

# Palomino Lakes Property Owners Association

January 2007

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## **Thank you volunteers**

As discussed later in this newsletter, the Association completed a number of projects in 2006. These important projects could not have been completed without the help of Palomino Lakes residents who volunteered their time and labor to improve our community. Volunteers cleared brush, trimmed tress, directed traffic, inspected roads and cleaned drainage ditches. On our tight budget we would have accomplished much less had it not been for volunteers.

In addition to the members of the Board, our volunteers included Howard Blake, Frank Crivello, Sue Corriea, Terry Candrian, Tony Delfino, Andrew Forchini, Bob Forman, Patti Fenner, Dennis Harlan, Gary Johnson, Aurelio Lopez, Tim Monahan, Tom Mannatt, Charles Retherford, Rich Schaefer, Amy Schaefer, Lee Tolbert, and Lynn VonHoogenstyn. These folks deserve a big thank you and a pat on the back.

A number of you have expressed an interest in helping out in the coming year and we can certainly use the help. Most of the work will involve tree trimming and brush removal although other things will certainly come up. Let any Board member know if you can help.

## **Major road repairs completed**

Much of the effort during 2006 went to repair deteriorated roads. Our roads had not seen any significant maintenance for a number of years and the winter of 2005/2006 took a heavy toll.

As mentioned in the July newsletter, new road markings were placed at the River Road, Palomino Road entrance and new street name signs were installed at each

corner. Road marking, signs and reflectors cost about \$1,000.

In July, Flick Enterprises of Cloverdale dug out a number of silted roadside drainage ditches in order to reduce the amount of water escaping the ditches and running across the roads. The cost was approximately \$1,250.

In August, Oak Grove Construction of Santa Rosa completed dozens of patches on Palomino Road, Mountain Pine Road and Madrone Drive. The work took 10 days, consumed 275 tons of asphalt and cost the Association \$56,000. Volunteers saved an additional \$8,000.

During three days in September and October, Aaron Paving of Petaluma applied 1,500 pounds of hot tar to miles of cracks in the pavement on Palomino Road, Mountain Pine Road, Madrone Drive, Oak Knoll Terrace, Willow Road, and "Little River Road".



Javier and Hector seal cracks on Cedar Lane

Crack sealing prevents water from getting under the asphalt and deteriorating the road base. The cost of crack sealing was \$6,500.

## **Trees trimmed / brush removed**

Using primarily volunteer labor, we were able to trim a significant number of roadside trees and remove large quantities of brush along Palomino Road and Mountain Pine Road. Working on three separate weekends, volunteers cut and loaded some 45 cubic yards of material which was then hauled away by Firescape of Cloverdale. Sanz Nursery and Landscape of Cloverdale also trimmed trees, cut brush and removed poison oak on Palomino Road, Little River Road, and Mountain Pine Road. Professional labor and hauling cost \$5,000. Volunteers saved an estimated \$7,000.

## **“Double” utility poles removed**

Working with PG&E, AT&T, and Comcast, the Association was able to secure the removal of a number of “double” utility poles. These poles were the result of PG&E setting a new pole and transferring its equipment and then AT&T and/or Comcast failing to follow through and transfer their equipment and remove the unneeded pole. The resultant eyesores then graced our neighborhood – for years in some cases.



Comcast removes pole on Mountain Pine Rd

After a good deal of effort, two poles were removed from Palomino Road and two more from Mountain Pine Road. The bad news is that within weeks of having this cleaned up, PG&E set another pole on Oak Knoll Terrace. The Board will closely watch AT&T and Comcast to ensure that equipment is transferred promptly and the unneeded pole removed.

## **Slow progress on CC&R revision**

The effort to revise our 50 year old CC&Rs continues. Our attorney, William Gillis, completed and delivered a first draft of the revised CC&Rs in September. Due to other pressing work, the Board wasn’t able to review and return the draft to Gillis until December. Gillis is now incorporating the Board’s suggested changes and will have a second draft to us shortly. We will ask for volunteers to review that draft.

The first phase of the revision process will incorporate the numerous changes to law that have gone into effect during the last half-century. It should be noted that the vast majority of changes required by law strengthen property owner rights and clarify Association responsibilities.

Our hope is to complete the revision and review processes in time to have Gillis meet with the community and explain the proposed CC&Rs late this winter and then have the proposal on the Board election ballot in May.

## **Lots of mailings coming**

Recent changes to California law now require property owner associations such as ours to inform members on a regular basis of the operation of the Association. The laws require the Association to annually inform you, by certified mail in some cases, of our assessment and collection processes, our dispute resolution process, our budget and financial condition, your right to review meeting minutes and a summary of the Association’s insurance coverage.

We apologize for the amount of mail you will be receiving but it is required by law. We will combine mailings whenever possible but we anticipate several mailings and our reproduction and mailing costs will exceed \$2,000.

We are investigating the possibility of distribution by e-mail for those who would prefer this method.

