



August 2009

Laurel Hill Valley Citizens

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Neighborhood Picnic Celebration

by Johanna Mitchell

Our Laurel Hill Neighborhood Association's annual picnic is Sunday, August 23, 5:00 pm. in Laurel Hill Park.

Plan to attend and join your neighbors to enjoy a wonderful summer evening together. To those neighbors who have not previously attended this gathering, consider this is your personal invitation. Let's get to know each other.

Knowing our neighbors gives us a sense of community: from keeping an eye on your home to providing assistance when someone is ill, good neighbors make a good neighborhood. Meet (or re-meet) your neighbors at the picnic. It is a pleasure to put names to faces and to catch up with people we have met before.

As usual Laurel Hill Valley Citizens will provide all the great eats, this year focusing on food from our local area (meat and vegetarian). Just bring yourself, family and neighbors.

Raffle Tickets

We will be having our ever-popular raffle of great prizes again this year. Win gift certificates for restaurant dinners, ice cream cones, and pizzas. Choose from jewelry, garden supplies, and baskets full of wonderful delights.

Tickets are just \$1 each, six for \$5, or 13 for only \$10.

Help our neighborhood with expenses and win a great prize at the same time! Once again, thank you for your continued generosity.

Just Desserts

The homemade dessert contest promises to be popular again this year. All types of baked goods are eligible: cookies, as in bar, brownie, drop, molded, rolled, cut out, or refrigerator; cupcakes, pies, fruit crumbles and crisps, or

wherever your imagination and creativity lead you. Bake enough for the judges to taste and perhaps some to share with the crowd. Bring your delectables in a re-usable container with your name on the underside, hidden from the view of the judges. If it's not a family secret, we would love to have your recipe so we can publish the winning entry in our next newsletter.

Judging will be at 6:00 pm. Along with fame, bragging rights and applause, prizes will be awarded for the judges' top three favorites!

Most everyone loves dessert and we'd be delighted to taste some of your favorites. Please join the fun and ask a neighbor to come along.

May the best dessert win!

Volleyball and Croquet Games

Pick a team and challenge others: maybe brown houses versus red, or odd numbers versus even. We will have it all set up by 5:00 pm.

Musical Entertainment

New this year: The Laurel Hill Neighborhood School – Camas Ridge Community School Marimba Players will present a concert. Several of the current students and recent graduates have volunteered to entertain us. Also appearing will be Mitch Hyder. By popular demand Mitch will return with a promised new verse to his Laurel Hill ode "Turkeys in the 'Hood". For turkey lovers and haters alike, this is a presentation not to be missed. Audience participation and applause encouraged; fun for all ages.

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Zero-Waste Event

Once again we are planning a Zero-Waste Event. We will have bins for recycling and provide re-usable plates and utensils. We have become the neighborhood to emulate. Others are following our example.

We're trying to encourage zero waste so that we can divert as much trash as possible from the landfill. Our goal is to have all the picnic materials reusable, recyclable, or compostable. Pretty much ZERO waste! Last year we had less than seven pounds of trash, which included all the food wrappers.

Please Do Bring

- Your family and neighbors
- An appetite
- Re-usable containers for leftovers
- Homemade dessert if you are so inclined
- Lawn chairs/blankets/"sit-upons"

Please Leave at Home

- Disposables
- Your pets

Hope to see you Sunday, August 23!

P.S. *Keep your fingers crossed for nice weather*



Adopt-a-Spot

by Rich Hazel

On a nice evening recently I decided to stroll up Moon Mountain. Instead of the rutted utility easement (mucky in winter and dusty in summer) I prefer to walk a less travelled path that leads to the park. In anticipation of the completion of East Ridge Village, an all-season trail was constructed part-way up Moon Mountain several years ago. Designed to tie in with the planned streets that have yet to be built, this initial trail segment is a little hard to find and infrequently used.

