

# The Riviera Reporter

NEWSLETTER OF THE RIVIERA HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2004

## The Prez Sez...



On Friday, February 13, I went to the City's Armstrong Theatre to see my daughter Raegan and about 70 of her classmates perform in Riviera Elementary's Annual Talent Show. She was, of course, brilliant in her portrayal as a singing ox in a dance number with six of her classmates. Over 40 acts, ranging from a team of juggling comics, a dancing Brownies troop singing "It's a Small World After All" (in six languages), young pianists playing "Stars & Stripes Forever" and "Take me out to the Ball Game", to poodle-skirt-wearing beeboppers dancing to the theme from "Grease". The theme of the show was a tribute to Bob Hope and the USO shows he emceed for our troops for so many years. It was a wonderfully entertaining event for all. I bring this up not because my daughter participated, although I certainly would not have known the event occurred had she not been performing. I bring this up because this evening really increased my appreciation for our Riviera neighborhood.

An unbelievable amount of volunteer work is done by so many in our small community. For this talent show alone, a monumental effort is put in by all of the moms (and some dads).

## RHA GENERAL MEETING:

**WHEN:** WEDNESDAY, March 24, 2004 - 7:00 P.M.

**WHERE:** RICHARDSON MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA  
23751 Nancy Lee Lane (off Newton Street)

**AGENDA:** IMPACT OF CALIFORNIA'S STATE BUDGET CRISIS  
ON CITY SERVICES AND SCHOOLS  
Guest Speakers: Leroy Jackson, Torrance City Manager  
Dr. Stephen Fish, TUSD Superintendent

Consider all they do: build the sets, sew the costumes, choreograph the numbers, shuttle the kids to practices. The time these dedicated individuals put in enhances the experiences of all of our children as well as their own. The producers of the show, Stevie Lorentzen and Laura Savitz must have spent many weeks if not months preparing for this show. These ladies epitomize a commitment to our neighborhood that is incredibly admirable. I personally want to applaud them for their hard work and dedication. Efforts like theirs transform our local elementary and middle schools into the type of comprehensive learning experiences that is usually only available in private schools.

They are just one example of the amazing volunteer effort that occurs at our schools. Parents volunteer to help teachers in the classroom every day. The Riviera PTA raised money for a wonderful Physical Education program this year. Each year a "Super Saturday" clean up effort takes place at Riviera where parents volunteer a weekend day to paint school buildings, clean up school bathrooms and plant new landscape and vegetable gardens. With the state budget programs likely to impact schools even

further in the coming years, these efforts will be even more critical to our local schools.

Why do I care so much about the issue of schools? As a parent of three children, I have a vested interest in the quality of our schools. But also, as RHA President I recognize what any good real estate agent would tell you: the high quality of our schools drives up the value of our homes!

Not only is this an important reason to applaud the efforts of these volunteers, it is just one more reason I hope you consider joining their ranks. Every one of us benefits personally...and ultimately financially. I am willing to bet that the benefit you receive financially will pale in comparison to the heart-warming satisfaction you will feel from your efforts. And in either case you are doing your part to enhance the lives of our children and in turn they will be the next generation to make the Riviera their home, their jewel of the South Bay.

*Michael Cotton, President*

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**SUPPORT OUR  
LOCAL SCHOOLS!**  
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# WHAT'S UP IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD:

## RIVIERA HOMEOWNERS REJOICE AT SHUTDOWN OF FM TOWER

Ending a several years-long battle between local residents, SBS (Spanish Broadcasting System), and the city of Torrance, the 93.5 FM Radio Tower at 5010 Calle De Arboles went silent on January 14, 2004, after more than 30 years of operation.

With a lease of the city lot on Calle De Arboles set to expire in 2005, and the impact that that would have on the station's value if sold, SBS and the city worked out an agreement to move the transmitter. Once SBS receives final approval, the antenna and monopole will be relocated to a distant non-residential location, and the building will be demolished. They expect that this will be done in the next few months.

Since radio interference tends to be limited to roughly a 2,000 foot circle around the tower, this move eliminates all concerns for the Hollywood Riviera residents, and is much cause for celebration by homeowners close to the tower who have struggled with interference problems for years.

