



# FROM THE FIELDS

A Newsletter of the Los Olivos-Riker Neighborhood Association

November/December 2010

[www.lorneighborhood.com](http://www.lorneighborhood.com)



## Season's Greetings from the South Side!



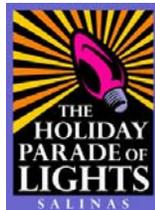
## LORNA News — Announcements, Events, and Reportage

### BANANA BREAD THROWDOWN

New friends and old enjoyed a beautiful autumn day getting acquainted and reacquainted in the backyard of John and Mary Richardson. Several neighbors baked their secret recipes for a *Banana Bread Throwdown* judged without bias by food lovers Dusty Eaton and Steve McShane. The winner of First Place and Second Place was none other than hostess Mary, who offered her grandmother's recipe. Third Place was awarded to Dusty's wife, Marlene, and the Over the Top Award went to Sarah Smith for her decadent banana bread pudding with sweet cream and fresh berry topping. Delicioso!

### HOLIDAY PARADE OF LIGHTS

LORNA merrymakers love a parade! With great excitement, the association announces its entry in the 2010 *Holiday Parade of Lights* in Oldtown. A flatbed truck donated by McShane's Nursery and Landscape Supply will be transformed into a rolling festive holiday production, complete with a large Christmas tree, hay bales, music, and courageous carolers. LORNA revelers are invited to join the decorating festivities in the Park Row parking lot on November 28<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm.



Organizers are also looking for good hand wavers to ride on the truck, and are in need of donated Christmas lights, garlands, wreaths, bows, tinsel, and tacky Christmas décor.

The parade begins at 6:00 pm. Come out and show your LORNA pride! Santa's helpers RSVP to Mary at [maryjohnr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:maryjohnr@sbcglobal.net) or call Steve at 970-4141.

### VILLA SERRA

Villa Serra is sponsoring a Casino Night Fundraiser benefiting *Toys for Tots* on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The United States Marine Corps will be accepting new unwrapped toys and donations. For an evening of Blackjack, Craps, Roulette, fabulous raffle prizes, appetizers, and cocktails, RSVP to 754-5532. Admission is free.

### HOLIDAY HOME LIGHTING COMPETITION



Release your inner Clark Griswold! Residents are invited to submit their homes for entry in the first annual *Holiday Home Lighting Competition*. LORNA judges will meet at Villa Serra on Sunday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm, then tour the neighborhood together in search of the ultimate decorated home. The Best Holiday Home title will be awarded with a sign for placement in front of the home, and the winner of "Best of Show" will be presented with a \$50 cash prize to help pay the power bill. Please join us! Contact Steve at [steve@mcshanesnursery.com](mailto:steve@mcshanesnursery.com) or 970-4141.

### SMART METER PRESENTATION



At the October meeting, LORNA hosted Gabriel Martinez of PG&E for a SmartMeter presentation. Gabriel spoke briefly about PG&E and customers' bills and rates. He then introduced the technology behind the SmartMeter, and explained that the California PUC voted nearly four years ago to implement SmartMeters statewide in order to create a "smart grid", given brown outs in 2002. Nearly six million meters have already been installed. Several residents asked questions, and Gabriel spoke to some of their health and/or wireless interference concerns. Attendees recommended a forum where the issues surrounding SmartMeters could be further debated. For questions regarding SmartMeters, call 1-800-660-6789.

### TRASH CLEAN UP EFFORT

Thanks to the leadership of Ray Villanueva, LORNA has implemented a trash clean up effort. Ray is supplying trash sticks that are available for residents and students interested in community service. Anyone interested in this effort, or who has a child that can volunteer, please call Ray at 682-5626.



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## KIPLING STREET FALL FESTIVAL



South side neighbors joined together for the *Kipling Street Fall Festival* on Halloween. This fun inaugural event featured a Salsa Throwdown and awards for Best Side Dish and Best Dessert. Additional festivities included costume contests, games for kids, a pumpkin carving contest, and face painting by Diana Joy.

Music was provided by local rockers *Mechanikill*, (David Carrasco, Joey Chavez, Dalton Robertson, and Bijan Kooroshfar) whose rousing rendition of the *Star Spangled Banner* opened the festival.

The most thrilling highlight of the day for many was the awesome sight of a Salinas firefighter climbing to the top of an extended truck ladder eight stories high!



Meredith Crews of the *Salinas Valley Street Rodders* made a special appearance with her pink Cadillac.

The American Red Cross Emergency Response van was also on hand for festival goers.

Salinas PD CSO Jenny Bryant was honored for her dedication to the Neighborhood Watch program. She was presented with an olive tree as a symbol of peace and goodwill, and left the festival in her squad car with lights and sirens as neighbors cheered.

