

# WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION

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*Newsletter* ~ Spring ~ 2010



## Miramar's Modest Matron

By Nanette Asimov

Anyone know Deodara?

Deodara's lived on Miramar for more than 40 years, yet speaks no English. Descended from a family of tall Middle Easterners from the Afghan/Pakistan region, Deodara is nevertheless short of stature and not quite straight of spine. Yet there are many who look at Deodara and see only beauty and grace.

Deodara is the tree in the Miramar Circle.

The name means "wood of the gods" in Sanskrit, and refers to a species of cedar considered divine in the Hindu religion. Its fragrant wood is used to make incense and body oil. Insects dislike it, so the oil is used to protect the feet of horses, cattle and camels. Some credit the cedar oil with curing everything from stomach ailments to psoriasis. Others say it's a better floor polish.

Either way, divine Deodara also holds high office: It's the national tree of Pakistan.



*Snow at the Miramar Circle, 2006  
Tim Emert*



*Hugh D. Byrne*

Yet in the Miramar Circle, the celebrated cedar is modestly personified.

"My son used to call it the Charlie Brown Christmas tree because it was at once pathetic and endearing," said Tim Emert, a resident of the Circle who in 2006 snapped a dramatic, nighttime photo of snow caked around its trunk. "I have always been charmed by the bent and scraggly tree in the Circle, even as it seems to grow into a more majestic maturity."

"Majestic" may be kind.

Arborist Richard Hill of Davey Tree, who cares for the woods of Westwood Park, acknowledged that Deodara is slow to grow despite attentive pruning.

"I would have expected it to be bigger by now," he said. "It's

certainly healthy. It's not dying. Deodara cedars can go easily to 100 years, and they can grow to 80 feet."

Deodara appears closer to 25 feet, with a trunk less than two feet wide.

Mr. Hill isn't sure how old Deodara is. But Roy Skover, who lives on Miramar just up from the circle, believes it was planted by a City College professor named Mr. Larson a few years after the Skovers arrived in 1963.

"It's a great climbing tree for the grandchildren," said Mr. Skover, who has three of them. "That's the reason they come over to Grandpa's house. After they play with the dog, they want to go climb the tree."

As the central figure of Westwood Park's more-or-less central geographical point, Deodara fulfills

*Continued on page 3*



*The Miramar Circle, 1922*

# Funds To Flow Onto Ocean Avenue

By Kate Favetti

In a victory for our ongoing effort to beautify Westwood Park's main street for shopping and commerce, the Ocean Avenue Revitalization Collaborative is pleased to announce that we've won a \$79,000 grant from the city.

The lucrative grant from San Francisco's Office of Economic and Workforce Development is specifically for capital improvements along the Ocean Avenue Commercial Corridor.

Neighbors who shop on Ocean Avenue may already see new awnings and signs, bright new exterior lighting, fresh paint, façade improvements and greening projects on several businesses, thanks to the grant. Work began on March 15.

In February, the Ocean Avenue Revitalization Collaborative (OARC)

was thrilled to learn that we had won the \$79,000 grant -- and so were the merchants. Within four days of the announcement, 18 businesses had applied to participate.

Among them were Java on Ocean and Lili Knit, which are getting new exterior lights, and Fruit Barn and Continental Appliance, which will have new awnings.

More projects, including planter boxes, will be phased in when merchants and property owners complete their contracts. The entire effort is expected to take about a year.

The OARC is funded by the Office of Economic and Workforce Development and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. Our volunteers are a diverse group of merchants, community

organizations, property owners, and local residents from Westwood Park, Dorado Terraces, OMI, and Ingleside Terraces.

Volunteers help clean up Ocean Avenue on the fourth Saturday of each month. Come join us! We also meet on the second Wednesday of the month, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the OMI Senior Center at 1948 Ocean Ave. Refreshments are provided.

For more information about OARC or the new grant, contact Dolly Sithounnolat at [dolly.oarc@gmail.com](mailto:dolly.oarc@gmail.com) or call 375-2265.

*Kate Favetti is on the OARC steering committee, and is on the board of the Westwood Park Association.*

# Fatal Accident at Ocean and Miramar

By Nanette Asimov

A 63-year-old woman was struck and killed by a city truck as she hurried across Ocean Avenue at Miramar on February 9.

The tragedy at the edge of Westwood Park occurred at 1:40 p.m. on a bright Tuesday afternoon and serves as a strong reminder to residents of all ages to make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street.

Witnesses offered different accounts of how the city Water Department truck hit Xiu Fang

Huang as she crossed the busy street, apparently walking from south to north. She was not a resident of Westwood Park.