Hostilities peaked between 1998 and 2000 when the station was owned by Chagal Communications. Very little progress had been made until the station was purchased by SBS, and VP Carroll Larkin took a personal interest in trying to work out a compromise that both the city and residents could live with. Carroll's direct attention resulted in the arrangement to move the station into an even better position for 93.5 FM, while also granting residents their best wish for a shutdown in the local neighborhood. Unfortunately, Carroll Larkin, who had been involved in radio for almost 100 years, died several months ago and was unable to witness completion of the project he started.

Local resident, Neal Pollack, remarked: "Despite all the protests, complaints, and loud city hall meetings attended by residents, it was, in the end, Carroll Larkin who engineered this win-win situation for the city, the residents of the Riviera, and the owners of 93.5 FM. Carroll was a fine catalyst for progress, kept his word, and I wish he could be here to see the result. He will be missed. In addition, it should be mentioned that Brian Shunshine, the Assistant to the Torrance City Manager, did an outstanding job protecting the interests of the homeowners, negotiating with SBS, and ensuring that all lease provisions were met on time."

*Submitted by Neal Pollack*

## MONTE CARLO NIGHT SATURDAY, APRIL 3, 2004

Riviera Elementary School will be sponsoring the Ninth Annual Monte Carlo Night on April 3, in an effort to fundraise and offset severe budget cuts. An estimated \$800,000 is being cut from this year's school budget and a projected \$4-5 million will be cut from the 2004-2005 budget.

It is estimated that approximately \$15,000 in proceeds will be generated from Monte Carlo Night, and this will be used to 1) renovate and upgrade the computer lab, 2) purchase two new computers for every classroom, and 3) provide necessary school supplies and equipment.

The school is soliciting your help by asking for services such as giftware, electronics, free lessons/classes, toys, sports equipment, vacation packages, tickets, etc. for the silent auction. We are also enlisting advertising sponsorship and financial support from the business community and private individuals. Please support our school with your donation and/or save the date to participate in the event. **All donations are tax deductible.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 310-533-4460**

## OUTSTANDING LANDSCAPE AWARDS



The Outstanding Landscape Award for **October** Award was presented to the Eurich Family: Dane, Lori and 6 month old Ryan at 167 Via La Circula. Their engaging landscape, designed by Sandy Fields and installed one year ago by Green Scene Landscapes features a white picket fence and entry arbor which handsomely frames the property. The border it created is bursting with color and a variety of tones and textures highlighted by white iceberg roses, yellow lantana, purple mexican sage, lavender and princess flower, chartreuse "Limelight", maroon flax and interspersed with the petite festuca grass.



The Outstanding Landscape Award for **November** was presented to June Young, at 5105 Via El Sereno. This is a mature garden with many well established plants, shrubs and trees, that provide color and texture almost year round. There are 50 rose bushes, mostly hybrid teas and some grandifloras, huge camellia bushes, geraniums, begonias, bougainvillea and Australian tea trees. Meyer lemon, Fuji apple and avocado trees guide your eye up the driveway path to the front door and there you behold a secret garden, highlighted by a spectacular 10 foot high camellia tree, laden with blooms. This is an immaculate and lovingly maintained garden.



The Outstanding Landscape Award for **December**, was given to Mike and Robin Krotz at 537 Paseo de la Playa. Ornamental grasses play a significant role in this garden and have been handsomely combined with shrubs, perennials, ground covers & trees. This presents a complex tapestry of interwoven textures, colors and shapes. Tall, fountain-like Miscanthus Sinensis "Maiden Grass" and shorter Sesleria Autumnalis contrasts strikingly with the stiff, upright bronzy leaves of Phormium "Jack Spratt". Highlighting the background are a row of yellow Anigozanthos "Kangaroo Paws" which set off the shrubbiness of Westringia fructosa "Wynabbie Gem", Lavender and Nandina. Gray leaved helichrysum petiolare, and senecio are woven in and around. A lovely Distictus trumpet vine crowns the railing on the deck and the whole landscape is anchored by an Acacia Tree.

