A busy 6 months for HHIA Board

The Board has been kept busy with issues affecting the Heights. Several Board members were termed out and as of our election in January all were not replaced. Since then we have welcomed Cristina Geiger, Jim Kleinpell, and Shou-Jen Kuo to fill all vacancies.

Have you noticed the Vines along Hacienda Boulevard? Six years ago HHIA suggested a beautification project, and thanks to Supervisor Don Knabe and James Yang of County Public Works, it's really pleasant to go north on Hacienda Blvd.

Plans are now underway for HHIA involvement in the Jim Davis Beautification Day, Saturday July 2nd. and the July 4th parade with Supervisor Don Knabe as the Grand Marshall.

At each monthly meeting new development projects have been studied and input from residents received. In addition, during the public comment period, residents bring issues they have to HHIA attention.

Three major issues have commanded our involvement. Los Angeles County initiated a study of parks throughout the County, and HHIA took the lead on studying possible needs in our community as well as the involvement and public input. The results of that study are now out. (See page 3.)

The Quemetco lead/acid battery recycling plant is being evaluated because of requests for permit extensions and a 25% increase in their production. Concerns about toxic contamination by lead in soils of Hacienda Heights require testing of areas around the plant that began in May, including homes of our residents. Meanwhile airborne arsenic contamination is being evaluated from the same plant. A public meeting is planned for June 23rd. (See page 4.)

Planning for the new regional park on the closed Puente Hills Landfill continues and a public meeting on this project is planned for June 29th at the Hacienda Heights Community Center. (See page 2.)

Two big events coming to the Heights

The 22nd Jim Davis Beautification Day will be celebrated on July 2nd. at 8 a.m. at the Mormon Church on Colima Ave. Organizations in Hacienda Heights and residents will come together to clean up debris along the July 4th parade route. The activity has been sponsored by HHIA since its beginning. It takes place along Stimson Ave. on the route of the July 4th “I Love A Parade” as well as other streets nearby. After his early death, HHIA named the activity for Davis, a past president of the organization.

Annually HHIA has been successful in mustering 200 or more volunteers on the Saturday before the parade to sweep up trash, leaves bottles cans and other debris along the route. Many groups have supported the activity including the Hsi Lai Temple, St John Vianney, the first, second, and fifth Wards of the LDS Church and their youth organizations, plus three Boy Scout Troops: 620, 684, and 710.

The Los Angeles County of Public Works supplies bags, gloves and safety vests. Several businesses provide water and donuts.

For groups or individuals interested in participating: We meet at the Mormon Church at the corner of Colima and Halliburton/Dawn Haven. Contact is Christine Geiger at (310) 763-6199 or e-mail: cmegeiger213@hotmail.com

Following the clean-up, on Monday, July 4th, the parade will begin at Stimson and Kiska/Colima and proceed down to Steinmetz Park where there will be booths, food stands and entertainment.

This parade began in 1988 headed by Barbara Fish and Nancy Abbott. It was sponsored, as in all years, by the Kiwanis. HHIA’s first entry featured recycling with three members dressed as trash cans. HHIA has had an entry every year and has won several awards.
Puente Hills Landfill Park Draft Environmental Report (DEIR) coming soon!

Planning continues for the creation of a new regional park on approximately 115 acres of the Puente Hills Landfill that closed on Oct. 31, 2013. There have been 5 community workshops at which residents expressed types of activities they would like and their concerns that there will be no access to the park area directly from Hacienda Heights. At the workshops, three themes were introduced: a passive park with trails, open areas and natural vegetation with connections to trail with opportunities for wildlife viewing; a second vision of a park with more extensive recreational options, including activities such as a bicycle park, a zip line, dog park, etc. and a third option that emphasized the history of the landfill for its renewable energy and recycling. Residents voted on the activities and a “Preferred Plan” was developed.

Based on the input from attendees at the meetings, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) is currently being prepared. The Public Review of the DEIR will be presented to the community and stakeholders on June 29th. Following a presentation, the consultant team will facilitate a discussion and conduct a question and answer session.