## Need wood chips?

Many of the projects undertaken by the Association generate wood chips and we would prefer not to pay to have chips hauled off if they can be used in the community. Chips (in minimum 5 yard quantities) can be delivered to your site. If you are interested, let one of the Board members know.

## Huge eucalyptus removed

In December, the Palomino Lakes Property Owners Association and the Palomino Lakes Mutual Water Company jointly contracted with Johnson's Quality Tree Service of Ukiah to remove a 130 foot tall eucalyptus from the edge of Palomino Road. The eucalyptus had grown to nearly 7 feet in diameter, was beginning to lean and was lifting the asphalt on Palomino Road. The water company was also deeply concerned about the tree as a six inch water main was immediately adjacent to the tree and roots were threatening the water main.



Worker removing eucalyptus on Palomino Rd

Johnson's worked 6 days to remove the tree which was estimated to weigh 100,000 pounds. The cost of removal was \$10,000.

## Please, slow down

While working on the roads this past year, the Board had the opportunity to observe first hand the traffic on our roads. While the vast majority of folks are driving safely and prudently, there are a few people who are simply driving too fast for conditions. Please, take it slow.

## Projects considered for 2007

The Board is currently planning the projects it will undertake in 2007. In addition to completing phase 1 of the CC&Rs, we have plans for a number of infrastructure repair and improvement projects.

We hope to make paving repairs on Cedar Lane, Oak Knoll Terrace and lower Mountain Pine Road during the summer or early fall of 2007.

We hope that, concurrent with paving work, we can replace the first of the deteriorated culverts on upper Palomino Road. We would also like to begin the engineering work necessary to install a liner in a large, badly deteriorated culvert on upper Mountain Pine Road.

We have plans to replace a few more of the badly deteriorated traffic signs and to install additional speed limit signs.

We are hoping to contract for a wood chipper and operator to chip brush for property owners. The idea is to support your efforts to remove flammable vegetation by providing a method of disposal. This would be along the lines of the successful (and popular) effort of 4 or 5 years ago.

We have plans for more tree trimming - particularly along Palomino Road, Madrone Drive, Toyon Lane and upper Mountain Pine Road. Removing overhanging limbs and roadside brush pays big dividends in fire safety, traffic safety and general appearance. This effort would be accomplished with a combination of professional and volunteer labor. *Volunteer early to avoid the rush.*

The drainage ditches, while working better than last year, need additional work. We hope to have Ethan Flick and his backhoe continue this effort.

We need to address a problem with an eroding roadside earth bank on Palomino Road near Willow Terrace. This area must be stabilized to prevent further erosion.

We hope to continue the effort begun last year to improve the appearance and fire safety of the area between River Road and Little River Road.

If you have thoughts about other areas which should be addressed, please let us know.

## **2007 budget and assessments**

The Board is currently in process of preparing the budget for the next fiscal year which begins on April 1, 2007. We will finalize the budget and mail it to all property owners in February.

As mentioned in previous newsletters we anticipate that an assessment increase will be necessary but that any increase will be relatively modest and less than \$100 per year. An announcement of the fiscal year 2007 assessment will be included with the budget.

## **The Crocker Inn**

There have been a number of questions about the Crocker Inn and its county use permit. The Crocker Inn has been issued a permit to operate a lodge with twelve rooms for transient guests and may operate its commercial kitchen to prepare meals for those guests. The Crocker Inn is not approved for "special events." The Inn's use permit does not address noise, which is covered by county ordinance, or open fires, which are covered by CFPD and CDF regulation.

The Board has discussed the use permit with the Inn's owners, Tony and Marcia Babb, and expressed our concern about activities beyond those permitted by the county. We have urged the Inn's owners to confine activities at the Inn to those allowed by their permit.

The Board has been able to work with Tony and Marcia on a number of issues and feels that the Babbs have heard and understand our concerns.

## **\*\*Elections around the corner\*\***

Our annual meeting is scheduled for May 5, 2007 at the Cloverdale Veterans Hall. As usual we will elect officers to the boards of the Property Owners Association and the Mutual Water Company. Changes in state law will effect how we conduct those elections. The law now requires that ballots be mailed to all members at least 30 days prior to the deadline for voting. The law also requires secret ballot elections and the appointment of a Supervisor of Elections. Joe Chiantella has been appointed as the election supervisor for 2007.

The Association and the Water Company are inviting nominations for directors of both organizations. Nominations should be in writing and may be given to a Board member or the Supervisor of Elections either in person or by e-mail, e-mailed on the Palomino Lakes web site, or mailed to P. O. Box 687, Cloverdale. Nominations must be received by March 31, 2007.

Any property owner may be nominated and, as in the past, self-nomination is permitted.

## **Your feedback is appreciated**

The Board has been very active this past year and we appreciate the feedback we've received. Most of it has been positive and all of it has been constructive. Please continue the feedback and keep us up to date about problems areas and concerns.

## **Board Members**

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