*The October and December Landscape Awards were presented by: Ruth Vogel & Mary Lenihan for the RHA, & Toni Sargent for the Riviera Garden Club. Judy Urnine represented the Riviera Garden Club for the November Landscape Award.*

## RHA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL GUIDELINE

The Riviera Homeowners Association has been working to improve the way we track and report our membership dues activities. Each newsletter has the most recent dues payment information right above your mailing address.

The RHA's business year begins in September and ends in August; it is meant to coincide with the school calendar year. The current 2003-2004 business year began on September 1, 2003 and will end on August 31, 2004. Annual dues received during this period will be counted toward this period. We hope this guideline helps you to better understand the dues payment message included in each newsletter.

## RHA MEMBERSHIP FORM 2003 - 2004

If the information on the mailing label is correct, please indicate by marking the appropriate box below.

Continuing Member – mailing label personal information is accurate.  
(NO NEED TO FILL IN PERSONAL INFORMATION BELOW)

Continuing Member – See modifications and/or comments below.

New Member – see information below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

The following officers can be contacted through their email at the RHA:

president@hollywoodriviera.org    secretary@hollywoodriviera.org

newsletter@hollywoodriviera.org    concert@hollywoodriviera.org

## ENROLLMENT FORM

Also, please review the membership enrollment form below. If you are renewing your membership and all of the information on the mailing label is accurate, mark the appropriate check box and submit your dues. Space is provided for modifications or new enrollment information should you need it.

The RHA does not share this or any other personal information with anyone for any purpose other than newsletter processing and delivery.

We will continue to try to improve these administrative functions in order to better serve you.

Amount paid:

\$20 (annual) +  \$\_\_\_\_ (Other) = Total \$\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Check Date \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn of the Riviera Homeowners Association?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## THE PAST IS A BLAST!

Austin Woodward, the RHA Historian has been studying the association archives and is in the process of organizing and cataloguing the contents. The plan is to index the material, which includes meeting minutes, newsletters, photos, newspaper clippings and other material dating back to the 1940s.

We are asking for help from all Riviera residents. We need 1) material that can be added to the archives, and 2) archiving material to help preserve this trove of Riviera lore.

We are especially interested in donations of a small fire-resistant file cabinet and memory books/photo albums with acid-free paper. If you have any interesting material or donations of archiving supplies, you can email the webmaster, or Austin directly at: <mailto:historian@hollywoodriviera.org>. After getting all this history shipshape, we hope to make it available to the public with the cooperation of the Torrance Historical Society.

*Julian Chasin, Webmaster*

## RIVIERA ELEMENTARY CELEBRATES ITS 50TH YEAR!

Date: Friday, May 21, 2004

Time: 5-8 p.m.

Place: Riviera Elementary's Cafeteria

RSVP: Dana, 373-0389 by May 7th.

Riviera Elementary is extending an open invitation to the community to celebrate its 50th year of educational excellence. Come dressed in your poodle skirts & bowling shirts for a 50's themed celebration. A disc jockey, and the Riviera Elementary chorus and band will be on hand to entertain you as you reminisce about the good old days! Carl's Jr. will provide dinner for a nominal fee.

Anyone with old yearbooks, photos and/or any information on past teachers, principals or PTA Presidents please contact Dana at 373-0389 or at her email address: [andyache@msn.com](mailto:andyache@msn.com).

## news FLASH!

### KEEP OUR GARDEN OPEN

The South Coast Botanic Garden, an 87-acre "jewel" of the Palos Verdes Peninsula in Southern California, is owned and operated by the County of Los Angeles but is scheduled to be closed on July 1, 2004 by the County Board of Supervisors.

In 1961, this garden became the first botanic gardening the world to be built on a landfill. It is a "Living Laboratory" for plant study and introductions by botanists and horticulturists from all corners of the globe who come to see how the garden was developed and how it has continued to thrive over the past 40 years.

The garden is a diverse natural wildlife habitat that is used as an educational resource and meeting place for a variety of horticultural groups, wildlife societies, artists, school children, school boards, and civic events that are open to the public.

