

The Menlo Oaks Neighborhood Newsletter



The Oak Leaf



February 2006

Annual Meeting

Once again MODA held its Annual Meeting last November in the Peninsula School Auditorium. Over 25 members join us to catch up on the year's efforts and thank the MODA Board Members for their hard work and dedication to our neighborhood. Thank you Joel Wilhite, (President), Holly Still (VP), Remona Murray (Treasurer), Richard Collyer (Editor), Marge Draper (Welcome Committee), David Jevans (Web-master), Charles Riley, Celine Sanie, and Mary Sapountzis.

The introduction of the MODA Board members was followed by Remona's Treasurer Report which is available by request by MODA membership in hard copy or via email (treasurer@menlo-oaks.org). Bottom line we had a balance of \$3,502.21 in our bank account at the end of the year.

Joel gave a presentation of the different Districts (Fire, Water, Sewer, etc) that crisscross and overlap our neighborhood. Followed by Remona's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) hard hat and showing off the skills and free stuff she got from taking the course offered at no cost to residents with the Menlo Park Fire District (MPFD).

MODA Board requested that members present vote on allocating \$1,000 of the funds remaining from last year to go towards MODA's Disaster Preparedness. MODA CERT and Board Members are re-vamping our old plan in conjunction with Carol Parker at the MPFD. We are working on finding a site in the Neighborhood to stash a Cache. Please contact Rich Collyer at (editor@menlo-oaks.org) if you would like to learn more about the program or wish to volunteer.

Residents also got a sneak peek at the upcoming Community Project of making available at a discount Water Barrels (see insert) to MODA residents. Cyrena Wilson presented a letter (see insert) to MODA members regarding oak tree protection.

SFPUC Public Meeting

NOTICE OF UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS REGARDING BAY DIVISION PIPELINE RELIABILITY UPGRADE PROJECT

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) will be holding informational public meetings on March 15 and 16 to discuss important upgrades to the regional water delivery system.

The goal of the Bay Division Pipeline Reliability Upgrade Project is to improve the reliability and seismic stability of the SFPUC Regional Water System, which serves 2.4 million people in Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco counties. The project, which is in the early planning stages, proposes to construct a fifth Bay Division Pipeline along the existing SFPUC right-of-way that passes through Redwood City, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto.

Please join us at one of two meetings to learn more about this important project and how it will affect you.

Wednesday, MARCH 15
East Palo Alto Senior Center
560 Bell Street, East Palo Alto
6:30pm

OR

Thursday, MARCH 16
Veterans Memorial Senior Center
Redwood Room
1455 Madison Ave., Redwood City
6:30pm

Information about the meeting and requests for accommodations for people with special needs can be obtained by calling (800) 571-6610, or email baydivision@sfgwater.org.

Betsy Lauppe Rhodes (415) 554-3240, blauppe@sfgwater.org
Christina Kerby (415) 554-3203, ckerby@sfgwater.org

Calendar 2006

Mar 16 & 17 SFPUC Public Meeting
Mar 9 - Apr 13 CERT Training
Mar 11, 13, 18 HAM Tests
Apr 22 Earth Day Clean up
Jun 17 Annual Picnic

Wireless Networks

There are a number of unsecure wireless networks in the MODA area. I can drive around the neighborhood and from the front of a number of houses connect to the internet. This is generally considered a bad idea. So why is it important to secure your wireless access to the internet - because it is also a wireless access to your home computer(s).

Think about what the nature and contents of the information you store on your hard drive or on other computers in your home network. Providing open access to e-mail and files on your computer are obvious security risks. Many people use financial software such as Microsoft Money or Quicken. They keep all their financial data in these (cont page 3)

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Letter to Supervisors

In response to the petition from Carla Dewar, the MODA Board sought guidance from the neighborhood and with the San Mateo County Department of Public Works and held several meetings on how best to proceed. The purpose of those meetings was to determine what options were available and which actions should be taken if any to improve Coleman Avenue for pedestrians — particularly for parents and children walking and biking to Laurel School.

