

The Treetop Times

The Newsletter of the Arnold Lilac Park Homeowners Association

Inside this issue:

<i>Updated Budget Plan</i>	1
<i>Big Trees State Park</i>	2
<i>Pool and Event Schedule</i>	2
<i>HOA Needs/Wants</i>	2
<i>CalFire Inspections</i>	3
<i>ALPHA Collection Rate</i>	4
<i>Arnold Rim Trail</i>	4
<i>CalFire Guide - INSERT</i>	

Points of Interest:

- Board Meetings are held the first Saturday of each month. Check the web site for location.
- The Lilac Park Pool closes Weather permitting.
- The ALPHA web site is your source for up to date news in Lilac Park.
- The ALPHA Social Committee kicks off its first event in June!
- ALPHA voicemail messages are sent by email to several board members.



Updated Budget Plan for 2013

Late last year, the Board of Directors unanimously agreed to raise assessments 15% in order to ease the planning for and implementation of much needed pool and building repairs.

According to available records, the last time assessments were raised was in 1992, more than 20 years ago. As time goes on and our pool and buildings age, operating and repair costs continue to rise and planning for their eventual repair has to be done using current dollars. The previous amount was just barely enough to meet our needs, but didn't leave us anything extra to save money for planned repairs or emergencies.

Last summer, the board invested some of our savings into the pool and installed new solar panels which allowed us to heat the water to as high as 80 degrees. In 2011, the highest water temperature recorded was only 71 degrees. While a difference of 9 degrees doesn't sound like much, it's actually considerable and the warmer water produced a record number of homeowner visits to the pool last year. More than 1300 swimmers signed in over the three months and two weeks that it was open. This was the highest number of visitors that anyone can remember, which tells us that Lilac Park residents want to keep the pool operating for the foreseeable future.

At the 2012 Annual Meeting of the Homeowners, the board presented a preliminary budget plan for 2013 that showed the increased assessments, but it didn't specifically spell out where the additional money was going to be used. Our updated budget plan does just that. Here it is, with an explanation of each addition.

First, while this winter has been relatively mild in terms of precipitation, the heavy rains we had between Thanksgiving and Christmas overwhelmed the drainage spouts on top of the pump house and caused the roof to leak. Because the top of the roof is flat and drainage wasn't sufficient, there was almost 10" of standing water on top of the pool house. (That's a lot of weight!!) While we're confident that we're not going to have to replace the roof, repairs and additional drainage spouts will likely be needed. Cost for these **roof repairs** is currently unknown. We plan to get a roofing specialist to bid on this once the weather stabilizes.

Second, state law requires us to have a working shower for bathers to rinse off with before and after using the pool. We're also required to have hot water for the kitchen and bathrooms for hand-washing. The water heater has been patched up, bandaged, and carried along for the last several years and it eventually quit working late last summer. A **new water heater** is going to be installed this spring. Approximate cost: **\$400—\$500**.

Next, the **pumphouse** needs to be cleaned out followed by the addition of **new shelves and a work bench**. The existing ones are made of particleboard (or press-board) and got wet when the roof leaked. Drawers are broken, cabinet doors won't open, and mold is starting to grow. So we're going to clean out the 30+ years of old, unusable chemicals and outdated components and organize those things we can keep. All of this will make for a safer working environment for our pool staff and, hopefully, save us some money because it will allow us to see what we have in there. Right now, there are boxes tucked away in cabinets and on shelves that don't look like they've seen daylight in years. We estimate this to cost **approximately \$400** for lumber and materials to build the bench, shelving, and for a locking metal cabinet.

(continued on page 2)

Calaveras Big Trees State Park

is home to two groves of giant sequoia trees. It is located 4 miles northeast of Arnold, California in the middle elevations of the Sierra Nevada. It has been a major tourist attraction since 1852, when the existence of the trees was first widely reported, and is considered the longest continuously operated tourist facility in California. The area was declared a state park in 1931 and now encompasses 6,498 acres in Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties.

