



# Parkmead Community Association

## Summer 2008

### Summer Block Party

*Sunday, September 14, 1 PM to 4 PM*

**Maple Lane**

Across from Parkmead School off Magnolia Way  
Join Your Neighbors—Bring Your Family  
Live Music

### Annual Parkmead Community Summer Block Party – Sept. 14

It is that time of the year again for the Annual Parkmead Summer Block Party and BBQ on Sunday, September 14 from 1:00pm-4:00pm on Maple Lane. This is an event for all residents of Parkmead, so bring your neighbors along for what will be a great afternoon of food and LIVE music.

Our party is held on Maple Lane (off Magnolia Way) across the street from Parkmead Elementary School. We will be serving hamburgers, hot dogs, and drinks all provided by the Parkmead Community Association. Please consider bringing a salad, dessert or a favorite dish of your own (to feed approximately 10 people). We ask that you leave your four-legged friends at home, but want you to come enjoy the festivities. There will be chairs to relax in, tables to dine at, and activities for the kids. Thank you to our fellow community residents living on Maple Lane for letting us use their street. Hope to see you there!

### Neighborhood Creek Nature Walk: September 27

Join Friends of the Creeks biologist, Dr. Jim Hale, for a neighborhood creek channel nature walk on Saturday, September 27, 9am-11am. Learn about flora and fauna in the Parkmead portion of the Las Trampas creek channel between the Olympic Boulevard Bridge and the California Boulevard Bridge. Participants must be seven years of age or older, minors must be accompanied and supervised by an adult. Group size is limited. RSVP to reserve your space. For more information, contact Francine Podenski at [fpodenski@comcast.net](mailto:fpodenski@comcast.net)

### Message from the PCA President

Your Board has been involved in quite a number of projects this year. One way to see what is new around Parkmead is to log on to our website, [parkmead.org](http://parkmead.org). Our site continues to grow and contains much valuable information. I suggest you take a few minutes and explore it. We have an events calendar, neighborhood news, photos, past newsletters and many helpful links.

On May 10<sup>th</sup> we participated with the Parkmead Elementary School and the Hillside Covenant Church to work on a community cleanup day. Gardening work was done at the school and many of us worked at repairing the Newell Avenue Path. This winter the path will be much more traversable.

On June 6<sup>th</sup> we had a very successful Community Garage Sale. We had over 50 homes participation this year. I want to thank Chris Sherwood for once again making our neighborhood as popular a shopping destination as Broadway Plaza for a day.

*See Presidents Message, page 2*

### Walk to School Week: October 6 to 10

Once again, the Parkmead Community Association will be joining with Parkmead Elementary School and with other schools around the world to celebrate International Walk to School Week - October 6th to 10th, 2008.

Last year over half of the Parkmead kids joined in and walked or biked to school along with parents, teachers, neighbors and also the Mayor of Walnut Creek.

This year we plan to have Walking School Buses starting from Arlene Lane, the top of Magnolia Way and from Dewing Park. So please arrange with your kids, friends and neighbors to meet up with each other and walk together with plenty of time to get to school.

Come and join us on Monday October 6th with your kids, your dogs or just yourselves and meet your neighbors, get a free balloon, some exercise and some fresh air, help save the environment and make Parkmead an even friendlier place to live. For more information, please contact Tony Phillips at [a.n.phillips@att.net](mailto:a.n.phillips@att.net).

***School is back in session. Drive carefully.  
Lilac Drive and Newell Ave. residents —  
please keep the pathways clear of parked vehicles and  
remove trash cans in a timely manner.***

## PCA Appeal To City Council

On August 5, the Parkmead Community Association's Appeals Team presented an appeal to the City Council for the Design Review Commission approval of a proposed new 4,660 square foot house at 1509 Arbutus Drive, near the corner of Lilac. Walnut Creek's city codes and general plan require that in-fill development be designed similar in character and scale to that of homes in the surrounding area. The intent of the appeal was to request that the City of Walnut Creek work with residents to develop neighborhood character standards to guide this and future Parkmead development. Video of the appeal presentation and Council discussion is available at [www.parkmead.org](http://www.parkmead.org) and on Walnut Creek's city website.

Our Appeals Team did a fantastic and professional job. Thanks to our research team Ann Hinshaw, Tom Sheridan, Mary Andre, Terri Almeida, Sue Chan, and Joe Huettl; and a special thank you to Troi Nelson, who integrated the team's research into a well thought out and highly organized appeal presentation script, to PCA board member Francine Podenski for acting as the spokesperson at City Council, and to Steve Nelson for his outstanding and professional PowerPoint production that accompanied the presentation.

