

## **Taxpayer Alert: State Agency (LAFCo) Proposes Area Police, Fire, Sanitation and Highlands Recreation Districts Be Moved to Cash-Strapped City of San Mateo**

The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) <http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/portal/site/lafco> is a state-mandated, independent agency with county-wide jurisdiction over changes in organization and boundaries of cities and special districts, including annexations, detachments, incorporations and formations. Its responsibilities also include “to establish and periodically update spheres of influence--future boundary, organization, and service plans--for the county's cities and special districts.”

LAFCo executive officer Martha Poyatos sent a report dated February 4, 2013 to area community associations recommending annexation of our special districts into budget-challenged City of San Mateo. She has called a meeting to deliver the report to area communities on Wednesday, February 20, at 7 p.m. in the Highlands Elementary School LGI room.

In December 2012, County Service Area Number

One (CSA 1) communities of our area (Highlands-Baywood-Oaks) officially notified the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors that LAFCo has shown a pattern of writing inadequately analyzed reports about our area community services. To date, the LAFCo office has ignored our specific written requests to follow due process for involvement of area communities, including advance notice and information to every taxpayer.

All of our neighbors need to attend this meeting to learn more about this effort that would irreversibly change the services we pay taxes for and our community's quality of life. Keep taxpayer demand for government accountability strong. Help maximize services and minimize taxes.

Please attend the meeting so we may preserve our county sanitation, police, fire, and Highlands recreation Districts.

### **Your Attendance is Critical!**

**Highlands Recreation District  
Baywood Plaza Community Association  
Baywood Park Homeowners Association**

### **Invite Your Neighbors!**

**Highlands Community Association  
Polhemus Heights Homeowners Association  
San Mateo Oaks Homeowners Association**

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### **HRD Meeting**

Tuesday, March 12, 7 p.m.  
Multipurpose Room

### ***lowdown* Deadline**

Friday, March 1

### **HCA Meeting**

Tuesday, February 26, 7:30 p.m.  
Multipurpose Room

## FROM THE HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



Rick Priola  
HCA President

Too bad I can't begin this message congratulating the 49ers for winning the Super Bowl and giving the Bay Area another sports championship. At least they came close, and it was an exciting year. Let's hope their next season is as good.

**February HCA Meeting Speaker:**

Our February meeting should be very interesting because Steve Dupré, a project manager working with the San Mateo County Sheriff's office and the Information Services Department on a public safety radio project, will be explaining the project and looking for input about it from our community. The project includes placing additional equipment, including an antenna tower, on an existing site just west of the Youth Services Center. That site is part of a countywide public safety radio network that supports radio communication for first responders throughout the county. We'll get detailed information and have a chance to ask questions and comment at our HCA meeting on February 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the Rec Childcare Center Multipurpose Room.

**LAFCo:** As the January *lowdown* described, the HCA has been working with nearby neighborhoods in County Service Area 1 (CSA 1) and the HRD to respond to LAFCo's review of the various providers of services to district residences. (Copies of the January *lowdown* can be found at the Rec office). We pressed the commission to include CSA 1 residents' responses to their report in their process and they've set up a public meeting with CSA 1 residents, but with very short notice. It will take place on February 20, at 7 p.m. in the Highlands School LGI Room. See page 1 of this *lowdown* for more information.

**San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (PUC):** As you probably know, our nearby Crystal Springs lakes and dam are part of the San Francisco Hetch Hetchy water system operated by the San Francisco PUC. At our March HCA meeting, we'll be hearing from a PUC staff member who will bring us up to date on the progress of their projects at the lakes and dam. The county can't get started rebuilding the closed section of Skyline Blvd. until the

work at the dam is finished.

