunteers needed: leaders, sponsors, & volunteers for special activities. Training provided. Commitment varies.

Views concerning the present and future Serra Mesa. Please attach a sheet with issues, suggested goals, and suggestions.

Skills/Experience/Interests. Sometimes an organization needs specialized help. If you wish to volunteer, then please attach a sheet with a list of your skills/experiences.

Serra Mesa Enhancement Committee

The role of the Serra Mesa Enhancement Committee (SMEC) is to provide information, education, cooperation, and assistance in the area of City Code Compliance. After confirming a code violation SMEC sends a friendly, educational letter asking for compliance. In 90% of the cases people come into compliance and cases are not reported to the City. If you have a problem in your area, report the problem with this confidential form.

Request for Investigation

Return form to: Serra Mesa Enhancement Committee,
Post Office Box 23315, San Diego, California 92193

Please investigate this address _____

This is the problem: (give complete details; time of day, license plate of vehicles, type of vehicles, condition of property, owner's or renter's name if known etc.)

(Please use back if necessary.)

Your name (will not be disclosed) _____

Date _____ Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

===== for office use =====

ID# _____ Area _____ Contacted complainant _____

Complaint Referred to (specify date)

_____ Code Compliance

_____ Community Policing

_____ Signs

_____ Tree Division

_____ Vector Control

_____ Vehicle Abatement

_____ Weeds

_____ Other

Action Steps (specify date)

Second Checker: No Violation, Close _____ Violation _____

1st Letter: _____

Second Checker: No Violation, Close _____ Violation _____

2nd Letter: _____

Second Checker: No Violation, Close _____ Violation _____

Thank You: _____ Reopen Previous Case: _____

SERRA MESA-KEARNY MESA BRANCH LIBRARY

March/April, 2015 Events/Programs

Adult Programs

Art Exhibits – The Friends of the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch Library present a Kearny High School Alumni Exhibit in the display cases.

Zumba® Dance/Toning Fitness – Mondays & Thursdays, 1:00 p.m. The Zumba® Fitness program fuses Latin rhythms with easy-to-follow moves. Monday's class includes a half hour of Zumba Dance and a half hour of toning.

Zumba® Gold Fitness – Wednesdays, 1:30 p.m. The Zumba® Gold Fitness program fuses Latin rhythms with easy-to-follow moves. This class is designed for beginners and active seniors.

March 2 & 16, 10:00 a.m. Diabetes Wellness. Coaching for people with diabetes, their family and friends presented by Mary Hyde, CHHC. For more information contact 858-750-3112 or maryhyde@we-are-well.com.

March 3, 6:00 p.m. Scott Sherman's State of the Neighborhoods Address. District 7 Councilmember, Scott Sherman, presents the State of the Neighborhoods for Serra Mesa and Mission Valley.

March 10, 5:00 p.m. Friends of the Library Meeting. Join members of your community to discuss ways to support the library.

March 10, 6:00 p.m. National Management Association High School Speech Contest. Join us as students read their speeches in a contest sponsored by the National Management Association and the San Diego Public Utilities Department.

March 10, 6:45 p.m. Serra Mesa Library Book Club. Join members of your community to discuss *The American Heiress* by Daisy Goodwin.

March 13, 1:00 p.m. Resume Strategies. This workshop by the San Diego Metro Career Center teaches you how to build professional, attention-grabbing resumes.

March 15, 2:00 p.m. Music on the Mesa: Pacific Coast Chorale. Come and enjoy a FREE concert by the local group, Pacific Coast Chorale.

March 17, 6:30 p.m. Tax Assistance Information Session. Tax Specialists from H&R Block will be answering questions about taxes regarding the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and small businesses.

March 18, 6:00 p.m. Kearny High School Alumni Exhibit Reception. A reception for the opening of the Kearny High School Alumni Exhibit hosted by current Kearny High School students and teachers.

March 19, 3:00 p.m. Serra Mesa Village Meeting. Join members of your community for presentations on healthy lifestyles for older adults.

March 22, 1:30 p.m. San Diego Folk Song Society. Join the folk song circle and enjoy free, live music.

March 25, 6:30 p.m. Serra Mesa Community Council. A meeting to provide information and act as a forum for identifying and solving community problems.

March 27, 1:00 p.m. Thank You Letters. Learn how to write a follow up letter for prospective employers in this workshop offered by the San Diego Metro Career Center.

SERRA MESA-KEARNY MESA BRANCH LIBRARY

April 6 & 20, 10:00 a.m. Diabetes Wellness. Coaching for people with diabetes, their family and friends presented by Mary Hyde, CHHC. For more information contact 858-750-3112 or maryhyde@we-are-well.com.

April 10, 1:00 p.m. Cover Letters & More. This workshop by the San Diego Metro Career Center teaches you how to write impressive, attention-getting cover letters.

April 14, 6:45 p.m. Serra Mesa Library Book Club. Join members of your community to discuss *The Girls of Atomic City* by Denise Kiernan.

