

WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION



Newsletter ~ Spring ~ 2012

OCEAN AVENUE UPDATE

From Paint Store to Pool Hall (and Much More)

By Kate Favetti

The Avalon Bay development near City College is almost complete, and is accepting applications for rentals. Once the protective netting was removed in January, progress on the building –including its state-of-the-art fitness center -- was evident.

The architecture is colorful and modern, with rentals ranging from \$2,025 to \$3,785. And yes, pets are welcome.

Also visible is the space for the new Whole Foods, a much needed grocery store for our area! The store is expected to open around Labor Day.

At the opposite end of the avenue, however, plans to open a pool hall at 1948 Ocean drew complaints from neighbors earlier this year.

When a concerned resident on that block and members of the Ingleside Terraces Home Association learned that the pool hall planned to serve alcohol and keep its doors open until 2 a.m., they asked the city's Planning Commission to intervene. The neighbors, worried that the business would be noisy and attract crime and loiterers, said it would be a mismatch for a neighborhood with nearby schools and daycare centers.

On Jan. 12, the commission held a type of public hearing called a "discretionary review," in which projects are evaluated to make sure they comply with the city's planning code. In such reviews, the commission also determines whether projects should be altered to address neighborhood complaints.

Whole Foods, a much needed grocery store for our area!

The store is expected to open around Labor Day.

The commission voted 4 to 1 to approve the pool hall. However, it required some important changes.

1. The business will have to close at midnight rather than 2 a.m., at least at first. If the operator can demonstrate that the business is problem-free after six to 12 months, it may be permitted to stay open later.

2. The operator will have to assign a liaison who will be available by cell phone to respond to neighbors' complaints.

3. The pool hall must have security cameras and security guards

4. No alcohol may be sold or consumed on the premises.

Although not everyone is happy

with the results, if the request for discretionary reviews had not been filed, there would have been no compromises benefitting the neighborhood. No date for when the pool hall will open was available by the newsletter's deadline.

In other Ocean Avenue news, Chase Bank will open this summer on the corner of Faxon, and three other newcomers are also set to open their doors in the coming months:

A new Thai restaurant called Champa Gardens is expected to move into the space on Faxon next door to Java on Ocean. The restaurant already has one location in Oakland, and based on the reviews I read, it sounds like this will be great place to eat!

Sherwin Williams paint store will open at 1415 Ocean Ave. between Miramar and Granada.

CLW Construction Co. will open its offices at 1431 Ocean, next to the new paint store.

Neighborhood Picnic



SAVE THE DATE!

Westwood Park's 2012 meeting and picnic will be on

Saturday, Sept. 22

Everyone is welcome!

Personal Safety and Security

By Ray Favetti

No matter where we live, crime occasionally happens. So I'm sharing some tips that I have gathered from SF-Safe.org and other sources.

Some tips appear obvious, but it doesn't hurt to review our practices and be aware of safety and security for our families and neighbors.

- Be alert and aware at all times. Walk with confidence and purpose. Be especially careful if you are wearing headphones or ear buds, which greatly reduce your ability to hear and may distract you from your surroundings.
- Remember that smart phones and Ipods can attract thieves, so don't use them in the open.
- Take valuables out of your car or lock them in the trunk. Make sure that your doors and windows are locked.

When parking at night, park near lighting.

- When traveling, let someone know your itinerary and the time you are expected to return. Place your mail and newspapers on hold and have automatic lighting for your home. And, of course, lock your doors and windows. To place your mail on hold, call the U.S. Post Office at 1-800-275-8777 or do so online at <http://tinyurl.com/dyg3cdx>
- Treat your trash and mail carefully. Purchase a shredder and use it for your credit card receipts, copies of credit applications, insurance forms, physician statements, checks and bank statements, expired credit cards and all those credits offers you receive in the mail.
- One sure way of making sure personal information isn't sitting in your mailbox is to opt out of receiving credit offers in the mail. To do that, call:

1-888-5-OPT-OUT (1-888-567-8688).

- While it is handy to leave outgoing mail in your house mail slot for the letter carrier to pick up, mail dangling from your mail slot or in an unsecured mail box is an invitation to identity theft. Instead, deposit mail in post office collection boxes or at the post office.
- Promptly report thefts and even unusual incidents to the police, such as someone going through your blue recycling bin and taking personal mail. You can report by calling the police non-emergency number, 553-0123, or 311, or online at www.sfpd.org. Police want to hear about unusual incidents so they can identify patterns, and it's good for neighbors to do so in support of our neighborhood advocacy.
- And most importantly, if you see a crime in process, call 911 immediately.



Since 1879, surveyers have embedded an untold number of metal disks called survey markers or "monuments" in rocks or concrete across the country to help mapmakers do their work accurately.

This one is at the corner of Greenwood and Colon.

Westwood Park has at least one more. If you can find it (them?), send in a photo and the location to board@westwoodpark.com. Let us know who you are, and we'll publish it in an upcoming newsletter!

Westwood Park: A "City Guides" Tour And Garden News (from 1923!)

By Nanette Asimov

San Francisco's City Guides program has augmented its array of free walking tours to include one of the most historic and picturesque neighborhoods in the Bay Area: Westwood Park.

Leading the two-hour "Bungalows of Westwood Park" tour is our own Kathleen Beitiks, who has become a true historian of this nearly century-old 'hood. Her understudy is another Westwood Park resident, Richard Harned, who also leads tours of the Ferry Building and Market Street.

The next tours will be at 10 a.m. on Saturdays May 5 and 19. Participants meet at Java Cafe on Ocean at Faxon, and end at the library on Ocean at Plymouth. But to check for any last-

minute changes, or to see the schedule of all City Guides tours, visit sfcityguides.org.

