



The Saratogan

Winter 2008

Council Priorities for 2008

The City Council is preparing to make this a successful year for Saratoga. During the annual Council Retreat held in early February, the Mayor and Council had the opportunity to reflect upon the past year and identify new goals for 2008 to make Saratoga a better place for residents, business, and visitors.

At the top of the list is increasing civic participation. Community involvement benefits the City by keeping elected representatives in touch with the community, providing the City Council with a better understanding of resident interests, and strengthening the sense of community that makes Saratoga an attractive place to live. At the direction of the Council, staff will be reaching out to neighborhood groups and exploring opportunities to maintain a two-way exchange between residents and the Council. A joint meeting between the Council and Saratoga homeowners associations is being planned for later this year. Additionally, the Parks and Recreation Commission is active once again. This newly restored Commission will determine the best way to serve as a conduit between the council and the public, while using parks and recreation to bring the Saratoga community together. The Council expects a regular exchange will encourage residents to become more involved in the public process by attending public meetings, serving as a commissioner, volunteering for one of the City's many community organizations, and a variety of other activities that keep the community connected.

In addition to civic participation, this year provides an opportunity to make Saratoga more environmentally sustainable. In 2007, the City of Saratoga signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. As the City works towards achieving the goals laid out in this agreement and strives to become environmentally responsible, the City will have to identify and adopt sound environmental practices. Staff is investigating options such

as implementing green building standards for City facilities, replacing street lights with light-emitting diodes (LED), creating a guide to help homeowners renovate or build their homes using environmentally sustainable practices and materials, and making it easier for residents to dispose of household hazardous waste.

While examining the City's environmental impact, the Council also aims to reduce expenses and increase financial security. Although there has been a steady decline in property values throughout Santa Clara County, Saratoga enjoys a relatively stable housing market that has generated sufficient property taxes to support basic City services. The City, however, receives less than 7% of the property taxes collected in Saratoga. As a result, any reductions in funding will impact the delivery of fundamental City services. Staff has been instructed to identify opportunities for cost savings and revenue generation. One effort to supplement the City's budget will include improvements to the Village, such as lighting, landscaping, news racks, sidewalk repairs, and the Village Façade Improvement Program. These enhancements are intended to attract businesses and shoppers to the Village and in turn produce additional sales tax revenues.

As the City Council moves forward with its plan for the next year, engaging the community in a collaborative effort to achieve these goals will be critical. The Council is confident that the commitment to Saratoga's wellbeing shared by its dedicated professional staff, interested citizenry, and involved Council will come together to improve the civic participation, environmental sustainability, and financial security of the City.

McWilliams House: Reviving Saratoga's Past

The newly renovated McWilliams House opened in October 2007 thanks to the hard work of community volunteers and members of the Saratoga Historical Foundation with

a shared love of Saratoga's history. Plans to renovate the McWilliams



Students doing laundry at McWilliams House

House began after the Saratoga Chamber of Commerce moved out of the building in 2003. Since then, the building has been restored to its original appearance.

The restoration of the McWilliams House has included both the outside and inside of the building. The four small rooms of the building, which was home to the family of James and Martha McWilliams from 1865 to 1880, has been decorated with period appropriate Victorian furnishings. All of the furnishings have been donated by Saratoga residents.

Since the re-opening of the McWilliams House, it has been operated entirely by volunteers and is open to the public Friday through Sunday from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Special tours, including programs focused on third and fourth grade classes studying California history, can be scheduled by contacting Linda Hagelin at (408) 867-3763 or lhagelin@saratogahistory.com. For more information about the McWilliams House or to volunteer, visit www.saratogahistory.com.

Attention Homeowners Associations!

Help improve your connection with the City Council! Presidents are encouraged to contact Crystal Morrow at (408) 868-1275 or cmorrow@saratoga.ca.us to learn more about opportunities to interact with the Council and future joint meetings.

Preserving Saratoga's Natural Beauty

One of the most attractive features of Saratoga is a mature tree canopy that contributes to the rural character of the City, which has developed after years of hard work and care. Regular maintenance is required to keep Saratoga's trees looking good and the winter months are the best time to maintain trees. The months between November and February are ideal for pruning a variety of trees that can be found in Saratoga, particularly deciduous trees and Monterey Pines.