**Join the HCA:** We kick off our HCA membership drive this month, and the meetings and issues mentioned in this message describe some of the important work of our organization. The annual Highlands 3rd of July fireworks and 4th of July celebration are more of the HCA's work and a pleasure for the whole community. The *lowdown*, produced by the HCA, also helps bring the community together. You support them all when you join the HCA and pay your \$30 dues. It's easy with the flyer and envelope enclosed with this *lowdown* or with PayPal on our website, [www.highlandscommunity.org](http://www.highlandscommunity.org). Gene McKenna will be working on the website and making it even more user-friendly than it is now. Even more reason to join the HCA.

As always, I look forward to meeting you and seeing you at the HCA meetings. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [hcapres@gmail.com](mailto:hcapres@gmail.com).

**HCA Meeting February 26, 2013, 7:30 p.m.**

**Agenda**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Review and Approval of the Minutes
- III. Sheriff's Dept/CHP/CDR Cal Fire
- IV. Reports
  - A. First Vice President
  - B. Second Vice President
  - C. Treasurer
  - D. Membership
  - E. *lowdown*
  - F. Public Utilities Committee
  - G. Emergency Services Committee
  - H. Land Committee
- V. Old Business
- VI. New Business/Announcements
- VII. Adjournment

**HCA Board Officers for 2013**

President:	Rick Priola	574-8313
Co-First VPs:	Beverley Madden	574-1593
	Liesje Nicolas	773-7805
Second VP:	Jean-Pierre Bernard	357-7644
Treasurer:	David Krakower	415-398-1100
Secretary:	Denise Haas	372-0373
<i>lowdown</i> Editor:	Dorothy Greene	341-1752

**HCA Committee Chairs for 2013**

Land:	Sam Naifeh	572-8787
Public Utilities Co-Chairs:	James Goodman	372-0986
	Wil Pinney	345-2546
Emergency Services:	Pam Merkadeau	280-9046
Membership Co-Chairs:	Kim Nations	415-505-3866
	Colin Dasanjh	

HCA MINUTES

**HCA Meeting, Jan. 22, 2013**

by Denise Haas, Secretary

**I. Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by President Rick Priola at 7:33 p.m.

**II. Review and Approval of the Minutes** – A motion to approve the minutes of Nov 23, 2012, was moved by Wil Pinney, seconded by James Goodman, and carried unanimously.

**III. Sheriff's Department/California Highway Patrol/CDF**

The Sheriff reported that a car left running without supervision was stolen on Monticello. Residents continue to request assistance with the crossing at Lexington and Newport. Cal Fire reported a total of 88 calls made to Station 17 since December 20. A partial list includes 6 structure fires, 36 calls for medical assistance, 28 calls to cover other stations (of which 16 were out to the coast).

A countywide push for fire prevention will occur in April. A CPR course will be offered on January 30, 2013, and a first-aid course will be offered in February. CERT training will commence on February 21, 2013, at 6 p.m. at Station 17. Residents are encouraged to attend. Groups that need float assistance for the 4th of July parade should contact Scott.ernest@fire.ca.gov

**IV Reports**

**A. First Vice President** – Liesje Nicolas reported that the HRD continues to explore solutions to park-

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"Your feet will thank you!"  
Thank you Yeah, thanks!

ing and congestion. HRD will be speaking with neighboring residents concerning these issues. A new fee structure has been instituted to allow residents of CSA 1 to benefit from reduced fees.

A report on the December 19 LAFCO meeting announced that the review of the HRD has been

moved to next March 20. The LAFCO Commission stated that they would listen to the community, and Supervisors Pine and Horsley stated that they would not consider annexation to the City of San Mateo without polling CSA 1 residents.

Two reviews are expected from LAFCo: an HRD review and a Crystal Springs Sanitation District review, though the sanitation review has disappeared from the agenda. Brigitte Shearer added that the 50 letters from Highlands residents to the LAFCo commission made an impact on the commission.

**B. Second Vice President** – JP Bernard announced that he was planning a meeting for July 3rd and 4th festivities chairs. Highlands residents are encouraged to participate by volunteering.

**C. Treasurer** – David Krakower presented the final 2012 budget; the proposed 2013 budget will be presented at the February 2013 meeting.

