

# The Sierra Post

VOLUME I, ISSUE 4

THE SIERRA AT JACK LONDON SQUARE

APRIL, 2005

## HOA Meeting Summary

### HOA Organization

#### Board of Directors

Russell Wilsey, President  
Bach Nguyen, Vice President  
Ron Siengo, Treasurer  
Mary Tilbury, Secretary  
Frank Schultz

#### Social Committee

Dan Rice  
Jackie Luckett  
Spontaneous Russell

#### Architectural Committee

Veronica Welch  
Gene Blis  
J.D. Lin

#### Newsletter Committee

Curtz Lam  
Phil Ting

### Merit Property Management

Lee Crowell  
925.855.3240  
[lcrowell@meritpm.com](mailto:lcrowell@meritpm.com)

### Crescent Heights

Lorraine Shmulik  
415.343.4415  
[lshmulik@crescentheights.com](mailto:lshmulik@crescentheights.com)

### Contact Information

Front Desk 510.285.3515

Mario Brown 510.663.1245

HOA President  
[sierra\\_pres@yahoo.com](mailto:sierra_pres@yahoo.com)

Newsletter Committee  
[sierranewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:sierranewsletter@yahoo.com)

The last Board meeting was held on Mar 8. Check the bulletin board for the official meeting minutes.

### Board Update

Mr. Nguyen explained the difference between executive sessions, open board meetings, and the place of homeowners' participation within open meetings. He encouraged homeowners to stay for the entire open meetings, not just the homeowner forum section.

Mr. Siengo queried the homeowners present regarding the time of the meetings. It was agreed to try to continue having the open meetings at 6:30, but to place the Open Forum session later in the meeting agenda, to begin no earlier than 7:00 p.m. and no later than 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Schultz updated the homeowners on his research into the governing documents of the association.

### Homeowner Forum

The homeowners present were given the opportunity to address the Board and Management on issues of concern. The following items were discussed:

The Yahoo group, which is not officially sponsored by the Association, was discussed. The moderator of the group made a plea for more constructive comments.

Violations, especially those of noise, were discussed, with the Board explaining the reasons for the multi-tiered violations procedures.

Handicapped parking, to be assigned by the city on the public streets surrounding the building, was discussed.

**Financial report:** The financial report through January 31, 2005 was presented,

noting there was \$130,128.66 in operating funds, \$167,871.41 in working capital funds and \$291,101.90 in reserve funds for a total of \$589,101.97. It was resolved that financials are accepted for placement on file for audit.

**Reserve Spending:** The Banking Transaction Resolution to pay for the repair of the garage door out of reserves was presented. It was resolved that R&S Overhead Garage Door invoice in the amount of \$5,106.00 be paid for out of the reserves, line item 23137, access gates.

### Committee Report

The Newsletter Committee reported that the costs of printing the newsletter were more than covered by the sales of advertising space within the newsletter.

The Architectural Committee reported that it has requested the current applicants follow through on providing the requested additional information regarding their application.

### Insurance Disclosure

The Annual Insurance Disclosure will be mailed to the homeowners as an insert with the April assessment.

### Trash Enclosure

The Board reviewed the cost and site of trash disposal by the commercial units. It was resolved that the association authorizes the construction of a trash enclosure in the loading dock by Ken Long Construction.

**Next HOA Meeting will be held on Tue, April 12, at 6:30 pm in the lobby. The Board will present an update to the 2005 operating budget. Please note that new time for the homeowner forum session.**

# Our Neighborhood

Greetings neighbors. Well it looks like spring has finally arrived. We have changed our clocks and the evenings are warming up. A stroll along the waterfront, down to the square, reminds me why the Jack London district is a great place to work and live.

This month's HOA meeting is an important one so make sure to mark your calendars and attend. We will be getting a presentation on a revised budget and recommendations on the transition from the Department of Real Estate (DRE) budget to a new budget that much more accurately reflects the Sierra's actual current expenses. For those unfamiliar with the process, when a new condominium project is created the initial budget typically follows guidelines set up by the Department of Real Estate. The expenses for the new HOA are based on estimates for similar developments and it takes some time to get enough expense history to see how accurate these estimates are. As it turns out, the estimates for our building were not very accurate. Some items were way over budget, some were under. Ron Siengo has done a great job of crunching all the numbers and will share his findings at the meeting on Tuesday, April 12. I want to take this opportunity to thank Ron for all his hard work on this and other HOA matters.