April 19, 2:00 p.m. Music on the Mesa: Silverwood. Come and enjoy a FREE concert by the local group, Silverwood.

April 22, 6:30 p.m. Serra Mesa Community Council. A meeting to provide information and act as a forum for identifying and solving community problems.

April 24, 1:00 p.m. Labor Market Websites. Learn how to navigate the best labor market information websites in this workshop offered by the San Diego Metro Career Center.

April 26, 1:30 p.m. San Diego Folk Song Society. Join the folk song circle and enjoy free, live music.

AARP Free Tax Preparation – Fridays, 11:30 a.m. to 5:00p.m. Starting February 6 to April 10. AARP Tax Representatives will prepare taxes for FREE by appointment only. Please contact the library at 858-573-1396 or visit the Circulation Desk.

Children Programs

Kids Night with Hopscotch Tiny Tots – Tuesdays, 4:30 p.m. Join Miss Kim for music, stories, arts and crafts in a program which is ideal for toddlers and pre-schoolers.

Preschool Storytime – Fridays, 10:00 a.m. Join Grandma Patti for our very popular story time, which is perfect for pre-schoolers and their families.

March 2 & 16, 10:30 a.m. Yoga Storytime for Kids. Toddlers will hear stories and songs while learning yoga poses.

March 4 & 18, 4:00 p.m. Lego Builder Club. Join us to build Lego creations that will be displayed in the library.

March 7, 9:30 a.m. Chess Club Tournament. Kids and Teens are welcome to put their chess skills to the test in a friendly tournament sponsored by the Lone Kings Chess Club.

March 9, 23 & 30, 10:30 a.m. Preschool Craft. Join us for a fun, easy-to-make children's craft.

March 12, 19 & 26, 10:00 a.m. Music Time for Kids with Cowboy Bob. Come dance with Cowboy Bob as he introduces music and instruments in a show appropriate for all ages.

April 1 & 15, 4:00 p.m. Lego Builder Club. Join us to build Lego creations that will be displayed in the library.

April 6 & 20, 10:30 a.m. Yoga Storytime for Kids. Toddlers will hear stories and songs while learning yoga poses.

April 9, 16, 23 & 30, 10:00 a.m. Music Time for Kids with Cowboy Bob. Come dance with Cowboy Bob

SERRA MESA-KEARNY MESA BRANCH LIBRARY

as he introduces music and instruments in a show appropriate for all ages.

April 13 & 27, 10:30 a.m. Preschool Craft. Join us for a fun, easy-to-make children's craft.

April 14, 6:00 p.m. Friends of the Library Essay Contest Awards. Join us for an awards ceremony for the winners of the Friends of the Library Essay Contest.

Apply for a Free Computer!!! Computers 2 SD Kids at the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Library – Classes on March 28 and April 25

The San Diego Public Library and Computers 2 SD Kids are teaming up to provide computers for families with children. Sign-up at the Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch Library starting on the 1st of each month. Volunteers will guide you through an introductory computer class at the library. Attendance at this class is required before you can receive a computer. Computers 2 SD Kids will give you a Technology Assistance Program application. They will review it and notify you whether you qualify based on your verified income.

How Low Can You Go?

How low can you go to reduce water use this winter?

Rain and snow in December improved water supplies statewide, but they didn't make up for three dry years. With drought conditions continuing into 2015, it's time for everyone in the region to take another look at how to "go low."

There are many ways to conserve water:

- Use a bucket to capture shower water while it warms up, and reuse it to irrigate plants.
- Wash only full loads of clothes and dishes.
- Turn off your sprinklers for weeks at a time, especially after a good rain.



More information about drought, along with links to conservation tips, rebates and other resources, are at www.whenindrought.org.

A TASTY WAY TO RAISE MONEY FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION!!

We would like to thank the Serra Mesa Council Observer and all the people who supported Taft PTA fundraiser on February 2, 2015. In addition Maggie's Café would like to extend the invitation to any School, Church, Sport Club, etc., to make us part of your support group. Schedule a Benefit Night and 20 % of the money collected by your guest will be donated to your organization. Please call us at 858-430-6755 or e-mail us at maggiescafe2014@gmail.com thank you for your support and for making us part of your family, please like our Facebook page to get news and updates about Maggie's Café.



Serra Mesa Observer
Editor: *Ronda Adams*
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San Diego, CA 92193

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FRIENDSHIP LUNCH OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY

Join us for the Friendship Lunch.

Gethsemane Lutheran Church and Mission Village Christian Fellowship offer the Serra Mesa community a soup, bread, and dessert lunch every Wednesday at noon.

The “Friendship Lunch” with **no age limitation** is at MVCF in the even months (i.e. April) and at Gethsemane in the odd months (i.e. March).

There is no cost but all are invited to bring a can or package of food for the Serra Mesa Food Pantry.

The churches are located at 2696 and 2650 Melbourne Drive.
More information at 858-277-6572 or 858-278-2633.