



Working to build a better community

# Newsletter

Hacienda Heights Improvement Association

December, 2015

Editor: Joan Licari

Happy New Year to all in Hacienda Heights!

## President's Message

**H**appy New Year to all, and may you have peace, love, health, happiness and prosperity in 2016.

Major items of importance are on HHIA's agenda this year include but are not limited to the following:

1. Master planning meetings of the Puente Hills Landfill Regional Park.
2. Coordination/planning of the Hacienda Heights County Parks Needs Assessment Program and Community Engagement Process.
3. Community involvement regarding the Quemetco, Inc. lead battery recycling plant operations and state agencies mandated environmental monitoring/abatement.
3. Hacienda Boulevard Improvement/Beautification Projects.

I want to take this time to thank the following termed-out HHIA Board Members for their time, talent, tireless support and efforts in the community and its environs as follows: Mr. Maury Edwards, Ms. Lucy Pedregon and Ms. Johanna Zamora. In addition, a special thanks to previous HHIA Board Member, Mr. Jeff Yann, who continues to be actively engaged in the community and as both an environmentalist and mentor for environmental issues which have had a significant impact on the quality of life in, around and beyond Hacienda Heights. It has been my pleasure to work with such talented and committed individuals.

In closing, I greatly encourage you to be actively engaged and participate in those items that shall continue to shape and affect our residents, quality of life, community and its environs.

Sincerely,  
Brent R. Palmer  
President, HHIA

**Keep up with what is happening in  
Hacienda Heights!**

**Go to our website:** <http://hhia.wordpress.com/>

## Become involved—Join the Board!

Welcome to David Salcedo, a new Board member

**H**HiA speaks for Hacienda Heights to Los Angeles County. Be a spokesperson for your community! There are currently three openings for new Board members. If you are interested in helping guide the community towards the future and if you have been a member of HHIA for 6 months, you are eligible to be on the Board of Directors of HHIA. Terms are for 2 years. A member can serve for 3 consecutive terms after which they are termed out. They can return to the Board after one year. **Contact Brent Palmer at [brparch@msn.com](mailto:brparch@msn.com) if interested in becoming a Board member.**

At the monthly meetings proposals for new developments, both private and public are considered. Representatives from the Sheriff, California Highway Patrol, the library and the county report on activities happening in the Heights. Proposals are also made by HHIA for things needed in our community.



## Come to the Annual Dinner Jan. 20th!

On Wed. Jan. 20th HHIA will host "Celebrating 68 Years of Community Service" and recognition of our Los Angeles County 4th District representatives. It will be held at the Hacienda Heights Community Center located at 1234 Valencia Ave, Hacienda Heights, CA 91745. Dinner will be at 6 p.m. and concludes at 8:30 p.m. **It is free to HHIA members, \$10 for nonmembers.**

The event will include an introduction of incoming Board members and a farewell to those who will be leaving. Come meet our 4th District Supervisor, Don Knabe.

## Planning for our new landfill regional in Hacienda Heights



In October 2013 the Puente Hills Landfill, once the largest sanitary landfill in the United States, closed. As agreed in the last permit process in 2003, after closure the area that had been filled with garbage will become a new regional park. As the planning process got into high gear this fall, 4 meetings were held to obtain information from residents on the types of park activities they wanted.

The park will be developed in three phases over many years depending on compaction and decom-

position of waste that causes surface subsidence that is estimated to be as much as 125 feet in places. The unsettled nature of the surface precludes placement of permanent structures in such areas. There are only limited areas that may be developed on solid materials.

At the initial meeting held in September, a presentation showed attendees various types of activities that could be included and asked them to vote on those they preferred. Possibilities included such things as picnic areas, a dog park, playgrounds, bike skills areas, zip lines, a gondola, hiking trails, bird observation stations plus many others.

From the voting, three themes were presented at a second community forum for consideration of residents. The “Ecology” theme emphasized passive activities such as hiking and outdoor nature study. A second theme “Recreate” included more active pastimes including zip-lines, a gondola, slides as well as picnics and bike skills regions, a café, performance and art show regions. The third theme “Upcycle” emphasized the history of the landfill, as well as its energy and waste recycling activities. Residents again were asked to vote using stickers placed on activities they supported. At the third and similar fourth meeting, a “Preferred Park Plan” was presented. HHIA is supporting a vision of the park includes facilities for quiet activities, playgrounds, a dog park, trails, opportunities for observing nature, hiking, exercise stations and stair climbs as well as easy access to all parts of the park by vehicles with adequate parking. This vision is more aligned with the “Ecology” theme.

