

# The Riviera Reporter

NEWSLETTER OF THE RIVIERA HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2005

## The Prez Sez...



It's hard to believe that spring is right around corner. I love this time of the year. The days are getting longer, bulbs are pushing up in the garden and the kids are playing baseball. It's a great time to enjoy our Riviera neighborhood.

I hope to establish a new tradition with my "Prez Chat" this newsletter. I will be writing on the "State of the RHA". I want to update you on the condition of our organization and highlight some of the key events this (fiscal) year.

Key board members have provided detailed reports (budget, membership and more) on their areas of responsibility in this newsletter. I encourage you to review them. Our financial and membership performance this year is strong. We are on track to meet our budgeted revenue targets. RHA expenditures have remained in line with the approved budget all year long and we expect to close out the year within budget. It has been a personal goal of mine to improve our accountability and transparency as an organization. I believe that, as a result of the efforts of our Treasurer and VP of Membership, we are doing just that.

The RHA has presented a number of interesting and topical general meetings this year. In October, City Council members Hope Witkowsky and Ted Lieu participated in a panel discussion of "Development in the City of Torrance". They were joined by Doug Maupin of Maupin Development, the developer

## RHA GENERAL MEETING:

**WHEN:** WEDNESDAY, April 13, 2005 – 7:00 P.M.

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

**AGENDA:** *THE RHA - Who We Are and What We do*  
President Michael Cotton will give a presentation on the State of the RHA, and board members will speak on the Scholarship Program, Membership, the Budget, the Concert in the Park, and the Landscape Awards. Also at this meeting: RHA Board Elections will take place.

building the town home community on the site of the old Vagabond motel on PCH, and Austin Woodward representing the Torrance League of Women Voters.

In our last general meeting, Jim Osborne, Public Works Department, came to speak about city regulations and practices for trimming and removing trees. Ted Semaan, from the Planning Dept., and Scott Gobble, from Southern California Electric, spoke about the process of undergrounding utilities.

Our Holiday concert was the most successful ever with a standing room only crowd taking in the Holiday sights and sounds of performing groups from Riviera Elementary, Richardson Middle School and South High. Apparently Riviera kids were "nice" this year as evidenced by Santa's appearance at the end of the concert to pass out Holiday treats to the kids.

Our Concert in the Park is getting bigger every year. It is a great opportunity to meet more of your neighbors and enjoy live music in our beautiful El Retiro Park setting. Mark your calendars now for our next Concert in the Park. We schedule it for the first week-end after school starts in September.

We will continue our tradition of providing college scholarships to deserving Riviera residents. Last year we gave out \$2,000 in the form of \$500 scholarships to four outstanding Riviera students. We are budgeted to do

the same this year.

I believe that we have executed well on our responsibility to protect our neighborhood from any negative influences from within or outside of the city. We worked closely with neighbors to influence the scale and design of the Vagabond project. In the end, our efforts helped to influence the developer to redesign his plans to better align with Riviera community concerns around traffic flow, building height and scale.

In the same way, our participation in the coalition of the Torrance Homeowners Association Presidents helped to influence the City Council to reconsider its development project approval pattern. They ultimately passed a temporary development moratorium to signal their recognition of community concern of the rate and shape of development within the City.

RHA participation in that coalition had a moderating effect on the group's dialogue and ultimately resulted in a more balanced statement to the City Council. I was particularly honored to be chosen to deliver our joint statement to the Council during the meeting where the moratorium was being considered.

Looking ahead, I am heartened by the response to our call for new RHA board

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## The Prez Sez...

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members. Our board will have as many as four new members this upcoming season. This is a gratifying legacy for each board at the end of our year. It shows that others are supportive enough of our efforts as to want to join the cause.

We must say goodbye to two of our most critical and dedicated board members; Amy Graham, Secretary and Chela Cowden, Newsletter Editor. I have personally relied on these two outstanding individuals more than I have a right to. They have both had significant impact on the RHA and have established foundational efforts. All who follow in their footsteps will appreciate the extra effort they have made to ensure that the RHA is strong and well positioned to support our community. Thank you, Amy and Chela for your commitment and hard work.

I must end on a sad note, RHA Historian Austin Woodward passed away this month. I will miss Austin terribly. He brought a wonderful attitude and an air of "gravitas" to our board. Not only was Austin a wealth of knowledge, he was an inspiration to each of us who had the pleasure of spending time with him. A selfless community volunteer who brought his personal warmth and dedication to every organization lucky enough to have him. Our thought and prayers go out to his family.

So, the year has had triumphs and some personal tragedy for the RHA. I believe the organization is strong and getting stronger. We are inspired by the memory of Austin and fueled by the energy that a new board will bring.

I am pleased to report on our efforts and I look forward to doing this every year at this time. In the meantime, do your part to support our efforts by sending in your \$20 membership fee. Together, we'll continue to work to make sure that the Riviera remains the jewel of the South Bay.

*Michael Cotton, President*

### RIVIERA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

Three community members and teachers from Riviera Elementary School will be honored on Thursday, June 9th at 3:30 p.m. in the Riviera Cafeteria. Retiring are Mr. Duncan, Mrs. Maloney and Ms. Oghigian. We encourage the community and past students to attend.

# WHAT'S UP IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD



## FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING



At our February 16, 2005 General Meeting, the RHA was fortunate to have representatives of the City of Torrance and Southern California Edison to share information on the process to underground utilities in residential neighborhoods.

