

Northside

FALL 2009

NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
(FOUNDED 1965: JULIAN TO HEDDING AND 6TH STREET TO COYOTE CREEK)

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SAN JOSE, CA

Holiday Potluck December 3 (*details at page 5*)
Fiesta de Navidad 3 diciem-

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— *details inside at page 2*



Another magical but fleeting creation by professional chalk artists Wayne & Cheryl Renshaw at the 2d annual Luna Park Chalk Art Festival, held Saturday October 10 in Backesto Park. **Photo by Matt Bruensteiner.** (See page 2 for details.)



President's Corner

by Gus Vargas, President
Northside Neighborhood Assn.

The morning air grows more crisp and the sycamores' brown leaves roll across Backesto Park once again. It's autumn and Thanksgiving approaches — time to pause and reflect on what matters most and what we should truly be thankful for, especially in this period of limited resources: Family, friends and neighbors. A warm smile and embrace, an offer of neighborly help, an outdoor walk or hike with friends, an invite to a shared meal, a pleasant exchange of light-hearted conversation with guest around a warm fireplace with a warm drink in hand, etc. Good times can be had with little effort by embracing our humanity and coming together and celebrating our communal lives in good spirits.

The Luna Park Business Assn. (LPBA) held their 2d annual **Luna Park Chalk Art Festival** in Backesto Park on Saturday, October 10. (See photo on cover and this page below.) LPBA president **Lou Chiamonte** reports that the festival "was a whopping success with an estimated one thousand spectators drifting past all the wonderful works of chalk art."

Accordionist **Mike Zampiceni** strolled around the park throughout the day playing Italian melodies, setting the mood for the traditional Italian event. A Native American dance troupe provided entertainment as well. Thirteenth St. eateries, **Chiamonte's Market**, **Gecko Grill** and **Giovanni's Pizza**, provided food vendors, and **Romano's** Italian sodas were donated for sale to benefit the event. And there was a resource fair featuring the **Stanford Blood**

Bank, the Council on Aging, ChildQuest International and 13th Street Cat Rescue Group.

Per Chiamonte, thanks goes to the many volunteers from the business district and NNA, including LPBA's **Ann Sherman** and the Redevelopment Agency's **Maria Le**, along with Strong Neighborhoods Initiative city employees **Debbie Bybee** and **Paul Pereira**.

The LPBA did a great job! It was great to take in all that artistic talent, the savory food, the blending of cultural expressions in music and dance and the good company of neighborhood friends on a nice day.

Many thanks to our neighbors in Naglee Park, under the **Campus Community Assn. (CCA)**, donated \$150 to the **Friends of Ryland Pool** in connection with its celebration on September 26 (see page 3). The funds were raised through CCA's annual "Bark in the Park" event in William Street Park, the country's largest dog event. The *CCA Advisor* reports in its latest issue that over the years the neighborhood group has donated more than \$100,000 to neighborhood causes, including outside of Naglee Park itself.

Glad the City of San Jose wants to reduce the number of plastic bags circulating in the neighborhoods. The city council passed a ban on them at its September 22 meeting. As a single person, extrapolating from when I used to have groceries bagged in plastic bags, it was an average of about 300 bags per year. A family of four would be many more, and a neighborhood, then a larger community?

What a difference this will make for the environment if we all follow the spirit of this ordinance. Kudos to the city council.

TIME TO RE-SUBSCRIBE! *This Northside newsletter is published quarterly for an annual subscription of \$5. You can also read it for free online at the NNA website, www.northside-sj.org. To renew, send \$5 check made payable to "Northside Neighborhood Assn." to Don Gagliardi, c/o Bergeson, LLP, 303 Almaden Blvd., Suite 500, San Jose, CA 95110. Free subscriptions available for senior (65 or older) and low income residents.*

Our next NNA event is the annual **Holiday Potluck on Thursday, December 3 at the Northside Community Center at N. 6th & Empire Sts.** As always, we'll supply the entrees and drinks. Bring a side dish, salad or dessert to share with your neighbors! (See p.5 for details.)

As is tradition, the next president of our neighborhood association will be elected by popular vote at the potluck. It has been my great honor and privilege to serve as your president this past year but I will be stepping down. The NNA slate proposed includes former NNA president **Chuck Hagenmaier**, who held the office from 1996-98 and is looking to serve again. I invite all residents to take part in the election. You need to be present to run or to vote. So, I hope to see you along with many of our neighbors at the NNA Holiday Potluck on December 3!



An artist at work during the 2d Annual Luna Park Chalk Art Festival held Saturday, October 10 in Backesto Park.

