



Happy Valley Improvement Association

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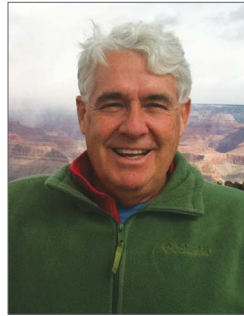


PAY YOUR DUES ONLINE:

Use this QR code if you would like a fully online payment.

Our traditional mail-in form is still welcome and encouraged.

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello, HVIA members:

It is time for our annual report to the residents—an overview of new and old projects and a quick introduction to the members of the Executive Board. We were finally able to return to the annual Spring meeting this year and enjoyed the

hospitality of the Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center. What a jewel of a place! Our next meeting will be in the Spring of 2023.

First order of business: HOA annual dues are now \$25 per household. This is the first increase in over 25 years, and Happy Valley homeowners may now pay annual dues electronically. Many thanks to those of you who, year after year, also include an additional donation to support HVIA programs.

Second order of business: The HVIA is extremely lucky to have both an active Executive Committee as well as some truly terrific advisors on specific projects as part of our Board. They are the real champions of our Association – dedicating time and attention to ideas that sustain and improve the neighborhood for all of us. Let me introduce some of them:

Jenny Lancaster is the point person for our Welcome Basket program that lets newcomers know, “we are glad you’re here.” We receive extraordinary support from many local businesses in the form of gift cards, coupons, and bottles of wine. These wonderfully stuffed baskets are artfully wrapped and delivered to new neighbors by a team of volunteers. In addition, Jenny has helped set up our website (hvia.org) and started to move us to a digital platform for neighborhood communications.

Greg Moeller—planter, builder, strong back, fountain of botanic knowledge & friend of birds – is the ambassador for the daffodil plantings, annual bulb giveaway and bird house installations that make our entire neighborhood the wonder it is each Spring. Greg also plants and maintains the island at the corner of Upper Happy Valley and El Nido, and he recently volunteered to “adopt an island” from the Department of Transportation at the entrance to Hwy 24. Next time you see someone toiling over a public space at the edges of Happy Valley, roll down the window and give a shout of thanks – it’s sure to be Greg.

Aaron Stone, HVIA’s Secretary, is a welcome-basket success story! Upon receiving a basket, he was eager to get involved in his new neighborhood. We are so excited to have his fresh perspective and enthusiasm on the team.

Vice President, **Jeff Kowalski**, is the strong and steady handler of our clean up efforts, maintenance of the path and safety corridors. He is working closely with our newest member, **Matt Geist**, on the expansion of the neighborhood security camera program. This type of camera system currently exists in the Glen but not at three additional points of ingress to our neighborhood. See p. 8 for more details.

I finish my salute to our stalwart Board with **Tracy Brog** - our neighborhood sprite. Tracy is a community builder who believes in the power of participation. She organized the wonderful Bird House Hunt last year and was the chief organizer of our annual meeting. If there is a “fun” activity, promoted by an even “funner” sign, you can be sure Tracy is the instigator.

One of our newest projects is the launch of a Happy Valley Firewise program. Working closely with the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), the Firewise program organizes neighborhoods to deliver timely information regarding fire safety and evacuation protocols. Stay tuned for important updates on this. Fire safety and mitigation is of special value to our area. See p. 4 for more details.

Finally, we continue to champion the walking path that connects us along Happy Valley and Upper Happy Valley. The path is so important for exercise and pleasure. This year our push will be to make more improvements to the path by clearing vegetation and tree trimming where needed. To all of those who live directly on the path, our appreciation for your care and maintenance of this huge neighborhood asset knows no limits ... you make a tremendous contribution to our association by making sure the path is accessible and open to all.

Lastly, let me thank you, the members of our Association, for your trust and continued support. We are so fortunate to live in this beautiful area. Your Board is representative of you, the neighborhood, and we welcome your communication.