An underground utility assessment district can be established for as few as 30 homes or a few street blocks within neighborhood. It is truly a grass roots effort that directly involves individual homeowners and neighbors working together to make it happen. The process starts with individual homeowners canvassing their neighborhood and gathering signatures of homeowners that express an interest in having electric, telephone, and cable utilities undergrounded. If at least 60 % of homeowners express an interest in undergrounding utilities in a defined area, the city will perform a study to estimate the cost of undergrounding utilities for each individual homeowner. Homeowner's then cast ballots in an election to approve establishing an underground utilities assessment district to pay for undergrounding as an added fee on their property tax bill over a period of up to 20 years. If 50 % or more of the homeowners in a defined assessment district approve the ballot measure, the undergrounding project proceeds. For further information on undergrounding, go to: [www.torrnet.com/streetsvcs/engineering/hollywoodRivier.html](http://www.torrnet.com/streetsvcs/engineering/hollywoodRivier.html) or contact Dick Rector, the RHA Underground Utilities Reporter at (310) 378-5615.

Also at the meeting, Jim Osborne of the City of Torrance discussed tree trimming. The City trims trees that are on City property. Individual neighbors need to work with each other regarding tree trimming on private property. The City will recommend qualified tree service companies. There was considerable discussion about forming a subcommittee to consider development of a City ordinance regarding tree trimming and view preservation. Please contact the RHA if you are interested in participating in this committee.

## NEIGHBORHOOD POTHOLE PROBLEMS?

Did you notice all of the rain this winter? Just kidding! With this year's record amounts of rainfall, the City of Torrance has experienced a huge increase in new potholes. According to the Torrance Public Works Department, potholes are created when water seeps into cracks in the roadway, weakening the subsurface. The additional stresses caused by traffic can lead to a local surface failure: the proverbial car-mangling pothole. To report a pothole online, please visit the Torrance Public Works Department web site at <http://www.torrnet.com/streetsvcs/Administration/index.htm> and fill out the Service Request Form (scroll down to the bottom of the page to see the form). Or, try calling the Public Works Department at 310-781-6900.

## 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 2004-2005 business year began on September 1, 2004 and will end on August 31, 2005. 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 2004 - 2005

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

historian@hollywoodriviera.org      landscape@hollywoodriviera.org  
scholarships@hollywoodriviera.org



### AUSTIN WOODWARD 1925 – 2005

Austin Woodward, passed away March 8th of congestive heart failure. The RHA and our larger community has lost a great friend.

During the past year, Austin had been cataloging the considerable quantity of the

Association's historical archives in preparation for its installation at the Torrance Historical Society. The intention is for the Historical Society to provide safekeeping of the Association's archives, while making it available to residents for viewing, or research. It was a pleasure for Austin to peruse the accumulated lore and minutiae of the Association, and recollect his own involvement in so much of its past. He was a paragon of civic participation, a model for citizen involvement in his community and the wider world. As editors of the RHA newsletters in the early 70's, he and his wife, Rosalie, imbued the Association's correspondence with wit, charm, and a sense of purpose. (Many of these newsletters can be viewed online in the Riviera Reporter section of the RHA website.)

More recently we had gotten to know Austin as a wise mentor, with the kind of inspired advice leavened with practical experience. Austin, you left us too soon, there is still work to be done.



The current Riviera Rainfall to date is 28.03 inches. That's twice the normal rainfall for the year! We are running about 5 inches less than the official rainfall for Los Angeles. It rained 8 days in February for a total of more than 7.5 inches. During one lightning storm (2/18/05) several transformers were destroyed and power was cut off in several districts. The lightning storm started at 1:30 am and lasted for about one hour with very close strikes (one thousand o..) and thunder to match. It seemed like everyone woke up to watch except for my neighbors' kids. If only I could sleep that soundly.

Our understanding is that a storm later this week should help break the Los Angeles rainfall season record. We'll let you know the final results in a later report this year. In the meantime, go out to the desert and enjoy the wild flowers. I hear that they are the best in years.

# RIVIERA HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION 2004-2005 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	Traffic Liaison	Art Wong	375-1741
Secretary	Amy Graham	375-8640	City Council Reporter	Pam Popovich	375-8729
Treasurer	Andrea Perez	378-2744	Underground Utilities	Dick Rector	378-5615
Newsletter Editor	Chela Cowden	375-8649	Planning Commission Reporter	Steve Gerhardt	614-0258
Webmaster	Julian Chasin	373-6314	Historian	OPEN	
Landscape	Ruth Vogel	375-4702	Mailing Coordinator	Diane Kuhn	375-6367
Hospitality	Pam Popovich	375-8729	Programs Coordinator	OPEN	

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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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## LANDSCAPE AWARDS



Audrey Marsee, at 358 Camino de las Colinas, graciously accepted the February Outstanding Landscape Award on behalf of the Stuart Marsee Family. Stuart was President of El Camino College for many years and served with distinction and many honors. The Marsee Family has been here since 1958 and lived all that time with a non-descript ivy slope.

Now there is a brand new and very unique, water-wise and low maintenance landscape designed by Sandy Fields, with winding paths of flagstone interspersed with clumps of Mexican Feather Grass, moving gently in the ever present Riviera breeze, Lavender, and Senecio Madrilense, a lush gray/green ground cover. Other plants are Blue Hibiscus, Armeria, Dusty Miller and Society Garlic.



Louise and Michael deCastro of 4410 Paseo de las Tortugas received the Outstanding Landscape Award for March on behalf of their family.

This is a really lovely landscape with sweetly curving borders that are lushly filled with Lobelia, Camellias, Pansies, variegated and non-variegated Pittosporum, Princess Flower, Pink and White Marguerites, Australian Tea Tree, Primroses, Ferns, Freesias, Lavender, Hydrangeas and anchored by stately Birch trees. These gentle borders were laid out by Louise deCastro and the landscape installation was done by Beautiful Landscapes in Long Beach.