

The Sierra Post

VOLUME I, ISSUE 11

THE SIERRA AT JACK LONDON SQUARE

November, 2005

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Other HOA contact information
can be found at
<http://www.sierrajacklondon.org>

For advertisement information,
questions or comments regarding
this newsletter, please email to
news@sierrajacklondon.org
Homeowners may place free
classifieds by sending email to
the same address.

**Nov HOA meeting will
be held Tuesday, Nov
15th. Homeowner
forum will start
between 7:00 to 7:30
pm.**

**Annual HOA meeting
will be held Tuesday,
Nov 29th.**

HOA Meeting Summary

The last Board meeting was held on Oct 25. Please check the bulletin board for the official meeting minutes.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

▪ **Employee Break Room:** The GM asked the Board to consider converting the 5th floor storage room into a break room for the janitorial and lobby staff. The Board discussed the option and agreed to review a proposal at the next Board meeting. The proposal is to include any costs associated with the project and items needed to convert the room. Dean Wallace offered lockers for the room.

▪ **Gym Equipment:** The Board would like residents to let them know what additional items they would like to see, if any. The GM proposed purchasing assorted fit balls, resistance balls and antibacterial cleaners (wipes or spray bottles) for the equipment. A motion was made to approve the purchase of assorted fit and resistance balls. During this discussion, the Treasurer requested that the GM work on a plan for future capital improvement expenses.

▪ **Painting:** Several proposals were submitted to the Board to paint areas of the building including the lowest portion of the pillars surrounding the building, the interior pedestrian doors and several walls. A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposal from Ken Ealy Painting in the amount of \$8,400.

▪ **Notice Holders:** The GM requested authorization to install plastic notice holders on the majority of the interior entry doors throughout the building. A motion was made and seconded to approve the installation.

▪ **Public Bike Rack:** The City of Oakland has requested consent to install a tube style bike rack on the sidewalk between Subway & The Sierra Deli. The Board chose to notify the homeowners via the newsletter and GM's announcement page (located on the website) prior to giving their consent. The

Board will be making a final decision at the November 15th Board meeting.

HOMEOWNER COMMENTS

▪ A homeowner inquired about the recent fire alarms. The GM explained that each recent alarm had been triggered by something different. The recent early morning alarm was due to a heat sensor that had stopped working which triggered the alarm. The GM then mentioned that she was working with the building engineer and staff to put together a procedure for emergencies. This would include floor leaders. This procedure will be proposed to the Board at the next meeting.

▪ A homeowner inquired about dogs in the lobby elevators. The rules chairman, Frank Schultz agreed to look into this issue and come up with a possible solution.

▪ A homeowner inquired about the planned uses of the three storage rooms. The GM gave a brief explanation which included a room for storing social events item, a staff break room and possibly the business center.

▪ A homeowner asked about the timers on the pool lights. The GM said she would have Mario look into the lights.

▪ The GM mentioned that homeowners need to return the blue form requesting information as soon as possible. Several homeowners said they had not received the recent mailing. The GM asked that they contact her office if they still had not received the mailing by the end of the week.

MANAGEMENT CHANGE

The Board president announced that the Board had found a new financial services company and that Merit would no longer be affiliated with the Association as of January 1, 2006. The president also mentioned that the Association employs the GM and building engineer directly.

Our Neighborhood

Greeting neighbors

Or perhaps I should say farewell. This will be my last column as your HOA president. I would like to thank everyone who made my tenure on the board a positive experience. The board has had a challenging year during the transition period. We have accomplished much but there is still important work to be done. This month's expanded newsletter has candidate statements from homeowners who have volunteered to serve on the board. You will soon receive voting information in the mail. Make sure to return your proxy and ballots.

The annual meeting will be held at the end of the month, I urge everyone to attend this meeting as we will be casting votes for the new board members, and you are encouraged to voice your opinion on the direction the board should take in the next year.

The 2006 budget is almost ready thanks to the hard work of Ron and Sarah. I believe that there will be a presentation given by Ron at the November meeting.

Speaking of Ron, I would like to take this opportunity to give Ron my endorsement for re-election to the Sierra board. His hard work and accounting expertise have been instrumental in the achievement of the board's goals.

Russ Wilsey
president@sierrajacklondon.org

Holiday Food Drive

Jack London Mail is holding their third annual Food Drive for the Alameda County Food Bank. Drop off hours are 9am – 6pm M - F, 10am – 2pm Sat, at 248 Third St @ Alice. The food bank recommends the following items: Canned vegetables & fruit, Canned meat & fish, Pasta & tomato sauce, Beans, Rice, Peanut butter, Cereal/oatmeal, Powdered milk, Nutritional beverages, Pre-packaged meals.