While Kathleen was researching our neighborhood's history, she discovered a defunct Oakland magazine called "The Home Designer," whose 1923 issue about the best plants for bungalow gardens featured this very neighborhood, Westwood Park.

Thinking the article might be of interest to readers of the non-defunct "American Bungalow" magazine, Kathleen wrote them a letter. The editors published it under the headline "Vintage Publication Features Westwood Park, San Francisco," with a link to the feature from 1923.

You can find them both here: <http://tinyurl.com/7kg33qy>

THE MIRAMAR MEDIAN: WHAT'S WITH THE TREES?

By Nanette Asimov

If Westwood Park has a front parlor where visitors receive a first impression of our home, it's likely the Miramar median with its promenade of majestic greenery.

The 58 trees that grace the center of the avenue from Ocean to Monterey are the chandelier in our entryway, and we care about them. So it hurts to see the most magnificent of those trees, the canopied Italian Stone Pines, with their thick, gnarly bark, wrapped in tape and targeted for removal.



Grand old Stone Pine north of Eastwood



The limbs of this Stone Pine have been cabled together to reduce chance of failure.

A few neighbors have tried to keep the Stone Pines from being cut down, filing petitions with the Department of Public Works to stop the Westwood Park Association from removing them. But in cases where the vast, beautiful trees pose a danger to pedestrians, the city – most recently in February -- has agreed that they must come down.

About 20 Italian Stone Pines still live on the Miramar median. They weren't there when Westwood Park was born some 90 years ago. Even Richard Hill of Davey Tree, the arborist who cares for the trees of Westwood Park, isn't sure how old they are. But whoever planted them had an eye for beauty.

The kingly charisma of *Pinus Pinea*, the Latin name for the Stone Pine, comes partly from the tendency of its crown to grow wider than the tree grows tall, which is about 50 feet high. Its elephantine trunk rises not in a straight, upright line, but often appears to sway as if dancing and twirling in a costume of deeply creviced, rosy, gray bark. And the tree can live for generations.

But those who chose them may not have known that to succeed in old age, the limbs of the Stone Pine must have room to split, fail, and fall. Over the years, its heavy, seemingly invincible branches naturally weaken and drop. This happens even to Stone Pines growing in wide fields. But it happens even more often to those squeezed into narrow spaces like a traffic median, where the weight of cars, frequent road work and even pedestrians hasten the giants' tendency to lose their limbs.

"Italian Stone Pines are notoriously structurally weak," said Mr. Hill, the

arborist, who has maintained the trees for years. Every year, he reduces the weight on the ends of the branches to lessen the possibility that a heavy limb will fall on someone's head. He also secures the most precarious branches with cables to retain them as long as possible.

Sometimes, he said, there's nothing left to do. So Mr. Hill is compelled to remove the trees before their falling branches hurt anyone. The Westwood Park Association has paid \$110,000 on tree maintenance since 1997, partly to avoid such an outcome.

The sad truth is that the Stones Pines are now failing at a rate of about two or three each year, Mr. Hill said.

Two years ago, when Mr. Hill recommended removing a particular Stone Pine, a neighbor filed a formal protest with the city, halting the removal process. But before the city had a chance to hear the



Left, a Red Flowering Gum; right, a Monterey Pine.

All Photos on this page by Nanette Asimov

case, a large branch from that tree cracked off and damaged a car that hadn't even been parked on Miramar. It was in a driveway across the street, which gives an idea of the Stone Pines' breadth, power – and ability to do damage.

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"As much as I don't like to see trees fail," Mr. Hill said, "it was kind of gratifying that it was the one we were waiting on" from the city. The Stone Pine was removed.

This year, Mr. Hill had the unhappy task of recommending that three more Stone Pines be removed. The city agreed to remove two, and in February overruled the objections of a family that filed a formal complaint.

In keeping with Westwood Park Association policy, the Stone Pines across from 340 and 720 Miramar will be replaced with another majestic tree: the Red Flowering Gum, or *Corymbia Ficifolia*, which can grow to a height of 55 feet.

The Miramar median now has about 23 Red Flowering Gum trees, including several babies.

There are also a handful of towering Monterey Pines, 10 *Arbutus Marina* "Strawberry" trees, with their characteristic chocolately red bark, and three Japanese Black Pines.

PERK OF THE PARK

How to Sign Up for a Free (1-Semester) Gym Pass at City College

Westwood Park receives 30 free passes to the City College gym and pool each semester. The passes are distributed to neighbors 18 or older on a first-come, first-served basis, and limited to two per household. Each pass is valid for one semester.

Neighbor Steve Miller administers the passes for Westwood Park and maintains the waiting list.

To sign up for a pass, send Steve an email at wellnesspass@westwoodpark.com. Please indicate whether you want one pass or two, and make sure to include your contact information.

Neighbors without email may call the Association at 333-1125 to leave your name, number and pass request for Steve.

Newcomers to the City College Wellness Center must complete an orientation, which can be done online. Hours for the gym and pool vary each semester. For reviews of the gym, visit <http://tinyurl.com/4sg2x3f>

JUDGES WANTED!

If you'd like to help judge Westwood Park's Halloween contest, which is done each year just before Halloween, please email the Association at board@westwoodpark.com or call 333-1125. Let us know that you'd like to be a volunteer judge, and tell us how to reach you. Thanks!

WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION

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The long-awaited episode of "Curb Appeal: The Block," featuring Meredith and Randy Nonnenberg's home at 1570 Plymouth Ave. is ready to air.

The show is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Sat. April 28 on HGTV.

For more information on the show, visit <http://tinyurl.com/7236bj>

And for the original story of the Nonnenberg's house in the fall, 2011 edition of this newsletter, visit <http://westwoodpark.com/newsletters.htm>