Before picking up the pruning shears, it is important to know that there is a science to tree care. While all trees should be inspected on a yearly basis, not all trees need to be pruned annually. Deciduous trees, which lose their leaves seasonally, typically need a trimming every 3 to 5 years. Saratoga is home to a variety of deciduous trees, such as some types of oak, big leaf maple, and the California buckeye. Conifer trees, including the redwoods growing throughout Saratoga, usually only need to be pruned once every 5 to 7 years. During annual inspections it is important to identify dead limbs, crossing branches, or unusual branches that are heavy at their ends. Removing these hazards will help encourage proper structure and good health.

If it is time to prune, take the time to find a responsible tree company. Too often trees are recklessly trimmed by contractors who disregard safe tree pruning practices or City rules. Reputable tree care companies in the area can be found by visiting www.treesaregood.org.

Contractors should be familiar with the City's Tree Ordinance. Many residents do not realize that a permit is required to prune a tree if more than 25% of the tree will be removed. Furthermore, permits are required for removal of all trees that measure 10 inches or more in diameter at 4.5 feet above the ground—including dead or fallen trees. Native species need a permit for removal if

they measure 6 or more inches in diameter.

Preserving Saratoga's natural ecosystem not only keeps the City beautiful, it also makes it a healthier place to live. The urban canopy significantly contributes to the sustainability of the environment in a variety of ways. Trees are natural filters and improve the quality of air and water, by removing pollutants from the air and reducing the amount of runoff that flows to streams and storm drains. Furthermore, trees reduce the urban heat island effect—in which dark materials in urbanized areas, such as asphalt, cause the ground to absorb heat and in turn raise temperatures. Shade created by trees counteracts urban heat island effect and keeps city streets cooler.

Residents can review removal permits on the City's website at www.saratoga.ca.us, which lists permits by address, name, and date. For further information about tree permits or if you suspect a tree is being illegally trimmed or removed, please call the City Arborist at (408) 868-1276. Be sure to provide an address if you are reporting an illegal pruning or removal.

Investing in the Economic Vitality of Saratoga Village

Maintaining the rustic feel of Saratoga Village is the result of an investment of time, money, and care on behalf of residents, property and business owners, and the City. Working together, these different groups have been committed to ensuring that the Village is vibrant in the years to come.

The City has recently renewed its commitment to this collaborative effort to preserve the Village. In late 2007, the City Council set aside \$50,000 for investment in the Village. This money will be used to fund the Village Façade Improvement Program and to install more attractive news racks. The funds are expected to increase private investment in the Village and make the heart of Saratoga more attractive to customers and businesses.

The Village Façade Improvement Program offers rebates to Village property or business owners for making storefront improvements that are visible from Big Basin Way. Up to 50% of the project cost can be refunded. The maximum reimbursement for a single project is \$5,000. Additional information on the

Village Façade Improvement Program can be found at www.saratoga.ca.us. The ambiance of the Village



Façade Improvement to International Coffee Exchange on Big Basin Way

will be further enhanced by the installation of more appealing news racks. Council has already identified two news rack designs that better reflect the appearance of the Village. Residents will have the opportunity to weigh in on the final decision. Before the final news rack design is selected, samples of the two different news racks will be installed on Big Basin Way with an opinion poll to follow. Residents can expect to see the two designs in early 2008.

Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Service for Saratoga Residents

The improper disposal of household hazardous and electronic waste has wide ranging impacts that affect the entire region. In recent years, an alarming amount of pollutants have entered California waterways from improperly disposed household products containing dangerous chemicals. Oil, pesticides, batteries, and thermometers containing mercury are just a few of the household products that are being released to streams and the Bay through storm or ground water. Unless household hazardous waste is controlled, the negative impacts of these pollutants will have a devastating impact on the Bay.

To make it easier to keep California's waterways safe, West Valley Collection & Recycling now offers Saratoga residents disposal service for universal and electronic waste. Get rid of used oil, paints, batteries, fluorescent lights, mercury thermometers, old televisions or other electronic devices, and more for free! To make an appointment to drop off universal or electronic waste, call West Valley Collection & Recycling at (408) 283-9250.