My best to all of you,

Mark Dunaway

(404) 229-6962 or mark@hvia.org

COMMUNICATION FROM OUR REPRESENTATIVE ON GPAC

Lafayette City General Plan and Happy Valley



Happy Valley residents have a voice in how our city grows and changes by participating in the development of the Lafayette 2040 General Plan.

In summer 2020, the Lafayette City Council started the 2040 General Plan process by creating the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) to encourage open and engaging dialog with the community, and to guide

the overall development of issues affecting our town. The committee includes 11 volunteer representatives from Lafayette neighborhoods, non-profit representatives, City staff and City Council. Sarah Blumenfeld is the Happy Valley representative to GPAC. *(photo above)*

The 2040 General Plan is a long-range document representing the City's official policy regarding the character and quality of development for the next 20-30 years. The Plan specifically addresses key elements, including Land Use, Transportation and Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, Growth Management, and Safety. Several of the elements are mandated by state law while others address local concerns.

1st Task: Lafayette's Revised Mission Statement

GPAC will review each element of the existing plan, provide the opportunity for input from the community, and formulate updated recommendations for the Planning Commission and the City Council. GPAC's first task was to gather community input on an updated City Vision/Mission Statement. The updated Statement was approved in February (see pull out box).

2nd Task: Building New Housing

GPAC's second task was to provide input on recommendations for the Housing Element. Lafayette received a Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) from the State for 2,114 new housing units. State law requires that the Housing Element contain a site-by-site inventory of land that can accommodate this allocation including a percentage for market rate, low income and very low-income units, and a buffer of 15-30%.

The challenge with the Housing Element has been to balance the state's increased site requirement with Lafayette residents' desire to retain the City's semi-rural ambiance of residential neighborhoods. Many in the Happy Valley neighborhood expressed their concerns for increasing density in high fire

risk neighborhoods with limited egress. After much consideration, a draft of the Housing Element was submitted to the State in June. See the details of the plan here: [<https://bit.ly/3AoXqfE>]. The City will receive comments back from the State in early Fall, and then make any required changes before submitting a final plan for certification in January 2023.

3rd Task: The Safety Element

The Safety Element is under review over the next 6-8 months and includes goals, policies and programs that address Lafayette's major risks of fire hazards, police services and emergency preparedness, seismic and flood hazards, landslides and unstable slopes, hazardous materials (including utility-related hazards), and climate adaptation and resilience. See what's involved in this new agenda item here: <https://www.planlafayette.org/safety-element>

Interested in Getting Involved?

Residents in Happy Valley are encouraged to provide input on any element in the General Plan by attending GPAC meetings, community workshops, emailing the committee, or neighborhood representative, Sarah Blumenfeld (SBlumenfeld.lafayettegpac@gmail.com). GPAC meetings are open to the public and currently take place online. To learn about upcoming meetings and workshops sign up for City e-notifications: <https://www.lovelafayette.org/city-hall/e-notification>

VISION/MISSION STATEMENT FOR GPAC

Lafayette's vision is to be a welcoming, inclusive, safe, family-friendly city for residents and visitors alike, with excellent schools and a commitment to lifelong learning that respects and preserves its magnificent natural setting. We pursue this vision by engaging residents, community groups, and business and property owners to work together with our city government to make Lafayette a highly desirable small-town community with a semi-rural ambiance that is guided by these principles:

- Value everyone
- Support environmental sustainability
- Build and maintain effective infrastructure
- Improve safety for all modes of travel
- Protect and enhance our parklands, trails, hillsides, ridgelines, open spaces and creeks
- Support a vibrant downtown
- Maintain a fiscally responsible and transparent city government that encourages volunteer involvement on committees and commissions

REMEMBERING BYRNE MATHISEN

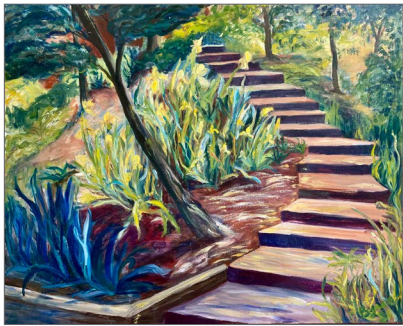
Earlier this year, Happy Valley lost one of its staunchest defenders and most dedicated proponents. Byrne Mathisen loved Happy Valley and particularly her quiet neighborhood, Happy Valley Glen.