A D V E R T I S E M E N T



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A Note From Sarah



Halloween Bazaar: Did you see the creatures roaming around the building the night of the Bazaar or hear the laughter of the kids playing the many games that were set-up around the pool? The Bazaar and its many festivities was put together by Winnie and Paul of unit 328. Along with Dezi and his friends who helped set-up, they put on a great evening! Thank you! Hope to see more of you next year!

Blue Forms: Have you heard? I need those forms! Yes, that blue form that was mailed to you in the middle of October is very important in order to create an accurate database of your information. If you happened to have misplaced the form (or maybe it was recycled?), fear not, there are extra forms at the front desk.

Dirt: Have you noticed an area of the building that is particularly dirty? Or maybe one that is often overlooked? Please point those areas out to me whenever you get a chance. (An e-mail is perfect.)

The season of giving: In the spirit of the season, one of our residents suggested a clothing drive. I have not narrowed down the non-profit that could benefit from this, but thought you might want a heads up so you can start cleaning out those closets. I hope to find a non-profit that will also accept small household items such as pots and pans, etc. So, find a corner, start collecting those items that you no longer have a need for and stay tuned. (If you can suggest a non-profit, preferably one that is non-denominational, please let me know).

In addition, we will have a canned and dried food drive for the Alameda Food Bank. You might want to keep that in mind when the grocery store has a good sale!

Gym Equipment: Recently, a few requests have been made to purchase additional pieces of gym equipment. Rather than planning large capital purchases based on a small group of residents, we would like to know what you think. Is the gym missing a crucial piece of equipment? The Board did approve the purchase of a few minor items which include fit balls and resistance balls. These should be here soon. In addition, we have added new features to the gym...get ready for this...the equipment is now numbered! Now, when you fill-out an equipment repair form (located at the end of the shelving unit as you walk in the door), you can tell us what piece of equipment is having a problem! Pretty neat huh? (Thanks for the suggestion Dean.)

Staff break-room: The Board is considering turning one of the storage areas into a staff break room. Currently the janitorial staff shares a room with a dumpster. Though it may be a conversation piece, it is not the best place to eat your lunch. The Board has asked that a proposal be put together for this project. A few items that are needed just may be lurking around this building. Do you happen to have any of the following that may be donated to the break room? Table & chairs, a bulletin board, or a refrigerator? Lockers will also be provided but may be donated by a resident. Please contact me by November 14th if you have any items to donate. Thanks!

Emergency Preparedness: Are you prepared for an emergency? Do you know where to go if the building is evacuating? Great! We need you! We are putting together emergency procedures for the building to follow that will include the use of floor leaders. Each floor will need at least two leaders, preferably from different households. A meeting for the leaders will be schedule soon. Please contact me if you would like to wear a snazzy hat and carry a flag!

Balconies: Please note that balconies are considered "exclusive use common area". This means that the balcony belongs to the Association, but is only to be used by the unit it is connected to. No items are to be attached or mounted to any part of the balcony including, but not limited to lighting, cameras, or decorations.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T



Call today for a free comparative market analysis and receive two tickets to a show at Yoshi's, the Paramount Theater or Jack London Cinemas!

Andy Read
aread@caldecott.com
510.594.2400



Neighborhood Events

Girl's Night Out

Tue, Nov 15. From 7pm on, there will be girlish merriment at The Warehouse Bar & Grill. Celebrate with the new owners a night here in the Jack London District. No rsvp, no organizers. Just come and meet other women from the neighborhood. Just to explain Girl's Night - there's really no point to it. It's just an excuse to gather and gab. It's whatever YOU want it to be and whatever YOU make it!

Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony

Fri, Nov 25. Join the official lighting of the Jack London Square holiday tree. Watch as 20 bay area high schools compete in a \$5000 choir competition sponsored by the radio station KBLX. Holiday shop for arts & crafts, visit Santa, and get into the holiday spirit as tenor, Christopher Pucci sings classical music. Actual tree lighting will take place at 6:15 PM.

Mario's Corner

Baseboard Heater Testing

Please test the baseboard heater in your unit to ensure that it is working properly. Turn up the thermostat and check that warm air comes out from the heater. If it is not working, please fill in a maintenance request at the front desk and I will see that the problem is corrected. A malfunctioning heater wastes energy and increases your heating bill.



Fire Sprinkler Cages Again

A few issues ago, I had requested homeowners wishing to install fire sprinkler cages to sign up at the front desk. The price of the installation depends on the number of people who sign up. At this time, the price comes out to about \$35 each. We are still trying to negotiate for a better price. However I have found a website where you can buy a self-installed version for \$2. This version is less heavy duty but will give an alternative to the higher price option. You can find them here at www.orthsupply.com under Fire Sprinkler Accessories. For those who had signed up for the installation, I will be contacting you once we get a final price.

