

The

BASS LAKE BULLETIN

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The Voice of the Bass Lake Community

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BASS LAKE ASBESTOS QUESTION AGAIN RAISED

A February 4, 2004, article on the front page of the El Dorado Hills Telegraph newspaper discussed the ongoing asbestos problem at Oak Ridge High School in El Dorado Hills. Readers will recall that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found unacceptable levels of naturally occurring asbestos contamination at the school after local government agencies had declared the school to be safe from the danger of asbestos.

The Telegraph article, by reporter Ryan Rose, mentioned that BLAC has raised the same asbestos issues about the piece of vacant land next to Bass Lake that the county wants to make into a sports complex.

In 1998, the California Department of Conservation's California Geological Survey (CGS) produced a small map showing areas where naturally occurring asbestos is more likely to be found in Western El Dorado County.

In March 1999, a task force comprised of local, state, and federal agencies recommended that CGS develop a series of more-detailed maps showing areas where asbestos is more likely to be found throughout California. Because of growing health concerns, western El Dorado County was selected as a "pilot project" for this effort.

In 1999, the Sacramento Bee ran a special investigative report, "The Asbestos Danger," which pointed out the problems with naturally occurring asbestos in El Dorado County. The report included a map that showed a possible swathe of asbestos cutting right across Bass Lake. The map was

produced by the Bee and relied on information and input from, among others, the State Division of Mines and Geology, the El Dorado County Surveyor's Office, and a UC Davis geology professor, Howard Day.

On May 12, 2000, CGS released an improved map showing areas where naturally occurring asbestos is more likely to be found in Western El Dorado County.

Their accompanying report, "Open-File Report 2000-02: Areas More Likely to Contain Natural Occurrences of Asbestos in Western El Dorado County, California," discusses asbestos health issues, the history of the asbestos issue in El Dorado County, the geologic basis for the classification of units shown on the map, the methods used to produce the map, and limitations and recommended uses of these methods.

Copies of the resulting report, maps, and related information are available by following the appropriate References link on BLAC's website.

BLAC continues to be concerned that the athletic fields proposed for the sports complex at Bass Lake will face the same asbestos problems that occurred at the Oak Ridge High fields. Besides posing a possible threat to users of the park, airborne asbestos fibers could adversely affect the park's downwind neighbors east of Bass Lake.

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COUNTY BARS ROADSIDE AUTO SALES

Recently there have been a number of complaints about automobiles for sale parked in front of Bridlewood and Woodridge on Bass Lake Road. Residents see this condition as unsightly and dangerous because people pull off and on the road, attracted by the cars for sale.

Responding to an inquiry from BLAC, the county has confirmed that there is an ordinance prohibiting vehicles being parked for sale or parked for the purpose of vending merchandise in the county's right-of-way (Ord. #10.12.190).

At a meeting last year with the county department of transportation, representatives from BLAC and Bridlewood Canyon HOA determined that the right-of-way for Bass Lake Road extends eastward from the pavement almost to the sound walls of Bridlewood and Woodridge.

Jim Imes, county traffic superintendent, has informed BLAC that the county will install "NO PARKING FOR SELLING OR VENDING - TOW AWAY" signs along the 150-foot section of county right-of-way in front of Bridlewood and Woodridge.

Imes said that the county sign crew should be able to install the signs within the next 30 days. The installation of the signs should eliminate the issue, and BLAC is grateful to Superintendent Imes for his timely assistance. ✂

"Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have."

— Margaret Mead




OAK KNOLL SWIMMING POOL SUPPORT SOUGHT

Many Bass Lake residents are unaware that our own Oak Knoll Park is located on Alyssum Circle in The Hills of El Dorado. The park is a part of the El Dorado Hills CSD park system.

Set among Heritage oaks, the park's main features are a swimming pool, a clubhouse, and a playground. The picture above shows the front of the swimming pool that is nestled in the beautiful oak trees. However, the swimming pool has not been operated for several summers, reportedly because of a lack of community interest.

Responding to requests by Bass Lake residents, we spoke to Wayne Lowery, General Manager of the CSD, about the possibility of opening the Oak Knoll pool this summer. Lowery suggested that we discuss the matter with Tom Hellmann, the district's recreation supervisor, and discuss what needed to be done to open the pool.

Accordingly, Kathy Prevost and John Thomson met with Hellmann on February 27 and were gratified to learn that the CSD indeed plans to open and operate the Oak Knoll swimming pool this summer. Activities tentatively planned include swim lessons for various age levels up to six years old, water aerobics (aqua-cise) sessions, and recreational swimming periods. The CSD will publish their summer recreation schedule, including the activities at Oak Knoll pool, in mid-April.