Photo by Matt Bruensteiner.

Historic Rotary Ryland Pool Celebrated by Residents and Rotarians on September 26

A regular update on the 13th St. Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI):

Downtown area residents and officials of the Rotary Club of San Jose celebrated the restoration of the historic, and recently renamed, Rotary Ryland Pool on an appropriately summer-like post-summer Saturday afternoon on September 26.

As temperatures approached 100 degrees, the pool was open for one last day of swimming following the de rigeur speeches from the likes of San Jose city councilmember Sam Liccardo, Rotary Club of San Jose president Rod Diridon, Sr., Friends of Ryland Pool chair Tina Morrill and 13th St. NAC president Don Gagliardi.

New whimsical signage for the pool along the perimeter fencing was unveiled along with an historic plaque detailing the pool's history and its recent renovation and re-opening after a three-year hiatus. (See adjacent photos.)

* * * * *

New 13th St. SNI initiatives are going to be in a holding pattern for the next couple years, according to councilman Liccardo.

On October 26, the Redevelopment Agency released its proposed operating and capital budgets for FY11. "The combination of the severe economic downturn, the drop in commercial and industrial property values, the freeze in the bond markets, and the state's heist of \$75 million in redevelopment funds has put the RDA in its worst fiscal position in memory," Liccardo announced to downtown neighborhood leaders. "Nearly every significant planned capital project (other than those for which there are signed commitments and contracts) will be stalled or cancelled [and] there will not likely be any funding for any capital projects of significance for at least two years."

Fortunately, the conversion of the one-way Julian St. James couplets to two-way traffic (see, *Northside*, Summer 2009, at pp. 6-7), and the

Top photo: Rotarians and Friends of Ryland Pool gather around the new sign unveiled at the Rotary Ryland Pool celebration on September 26. Front row (left to right): Friends chair Tina Morrill, Erik Schoennauer, Diane Gonzales. Back row (left to right): City councilmember Sam Liccardo, Rotary Club of San Jose Downtown Development Committee chair Sean Cottle, Sonya Lu (who designed the sign), Lenora Porcella, Rotary Club of San Jose president Rod Diridon, Sr., Lorraine Wallace Rowe, Luna Park Business Assn. president, Lou Chiaramonte, 13th St. NAC president Don Gagliardi, and Rotary Club of San Jose executive director John Kennett.

Bottom photo: the Rotary Ryland Pool historic plaque on the bathhouse wall.



first phase of the Watson Park master plan (see *Northside*, Spring 2009, at p.3), are already funded and will be proceeding as planned.

* * * * *

13th St. NAC meets 3rd Thursdays at 6:30 pm at Ellington Branch Library, 491 Empire St. Free dinner served from 6 pm. Contact 13th St. community coordinator Debbie Bybee at debbie.bybee@sanjoseca.gov or 297-3301. To make an online tax deductible donation to 13th St. NAC to support neighborhood programs. Log on to www.13thStNAC.org.

Northside The Northside Neighborhood Newsletter

Northside is published quarterly by the Northside Neighborhood Association, San Jose's oldest. NNA's mission is to improve and beautify the Northside neighborhood, inform members, encourage participation in activities which benefit the Northside and encourage identification with the neighborhood through social functions.

The Northside neighborhood encompasses the area bounded by Julian, Hedding, Sixth Street and Coyote Creek. All residents are automatically members of the association. There are no dues. Northside's Board of Directors: Gus Vargas (president); Chuck Hagenmaier (vice president); Ed Berger (treasurer); Frank Barnard; Leo Bevilacqua; Chris Bogosian; Don Gagliardi; Cathy Novello; Joe Rodriguez; and Bonnie Ross.

The Northside Neighborhood Association of San Jose. P.O. Box 2317, San Jose, CA 95109-2317. Telephone: (408) 291-2752. www.northside-sj.org.

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SHADES OF THE PAST

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In Brief.....



Holiday Potluck December 3 at Northside Community Center

NNA is holding its annual holiday potluck in conjunction with 13th St. NAC and the Hensley Historic District on Thursday evening December 3 beginning at 7 p.m. at the Northside Community Center, N. 6th & Empire Sts.

Entrees and drinks will be provided. Bring a side dish, salad or dessert. We'll have music, piñatas, an update on 13th St. SNI, and the annual election of NNA officers.

Come celebrate the season with your neighbors.

Fiesta de Navidad 3 de diciembre en el Northside Community Center

El vecindario Northside (NNA) tendrá su fiesta de navidad junto con la reunión del 13th St. NAC y el vecindario Hensley Historic Dist. el día jueves, 3 de diciembre a las 7 p.m. en el Northside Community Center localizado en la Calle 6 y Empire.

