

SARANAP NEWS

SARANAP HOMEOWNERS ORGANIZATION

DON'T MISS THE ANNUAL MEETING!

The Saranap Homeowners Organization annual meeting will be held:

**Thursday
May 19, 2011
7:30-9:00 pm**

Sun Valley Bible Chapel
1031 Leland Drive
Lafayette

For directions and map see
page 7 or visit
www.saranap.org

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SUFISM REORIENTED PROJECT UPDATE BY DICK GALTON

COUNTY ASKS FOR COMMENTS

66,000 SQ. FT. BUILDING WOULD DWARF NEIGHBORHOOD

On March 29, 2011 Contra Costa County published a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on the application by Sufism Reoriented to build a 66,000 sq. ft. religious facility on a 3.12 acre site on Boulevard Way in residential Saranap. The proposed building includes a prayer hall, classrooms, offices, library, bookstore, an art studio, video production facilities, kitchen, and café.

The Saranap Homeowners Organization (SHO) does not object to the building of a religious facility in our neighborhood; it is the size and scope of the Sufism Reoriented project that we oppose. The 66,000 sq. ft. building, two-thirds of

which would be underground (43,000 cubic yards of soil will have to be removed from the site), would have 13 domes, of varying heights up to 33.5 feet. The entire project would be closed off from the neighborhood within a compound surrounded by 6 foot white masonry walls.

This development is simply too big. Its size and design would detract from the semi-rural residential nature of our lovely Saranap neighborhood. Although the building could easily accommodate a congregation of well over 1,000 people, Sufism Reoriented claims that they will never exceed their present membership of 350 persons. They propose to provide minimal parking, only 74 spaces because they all plan to walk or car-pool to the

(Continued on page 5)

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH — IT'S UP TO US! BY RON OGG

The Sheriff's Department has stepped up undercover patrols, but overall Sheriff's Department manpower is continuing to suffer from State and County budget cuts. There are fewer regular patrols, and there is no longer a Resource Officer to support Neighborhood Watch Programs. As a result, the Saranap Home-

owners Organization has contributed money to purchase six Neighborhood Watch signs from the Sheriff's office. These signs have been installed in the Saranap neighborhood by a group of concerned Saranap residents who have organized a citizen-led Neighborhood Watch program.

MEET YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Saranap Homeowner's Organization was founded in 2009 to provide Saranap homeowners with a true and unbiased voice, dedicated to preserving and fostering the long established character of our neighborhood as semi-rural, low density and residential. The SHO is a legitimate entity, recognized and registered not only with Contra Costa County, but also with the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(4) not

for profit community organization. The Saranap Homeowners Organization is strictly governed by its Mission Statement and Bylaws, and is managed by nine Board members, many of whom were former founders and members of the Saranap Community Association before its 1998 takeover in 2008.

President **Wayne Fettig** has been a homeowner in two different Saranap homes since 1983, and is fierce-

ly committed to preserving the semi rural and low density neighborhood character. He was a founding member and first Vice President of the Saranap Homeowners Association which later became the Saranap Community Association, where he then served as a Board member for seven years. Wayne has established good working relationships with and is well respected by Contra Cos-

(Continued on page 3)

BURGLARY ON THE INCREASE

BY RON OGG

Theft from vehicles is just one type of crime on the rise in our neighborhood. Total incidents have more than doubled in just two months. Crimereports.com notes approximately 58 incidents in our area from November 1-March 31, compared to the last update of November 1 to January 31 which had approximately 27 incidents. This does not include vehicle theft, which is handled by the Highway Patrol and isn't reported on Crimereports.com website. Neighboring communities, including Lafayette, Alamo and Danville, are targeted as well.

Thefts from vehicles are taking place at night. Thieves, often working in pairs with one functioning as a lookout, are breaking into cars left parked outside. In most cases there are items left in vehicles that make them an attractive target for the thieves. There have been more incidents of thieves "casing" neighborhoods ahead of time, to learn

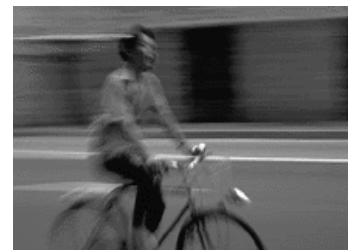
when people are away from home and where vehicles are left outside at night.

Assaults on persons are also on the increase, with ten noted in the current five month period versus four in the prior three month period (both starting 11/1/2010). This type of crime was almost unknown two years ago, and the increase over the past few months is startling.