Special thanks to Glenys Sollid and Ray Villanueva for organizing a great day.

## LORNA BUSINESS MEMBERS

Remember to support local business members when shopping for the upcoming holidays - and don't forget the great eating establishments here on the south side. Visit the LORNA website for a list of these fine businesses.

## LOS OLIVOS VILLAGE

A cluster of LORNA yard signs has cropped up in the Los Olivos Village townhome complex. Los Olivos displaying pride and representin'!



## LORNA MEETINGS

Association meetings have historically been held on the second Tuesday of each month. However, with Steve's election to the City Council, the schedule will be changing, so please visit the website for announcements of future meeting dates. All are welcome, so please come and join your neighbors!



## THANKS, KUDOS, PLAUDITS, ACCOLADES

- Accolades to newly-elected Salinas City Council Member, LORNA's own president, **Steve McShane!**
- Special thanks to **Renae Gerhardstein** and **Villa Serra** for their support and the use of their facility.
- Thank you to Salinas PD Commander **Terry Heffington** and CSO **Jenny Bryant** for their continuing assistance, guidance, support, and dedication.
- Plaudits to **Cynthia Shaffer** who gave birth to a daughter, consoled a very ill friend, and continued working hard to make The Watch the fine-tuned, well-oiled organization it has become.
- Kudos to **Diana Joy** for her inexhaustible face painting talents at the *Kipling Street Fall Festival*.
- Thanks to **Frank and Stephanie Perkins** for graciously and generously printing the newsletters.



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## EYES and EARS – The Watch, Prevention, Awareness, and Vigilance

### NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

LORNA Neighborhood Watch (LORNW) was officially kicked off at the end of September with distribution of a two-page flyer containing an introduction to the Watch, a LORNA membership form, and a copy of the LORNA newsletter. As a result of the flyer and other outreach activities, LORNA membership is continuing to grow. Email alerts are extremely popular and the alerts feed right into the Watch activities. As Watch activities continue to increase, we will all have a better feel for the “pulse” of our neighborhoods. While knowledge of suspicious activities that occur in our neighborhoods may be unsettling, it is far better that it be a “known”, rather than an “unknown”. Knowledge of these activities provides a heightened awareness for everyone, which is the first step in combating crime.

Don't hesitate to contact Don Jones at 758-5867 or Kevin Low at 751-9654 for information on obtaining a Neighborhood Watch package, including a vest with the LORNA logo, a copy of the *Guide to Citizen Patrol*, and a notebook and LORNA business card.

### HOLIDAY CRIME PREVENTION

The holiday season is a time of opportunity for burglars and thieves to commit crimes. Homes are packed with gifts, and stores and malls are full of stressed, careless, and unsuspecting shoppers. The Monterey County Sheriff's office has posted crime prevention tips on its website to help citizens celebrate safely. This invaluable information includes shopping at stores and malls, shopping online, shopping with children, using ATMs, driving, holiday festivities, and cell phone security. Visit the website at [www.co.monterey.ca.us/sheriff/](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/sheriff/) for these and other crime prevention tips.

### VEHICLE SECURITY TIPS

As a result of the recent surge in vehicle break-ins, The Watch offers the following vehicle security tips.

- Park in a garage or well-lit area such as the driveway or carport.
- Remove all valuables. An old GPS or iPod might not seem valuable, but could be gold to a thief.
- Lock the doors and close all the windows.
- Activate the security system.
- Stay vigilant.

### COMMUNITY SAFETY AWARENESS TRAINING

Learn how to protect and maintain the safety of the neighborhood and community at Monterey Park's *Community Safety Awareness Training*. Residents learn to evaluate suspicious situations, persons, and threats to personal safety and security, detect and deter criminal activities, access Salinas Police dispatchers, and effectively communicate and report crimes.

The training program is an informative multimedia presentation led by former and current law enforcement personnel. Don't wait for someone else to do something about the problem. Get educated and be an active steward of the community.

Watch Co-Chair and Citizen Patrol Chief, Don Jones:

*“Numerous LORNA members attended the MP CP Orientation on Saturday, 11/6/10. This was an excellent presentation and I would highly recommend other LORNA members attend when it comes around again, even if you're not interested in patrolling. MP conducts the 90-minute orientations about every three months. Most of the attendees were LORNA members this time.*

*The tips and background information that they presented answered many of my own questions. Especially helpful also was the interaction among members (both LORNA and MP) about what they are seeing in the neighborhoods. We all share the same concerns, and sharing different perspectives and experiences was both interesting and helpful.*

*The MP Civilian Patrol Orientation is an excellent service to the community and I would recommend taking 90 minutes to attend one of the sessions at your next opportunity.”*

A dedicated contingent of eleven LORNA members attended the November 6<sup>th</sup> presentation and completed the Community Safety Awareness Training.