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## HIGHLANDS RECREATION CENTER NEWS



Keep an eye out for the Spring/Summer Activity Guide arriving in your mailbox any day now! We have lots of exciting classes and camps to fill those empty spring break and summer vacation hours.

We're about to see many more sunny days, which always means more patrons at the Rec. Please be considerate of our neighbors - drive slowly, park in the Rec parking lot whenever possible, or if on the street, be sure not to block a driveway. Or even better, walk to the Rec!

### 2013-2014 After School Program Child Care Enrollment Start Dates

The dates below are when registration OPENS for each group. Registration will remain open until the spaces are filled. We will then maintain a waitlist. Don't wait until August to enroll! We cannot guarantee that space will be available.

<b>Residents</b>	<b>Jan. 28</b>
<b>Current ASP Families:</b>	<b>Feb. 11</b>
<b>CSA 1</b>	<b>Feb. 11</b>
<b>Non-Highlands/</b>	<b>Feb.18</b>
<b>Non-CSA 1</b>	

### Kids Nite Out

Need a night out? Missed Valentine's Day? Drop your kids at the Rec for the evening. Pre-registration required. Call the Rec for details. Pizza Dinner and Movie Provided  
**Fri. 3/8 6-10 p.m. K-8th Grades**  
**\$30 per child \$5 sibling discount**  
**Location: Social Room**

### Spring Camp 2013

Don't miss the fun! Sign up now!  
**3/29 - 4/5 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.**  
**(10.5 hours. of care)**  
**Sibling Discount Daily Fee \$65/70**  
**Field Trip Only Day Rate \$75/80**  
**Weekly Rate \$260/265**

### Now Hiring!

The Highlands Recreation Center is currently hiring lifeguards and swim instructors to work a variety of hours. Please contact Bryce for more

info at (650)341-4251 or  
brycer@highlandsrec.ca.gov

### Lifeguard Training

This program will certify the passing student in CPR for the Professional Rescuer, First Aid, and Lifeguard Training. Students must be 15 years old or older (proof of age must be shown at the first meeting) and pass a water skills test to be admitted into the class. Bring class material, swim suit, towel and comfortable clothing.  
**MUST ATTEND ALL CLASSES PER SESSION!**  
**M-Th 4/1-4/4 8 a.m.-5 p.m.**  
**\$215/220**

**Highlands Rec T-Ball (COED)**  
**Day Games Division Time**  
**Sat 3/23-5/18 Junior 9-10:15 a.m.**  
**Sat 3/23-5/18 Pee-Wee**  
**9 a.m.-- 2:45 p.m.**  
**\$80/85 /player \$5/sibling discount**  
**Location: Highlands School grass field (off Bunker Hill Exit)**

**Beginning Leadership & Resiliency Training**  
**Tu 2/12-3/5 6:30-8:30 p.m.**  
**\$150/155 Ages: 7-13 years old**  
**Location: Social Room**

**Highlands Rec Tennis**  
**Sat 3/24-4/28 1-2 p.m. \$50/55**  
**Location: Tennis Courts**  
**Ages 3-13 No Class 3/31**

### Online Driver's Education

Approved by the DMV. For more information go to Economic Online Driving School at [www.economicdrivingschool.com/online](http://www.economicdrivingschool.com/online). When registering, be sure to complete the question that asks, "How did you hear about us?" by choosing Activity Guide. Then enter HRC code: 4251 **Cost: \$68.50**

### The Kitchen Garden from Design to Harvest

**Wed. 3/20 6:30-8:30 p.m.**  
**\$35/40 Ages: 18 and up**  
**Location: Multipurpose Room**

Join Master Gardeners Laurel Nagle and Marybeth Lybrand for this four-class session that will detail the entire process of growing vegetables, herbs, and fruit in your yard.