For those not able to attend, the council chamber was filled with 30 to 40 Parkmead neighbors who came to show their support. Senior City Planner Ken Nodder, explained why city staff recommended denying the appeal. Developer Mark Scott's representative, Chris Trent, stated that they worked closely with immediate neighbors to design the proposed home, that they had complied with all city codes and zoning requirements, and urged Council to deny the appeal. Parkmead Community Association spokesperson, Francine Podenski, described Parkmead's neighborhood character, explained how the proposed Arbutus home is inconsistent with Parkmead character, and requested that the City of Walnut Creek follow its General Plan and work closely with residents to establish neighborhood character standards that guide this and future development. Several Parkmead neighbors spoke in support of the appeal. Almond Shuey neighbor, Tom O'Brien, urged City Council to preserve the character of neighborhoods adjacent to Walnut Creek's rapidly developing downtown core area. After discussion, Walnut Creek City Council members expressed support for the developer and voted unanimously (5-0) to deny the appeal.

The Appeals Team had hoped that City Council would direct staff to work with Parkmead residents to establish neighborhood character standards to guide development in the Parkmead neighborhood. Council members felt it would be impossible to define Parkmead's neighborhood character. Though the entire neighborhood is located within Walnut Creek's designated planning area and sphere of influence, Council members also brought up the fact that most of us (400 out of 600 homes) are in the county and not located within city limits. Thus, Council was unwilling to expend

## President's Message, *continued from page 1*

September 14<sup>th</sup> will be the Parkmead Community Association summer Block Party. This is the Parkmead social event of the season. We will have live music this year and lots of things for the children to do so bring the whole family. We are able to do this without increasing dues because some of you decided to make donations in addition to dues. We thank you for this and urge you to continue your generosity. This event is important because the warm and casual atmosphere is perfect for getting to know your neighbors and it provides an opportunity for the PCA Board members to get your thoughts on our neighborhood. Please look at the announcement in this newsletter and plan to attend.

PCA membership continues to grow. As of this date we have 211 households that have joined the Association. Even with our growth and the remarkably low dues rate of \$12 per year, only about one in three households are members so we still have a lot of growth potential. If you have not joined the Association for this year, please do so.

Your Association is constantly looking at ways to further the quality of life in the neighborhood and we need your help. We have more ideas than resources so if you want the opportunity to contribute to your community and work with some quality people, talk to a Board member about how you might get involved.

*Joseph Patch Curtis*

city funds or staff time to establish Parkmead neighborhood character standards or on a specific plan similar to the one done for Northgate, which is also within both the city and county limits.

Although unsuccessful with our appeal, we learned a great deal about how the Walnut Creek City Council views the Parkmead neighborhood and what we can do in the future to represent our neighborhood on issues that affect all of its residents. In the process of preparing the appeal to the City Council, we learned that several cities across the nation have developed neighborhood plans. The neighborhood and the city usually work together to develop mutually agreed upon standards that define the neighborhood in order to preserve its unique characteristics. The PCA Board will look at this option and others with the neighborhood in coming months. If you have suggestions or comments contact us at [parkmead@parkmead.org](mailto:parkmead@parkmead.org).

*The Appeals Team*

## After Pinky's and Sunrise – What Happens Next?

As Pinky's Pizza and Sunrise Catering/Barbeque disappear from S. California Blvd. at Newell, what happens next? These longtime tenants are letting their leases expire as of Sept. 30. Pinky's, there since 1962, is going out of business Aug 31. The "new" barbeque place is moving to Sunrise Bistro near Ross store and Sunrise Catering is relocating. High rents and the issue of who pays for upgrading utilities drove them away. In addition the corner gas station is willing to sell for a rumored \$4 million, way over market value and needing environmental cleanup.

Options include new tenants moving in or the property being sold. If the owner sells, will the gas station—which is owned by someone else—go? Kaiser owns the two-story office building facing Newell and the surface parking lot by the freeway. Past rumors said Kaiser wanted to buy it all and build a parking garage, but that may no longer be a priority for them.

If someone wants to build on the site, the City will be involved in the review process. Under the General Plan, Parkmead is to be consulted on traffic impacts. Our role may be unofficial, as it was when Trader Joe's went in and we got directional signs pointing traffic away from Newell. Or it may trigger something more official like a "specific plan," wherein we would have a more official role. In any event, the City would most likely address traffic, street and creek setbacks, pedestrian and bike use, and view corridors of Mt. Diablo. Height limits are 35' where Pinky's, Sunrise and the gas station are and the remainder of the property (Kaiser office building and surface parking lot back to 680) is at 50'. The main block (Trader Joe's, Ross etc) is all 50' potential.

The PCA Board and its Development Committee will be monitoring this and will keep you informed, including updating the website, using our email list if appropriate and future newsletters.