With the reserve study complete and a realistic budget, the Sierra's board will now have a much better information base

with which to make future decisions about service levels and improvements. We can now address some of the issues that had to be put on hold until we had a better picture of the Sierra's finances.

Thanks to the homeowners who responded to the request to remove goods stored improperly in the garage. If you still have items stored in your parking spots please remove them as soon as possible.

One of the hassles of life in this neighborhood is the lack of parking. It is bad and as more development takes place, it will get worse. The city traffic engineer has told me that we may have some control over street parking adjacent to our building. The board is looking for volunteers for a short term committee to look into the parking issues and help inform the homeowners and board about options and what actions we can take. If you are interested in helping out with this important issue see me at the meeting or drop me a line at: [sierra\\_pres@yahoo.com](mailto:sierra_pres@yahoo.com).  
- Russ -



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# Know Your HOA

## Lee Crowell, Property Manager

Contact Lee for questions and answers pertaining to day to day management of the building. Also submit topics for the agenda to Lee and obtain copies of public records from Lee.

Phone: 925-855-3240. Email: [lcrowell@meritpm.com](mailto:lcrowell@meritpm.com).

## Security/Lobby Attendant

Contact the front desk for incoming mailed packages, dry cleaning pick-up/drop off, and common area maintenance requests. The security staff also do rounds to make sure the building is secure. This is their primary responsibility. If you have a security concern that needs immediate attention contact the security staff or the local police if necessary. Do not try to apprehend intruders yourself.

If you see something in the common area that is in need of attention, please stop by the front desk and fill out a maintenance request. These requests are then passed along to Mario or other staff responsible for resolving the problem. The front desk is also equipped with escalation procedure to dispatch the appropriate parties for urgent issues. Phone: 510-285-3515.

## Mario Brown, Engineer

Mario is responsible for maintenance of the building systems and common area equipment. He is responsible for contacting vendors for repair of items currently maintained under contract like the elevators. Although Mario is not responsible for any of the items or systems within individual units, he may be contacted for advice and may be able to refer you to a reputable contractor. Phone: 510-663-1245.

## Janitorial Staff

Homeowners should not contact the janitorial staff directly or any other third party contractor that we have working in the building. Instead, contact Lee concerning janitorial issues and other issues that involve a third party contractor.

## The Board of Directors

Contact the board of directors for recommendations on policy changes that govern the residents of the building. Do not contact the Board members for day to day questions and answers; instead contact Lee, the property manager. You can submit your suggestions in writing to the email address [sierra\\_pres@yahoo.com](mailto:sierra_pres@yahoo.com). It is best to get your suggestions in writing so they can be forwarded to other Board members and saved for follow-up.

## Architectural Committee

The purpose of this committee is to review and approve changes to the interior or exterior of your unit such as installing a new closet or other design changes as indicated in the CC&R's.

## Social Committee

The Social Committee's purpose is to plan and execute social events for the benefit and enjoyment of the residents of the Sierra.

## Newsletter Committee

The Newsletter Committee prepares the monthly newsletter. You can submit suggestions or comments for past or upcoming issues by email to [sierranewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:sierranewsletter@yahoo.com).

## Rules Committee

The Rules Committee will be putting together rules that govern the residents of the Sierra based on input from the Homeowners.

*This article was prepared by Ron Siengo.*

## Neighborhood Events

### Oak to 9<sup>th</sup> Informational Meeting

Apr 9, 9am – 1pm

Oakland Asian Cultural Center  
388 9<sup>th</sup> St, Suite 290

An open house and public meeting to review and discuss the Oak-to-Ninth Waterfront proposed development plan. Please attend to:

- learn about the proposed plan
- review community issues discussed in recent small group meetings
- provide your comments on the proposed plan and
- find out about the project development schedule and future opportunities for public involvement.

For more info, contact Margaret Stanzone, City of Oakland 238-4932

### Oakland Athletics

Apr 11, 7:05pm

Network Associates Coliseum

A new and exciting season of America's pastime starts with the A's home opener against the Toronto Blue Jays. Probably the best bargain in baseball, especially with \$1 hot dogs on Wednesdays.