Visit the LORNA website for times and locations of upcoming training sessions.





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## OPEN LETTER FROM THE WATCH CHAIR

Dear Neighbors,

Happy Holidays everyone! My name is **Cynthia Shaffer** and I am the Chair of the Los Olivos-Riker Neighborhood Watch (LORNW). LORNW is a committee of Los Olivos-Riker Neighborhood Association (LORNA).

Part of my responsibilities is sending out the email alerts. These are emails that go out to the neighbors alerting us about suspicious activity and all things safety/security, including information from the Salinas Police Department (SPD). Additionally, the email list is used to keep the neighbors up to date with all the great things going on with LORNA, our community building effort.

A word about your contact information—it is important we keep your information safe, so I want to tell you who will have access to your information.

- Don Jones is the keeper of the Master Email Alert List (MEAL), which includes over 200 email addresses along with street addresses and phone numbers. He is also the Co-Chair of LORNW and the Citizen Patrol Coordinator.
- Cynthia Shaffer (that's me) sends out the email alerts and announcements.
- Kevin Low is the email alert backup and Citizen Patrol Co-Coordinator
- Bill Slezak is the Treasurer. Since Bill handles the money it is important for him to be able to contact folks should he have questions or need to work something out.
- Zone Coordinators (ZCs) and Block Captains (BCs) only have access to the folks who are in their respective zones.

We've divided our neighborhood into 13 zones and each zone has a Zone Coordinator. The ZC keeps the neighbors in the loop with respect to what is going on specifically with that zone and generally what is going on with LORNA and LORNW. Zone Coordinators and Block Captains are also the ones who faithfully deliver the Newsletter to you.

We are the Eyes and Ears (E&E) for the SPD, so I'll often use "E&E" in my closing to remind us to stay alert.

If you witness suspicious activity please call the SPD non-emergency number (758.7321). What is suspicious activity? Anything that doesn't "sit right with you". Considering you are a resident of the neighborhood, you know what looks out of place. The police request us to call in those activities that don't sit right with us. That single phone call may prevent a crime from happening. Since neighbors have been looking out for each other, we've actually averted some potential break-ins! If you witness a crime in progress, call 911.

We do our best to impart information by way of the Newsletter, but the most up-to-date, efficient way to be informed and network is to be a part of the MEAL.

I do hope you consider becoming a LORNA member. We suggest a minimum of \$10 for a household, but you may give any amount you choose. Your return on your investment is much greater than the dues. Besides receiving a membership decal and a discount on the Citizen Patrol vest, your membership helps to cover the costs incurred in stewarding a successful neighborhood group. There are modest costs such as funding neighborhood activities (like the hot dogs that were provided at the Kipling Street Fall Festival) where we have a chance to meet and hang out with each other which is the best way to combat crime. Neighborhood Watch works best when neighbors know each other!

Personally, I believe the membership decal sums it up: **PROUD LORNA MEMBER**. I love being part of this neighborhood!

To give you an idea of what you will receive in your Inbox, below is the most recent alert that went out on Halloween night. Please note I was able to call the neighbor since he had provided his contact information by way of LORNA membership. The Citizen Patroller (CP), the neighbor, and I went out for coffee after the police did a sweep and declared the house safe. It's rewarding that not only are we looking out for each other, but we are also comforting each other after the fact. I checked in with the neighbor the next day and he's feeling OK.

*Dear Neighbors,*

*Just called 911. There was an attempted break-in at one of the houses on Riker. One of our Citizen Patrollers heard glass breaking and yelled out, "We're going to call 911!" The CP called me to contact the neighbor. I called the neighbor and the neighbor came home right away. Dispatch says the police will come as soon as they can.*

*Tonight is a victory for Neighborhood Watch! It is unfortunate our neighbor's house was targeted, but it is fortunate our neighborhood has Neighborhood Watch... especially, Citizen Patrol!*

*Neighbors, Halloween night is fun, but it's also a night when people are running the streets. BE ESPECIALLY ALERT TONIGHT! Keep your outside lights on. Make sure your motion sensor lights are on. If you hear/see suspicious activity, PLEASE call the non-emergency number: 758.7321. If a crime is in progress (like you hear glass breaking) call 911!*

*Eyes and Ears!!! Stay safe. Cynthia*

Thank you for your interest in keeping our Neighborhood safer and improving our quality of life! Please let me know if you have questions/concerns.

**E&E!**



**Cynthia**