**The next meeting, the “Final Park Plan Environmental Scoping Meeting” is planned for January 27, 2016 at Don Julian School at 13855 Don Julian Rd. La Puente, CA 91746 . Watch the HHIA website for information as it becomes available. It will be your park; give input on what you want for now and future generations. You can view the presentations as well as the “Preferred Plan” at the Los Angeles County Parks and recreation website: [puentehillslandfillpark.org](http://puentehillslandfillpark.org),**

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## Hacienda Blvd. beautification begins

The Los Angeles Dept. of Public Works has begun beautification work on Hacienda Blvd from Three Palms St. to Halliburton. Work will take about 3 months to complete. The County will be installing trellises along the fence-lines on Hacienda Blvd. and planting vines that will eventually cover and the block walls along the boulevard. They will be also be installing irrigation systems and doing sidewalk repairs.

Examples of this type of project can be seen along Workman Mill Rd. in Avocado Heights. During construction, there may be restriction of traffic along Hacienda Blvd. Temporary “No Parking” signs will be posted along the construction route at least 1 day prior to the arrival of work crews into an area. However working time will be between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. to minimize the impact to travel times during peak commute hours.

## **Assessment of parks in Hacienda Heights begins—Be Involved on Feb. 11th!!**

**D**o you want more playing fields, a dog park, a BMX site, a pool or something else? The Supervisors of Los Angeles County are asking the 88 cities and representative groups from unincorporated areas throughout the entire county to take a look at their communities and see what is needed in our parks—repairs, new parks, land acquisition and recreational facilities. This \$3.5 million study is considered necessary before putting a together new bond issue for possibly the November 2016 ballot. This bond would replace the loss of funding that has been provided by Proposition A that will be ending soon.



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**A workshop to assess the park and recreation needs and opportunities in Hacienda Heights has been scheduled by HHIA for 6:30 p.m. on February 11, 2016 at the Community Center, 1234 Valencia Ave., Hacienda Heights.**

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This workshop will be an opportunity for Hacienda Heights residents to directly influence planning and development of the park system in our community. The purpose of this workshop is threefold: (1) gain an understanding of the facilities available in present parks in Hacienda Heights; (2) collaborate with attendees to determine what improvements, upgrades or new facilities are needed and (3) conduct a voting exercise to prioritize the list of potential park projects.

HHIA involvement, as a sponsor, is gathering a team of volunteers to carry out the following tasks: (1) conduct outreach to encourage residents to attend the workshop, (2) arrange all workshop logistics, (3) prepare a list of potential park projects. (4) present Community Profiles of each of our 7 parks during the workshop, (5) collaborate with workshop participants to expand the prepared list of potential park projects, (6) conduct a voting exercise with participants to prioritize the projects on the list and (7) document the list of prioritized projects. **Results of the workshop will be compiled and reported directly to the L.A. County Parks and Recreation Department as part of a comprehensive assessment report.**

### **Make your wants known!!!!**

#### **Is there a problem in your neighborhood?**

For information, to report a code violation, or other problem call 211. 211 LA provides information and takes reports about potential code and zoning violations from residents of the unincorporated area of Hacienda Heights in Los Angeles County.

They will help with questions about animal control, unpermitted garage conversions, home construction permits, graffiti removal, and illegal dumping, or other issues/concerns you may have.

Code violations are also monitored by HHIA. Contact one of the Board members listed on page 6.

#### **Come to HHIA meetings!**

We will be meeting on Jan. 25th, and Feb. 22nd at 7 p.m. All other meetings are on the 3rd Mon. of the month. The location is at the Hacienda La Puente School District Office at 15959 E. Gale Ave., City Of Industry, CA 91745. Each month we hear reports from local law enforcement and government representatives about local proposed projects.

**Give your input about any concerns you have in your area!**



## What's happening with the extension of battery/acid recycling permit for Quemetco ?

HHIA continues to monitor the progress of the request by the Quemetco lead/acid battery recycling plant for a ten-year extension of their operating permits and expansion of operations by 25% going from 1.2 million pounds to 1.5 million pounds of batteries processed each day. HHIA is working together with the Clean Air Coalition (CAC) of Avocado Heights, located in the area north of the 60 freeway and east of the 605 freeway. This is also an area potentially subjected to pollution from the plant.

Quemetco is a hazardous waste recycling business that is now the only battery recycling plant west of the Rockies since the closure of the infamous Exide plant in Vernon near Los Angeles. Quemetco receives batteries not only from the western U.S. but also foreign countries, including Canada and Mexico. The facility is located in the City of Industry but is on the boundary with Hacienda Heights. Homes in our community are located to within a few hundred feet of the plant.

Quemetco submitted 4 plans to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) for sampling all contamination associated with the plant, not only lead and arsenic in the areas around the plant but also airborne, water and soil sampling as part of the permitting process. All four Quemetco plans were deemed inadequate by DTSC.