[www.oaklandathletics.com](http://www.oaklandathletics.com)

### Pacific Sail Expo

Apr 13 – Apr 17

Over 100 sailboats will be exhibited at the JLS marina. Includes opportunities for the public to get out on the water and try sailing and racing as well as over 80 free seminars on a wide range of topics. For more information, call 1-800-817-7245 or [www.sailamerica.com](http://www.sailamerica.com)

### Dave Eggers Book Signing

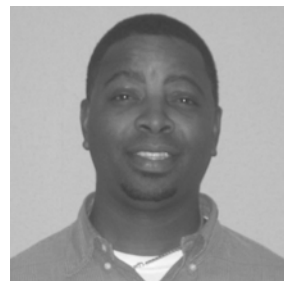
Apr 14, 7pm

Oakland Museum of California

Author Dave Eggers (*A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*) in conversation with writer Stephen Elliott. Book signing follows. Co-sponsored by the Oakland Public Library Foundation. Free.

[www.museumca.org](http://www.museumca.org)

## Mario's Corner



### Neighborhood Events (cont.)

#### Trash Bash VI

Apr 23, 9am – 1pm

Participate in our local neighborhood clean up event followed by a free BBQ. To sign up or for questions, email [trashbast@jacklondondistrict.org](mailto:trashbast@jacklondondistrict.org)

### Classifieds

The Newsletter Committee is looking for articles to be featured in future issues. Send your submission to [sierranewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:sierranewsletter@yahoo.com)

#### Free Window Tinting

8 feet by 2 feet roll. Enough for 2 applications to cover the small window next to most front doors. Call Phil at 893.1097

### Maintenance Request

Please help us improve our maintenance process by filing out maintenance request forms to report any common area maintenance issues. The form is available at the front desk. It is important that we have written records in case we have follow-up questions, and it will help us track progress and streamline our system. The front desk is also equipped with procedures to dispatch the appropriate personnel in the event that the issue needs to be handled immediately.

### Air Conditioner Filters

Summer is almost here and it's time to get your air conditioner ready. If you have an AC in your unit, check the instruction manual for steps to clean the filter. If you are not comfortable doing it yourself, I can recommend a good contractor for the service.

### Contractors

When you use outside contractors to work on your unit, make sure they are properly licensed, bonded and insured. If they do not have the proper insurance, you will bear the full liability of any damages that they may cause.

### Trolleys

We have a couple of trolleys and flatbed push carts available for use by our residents. Please check them out at the front desk and remember to return them when you are done.

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# Community Meeting About Serial Rapist

On the evening of March 28th, a Public Safety Community Meeting was held at the Waterfront Plaza Hotel. Councilmember Nancy Nadel, Lt. Paul Berlin and Eric Karsseboom from the Oakland Police Department (OPD) as well as representatives from the Bay Area Women Against Rape and Highland Hospital gathered to discuss a series of rapes in the Chinatown, Jack London, and West Oakland area.

There were three incidences of sexual assault and robbery within the last 6 months:

- On September 23, 2004 (Thursday) around noon by the Posey Tube at Fifth and Harrison. The victim was walking back to her car after shopping at Chinatown.
- On December 18, 2004 (Saturday) around 4:45pm by the West Oakland BART at 5th and Union Street. The victim was walking from Jack London Square to West Oakland.
- On February 19, 2005 (Saturday) around 2:30pm by the Posey Tube at Fifth and Harrison. The victim was walking back to her car from Chinatown.

All three victims were attacked from behind, assaulted and robbed. The suspect as described by the victims is a Hispanic man in his 20s to 30s, with dark complexion, black curly or wavy hair, between 5'-3" and 5'-5" tall, has a Spanish accent and speaks broken English. Distinguishing features include a multi-colored tattoo (subject unknown) on his left shoulder and a smaller one on his left or possibly right forearm. No weapons were reportedly used by the suspect.

The victims were between the ages of 40 and 50; and weighed between 150-230 pounds. One woman was Chinese, the other two were Caucasian. The first two cases were linked via DNA evidence. The second two cases were link by physical description and MO.

Based on current evidence, the OPD suspects the attacker prefers "noisy" areas i.e. near a freeway, the tube, BART, and targets women during the hours of 11am to 5pm. However, there is no guarantee that the next attack will fall into this pattern. Although all the victims were robbed, money does not seem to be his motive. The suspect has not used any of the stolen credit cards. One of the victim's personal belongings were found by the Marina Village in Alameda. The OPD is examining these for fingerprints.