In Memory of Joan Pisani



Joan Pisani

On September 24, 2007, Joan Marie Pisani, 57, passed away peacefully, surrounded by her loving family after a courageous 14-month battle against pancreatic cancer.

Joan graduated from San Jose State University in 1972 with a B.S. in Recreation and she began working as a teen coordinator for the City of Saratoga in 1974. She soon became Director of Recreation and led the department through 33 years of growth.

Joan dedicated herself to expanding community programs in the City where she lived and worked. Joan's generous spirit and love will always be remembered by the City staff and Saratoga residents who will continue her legacy of building community in Saratoga.

Joan is survived by her husband Ron Pisani, her two daughters Kelly and Kate, and her many family members.

Saratoga Area Senior Coordinating Council (SASCC)

The Saratoga Area Senior Coordinating Council (SASCC) is a local, non-profit, 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to

providing quality services and programs to seniors of all ages and abilities. SASCC recently entered into a five year use agreement with the City to continue serving older adults in Saratoga at the Senior Center located at 19655 Allendale Avenue. Services include Adult Day Care, a nutritious lunch program on Wednesdays, social groups, art classes, bridge lessons, computer classes, fitness classes, movies, and more. Services are provided to approximately 1,475 people each month.

In early January 2008, SASCC appointed Susan Huff as Managing Director. As the new leader of this non-profit, Susan intends to use her experience in hospitality, gerontology, and health care to make SASCC a place where older adults can go to attend "programs that are fun, current, appealing, educational, and financially viable," said Huff. The City of Saratoga and SASCC are grateful to have found someone like Susan, with the essential skills and experience to lead the SASCC team. For more information about SASCC, please call (408) 868-1257 or visit at www.sascc.org.

Highway 9 Safety Enhancements

An increasing number of accidents along Highway 9 in recent years have prompted Saratoga to partner with Los Gatos and Monte Sereno to make much needed improvements. This multi-jurisdiction safety project is aimed at improving bicycle and pedestrian safety along this busy corridor. The project area is approximately 4.4 miles and runs between Big Basin Way in Saratoga through Monte Sereno to Los Gatos Boulevard in Los Gatos.

The Highway 9 Safety Master Plan was developed by staff from the three municipalities and engineering consultants from BKF Engineers. To ensure the Master Plan met the needs and interests of the residents from Saratoga, Monte Sereno, and Los Gatos, the plan was reviewed by an ad hoc committee comprised of two councilmembers from each jurisdiction and input was gathered at three public meetings.

In conjunction with the creation of the Highway 9 Safety Master Plan, efforts have been made by all three cities

to secure funding to be used to carry out the multimillion dollar improvements contained in the Master Plan. Much of the necessary funding has been identified and the project has been divided into phases to allow work to move forward more quickly.

The first phase began in early 2008 and will establish a continuous bicycle lane or shoulder along the entire 4.4 mile stretch of Highway 9 between Saratoga and Los Gatos. Improvements also include pedestrian-activated crosswalks with embedded lights in two locations—Vickery Avenue in Saratoga and Massol Avenue in Los Gatos.

The second phase of the safety improvements will close substantial gaps in the existing pedestrian walkway along one side of Highway 9 to provide a continuous path from Saratoga Village to Monte Sereno. Planning for this phase is in initial stages and construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2009.

Staff members from Saratoga, Monte Sereno, and Los Gatos are still searching for additional funding resources that are needed to complete the remaining improvements, including extending uninterrupted pedestrian pathways from Monte Sereno to Los Gatos Boulevard. One of the most substantial expenses in the remaining phases will be a bicycle-pedestrian bridge over Los Gatos Creek that will provide a direct connection from Highway 9 to the Los Gatos Creek Trail. The three cities are working hard to ensure that the pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements along Highway 9 are completed in a timely manner.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

With colder temperatures comes an increased risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Produced by common household appliances, such as natural gas water heaters and stoves, this colorless and odorless gas is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths. During the winter months, improperly heating a home is a common cause of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Fortunately, carbon monoxide can be easily avoided by properly installing and maintaining carbon monoxide alarms. Carbon monoxide alarms can detect the gas before the initial symptoms of poisoning, which are similar to the flu and include dizziness, fatigue, headache, nausea, and irregular breathing. Be sure to install alarms near sleeping areas and purchase alarms certified to the requirements of the latest safety standards for CO alarms (UL 2034, IAS 6-96, or CSA 6.19.01).