### Aqua Track

**Ongoing class MWF 8-9 a.m.**  
Punch Card Fees for Aqua Track  
**Drop-in Fee \$10; 5 visits \$40**  
**10 visits \$70, 20 visits: \$120**  
**No Class: 2/18, 3/25**

### Water Aerobics

**Ongoing class Join anytime!**  
**M/F 11:05 a.m.-noon \$68/73/ mo.**  
**No Class: 2/18, 3/25**

### Arthritis Foundation Aquatics

**Ongoing class. Join anytime!**  
**W 11:05 a.m-noon \$39/44 /mo.**

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COMMUNITY NEWS

**San Francisco PUC to Update Us in March**

by Dorothy Greene

At our March 26 HCA meeting, a staff member of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission will bring us up to date on their projects on the dam and reservoirs located so close to the Highlands. Here's some background from the PUC's website about the watershed and lakes that are such an important part of our physical environment and which we tend to take for granted.

Located in central San Mateo County, the Peninsula Watershed includes three reservoirs--San Andreas and Crystal Springs adjacent to Highway 280 in the east and Pilarcitos to the northwest.

Highway 92, which connects

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**Coming Events at the College of San Mateo**

by Valerie Anderson, President's Office Coordinator

As tax season approaches, students in CSM's Volunteer Income Tax Preparation Class are offering **free tax preparation services, provided on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., from February 2 to March 30 (except for 2/16), in Building 14, Room 104.** For more information, go to [VITA@smccd.edu](mailto:VITA@smccd.edu) or call (650) 378-7323.

Looking ahead, on **Thursday, April 11, from 6 to 8:30 p.m., CSM hosts will host Connect to College, a night of information for high school seniors and parents in College Center (Building 10).** This event will cover transfer, career and technical programs, financial aid

and scholarships, degrees and certificates, and student life and leadership. Plus, there will be scholarship drawings and refreshments! For more information visit [collegeofsanmateo.edu/calendar/events](http://collegeofsanmateo.edu/calendar/events)

On **Saturday, June 1, 2013, Jazz on the Hill** will return to CSM as part of the college's celebration of the 50th anniversary of the College Heights campus. This free event is open to the community and will include a college open house. The concert will run from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m, and the open house will take place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For the performance schedule, visit [collegeofsanmateo.edu/calendar](http://collegeofsanmateo.edu/calendar)




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Two Among the Righteous Few:  
A Story of Courage in the Holocaust  
Sunday March 10 @ 7 PM  
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## COMMUNITY NEWS

**Senior Network News**

by Barbra Cohn



A happy new February to all of you. And with the new month comes a batch of events for your calendar. So get it out and start filling in the following dates.

**Tuesday, February 26**, will bring fun and games. We are having a games day (i.e. Scrabble, Monopoly, Cards of whatever variety, Dominos, etc., etc.). You might want to schedule a bridge game, or a board game, but whatever you like, you'll like the lunch—and the price, (\$5). Call Lois Scott at 345-5471, or Pat Donley at 349-5290, make a reservation, and show up at the Rec (multipurpose room ) at 11:30 a.m. ready for lunch and a fun afternoon.

**On March 14, at 12:30 p.m.**, we've scheduled lunch at Rainbow Pizza. As always, if you need a ride, call Cliff at 349-5290.

And then on **April 17, at 10 a.m.**, we will be having a workshop on Advance Directives. Eva Voisin has very generously agreed to show us how to do this (difficult?, intimidating?) task that we all know we should take care of sooner rather than later. With food of course. More info on that next month.

Now for some good news. We have a list of volunteers. If you are immobilized in your home and would like to have someone to talk to, play a game with, or just watch TV with, call Dianne Weitzel at 571-6122. If you need someone to help you get a ride, change a light bulb, or run an errand, she may be able to help. Or, if you would like to be the person who visits, drives or fixes, she'd love to hear from you.

**Highlands Book Club**

by Jo Nassutti



We meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 10:15 a.m in Multipurpose Room B in the child care center, south of the main Rec Center building. Visitors are always welcome.