Tendremos comida y bebidas. Traiga un plato, ensalada or postre para compartir. También tendremos música, piñatas, anuncios del 13th St. SNI, y elecciones para los representantes del vecindario Northside para el año 2010.

Venga a celebrar los días festivos con sus vecinos.

Children's Books Sought for Santa Program at Ellington Library

The Friends of Joyce Ellington Library are helping to collect children's books for the Santa program event that distributes free books to neighborhood kids. They are accepting donations through December 1 of new or gently used books to a drop-off box just inside the front door of the library. Alternatively, the Friends are accepting monetary donations to purchase books in case they fall short on donated books. Make checks payable to "13th St. NAC" with notation "Friends of Ellington Library" in the memo line and insert in the Friends book nook drop slot at the library.

City to Acquire Land from Drug Rehab Facility Near Watson Park

The San Jose city council approved a \$2 million deal with the owners of the LifeChoices drug rehabilitation facility on E. Taylor St. near Watson Park to acquire the seven-tenths-of-an-acre parcel for an on-ramp to Highway 101 at Taylor to accommodate a planned Berryessa BART station, expected to be completed in 2018.

"I would characterize this in technical and legal terms as a twofer," downtown area councilman Sam Liccardo, a Northside resident, told the *San Jose Mercury News*. "We're resolving the suit [filed by the landowner over the city's refusal to rezone the property to allow expansion of the rehab facility in the face of neighborhood opposition] with the added benefit of getting land that we wanted to buy anyway."

Back in 2002, Northside residents were up in arms, "express[ing] vehement opposition" to LifeChoices' proposed expansion of the facility to 127-beds. (See, "Neighbors Voice Opposition to High Density Proposed Drug Rehab Project by Watson Park," *Northside*, Summer 2002, at pp. 12-15). NNA's board voted 10-1 on a formal resolution against expanding the facility.

The city council agreed with residents and refused to allow the facility to expand, prompting a disability discrimination lawsuit from the owner which is now being settled with the city acquiring the property.

The city will rent the property to LifeChoices for \$1 per year until it is needed for the freeway project, according to the *Mercury News*. The money to purchase the property for a cash-strapped city will come from already allocated transportation funds, since the site has been targeted for a freeway onramp for several years.

Steve Gordy Receives NNA's Fall 2009 Live Oak Award

N. 12th St. resident Steve Gordy is the Fall 2009 Live Oak Award recipient.

An electrician, Gordy is a former NNA boardmember and the husband of previous awardee Katrina Loera (Fall 2006).

He has been involved with Friends of Backesto Park and its work restoring the fountain, and he is very active in graffiti abatement in the Northside.



Steve Gordy removing graffiti, October 2009.

The Live Oak Award is presented quarterly to an individual or group who materially improves or assists the Northside neighborhood, NNA, or one or more of its residents in the upkeep or beautification of the neighborhood. Current NNA board members and their families are ineligible. Send nominations for future Live Oak Awards to Don Gagliardi, 291-2752 or dpg2003@aol.com.

Right: Ribbon cutting at the grand opening of the new Empire Montessori Preschool on October 2.

Below: the grand opening sign along the N. 11th St. side of the school.



Synergy: Empire Montessori Preschool Opens Across From Ellington Library & Grant School

by Don Gagliardi

On October 2, Empire Montessori Preschool celebrated its grand opening at 499 N. 11th St., across from Joyce Ellington Branch Library, within the Northside.

“This new community asset has been made possible through the hard work and supportive efforts of many members of various downtown San Jose neighborhoods who have been asking for a Montessori school to be located in the downtown area,” says the school’s director Angelina Bowers.

The new school occupies an historic 5,500 square-foot building originally constructed in 1918 which previously was occupied by the Rancho Market. In 2008, it was seismically retrofitted and expanded to accommodate childcare space for eighty children. The two-story preschool now features four class-

“The reuse of the historic building has contributed to the reopening of the library and the remodeled Grant School. The combined positive assets in the neighborhood contribute to a great learning environment.”

— Angelina Bowers

rooms, staff offices, a large outdoor play area and public parking.

The San Jose Redevelopment Agency contributed \$532,000 to complete the rehabilitation.

“The opening of the location has added to the dramatic transformation of the immediate area,” says Bowers. “The reuse of the historic building has contributed to the reopening of the Joyce Ellington Library (in 2008) and the remodeled and partially rebuilt Grant School, one block north. The combined positive assets in the neighborhood contribute to a great learning environment.”