110,000 visitors tour the garden annually as public interest and involvement continues to grow. The nearest comparable public facility in the region is 40 miles away.

2,500 member-families of the South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation, Inc. are dedicated to continuing to assist Los Angeles County in developing, improving and maintaining the garden with financial and volunteer support.

We need to let the Board of Supervisors know how important and vital this garden is to us and this region. Please write letters to Supervisors Don Knabe, Yvonne B. Burke, Zev Yaroslovsky, Gloria Molina, Michael Antonovich, and CAO David E. Janssen at 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

In addition, please write letters to: the Los Angeles Times, the Daily Breeze, the Peninsula News, the Easy Reader, the Beach Reporter, and the Gardena Valley News.

You may also donate to the "Keep Our Garden Open" Fund. Address your donations to: South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation, Inc. (SCBGF), 26300 Crenshaw Blvd., Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274. Telephone: (310) 544-1948.

# UPDATE

## HOME REMODELING WITHIN THE HILLSIDE OVERLAY AREA OF THE HOLLYWOOD RIVIERA

### BACKGROUND

A little over a year ago, in October 2002, the Riviera Homeowners' Association (RHA) sponsored a general membership meeting on the subject of "mansionization." While this is a subjective term, mansionization typically implies large-scale, single residential development that contrasts to smaller existing homes in the surrounding area. The forum, consisting of a panel of people with a variety of views and areas of expertise, was held because some residents of Hollywood Riviera have raised concerns about mansionization. The meeting was well attended, and audience participation was lively.

Since that meeting, officers of the RHA have continued exploring and discussing related topics. This article summarizes what we learned and concluded. Our overall intent is to provide information that will help reduce the level of conflict that can arise among neighbors regarding a remodel project.

### APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Remodeling within the Hollywood Riviera is subject to the City of Torrance Municipal Codes that provide specific criteria on remodeled buildings, including height, size, set backs, lot coverage, floor-to-area ratios (home size limit based on lot square footage) and other design considerations.

In 1977, a special overlay district was created in the hillside areas of the city (which includes most of the Hollywood Riviera). The Hillside Overlay was designed to acknowledge particular development difficulties arising from the topography of the area. In addition to the standard city codes, remodeling projects in the Hillside Overlay Area are subject to special review criteria. The specific sections of the City of Torrance Municipal Code known as the Hillside Overlay Ordinance, which include both design and process guidelines, can be accessed via links on both the RHA Website and the City of Torrance Website. **A map of the Hillside Overlay Area of the Hollywood Riviera is provided on the reverse side of this page and on the RHA website.**

### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

There is continuing debate on how development in the Hollywood Riviera should be undertaken. The RHA Board believes the Hillside Overlay Ordinance, where applicable, offers the best means to manage significant remodeling within the Hollywood Riviera community by providing a basis for reasonable public comment under appropriate City oversight and review. At the same time, the RHA Board does not believe that the Hillside Overlay Ordinance or any City Municipal Code should regulate issues relating to style or personal taste. Hollywood Riviera homes reflect a variety of designs and architectural styles, which contribute to the character of the area. As for the mansionization issue, design choices can be made to mitigate the perceived bulk of larger homes while allowing for enlarged home sizes in line with City Building Codes. The RHA Board believes that City Municipal Codes and reasonableness should guide the ultimate outcome.

In addition, the RHA Board recommends that all Riviera residents affected by a remodeling project should engage in informal discussions early in the planning process and that impacted neighbors should not hinder remodel progress by appealing without reasonable cause.