As a result DTSC developed its own sampling protocol that called for samples up to a distance of 1 mile radius around the plant. A one-mile radius includes a number of schools and residents. Quemetco objected. DTSC reduced the number of samples required and the distance of sampling to one-quarter mile raising local concerns. Wrangling has delayed the actual sampling, a fear that coming rains will wash away evidence of contamination and add runoff with pollution to San Jose Creek.

Joan Licari, Board Member, recently attended a meeting with the L.A. County Dept. of Health along with representatives of CAC to express alarm about the recent actions of DTSC. HHIA is contacting DTSC, relevant agencies, and political representatives about concern over the project.

For many years this plant has been an issue due to lead contamination of areas around the plant including water, soil and air, particularly in the past, prior to installation of pollution control systems. Quemetco and the State's



regulatory agencies have known about elevated levels of lead in the surrounding vicinity of the battery recycling plant since 1991. Tests conducted at that time found levels of lead as high as 10,300 parts per million (ppm). up to 3,200 feet away from the facility. The current residential California human health screening level for lead is 80 ppm. However, no cleanup was conducted as a result.

Lead is harmful when ingested or inhaled and accumulates in humans with chronic exposure. It is particularly harmful to young children where it can cause learning disabilities. It is stored in the human brain, liver, kidney and bones where it builds up. No known level of lead exposure is considered safe.

CAC recently conducted a nonscientific, anecdotal study of local residents by asking residents about incidence of cancer, respiratory, gastrointestinal problems in an area of Hacienda Heights near the plant. There were many reports of such problems and also complaints about illness in their pets. It is felt that Quemetco should be required to clean up past pollution where residents and pets can come in contact with lead outdoors or in homes. **Hacienda Heights residents should not have to live in an area in which lead in the soil and airborne materials could impact their health.**

**A community meeting, hosted by CAC, about Quemetco will be held on Jan. 20th at Andrews Elementary School located at 1010 Caraway Dr. , North Whittier, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. This school is located near the junction of the 60 and the 605 freeways so is not far from Hacienda Heights. Also watch both the HHIA website and the CAC website (<http://www.cleanaircoalition.org/>) for information on this project. Residents particularly of areas surrounding the Quemetco plant are encouraged to attend.**



Mexican fan palm on left, California fan palm on right

## Planning for Palm Tree Replacement on Hacienda Blvd.

You might have noticed in the last month that some of the palm trees along the median of Hacienda Blvd. have been cut down. It was discovered that the California fan palms have been infected by Diamond Scale and pink rot. Both Mexican and California palms are in the medians along Hacienda Blvd., however, Mexican fan palms are not affected. Arborists have examined the trees and recommended immediate removal of 56 trees in danger of falling. Another 100 palms may need to be removed in the next year or so.

Regulations now prohibit replanting of palms in medians so plans are being developed to determine what replacement action could be taken.

Three options exist: filling in the open spaces with shrubs around the base of remaining trees, replacing cut trees with a different tree variety, or installing irrigation systems that

would allow trees that are less drought tolerant to be planted. The last option is possibly not economically feasible.

The option favored by residents who attended a recent informational meeting with representatives from the Dept. of Public Works was replanting with different but drought resistant trees such as Palo Verde. This action is also favored by HHIA.

The Dept. of Public Works is planning in the next few months to plant one open area with a sample landscape to allow residents a chance to see how it is liked before a final decision is made.

The infection of our trees is probably an impact caused by the drought in which trees have become weakened; our medians do not have irrigation systems. Diamond Scale disease, a fungus, is characterized by the diamond shape of fruiting bodies that emerge from the surface of a frond. It attacks primarily the California fan palm (*Washingtonia filifera*). Trees do not typically die from the disease but are weakened allowing other infections to take hold such as pink rot. Pink rot, also a fungus, produces pinkish spore masses from which the disease derives its name. A brownish syrupy fluid also might be present. Infected plants weaken, decline and eventually can die posing a danger of falling.



Close-up view of Diamond Scale



Diamond star infected tree frond..

**Want to know who in L.A. County to contact about a problem?**

**See the Hacienda Heights Community Connections! Check it out at:**

**[http://knabe.com/\\_dev/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Hacienda-Heights-Conn-2014-final.pdf](http://knabe.com/_dev/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Hacienda-Heights-Conn-2014-final.pdf)**



Hacienda Heights Improvement Association  
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Hacienda Heights, CA 91745

**Come to the Annual  
Dinner Jan. 20th  
See page 1 for details!**

**U.S. Mail:**

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P.O. Box 5235  
Hacienda Heights, CA 91745

HHIA Email: [info@hhia.net](mailto:info@hhia.net)

**Board Members**

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