Byrne became interested in civic affairs when the owners of the eventual “Crosses of Lafayette” hillside proposed a massive earthmoving project to remove thousands of cubic yards of dirt, level the hillside, and construct

mid-rise buildings, which could have shattered the tranquility of the Glen.

Byrne set out to stop the disruption, and after that battle was over, she stayed on for over thirty years, serving as Vice President of the HVIA Board and as the Association’s representative to the Lafayette Homeowners’ Council, standing up before the City Council,



Byrne’s artwork celebrates Happy Valley landscapes

Planning Commission, and Design Review, arguing for the preservation and improvement of Happy Valley, making and keeping it one of the best places to live in the Bay Area.

The denizens of City Hall did not always agree with her, but they had to admire her commitment and persistence. Year after year, her polite but pointed presentations moved the needle toward the semi-rural ambiance and green-hills vistas that we all treasure. Year after year, her reports to the HVIA Board kept us abreast of often fast-moving events at City Hall.

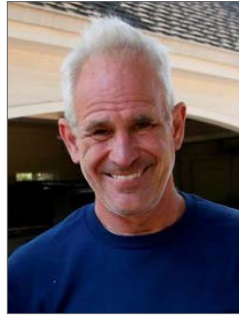
By the time ill health forced her from the City arena, everybody involved in making local policy stood in awe of Byrne’s commitment to Happy Valley and Lafayette. Her husband, Oystein Mathisen, currently serves on the HVIA board.

In honor of Byrne, the HVIA will soon be dedicating a memorial bench to be placed along the Happy Valley Road pathway. The bench will include a plaque that reads “Remembering Byrne Mathisen and her love for Happy Valley.” In the meantime, we miss you, Byrne.

~ Peter Clark

GREG’S CORNER

Beautification - Daffodils and Birdhouses!



The lack of rain from January through March was very tough on the daffodils this year, but I will carry on and will continue our program and hand out more bulbs in the fall. Be sure to look for the signs announcing the bulb distribution! However, until we have more of a normal rainy season, I may discontinue planting lots of extra daffodils in open spaces.

As part of the bulb handout, I will also have some completed birdhouses to give away and lots of birdhouses for kids to finish painting and decorating.

As always, a very special thank you to **Will Thorn** for his help and a big thank you to **Orchard Nursery** for the terrific value and wonderful bulbs they provide each year!

Will and I look forward to meeting everyone this fall. Don’t forget to complete the form below and mail it in or email me at greg@hvia.org. Drop-ins are welcome if you forget to complete the form! I will post signs at the corners and send you a reminder postcard when the bulbs will be distributed in late October or early November.

DAFFODIL ORDER FORM

YES! We would love to participate in the Neighborhood Daffodil Planting Program. Please reserve 12-18 **FREE** 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
or email Greg at greg@hvia.org

FIREWISE NEIGHBORHOODS NOW FORMING!



Happy Valley is joining the ranks of a grassroots effort across America to reduce neighborhood vulnerabilities to fire damage. *Firewise USA* is a national program that aims to “help neighbors in a geographic area get organized, find direction and take action to increase the ignition

resistance of their homes and community and to reduce wildfire risks at the local level.” (<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>)

There is a one-time application process for being designated a Firewise zone. In a nutshell, small groups of neighbors band together and form a zone. These zones then request a non-punitive assessment by the local Con Fire chief for the purpose of becoming educated about the specific fire dangers in their zone and engaging with some suggestions (non-binding) for how to improve home and landscape vulnerabilities.