Enthusiastic neighborhood use of the pool will show the CSD that they are justified in keeping the Oak Knoll pool open. If you are interested in helping to mobilize the community to use the pool this summer, please contact Kathy Prevost or John Thomson at blacinfo@aol.com or 677-3039. 




HIDAHL PRESENTATION TO BLAC ON EL DORADO HILLS CITY INCORPORATION

On February 4, 2004, John Hidahl, Chairman of the El Dorado Hills City Incorporation Committee, spoke to the BLAC board and interested BLAC members in attendance. This meeting took place before the scheduled board of directors meeting that evening.

Hidahl spoke about the organization structure of the Incorporation Committee. He circulated a copy of the press release distributed on February 2 announcing that the Incorporation Committee has raised the \$20,000 required to complete the first phase of work toward incorporation.

In Hidahl's opinion, among the primary benefits of cityhood are local control and direct accessibility to elected decision makers, a dedicated police force, the preservation and protection of the local environment, the establishment of ordinances that reflect standards of EDH citizens, local administration of most primary services (police, public works, planning, building, animal control), and focused economic and business development opportunities.

Hidahl pointed to other recent successful city incorporations and stated that the City of El Dorado Hills would be economically viable. He stated that property and other taxes would not increase. He urged a "yes" vote on incorporation when it appears on the ballot in November 2005. 

EDH CABLE TV SUBSCRIPTIONS INCREASE

The El Dorado Hills CSD recently concluded a new twenty-year franchise agreement with local cable provider Comcast.


The new agreement increases the franchise fee received by the CSD from 3 percent to 5 percent of Comcast's cable revenues in EDH, effective in February 2004. Cable rates are also increased.

The new agreement provides for several community access channels to be added to the cable lineup, channels that will be administered by the CSD, which will provide local public affairs programs, somewhat akin to a local C-SPAN. The CSD is also slated to receive funding to enable the CSD to broadcast their meetings and to run the community access channels.

Recent announcements of the new cable pact in the CSD's Village Life supplement did not mention that under the agreement EDH cable subscribers will pay more for cable.

Under the Federal Cable Act, Comcast has the right to pass through the franchise fee directly back to its subscribers. So Comcast subscribers will see the franchise fee that they pay on their service go up.

Overall, a subscriber's typical Comcast cable bill for Standard (including Limited and Expanded Basic) Cable went from \$43.97 in January to \$48.10 in February, an increase of \$4.13 per month. Check your bill.

In comparison, satellite providers Dish Network and DirecTV offer packages with comparable programming for about \$40.00 per month. However, subscribers should consider more than price when selecting a provider. Factors include the availability of local community access channels, broadband (cable modem) internet connection, reception, and so forth. Ah, the age old question of cable versus satellite TV—your reporter hasn't made up his mind yet. 



THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The bright yellow daffodils that signal the beginning of spring for many of us are beginning to peek out of the mulch on my western facing hillside. When I lived in the Midwest, I viewed their first green tips with much amazement because there was often still snow on the ground. Here in El Dorado Hills, I still love the feeling of spring without the snow!

While we mark time awaiting the County's Draft Environmental Report for the proposed site of the Bass Lake Regional Park, we initiated a discussion with the El Dorado Hills Community Services District about the possible reopening of the Oak Knoll Park swimming pool in the Hills of El Dorado, which has borne fruit.

With widespread community support, I am certain we could have an ongoing swim program operating for the young people of our neighborhoods. We understand they did attempt a program three years ago that was not successful, but this time we feel, with the influx of many new families to the area, that a program will be viable.

Imagine having swim lessons here in the summer! Let us know what you think of this idea!

BLAC has been closely following the actions of the Federal EPA at Oak Ridge High School. According to the EPA, the best method of testing for airborne asbestos contamination is TEM (Transmission Electron Microscopy). This is the method that we recommended be used at Bass Lake because we believe the same testing stan-

dards used for school grounds should also apply to parks.

It should be noted that the consultant who developed the EDH CSD Park Development Impact Fee Nexus Study addressed the asbestos mitigation issue by estimating that it will cost \$9.6 million for serpentine rock mitigation on future CSD park sites.

On a happier note, Brian Holloway of the Hollow Oaks development spoke at the February EDH CSD meeting about the Bass Lake Road improvements. It appears the work on the realignment and improvements will begin this June.

Also, the approval of Serrano Village "J" has advanced the release of the 15 acre park property on the southwest side of Bass Lake. Although this planned park is in the future, we are interested in how the park will be developed, as we were told at one time that it was too rocky for ball fields.

Happy Saint Patrick's Day to you all,

Kathy Prevost, President
Bass Lake Action Committee



DRIVERS URGED TO WATCH THEIR SPEED

Community members have reported that some drivers have been going rather fast on Magnolia Hills and Summer Drive.