A considerable investment of time and energy was made by the MODA Board, and from various volunteers and County officials. A special thanks are owed to Neil Cullen of the San Mateo Department of Public Works for attending local meetings, providing a variety of data, and for supporting Menlo Oaks during this process.

The main thrust of this effort was to sort out the Coleman Avenue issues and come to a viable consensus about what the neighborhood wished to do. As a final step, a neighborhood-wide vote was taken on June 7, 2005. The results of the vote were as follows:

| Votes | Option |
|-------|--|
| 52 | No Change at all |
| 12 | Remove 3' of landscaping special treatment for intersections |
| 8 | Raised curb 2' planting strip and paved path |
| 6 | Close Coleman at County Line |
| 5 | Paved shoulder and limited parking one side |
| 4 | Class One Bike Path one side |
| 4 | Close Coleman between Arlington and Berkley |
| 2 | Sidewalk both sides |
| 2 | Graded shoulder area one side |
| 1 | Limit parking minimum clearance |
| 9 | A la carte solution ("hanging chad votes") |

Of the 183 MODA memberships participating in the election, a total of 104 ballots were received. When the ballots were distributed, we verified the membership status of the person receiving the ballot which guaranteed one vote per household. This

also guaranteed the number of ballots cast did not exceed the number of ballots distributed.

The MODA board set up the ballot to be a yes or no choice but if yes, choose one option from nine. Given a list of choices, residents would select their preference. Some of the options listed were provided from Neil Cullen, while others were submitted to MODA from residents for consideration. The option feature created an interesting side effect and some confusion.

Depending on your point of view, those households that selected a choice from the list of options delivered what looked to be a "no clear consensus" to those that selected a no change position. Conversely, those that voted for no change barely squeaked out a victory against the sum of all those that wanted some form of change.

Finally, the nine multiple choice ballots we collected with a no and yes mark, clearly ignored the instructions printed on the ballot and rendered their vote invalid. The interesting twist is they voted for two or more of the options showing a preference, if any of the yes choices won. An argument was made by a board member to point out that despite the printed rules on the ballot, these ballots still represent a voice.

After 2+ years of neighborhood deliberation, culminating with the neighborhood vote, we have to conclude in great frustration we can not find clear consensus on this issue. As a result, the MODA Board is making no recommendation to the County on this matter. It is our hope that the Coleman residents now understand the need for Menlo Oaks residents a place to safely walk their children to and from school. By trimming back over grown hedges and shrubs.

In closing, we wish to warmly thank all of the Coleman homeowners that took the remedial actions which have produced a functional, more accessible and comfortable right-of-way for our little pedestrians. The initiative and response to this matter has been tremendous and is very much appreciated.

Joel Wilhite, MODA President

Dues & Directory

MODA has annual dues of \$20.00, which helps to cover the cost of our Annual Picnic in June, the Annual Meeting in November, the Web Site, and the ever increasing printing, postage costs of the three issues of the Oak Leaf and Annual Directory. If the newsletter you received has an envelope, with my return address of Remona Murray, MODA Treasurer, 441 Arlington Way, attached, then my records show that I have not received your dues for 2005-2006 MODA calendar year. Please check your records and let me know if I am in error. I can be contacted via email at treasurer@menlo-oaks.org or by phone at (650) 327-2806.

The MODA Directory will be distributed this week to members who have paid their annual dues, PDF or Excel format are available via email upon request. If you have paid your dues, but have not received a Directory by the third week of March and you would like to receive one, please let me know so I can correct my records.

Spring Cleaning April 22nd

Want to talk trash with your neighbors? Then join us for a Spring Cleaning day full of friendship and fun. We will be meeting at Peninsula School on Saturday April 22nd at 10AM. We will split into smaller teams to comb the streets and pick up trash as well as recycling. Hot dogs and drinks will wait for all the participants at noon on Madison, that will be closed for the occasion. Bring your own chairs and toys, tricycles and balls!

