

Happy Valley News
Happy Valley Improvement Association
Spring 2019

Letter from the President:

This last March, my wife Martha and I celebrated our fortieth wedding anniversary. It has been a long, great trip so far, with more good times yet to come. For fourteen of those years, we were vagabonds, living in nine different places – five on the East Coast, three on the West Coast, and one in the middle. Then we found Happy Valley and haven't moved since. Part of it was schools – our daughter was entering first grade and we didn't want to uproot her year after year. But mostly, Happy Valley just suits us. The familiar feeling of controlled disorder as you drive up Happy Valley Road – big houses next to little houses, manicured grounds next to fields of weeds guarded by ramshackle fences, captains of industry next to captains of seven-year old minivans, major league ballplayers next to soft-baseball strikeout kings. It is both relaxing and reassuring.

After 26 years, Happy Valley Road should have gotten very old, but it never has. Going downhill, I'm usually headed toward something tasty, like the Peets coffee bar or the Diablo Foods meat counter. It has become a “flow” experience – full involvement in the present, doing exactly what you want to be doing right now. Headed back up the hill, the satisfaction of rounding each curve is augmented by thoughts of how happy everyone will be with their steak hot off the grill later that evening. Happy Valley has real quality; that elusive something that makes things feel just right, instead of half-fouled-up, like they usually are most of the time.

I say this not to be immodest, but to remind everyone who received this newsletter how fortunate we all are to live in such a terrific place, and to urge all of us to take advantage of it while we can.

For our stellar neighborhood is under siege. Not satisfied with building 8-story apartments in the BART parking lots along Deer Hill Road, the California state legislature is pushing to extend BART's long arm a half-mile in every direction. That's 8 (or maybe just 5) story apartment buildings all the way from the BART station to the corner of Glen and Monticello, or the corner of Happy Valley and Crestmont. Given that BART has enough trouble just running a railroad, the plan is a disaster waiting to happen. After a long period of construction noise and pollution, a trip to Diablo Foods will be more like running a gantlet than a cruise lined with daffodils and birdhouses.

And for what purpose? Not for reduction of greenhouse gasses (residents of outlying transit villages still demand cars and use them frequently). Not for low-cost housing (mid-rise construction and mandatory union labor will make even tiny apartments quite expensive). And not to put more riders on BART (their trains are crammed to capacity during rush hours now). Just urban animosity toward the suburbs pushed along by developers' pursuit of profit.

Peter Clark

Fire Station 16: Hardly Nearly Almost Done

By Peter Clark

Happy Valley's fire station at the corner of Los Arabis and Upper Happy Valley Road is close to completion. But not quite yet. The whole process reminds me of the scene at a dog racing track. The dogs are running like crazy, but their objective, a mechanical rabbit, keeps moving out in front of them, never to be caught. At first, our fire department, the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District -- CCCFPD or "Con Fire" for short – set a firm completion date of "late March". Then extra rain moved the date to "April", and finally a territorial dispute with PG&E about where the electricity meter would go moved it to June.

This is a serious matter – without firemen and equipment at the new station, arrival times in most of Happy Valley are about four minutes longer than if a crew has to travel from Station 43 (in Orinda by St. Stephens Church), or even longer if the first response is from Station 15 (on Mt. Diablo by Big O Tires). In some situations, those few short minutes can be the difference between life and death.

In addition, running a fire department is expensive. Fourteen cents of every dollar paid in Proposition 13 (1%) real estate tax go to Con Fire. A reasonable estimate of the fire tax paid annually by the 1,042 homeowners in the HVIA is therefore $(1,042 \times \$1,500,000 \times .0014) = \2.2 million per year, or \$15.3 million over the seven years the station has been closed. Add another 50% for all the other homes served by Station 16, and you get about \$23 million, a figure comparable to the biggest bank robbery in U.S. history [Dunbar Armored, 1997, \$18.9 mill].

While the just-retired Con Fire Chief (Jeff Carman) and his successor (Lewis Broschard) have both worked non-stop to restore our fire services, the institutional obstacles have been too high and too numerous. It is definitely time for Station 16 to be up and running again.

Wanted: A Few Good Neighbors

If you are interested in playing a more active role in our community, you may want to consider joining the Happy Valley Improvement Association Board. The Board meets 8-9 times a year; summers are meeting free. It is a great way to stay current on local events and meet new neighbors. Short on time? Volunteer for one of our projects. Please contact Peter Clark or return the form below.

YES! I am interested in volunteering for an HVIA project or joining the board.

Name

Phone

Street Address

Email

Mail this form to: HVIA, Attn: Peter Clark, 4103 Happy Valley Road, Lafayette, CA 94549

Do you like the daffodils...and the bird houses?

By Peggy Lucchesi

My daughter, her husband, their two-year-old son, and I moved to the Upper Happy Valley area of Lafayette last summer from Redwood City. Seeing the cute little bird houses on the backs of the signs put a smile on our faces and brought a warm feeling to our hearts. We thought how nice it was going to be to live in a town where people care enough about their community to do special things like that. So, when I saw a note on Nextdoor from the Happy Valley Improvement Association (HVIA) asking, “Do you like the daffodils...and the bird houses? If so, why not join us at our next HVIA meeting?”. I said, “Why not indeed?!” So I went to the meeting, had a lovely time, and got to learn about the HVIA projects underway for this year and next. One of those projects is assisting with the re-opening of the new Fire Station 16 on Los Arabis Road at Upper Valley Road. Now, I’m



hoping to join one of the HVIA’s committees to take a more active role in the community. Thank you, HVIA, for reaching out for new members.