Because the trail doesn't see much use I knew that blackberries have been trying to reclaim it, sending their scouting canes from the trail's edge over the gravel walkway. In response, I took a small pair of pruners with

me. Since its construction the trail has seen a handful of work parties. At least one of these had to rescue the trail from extensive overgrowth and did a great job of restoring the walkway. On my recent amble I ended up spending an extra twenty minutes cutting canes. None of them blocked my passage, but I knew it would never be any easier to cut them then it was then. I plan to do the same again next month. I estimate that I can spend three hours a year on this light maintenance, and that this easy work will keep the trail open. By doing just this something I want is preserved for me, but is also preserved for the entire neighborhood.

Have you thought about your obligation to your neighborhood? What will you do to "pay it forward"? My challenge to you: adopt-a-spot. Find something that needs, but doesn't receive, a little TLC. It doesn't matter if someone else should do it, or if you pay taxes, or if no one else is carrying their share. Park Maintenance cleans out the sand at the playground, but not often enough to keep out all the weeds. Can you spare twenty minutes to pull them? The message

board at the mouth of the Valley has been tagged. Can you take five minutes to paint it over? Is there a public spot you can keep looking nice? I'm not suggesting anything as ambitious as picking trash from a mile of interstate highway. Find something do-able, something that works for you. Then you just do it.

The beauty of Adopt-a-Spot is it's flexible. If you can't get to it this week, just do it next week. You don't have to be concerned with meeting days and times because you do it on your own schedule. If you want to work alone, you can. If you want to pair up with someone, you can probably find a kindred soul. Most importantly, you can find something that it's important to you, something that you want to do. No worries about groups and consensus, if you think it needs done, you do it. Simple, effective, and satisfying.

So, unless someone convinces me I should let "my" trail be lost I will be spending a few minutes per month with my pruners, doing my part for my neighborhood. Will you do yours?

Neighborliness

by Rich Hazel

Bark. Bark-bark-bark.

Whine. Thump. Shout. Bang, thump, boom, roar, clatter. Bark.

Your noise? My annoyance? Who's to say, and more importantly, how can we speak about it among ourselves?

I recently read comments from two sides of a neighborhood dispute. On one side, a series of anonymous letters complaining of constant noise and inconsiderate behavior. On the other, a response that no noise violations have occurred. It's not within my knowledge, and certainly not my position to say who's right and who's wrong, or even that there is a right and a wrong in this matter.

Too often each of us presumes almost everyone else's interests align with our own and against that one guy who's making trouble. If something annoys me, the source of that annoyance is out of line. If I think it's okay, your complaint is invalid.

For better or worse, our lives are lived near those of others. When Rodney King asked, "Can we all get along?",

he was addressing a scene of widespread violence. Nonetheless, the question is germane to our daily actions and reactions towards our neighbors, whether innocuous or hateful. Our lives are a sequence of compromise: at work, with family, while driving. We compromise precisely so we can all get along, because it is for our own long-term benefit.

You may have a leaf blower. You may have a dog that barks. You may have parties, mow your grass, listen to music outdoors, make house repairs, vacuum your car. You may want to paint your house bright purple, or put up a huge antenna, or keep a goat. At one time or another, with no malice, you probably will do something perfectly legal that will disturb a neighbor. Conversely, you may be the person who is bothered by these actions. Regardless of which side you find yourself on, your best interests are in finding some middle ground.

A section of my yard has mature trees and a minimally managed understory. I once received a City Complaint about the area: abate my nuisance by cutting down "weeds" or be prepared to face the consequences. I admit that there were a couple of areas where the grass had grown up and where some vines had spread. So, was it the grass on the corner that had offended someone? Or the wild peas that had bunched in mid-block? Or maybe it was the scores of wild cherry tree starts that were sprouting or the clusters of wild daisy. Because the complainer didn't talk with me, I just mowed down everything. I didn't have a choice, because I

didn't have any information, just the anonymous complaint. I'm sure I cut down what was bothering him/her, but I know a lot of other stuff was stripped away as well. Maybe even something s/he would have liked to remain.

About three years ago I wrote of another anonymous complaint directed to a neighbor of mine. At that time I encouraged neighbors to talk to each other. Now I worry that statement doesn't go far enough, because "talking to" can mean no more than "talking at". We need to do better, we need to reach the level of "talking with". We need to listen and we need to speak in a way that allows listening. We need to have dialogue.

