



The Bonita Highlander

August 2024

From the Open Space Chairperson (OSC)

Hello Bonita Highland Neighbors,

As of this writing (Mid July) we have been blessed with beautiful summer weather, perfect for trail hiking or street striding. The annual open space mowing has been accomplished. Just a friendly reminder for those of us who have brow ditches running across our property, please ensure any debris has been removed from those ditches and ready for a possible summer monsoons. I can see some of you rolling your eyes at this hopeful weather prediction.

If you have never ventured on our 7+ miles of manicured trails, you are truly in for a wonderful treat. Designed with walking, biking, and horse riding in mind, the Highland trails offer splendid views of the natural terrain with flora and fauna. At a number of points you can see the San Diego skyline and the Pacific Ocean. You can also appreciate the design, beautification, and the hard work of many of our neighbors' backyards. Plus, trail walking can clear the mind, build the spirit, and exercise those body parts.

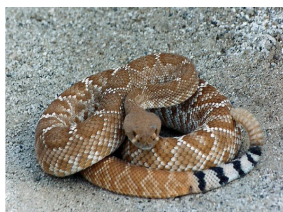
If this is your first time out on the Trails, it might be wise to choose a trail of a shorter duration and less difficulty. Take the usual precautions, water, sunscreen, hat, and maybe a walking stick. If you have a four-legged friend, it can be great company and should be on a leash. (Plus, please pick up after your furry friend.)

Because of the time of year, be observant of snakes, especially the venomous rattler. San Diego county has three varieties of rattlers: Red Diamond, Speckled/White Speckled, and the Southern Pacific; picture below left to right. The one that you may most likely encounter is the Southern Pacific rattler. It likes areas around scrub, chaparral, and disturbed areas such as yards, trails, and golf courses. But you're more likely to encounter one of these guys in your yard than on a trail.

In the 20 plus years living in the Highlands, I have found four southern pacific rattlers at my home. (My home is on a canyon with a riparian preserve below. I found one on the front porch, one at the back patio, one in the garage, and one just recently at the south side of the house among green foliage. There is a vaccine to give to dogs for protection from rattle snake bites which is effective and a lot less money than going to the vet after the bite has occurred. The key is to be observant and keep your eyes and ears out for rattle snakes when you're out and about.

Stay Safe and Enjoy!

James



Around the Neighborhood — Cactus vs Succulent

Succulents are not their own distinct family, but can be found in approximately 60 families of plants. Cacti, in the *Cactaceae* family, are a subcategory within a group of plants collectively known as succulents. So all cacti are succulents, but not all succulents are cacti. And succulents are defined as water-storing plants. The word "succulent" comes from Latin *sucus*, meaning juice or sap, and the modern word simply means "juicy." These plants can be found in dry, arid climates where rainfall is infrequent, so they rely heavily on dew and mist to survive.



Cereus Hexagonus or Lady of the Night cactus is a species of columnar cactus native to Ecuador and Venezuela, and the Highlands have a few! For most of the year, this plant is tall and a dusty green, then this beautiful white flower blooms. The sad news is that it buds, blooms, and wilts in a matter of days. It is a beautiful blossom and if you notice these in neighbor's yards, watch for the blossom, it is something to behold.

"Pencil Cactus" or "Fire Stick" are a colorful succulent plant native to South Africa that is easy to grow in direct sunshine or very bright indirect light. Water sparingly when the soil mass has dried out and feed monthly, spring through fall. When your plant becomes too tall, cut it back to the desired height. **BUT wear gloves and a long sleeve shirt when pruning "Pencil Cactus". The sap is poisonous and may cause skin irritation and blisters! And be super careful not to get the sap in your eyes!**



From the President!

As mentioned in our July Newsletter, the BHHA was in search of a **New ACC-A Staff Member** to replace the long time ACC-A, John Gilman, who has been at the helm of this position for over 17 years!! John has done a remarkable job and has been key in keeping the Highlands to top-top shape! And I'm happy to announce that we have a Winner! John Niekrasz has been approved by the Board to succeed John as the next BHHA ACC-A!

Also mentioned in our July Newsletter was our **Guest Speaker** for the August 13, 2024 BHHA Board meeting at the Bonita/Sunnyside Fire Station. Mr. James Bray (San Diego County Code Compliance Officer) will talk with us about all things dealing with the topic of County Code Compliance. Please join us at the meeting and bring your questions for Mr. Bray!

At the end of this year, the Association will conduct a **Full Election** by ballot with all the homeowners casting votes. This is an opportunity for folks to step up and volunteer their time to be members of the Board. Interested homeowners can get a *Candidate Qualification Form* from the Recording Secretary at bhighlanderhoa@gmail.com.

Potential FIRE Danger!!



The Bonita/Sunnyside Fire Department Captain, Mr. Oosterbaan, is the local San Diego County Fire Marshall and works closely with the BHHA Open Space Staff. While walking the trails with the new Open Space contractor, the OSC took pictures of some local fan palms pictured at the top left. These fan palms with large amounts of dead palm fronds hanging from the tree are a huge fire danger to homeowners. Captain Oosterbaan provided some pictures at the top right of falling palm fronds and a palm tree that burst into flames! These California and Mexican Fan Palms need to be maintained by skirting/trimming the dead fronds so they don't build up or hang close to the ground and provide fuel for wind driven embers. The Association maintains or removes any palms in our Open Space that may spout up, however those palms on private property are the responsibility of the homeowners. Should you have a concern about a tree near your home that has not been maintained, you may contact the OSC or call Bonita Sunnyside Fire Department (619-479-2346) and ask Capt. Oosterbaan to come out and check to see if it is a fire hazard. We as homeowners need to do our part to keep to keep the Highlands fire-safe for everyone in the neighborhood.

The Bonita Highlander is the monthly newsletter of the Bonita Highlands Homeowners' Association (BHHA), a California non-profit corporation. This Newsletter is distributed (postage paid) or emailed to each residence within the Bonita Highlands.

Information for publication should be sent to the Recording Secretary & Editor, Mary Ellen Phillips at bhighlanderhoa@gmail.com by the 15th of the month, for publication the following month. The Association reserves the right to edit any copy submitted for publication.

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The BHHA documents, forms, meeting minutes, and notices may be found on its website:
bonitahighlands.org



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The next monthly BHHA meeting will be held on ***Tuesday, August 13, 2024, at 6:00 PM***, in person at the Bonita Sunnyside Fire Station. All homeowners are welcome to attend.

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Introduction of Board members, Pledge of Allegiance, Announcement of the Next Meeting, Adoption of Minutes from the last monthly meeting.
2. Homeowner appearances for appeals to notices, fines, or requests for structural alterations.
3. Homeowner Open Communications.
4. Committee and Staff Reports.
5. Old Business.
6. New Business.
7. Community Items of Interest. Guest Speaker, San Diego County Code Compliance Officer
8. Board Member Comments.
9. Adjournment.
10. Board Executive Session (if required).



The BHHA Board of Directors (BOD) welcomes and encourages e-mail and letters from homeowners. Any letter sent to the Board may be published in this newsletter. Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author or other contributor, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the BOD or any Staff Member.