



THE LETTER

LAFAYETTE ASSOCIATION OF HOMEOWNERS, INC. NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2004

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FROM THE OFFICE

Hallway Lighting

The hallway lighting project is nearing completion, and we are hopeful that it will be done by Christmas. The electrician is currently working on the 5th floor in the Campbell building.

Garden of Pan Review

We have all waited patiently, or not so patiently for this event. Well, finally the Garden of Pan has opened its doors. They are open from 6am until 11pm for now. If you haven't tried one of their delicious drinks, you should. I personally sampled one of their smoothies and it was great. Or maybe a pastry is more to your liking. Well, they have those, too. Fresh pastries that I am sure taste as good as they look. Rumor has it that they will also carry salads and sandwiches soon. What a great place to go for lunch.

Neighbor News

Leo Bell and his fellow bridge-playing teammates were world champions in the seniors category at the 12th annual World Team Bridge Olympiad held in Istanbul, Turkey from October 23 to November 6.

Susan Phinney and her a-cappella women's chorus, the Harborlites, took first place at the Sweet Adelines 2004 International Chorus Competition in Indianapolis, Indiana held October 26 to 30. They took first place from over 2,000 competitors and have the distinction of being the 2005 International Champions.

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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Gary Johnson

By Thea Robertshaw

If you hear organ music in the library area, don't worry—it's not the ghost of the Lafayette—it's Gary Johnson playing our organ "live." But like a ghost, Gary walks through walls, skips around times and places with his facts, as his story unfolds. One thing we know for sure is that Gary Johnson was born in Long Beach just a few blocks away from here.

As a young man looking for adventure, Gary moved to Yuba City and met a lady in a bar who mistook him for George Carlin, a comedian. She invited him to her father's steak and lobster house saying it's a nice place to eat and you'll like the piano player. After they got a little more acquainted, they fired the piano player and Gary landed his first piano job. After six months she left with another fellow but Gary stayed on for three years. After that he taught piano at the University in Chico.

Gary recalls that ladies liked to use him, they would pick him up and take him home. On one such occasion they were kissing in her kitchen. Next Gary hears "Knock-knock." He says, "What's that?" She says, "Oh, that's my husband." "Your Husband!" "Yes, I just want to make him jealous."

Eventually Gary married a girl from India. They had a daughter named Rashni who married an Indian man near Nepal who is the ambassador to Australia. Gary's family history is fascinating. His grandfather married the daughter of the Dean of the Nazarine University back East. The Dean set him up with money and a car, told him to find a place in California to establish a Nazarene Church. He picked Long Beach, and they lived in Naples happily ever after.

"I was an illegitimate child. Dad was still married when he met my mom. He had a wife and daughter." They finally married in 1946. They sold their land to Knotts and became one of the three richest families in the area. "My sister Sharon who is nine years older than me inherited a lot of money."

THE LAFAYETTE
CONDOMINIUMS
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FROM THE OFFICE, CONTINUED

to your Postal Carrier, our online request system is an easy way to notify your Postal Carrier that your packages are ready for pickup. Just one more way the U.S. Postal Service is working for you.

It's quick and easy to request a package pickup online. Follow these simple steps to take advantage of convenient carrier pickup:

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Notify your Postal Carrier that you have a package ready for pickup through Click-N-Ship service or simply enter your address at usps.com/pickup.

STEP 3

Your Postal Carrier will pick them up on your regular stop the next postal delivery day.

Visit usps.com/pickup to learn more about carrier pickup.

Annual Holiday Party

The annual holiday party is scheduled for Thursday, December 16 in the lobby. Please come and join your neighbors for appetizers, drinks, live music and raffle drawing to raise funds to light the façade and flag on the Campbell building.

Annual Homeowners Meeting

This year's meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 12, 2005** in the mezzanine.

If you are planning on running for the board, please get your resume to Sharon ASAP

so the proxies can be mailed with the candidates' information.