Maybe you think your dog is well behaved, but you don't know how much it barks in the day when you're not home. Maybe I think my leaf blower shouldn't be considered noisy after 7:00 am, but you like to sleep until 8:00. Whether the issue is noise, appearance, or anything else, don't miss an opportunity to benefit yourself: start a dialogue and communicate; clarify; ask follow-up questions; understand what "they" want and communicate what you want. Talk with your neighbors.



Sound Wall Survey Results

by Suzanne Roberts

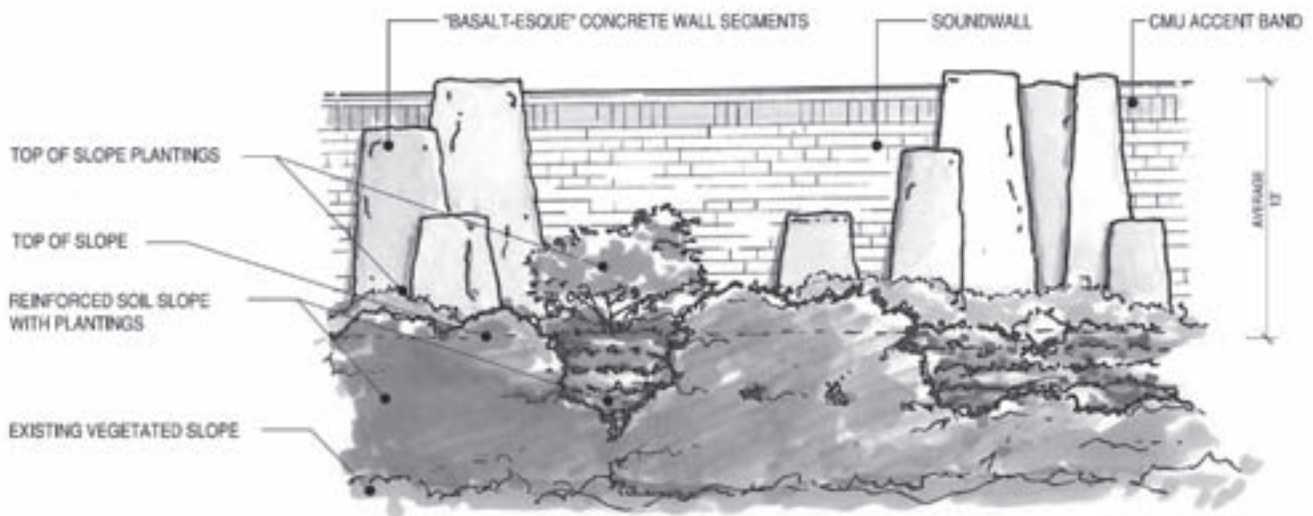
Oregon Department of Transportation representatives met with Laurel Hill Valley neighbors in April to discuss and answer questions about a sound wall planned for construction as part of the Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge project. ODOT then polled property owners and residents in the area of the sound wall. Following the vote for construction of the wall, a survey asking for input on design concepts solicited over 120 responses. The responses were received through a combination of Internet survey and mailed-in responses. The survey included visual examples of the design options for the sound wall and asked neighbors to rank them. Respondents overwhelmingly selected sculpted concrete as their first choice. This design is intended to emulate the basalt wall of Judkins Point by using colored and acid-etched concrete. Other designs included steel panels, metal trellises, and a large camas flower image.

Since completion of the survey ODOT has continued designing the retaining wall that will support the rise in the southbound freeway on-ramp. The sound wall will be on surface grade for most of its length, but sit atop the retaining wall along the ramp section.

The proposed retaining wall will be a “vegetated reinforced soil slope”. It is not a “wall” in the traditional sense, but more of a structurally-reinforced slope that can be planted with a variety of vegetation. Vegetation would be irrigated to ensure plant survival and a good appearance.