Over the years other parcels of mixed conifer forests, including the much larger South Calaveras Grove of Giant Sequoias (purchased in 1954 for \$2.8 million USD), have been added to the park to bring the total area to about 6,400 acres. The North Grove contains about 100 mature giant sequoias; the South Grove, about 1,000.

The North Grove included the 'Discovery Tree' noted by Augustus T. Dowd in 1852 and felled in 1853, leaving a giant stump which is the only remainder of the tree. It measured 24 feet in diameter at its base and was determined by ring count to be 1,244 years old when felled. However, the largest tree was believed to be the Mother of the Forest, which was cut down in the mid-nineteenth century and dwarfed any tree alive today.

In addition to the popular North Grove, the park also now includes the South Grove, with a 5-mile hiking trip through a grove of giant sequoias in their natural setting. The South Grove includes the Louis Agassiz tree, 250 feet tall and 25 feet in diameter 6 feet above ground, the largest tree in the Calaveras groves. It is named after zoologist Louis Agassiz (1807–1873).

Other attractions in the Park include the Stanislaus River, Beaver Creek, the Lava Bluff Trail and Bradley Trail.

Updated 2013 Budget Plan—Continued

Item number four is a **new main pool pump**. New technology has become so energy efficient that replacing our existing pump with a new, variable speed, energy efficient model can pay for itself over two summers or less. Energy savings after the pump is paid for drop straight to ALPHA's bottom line and ultimately saves EVERYONE money.

Additionally, the new pool pump will allow the pool staff to more efficiently filter the pool water by increasing the volume of water that's filtered every minute. (Gallons per Minute—GPM) A new pump means almost doubling the GPM, which means safer water for you and your family to swim in and the ability to do it in less time, using less electricity. **Estimated cost: \$1250.**

Finally, to benefit everyone in Lilac Park, we are going to build a **community bulletin board** to be installed at the bottom of the pool lot, adjacent to the driveway, near the street. The main function of the signboard is to allow the association to post legally required notices and relevant information. Part of it will be allocated for board notices, but the remainder will be for use by the community at large.



If you have a garage sale planned, would like to post your car for sale, or have a lost dog, you can put up a flyer or other note. We haven't figured out exactly where it's going to go yet, but when it's up, we'll let you know. **Approximate cost \$400.**

The additional money is already in the budget, but is currently allocated for reserves. Any new funds not used as described above will be put into a reserve account and used for future expenses and repairs.

If you would like a formal copy of our updated 2013 budget plan, please visit the website or give us a call and we'll mail one to you.

Pool and Event Schedule 2013

- **Pool Prep in May**
WE NEED YOUR HELP! Info coming.
- Saturday, June 1 (weather permitting)
Pool Opens
- Saturday, June 1 or 8 (exact date TBA)
Season Kickoff BBQ at the Pool!
- Saturday, July 6
4th of July BBQ / Parade
- August (exact date TBA)
Hot August Nights & Wine Tasting Potluck
- Saturday, Sept 7 (weather permitting)
Annual Meeting of the Homeowners Pool closes
- There are other events planned that will be posted to the ALPHA web site. More information to follow.

<http://www.arnoldlilacparkhoa.org>

ALPHA 2013 Wants

In order to make our pool more inviting and fun, the ALPHA Board of Directors is seeking donations of games and other items.

If you have any board games, decks of cards, volleyballs, basketballs, or other items you can part with, we'd love to have them.

Millwoods Homeowners Association was kind enough to donate an unused ping-pong table to us late last year, so this should be available when the pool opens.

So far, we've had requests for the following:

- Foosball table
- Table Top Air Hockey Table
- Basketball hoop (in the works)
- Pool floaties & toys of all kinds
- Face Painting Supplies
- New plastic deck chairs
- Inexpensive squirt guns / water blasters

CalFire Inspections and Lilac Park

In the last few years, fire safety and enforcement of CalFire's 30/70/100 clearance requirements has been something of a sore subject with many homeowners in Lilac Park. A number of notices to clean up lots and a few citations have been issued since 2010. We realize that NOBODY likes getting a notice, much less a citation.