We can help ourselves and our neighbors by taking some common sense steps.

1. Be observant. Start noticing people and vehicles which seem out of place.
2. Talk with your neighbors; watch each other's homes. Learn enough about each other's habits to identify visitors and vehicles that may appear unusual. Keep neighbors informed when you leave on vacation, or even for the weekend.

3. Never approach any suspicious person. Observe, write down the license number and description of any suspicious vehicles, and call the Sheriff at 646-2441 or dial 911.
4. Take steps to make your home appear occupied when you are not there. Use lamp timers, leave a radio or TV on, stop newspaper delivery and mail service.
5. Lock your car, even when it's parked in your driveway or garage. Don't leave anything of value in your car.
6. Be sure you know where your kids are at all times.



MEET YOUR BOARD (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 2)

ta County governmental agencies.

Vice President **Richard Galton** was a banker at Wells Fargo and a high school teacher in Danville. He has called the Saranap home for 32 years. He was attracted to the many trees and peaceful streets and his fondness for the neighborhood has continued to grow. Dick has worked on neighborhood issues for nearly a decade and served on the committee that successfully kept traffic of our streets from the Hidden Oaks development in Lafayette.

Secretary **Kathy Rogers** and her husband have been Saranap homeowners for 37 years and raised their two children here. Her daughter and son-in-law bought a home in Saranap so the Rogers' commitment to this area will continue to the next generation. Kathy has been involved in preserving the Saranap for many years and was a founding board member of the former Saranap Improvement Association. She is a retired school teacher and loves the history and quiet nature of our neighborhood.

Treasurer **Ronald Ogg** is also the designer and webmaster for the Saranap Homeowners Organization website (www.saranap.org). Ron retired from 40 years of management positions in the Information Technology field and he and his partner bought their home in the Saranap in 2000. In 2008 Ron worked with other concerned Saranap residents to establish the Saranap Homeowners Organization with its mission to preserve our semi-rural neighborhood environ-

ment.

Paul Borgwardt has been a Saranap homeowner for 27 years. He and his family also own and, until two years ago, operated the Saranap Filling Station. Paul has been a Board member on the various Saranap organizations since the mid 1990's. Because of his deep roots and fondness for the community, he is committed to upholding the Saranap Homeowners Organization Mission Statement.

Stacey Bradbury has lived in the Saranap for over 40 years. She grew up on Leland Drive and attended schools here. Stacey now owns her own 70 year old historic home on an original Dewing property. She finds its upkeep and restoration a challenge and very satisfying. Because of her love for the Saranap, Stacey was a Board member of the Saranap Community Association, and has been on the Board of the Saranap Homeowners Organization since 2008.

Deb Lowande was born and raised in Hollywood, CA where she attended Hollywood High School and graduated from UCLA with degrees in English and French. In 1984, Deb relocated to Walnut Creek to work for Bank of America. After a short job related return to Los Angeles in 1988, she returned permanently to Walnut Creek in 1992 to live and continue her career with the Bank. Deb moved to Saranap where she has resided since 1998. Deb continues to work as a Network Project Manager and has developed strong ties to her neighbors and neighborhood. Having grown up in a large city, she appreciates and enjoys the

rural feel and beauty of the area.

Tim Lynch has lived in the Saranap for over 31 years and owns several properties in the neighborhood. He and his wife raised their son here. Tim owns a landscape construction company and is part-owner of a popular restaurant in Lafayette, and is very committed to maintaining the established quality and feel of our area. As such, Tim provides business sense, balance and practicality to our organization.

Robert Nuzum has lived in Saranap since 1968 and he and his wife have raised three daughters here. He is the owner and Lead Scientist for a consulting firm in Walnut Creek that specializes in developing and administering comprehensive natural resource management programs. Bob is committed to maintaining Saranap as a family-friendly residential community.

Charles Stepp and his wife purchased a home in the Saranap in 1999 to raise their two children. Their attraction this area was the small town feel, great schools, and area amenities. Chuck formerly worked as a baker, but following a disability, became a stay at home father. This has also allowed him to be more involved with the Saranap community. Chuck was instrumental in helping to start the Saranap Community Garden along Olympic Boulevard and has remained active in the Garden project and the Saranap Homeowners Organization.



Saranap Homeowners Organization

Giving Saranap residents a true independent voice in the future of our neighborhood

The Saranap Homeowners Organization is committed to preserving the semi-rural quality of our neighborhood.