Commission Openings

Library Commission

Application Deadline May 8, 2008 Openings: 1

Youth Commission

Application Deadline: May 8, 2008

For more information, please visit www.saratoga.ca.us or contact the City Clerk at (408) 868-1269 or ctclerk@saratoga.ca.us.

Think Summer!

While many of us are still bundled up in scarves and mittens, the Saratoga Recreation Department is busy preparing for the 2008 Summer Camps! Summer will soon be here and now is the best time



Saratoga Summer Camper

for parents to start planning for summer camps. Last year, the City offered over 140 camps that filled up quickly. Specialty camps that focus on activities such as golf, theatre, art, soccer, tennis, basketball, dance, and much more will be available all summer. These camps, along with a number of other recreational programs, will be featured in the Spring Recreation Activity Guide available after March 4, 2008. Don't miss out on summer fun; sign-up early!

Saratogan is Back!
 Staying on top of Saratoga's current news is now a little easier! After the publication was discontinued in 2004 due to budget cuts, residents can once again expect to find this helpful resource in the mail on a quarterly basis.

Mills Act: Historic Buildings with a Bright Future

The City of Saratoga enjoys a vibrant history that anyone can see—literally. The City is full of reminders of its past—from the McWilliams House to Blaney Plaza to the Heritage Orchard. Throughout the City there are historical markers that reflect the significant periods of Saratoga's past, including traces of the Ohlone Indians that settled here thousands of years ago, the lumber industry that sparked the development of Campbell's Gap, the pioneers that made their home along Big Basin Way once the

town officially became McCartysville, and the transition into a resort town surrounded by blossoming orchards.

Markers of Saratoga's past are abundant. There are over 100 buildings on the City's Heritage Resources Inventory. These have been identified as buildings that are historically or architecturally significant by the Historic Preservation Commission, in hopes that recognition on the Heritage Resources Inventory would prompt property owners to preserve their buildings. A spot on the inventory is the first step to landmark designation and taking advantage of the Mills Act.

The Mills Act is a state law that was created to make it easier to restore and preserve historic properties. It allows property owners and local jurisdictions to enter into a contract that requires owners to preserve a historic property in exchange for reduced property taxes. Savings vary from property to property and are determined by Santa Clara County. Many property owners have used tax savings to improve their property or restore a building's frontage according to its original architectural features.

While there is a long list of buildings in Saratoga that would qualify for historic designation and a Mills Act contract, only a few owners have seized the opportunity to benefit from property tax reductions. Historic landmarks play a special role in the character of Saratoga, providing the City with a rich culture that has made it one of the best places to live. Working together, the City and its residents can ensure that the history of Saratoga is preserved for generations to come. For more information, please call the Community Development Department at (408) 868-1222.



**Get Involved!
 Help Celebrate July 4th!**

For the past five years, Saratoga residents have celebrated the 4th of July with one of the largest community events in the City. This event has been organized by resident Jack Mallory, who is now looking to pass along leadership of the event to a new person or organization. If you are interested, please contact Jack Mallory at (408) 252-7447 or mallory58@aol.com.



Directory	
City Hall	(408) 868-1200
Building Permits	(408) 868-1240
Business Licenses	(408) 868-1260
City Clerk	(408) 868-1269
City Manager	(408) 868-1216
Code Enforcement	(408) 868-1214
Commission Recruitments	(408) 868-1269
Employment Opportunities	(408) 868-1252
Facility Rentals	(408) 868-1259
Garbage & Recycling	(408) 868-1269
Park Maintenance	(408) 868-1245
Park Reservations	(408) 868-1248
Recreation	(408) 868-1249
Senior Center	(408) 868-1257
Sheriff's Office West Valley Division	(408) 868-6600
Storm Drains	(408) 868-1245
Street Maintenance	(408) 868-1245
Tree Removal Permits	(408) 868-1276
Volunteer Opportunities	(408) 868-1216

Contact the Editor

The Saratogan is published quarterly by the City of Saratoga to report on community issues and events. Community members are welcome to send questions, comments, and story ideas!

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