On **March 5** we will discuss *Ladies of the Lake* by **Haywood Smith**. This light read about four middle-aged sisters describes how they deal with meeting the terms of their grandmother's will so that they can inherit the valuable property of 50 acres she owns in the genteel South.

The book for **April 21** is *Book of Mormon Girl* by **Joanna Brooks**. This biographical novel is about moving from the innocence of childhood into the complications and problems of adulthood with its privileges and problems.

**Questions**, call Betty O'Connor at 650-345-9764. **Curious**, come by and observe.

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HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWS

# Highlands School Schedule Update

by Etienne Vick

**Come celebrate the Book Fair Community Day scheduled for Saturday, March 2, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Highlands School LGI Room.** You will find books for children and teens, great for gift giving. Proceeds will support the many Highlands PTA programs.

**Science Fair 2013 - Wednesday, March 2, 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

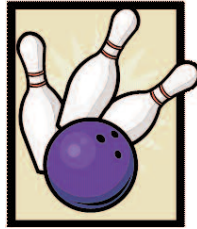
The Science Fair 2013 is coming to Highlands! Get ready to explore, discover, and learn! All students are encouraged to use the life skill of curiosity by participating in the Science Fair. Come and enjoy an evening for the entire family and friends. We will have a live insect discovery lab by SaveNature.org, a Scavenger hunt, Raffle prizes, and more.

Informational flyers regarding Science Fair rules and guidelines and entry forms can be found in the school's front office and on the school website. Please turn in the entry form to your teacher or the office by Friday, March 8.

**Project Wee Care**

THANKS to all who so generously donated to our toy drive in December. We had an incredible collection, and your kindness is greatly appreciated. Our next drive for gently used linens (for twin beds), blankets and bath-size towels for the residents of Safe Harbor Adult Shelter ended on February 6. If you have any questions, please contact Lucy Mulkerrins at [lucy200104@gmail.com](mailto:lucy200104@gmail.com) or Brooke at [brooke@puttymilk.com](mailto:brooke@puttymilk.com).

**Annual Bowl-a-thon  
February 23, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.**



The San Mateo-Foster City Education Foundation is hosting its Second Annual district-

wide Bowl-a-Thon to raise money for Kindergarten-8th grade music on Saturday, February 23 at Bel Mateo Bowl. The school with the most participants will be awarded the Annual Bowling Trophy by Dr. Cynthia Simms, our District Superintendent. Participants are asked to raise pledges for this event. More details to come, save the date for a fun event!

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San Mateo and Half Moon Bay, bisects the Watershed between Upper and Lower Crystal Springs Reservoirs. Other roads adjacent to the Watershed include Edgewood Road to the south and Skyline Boulevard to the east.

In addition to their primary uses for water collection, water storage, and water quality protection, the Peninsula Watershed lands serve as a State Fish and Game Refuge and are designated by the California Department of Forestry as a hazardous fire area. A Scenic Easement (19,000 acres) and a Scenic and Recreation Easement (4,000 acres) established through a four-party agreement between us, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Caltrans, and San Mateo County, also overlay the Watershed. The Watershed is also home to the historic Pulgas Water Temple.

 <p><b>Martinelli Properties</b></p>	<p><b>Eva E. Voisin, Esq.</b> Realtor, DRE # 01741015 Senior Real Estate Specialist</p>
	
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## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWS

by Steve Schlichter

### Lenten Schedule

#### Lenten Day of Prayer

3/23 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-noon

**Palm Sunday:**- Drama Service:  
10 a.m.

#### Holy Thursday - 3/28

Seder Meal & Upper Room

Drama Service 6:30 p.m.

#### Good Friday Vigil - 3/29

Noon - 8:p.m.

#### Easter Sunday

Drama service 10 a.m.