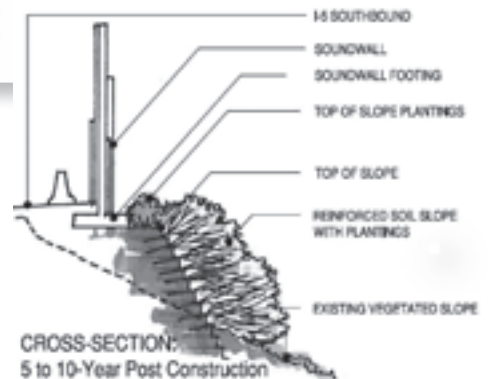
Conceptual drawings of a vegetated reinforced soil slope in combination with the sculpted concrete sound wall are in this newsletter. One drawing shows a section of the wall on the neighborhood side, and the second is a cross section depicting the wall and vegetation five to ten years after construction.

(Suzanne Roberts is a Public Involvement Specialist with Oregon Bridge Delivery Partners)



SECTION - NEIGHBORHOOD SIDE

ALSO SHOWS REINFORCED SOIL SLOPE (OCCURS @ SOUTHERN 2/3 OF WALL; RANGE 0-10-FT.)



Web Site Assists Sharing Local Fruits and Vegetables

by Deborah Kelly

Do you have more zucchini in your garden than you can use? More tomatoes than you need? What about all those apples that are ripening on the trees in your yard? You can share the excess bounty from your garden with your neighbors in the Laurel Hill Valley. Just send me an e-mail at dskharp@yahoo.com. I'll post the information on the neighborhood web site giving the details of what you are offering to share and how you want others to contact you or pick it up.

To check the web site for available fruits and vegetables go to www.lhvc.org and click on "Free Neighborhood Surplus Produce" at the top of the right hand column.

This is a great way to avoid waste and share the goodness of fresh, locally grown food. Thanks for your participation!



Plan to Prune

Even though you don't "own" your sidewalk (technically it is in the street right-of-way) you are responsible for its maintenance. City Code requires you keep the surface in good condition and keep the walkway free of obstructions. Obstructions means more than that. To get a perspective of how others perceive your sidewalk, take a few minutes to actually walk it. Do it honestly. Do you have to walk around bushes or hedges intruding into the walkway? You need to cut them back. Do you have to duck to avoid tree leaves or branches drooping over the walk? You need to prune. Unless you can walk on all portions of the sidewalk without obstruction, you need to trim.

Make Your Own Cider at Neighborhood Gathering

by Deborah Kelly

Do you have apple or pear trees in your yard? Would you like to turn that fruit into juice? If so, join us at Laurel Hill Park on Saturday, September 26th at 1 pm. Don McLoud will bring his cider press for a neighborhood juicing event. In addition to your apples or pears, bring containers for your fresh juice and additional containers to carry away the compost.

Don says apples work better than pears, and his is a hand juicer so you should be prepared to work. He also recommends picking your fruit at least a day before and keeping it in the shade until you bring it to the park. Fruit that is cool will juice better than when it is still warm from the tree.

It goes without saying that you should be sure your fruit is clean to keep contaminants from your juice.

Need a little help with a
big idea for your
neighborhood?



The City of Eugene's **Neighborhood Matching Grants** program is accepting proposals for community improvement projects such as parks, playgrounds, gardens or events. Your group provides half of the cash/materials/labor and the City will match it.

Grant packets are now available at www.eugene-or.gov/matching-grants, at City libraries, community centers, and the Atrium Building at 99 W. 10th Ave.



Want to learn more? Contact Cindy Clarke, City of Eugene Neighborhood Services, at 682-5272.

Spare the Water, Save Your Oak

by Rich Hazel

The Oregon White Oak is a beautiful tree, easily recognized by its leaves and distinctive light gray or whitish bark. Common throughout the Willamette Valley prior to the arrival of white settlers, it has been cut and crowded out until it now occupies less than 1/100th of its former range. A significant number of specimens still exist in the Laurel Hill neighborhood, many in residential yards.

Oregon White Oak is a highly desirable tree on all but the smallest

lots. It is a strong, and because it has a deep taproot and well-developed lateral roots it has very good ability to stand firm against wind. It also contains less flammable resin than Douglas fir, pine, and other conifers found in this area, making it less prone to spread fire.