Spam Filtering

Every once in a while the treasurer and editor of MODA send out emails (info about break-ins sent on Jan 20th) to everyone in the neighborhood who has given us an email address. However, it is not clear that the emails are getting through to everyone. It is suspected that spam filters are getting in the way. If you are interested in the VERY occasional emails on major neighborhood issues, then please make sure that your filters know not to filter our personal emails which are listed in the directory.

(cont from page 1)

programs without using a password to encrypt their data files. Others have credit card information, tax returns that contain social security numbers, and even text files with password lists stored on their home computers. This is a virtual smorgasbord for wireless hackers and could make you an easy target for identity theft.

In today's world of drive-by hackers, it's more important than ever to combine all the available tools to secure your wireless home network. The time you spend reconfiguring or setting up a wireless network to provide strong security is time well spent.

From compnetworking.about.com, I found an article that does a great job of documenting the top 8 tips for secure home wireless networking.

1) Change Default Administrator Passwords (and Usernames)

At the core of most Wi-Fi home networks is an access point or router. To set up these pieces of equipment, manufacturers provide Web pages that allow owners to enter their network address and account information. These Web tools are protected with a login screen (username and password) so that

only the rightful owner can do this. However, for any given piece of equipment, the logins provided are simple and very well-known to hackers on the Internet. Change these settings immediately.

2) Turn on (Compatible) WPA / WEP Encryption

All Wi-Fi equipment supports some form of "encryption." Encryption technology scrambles messages sent over wireless networks so that they cannot be easily read by humans. Several encryption technologies exist for Wi-Fi today. Naturally you will want to pick the strongest form of encryption that works with your wireless network. To function, though, all Wi-Fi devices on your LAN must share the identical encryption settings. Therefore you may need to find a "lowest common denominator" setting.

3) Change the Default SSID

Access points and routers all use a network

name called the SSID. Manufacturers normally ship their products with the same SSID set. For example, the SSID for Linksys devices is normally "linksys." True, knowing the SSID does not by itself allow anyone to break into your network, but it is a start. More importantly, when someone finds a default SSID, they see it is a poorly configured network and are much more likely to attack it. Change the default SSID immediately when configuring your LAN.

4) Enable MAC Address Filtering

Each piece of Wi-Fi gear possesses a unique identifier called the "physical address" or "MAC address." Access points and routers keep track of the MAC addresses of all devices that connect to them. Many such products offer the owner an option to key in the MAC addresses of their home equipment, that restricts the network to only allow connections from those devices. Do this, but also know that the feature is not so powerful as it may seem. Hacker software programs can fake MAC addresses easily.

5) Disable SSID Broadcast

In Wi-Fi networking, the access point or router typically broadcasts the network name (SSID) over the air at regular intervals. This feature was designed for businesses and mobile hotspots where Wi-Fi clients may come and go. In the home, this feature is unnecessary, and it increases the likelihood an unwelcome neighbor or hacker will try to log in to your home network. Fortunately, most Wi-Fi access points allow the SSID broadcast feature to be disabled by the network administrator.

6) Assign Static IP Addresses to Devices

Most home networkers gravitate toward using dynamic IP addresses. DHCP technology is indeed quick and easy to set up. Unfortunately, this convenience also works to the advantage of network attackers, who can easily obtain valid IP addresses from a network's DHCP pool. Turn off DHCP on the router or access point, set a fixed IP address range, then set each connected device to match. Use a private IP range (like 10.0.0.x) to prevent computers from being directly reached from the Internet.

7) Position the Router or Access Point Safely

Wi-Fi signals normally reach to the exte-

rior of a home. A small amount of "leakage" outdoors is not a problem, but the further this signal reaches, the easier it is for others to detect and exploit. Wi-Fi signals often reach across streets and through neighboring homes. When installing a wireless home network, the position of the access point or router determines its reach. Try to position these devices near the center of the home rather than near windows to minimize this leakage.