Some said Ms. Xiu was in the intersection of Ocean and Miramar but not in the crosswalk when she was struck by the eastbound truck. Others weren't sure. Some witnesses said the truck was moving slowly, while others were less certain.

Tyrone Jue, a spokesman for the city Public Utilities Commission,

said two employees were in the truck, and that the driver has worked for the city for 23 years.

One witness, Khalil Judie, 18, said after that after the driver realized he'd hit someone, he jumped out of the truck and ran to the woman lying in the street.

"He started praying," Judie said.

# Miramar's Modest Matron (cont.)

(continued from page 1)

the role of neighborhood icon.

Consider its low density. The feeling of air, light, privacy and spaciousness it conveys. Its many slopes, providing a terraced rhythm that offer full or partial views.

You may wonder if that's a description of the tree – or a slightly doctored version of the Westwood Park Residential Design Guidelines.

It can be hard to tell.

Like other icons, Deodora has a storied past. A story is all it may be, yet some neighbors vaguely recall that the little tree suffered an early trauma – and lived. The tale goes like this:

Late one night about five years after Prof. Larson planted the cedar, someone committed a crime south of Westwood Park. The perp jumped into his car and led police on a wild chase up Miramar.

"He thought he'd make a quick left turn onto Wildwood toward Faxon, but he realized all of a sudden he'd have to dodge the tree," said Mr. Skover, who tells the best version so far.

Only he didn't dodge the tree, which is why it's tilted to this day, said Mr. Skover, adding that the chase ended when the getaway car slammed into his son's car parked in the Circle in front of Perker Meeks' house.

Whether Deodara's characteristic sway comes from a car's bumper, from the forceful wind, or from its own *joie de vivre* may never be known.

But with its low-slung, artsy profile, the central cedar may be more than an icon. It may be a metaphor for Westwood Park itself.

## Westwood Park Association Board Members

Greg Clinton  
President (term expires 2011)

Anita Theoharis  
Vice President (term expires 2012)

Kate Favetti  
Secretary (term expires 2011)

Julie Hagelshaw & Grant Edelstone  
Co-Treasurers (terms expire 2010)

Anne Chen  
Member at Large (term expires 2012)

Nanette Asimov  
Member at Large (term expires 2010)

Members of the Westwood Park Association Board of Directors are volunteers elected to serve three-year terms

Board meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of each month at the home of a board member, and begin at 7 p.m.

Contact us via e-mail at:  
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or by voicemail at:  
415-333-1125  
or by mail at:  
P.O. Box 27901 #770  
SF, CA 94127

## Upper Faxon Green Improvements

By Greg Clinton

Work on the upper Faxon green should be completed by the time you get this newsletter. The plan was for our beloved gardener, Baltazar Gutierrez, to repair and replace the aging irrigation system, add gopher barriers, and plant new sod. In addition, as neighbors have requested for years, the *Photinea* hedges should now be extended around the perimeter of the green.

A huge thanks goes out to resident Mike O'Driscoll, who for years and years took care of the Faxon green. Out of his own pocket, Mike made repairs to the irrigation system, replaced broken

sprinkler heads, trapped gophers, and was overall custodian of the green. We are very, very grateful to Mike for all his help over the years.

The Faxon green, with its new infrastructure, can continue to provide residents with a large open space to play catch, run with dogs, and have our annual meeting and neighborhood picnic.

As the largest common area in the neighborhood, the Faxon green is a very special space, much loved, much used, and now much better preserved for future generations to enjoy.

# Our Neighborhood Emergency Plan

By Shelley Knox

If a major disaster strikes the Bay Area, the city's ambulances and firefighters could be overwhelmed and unable to respond to individual needs in a timely manner. It may not even be possible to call for help, as phone and cell service could be down.

But our neighborhood has a plan for assisting residents in such a dire case, developed by trained volunteers from the Westwood Park Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT).

Here's what you need to know:

## UPPER PLYMOUTH GREEN

- The NERT staging area at the upper Plymouth Green at Montecito will be your resource for help. There you'll find first aid, help with search and rescue, and emergency services information, all handled by NERT.
- Using a designated ham radio frequency, NERT members expect to be able to communicate with the city's emergency responders, and will keep neighbors apprised of city updates and emergency services status.

## MEDICAL AID AT PLYMOUTH GREEN

- A first-aid station will be set up to help any neighbors needing medical assistance. For those requiring more serious treatment, NERT will radio for help or direct neighbors to the closest emergency medical facility, depending on availability of services.

## WHO'S IN CHARGE?

- NERT will choose an Incident Commander as the primary person to manage the emergency response.