Pool maintenance

The seat cushions in the pool area will be stored away to protect them from wear and tear during the winter months.



A D V E R T I S E M E N T

YOGA CLASSES BEGINNING AT PAIN SOLVERS NOVEMBER 2nd



311 Oak Street, #114, Oakland

Schedule

Monday

7:00am » 8:15am

7:00pm » 8:15pm

Modified Primary Series – Hatha

Evening Wind-Down – Vinyasa Flow

Wednesday

7:00am » 8:15am

7:00pm » 8:15pm

Modified Primary Series – Hatha

Evening Wind-Down – Vinyasa Flow

Friday

7:00am » 8:15am

7:00pm » 8:15pm

Modified Primary Series – Hatha

Evening Wind-Down – Vinyasa Flow

Please give us a call if you have any questions: (510) 821-2906 or (510) 444-7246

Election for Board of Directors

The election for the two seats on the HOA board vacated by Russ Wilsey and Ron Siengo will be held at the Annual Meeting on November 29th. The community thanks Russ and Ron for their service and the tremendous effort they put in the last year.

On Tuesday, November 29th you will be electing two new members to your Board of Directors. In order for this election to take place, we must have a quorum of owners attend the meeting, either in person or by proxy. Why is it so important to have a quorum? The Association is a corporation; it can not hold a membership meeting without written proof that everyone knows the meeting is being held (proxies). AND if we do not hold the meeting on the 29th, it will have to be re-scheduled which means additional money and time down the drain. That being said, please keep an eye on your mailbox. Your proxy and return envelope will be delivered soon. The proxies should be returned to the front desk as soon as possible.

We are pleased to present the four candidates running for the Board of Directors, please see their candidate statements below.

Ron Siengo

Dear Homeowners,

I would like to run for Board of Directors of the Sierra because my term is up in November and I will need to be re-elected to continue to serve. I would like to tell you a little about my experience on the Board to help you with your decision to re-elect me in November.

When I was elected as CFO/Treasurer of the Board in September 2004, it was clear to me that the Developer had not lived up to the expectations of the homeowners. I knew that it would be a tough job to win back the homeowners' trust and confidence in the Board but this was the starting point for all of the decisions that followed.

After serving on the Board for a few months it became clear that the one thing this community needed was a full-time on-site property manager. But it was too early to be sure whether the Association could afford that kind of move. So, before acting I began to gather our financial records to determine if there was any room in the budget to hire a person for the job.

In November I initiated a reserve study that would tell us later in February that we had enough cash reserves to fund our future building repair needs. By the time the reserve study was completed I had also gathered enough financial records regarding our actual expenses to institute a budget increase in April that would put the Association on solid financial footing. There had not been an increase in assessments in two years and the original budget prepared by the Department of Real Estate was highly inaccurate in many categories.

Soon after implementing the budget in mid-year 2005 I began researching the costs of hiring a full time property manager and new policies surrounding hiring staff directly versus outsourcing. I determined that it would be possible to hire a full-time manager without increasing monthly assessments as a result. This began the hiring process and eventually led to hiring our first employee, Sarah Steele, Property Manager, in September 2005.

So here we are today and when you look back we have come a long way. During the time that has passed I truly believe that the Board has taken actions that have re-instilled the trust and confidence of the homeowners. My term is up as Board member but I can serve another term if I am reelected to the Board. I think the Sierra still has a long way to go to be a first class community but I think we have made it through the toughest part. Vote for me and I will continue to put forth the effort to make this a great place to live and work.

Sincerely,
Ron Siengo
CFO/Treasurer & Board Member



Do you know serving on the board of directors is not the only way to serve the community? You can volunteer to be a member of the various committees. The newsletter committee is actively looking for new members, if you are interested, please contact news@sierrajacklondon.org

Ranel Porter

I am Ranel Porter and I am running for the Home Owners Association Board of Directors. I live with my husband, Steve, and my nine year old daughter, Valerie, on the fifth floor. I am currently not working outside the home, as I recently began home schooling our daughter, and my husband works across the street at the Cost Plus World Market Corporate Office as the Director of Technology and Operations. We believe our building is currently the most desirable one in the area, and I would like to help keep our property values high by volunteering my time to the HOA. I am particularly interested in helping by taking an active role in the many changes in the Jack London Square area, in so much that it affects our property value and quality of life. I am also interested in helping with our continued growth from a new building to an efficiently run and maintained building. I earned a BA in Secondary Mathematics and Science Education from Purdue University, and taught Math, Science and Computer Skills at the Secondary and University levels for 11 years, and then six years ago I became an Oracle and SQL Sever database administrator. Now that I am at home with my daughter, I feel that I can devote a significant amount of time to the board. Thank you for considering me for this very important position.