Both streets are wide, and both go downhill as drivers leave the community. Neither street has sidewalks, so pedestrians must walk in the streets. Danger is posed to pedestrians, to residents leaving their driveways, and to the speeding cars themselves.

How can traffic on our streets be slowed to a safe speed? BLAC asked a retired policeman, Richard Thomson, for guidance. Thomson's background includes service with the Inglewood, Redondo Beach and Newport Beach, California, police departments. A vet-

eran of traffic enforcement and detective assignments, and now the president of Thomson and Associates, a private detective agency, Thomson offered BLAC some tips.

"The main cause of residential speeding is inattention," Thomson said. "People drive the same streets everyday in their neighborhood, and they just don't notice how fast they are going."

He advised against implementing popular quick fixes, such as stop signs and speed bumps: "Speed bumps slow down honest drivers and emergency vehicles, not speeders. Stop signs irritate everybody, especially nearby residents who have to listen to cars constantly braking and then accelerating because of the stop signs, and only the honest people stop for them."

Thomson suggested a public awareness program designed to remind drivers to watch how fast they are going. He explained that most drivers are unaware of how fast they are going, and they are usually shocked when they try to stop suddenly for an unexpected circumstance, like a child darting into the street. "No one likes to be the cause of a tragedy," he said. "Most people will slow down when they are reminded that they are going a bit too fast. They know it's a lot easier to stop for a child when you're going twenty-five miles an hour than when you're going thirty-five."

Let's all take this advice to heart, and remember that when we're going down Summer or Magnolia Hills, our cars tend to pick up speed to the point where we can't stop quickly.

Let's not have a tragedy in our neighborhood, whether it's hitting a car pulling out of a driveway, or Heaven forbid, running over a child. ❧



MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS AT OAK RIDGE HIGH ASBESTOS MEETING

The public meeting held at Oak Ridge High School on February 23rd to discuss the asbestos situation at Oak Ridge High School generated more questions than answers and appeared to leave the public both irate and frustrated.

Kathy Prevost and John Thomson represented BLAC at the meeting. John was interviewed by KCRA Channel 3 News, but his interview did not appear on the evening news. The high school's performing arts theatre was filled with government representatives, concerned parents, and the public.

Dan Meer, a branch chief with the Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Superfund toxic substances cleanup division, spoke first. He explained why the USEPA was involved with the cleanup. Meer said that the USEPA was responding to letters from citizens who were dissatisfied with the steps taken by state and county agencies.

Dan Suter, USEPA On-Scene Coordinator, explained that he was overseeing the replacement of the asbestos-laden soil on campus with clean soil over a membrane to keep the asbestos fibers buried.

Dr. Jill Dyken explained the role of the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) in asbestos cleanup. Dr. Dyken explained that ATSDR advises the EPA on the toxicology of asbestos and is concerned with the effect of asbestos from a public health perspective.

A question and answer period ensued, which because of a lack of answers, promptly degenerated into an exercise in frustration for many attendees. However, several salient points emerged.

First, the EPA does not contemplate designating El Dorado Hills as a Superfund site.

Second, in answer to questions as to why the EPA cannot prevent develop-

ers from excavating and releasing dangerous asbestos fibers into the air, the USEPA does not have the power to intervene in local land use decisions such as the issuance of building permits. Concerned citizens must look to local officials for relief.

In response to queries as to why the county has allowed developers to endanger the residents, county officials said that the county has tough rules to prevent the release of dust and asbestos into the air.

Third, the USEPA will be conducting an assessment of various school grounds, playgrounds and parks in El Dorado Hills to see if there appears to be any other sites that call for remediation. The next public meeting will be held to review the scope of El Dorado Hills preliminary site assessments. *✍*



WOODRIDGE STREET LIGHT, ENTRY LIGHT PROBLEMS ADDRESSED

BLAC member Joe D'Amico, who was recently successful in persuading the CSD to make sure all of the Woodridge street lights were operating correctly, is currently working with the EDH CSD to develop a permanent fix for the lighting at the entrance to Woodridge.

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Residents may have noticed that until lately most of the Woodridge entrance lamps were out, so the corner of Bass Lake Road and Madera was very dark.

D'Amico reports that the CSD is being very cooperative. Evidently there is a question as to whether new tamper-proof light fixtures are required, or if the existing lights simply need to be better maintained.

The CSD assesses Woodridge residents several hundred dollars each per year for maintaining the neighborhood's street lights, the entrance lights, and the landscaping of the common areas.

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The Bass Lake Action Committee is a group of concerned homeowners from the communities immediately adjoining Bass Lake. Our purpose is to provide a voice for Bass Lake community homeowners in dealing with the county and other community organizations and agencies.

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For information, see our website

www.basslakeaction.org

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