San Jose head librarian Jane Light agrees, remarking at the grand opening celebration on the synergies of having a preschool across the street from Ellington Library. Councilmember Sam Liccardo and Sal Caruso, the Santa Clara-based architect for the renovations to the for-

mer corner store, also spoke at the opening, along with a parent representative.

The preschool, which has a Montessori-certified staff, offers full and part time schedules with two nutritious snacks and a hot lunch included in the tuition. It includes a fenced-in outdoor play area that allows the children to ride bikes, climb on play structures and run and play in the grass. The school also offers transportation to local elementary schools for before- and after-school care for kindergartners and first graders.

Montessori schools trace the origins to the slums of Rome in 1907, where Maria Montessori opened the first of some 22,000 schools devoted to her method worldwide, most preschools but some for older kids as well.

“No one outside the fold (and lots of families inside it) really knows what exactly it is,” writes Emily Bazelon for *Slate.com*. “The fog of magic and romance obscures the key to a Montessori classroom: It’s all about structure and framework and purpose.”

“Montessori might have called the child ‘an amorphous, splendid being in search of his own proper form,’” says Bazelon. “But more important, in the end is a different canny insight of hers: Those kids crave order.”

Empire Montessori Preschool is located at 499 N. 11th St. and is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and serves children from 12 months to six years old. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, call 295-5900 or visit www.empiremontessoripreschool.com.

Don Gagliardi is editor of the Northside newsletter and is a past president of NNA.



“This new community asset has been made possible through the hard work and supportive efforts of many members of various downtown San Jose neighborhoods who have been asking for a Montessori school to be located in the downtown area.”

*— Angelina Bowers
Director,
Empire Montessori
Preschool*



Top: preschoolers were entertained during the grand opening speeches. Bottom: youngsters get a look at one of the classrooms at the grand opening. Left: the former Rancho Market, which the school now occupies (photo by Matt Bruensteiner).



Left: Jesse Espinoza's father Jesus with Jesse's first daughter Mary Helen on the front steps of their Mission St. home, 1962.

Below: Vicky Gutierrez in Alum Rock Park, 1960.



Northside Oral History Project

Jesse Espinoza: He Found His Way to San Jose — and Stayed for Going on 50 Years!

by Don Gagliardi & Steve Gordy

Jesse Espinoza is officially retired from the Operators Engineers Local 3, for whom he toiled for 40 years until 1995, but he still works three months every summer rolling asphalt for Top Grade Construction.

“That’s what keeps me going to see all my friends,” the longtime Northside resident says. At age 78, he is the “oldest guy in the company.”

For the 48 of his 78 years, Espinoza has lived with his wife, Vicky Gutierrez Espinoza, at their home on Mission at N. 11th St. They

moved in together on their wedding day, October 29, 1961.

Vicky has actually lived in the house much longer, since 1945, when the Gutierrez family emigrated to San Jose from Del Rio, Texas to work in the orchards. Vicky, now age 72, was the youngest of eleven children – six boys and five girls. (A photo of Vicky’s brother Raymond Gutierrez appears at page 89 of Nanette Regua and Arturor Villareal’s *Images of America: Mexicans in San Jose* (Arcadia 2009) being honored at a Cinco de Mayo celebration in the 1950s for his military service to the U.S. Air Corps in World War II).

Jesse was born in Fresno and spent 10 years in the U.S. Navy. While stationed in Half Moon Bay, he would periodically visit San Jose to attend dances, which is how he met Vicky. The couple was married at St. Joseph’s Cathedral in downtown San Jose in front of more than 350 people. “It was one of the largest weddings in San Jose at the time,” Jesse recalls. “They blocked off Market St.” The reception was held at the Portuguese hall at Five Wounds Church, and Jesse remembers driving to the reception in a 1948 Chevy decked out in flowers.

The couple spent their honeymoon in Monterey and then returned to San Jose where they’ve spent nearly 50 years living in the same Mission

St. home. Jesse purchased the house from Vicky's parents for \$12,000, which was a "lot of money at the time," Jesse says. Following their marriage, the couple had three children in quick succession, starting with Mary Helen, the oldest in 1962. Philip and Richard followed, and the kids all attended Backrodt Elementary School, Peter Burnett Jr. High and San Jose High School.

Richard, sadly, passed away eight years ago at age 35 from lymphoma. Mary Helen, who is divorced, lives with Jesse and Vicky, and Mary Helen's four children, Monique, Michael, Junior and Celine. Philip also lives with his, although not with his three children. Altogether, eight people and three generations currently share the modest Mission St. home.