Shawn Swanson

My primary interests in serving on the HOA board are as follows:

- Preserving the value of each home owner's investment
- Containing operating costs to ensure HOA dues do not rise unnecessarily
- Ensuring safety and security on the premises
- Ensuring that all services and facilities promised are available and functioning properly
- Investigating services and potential improvements that enhance the property values and enjoyment of living in the Sierra
- Differentiating the Sierra from the existing complexes as well as those under construction
- Quarterly reviews on services, maintenance, facilities, etc. to ensure standards are upheld

Academic

- Graduate Degree - MBA (U.C. Berkeley),
- Undergraduate Degree -Computer Science (VA Tech)

Professional

17 yrs of Engineering, Senior Management, and Executive Management experience with Fortune 500 companies and technology start-ups. Fortune 500 companies include IBM, Accenture, HP and Sun.

Leadership and Personal Development/ Continuing Education

- Completed year-long curriculum for leadership & personal development
- Coached leadership & development program students for Landmark Education
- Coaching and developing the coaches who are coaching leadership and development program students
- Regularly attend training seminars for leaders of start ups

Home Owner Association (HOA) Experience

President 2003 – 2004, Portico Lofts HOA (in Jack London Square)

A D V E R T I S E M E N T



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Stephanie Hayden

We've met many neighbors over the last two months, thanks in part I believe to a renewed interest in communication sparked by our new Property Manager, Sarah Steele, and of course many residents reaching out to the community.

After attending a few HOA meetings, we've decided we're ready to pitch in here at the building. This place is full of interesting and motivated people who seem open to more collaboration and mutually beneficial environments. And so I'd like to offer my background creating these types of environments professionally to keep the momentum going this year.

A little background on me, what I do for a living, and why I'd like to be on the Board of the Sierra...

I've spent the last nine years building and running my own technology consultancy business helping a range of clients—from Fortune 100 companies to startups—discover and define business goals. My role has historically been to recommend collaborative technologies and communications to further my clients' membership growth, increase policy adoption, and drive company success.

Much of my work has involved building governance policies that embrace the equitable delegation of responsibilities, privileges, and tasks within a community of people. Ultimately, these foundations help ensure that new tools are adopted, and community members are informed, educated, and satisfied with new services. I currently consult for BEA (previously Plumtree Software) as a Managing Principal.

Over the years, I've experienced many logistically complicated technical engagements across several industries, specializing in complex political environments. I truly enjoy working with groups of people to help them define their goals and provide strategic consultation and management for all levels within their efforts.

What I will do if elected...

As a Sierra Board Member I will commit to further developing these areas:

1. Promote and foster a diplomatic, peaceful, respectful, and law-abiding community membership in which residents feel involved in the community and personally vested in its quality of life.
2. Help facilitate frequent, easily accessible information among the Board, community members, and staff. These communication methods will continually be reviewed to make sure they are reaching the widest population possible.
3. Promote timely improvement of community-based issues, report issue resolution success rates, and feature programs used in other facilities that may work well for The Sierra.
4. Ensure rules are well communicated, upheld, and enforced.

Develop a series of guest speaker events to be held at The Sierra, featuring members of the Oakland community working on initiatives that affect Sierra members. Speakers could include: Oakland Police Department, City Planning Commission, Political candidates, Development company representatives, businesses around the area, and community action speakers.



The First Halloween Bazaar at the Sierra

Homeowner's Insurance

It is recommended that each unit owner carry their own insurance policy to cover the loss of personal property and fixtures owned by the unit owner, loss assessments, additional living expense/rental value and personal liability. In addition, unit owners should require that their tenants carry renter's insurance.

Please keep in mind that if a claim is made against the Association's property insurance, the \$10,000 deductible is the responsibility of the unit owner.

The association policy does not cover earthquake or flood damages.

For additional information, please contact the Association's insurance agent, Dorothy McCorkindale of Acordia of California Insurance Services, at 415-541-3604.

Recycling Old Computers

Oakland Technology Exchange accepts working computer equipment for use in classrooms in Oakland. Donations hours are every Tuesday from 2-6 pm at 1680 14th Street in West Oakland. 510-893-4822.

<http://www.otxwest.org/donations.html>

Alameda county computer recycle center accepts non-working computer equipment. There is a small fee charged for each piece of equipment. Hours are 10-5 weekdays, 12-5 Sat at 1501 Eastshore Highway, Berkeley. 510-528-4052.

<http://www.accrc.org>

880/980 Freeway remodeling project

A massive freeway construction and "remodeling" project in our area that is currently undergoing feasibility studies, the project would require major off and on-ramp changes throughout our neighborhood, and would appear to even require demolition of some buildings by the freeway. You can find out more about this project at <http://jlda.org/development/jlsramp/>

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