The requirements for maintaining a “good standing” status every year are not difficult or overbearing. The zone is required to show proof of 1 hour of work or \$35 of clean-up expenses per home, per year in the zone. Firewise neighborhoods may also more easily apply for grants from the Diablo Fire Safety Council for possible special projects on public or private property.

Happy Valley currently has one Firewise Zone approved and thriving in the Glen (covering N Thompson, Glen Rd, Nordstrom Lane, Monticello, Presher and Hastings) headed up by Megan Pardo. HVIA is helping to coordinate five additional zones by identifying a series of Captains willing to organize their neighborhoods and to begin the application and assessment process. If you do not find your street listed below, contact Jenny Lancaster at jenny@hvia.org to explore options for your neighborhood joining in! If your street is listed below, reach out to your captain for more information. Not all homes in these zones need to participate in the program actively.

Zone 1

Captain: Rik Sheldon (contact rik@hvia.org)

Streets Included: South stretch of UHV to El Nido Ranch Road, Rahara, Natasha Drive, Leroy Way, South Peardale, Tilden Lane and Rancho, few houses on El Nido (Lafayette part)

Zone 2

Captains: Jenny Lancaster (jenny@hvia.org) and **Tracy Brog** (tracy@hvia.org)

Streets Included: North Stretch of UHV to Happy Valley, Oleander, Cowan Road, Hilldale Road, Marguerite Court, North Peardale

Zone 3

Captain: Jeff Kowalski (jeff@hvia.org)

Streets Included: Camino Vallecito, Vallecito Court

Zone 4

Captains: Aaron Stone, Jim McKee and Margaret Kintner (margaret@hvia.org)

Streets Included: Happy Valley Road (from school to Bart station), Valory Lane, Crestmont Drive, Crestmont Place, Baker Lane, Lois Lane, Hester Lane, Happy Valley Lane, Happy Valley Court, Panorama

Zone 5

Captain: Jim Tamuski (jim@hvia.org)

Streets Included: Palo Alto, Cambridge, Toledo Drive

THE BENEFITS TO HAPPY VALLEY FOR ESTABLISHING FIREWISE ZONES ARE MANY:

- Happy Valley is listed as a “very high fire severity zone” which ranks us as one of the most vulnerable districts in Lafayette and even in the state.
- We are further classified as a “wildland urban interface” which means narrow streets and hilly terrain that slow response times of our firefighters within the neighborhood.
- Our ingress/egress points are limited, and so banding together as smaller units can help with evacuation procedures, information dispersal and help for elderly or less mobile neighbors.
- Some insurance companies may provide reduced rates or increase the chance of selling fire insurance to homeowners living in a Firewise neighborhood. N.B. Some neighborhoods in Orinda cannot buy fire insurance even if they desire such coverage.
- Closer communication and connections between neighbors can only increase quality of life and sense of community.

HVIA CLEAN UP

Corner of UHV and El Nido Ranch Road

HVIA strives to contribute to the beauty and safety of our neighborhood in a variety of ways: daffodils, bird houses, and maintenance of the path to name a few! This past year, we targeted a big clean up on the corner of Upper Happy Valley Road and El Nido Ranch Road. Sharp bushes and dead trees scraped cars and occluded vision for the right turn towards the highway entrances. It had been neglected.



Before



In progress

HVIA board member, Jeff Kowalski, sought to sort it out and worked together with all the parties to agree to a cleanup. With training in arboriculture, Jeff identified the plants worth keeping, and contracted with a tree-care company to remove the rest. We've now made room for the native Oaks and ornamental Pyracanthas, leaving the roots of the cleared trees to stabilize the slope as new plants establish – like recently seeded sweet peas. We've now got a clearer, cleaner, corner!



Right after clean-up



New Spring planting!