Nominations are needed! (See story below.)

To Serve or Not To Serve

Have you ever thought of being on the Board of Directors of your community association or condominium? Of course you have, in a fit of rage or disgust, perhaps. Oh, but then you got over it and decided to let somebody else take the fall. It is possible that being a condo director may not turn out to be your cup of tea, but don't sell yourself short. You many have the qualities your property needs. Good directors are hard to come by and you may be one. Read on.

What Does It Take

Simply stated, a good director possesses the same attributes needed to do a good job of parenting, managing a staff, or being a community activist. Although special knowledge is sometimes helpful, the key skill required is that of being able to understand the perspective of other people while working for the common good of the community.

Even Temperament

Effective directors stay cool. They do not get excited at board meetings or while defending board policies at social events. As we know, the electorate does not always elect the best people to office but they do prefer a leader who insists on hearing all sides to an issue before making a decision in preference over the firebrand who tries to bully through his own agenda against the interest of others.

Understanding...But Able To Take A Stand

Directors cannot expect all of the people to like all of the decisions they make. There will be bad

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Who's Who at the Lafayette

2004 Board of Directors

President: Bill Guzik

First Vice-President: Joe Hill

Second Vice-President: Lou Schor

Treasurer: Andy Blinn

Secretary: Frank Flores

Office Manager

Sharon Hays

Contact the President

E-mail: billguzik@aol.com

Phone: 495-6264

(Weekdays 8am-9pm, Weekends 9am-9pm)

Contact the Board

In writing: Each board member has a mailbox in the office. All written comments will be addressed in a timely manner. Or go to "Feedback" on the Lafayette's Website at www.thelafayettelb.org.

In person: Come to the board meetings every first Wednesday of the month at 7pm in the Mezzanine (2nd floor of main lobby).

Contact the Office

Phone: 436-5391 9:30am to 6pm weekdays

THE LAFAYETTE LETTER IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY FROM THE OFFICE OF THE LAFAYETTE ASSOCIATION OF HOMEOWNERS.

NEWSLETTER TEAM
ANDY BLINN
GERONIMO QUITORIANO
SHARON HAYS
THEA ROBERTSHAW

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS THE 21ST OF THE MONTH. AD SPACE AVAILABLE. CONTACT THE OFFICE FOR RATES.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR, CONTINUED

Gary's mom was one of the Grenville Sisters who sang with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. As for Gary, he is a social worker for L.A. County in home health services. The object is to have people stay at home, assess the situation and provide what is needed. So Gary assesses disabled people and he assigns various needs such as cleaning, bathing, cooking, and distribute medication. Some of the disabled are gunshot victims in a wheel chair or simply old age. Whenever there is a piano in the house Gary will play for them. He gives a piano lesson to an 80 year old woman once a year. She practices diligently until he returns. For an 8 year old autistic child who cannot sit still, he suggested a drum set. "This really helped the situation," he says. Gary likes to get these people to laugh. He mentions that this releases beneficial chemicals in their system.

Remembering his childhood, Gary says, "My Father spoiled me. He gave me everything I wanted. Mother was very strict. She was a Latin professor and went to World War II. She wanted me to compete in the Tchaikovsky piano competition in Russia with Van Claiborn. It's a good thing I didn't. I would have lost. She wanted me to be gay so she wouldn't have to deal with another woman. Finally I had a nervous breakdown. The psychiatrist told me I had a very high I.Q. They put my sister and me into a special school." Several times over the past years Gary has worked on a Ph.D. One thesis was on the relationship of music and I.Q. He found that musicians have a thicker cable (nerve core) between the right and the left brain. One of Gary's favorite stories concerns his stay at Camarillo State Mental Institution.