To see the workshop presentations go to: http://www.puentehillslandfillpark.org/workshops

Attend the Public Meeting

Date: June 29, 2016
6:30-8: p.m.
Location: Hacienda Heights Community Center
1234 Valencia Ave.
Hacienda Heights, CA

Miss Mary Ann of Romper Room Passes Away

We received the sad news that Mary Ann King, a long time resident of Hacienda Heights, passed away on June 16th. She was recognized from her time as the hostess of the popular children’s TV series “Romper Room” from 1966-76 and activities in Hacienda Heights.

She was known for advising children how to be “Do Bees” — well mannered children — and not a “Don’t Bee” — one who misbehaves. She finished the program with her magic mirror saying “Romper, bomper, stomper boo, tell me, tell me, tell me do...” after which she would look through her magic mirror to recite names of children she pretended to see.

In 2003 the mirror was stolen when she was attacked in the parking lot of Hometown Buffet in the City of Industry. She suffered a broken arm and rib as well as a punctured rib. She was sad about its loss as people who watched her as children would recognize her and say their names were never used. She would take the mirror (an empty frame) from the black taffeta bag which she carried and would look through it and recite their names to their delight.

She lived for many years in Hacienda Heights and was active in local affairs as president of the Puente Hills Chamber of Commerce, working as public relations director for the La Puente Valley Regional Occupational Program and as float judge for the July 4th parades.

She had recently moved to Chino Hills.

Come to HHIA Meetings

The monthly meetings of HHIA are held at the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District Offices located at: 5959 E. Gale Ave., City Of Industry, CA 91745. Meetings are held the third Monday of each month for the remainder of the year starting at 7 p.m.

Hear reports from law local enforcement, government representatives, residents concerns and discussion of new proposed projects for the Heights.
L.A. County Park Assessment is Completed
Hacienda Heights residents tell what they want!

Park projects in Los Angeles County are currently funded in part by Proposition A—the Safe Neighborhoods Park Tax passed in 2014. This funding is set to expire in 2019, and funding for park projects will be greatly reduced. As a result, in March 2015 the Supervisors of Los Angeles County approved a motion to begin a countywide survey of the park needs and recreation areas within the County, including both cities and unincorporated county areas. The study is an attempt to determine the number of parks, their condition, and community needs for new facilities and potential costs of initiating these changes. The results of the Parks Needs Assessment will help inform planning and decision-making regarding future funding. A parcel tax is being considered for placement on the November 2016 ballot. Current voter polls indicate support for such a measure.

The County was divided up into study areas. In Hacienda Heights, HHIA took the lead and a committee of Board Members evaluated the parks within our community. Each park was visited to determine types of facilities present, their condition, and what was needed with respect to maintenance. The County staff of each area also evaluated needs of parks under their management. After the evaluation was complete, a community meeting was held at the Hacienda Heights Community Center to present the HHIA findings and to solicit response from attending residents as to what new projects they would like. A list of what was wanted was compiled during the meeting and residents voted on projects they wanted. The ten top priority choices were submitted to the Dept. of Parks and Recreation and included in the countywide study. The purpose of the study will inform the Supervisors of current park needs and what residents of each area would like added as they consider placement of a parcel tax to replace current funding to be lost.

On May 16, 2016, a meeting was held at the Hacienda Heights Community Center to discuss the findings of the Assessment. Hacienda Heights was found to be park poor. The county average is 3.3 park acres per 1,000 population. Within our community, the parks ranged from 1.3 acres to 2.1 acres per 1,000 residents. The 10 top priority projects as determined during voting by attendees at the Assessment workshop were:

1. Add Dog Park at Thomas Burton Park
2. Add skate parks at Thomas Burton & Orange Grove Parks
3. Add a Community Garden at Orange Grove Park
4. Build a New Community Park that included land acquisition, infrastructure, a pool and aquatics center and a gymnasium
5. Repair Infrastructure/General at Thomas Burton Park
6. Repair Infrastructure/General at Manzanita Park
7. Repair Infrastructure/General at Steinmetz Park
8. Repair Infrastructure/General at Los Robles Park
9. Repair Infrastructure/General at Los Robles Park
10. Repair Infrastructure/General at Los Robles Park

The total estimated cost for the prioritized projects and deferred maintenance is: $41,034,427

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST FOR PRIORITIZED PROJECTS, DEFERRED MAINTENANCE.