If you have one or more of these fine strong trees you can see that it lives to a ripe old age (which can be up to 500 years!) by properly watering it. Which is to say, DON'T water it. The Oregon White Oak does best when it is allowed to experience the dry Willamette Valley summer. Help it out by keeping drought tolerant plants in its root zone and keep water away.

Oregon White Oak (*Quercus garryana*) can grow in climates with as little as seven inches rain per year, surviving drought that can kill other Northwest trees. If you are already watering your oaks, however, reduce your watering gradually. Water once a week, then once every two weeks, and then once a month to allow the tree to re-adapt to its natural conditions. A sudden change can be just as hard on the tree as watering too much.

Remember to avoid other types of rapid change as well: the sudden addition of fertilizers, pesticides and constant irrigation that you would typically see on a golf course will most likely kill an older White Oak.

(Thanks to Eugene Urban Forester Mark Snyder and the US Forest Service for information used in this article.)



City Concerts in Parks Offers Nearby Music

Local free music this summer includes the Washburne Park Series.

All concerts start at 6:30 pm in Washburne Park at Agate Street & 20th Avenue. It's a perfect event for a picnic dinner. Bring a blanket!

Sunday, August 16

Oregon Brass Society

(a genuine British-style brass band)

Sunday, August 30

Springfield Community Concert Band

(pops, show tunes, marches and more)

Sunday, September 6

Accordions Anonymous

(Twelve steps to accordion fun and frivolity)

Sunday, September 7

One More Time Marching Band (Favorite tunes, baton twirling, funny hats and a bit of marching for good measure!)



Executive Committee Members

Jan Wostmann, *Co-chair*

Stephanie Midkiff, *Secretary*

Betty Hemmingsen,
Treasurer

Jake Bradshaw

Sean Ferrarese

Rich Hazel

Betty Hosokawa

Deborah Kelly

Johanna Mitchell

Sandy Tilcock

LHVC 2009 Meeting Schedule

SUMMER PICNIC

August 23, Laurel Hill Park

FALL

November 19

Policy Statement: This is the official newsletter of Laurel Hill Valley Citizens. Newsletters are published and mailed courtesy of the City of Eugene. Newsletters are produced by neighborhood volunteers and are free to residents and businesses of the neighborhood. Space is available for letters to the editor and editorial comments from neighbors. All signed letters will be published as space permits. Editorials express the author's views, not the position of the Neighborhood Association, the City's elected officials, or City staff.



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Adiós

by Rich Hazel

This issue marks my last as the LHVC Newsletter Editor/Writer. In the past dozen or so issues I've presented articles about arson, activism, artisans, bridges, bikes, burglary, cookies, construction, complaints, picnics, parks, panhandlers, streets, speeding, subdivisions, sidewalks, and much more. Regardless of the topic, I've always considered content for inclusion based on how it was relevant to our neighborhood. Sometimes environmental matters called for thinking globally and acting locally, and they affected our lives here in Laurel Hill. Sometimes a story covered a matter for which no one outside of Laurel Hill was affected... or cared. Regardless of the depth or breadth of the stories, I hope you've found the content relevant to you, a Laurel Hill Valley Citizen. Thanks for reading.

Future issues will be written and compiled by neighbor Deborah Kelly (dskharp@yahoo.com), and will continue to be designed by neighbor Katherine Getta. I wish you all well and look forward to reading upcoming issues of the LHVC Newsletter.



(Thank you, Rich!)

All uncredited material by the Newsletter Editor: Rich Hazel. Please send letters, articles, comments and concerns to rhazel@yahoo.com
Newsletter design by LHVC neighbor Katherine Getta, www.gettadesign.com

Laurel Hill Valley Citizens is Eugene's oldest neighborhood organization, chartered by the City Council in 1974. General Meetings are held quarterly to learn about and discuss issues relating to the quality of life in our neighborhood. The LHVC Executive Committee meets at other times to discuss and represent the interests of the neighborhood.

For more information: Jan Westmann, LHVC Co-Chair, 485-1394, jw@efn.org

www.lhvc.org