Oakland police activities to date include: saturation of the area with both uniformed and undercover police officers, use of video recorders by the Posey tube, community awareness meetings in the Chinatown district with translators present and a review of all attempted assaults reported to see if there is a connection.

If you have any information regarding these cases, please contact the Oakland Police Department at 238.7910 or Crimestoppers at 238.6946.

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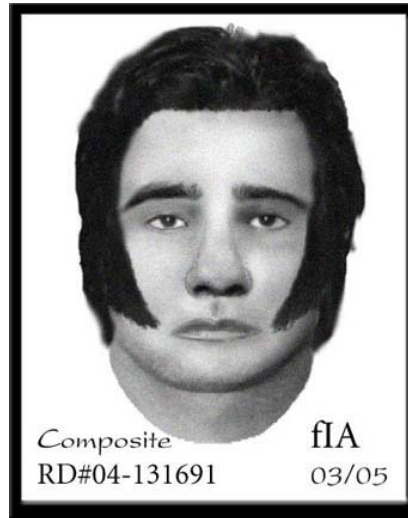
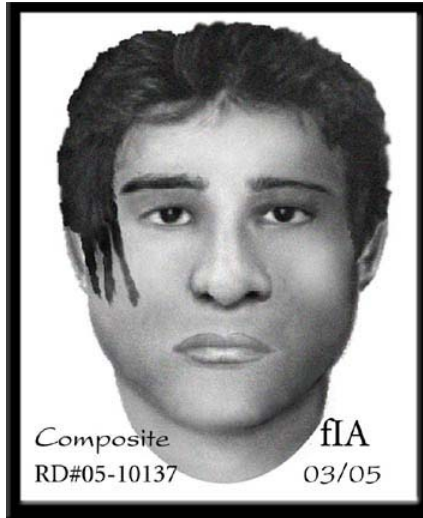
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**Bach Nguyen, REALTOR® Broker**  
**510.452.1927 Office**  
**510.928.8261 Direct**  
**[bach.nguyen@JackLondonRealty.com](mailto:bach.nguyen@JackLondonRealty.com)**

# Be Aware !

Serial Rapist composite picture courtesy of Oakland Police Department



This composite picture includes possible bangs or braided long hair hanging to the sides, NOT sideburns.

Here are some specific safety tips as you are walking around the neighborhood:

- Draw an imaginary circle around you that represents your personal boundaries, and force yourself to notice anyone who enters that circle.
- Make polite but firm eye contact with those people walking near you to acknowledge their presence.
- Trust your instincts: if someone or something doesn't look right, figure out an alternate route or head to a safe place.
- The most important asset you have is your mind. Do not rely on just one means of defense. Think through the various options at your disposal should you find yourself in a dangerous situation (your voice, a whistle, cell phone, keys etc).
- Recognize that weapons you carry (whether pepper spray, or firearms) can also be used against you, and decide accordingly.
- If you have a cell phone, program the Oakland Police Department into it instead of 911. **510.777.3211**. This could save you precious time, instead of being dispatched to California Highway Patrol.
- Avoid wearing headphones, or talking on cell phones while walking – such devices lessen your ability to hear someone coming up from behind you.

Remember, ultimately, the goal is not just to protect yourself against this ONE guy. The goal is to protect yourself in EVERY situation.

## More information:

Impact Bay Area (self defense classes), [www.impactbayarea.org](http://www.impactbayarea.org)  
Bay Area Women Against Rape, 510.845.7273 (24 hr crisis line), 510.430.1298 (office)  
Councilmember Nancy Nadel, [www.nancynadel.org](http://www.nancynadel.org)

## Activities At The Aquatic Center

The Jack London Aquatic Center, located two blocks from our building offers exciting kayaking programs such as Kids-in-Kayaks and Friday Twilight Kayaking. No experience is necessary. Space is limited and fills up fast. Check [www.jlac.org](http://www.jlac.org) for more information.

Editor's Note: Russ and I took the Friday twilight class last year, it was lot of fun. We paddled up and down the Estuary and across the channel to Alameda. I had never been on a kayak before and I can't swim, but still had a very enjoyable time.

