



# FROM THE FIELDS

A Newsletter of the Los Olivos-Riker Neighborhood Association

January/February 2011

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



## NEWS

**LORNA News** – Announcements, Events, and Reportage



### BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

*Submitted by Kevin Low*

*Ask not what your neighborhood can do for you, but what you can do for your neighborhood.*

On the cold, overcast morning of December 18<sup>th</sup>, a dedicated team of 15 of your neighbors came together to help beautify the intersection at Los Olivos and Blanco. As our inaugural neighborhood improvement project, this team of volunteers weeded, trimmed back overgrown plants, picked up trash, and laid weed block, landscaping borders, and cobble in the center median. However, we couldn't have done it without the help of another five members of our refreshment crew who provided snacks (including some really tasty home-cooked delights) to keep our energy level up.

Thank you to all of our faithful neighbors who contributed to this project. I would also like to extend a special *Thank you!* to McShane's Nursery for delivering all the supplies right when they were needed, and to Starbucks on South Main for donating coffee to keep us warm.

Phase 2 of this project will be to add signage at this intersection, greeting people as they enter our Los Olivos-Riker neighborhood. We anticipate that this phase would be completed in the spring of 2011.

If you haven't driven by Los Olivos and Blanco, I encourage you to check out the fruits of our labor. I would bet that you would agree that this beautification project shows pride in our neighborhood and also increases property values.

This project would not have been possible without your LORNA membership dues. If you are not a member, I urge you to join today. Visit our website at [www.lorneighborhood.com](http://www.lorneighborhood.com) for a membership application, or if you are a member and would like to donate money in support of our neighborhood improvement projects, please make checks payable to LORNA and send to **Cynthia Shaffer** at 162 Coleridge Drive, Salinas CA 93901.

If you have any other ideas to improve our neighborhood, or if you would like to help out with our next neighborhood improvement project with labor or providing refreshments, please contact **Kevin** at **831.751.9654** or [g.appletree@juno.com](mailto:g.appletree@juno.com).

### HOLIDAY HOME LIGHTING COMPETITION

The *Holiday Home Lighting Competition* has been declared a "complete success" by LORNA president **Steve McShane**. The competition, organized by the Los Olivos-Riker Neighborhood Association, featured a tour bus open to members of the public and a cash prize to help offset power bills for the winning household.

More than 40 festive community members joined LORNA for an hour-long tour of South Salinas homes vying for the title of *Best Holiday Decorated* home. Guests were greeted at Villa Serra before boarding a bus generously donated by Tanimura and Antle.

Guests participated in judging that resulted in four winners:

**Best Holiday Decorated Home in South Salinas:**  
**Carlos Gonzales, 228 Sansome Street**

**Most Outrageous Decorated Home In South Salinas:** **Armando and Chastity Dominguez, 381 Lombard Street**

**Best Holiday Decorated Home in Los Olivos-Riker Neighborhood:** **Steven and Anne Speelman, 1304 Riker Street**

**Most Outrageous Decorated Home in Los Olivos-Riker Neighborhood:** **John and Joyce Friscia, 419 Shelley Way**

**Honorable Mention:** **Sergio and Lorena Parra, 1334 Riker Street**

Huge thanks to **Mary Richardson** for preparing certificates for the winners, and to **Kevin Low** and **Melissa Mears** for creating the signs for proud display in the winners' yards.

### FREE FITNESS CLASS

**Lisa Washington** is offering a free exercise class. Her **Get Fit Salinas!** club is open to women and participating children 10 years and up. Lisa leads the class Sunday and Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm at the Salinas Seventh Day Adventist Church at 46 Villa Street. Admission is free. For more information, call **Lisa** at **831.210.0141**.

### LORNA MEETINGS

Association meetings are scheduled for the first Monday of each month at Villa Serra. Business begins at 7:30 pm. All are welcome, so please come and join your neighbors!



