

## Fire Prevention Report

The fire hazard in our area is already rated high, and is expected to be extreme this summer and fall.

All the funds in the \$7,000 fire prevention budget have been spent, almost all of it on the defensible space within 100 feet of our homes.

Approximately half of this expenditure has been in close-in areas normally cared for in the landscape committee budget. We are still waiting for the \$5,000 grant that was approved by the Diablo Firesafe Council for improvements in our defensible space in February. Once that money is clearly in the bank, an additional \$3,000 will be spent in the close-in areas and \$2,000 will replace fire prevention funds to be used in more distant areas during the wet season.

I considered the close-in work to be the greatest priority for fire safety, particularly because of the robust growth of grasses in some key firebreaks, at the expense of putting off work in the more distant areas.

Only one of our homes failed the recent inspection, and that was because the owner did not have the address posted on her unit. However, the fact that the other 99 units passed inspection does not necessarily mean they are fire safe.

Here is what you, as a homeowner, can do to help protect us all:

1. Install an automatic shut off on your gas line if you have not already done so.
2. Remove combustible materials and planters from upon decks and below them.
3. Close windows and skylight vents before leaving home on red flag days or when you will be away from home during the high fire hazard season.
4. Do not smoke on your deck or use a charcoal BBQ.
5. If you have a patio, maintain a non-ignition zone within the three feet adjacent to your house, including trimming bushes and branches two-three feet away from windows to prevent flames from cracking the glass.
6. Have an evacuation plan in place and be sure to close your garage door, windows and skylight before leaving.
7. If there is a fire approaching, you might use hoses or the floor mats in your car to put out small spot fires started by embers if it is still safe to do so.

Thanks in advance, Bob Sieben, Fire Prevention chair, (510) 841-2746

## The Story of a Water Leak in a Drought

One Sunday evening, in early June, Betsy Van Patten (Starview Court) was walking the downhill trail. She spotted water pooling below the homes at the bend of lower Starview Drive. She took the trouble to call the Landscape Chairman to report the possible problem. Tina Diskon then called Mrs. Valdez at 24 Starview to confirm sprinklers were on but no "geysers" were to be seen. Tina then contacted Serpico, who would come out for the problem even on Sunday night, even as dark fell. The judgement was made that the problem would subside as soon as the sprinkler cycle went off (about 5 minutes). That was also confirmed. Monday morning Serpico's irrigation tech was on the property first thing. He found a main lateral line had developed a leak. He fixed it. Had Betsy not spotted the problem, the leak would have grown in magnitude, eventually rupturing. By reporting the leak, Betsy Van Patten saved the Association hundreds of dollars.

Moral of the Story: You too have eyes. We have at least 100 pairs of eyes that might catch an irrigation problem. Please, watch for irrigation problems and report them immediately so action can be taken. All such calls are most welcome.

Tina Diskon

HHV Landscape Committee



## Fire Inspection Notices

The annual fire inspections of your property are conducted by the regular firemen sometime between June through August. The results will be hung on your doorknob if in compliance and mailed to you if out of compliance.

### ***If you are found out of compliance with the fire code:***

**Give a copy of the non-compliance notice to the Landscape Chair, Tina Diskon, at 53 Starview Drive, 510-540-0929.**

The HHV Association is responsible for compliance *outside* any fenced-off area, but it has no way of knowing your property is out of compliance unless you notify them. You are responsible for the property *within* your fenced-off area, but the form will not be clear whether this is the area that is out of compliance.

Firemen from throughout Oakland will do the initial inspections on all 25,000 properties in the Oakland Hills within the Oakland Wildfire Prevention District. They will not know which homes are in our homeowners' association. They are instructed not to indicate on the inspection form exactly which area is out of compliance. They were also told to say the property is out of compliance if any part of a tree is within ten feet of the chimney, the structure, or overhanging the roof. This is required by state law. *However, the fire inspector can, on review, grant an exception, as is likely if there is two to three or more feet of clearance.*

***It is extremely important that the Landscape Chair be notified of any property determined to be out of compliance, so she can deal with all of these properties with the fire inspector at one time. Your cooperation is urgently requested. She can then determine what has to be done by whom and when.***

--Tina Diskon, Landscape Chair

--Bob Sieben, Fire Prevention Chair,  
6 Starview Drive, 510-841-2746

## Gas Shutoff Valves

In the April 2012 newsletter, it was announced that the HHV Board voted to provide \$300 for every homeowner in the community who has a gas shut-off valve. This was done to encourage everyone in HHV to install a gas shut-off valve. Two years later, we are at about 80% who currently have a gas shut-off valve with several more being scheduled. If you suspect that your neighbor may not have a gas shut-off valve, please check with them and encourage them to have one installed, while the \$300 reimbursement is still available. For your safety and theirs, help your neighbor make arrangements for installation while the \$ 300 reimbursement offer is still available.