CalFire inspections are completed through a program of theirs called Volunteers in Prevention, or VIP. This is a Cal Fire administered program staffed by community volunteers who go out into various neighborhoods to ensure that homeowners are in compliance with CalFire's lot cleanup requirements. Arnold Lilac Park Homeowners Association has **NO** jurisdiction or authority when it comes to inspections or enforcement of CalFire requirements. No VIP inspectors are ALPHA board members.

In recent years, communication between VIPs responsible for our area and ALPHA homeowners has broken down due in large part to confusing forms published by CalFire and unclear notes printed on them by the VIP inspectors. We hope to change that this year.

The first thing the board of directors wanted to see was a way to improve communications between inspectors and homeowners so we encouraged the VIPs to establish an email address where homeowners could send a note with questions to inspectors. **Please use the email address below if you have any questions or receive a CalFire notice that you do not understand.**

If you do not have email, please leave a voicemail message with the ALPHA board and it will be forwarded to the VIP inspectors. All voicemail messages are recorded and sent by email to several board members who will ensure that your inquiries are forwarded appropriately.

The next thing we wanted to see was a simplified set of guidelines that we could pass on to you. Included in our Spring 2013 Treetop Times is a two page (front/back) insert that hopefully illustrates exactly what CalFire VIP inspectors want to see this year to bring Lilac Park into compliance with regulations. We may not all agree on these regulations and interpretation of what is "fire-safe" may be subjective to the VIP inspector, however, the Board encourages communication with the inspectors to facilitate compliance in a way that doesn't impact the natural beauty of our community.

Finally, to help you understand the process of "notices" and "citations," I want to clarify it here. When VIPs conduct inspections in May or June, if they find compliance issues, they will fill out a notice and send you copy of it. **THIS IS NOT A CITATION.** It is a notice that your property needs a little work to be compliant with CalFire requirements. Do NOT ignore this notice.

Your property will be inspected for compliance again later in the summer (usually late June through July) and a second notice will be sent if you are still not in compliance. **THE SECOND NOTICE IS NOT A CITATION EITHER.** There is NO third notice. A final inspection will be conducted sometime in late summer and if you've made no attempt to rectify the issues on the notice, your property will be submitted to CalFire as being out of compliance and you will be subject to a citation, which carries rather stiff fines and a mandatory court appearance to resolve.

In short, if you receive a notice to resolve certain issues with your property and you do not understand them, please contact the VIPs directly by email, or leave a voicemail with the board so we can pass it on to them. Be sure to include your name, Lilac Park address, lot number, and best contact telephone number.

Please note that CalFire has instructed the VIP inspectors to have "zero tolerance" (my wording, not theirs) for Mountain Misery (aka Bear Clover) within 30 feet of any structures. Mountain Misery is a very oily plant and is highly flammable at relatively low temperatures. If you have any on your property and it's within 30 feet of a structure, you will likely receive a notice to remove it. Again, these are CalFire's requirements, not the Association's.

We hope this year's inspections go smoothly and with little to no friction.

CalFire VIP Inspector for Lilac Park: lilacparkfirewise@yahoo.com

Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.

Henry Ford

Your Board of Directors:

President

Mark Carlson

Vice President

Mike Willemssen

Secretary

Jeff Lindevald

Treasurer

Maria Carlson

Director

Cora Bell

Director

Carter Bell

Director

Ahna Brown

Directors

Mark & Karen Nelson

Alternate Director

vacant

What is an 'Alternate Director?'

Alternate directors have voting privileges if present and their attendance is required to establish a quorum.