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## THANKS, KUDOS, PLAUDITS, ACCOLADES

- Belated thanks and kudos to **Mindy Carpenter** for her contributions to the Kipling Street Festival
- Special thanks to **Frank and Stephanie Perkins** for their generous contribution of time and energy to printing the newsletter
- Thanks to **Tanimura & Antle** for providing transportation for the Holiday Home Lighting tour
- Thank you, once again, to **Renae Gerhardstein** and **Villa Serra** for their support and the use of their facility



## CONDOLENCES

- To **Mary and John Richardson** on the loss of Mary's father
- To **Sarah Smith** on the loss of her mother



## ENCOURAGEMENT and SUPPORT

- To **Bill Slezak** and his family during Bill's battle with a serious health situation

## LORNA MEMBERSHIP

Minimum suggested annual membership is \$10 per household or \$50 per business. Dues are managed by the LORNA Board and financial reports are presented at each LORNA meeting and once a year at our annual meeting. Please complete the membership form and enclose your check payable to LORNA. Send checks and forms to: LORNA Membership, 162 Coleridge Drive, Salinas CA 93901. Thank you for supporting the Los Olivos-Riker Neighborhood Association!

## LORNA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Household Membership  \$10 (minimum)  \$25  \$50  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Membership  \$50 (minimum)  \$75  \$100  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Business / Member(s) Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to get more involved in LORNA?  YES

- Baking for events
- Join the Board
- Help with newsletter
- Host coffee / event
- Volunteer at event
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



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## EYES AND EARS

*The Watch, Prevention, Awareness, and Vigilance*

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WATCH

*Submitted by Cynthia Shaffer*

Dear Neighbors,

Since our first Neighborhood Watch meeting in March 2010, we've learned how to do something as small as having a stray shopping cart picked up to something as big as placing a call to the Salinas Police Department (SPD) regarding suspicious activity that led to an arrest...and, of course, all the stuff in between. Underscored is our diligent neighborly effort to keep our neighborhood safe and secure.

2010 was a successful year for our Neighborhood Watch. Some of the highlights included:

- Our Master Email Alert List now boasts over 250 addresses.
- We are a part of the Graffiti Task Force (GTF) that was created in response to the uptick in graffiti/tagging. Three arrests have been made to date.
- We've developed a strong relationship with the Salinas Police department.
- We are a part of a network of Neighborhood Watches that includes information sharing.
- We learned about mail theft and what to do.
- We worked to keep watch over a couple of vacant properties, which included contacting realtors to see what we could legally do to upkeep the property. Additionally, we worked to keep SPD abreast of highly suspicious activity occurring around a particular property which resulted in the squatters being vacated.
- Neighbors identified a male driver who has been throwing vodka bottles out of his window. In addition to the unsightly broken bottles, his speeding was dangerous, considering the children who play in the area. Resolution is still in process with SPD.
- We've participated in keeping a look out for missing children (all eventually located with happy endings).
- As a result of an e-mail alert with information and a picture regarding a lost dog, here is an excerpt of the follow-up from the owner:

*"Charlie is back at home with a fresh collar, dog tags, and a microchip. Your e-mail helped me locate her. Very much appreciated. I like how "WE DO IT ON THE SOUTH SIDE". Thanks again."*

We have also thwarted numerous potential crimes by calling the non-emergency number and 911. Here are the top three incidents of which we are aware:

- One of our neighbors called in suspicious activity consisting of a woman in a parked pickup truck, and two teenagers ringing the doorbell of a home several times. They eventually went through the back gate. As a result of the officers having a plate number, they arrested and booked the driver at a later time for expired registration.
- Another neighbor witnessed a pair of suspicious fellows by a home. One was in a parked vehicle and the other was coming out of the back gate. *It just didn't look right.* The neighbor called it in, and although the fellows weren't apprehended, the owner of the home confirmed they were trying to break in, as evidenced by the screen being removed and pry marks by the window.
- On Halloween night, our **Citizen Patrol** heard breaking glass coming from a neighboring house and yelled, *"I'm going to call 911!"* The police arrived, confirmed there was an attempted break-in, and searched the area to ensure the home was safe to enter.