To that end, we:

Oppose the incursion of construction not in keeping with the semi-rural character of the neighborhood

Review Planning Department applications for new construction and remodels and all applications for variances, tree permits, and subdivision of lots in the Saranap, and consult with residents about proposed construction in their neighborhoods

Make recommendations to County planners based on our findings

Keep members informed about proposed development and new construction in the Saranap

Keep members informed about new and proposed laws and regulations that affect (or would affect) the quality of life in the Saranap.

All Saranap homeowners are encouraged to join. Membership is a nominal \$25.00 per year per home address.

This covers the costs for telephone, postage, printing, maintaining our website, and expert and legal consultations as necessary.

You must be a homeowner in the Saranap to join the Saranap Homeowners Organization.

Memberships are for twelve months from the month you join.

Membership is per home, one voting membership per household in the annual Board of Directors election.

Please complete this membership application and mail it, with your check, to:

Saranap Homeowners Organization

PO Box 2272

Walnut Creek, CA 94595-0272

Please make your check payable to: **Saranap Homeowners Organization.**

Additional contributions are needed and gratefully accepted. Thank you!

I/We are homeowners in the Saranap, and would like to join the Saranap Homeowners Organization for one year at the rate of \$25.00 per year per household.

MEMBERSHIP: (please check one): RENEWAL ☐ NEW Membership ☐

Name(s)

Please print

Address _____ Walnut Creek, CA Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

We have Lived in Saranap Since: _____

I am able to help with: Photography ☐ Printing ☐ Community Planning ☐ Traffic ☐ Legal ☐

Membership ☐ Secretarial ☐ Historical ☐ Writing ☐ Newsletter ☐ Website ☐

Engineering ☐ Neighborhood Canvassing ☐

Other:

2011 SHO ANNUAL MEETING MAY 19

Don't miss the Saranap Homeowners Organization annual membership meeting, on **Thursday, May 19, 2011 from 7:30 to 9:00 pm.** The meeting will be held at the **Sun Valley Bible Chapel**, located at 1031 Leland Drive in Lafayette.

The hot topic at this meeting will be the latest updates of the proposed Sufism Reoriented sanctuary on Boulevard Way, including a discussion of the EIR.

The Saranap Homeowners Organization has gone on record as being opposed to the current size and design of this development as inappropriate for our residential neighborhood.



Please refer to the Sufism Reoriented Project Update article on page 1 of this issue for more information.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday May 19 to meet you and your neighbors and join the discussions and decisions that affect the Saranap community.

See page 7 for a map to the Sun Valley Bible Chapel.

SUFISM REORIENTED PROJECT UPDATE

(Continued from page 1)

facility, rain or shine, day or night, *forever*. We believe that these assumptions are unrealistic, if not wildly optimistic.

The size and scope of this project are a significant concern to the majority of its neighboring property owners. We have requested story poles to show the true height and mass of the structure, and how it would overwhelm the site. (Story poles generally consist of wooden poles situated at the perimeters and high points of the proposed project. The tops of the poles are usually connected by some sort of clearly visible ribbon or tape to delineate the general shape and look of the project in the exact spot where the project is proposed.) The removal of mature trees would make the stark white domes visible to the surrounding neighborhood for years until newly planted small trees grow enough to shield them. This project would also establish a

precedent for further encroachment, whether by Sufism Reoriented or any other large real estate developer. Our mission is to vigorously defend the unique character of our neighborhood. We believe the majority of Saranap residents agree with this mission.

A final and important point: *we are opposed to religious prejudice of any kind*. Our opposition to this project is based on its specific characteristics as a real estate development, and has nothing to do with the religious beliefs of our neighbors. But just as religious prejudice is wrong, so is political correctness. Just because the applicant to build this project is a religious group does not entitle it to any special consideration, nor should it be exempted from the careful scrutiny and oversight that normally would be demanded of any private builder or developer.

The Saranap Homeowners Organization has a committee working to analyze and counter many of the

assertions made in the Draft EIR document, and we are confident that we will prevail.

Please join us in this effort. We encourage you to view the Draft EIR report at www.cocoplans.gov (click on Sufism Reoriented-EIR). To comment in writing, send your letter to:

Attn: Ms. Lashun Cross,
Senior Planner
Contra Costa County Dept. of
Conservation & Development
651 Pine St.
4th floor, North Wing
Martinez, CA 94553

The comment period ends on Friday, May 27 at 5:00 PM. Please be sure to include County File numbers LP082034 and MS090008 on all correspondence.