### TALK WITH NEIGHBORS EARLY IN THE REMODELING PROCESS

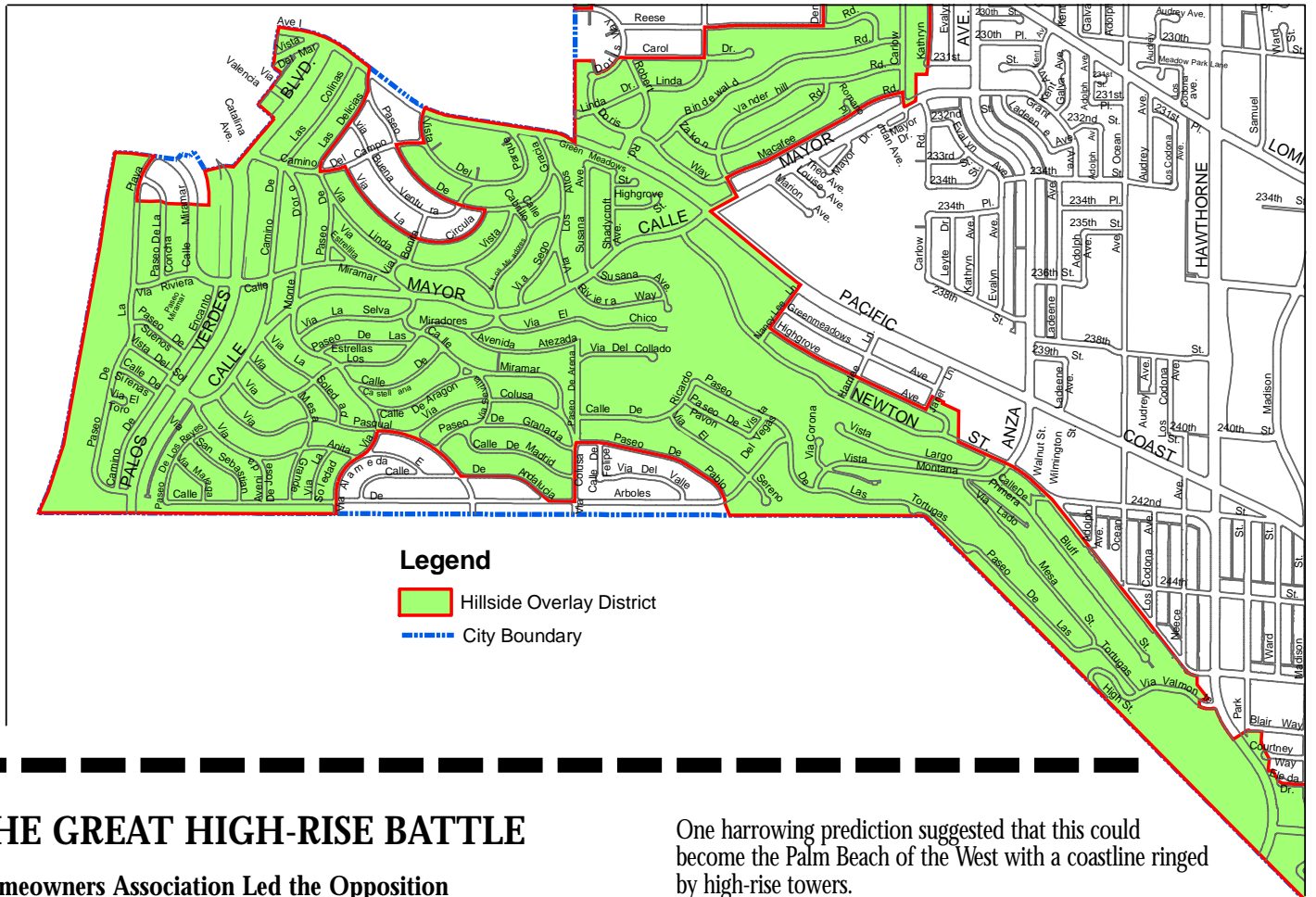
Residential remodeling can be a great experience, but also can be stressful to the homeowner and neighbors. If a remodel is within the Hillside Overlay Area, the process includes City notification of neighbors within 300 feet of a proposed remodel project. The Hillside Overlay Ordinance can provide a means to assure due process in a public forum. However, City Hall is not always the best place for impacted neighbors to vent concerns on a homeowner's proposed project. The RHA Board encourages homeowners to engage neighbors in dialogue early in the design process, in advance of any formal City process or hearing, even in advance of silhouettes being raised to display a proposed remodel. Early discussion of initial design concepts at your home or theirs, or a common community location, can allow for exchange of opinions and goals, and sharing of information.