[Note: As indicated elsewhere in this newsletter, the HVIA is still looking for more board members and volunteers. Every little bit of help makes Happy Valley even happier.]



Happy Valley Improvement Association

2018-2019 Volunteer Roster

Last Name	First Name	Position	Telephone	Email
Clark	Peter	President	299-0819	pkclark@ucdavis.edu
Dunaway	Mark	Director	404-229-6962	mark.dunaway@gmail.com
Kelly	James	Volunteer		james_kelly4@yahoo.com
Kowalski	Jeff	Director		jeff.kowalski@gmail.com
Lucchesi	Peggy	Director		peggy.m.lucchesi@gmail.com
Mathisen	Byrne	Vice President, City Liaison	284-9388	byrnemath@comcast.net
Moeller	Greg	Treasurer	283-2812	greg0361@comcast.net
Powell	Colby	Director	284-1414	Colby.Powell@pacbell.net
Zener	Angie	Volunteer		angiezener@gmail.com





Upper Happy Valley Walkway Project

By Mark Dunaway

One of the most frequent discussions at the monthly board meetings of the Happy Valley Improvement Association is how best to continue to beautify and improve our neighborhood - both for the HVIA members and for Lafayette as a whole. A wonderful and existing attribute of our area is the neighborhood walking path and this is where we have agreed to start the first, of what we hope will be many, new neighborhood improvements. Don't worry, folks, the Daffodil Project will continue to be our neighborhood lodestar and its excellence will be what we hope to emulate.

First up is the walkway along Upper Happy Valley Road. If you use this path, you may have noticed that there has been some significant deterioration over the years - cracks, asphalt erosion, curb failure - and we will address these issues this summer, now the rain seems to be over. Once the repairs have been completed, we will add mile markers every 1/10th mile along this path as well as the one on Happy Valley Road. We have enough money in the bank earmarked for walkways to fund this project.

As point person for this endeavor, I would welcome additional ideas, questions or thoughts. Phone (404-229-6962), email (mark.dunaway@gmail.com) or talk to me at our annual meeting.

Happy Valley Birdhouse Photo Contest

Walking or driving through our town, it's hard to miss the uniquely whimsical birdhouses and quail that share space with the road signs. Our local friend and HVIA Treasurer, Greg Moeller, has been creating and gifting these for many years. Sheltering native birds, and depicting our feathered neighbors, they're beautiful adornments that add to the charm of our community.

Now that it's spring, we're holding a contest to encourage a walk around the neighborhood, enjoying the Happy Valley paths and these unique installations. As you walk,



photograph the birdhouses and quail. We're awarding a prize* in each of two categories: (1) the greatest number of birdhouses/quail photographed, and (2) the best photograph of a birdhouse/quail. You may find the most photogenic bird family hosted in one of the houses!

Go to <https://tinyurl.com/y3ygcnh9> to post your photos by Sunday, May 27th. On Wednesday night, May 29th, at the annual HVIA meeting, we'll announce the two winners.

*Each prize is a \$50 gift card from Orchard Nursery. You do not need to be present to win.

Annual Members Meeting

The Annual Happy Valley Improvement Association Meeting

Wednesday May 29 at 7pm
Happy Valley School Library

Our guest speakers will be from the Orchard Nursery in Lafayette, giving a presentation on *What to Grow in Lafayette and How to Grow It*. There will also be a presentation by HVIA Board members on your association's activities, and maybe some discussion of the recent turmoil at City Hall.

As usual, light refreshments (bottled water, decaf coffee, cookies) will be served.



Beautification – Birdhouses and Daffodils

By Greg Moeller

It was a very wet winter which made for a fabulous spring full of color.

For those that decorated and hung birdhouses, I hope you had success attracting nesting birds. I will be building more birdhouses, with some ready to paint and decorate for the kids, and some completed and ready to hang.

This year, we are planning to introduce a variety of daffodil bulbs that will naturalize more easily to our area. We will continue to offer the King Alfred, but this variety has had difficulty re-blooming each year. So, this year, we hope to hand out a variety of bulbs, including the Paperwhite, Barrett Browning, Martinette, and Cragford. These bulbs should bloom with small clusters of 3-8 flowers, and more easily naturalize to their environment. Then, the spring blossoms should more evenly spread throughout our neighborhood and not just at the gateways.

As always, I'd like to extend a very special thank you to Will Thorn for helping to make the weekend handout of bulbs and birdhouses such a great success. Also a big thank you to Orchard Nursery for providing the wonderful bulbs they at a great value!

Will and I, and my nephew, Benjamin, look forward to meeting everyone this fall. Don't forget to complete the form below and mail it in or email me at greg0361@comcast.net. Drop-ins are welcome if you forget to complete the form!

DAFFODIL ORDER FORM

Yes! We would love to participate in the Neighborhood Daffodil Planting Program. Please reserve 12-18 bulbs for us to plant this fall.

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

Email

Mail this form to: HVIA
Attn: Beautification
P.O. Box 744 , Lafayette, CA 94549

Happy Valley Improvement Association

P.O. Box 744

Lafayette, CA 94549

Inside: News Impacting Residents of Happy Valley