If you haven't joined the Saranap Homeowners Organization yet, please do so, and come to our Annual Meeting on May 19. Encourage you neighbors to come, also. We will need your support at Plan-

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SUFISM REORIENTED PROJECT UPDATE

(Continued from page 5)

ning Commission hearings, which will begin sometime this summer. It is important that you stand with us to show the County that Saranap opposes this development. Please check our website at www.saranap.org where information about the hearings will be posted as soon as it is available.

Copies of the Draft EIR are also available for review and purchase at the offices of the Contra Costa

County Dept. of Conservation & Community Development Division, at 651 Pine St., North Wing, Fourth floor, Martinez, CA 94553.

The Draft EIR is also available for purchase in hard copy and CD formats. In addition to copies of the Draft EIR, copies of supplemental information including maps, and other materials relating to the project are available at the offices of the Conservation & Development Division. It is also available for viewing at local branches of the

Contra Costa Public Library, and at the Office of Supervisor Gayle B. Uilkema, District II, McBrien Administration Bldg., 651 Pine St. Room 108-A, Martinez, CA 94553.

There are also over 1,000 pages of appendices to the Draft EIR on traffic, drainage, emissions, noise, storm water control, etc. Email us at info@saranap.org and we will be happy to provide you a free electronic copy with the complete DEIR and Appendices.



Sufism Reoriented Sanctuary — Too Large for the Site and for Saranap

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The Saranap Homeowners Organization needs your help. We have a busy next few months ahead of us and we need your help to protect our semi-rural Saranap neighborhood. Here are some ways that you can help your neighborhood.

1. Mail EIR comments (see the Sufism Reoriented Project article for more information; comments must be received by the County no later than May 27).

2. Attend the Saranap Homeowners Organization Annual Membership Meeting on May 19.

3. Renew your Saranap Homeowners Organization membership.

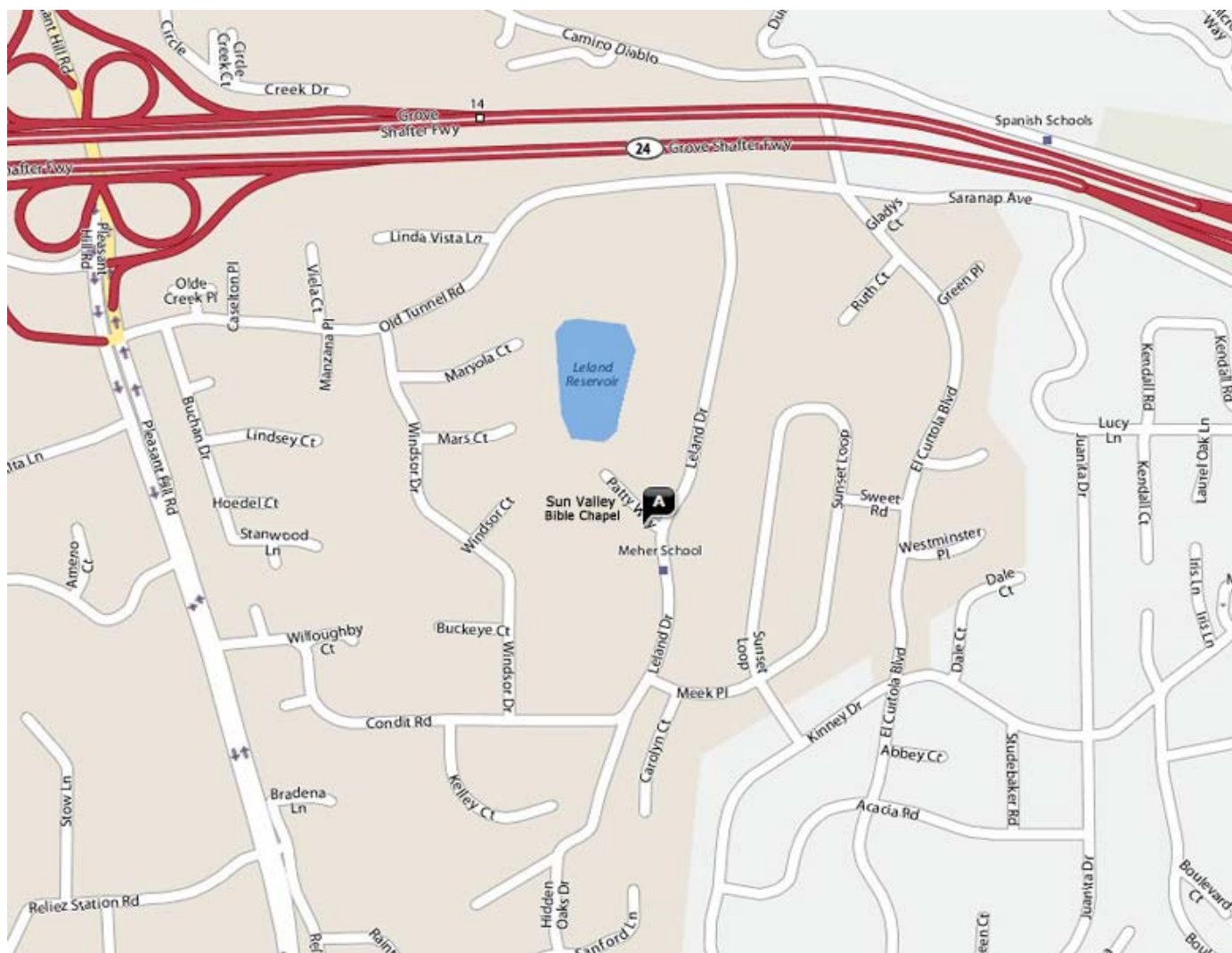
4. Encourage you neighbors to join the Saranap Homeowners Organization. There is a membership application on www.saranap.org and on page 4 in this newsletter.