Ongoing dialogue throughout the process can facilitate the best outcome for everyone. Listen to what your neighbors have to say, take note of any concerns they have, and make a good faith effort to accommodate reasonable requests. A neighbor's support in a remodel project can help the City process and construction go more smoothly. Under most situations, substantial remodel projects within the Hillside Overlay Area will be reviewed by the City of Torrance Planning Commission. In the event neighbors are unable to reach a reasonable agreement, the Planning Commission, with the advice of City Planning Staff, will make the final decision. Neighbors working reasonably together can streamline the Planning Commission review and minimize the number of cases appealed to the City Council.

Remember, once the remodel project is over, your neighbor will still be living nearby. In the long run, it's best for neighbors to do all they can to cooperate throughout the remodel process.

*Torrance Municipal Code specifies a 0.60 floor-to-area ratio limit which is used to determine maximum size of residential homes. For example, a 6,000 square foot lot could result maximum home size of 3,600 square, including the garage. Under this example, subtracting space for a two-car garage (assumed 400 square feet for this example) would result in a maximum home living space of 3,200 square feet, subject to the Hillside Overlay Ordinance.*

# HOLLYWOOD RIVIERA HILLSIDE OVERLAY



## THE GREAT HIGH-RISE BATTLE

### Homeowners Association Led the Opposition To Proposals for 10-13 Story Beachside Building

“High-Rise Threatens Riviera” was the headline of a 1963 flyer circulated to Riviera homeowners. The notice alerted residents that the Sovereign Development Co. of Beverly Hills had petitioned the Torrance City Council for a zoning variance to erect a 13-story building consisting of 140 apartment units, a restaurant, and shops on the site of the old Hollywood Riviera Club House, which had been vacant since the Club burned down in 1958. The flyer was prepared by the Citizens Committee Opposed to High Rise in the Riviera, headed by Stanley Dunn of Via La Selva.

This January I managed to track down Stan Dunn, who recently remarried, sold his longtime Via La Selva home and moved to Manhattan Beach. Over a delightful lunch, he recall highlights of “The Great High-Rise Battle,” as I call it. Riviera residents at the time will remember it well. The Homeowners Association led the successful opposition to a succession of proposals that would have set a precedent to drastically alter the character of this area.

The first proposal surfaced early in 1962 with a Sovereign request for permission to erect a 10-story tower on the site. Originally intended as an amenity for land purchasers in the Riviera – who automatically received Club membership and ownership – the magnificent property on the bluff overlooking Torrance Beach, part in Torrance and part in Redondo Beach, had been taken over by mortgage holders when payments were suspended during the Depression of the Thirties, and sold the property for \$250,000 in 1959. The Sovereign proposal was the first to surface after the sale.

Their first proposal (for a 10-story apartment building) denied, but they came back with the 13-story project. Dunn mobilized the homeowners, who were almost unanimously opposed fearing that this tower would lead to others and eventually seal off their beach access and coastal views.

One harrowing prediction suggested that this could become the Palm Beach of the West with a coastline ringed by high-rise towers.

The RHA rallied with petitions and a huge presence at public hearings. At one Torrance City Council hearing, Stan recalls, the fire marshals came in and dispersed part of the crowd outside to follow the proceedings via loudspeakers. When Sovereign failed to persuade Torrance officials to their zone change, the developer came back with schemes of land swaps that would alter the jurisdiction over the site to Redondo Beach or L.A. County. They also countered with a proposal for a high-rise condominium building – so the people living there would be homeowners too.

The final rebuff to Sovereign’s hopes, Stan recalls, came in a court decision in another jurisdiction, which ruled that a developer could not eliminate access to a public beach that had been in accepted use for several years.

As a result, today we have Miramar Park on the site. Stan notes that there are plaques in the park from the City of Torrance and the City of Redondo Beach for their part in establishing the park. “The Riviera Homeowners Association should have some recognition too,” he believes, “we really made a difference.”