Updated Lot Maps

Updated Lot Maps are available. Drop us a note or give us a call if you would like one.

info@arnoldlilacparkhoa.org

**Arnold Lilac Park
Homeowners Association**

PO Box 722
Arnold, CA 95223

<http://www.arnoldlilacparkhoa.org>
209.795.3807

The Treetop Times

The newsletter of the Arnold Lilac Park Homeowners Association

Welcome to the Treetop Times. The Lilac Park Homeowners Association aims to produce two to three newsletters per year. For complete and up to date information, please visit the ALPHA web site at

<http://www.arnoldlilacparkhoa.org>

SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!

ALPHA is committed to getting you the most up-to-date information that we can regarding our community and the Ebbett's Pass Corridor. Most of our communications goes out through email and is posted via our web site. To get this information to you as quickly as possible, send us your email address and we'll add you to our email list.

Your address will never be given to third-parties.



Find us on Facebook!

ALPHA has 100% Collection Rate

For the first time in a LONG time, the Arnold Lilac Park Homeowners Association has a 100% collection rate. What does that mean?

It means that all ALPHA Homeowners who have had a delinquent or past due balance, have either : a.) paid any past due balances, or b.) entered into some kind of payment plan with the Association Board, or c.) have begun making payments to ALPHA's collection agency. It does NOT mean that all ALPHA homeowners have paid their assessment.

The current board of directors is working to streamline and modernize the association's billing and accounting practices, including the development of a current billing and collections policy.

As you can imagine, there are differences of opinion between board members regarding the details of the collections policy, but at this point, it appears that a reasonable compromise has been made regarding past due dates, amounts, and what triggers the board to send a homeowner to collections.

If you have questions, please let us know.

Get Outdoors on the ART

The Arnold Rim Trail (ART) is a unique trail system at mid-elevation in the central Sierra Nevada Mountains. A non-motorized trail system designed for hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians, it connects the many wonders of public lands along the Ebbetts Pass National Scenic Byway stretch of Hwy 4 to its communities, creating a high level of access for its residents and visitors.

You'll discover breathtaking vistas with panoramic views stretching from Mt. Diablo in the East Bay Area to snowy Mt. Lyell on the high eastern slopes of the Sierras near Yosemite, then dive down into canyons with streams coursing through the shade of older growth forests of cedar, pine, fir and oak. High rocky promontories, native acorn grinding rocks, a magnificent waterfall, many birds and wildlife of all kinds, and a lake lie along its current completed section in the part of the Stanislaus National Forest known as the Interface.

You can find more information on the Arnold Rim Trail by visiting their web site at:

<http://www.arnoldrimtrail.org>

CAL FIRE's Fire Inspection Procedures -What you need to know

Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291 requires 100 ft of "Defensible Space" clearance around all structures, or to the property line, whichever comes first.

What does this mean for you?

Make sure your property lines are clearly marked.
(example below.)



Measure 30 ft from your structures, to determine your "**Defensible Space Zone,**" or **DSZ** and an additional 70 ft for your "**Reduced Fuel Zone,**" or **RFZ**.

This will equal 100 ft, unless you reach your property line first.

For the first 30 ft from each structure – house/cabin, garage, shed -- remove everything that is **DEAD** – dead trees, branches, brush, all dry grass, leaves, and pine needles from roofs, gutters, decks, porches, parked cars, boats....

This includes spaces under decks, porches, parked vehicles.

For both zones (DSZ & RFZ):

- Dead branches must be trimmed up, especially those overhanging a structure, to at least 6 ft.
- Brush, shrubs, ground-covers, seedlings/sapling trees, must be thinned, pruned, and spaced.
- Break up continuous masses of vegetation. Instead of straight lines, use a checkerboard pattern to create space between trees.

(See the picture in the top of the next column)



NOTE: dry, cut grass, leaves, and pine needles may stay on the ground in the 31- 100 ft area, but clearing it is preferable.

Clearing beyond 100 ft will increase the safety of your home and property.

Other items:

Propane tanks: clear 10 ft around and 15 ft above

Wood piles: clear 10 ft around and 15 ft above

Clear ditches/gutters in front/around the lot of debris so that water may flow freely.

Mountain misery/bear clover within 30 ft of ALL structures must be completely removed. It is highly flammable!