WELCOME BASKETS

Since its June 2021 inception, the HVIA Welcome Basket Program has personally welcomed 72 new residents to our neighborhood. With generous donations from local businesses, these baskets provide a lovely introduction to our community. See the participating vendors here – <https://hvia.org/category/meet-your-neighbors/>



HVIA Board members, Jenny Lancaster and Jeff Kowalski (pictured above) deliver a basket and get to meet one of the “newest” members of our community.

If you are new to the neighborhood, please contact Jenny at Jenny@hvia.org. We will be delivering another new batch of baskets in early November.

2022- 2023 HVIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Mark Dunaway - mark@hvia.org

Vice President, Jeff Kowalski - jeff@hvia.org

Secretary, Aaron Stone - aaron@hvia.org

Treasurer, Greg Moeller - greg@hvia.org

Tracy Brog, Community Events - tracy@hvia.org

Peter Clark, President Emeritus - peter@hvia.org

Matt Geist, Security Cameras - matt@hvia.org

James Kelly, Advisor - james@hvia.org

Jenny Lancaster, Welcome Baskets - jenny@hvia.org

Sallie Lovitt, Advisor - sallie@hvia.org

Oystein Mathisen, Advisor - oystein@hvia.org

Colby Powell, Advisor - colby@hvia.org

Angie Zener, Advisor - angie@hvia.org

HVIA ANNUAL MEETING



After a nearly three-year COVID hiatus, this year's HVIA annual meeting brought Happy Valley neighbors together at the **Lafayette Community Garden**, a hidden jewel in our own backyard. "This place is amazing!" may have been the most common refrain of the evening as residents explored a space with growing organic vegetables, fruits and flowers, vermiculture (worm composting), beehives, a butterfly garden, and even a Miwok Village replica and labyrinth!

The Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center's mission of "growing food, community, and an understanding of our local ecosystem" made it the perfect venue for our meeting presentation: *Happy Valley Cool— Designing Gardens for a Hotter Drier Climate*.

As we enjoyed local wines and beers, pizza and bakery goods, Mark Dunaway welcomed residents. (pictured, above left) Additionally, professional landscape designers, Katie Creighton and Susanne Frey (pictured, above right) encouraged us to reimagine our gardens in the face of warming temperatures, drier days, and longer summers. Katie and Susanne's presentation was topical, if not prescient.

From their unique experience and understanding of the micro-climates, soils, and native plants of Happy Valley, Susanne and Katie transformed the challenges of hotter, drier gardening into opportunities to create beautiful outdoor spaces.

Following the presentation, Happy Valley-ers met new neighbors, caught up with old friends, and tossed around great ideas for future HVIA events. Many thanks to Community Garden Board members Janet Thomas, Carolyn Wan, Kim Overaa, and Jimmy Hill, for their generous welcome and introduction to this special spot.

The Take-Aways from Suzanne and Katie:

- **Accommodate mother nature.** Grasses, trees, shrubs and perennials that thrive on the Mediterranean climate of winter rains and dry summers are made for Happy Valley! Planting local California native species will save water, money, fertilizers and chemicals. It can also help protect native species of insects and animals that depend on native plants for their survival.
- **Eliminate Lawns.** They require lots of water, chemical fertilizers, maintenance costs and fuels for maintenance. Consider low growing ground covers or native drought tolerant species of lawn.
- **Start with a good hardscape design.** This is the framework for your garden. Think about how you use the space. Providing structure allows incorporation of California native plants without resulting in an "abandoned" look.
- **Amend our heavy clay soils only as needed.** Avoid overwatering to create artificial environments.
- **Pay attention to irrigation.** Get to know how your irrigation controller works. Water less frequently for longer, rather than more frequently for shorter periods to help plants develop deep roots and build resilience against drought.
- **Get off to a good start.** Even drought tolerant plants need regular watering to establish! Try to plant new additions in the late fall, winter, and early spring - when they will make an easier transition. Establishment can take a year for perennials, one to two years for shrubs, and three to four years for trees.
- **Mulch.** A 3" to 4" layer of organic material or inorganic rocks or gravel will help conserve moisture, keep weeds at bay, and protect roots. No mulch should touch any part of the plant.

