

WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION



Newsletter

Winter of 2012

Halloween Contest 2012: And the Winners Are . . .

by Kay Kalmar and Dan Langdon



First Place Winner: 700 Faxon Avenue



Second Place Prize: 1576 Plymouth



Third Place Prize: 801 Monterey

THE DECORATIONS were all in place as judges toured the streets of Westwood Park.

There were many wonderful displays with no shortage of Halloween "Spirits!" It made judging the decorations difficult. Several tours of our neighborhood were made, some in daylight and some in the evening so the lights could be seen. Then the decisions were made. A conscious choice was made to award prizes to new displays that had not won in the past.

FIRST PLACE, \$50! 700 FAXON

Lights lined the walkway of this corner

home, with decorations continuing up the stairs. A pumpkin coach and a ghostly figure graced the entry on the Faxon side. In the driveway stood a vintage Studebaker complete with a skeleton family, dad at the wheel, mom in the passenger side and baby in the car seat in the rear. All looked great in the daylight and were well lit in the dark. This was quite well done.

SECOND PLACE \$25! 1376 PLYMOUTH

This display featured a horse with a skeleton rider, as well as a graveyard with headstones

and an array of pumpkins. With lighted features, it showed well at night.

THIRD PLACE \$10! 801 MONTEREY

This was a very spooky display with plenty of cobwebs, things hanging from trees and a graveyard illuminated at night.

HONORABLE MENTION!

130 HAZELWOOD

A large, inflated spider was at work wrapping a body in a cocoon, accompanied by ghouls, grave stones and pumpkins. The scene was

See HALLOWEEN WINNERS on page2

NextDoor.com: A New Way for Neighbors to Connect

by Greg Clinton

ONE OF OUR residents, Vic C., recently started a Westwood Park Neighborhood group on NextDoor.com, an online bulletin board. As opposed to the Yahoo group that many of us are familiar with, Nextdoor is geared toward specific neighborhoods, with several useful features.

For example, the site has a place for merchant and contractor recommendations, events and photos, buy/sell/free, crime/safety, and so forth. It has a very cool user interface, including a map of Westwood Park.

The site also lets us communicate with residents of nearby neighborhoods that have

See NEXTDOOR.COM on back page

Inside This Issue:

Halloween Kudos! 2

Energy Efficiency! Rebates! . . 2

Coyotes in Westwood Park . . 3

NextDoor.com continued 4



WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION



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CONTACT THE BOARD

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San Francisco, CA 94127



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Westwood Park is a wonderful community with lots of needs. If you would like to volunteer in the Westwood Park community please let us know:

- ◆ Watering patrol
- ◆ Green area maintenance
- ◆ Parking and traffic
- ◆ Dead car patrol
- ◆ Neighborhood nuisances
- ◆ Newsletter
- ◆ Special events
- ◆ Planning and zoning committee
- ◆ NERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team)
- ◆ FUF (Friends of the Urban Forest)
- ◆ Website content



Energy Efficiency and Rebates: Is it Right for You?

by Nanette Asimov

DAVID AND MARIKO Hingston of 47 Eastwood Drive recently had \$3,460 worth of work done on their house—and spent just \$460 to do it.

It's possible that you can do something like that, too.

The Hingstons participated in a statewide program called Energy Upgrade California that gives rebates on home-improvement projects that save electricity or natural gas. The rebates range from \$1,500 to \$4,000, depending on how much energy savings is projected.

San Francisco also kicks in a \$1,000 rebate of its own, at least it will until next April.

WHY THE GIVEAWAY?

California is trying to avoid having to build more power plants than are currently planned, so state officials hope 8 million homes will participate by 2020, says the San Francisco Chronicle.

That's a long way to go from the 5,130 homes that have joined since the program started a year ago.

The Hingstons of Westwood Park are among them.

"Our house is much more comfortable," David said. Since the work was completed in May, "it feels cozier."

The Hingstons were never big energy users. Their typical PG&E bill was only about \$80 to heat their 2-bedroom, 1-bath bungalow.

"But I thought the house was drafty," said David, an architect.

About a year ago, Mariko heard about the rebates and checked them out. She learned that you can't just have the work done on your own and get a rebate.

You choose from a list of authorized contractors at www.sfenvironment.org/sfship. The contractors received special training paid for from President Obama's stimulus, which funded the initial \$146 million for the program. That ran out, but local governments added \$50 million. PG&E also kicked in \$116 million from ratepayers to bring total funding to \$312 million, says the San Francisco Chronicle.

Under the program, customers choose a contractor, who provides an *energy audit*. Some contractors charge \$99—some as much as \$350 for the audit. Some subtract the initial fee from the cost of their work. Others may not.

Most people won't want to pay the fee to more than one contractor, so Luke Easdale,

See *ENERGY EFFICIENT* on page 5

Halloween Winners!

continued from page 1

well-lit at night. And now for a few specialty categories . . .

BEST HALLOWEEN SPIRIT!

Our winner was Faxon Avenue, where several homes featured decorations and displays. Miramar Avenue was a close second.

HALLOWEEN HALL OF FAME!

To honor homes that put in wonderful effort year after year, we name 555 Miramar and 799 Faxon Avenue. Well done!

Congratulations to the entire neighborhood for your great Halloween Spirit! ❖



Baba, beloved dog of Westwood Park resident Mila de Asis, celebrates Halloween, 2012

Coyotes ...! In Westwood Park?

by Julie Hagelshaw

THANKS TO stories in the San Francisco Chronicle, you may know about coyote sightings in the Presidio, Golden Gate Park, Bernal Heights, and as close as Mt. Davidson.

