

MOUNT HERMON COMMUNITY

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Presidents' Message
- Mount Hermon Roads
- Community Improvement
- Woodwardia Bridge Project

OFFICERS

Co- President
Armand Langmo
Co- President
Jim Linman

Secretary
Janet Payne

Treasurer
Barbara Grensted

Officer
Mark Lilley

Improvement Group
Paul Izor

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Rain Drops

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Co-Presidents' Message

It has been a busy and exciting Fall season at Mount Hermon and your Community leadership has been active on a number of issues. On October 21, a general meeting of the Community membership elected Janet Payne as Secretary and affirmed Mark Lilley in the position of Officer acting as liaison between the Community and Mount Hermon Association. On October 25, we opened 6 homes for the House Tours and greeted 88 visitors. On December 5, over 200 Community



members gathered at the Dining Commons for a delicious buffet and Christmas caroling. The Association had festively decorated the dining room and Dave Burns masterfully led us in sing-

ing carols. We appreciated the Association's support for this event. Your leadership continues interest in discussing the matters of maintaining roads, trails and bridges around Mount Hermon. We are mindful of the necessary costs as well as the burden on residents. Continue on to other articles in this newsletter and follow updates on the website. Without your registered email address, you will miss out on important news. For a better community, Armand and Jim

Winter Arrives at Mount Hermon



We are grateful to all who participated in the Fall Clean Up. Drains and roads are clear and ready for the rains to come. However, we are greatly blessed when a dusting of snow turns our Community into a winter paradise.

IMPORTANT!

Please send your email address to:

mail@mounthermoncommunity.com

or mail to:

**Mount Hermon Community
P.O. Box 413
Mount Hermon, Ca 95041**

For those without access to the Web, notices will be displayed at the Post Office.

Mount Hermon Roads, Trails and Bridges



From time to time, we hear from members of the Mount Hermon Community about the need for upgrading the condition of our roads, trails, and bridges. There seems to be a growing consensus (which we share) that more should be done to maintain these valuable resources. As we see it, the main issue is one of funding. In recent months, we have begun to assess the cost of eliminating deferred maintenance and establishing a sustainable financial basis for performing this work in the future. As many of you know, the cost of bridge repairs and replacements will play an increasing role in determining future funding needs (e.g., the County is now asking us to replace Woodwardia Bridge within the next 5 years; this will be a very expensive project. We have already spent \$112,000 on the Woodwardia Bridge in 2008 far exceeding the total 2008 assessment of all homeowners. This left us with little money for other improvements in 2008.)

In addition to calculating the annual cost to operate at a sustainable level, we are looking at the assessment *rates* of other similar communities. Our preliminary findings confirm what all of us already suspect: Mount Hermon's annual assessment of \$200

is considerably lower than others pay. For example, in Mission Springs (located in Scotts Valley), residents currently pay \$903 for roads and bridges. While we do not intend to arbitrarily match the rates charged by others, these figures confirm that an increase is probably overdue (our last increase was in 2002 - from \$160 to \$200, Homeowners Associations generally update their fees annually.) Recognizing that the economy is taking a toll on many in the Mount Hermon Community, we will do our best to keep the assessment as affordable as possible.

During the next few months, we will complete this review, and will get back to you with the results (probably in a special community meeting). We will also be working with the Community Improvement Group to help determine areas of greatest concern from the homeowner's perspective. Pending our findings, and establishment of a new rate, we will delay the billing for the 2009 improvement assessment until the March water billing. We thank you in advance for your support and cooperation, as we seek to make this community better than ever.

Alden Johanson
Chief Operating Officer
Mount Hermon Association, Inc

Address your comments or questions on this article to:

mail@mounthermoncommunity.com

To become involved in the Community Improvement Group, work projects and maintenance issues, email Paul Izor at:

mail@mounthermoncommunity.com

Felton Fair Affordable Housing Project Gets Additional Funding

On November 25, The County Board of Supervisors voted to allocate another \$1.2 million dollars for pre-development costs to the planned project. This amount will primarily pay for technical investigations with the total predevelopment costs expected to reach \$6 million. Supervisor, Mark Stone voted against the further allocation but the measure passed 4-1. The water source issue was not discussed but South Coast Housing is apparently pursuing obtaining water by tying into the San Lorenzo Valley water lines. Details, including a recording of the discussion can be obtained at the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors web site.