Such devices automatically shut off the gas to your residence in case of an earthquake, thereby decreasing the probability of fire after the quake. Because our homes are close together, the more homeowners who have such a device, the safer we all are. If you do not already have a gas shut-off valve, here is how you can qualify for this payment:

Contact a licensed plumber to obtain a quote for installing the valve. The plumber you choose will enter your utility closet, shut off the gas, install the shut-off valve, and relight all gas appliances that have a pilot light. The cost may range from \$350 to \$550. It is possible that you might receive a lower rate if you and some of your neighbors join forces to contract with a plumber to do multiple installations in the same period of time.

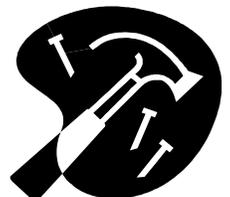
Once your valve is installed, send a copy of the payment invoice showing completion of the installation to Collins Management (500 Alfred Nobel Dr, Ste 250, Hercules, CA 94547, attention: Michael Lee). Once the Architecture Committee has verified the installation, you will receive the \$300 check from the Association.

## HHV Website

Have you visited [www.hillerhighlandsfive.com](http://www.hillerhighlandsfive.com) lately? This website provides important information for our community including our CC&R's, contact information and even forms for architectural changes. Another important function of the website is the mailing list which will allow the Board to notify the Association of safety issues like recent robberies and also reminders for community events. Don't worry, we won't fill your inbox with spam. Please send your email, name and home address to [michael@collins-mgmt.com](mailto:michael@collins-mgmt.com). Sending this information to Michael will also help keep the Association's cost down by reducing postage costs.

## Architectural Application Process

Are you planning to work on your home this summer? Please remember that when the time comes to paint your home or make other exterior modifications, you will need to inform the Association of your plans and obtain approval in order to proceed. A completed Architectural Change form is to be submitted to the Architectural Committee for consideration and approval. To obtain an Application for Architectural Change form, contact Collins Management at (510) 262-1795 or Steve Roland at (510) 644-1315.



## HHV Landscape: Who Does What, When?

The HHV landscape program is run by 6 community volunteers who report to the board of directors. Two volunteers do the gardens, three volunteers do trees and 1 does water/irrigation. Policy, budget and homeowner requests are decided by all, making decisions which hopefully reflect general community opinion.

The 2014 Serpico grounds crew is only on the property Wednesdays and Fridays. A Serpico tree crew is here, on demand, 4 times a year or more. The Serpico irrigation tech is on the property for short spurts of time, as needed, and once a month for a system wide inspection. Please do not interrupt Serpico workers. Emergency service calls, requests for service, questions and comments come to the Landscape Committee, **not Serpico**.

The un-landscaped common ground, on the lower portion of the slopes behind the homes, is managed by the Fire Prevention Committee and its vendor, Shelterbelt.

The 13 acres of managed landscaped common ground around homes.

**INSPECTIONS:** Serpico management walks the property, with landscape volunteers, monthly to evaluate work done, projects to be undertaken and needed remedial work. There are additional inspections looking at just the trees, just the irrigation, just the backflow valves. These are all used to plan landscape work, short and long term.

**MULCH:** Mulch is laid down every five years, property wide, in the landscaped areas. Specific small areas are mulched, as needed, following significant plant/tree removals and replacements. The next general mulch application will happen in 2015.

**IRRIGATION:** Repairs are made weekly as well as on a 24/7 emergency basis. Runoff water on the slope is managed by a concrete v-ditch system cleaned out at least twice yearly by the grounds crew. Water usage is monitored, at the meters, by both Serpico and EBMUD. Serpico's weekly readings of water flow are used to find irrigation problems not visible above ground.

**TREES:** The 500+ tree stock is managed through a "tree inventory" (tree tag number, location, type of tree, history of work done to that specific tree) maintained by an HHV volunteer and Serpico staff. Tree pruning (for building clearance, fire code, view restoration or the health of the tree) includes roughly 1/4 of the tree stock, each year, on a 4 year rotation. **HHV does not do custom pruning for aesthetics.**

Each spring selected trees and large shrubs are provided with deep root feeding, insect and disease protection, as needed.

Tree removals take place, as much as possible, during the summer dry months.

**HOMEOWNER REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL TREE SERVICE:** These requests are accepted by the Landscape Committee July 1 through September 30th. These are evaluated, prioritized, bid out and funded, to the extent allowed by the budget. **Homeowner requests are considered on a 4-year cycle so as to provide equal access to service.**

Homeowner requests, plus any discretionary tree replacements are done in the fall. Emergency tree work is addressed on a 24/7 year round basis.

**THE GARDENS:** The 13 acres of gardens, plus the downhill slope, to the v-ditch system, are worked, for general maintenance (debris, pruning, snail bait, weeding, fertilizing) on a monthly 4 zone rotation. The crew works 1 zone each week. **Applied to you, the crew works your area once a month.** No plantings happen during the summer dry months however heavy emphasis is put on the basics (hand weeding and pruning) plus the removal of fire fuels behind homes. During December and January the crew does extensive hard pruning, of older shrubs and woody plants, to generate new growth. In the spring and fall, heavy fertilizing and planting programs take place. We are in the 5th year of "refreshing" the 20 year old landscape.