To read all the results for Hacienda Heights:
http://lacountyparkneeds.org/FinalReportAppendixA/StudyArea_099.pdf

To read the results for all areas of L.A. County:
In May 2016, the California Dept. of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) began soil testing for lead and other toxic materials in Hacienda Heights originating from the Quemetco Inc. lead/acid battery recycling plant located at 729 South 7th St. in the City of Industry. The plant is located in the City of Industry but Hacienda Heights residents live within 400 feet of the facility. Waters within Puente Creek, a tributary that feeds into Puente Creek, are also being sampled.

Testing started due to concerns about accumulation of lead in soils during the years the plant has been operating since 1959 and possible movement of lead into surface and underground waters. Children playing in dirt and pets in contact with soils may be particularly affected. There is no known safe level of lead that can cause life-long neurological damage, particularly to infants and young children. Because of this risk, the Los Angeles County Health Dept. and Quemetco are offering free blood tests for lead to residents near the facility. (See areas involved in testing and assessment page 5.)

Residents within 1/4 mile are being asked to sign permission documents to allow DTSC soil testing on their properties. If you received a packet from DTSC, please return the permissions so testing can be completed. Sampling will include all homes studied during earlier investigations in 1991 and 2004. Up to 50 samples will be taken for each residence—10 locations at 5 depths - 0 1-3 inches, 3-6 inches, 6-12 inches, 12-18 inches. In the current soil testing by DTSC, public areas such as streets are being sampled first, to be followed by residential properties within 1/4 mile of the Quemetco facilities. If high lead levels are found out to this perimeter, testing will extend beyond the 1/4 mile.

On May 17, 2016 the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) instructed Quemetco it must notify 12,000 residents and businesses near the plant of potential contamination by arsenic, a known carcinogen by June 16, 2016. The company also must develop a risk reduction plan within 180 days because of the total number of people estimated to get cancer due to the facility’s emissions over several decades. The reduction is required because of new regulations instituted by the agency. Arsenic is a byproduct of the smelting of lead from the batteries and is a known carcinogen.

HHIA has joined with the Clean Air Coalition of Avocado Heights and the Sierra Club in monitoring two permit applications submitted by Quemetco—one with DTSC for a ten year extension to operate and separately another with SCAQMD for a 25% expansion of operations and change in fuel. Quemetco did install an additional electrostatic precipitator which resulted in a reduction of its lead and other toxic air pollutants but new regulations passed by SCAQMD require further reduction in arsenic contamination resulting due to air transport from the company’s smokestack.

DTSC, the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the Regional Water Quality Control Board and L.A County Sanitation District. are coordinating environmental studies and possible remediation of problems. This plant currently recycles batteries coming not only from areas west of the Rockies, but also from foreign countries including Canada, Mexico, European, African, and South American areas.

The Quemetco plant has been recycling lead/acid/batteries since 1959. Over the years there have been multiple violations of operating regulations and alarms were raised in 1991 and 2004 when tests of areas around the plant were found to be highly contaminated with lead, some at very high levels. Some cleanup was performed, but residential areas were not included.
Map of Quemetco areas of soil testing and arsenic risk assessment

Inner circle—1/4 mile radius for lead testing by DTSC
Outer circle—1 mile radius from Quemetco
Irregular outline extending beyond the map—area of risk assessment for arsenic

Do you have a local problem?

1. Come to a meeting of HHIA or contact us by e-mail. We will try to suggest a solution.
2. Contact the County. Call 211 for Los Angeles County services.
3. Look in your copy of Hacienda Heights Connections sent to you for a place to call. This is your guide to all things in the community. All residents should receive this from Supervisor Don Knabe’s office by mail.

Contact the HHIA Board

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HHIA  P.O. Box 5235 Hacienda Heights 91745
Keep up with HHIA on the website: hhia.wordpress.com
It’s membership renewal time!
H.H.I.A. MEMBERSHIP FORM

Date of payment ______________

First Name ______________________ Last Name __________________

Street __________________________ Hacienda Heights, CA 91745
Phone __________________________

If you would like to receive announcements of meetings, activities, please provide an e-mail address. E-mail address: ________________________________
(Your e-mail address will not be made public to any other organization or person.)

Annual Residents Dues $20 _____ Life membership Dues $150 _____
Newsletter Administration Donation $10 _________

Enclosed is a check for $ ______________ Renewal _____ New Member ______

Please tear off this portion, place in an envelope and mail.
Mail check to: HHIA  P.O. Box 5235  Hacienda Heights, CA 91745