In the 31-100 ft area, mountain misery/bear clover **MAY** stay, but you must trim it back to 4 inches in height, and prune overhanging trees to 15 ft.

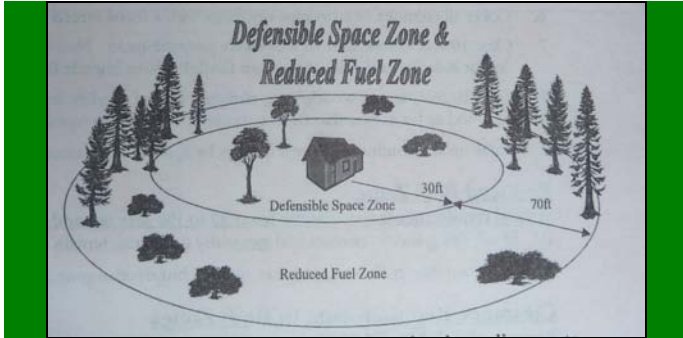
Who inspects Lilac Park lots?

A Volunteer in Prevention (VIP) inspector, trained by CAL FIRE, will conduct the first inspection (only those who fail the first inspection, will have a second inspection). After the second inspection, any lots that do not meet PRC 4291 requirements, will be inspected by CAL FIRE, and any further action will be the sole responsibility of CAL FIRE.

Please turn the page over

What happens during the inspection process?

The VIP will conduct the lot inspection using CAL FIRE's Fire Safety Inspection form. The form will prompt the VIP inspector to review all items listed above, in regards to 100 ft of "Defensible Space Zone" & "Reduced Fuel Zone".



What is the first and second "Fire Safety Inspection Legal Notice"?

It is NOT a ticket or a citation. It is a notice of what you must do, or complete, to improve wildfire safety in Lilac Park, as well as the safety of firefighters.

What happens after the second notice if you fail to complete the required work?

If efforts to comply with PRC 4291 are not met, you may be cited and fined. CAL FIRE would rather have you clear your 100ft defensible space every year, rather than issue a citation, but they will if necessary.

How much is a citation:

1. In Calaveras County, the fines and court costs are \$415 *per violation*. CAL FIRE issues the citation.
2. If violations are corrected after being cited, the fines may be reduced, but not eliminated.
3. If the same violation is cited three times in five years, it becomes a misdemeanor.

How about undeveloped lots?

Undeveloped lots fall under the jurisdiction of Ebbetts Pass Fire, and "Reduced Fuel Zone" rules apply to the ENTIRE lot:

1. Cut down & remove all dead trees, and branches, either standing or already downed trees, and dispose of both properly.
2. Remove dead branches and trees which are leaning into or against larger trees.
3. Remove and dispose of all dead tree limbs within 6 ft of the ground. You may be required to limb higher depending on slope of land.
4. Remove all dead brush, and brush growing under trees & bushes, such as Manzanita, buck brush, wild lilac, etc.
5. Thin Manzanita, thin saplings and/or smaller trees.
6. Accumulations and/or piles of dead and dying material must be removed.
7. Remove dead and/or dying smaller trees growing under and/or within the limbs of taller healthy trees.
8. Cut bear clover and/or ground cover vegetation from around trees and brush to a height of 4 in, or lower, depending on what is growing above it.

When will Lilac Park's inspections take place?

1. First inspections will be conducted May 24 – May 30, 2013.
2. Second inspections will be conducted June 21-22, 2013
3. If you have any questions, or need to leave a message, send email to: lilacparkfirewise@yahoo.com

FYI: Piles of pine needles/leaves/wood, covered or uncovered, should not be permanent fixtures on any lot, but temporary as you wait to have them hauled away, or burned during a permissible burn day.

Thank you for keeping Lilac Park fire safe!

This guide was created for the benefit of Lilac Park Homeowners by the VIP responsible for inspections in our area. However, these guidelines apply to everyone who lives in a CalFire region.