5. Watch for Planning Commission hearing dates this summer. They

will be posted on our website, www.saranap.org. Attend the hearings and make your voice be heard.

6. Visit www.saranap.org for more information about this project.

Want to champion a SHO membership campaign? Interested in hosting a Neighborhood Watch meeting? Have some ideas that you'd like to share? Visit www.saranap.org and contact us! We'd love to hear from you!



Map (above) to Sun Valley Bible Chapel — 1031 Leland Drive, Lafayette — (Aerial view below)
Saranap Homeowners Organization Annual Meeting — May 19, 2011 — 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

2011 SHO Board of Directors Election

The following Saranap Homeowners Organization Board of Directors members are up for re-election:

Richard Galton
 Robert Nuzum
 Kathy Rogers
 Charles Stepp

Ballots have been sent to current SHO members. Board of Directors terms are for three years.



A PLAN FOR BOULEVARD WAY

BY WAYNE FETTIG

Several months ago, a team was composed to work in conjunction with the Department of Conservation and Development, Public Works Civil Engineers and a liaison from Supervisor Gayle Uilkema's office, to discuss a 'traffic calming' and beautification initiative on the four-lane section of Boulevard Way.

The plan calls for a change in the configuration of Boulevard Way, from the existing four lanes down to two lanes and the addition of a left hand turn lane.

This phase could simply be completed by re-striping the lanes. Additionally, landscaping "bulb-outs" would be constructed at various intervals along both sides of the street. These landscaping beds would be planted with appropriate trees and landscaping.

Bulb-outs are essentially curb extensions into the street. Typically they are constructed near crosswalks as a safety measure, allowing pedestrians and motorists to see each other. While this project may slightly reduce parking spots, between 10 to 12, along this stretch

of Boulevard Way, it is not expected that these bulb-outs will significantly affect the overall parking availability. Currently, Boulevard Way is home to two businesses that experience marked parking fluctuations, Morucci's Deli during lunch hour and H&R Block during tax season. Projections do not indicate that parking ease will suffer.

Finally, a bike lane would be gained on both sides of the street, thus giving bicyclists a safe roadway as well as additional space for people entering and exiting parked cars.

A straw poll suggests that most Saranap residents feel that keeping Boulevard Way as a four-lane road is unnecessary. The original four-lane plan is now obsolete and was abandoned years ago, when Olympic Blvd. was improved and the new freeway ramps were built. Additionally, Rossmoor traffic no longer routes through Boulevard Way.

The safety aspect of slowing traffic entering our neighborhood is significant. Safety, coupled with the aesthetic improvement of this plan would be a huge win for the Sara-

nap. The street trees would effectively create a green lush roadway and reduce the look of barren asphalt and industrial buildings.