### Two Among the Righteous Few A Story of Courage in the Holocaust

Bay Area author Marty Brounstein will speak at the church on Sunday, March 10, at 7 p.m., on the story he has chronicled in a book. It is a remarkable true story of interfaith compassion, courage, and

rescue, involving a Christian couple in the Netherlands who saved the lives of at least two dozen Jews during World War II and the Holocaust.

Tickets are \$10, which will benefit church mission projects. Please join us for this interesting story.

### Healing Your Pain so You Can Forgive and Remember

When someone we once loved, trusted, or admired hurts us, the pain can last a lifetime. Intellectually you know you should forgive the other person, but until you go through an appropriate process, forgiving someone might not be possible. This workshop explores forgiveness. The workshop will be taught by Kathleen Maxwell. Suggested donation \$20. Held at the church from 1-3 p.m.

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when April 15 comes around.**

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### Highlands lowdown

*Editor and Business Manager*

*Dorothy Greene*

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COMMUNITY NEWS

►Minutes: from page 3

**D. Membership** – Colin Dasanjh was introduced as the new Membership Co-Chair. An area representative meeting is scheduled for February 5.

**E. lowdown** – Dorothy Greene reported that the deadline for February is February 1.

**F. Public Utilities Committee** – James Goodman reported that the water pipeline should be completed by mid February. He and Gerry Ozone from CSA 1 have requested a February 11 meeting with the County to discuss a status update of the LAFCo review of the Crystal Springs Sanitation District 1 and additionally, report on the over-billing correction owed to the Highlands.

**G. Emergency Services Committee** – No report

**H. Land Committee** – No report

**V. Old Business** – LAFCo as reported above.

**VI. New Business/ Announcements**  
None

**VII. Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

**More Than 600 Guns at County Buyback**

by Lieutenant Edmund Barberini

San Mateo County Sheriff Greg Munks, San Mateo County Supervisor Adrienne Tissier, and Congresswoman Jackie Speier held an anonymous gun buyback event at the San Mateo County Event Center on Saturday, January 26. Firearms were surrendered, with no questions asked, in return for \$100 in cash per handgun, shotgun, or rifle, and up to \$200 cash for an assault weapon.

San Mateo County Sheriff Greg Munks stated, "The overall purpose of the gun buyback program is to make the streets of San Mateo County safer for those who live and work here. There are many unwanted and unse-



cured guns in households throughout the county. We are providing a place for people to come and dispose of them and get some money in return. We feel this will improve public safety in our county."

Over 680 firearms, including 24 assault weapons, were turned in, and \$63,500 was paid out during the event.

Among the weapons surrendered were 30-round and 100-round capacity magazines, which are illegal to sell in California. A high-capacity shotgun, also known as a "street sweeper," was also surrendered and removed from the community.

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## UMC AND COMMUNITY NEWS

►**UMC:** from page 8

**Feb 24** Forgiving pain and disappointment caused by a family member living or dead.

**Mar 3** Forgiving intimate betrayal. Rebuilding trust.

**Mar 10** What to do when those you love judge you as lacking or steal your dreams. Surviving a painful personal attack by someone you know or by a stranger.

**Mar 17** Forgiving ourselves and God when we fail because we procrastinated or miscalculated.

**Mar 24** The step beyond forgiveness. How to transform and become more than you were.

### Wesley Academy

Starting Friday, February 22, from 7-9 p.m. and continuing on Mar 13, May 24, and June 28, Rev. Hon Ki Kim, Ph.D. will conduct seminars on Methodist spirituality and theology. This will involve delving into the history and philosophy of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist church. Relationship with other religious philosophies will also be explored.

Honk Ki is the husband of our pastor Hee-Soon and has written books and taught on this subject. He has served as president of Methodist Theological University. There is no charge for these seminars, and all are welcome. Call 650-345-2381 for more information.

### Sunday School

Learning to Use My Bible Class for 3rd graders and older children will be held on Sundays, March 3 to April 14, from 10:15 to 11 a.m. The class will encourage children to take an interest in the Bible and help them make it their lifelong companion.