(continued on page 7)

- *Some Native plants do not want ANY summer water!* California Coast Live Oaks, Arctostaphylos (manzanita) and Ceanothus (California lilac) are actually prone to disease when watered during the summer months.

- *No need to go ‘all or nothing.’* Maybe you have a favorite collection of old-fashioned roses that remind you of your grandmother’s garden or Japanese maples that light up your garden each fall? You can still incorporate native or drought tolerant plants in other areas of the garden. Adapting where possible is better than making no changes at all.

- *Don’t forget about edibles.* Fruit trees like olives, figs, walnuts, grapes, apricots and pears do particularly well in Happy Valley. In fact, many Happy Valley gardens are home to Bartlett pear trees that were planted in orchards almost a century ago and still bear delicious fruit every summer.



Check out these gardens featuring California natives and drought tolerant plants:

- ❁ The Ruth Bancroft Garden & Nursery
- ❁ The Regional Parks Botanic Garden, Berkeley
- ❁ University of California Botanic Garden, Berkeley
- ❁ San Francisco Botanical Garden

Other Resources:

- ❁ **APLD** (Association of Professional Landscape Designers) www.apld.org
- ❁ **CNPS** (California Native Plant Society) www.cnps.org
- ❁ **CalScape** (Partnership of CNPS and EBMUD) www.calscape.org
- ❁ **EBMUD** (East Bay Municipal District) Conservation, landscaping, rebates, water wise plants www.ebmud.com

HAPPY VALLEY WINE TASTING

Bill and Alissa Scanlin, DEER HILL VINEYARDS

Residents enjoy the hospitality of local winegrower Bill Scanlin and his selections at the tasting room of Deer Hill Vineyards, located just off Happy Valley Road.



2023 ANNUAL MEETING

Next year’s Annual Meeting will be in May 2023. Check your email or the sign posts on the corners for more details. We hope to see many of you there.





Happy Valley Improvement Association

hvia.org

P.O. Box 744
LAFAYETTE, CALIFORNIA
94549



SECURITY CAMERAS



criminal community that the neighborhood was not a soft target, and attempted crime went down.

HVIA would like to build on that successful program and bring the same safety and security to the rest of Happy Valley. We are looking to extend security camera coverage to include the three corridor entries:

Some years ago, in an effort to stem crime, neighbors in the Glen – off North Thompson Road – collaborated to install a system of security cameras recording traffic at key points along the roads. As a result of those recordings, and collaboration with Lafayette Police, identification and apprehension of perpetrators went up, word got out in the

at the northwest of Happy Valley Road from the Downs, at the southeast from Deerhill, and the intersection of Upper Happy Valley Road with El Nido Ranch road to the south.

Several Happy Valley neighbors have generously volunteered to site new cameras, and we now have bids from installation and service companies to provide reliable, high-quality monitoring of those key areas. In addition, another resident, **Matt Geist**, (*photo, right*) has stepped forward to lead the program. There are still more details to work out, so we will host a question and answer time on Zoom in the near future. Make sure we have your email address, and we will keep you informed.



For more information, or to get involved, please contact Matt at matt@hvia.org.

To be added to the email distribution list for timely announcements of events and issues in Happy Valley, please fill out this form, <https://hvia.org/hvia-join-us/>.

WHAT IS THE HAPPY VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION?

We are dedicated to “provide leadership, create consensus, and generate action on issues important to our community that result in a continuing improvement in the quality of life in Happy Valley.” Most of our activities, spearheaded by a volunteer board of residents, include programs to preserve the semi-rural beauty of our neighborhood and to promote a community spirit of unity and friendship.