Jesse says that before being occupied by the Gutierrez and then the Espinoza families, the Mission St. house belonged to the Barone family, which owned the Northside and the El Sol markets along N. 13th St. In 1961, this was mostly an Italian area, Jesse recalls about the blocks surrounding the 11th & Mission intersection. "We used to be one of only three Mexican families," he says. There were the Navarro's around back, he mentioned, pointing north behind the house, and the Ventura family directly across Mission St.

However, on the northwest corner of the street was a Mexican-American institution, the Puentos Brothers Bakery – the only Mexican-American bakery around, according to Espinoza. Once a month, he says, trucks would arrive to take supplies to ranchers in Half Moon Bay or Atascadero. But the bakery was gone by 1965, and more recently the property was used as a depot for Vietnamese-owned catering trucks. That business, too, is now gone, and Espinoza is not shedding any tears. It was such a nuisance, he and several other neighbors were forced to sue, he said, and the city eventually shut it down. It has since been fumigated; "you should have seen the cockroaches," notes Jesse. And the site is being readied for offices.

On the southwest corner of 11th & Empire Sts., literally a stone's throw from the Espinoza household, was the old Tri-Valley Cannery. They used to make their own pallets, there, Espinoza recalls. The cannery is also gone today.

Asked what he remembers about the old days in the neighborhood, without hesitation Jesse mentions that it used to have more of a small town ambience. "We used to leave our bikes out when the kids were small," he says. "Now you can't leave nothin'."

Don Gagliardi is editor of the Northside newsletter. Steve Gordy, who lives a block away from the Espinoza family, is the Fall 2009 recipient of NNA's Live Oak Award.



Vicky with her parents, Santana and Consuelo Gutierrez, who came to San Jose in 1945 from Texas.

'The couple was married at St. Joseph's Cathedral in downtown San Jose in front of more than 350 people. They spent their honeymoon in Monterey and then returned to San Jose, where they've spent nearly 50 years living in the same Mission St. home. Jesse purchased the house from Vicky's parents for \$12,000, which was a lot of money at the time.



Above and left: Jesse and Vicky Espinoza on their wedding day at St. Joseph's Cathedral, 1961.

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Section 101: Family Section
Sections 108 & 109: Supporters Section

Clip & Save Neighborhood Troubleshooter Page



What's Doing at Ellington Library?

Weekly Events

- Homework Center, Mon.—Thurs. 2:30 to 4:30 pm, (sign-up required). Begins Nov. 17.
- Chess Class, Tues., at 6 pm. All ages.
- Spanish/English Bilingual Story Time, Wed., at 5:30 pm & Fri. at 10:30 am.
- Story Time with Stay & Play, 1st., 2nd & 3rd Tues. at 5:30 pm.
- Craft for Youth, 4th Tues. at 5:30 pm.

Monthly Events

- Friends of Joyce Ellington Library, first Tues., at 6:30 pm.
- 13th St. NAC, third Thurs., at 6:30 pm in Community Room. FREE dinner at 6 pm.
- Teensreach, 3rd Tues, at 4 pm. (For teens 13-18). +
- "Movies@the Library," 2d & 4th Fridays, 3-5:30 pm. +

Special Events

- Tues., Nov. 10, at 6 pm, "Making a Scrapbook Page" (for ages 13+)
- Tues., Nov. 17 at 6 pm, "Tales from the Enchanted Forest" Puppet Show
- Tues., Nov. 17 at 6:30 pm, "Fruit Tree Care & Pruning with Master Gardner Laura" +
- Tues., Dec. 1 at 6 pm, "Knit Scarves" ++
- Tues., Dec. 8 at 6 pm, Xmas Stocking (felt) and Snowflakes (coffee filters/colored paper)
- Tues., Dec. 15 from 2 to 5 pm, Holiday Program

+ program supported in whole or part by Friends of Joyce Ellington Library

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Joyce Ellington Branch Library is located at 491 E. Empire St. Head Librarian, Kim Nguyen.
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Key Phone #s

Zoe Lofgren,
Congressperson 271-8700

George Shirakawa, Jr.,
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Watson Center 277-4927

Northside Neighborhood Assn.

Gus Vargas, President ///-////

Northside Parents Group

Rick Schertle 279-0307

Northside Parkstrip Project

Sonya Lu 971-1219

Northside Home Tour

Gloria Cerul 295-5380

13th St. SNI NAC

Don Gagliardi, President 291-2752

Cat Rescue Project 566-3637

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Friends of Backesto Park

Nat Robinson 807-5010

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