HHV is a planned community with a planned landscape entirely controlled by the Association; design, plants, shrubs, trees, maintenance and irrigation. You personally may not change the landscape around your home; no additions and no subtractions. The intent is to maximize investment/assets and minimize conflicting individual priorities. Open ground behind homes is not "landscaped" or irrigated. It is simply managed to control fire danger and erosion. **HHV does not provide for, or allow, customized plantings.** If you wish to personalize the front of your home, please do so by means of potted plants but only on the hardscape.

That being said, homeowner requests for additional ground service (for replacement or upgraded plantings or "missed" services) are accepted year round. Requests are evaluated, prioritized and, if approved, are dovetailed into regularly scheduled grounds work, by zone and season. **Homeowners requests are prioritized to line up with association priorities with consideration for equal access to service for all homeowners.**

Your 2014 Landscape Committee: Bet Lai, Karen Faircloth, Betsy Van Patten, Joan French, Pam Williams and Tina Diskon.

Tina Diskon

HHV Landscape Committee

## Board Officers and Committee Chairs



**John Diskon** - President

(510) 540-0929

**Jan Howard** - 1<sup>st</sup> V. President

(510) 848-7094

**Marlene Zuehlsdorff** - 2<sup>nd</sup> V. President

(510) 704-1372

**Sandi Bonacini** - Treasurer

(510) 647-8001

**Joanne Brown** - Secretary

(510) 848-8332

**Steve Roland** - Architecture Chair

(510) 644-1315

**Tina Diskon** - Landscape Chair

(510) 540-0929

**Bob Sieben** - Fire Prevention

(510) 841-2746

## Board Meetings and Homeowners Forum

The Hiller Highlands V Board of Directors meets monthly and meetings are typically held on the last Tuesday of every month starting at 6:30pm. There are some exceptions to the meeting schedule and homeowners are notified when there is a change. The Board meeting agenda is posted near the Association's mailbox at 37 Starview Drive, the weekend prior to the meeting. Homeowners are welcome and strongly encouraged to attend board meetings to learn about the important issues your Board of Directors are working on.

The Board will set aside 15 minutes at the beginning of each meeting for Homeowners' Forum. Prior to the start of Homeowners' Forum, the Board President will determine how many people wish to speak and determine a time limit of no more than three minutes in order to maximize the opportunity for all owners to have a chance to speak. A director or manager may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed. Speakers must observe rules of decorum and not engage in obscene gestures, shouting, profanity or other disruptive behavior. If a speaker is in the middle of a sentence when time is called, he/she may finish their thought before sitting down. The time guidelines ensure that others will have an opportunity to speak. Speakers may not allot their time to others.

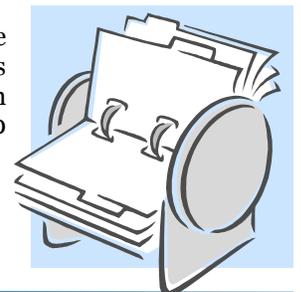
Although members do not have a legal right to participate in Board discussions and votes, the Boards can invite comments from the audience on particular items of business if they so choose. This is at the discretion of the Board. Once a motion and second has been made on an item of business, the president may invite comments from the audience. Once comments have been received, discussion can be closed and a vote taken by the directors.

## Updated Contact Information

Hiller Highlands V utilizes an emergency roster that provides contact information for each homeowner and resident. The list contains names and phone numbers organized into 12 groups according to address that was developed for distribution to the all residents and owners. This list is critical in case of an emergency. You have the right to request your phone number not be on this list. However, if you do so it will put you at a significantly increased risk in the event of a fire, earthquake or other emergency.

Please review the enclosed emergency roster to verify your contact information. **Attempts to call some have resulted in out of service or disconnected messages.** If your information or your tenant's information is incorrect or needs to be updated, please contact Collins Management at (510) 262-1795. A form to update your information will be sent to you. For your convenience, you can also fill out the form online at [www.hillerhighlandsfive.com](http://www.hillerhighlandsfive.com). Please return the completed form via mail, email or fax. Also, if you haven't provided your email address or have changed your email address recently, please email it to: [michael@collins-mgmt.com](mailto:michael@collins-mgmt.com).

If you are renting your unit, please remember that you are required to notify the Association and provide your tenant's name and contact information. For more information on the leasing or renting of your unit, please see sections 2.10 to 2.13 of the CC&Rs.



The next Board meeting will be held on July 29, 2014 in the small room of the Hiller Country Club starting at **6:30 PM**. Homeowners are encouraged to attend.



### Hiller Highlands V

c/o Collins Management

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Hercules, CA 94547

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Fax: 510-262-1797

Email: [Michael@collins-mgmt.com](mailto:Michael@collins-mgmt.com)

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