Our heightened alert status is truly the catalyst. Remember: ***Vigilance in the small will combat the big and Neighborhood Watch works best when neighbors know each other.***

Let's continue to grow our network by spreading the Neighborhood Watch word and joining LORNA and the E-mail Alert List, and of course, let's be the best *Eyes and Ears* out there for the SPD and report suspicious activity and crimes.

Finally, none of this could happen without neighbors being committed to stewarding this neighborhood effort. Perhaps this New Year you could take a moment to see where your niche is in stewarding our neighborhood. Please email or call me! E&E!!!

Cynthia: [cyfly@version2dot1.com](mailto:cyfly@version2dot1.com)  
831.809.4929





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## GRAFFITI ABATEMENT

Submitted by Steve McShane

The Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce hosted a graffiti roundtable discussion in response to an explosion of graffiti/tagging incidents throughout the city. The roundtable was attended by representatives of the city, Salinas PD, the Chamber, BFI, and members of neighborhood associations.

The following is an overview of the discussion:

- Graffiti has increased in the last year.
- Some gray areas concerning second stories and/or commercial/utility spaces have been presented.
- Groups of private citizens mix paint and address the issue head on.
- Photos have been taken and patterns have been discovered in certain areas of town.
- Taggers see this as their mission in life.
- Neighbors and neighborhood groups need to work in concert with BFI and the city.
- Business needs to become more engaged in the issue so perpetrators can be prosecuted.
- A protocol is being distributed for businesses addressing graffiti in Oldtown.
- The city has long dealt with graffiti. The policy has been to address it within 48 hours. Before contracted out to BFI, the city would address graffiti seven days a week.
- Dozens of tags every day amount to costing the city approximately \$100,000 a year.
- BFI has been handling graffiti abatement since July, and is aggressively tracking and responding.
- BFI has addressed more than 86,000 square feet of graffiti, and is keeping records of locations of tagging and how it is addressed.
- BFI is developing a process to interface its records with photographs.
- Neighborhood efforts to address the problem can be done with reporting to and coordinating with BFI.
- Photos, videos, monitoring, and surveillance are keys for prosecution.

The city's code governing graffiti has not been updated in some time. When the time is right, a presentation should be made to the City Council. This may provide a spark for a review and update of the code section.

Overall, this was a very productive meeting with many of the key players when it comes to addressing graffiti/tagging in our city.

## GRAFFITI ABATEMENT GUIDELINES

LORNA offers the following graffiti abatement guidelines for Salinas residents:

- Call the Graffiti Hotline at **831.751.5493** immediately when the graffiti is noticed.
- Call the Salinas PD at **831.758.7321** when an act of vandalism is observed.
- Send photos via e-mail of specific graffiti or tagging to [aalcala@republicservices.com](mailto:aalcala@republicservices.com).

## GRAFFITI TASK FORCE

The newly-formed Graffiti Task Force has been credited with assisting Salinas PD with the apprehension of three taggers.

Here is a summary from the January 7<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Californian*:

*A citizen patrol assisted police Wednesday with the arrest of three men who were tagging businesses in Salinas.*

*Shortly before 8:30 p.m., the Graffiti Task Force citizen patrol observed the suspects tagging businesses in the area of South Main Street and Acacia Street, Salinas police reported. The Graffiti Task Force contacted the police department and followed the suspects until officers arrived.*

*Officers said they observed one man spray-painting a business, while two others were using marker pens. The suspects claimed to be part of a tagging crew. All three were lodged into the Monterey County Jail for vandalism.*

The task force originated in South Salinas to address the increase in graffiti/tagging, and includes members of the Los Olivos-Riker Neighborhood Watch, Monterey Park Neighborhood Watch, Salinas Chamber of Commerce, Salinas Oldtown Association, and BFI Waste Services.