## Join the HCA--It's a Bargain

by Dorothy Greene

It's February, a month full of holidays, commemoration, and traditions, and in February in the Highlands we add one of our own—kicking off the annual HCA membership drive. Don't laugh (or cry)—it really connects with commemoration and traditions, because without the HCA there would be no annual Highlands 4th of July celebration. And that would be an enormous loss to our community.

The cost of joining or renewing your membership in the HCA is pretty traditional too. It's been \$30 for as long as I can remember. With membership dues, contributions, and *lowdown* ads, the HCA not only organizes and carries out the events on the 3rd and 4th of July and produces the *lowdown* but represents us before government bodies, mobilizes the community and works with the HRD and nearby neighborhoods when land use and other issues that affect our

quality of life arise. There is no HCA office or staff—just volunteers who share a commitment to their neighbors and the Highlands.

You can use the pre-addressed envelope and form enclosed with this *lowdown* to mail in your dues. Consider adding a donation for the 4th of July. Hint: save yourself a stamp by taking the envelope directly to the HCA box located at the postal service office behind Safeway in the Crystal Springs Shopping Center. You can also send your payment and donation via PayPal by visiting [www.highlandscommunity.org](http://www.highlandscommunity.org) and clicking on "Online Payments."

In future *lowdowns*, you'll be seeing the thermometer that measures our membership drive's progress. Join the HCA, make your commitment to Highlands traditions, and watch that temperature rise!

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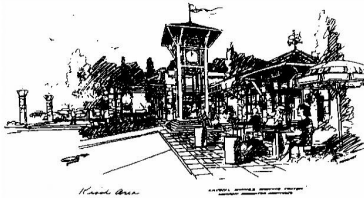
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## A VIEW FROM THE HIGHLANDS

### Multifaith Volunteers Benefit Needy and Themselves

by Florence Beier

Imagine a Muslim, a Jew, a Mormon, and a Presbyterian on their knees together. What on earth are they doing? They are assembling new metal bookcases for an elementary school storage room. They were among the almost 200 volunteers from 14 different faiths who worked together on Martin Luther King Day to build friendships and serve the community.

One project that absorbed close to 100 volunteers was at Belle Air School in San Bruno. Many families, including several from the Highlands, spent the day there. They built sturdy and safe new shelves for a large overflowing storeroom. A dingy cafeteria was repainted in bright colors. The preschool play area was cleaned up with fresh dirt in repaired planters. Because it was sunny, dozens of workers of all ages completely trimmed, weeded, and raked the landscaping. Between discards from the storeroom and waste from the garden, a huge dumpster donated by Recology was filled to the top.

The day started with a breakfast for all, and then volunteers spread out to four different projects. In addition to the school refurbishment, lunch was served to residents at the Safe Harbor homeless shelter in South San Francisco, over 1,000 donated children's books were sorted and delivered to schools, and 61 large boxes of warm clothes for Syrian refugees were assem-

bled for shipping.

Monday's event was sponsored by the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition, which includes Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Congregation Beth Jacob, Congregational Church of Belmont, First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame, Jewish Community Relations Council, Pacifica Institute, Peninsula Sinai Congregation, Peninsula Temple Beth El, Peninsula Temple Sholom, St. Bartholomew Parish, St. Matthias Catholic Church, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Shinnyoen Foundation of Redwood City and the Yaseen Foundation of Belmont.

The first-ever Multifaith day of service was such a success that the Peninsula Multifaith Coalition is already planning to repeat its summertime potluck and then organize a second day of service in January 2014. If you would like to see the press reports and photos of this year's MLK Day, go online to [www.interfaith-friendship.org](http://www.interfaith-friendship.org) and click on prior events.

I wonder if we could pull together a local effort in the Highlands to have our multi-faith, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural residents of all ages cooperatively help needy neighbors with their yards or small repairs or fix up the school or Rec Center. Just an idea for the HCA or Nextdoor network.