8) Turn Off the Network During Extended Periods of Non-Use

The ultimate in security measures, shutting down the network will most certainly prevent outside hackers from breaking in! While impractical to turn off and on the devices frequently, at least consider doing so during travel or extended periods offline. Computer disk drives have been known to suffer from power cycle wear-and-tear, but broadband modems and routers can easily handle this treatment occasionally.

For more specific information about setting up your wireless network for your Macintosh or Windows computers, please see one of the following web sites:

How to Secure Your Wireless Home Network with Windows XP

http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/networking/learnmore/bowman_05february10.mspx

Managing AirPort Extreme Networks

http://manuals.info.apple.com/en/Managing_AirPort_Extreme_Networks_v3.4.pdf

VE (Ham Radio) Exam Schedules

Sunnyvale - next test on 3/11/06

Contact sv1@amatuer-radio.org

Also see www.amateur-radio.org

Fremont - next test on 3/13/06

Contact Dennis, fmvvetl@comcast.net

Redwood City - next test on 3/18/06

Contact Al, wb6imx@worldnet.att.net

Walk ins OK

Misc. News

Free Classes

The next Community Emergency Response Team training will be held at the Menlo Park City Council Chambers from 6:30 - 9 pm starting March 9. The remaining five nights of the training are March 16, 23, 30, April 6 & 13.

There will be additional training dates at the Ravenswood Family Health Center from April 26 through May 31 and again at the Menlo Park City Council Chambers from September 21 through October 26.

There are also CPR classes available at Station 1 (300 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park). The classes are \$25 for the general public. For certified CERT members the cost is \$5.

For further details about CERT Schedules, please see the CERT web site <http://www.menlofire.org/cert/schedule.html>.

New Board Members Needed

Two members of our MODA Board will not be continuing to serve in the coming year. Mary Sapountzis and President Joel Wilhite have turned in their hats. Leaving us with two seats on the board available. If you are interested in the position please contact any board member.

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Richard Collyer

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ABOUT THE OAK LEAF:

The Oak Leaf is published by the Menlo Oaks District Association and is distributed to all homes in the Menlo Oaks neighborhood of unincorporated San Mateo County.

It's about the Oaks...

Many of us moved to the Menlo Oaks neighborhood because of its treed streets and country setting. Unfortunately our oaks are leaving us one by one, due to bad health, storms or new construction. Here are a few tips to help maintain the trees that make our neighborhood's character:

- do not water under the canopy, even in summer. Use only drought resistant plants.
- do not add soil or other material around the oak. This restricts the exchange of gasses and compaction due to extra weight damages the root system which is very shallow.
- during construction, do not trench within the drip line of the tree, and establish a fenced perimeter around the tree to keep equipment and toxic liquids away.
- deep root feeding performed by a tree specialist is very helpful to survive the stress of construction or new landscape.
- pruning to remove excess dead weight should be done every few years. Maintained oaks are less prone to breaking during a storm.

For more information, visit www.californiaoaks.org.

Celine Sanie.

www.menlo-oaks.org

BE AWARE!

There have been numerous burglaries in the Menlo Oaks area and the surrounding neighborhoods. If you notice anything or anyone suspicious call the Sheriff or 911 immediately. Most of the burglaries have taken place during daylight hours. Two Menlo Park teens were arrested in one of the latest burglaries.

Door-to-door magazine salesman/solicitors are another problem plaguing the area. There have been some break-ins associated with their presence. Menlo Park requires door-to-door solicitors to apply for permits. This permit must be issued by the City of Menlo Park, not from the company for which the solicitor works. Soliciting is only permitted between 9am-6pm. If you have a "No Solicitors" sign posted and a solicitor knocks on your door, this is considered trespassing. Call the Sheriff or 911. If a solicitor knocks on your door it is suggested that you acknowledge that you are home. But, don't open the door. Talk to them through the closed door. Don't take any chances.

Holly Still

Looking for House for Rent

Looking for 3 bedroom house to rent in Menlo Oaks or near by neighborhood. Please e-mail emfergason@gmail.com.

Menlo Oaks District Association 2006-2007 Board

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