## IF YOU'RE TRAPPED IN YOUR HOUSE

- NERT will go street by street conducting search and rescue. The team will also identify hazardous conditions.

## SIGN UP NOW FOR SPECIAL HELP

- Our emergency response team maintains a list of neighbors with special needs who would like to be checked on in case of emergency. To add your name to this list contact Melanie Johnson at 246-1902.

## HOW TO PREPARE TODAY

- All neighbors are encouraged to develop their own emergency plan. This means identifying a place where all family members will meet, and having a communication plan with them. Prepare a survival kit. Develop a home safety check-

Westwood Part NERT is registered in San Francisco and is comprised of neighbors who have completed a six-week course on emergency preparedness and response, and other skilled volunteers. For more information, visit <http://wpnert.ning.com>.

*Shelley Knox volunteers with NERT and is certified in CPR and first aid.*

# Barbeque, Sausages and Salmon on Ocean – Hungry Yet?

By Anita Theoharis

Westwood Park neighbors looking for a shop in our neighborhood to buy fresh meat, seafood, house-made sausages, deli sandwiches and barbeque should check out San Francisco Meats & Delicatessen at 1330 Ocean Avenue.

Owner Joe Shasky III, a native San Franciscan and Riordan High School graduate, began his career working “clean-up” behind the butcher counter at Tower Market, then spent 10 years perfecting his skills with old-time master butchers. Today he is realizing his dream of operating his own shop.

“I started at the bottom of the ladder and moved up the rungs of my profession,” said Joe, who opened SF Meats on Sept. 24, 2008.

“My brother (Pat) is my right-hand man, who helps out at the shop on a daily basis,” he said. His father, Joe Shasky, Jr., also comes by to help. “Really we are a family shop.”

It’s a small, local business that emphasizes good, old-fashioned quality. SF Meats carries Fulton Valley chicken and Niman Ranch beef. They make their own sausages (ask Joe to show you his vintage sausage maker), and thick deli sandwiches.

They carry a small selection of fresh fish—usually wild salmon and red snapper brought in fresh daily—that sells out every day. Joe says he’d rather have a small selection to ensure that the fish is always fresh.

If you are throwing a party, having a backyard fiesta or tailgating for the big game, SF Meats can help. They cater barbeque boxes and picnic baskets.

SF Meats will also special-order meats, poultry and fish that they don’t carry every day. They



Joe & Pat Shasky  
photos courtesy SF Meats & Deli



Joe Jr., Joe III, and Pat Shasky

also are happy to advise patrons about cooking techniques.

As much as the Shaskys hope neighbors will support their local business, they have also shown that SF Meats is committed to supporting the neighborhood. They’ve donated food to the Ocean Avenue Art Walk and participated in the Small Business Sidewalk sale. Joe says he’s enthusiastic about being a part of the future of the revitalization of Ocean Avenue.

“I believe with hard work, time and a collective effort of the community, Ocean Avenue can be on par with—or better than—West Portal in five years,” he said. “I was born and raised in [a nearby] neighborhood, have a sentimental connection, and this is where SF Meats wants to be forever.”

San Francisco Meats & Deli is open from 9 am to 7 pm weekdays, and from 8 am to 6 pm on Saturdays. You can find them at 859-9900, on the Web at [www.sfmeats.com](http://www.sfmeats.com), and on Facebook. You can also see their daily specials on Twitter, at [www.twitter.com/sfmeats](http://www.twitter.com/sfmeats).

# Sign Up For Your SF City College Gym Pass

## Perks of the Park

Westwood Park is entitled to 30 passes to the City College Wellness Center gym each semester, which the neighborhood gives out on a first-come, first-served basis.

Each pass is good for one semester, and may go only to residents over 18 years of age. Passes are limited to two per household.

To sign up, contact the Westwood Park Association. If e-mailing, please put "Wellness Center" in the subject line.



*Hugh D. Byrne*

A regular visitor to the garden of Hugh Byrne and Nanette Asimov since 2007, this opossum is called O'Pointy. He (or she) is always welcome to dine at the Byrnes because opossums favor a menu of insects and small mammals. We're hoping he'll sample gophers soon.

If you have Westwood Park wildlife photos to share, please e-mail them to [board@westwoodpark.com](mailto:board@westwoodpark.com).

### inside:

<i>Miramar's Modest Matron</i> .....	1
<i>Funds To Flow Onto Ocean Avenue</i>	2
<i>Fatal Accident at Ocean and Miramar</i>	2
<i>Upper Faxon Green Improvements</i>	3
<i>Our Neighborhood Emergency Plan</i>	4
<i>Barbeque on Ocean Avenue</i>	5

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