We initiated these meetings with the County to determine the process necessary to make this idea a reality. We were encouraged by the feedback that we received from the County staff members and would like to continue to research our plan. Unfortunately, with the critical budget shortfalls both at the Count and State levels, there is not a lot of public money available for non-urgent projects. We are hopeful and feel confident and educated on what we need to consider as we pursue this project. Next steps in this process include, gaining a community consensus, funding through a grant, creating a vision plan, and funding for ongoing maintenance.

We are excited to share this dream with the Saranap community. We have a lot of work to complete and we expect that this could take several years, but we wanted to plant a seed in the neighborhood.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR SHO MEMBERSHIP

If you haven't paid your membership dues already, watch for a renewal notice by email or postal mail. Please return the dues notice with your check or money order as soon as possible.

We ask for your help in encouraging your neighbors to join. Membership information is available at www.saranap.org/join.htm.

DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?

We do most of our communication with Saranap Homeowners Organization members by email. If you have change your email address, or if you haven't provided us with your email address, please provide us with your information. It will only be used for communications from SHO. You can send an email to info@saranap.org with your current email address. Thank you!

CURRENT PROJECTS IN SARANAP

BY KATHY ROGERS

Because of the state of the economy there have been fewer projects proposed for the Saranap neighborhood over the past year. The Saranap Homeowners Organization provides input to the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development on projects in Saranap as information becomes available to us. The following is a list of active projects over the past year and their current status. The Sufism Reoriented Sanctuary Project is discussed in the article starting on page 1.

2211 Olympic Blvd. The former Dirt Brokers site is zoned commercial. The property was sold to a buyer to be converted to a dental office. A minor variance was requested by the buyer, and the SHO Board of Directors advised the County Planner that we had no objection to that variance. A member of the SHO Board of Directors took the plans and reviewed them with the immediate neighbors, and the only expressed concern was with parking. The Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development requested that the

owner file for a permit to bring the building up to code as of December 2010, and the County Planner assured SHO that no further development was planned. In February of 2011 a Notice of Public Hearing was received by SHO. A second story is now proposed for the building closest to the existing two-story dental building. We are awaiting further input from the County Planner.

2055 and 2063 Olympic Blvd. — Two R10 lots. Old rental properties currently exist on this property. The plan was to put 8 houses of two stories each on the properties, which would entail a re-parcel of the lots and creation of cluster houses. In addition, the developers asked to rezone the lots to ML (multi-family) single family residences. In July of 2010 a presentation was made to the SHO Board by the owner and developers. They suggested a General Plan Amendment, which would affect a longer stretch of Olympic Blvd. than their properties occupied. We consulted the immediate neighbors, who were opposed to the General Plan request and the developers' desire

to build 2-story houses overlooking their properties. The SHO Board of Directors unanimously opposed the request to review a change in the zoning via a General Plan Amendment Study, and so notified the County Planner and the developers. We have received no further information about this project.

2023, 2031, and 2047 Olympic Blvd. These are 3 legal but nonconforming lots, with one house situated on two lots. The proposal is to combine those 2 lots in order address the nonconformance and to resolve a substandard parking issue. The owner's application to the County is incomplete and we are waiting for further input from the County Planner.

2431 Olympic Blvd. Neighbors of this property have been concerned about what appears to be an abandoned house with a pool. There is no controlled access to the property. A list of safety issues has been sent to the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development and we are waiting for a response.

THE MISSION OF THE SARANAP HOMEOWNERS ORGANIZATION

"The mission of the Saranap Homeowners Organization is to monitor proposed development in the Saranap area and adjacent neighborhoods, to participate in the public planning, zoning and approval processes of appropriate agencies in order to encourage low-density zoning that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood use, and provide design guidance for architectural styles that blend with the immediate neighborhood.

"The goals are to help preserve the established residential character of the Saranap area, preserve the area as semi-rural, and limit the expansion of higher-density development throughout the Saranap area and adjacent neighborhoods."

SARANAP

S P R I N G I S S U E
M A Y 2 0 1 1

For information about the Saranap Homeowners Organization visit us on the web, or email with your questions or concerns regarding Saranap to info@saranap.org.

Join us on our Website: www.saranap.org
Twitter: twitter.com/saranapupdate
Email: info@saranap.org

The Saranap Homeowners Organization

Saranap is the mostly unincorporated area of Contra Costa County, between Lafayette and Walnut Creek, California, south of Highway 24. The Saranap Homeowners Organization was founded in 2008 to give Saranap homeowners a true independent voice dedicated to preserving and fostering the established character and quality of Saranap as a semi-rural low density residential neighborhood.