Actually, these wild animals are even closer than that.

Westwood Park residents reported seeing a coyote along Montecito this summer in the early mornings. Coyote scat was found along Hazelwood. Now that winter is upon us, the coyote may move to another area. But it could be back by spring. Coyote pups are born between April and August.

Experts say that coyotes should remain afraid of people and not grow used to them. If you see one, scare it away. Raise your arms and make yourself bigger. Yell. Back away, but do not turn your back on it. If the coyote is aggressive, throw something — but try not to hurt the animal.

DO NOT TOUCH A COYOTE.

Feeding a coyote is illegal. The animal is in our neighborhood because it is locating its own food, such as mice, rats and squirrels.

Pet food can make coyotes sick, so if you feed your pets outside, bring the food indoors. Otherwise, coyotes may no longer be afraid of us—a dangerous development.

Coyotes are mainly nocturnal, active from dusk to dawn. But they are sometimes seen during the day, so keep small children close by and pets leashed. Coyotes may prey on small, domestic dogs.

If you find a coyote or its den in your yard, call the Department of Animal Care and Control. They are a tax-funded animal shelter that cares for wild and stray animals. Animal Care & Control responds to animal emergencies, including abuse or threats to humans, 24 hours a day, every day. The ACC is at 1200 15th Street at Harrison. If you see an aggressive coyote, call them at 415-554-9400. Coyote sightings should be reported by email to acc@sfgov.org. Their website is <http://tinyurl.com/aep4wg8>

Here is a link to a video of an off-leash dog harassing coyotes, who appear to be protecting pups: <http://tinyurl.com/b4c8bfg>.



In San Francisco, the dog-owner would be breaking the law under Park Code 5.08, which prohibits harrassing wildlife.

Last May, the Department of Animal Care and Control issued a strongly worded rebuke to dog-owners who let their pets run off leash in active coyote areas. The message can be read at <http://tinyurl.com/asp7pew>.

We can live in harmony with wildlife if we are mindful and respectful. ❖

Energy Efficient

continued from page 2



who coordinates the program for the city's Department of the Environment, recommends talking with contractors until you find someone you're comfortable working with.

The Hingstons chose a company called Building Efficiency, which charged \$200 for the energy audit. For several hours, contractors poked around the house, checking the furnace, water heater, ducts, windows and insulation.

A few days later, the Hingstons received their audit report. It was a menu of what could be done for the house, how much each item would cost, and how much energy it might save. At the low end, a

projected 15 percent energy savings shaves \$1,500 from the bill. At the high end, 40 percent gets the maximum \$4,000 rebate. And as long as the minimum 15 percent is achieved, San Francisco will discount the price by another \$1,000.

The Hingstons rejected most items on their audit, such as replacing their furnace and insulating the walls, because the price was far higher than any rebate they could have gotten.

In the end, they went with two modest fixes: They insulated the floor above their garage and sealed their heat registers around the edges. Total bill: \$3,460, including the initial \$200.

For reasons even the Hingstons aren't sure of, they made one important fix on their own. They bought and installed a door at the bottom of the stairs between their garage and house, cutting off an obvious source of chilly air. Although that might have been included in the program, the Hingstons did not request it.

"I'm not saying we did this the best way," David laughed.

Once fixes are made, the program requires the contractor to

See ENERGY EFFICIENT on back page

Seeking a Newsletter Editor

Dear Neighbors,

I'm planning to step down as editor next fall after eight enjoyable years, and I'd like to put out the call for a new editor to take over.

We are fortunate to have a newsletter producer, Susan Sheldrake, who takes care of all the technical work of putting out a newsletter, such as the layout and appearance. We also have a printer and a mailer.

But if you like to write, and if you care about what's going on in the neighborhood, then the editor's job might be perfect for you.

So if you're out there, please contact the Westwood Park Association at 333-1125, or at board@westwoodpark.com, and I'll tell you all about this fun way to help keep our neighborhood such a special place.

Sincerely,

Nanette Asimov
Newsletter Editor

NextDoor.com

continued from page 1

groups on NextDoor, such as St. Francis Woods, Miraloma Park, and Sunnyside. These can be blocked if you prefer not to see them, and there are privacy settings to control how much of your information is viewable.

The more people who sign up, the more useful it will be. So far, 67 households in Westwood Park, 9 percent, have joined, according to the site. I strongly encourage you to check it out. If you sign up, you'll see that it's easy to use the site to invite other neighbors to join, too. Ideally, we could replace the Yahoo group with Nextdoor, as people will find the two groups redundant. I think everyone will be pleased with Nextdoor's features.

Meanwhile, the Yahoo group has been a great way for folks in the neighborhood to communicate with each other, and Karen G. deserves thanks for getting it going. As Nextdoor grows in popularity, I hope we get even more people involved. ❖

Energy Efficient

continued from page 3

conduct a second audit (included in the price).

"It showed way more efficiency," Hingston said. "Maybe because of the door."

In any case, the portion done by the contractor rang the "20 percent modeled energy savings" bell, qualifying for a \$2,000 rebate from the state and \$1,000 from the City. The rebates went straight to the contractor, and the Hingstons were out of pocket \$460.

The Hingstons have yet to notice any savings on their PG&E bill.

"But we wanted to do what we could for as little as we could," David said. "And make the house a little more comfortable."

For more information about Energy Upgrade California, visit www.sfenvironment.org/sfhip or contact Luke Easdale with the San Francisco Department of the Environment, at 415-355-5007 or luke.easdale@sfgov.org. ❖

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