Community Improvement Group Seeks Your Input

One of the many great benefits of living in the private community of Mount Hermon is that we have a lot of control over things. We have a private water system and are removed from the politics and expenses of public water companies. We have private roads, trails and bridges. We even have our own post office with wonderful, personalized attention where we greet friends and neighbors nearly every day. We have our own recreational facilities, fitness center, gym, Rec Field, Canopy Tour, boats and swimming pool, all available through summer registration and the generosity of the Association. A great many employees of Mount Hermon are also residents of our Community, raise children here and invite friends and family to be a part of the neighborhood. Community officers and residents volunteer thousands of hours of free labor in an around the Mount Hermon operation. Donations of money, goods and other tangible property go directly to the ongoing operation of the 103 year old ministry and facility.

With that extraordinary control comes a measure of accountability. When Mount Hermon was founded, it was envisioned as a camp, a retreat, a Christian conference center. It was through the financial events that followed the 1906 earthquake that a plan was devised to sell portions of the acreage for private use. Over the years, the community grew with more and more full-time residents. Roads and bridges get used more and by heavier vehicles than 50 or 100 years ago. The water and well system is bigger and more complicated than ever before and yet most of the pipes and tanks are 50 years old.

The Association has asked for Community input to set priorities for needed work and finances.

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WOODWARDIA BRIDGE REPAIR UPDATE

As has previously been reported, Santa Cruz County has directed Mount Hermon Association to replace the bridge crossing Zayante Creek at Woodwardia Ave. The County also directed that a mechanical barrier gate be installed to prevent oversized vehicles from using the bridge until replaced. This proposed replacement will entail a substantial cost shared by the Association and the Community. Working with Community leadership, the Association is looking at alternatives to satisfy the County and to minimize the expense.

For now, it is proposed that the bridge continue to be used with reduced speed limits and a professional inspection program for not more than 5 years. Also, a gated, driveway-type access would be constructed at Mount Hermon Rd. at Lilac Lane for heavy vehicles only.

Long-term, there are three proposals.

- A. Close the existing bridge to all vehicles and construct a right-turn only access at Mount Hermon Rd and Lilac Lane;
- B. Close the existing bridge to all vehicles and construct a right-turn in and out and left turn in access at Mount Hermon Rd and Lilac Lane;
- C. Demolish the exiting bridge and replace it with a new steel bridge to current standards retaining emergency only access at Mount Hermon Rd and Lilac Lane.

A hearing was held on December 12 where the Association and Community representatives presented these proposals as well as requesting that the barrier gate requirement be eliminated.

The County stipulated that they would accept a 5 year period for continued operation with the reduced limits of 5 tons and 5 mph. and they would

accept the proposed inspection program. The County further stipulated that the barrier gate is not required if the Association adds another sign that lists the trucks to be excluded and installs speed bumps at each end of the bridge. The County would not accept options A or B as the permanent solution but agreed to continue the hearing until early March while we assess our position.

At this point the County still wants the Association to close Woodwardia Bridge no later than January 1, 2014 and then complete construction of a new bridge with an estimated cost of about \$600,000 to \$700,000 (present day costs). This cost would be shared by the Mount Hermon Association and the homeowners. The Association will be assessing their ability to successfully appeal the County's position .

The Association has received the permit to improve the Mount Hermon Road/Lilac Lane access and make it a proper legal access point for emergency and heavy vehicles. It will still have a gate to be opened for these vehicles only. In addition to this improvement a more elaborate enhancement of this access point will also be implemented early next year to be used by all in case of an earthquake requires closure of the bridge or during construction of a new bridge.

When the initial County order was issued, the Association called a special meeting of the Community and informational packets were distributed including projected costs of the project. All of this will have impact on the expenses shared by property owners within Mount Hermon. Residents are encouraged to voice their opinions regarding this potentially large, individual assessment on property owners.

Send your comments or questions to:
mail@mounthermoncommunity.com