While traveling as an adventurous young man, he runs out of money. He knows if he calls his mother she'll refuse him. So he hitchhikes back to Long Beach. He's totally broke. He goes to his mother's house where the caretaker informs him that his mother has left for Europe. So he decides to go to Traveler's Aid. The lady at Traveler's Aid is very nice to him. She listens to his story. Then she says, "I can get you a free bus ride to Camarillo." Gary thinks that could be fun, see everything and sleep on the way back. He was unaware that the bus was destined to Camarillo State Hospital. At that time he was a hippie with long hair and a stash of marijuana in his pocket.

"My first clue that something was wrong was when they insisted that I get off the bus. I was all set to have a nice sleep on the return bus ride but they told me the bus wasn't leaving. This is 1976, I am 31 years old. When I enter the waiting room which was not a waiting room, it's a hospital, I'm asked to sign some papers. No, I

won't sign a waiver for electric shock therapy. Some guys in white coats appear." Gary says, "This ain't for me." They hold him tight by the arms. He smashes their heads together. "Next thing, five guys are on top of me! They tie me up and give me a shot. In the morning I wake up still in my street clothes. I get an interview with the head psychiatrist who says, "We have to keep you for 14 days." Every time Gary sees the doctor, he only looks at the ceiling, never says a word. Gary asks him if he's counted the holes in the ceiling. One week later the doctor split leaving Gary a note saying, "1264 holes." When Gary goes to lunch his roommate squeals on him saying Gary has got a stash, when he returns from lunch the "God Squad" is in his room going through his stuff, finding marijuana and having themselves a party. "Nothing is illegal in this place," they say as they consume his stash. Gary wants to play the piano that is there. The nurse says, "No you can't play, that might raise their blood pressure." To Gary who has lived with music all his life, that was absurd. "I sang Boogie Woogie when I was still in the womb."



PHOTO COURTESY OF GARY JOHNSON

The man, the myth. Gary Johnson, ladies and gentlemen.

FROM THE OFFICE, CONTINUED

losers, and there will be times when decisions run contrary to the interests of friends and neighbors. Spouses are not exempt from sometimes feeling the sting of a neighbor who has lost his cause and is blaming the "ins."

Works And Plays Well With Others

Most of the decisions made by condo boards affect groups of people, often employees, sometimes guests and visitors, but always unit owners. Directors with experience in dealing with social issues are certainly more in demand than a specialist. The leaking roof does indeed call for the expertise of a roofing expert. But that is easy to address because you can hire expert opinion. Dealing with the discontented residents who have suffered water damage, insurance claims, and reconstruction inconvenience is the job board members themselves should be qualified to patiently deal with. Why is it that the words "faith and confidence" come to mind?

My Time Is Now?

When considering taking a directorship, ask yourself if you can give the time to do the job well. A survey of condos and community associations shows that there is a direct relationship between the size of the property and the amount of time required to serve as an officer or director.

If you have a five member board and a manager, you could estimate on the meetings taking roughly two hours.

Why Serve?

A 1990 survey of condominium directors revealed that 66% of them were primarily motivated to:

1. Serve by a desire to "improve the present operation"
2. Building maintenance
3. To reduce special interest concerns
4. To get my special project approved

Aside from the fact that they always wear white hats, you can usually recognize the good condo director by the following traits:

** They have no conflict of interest while serving on the board.

** They do not directly or indirectly supply any goods or services to the condo or its management.

** They do not expect, and will not accept, any special privileges.

** They do not break the rules or expect any special service from employees.

** They possess an awareness of today's changing conditions and do not insist on being stuck in a time and location warp of "Here's how we did it in Timbuktu in 1948."

They are the kind of folks you trust, and you like having them lead the community. They are, well...like you.

Is It Worth It?

You bet it is! And if you keep your sense of humor, it can be a barrel of laughs, too. Honest men and women with a sincere interest in drawing together a community of neighbors can find it very rewarding when reasonable policies are consistently applied.

(From "Managers Report," March 1993 and reprinted in the Lafayette Condominium Owners Association Newsletter, May 1993)

CALVIN & HOBBS

BY BILL WATTERSON