It was a high-water mark for the association, in both membership numbers and active participation by those members. It was also the starting point for a distinguished civic career for Stanley Dunn, who went on to serve as President of the association, as a Torrance city commissioner, and then as an elected board member of the Torrance Unified School District and El Camino College. He has sold his interest in Dunn Brothers Printing in Gardena (to one of his sons) but still maintains an office there and goes in daily. He also retains his position as a board member of South Bay Bank. The energy and organizing skills he showed 40-plus years ago in the Great High-Rise Battle are still quite evident.

*Austin Woodward, Historian*

# RIVIERA HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION 2003-2004 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President	Michael Cotton	791-1985	Past President	Doug Holker	378-8984
1st Vice President (Programs)	Heather Hintzen	378-7388	Scholarship	Art Wong	375-1741
2nd Vice President (Membership)	Bob Hoffman	378-7108	City Council Liaison	OPEN	
Treasurer	Andrea Perez	378-2744	Traffic Liaison	Johnny Tai	791-7465
Secretary	Amy Graham	375-8640	Underground Utilities	Nancy Conger	373-9867
Newsletter Editor	Chela Cowden	375-8649	Planning Commission Liaison	OPEN	
Riviera Website	Julian Chasin	373-6314	Historian	Austin Woodward	375-6390
Landscape & Concert	Ruth Vogel	375-4702	Mailing Coordinator	Diane Kuhn	375-6367
Hospitality	Pam Popovich	375-8729			

## *The Riviera Reporter*

P O BOX 1074 • TORRANCE, CA 90505

Please look above your name & address for your dues payment status. Your dues help us to provide scholarships, put on community events such as the Concert in the Park, and promote the Riviera community in our newsletter.

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## RHA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS LAST CALL!

We want to remind all high school seniors that their RHA Scholarship applications are due.

- South High seniors: the RHA Scholarship Committee will work directly with your scholarship counselor. Your application should already be submitted to your counselor.

- If you attend another Torrance Unified high school, please have your scholarship counselor contact the RHA Scholarship Chair at the email address or phone number below. Your application should already be complete.
- If you attend a high school outside of Torrance Unified, please contact the RHA Scholarship Chair at the email address or phone number below. We will forward to you a Torrance Unified School District scholarship application form. Your application is due March 31, 2004.

The minimum application requirements are 1) you live in the Hollywood Riviera, 2) you plan to attend college, and 3) you are in the top 25% of your class or have a minimum 3.0 GPA. Awards will be based on academic excellence, participation in school activities, teacher recommendations and community service. For more details, please contact Art Wong, RHA Scholarship Chair, at: [scholarships@hollywoodriviera.org](mailto:scholarships@hollywoodriviera.org) or 310-795-0289.

## UPCOMING SPECIAL PROGRAMS AT EL RETIRO LIBRARY

**March 24, Wednesday, 4 pm**

Celebration of the works of Maurice Sendak including *Where the Wild Things Are*.

**April 21, Wednesday, 4 pm**

Honoring the books of Beverly Cleary in celebration of National Library Week with stories, a readers theater production, crafts, and games.

**May 11, Tuesday 4, pm**

"Fiesta in Spain", stories, dancing and ethnic costumes by Alina Mendez.

## CALLE MAYOR

### TRAFFIC VOLUME AND SPEED

A fellow resident recently noted the high volume of traffic on Calle Mayor. For those that may not be aware, Calle Mayor is considered a collector street, meaning that the City expects a higher volume of traffic on this street than the neighboring streets. Being a public street, Calle Mayor can not be restricted to residents only although we would all love to have that. Although property value would be less detrimental if Calle Mayor were restricted, those that have bought on collector streets have also benefited from a relatively lower market price on their homes upon purchase.

In dealing with speed, traffic bumps were suggested. Our local Fire Department argues against speed bumps as it reduces their time and also negatively impacts their trucks/equipment... tough one to argue. Torrance FD is one of the few premier fire departments in the country, so they were smart enough to argue this point. Some-thing one can do that has worked for fellow neighbors: post "Kids Playing" signs (available in stores) near your house. For those drivers that do care, they will be more cautious in the vicinity around your house.