*Pete Johnson, City Liaison*

## Neighborhood Survey

There is a strong feeling among PCA Board members that we can take more assured positions on behalf of the neighborhood if we take a survey to learn resident opinions on several subjects related to the Parkmead neighborhood. We expect to start work on the survey questions in the next few months and welcome participation of any interested residents in both preparing and implementing the survey. If you are interested in working on this, please contact [parkmead@parkmead.org](mailto:parkmead@parkmead.org)

## Protect Your Home...and Your Neighbor's Home!

In April, I wrote about the importance of having an automatic gas shut-off valve installed on one's gas meter. An automatic gas shut-off valve is an inexpensive way to protect you, your family and your house, not to mention your neighbors! If you happen to be away when a serious quake hits, or if you are home but lack the strength or know-how to manage the manual valve, the automated shut-off valve acts on your behalf.

Contra Costa County now requires "the installation of approved gas shut-off devices in existing residential, commercial, and industrial buildings prior to the sale of those buildings, or when additions valued at more than \$15,000 are made..." (Ordinance No. 2006-44) Other counties and municipalities are likely to follow suit.

I'm pleased to announce that since April, QuakePrepare, a company which provides this and other earthquake-safety related services and products, has installed 12 shut-off valves in Parkmead.

As a result, QuakePrepare has agreed to extend the special Parkmead price of \$295. If you are interested, contact Larry Guillot at 510-758-3299, or [larry@quakeprepare.com](mailto:larry@quakeprepare.com). You can get more information about QuakePrepare and the valve they use on their web site, [www.quakeprepare.com](http://www.quakeprepare.com).

*Bram Zeigler, PCA Board, District 1 Representative*

## NEW Parkmead Specific Crime Report on [www.parkmead.org](http://www.parkmead.org)!

Our neighborhood website ([www.parkmead.org](http://www.parkmead.org)) has been updated with a link to a Parkmead specific crime report from [www.crimereports.com](http://www.crimereports.com).

CrimeReport.com is a new, free website that consolidates crime data from multiple law enforcement agencies in near real-time. The link on our website is a customized report of all crime reports within a radius of Parkmead Elementary.

From the main page, click on the "Crime Watch" link on the left hand side. There, you'll find a link to the report on CrimeReports.com as well as general information about keeping our neighborhoods safe and organizing Neighborhood Watch programs with your nearby neighbors.

We've also added a link to the Parkmead specific crime report on the Useful Links section.

*Bram Zeigler and Tony Phillips, PCA Board*

## Calendar of Events

**Sunday, Sept. 14**      **Annual PCA Block Party**  
1 to 4 PM

**Saturday, Sept. 27**      **Las Trampas Creek Walk**  
9 to 11 AM

**October 6 to 10**      **Walk to School Week**

For details on the above, see articles in this newsletter

**Wednesday, Nov. 12 – Fall Pizza Meeting and Board Elections, 7 PM, Hillside Covenant Church**—details in Fall PCA Newsletter. **Gary Bogue**, Contra Costa Times columnist and expert on local wildlife and pets, will speak.

## PCA Electronic Communication

Check our website: [www.parkmead.org](http://www.parkmead.org)

*To join our neighborhood e-mail list, send an e-mail to [parkmead@parkmead.org](mailto:parkmead@parkmead.org) with your name and (optional) home address.*

## Community Service Opportunities

### Emergency Preparedness Class

The City of Walnut Creek and the Contra Costa Fire District are offering free classes in Community Emergency Response Team. The next sessions will be on Mondays, September 29 through October 27 from 6 to 9:30 p.m. Call the city at 943-5899 ext. 189 or go to the city website at [www.walnut-creek.org](http://www.walnut-creek.org) and choose “Emergency Preparedness” under Quick Links.

### Citizen’s Institute Class

The City of Walnut Creek will be holding its next Citizen’s Institute from September 27 to November 15. Classes will be held on Mondays from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. October 6 -November 3 and on Wednesday, November 12, with Saturday morning sessions on September 27 and November 15. Call the city at 943-5899 ext. 189 or go to the city website at [www.walnut-creek.org](http://www.walnut-creek.org) and choose “Citizen’s Institute” under Quick Links.

The Citizen’s Institute consists of a series of sessions held twice a year in which citizens:

- Learn first-hand how the City works
- Meet and get to know their neighbors, City officials, and City employees
- Gain an improved awareness of available City services and community resources
- Discover opportunities to be involved with their local government.

## Membership

*Forgot to join the PCA this year? Never too late!! You can get the information on how to join on our website at [www.parkmead.org](http://www.parkmead.org). or contact a board member (see list in this newsletter).*

*Not sure if you are a member? Contact [parkmead@parkmead.org](mailto:parkmead@parkmead.org)*

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Jodi Hayes	At Large	
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Francine Podenski	At Large	Development/Traffic Comm. Chair

*Board members may be contacted at [parkmead@parkmead.org](mailto:parkmead@parkmead.org)*