



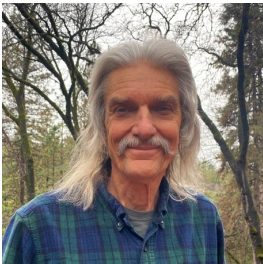
Greater Cement Hill Neighborhood Association

Protecting and preserving the rural qualities of our neighborhood by providing a forum for group action as needed.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Will Hart

Greetings Neighbors!



In this New Year I would like to focus on the one thing we all have in common: our community.

We are a strong and vibrant group. Our diversity enriches us and makes us who we are. Our commonality is the shared land and sense of pride and ownership in what is around us. Next to family, neighbors are your most important asset. They are who you can rely on when you simply need to borrow a tool or who you can count on in a crisis situation.

GCHNA is the soul of our composite well-being. It's the foundation for community improvement. Alone we are powerless, but in a group we have strength to affect change. In my year as President we have fought a few battles, and because of our numbers we have come out on top. We prevailed in the fight against AT&T and helped shepherd the Courthouse selection process to a favorable outcome. Our Ferrellgas discount is also based on our power as a group.

You matter. If you are already a member, thank you for your support. If you are reading our newsletter and are not a member, please consider joining. Out of our 467

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households, only 250 are members. Besides the actual benefit of the Ferrellgas discount and the Firewise Community insurance discount, you are getting a voice in what happens in our neighborhood. There is a group of very hard working folks, your neighbors, that seeks to make improvement in our lives and our community. By joining, you become aware of what is happening on the roads around you regarding fire mitigation, water, and whatever comes next.

During the time I lived on St Croix, Christmas to Three Kings Day (Jan 6th) was always a very special time of year. I closed down my company like most businesses for those two weeks, as revelry prevailed, and work was done for the year. Every night for a week before Christmas there were Tramps. They would start around midnight in one community with a large flatbed truck with the band Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights blasting music through huge speakers. They have been recorded by the Smithsonian's

Folkway Records (<https://tinyurl.com/56bstknm>). Stanley's group was a scratch band that played Quelbe music on flute, tenor banjo, and many rhythm percussion instruments.

People would gather behind the truck as it moved at a slow dance pace for several miles to another community, which would take hours. The end community prepared a huge breakfast feast for everyone. This went on every night and eventually covered the whole island so no matter where you lived you would hear The Ten Sleepless Knights music coming from a mile away and you could go out to the parade route in your pajamas (expected attire) and join in or just lay in bed and enjoy the music.

There was a great sense of community and enjoyment during this time, and it showed that community can involve fun! GCHNA hosts an annual fun picnic at the end of summer that is always a wonderful experience, where neighbors share food, music and each other.

Join in the fun and the important work! Membership information can be found in this issue and on our website at www.gchna.com.

Neighborhood Meetings

ALL ARE WELCOME!

2025 dates

Feb 3	June 2	Oct 6
Apr 7 *	Aug 4	Dec 1

7:00 pm to 8:30 pm at the Madelyn Helling Library Community Room

* April location TBD



FERRELLGAS NEWS FOR MEMBERS

New Propane Agreement Finalized with Ferrellgas

by Brian Waag



A new three-year agreement was reached with Ferrellgas and the GCHNA this past

November. This agreement, similar to prior agreements, results in a discounted propane price to current GCHNA members, which is one of the most beneficial reasons to be a member of our neighborhood association.

GCHNA has had a very long partnership with Ferrellgas (25+ years) and we want to once again thank the Ferrellgas team for working with us over the years to provide competitive pricing.

Our agreement with Ferrellgas continues as a "Cost Plus" agreement, meaning that we reimburse them their "Cost" to purchase propane, "Plus" a markup which includes their profit and overhead. Their Cost varies and changes weekly depending on supply and demand.

The prior agreement that expired in November included their cost, plus a spread of \$0.58 cents per gallon for the first two years, and increasing \$0.60 cents per gallon for the third year. Ferrellgas agreed to retain the current spread of \$0.60 cents per gallon for all three years of the new agreement. Tank rental remains at \$35 per year.

We also proposed (and Ferrellgas agreed), to include contract language stating that no fee will be charged for rental tank removal should a GCHNA member elect to utilize a different propane supplier.

During our meeting with Ferrellgas, we discussed installing cellular enabled transmitter devices that mount directly on the propane tank that will send continual tank level data to their office. This would enable them to make a propane delivery when they see a member's tank getting low, without the member having to call for a fill. A very small number of GCHNA members already have them installed. Ferrellgas has also agreed to install them at no cost to our association members. There is specific criteria required to have a transmitter installed and if you are interested, please contact Ferrellgas for details.

As a reminder, there are safety issues that come with propane use.

- Propane is colorless and odorless, however manufacturers deliberately add an odorant to give it a distinctive smell which can be detected in the case of a leak. Always take action if you smell a foul odor. The vapors are heavier than air and may accumulate in low-lying areas.
- When appliances are operating properly, propane burns with a blue flame. If you see yellow flames or notice significant amounts of soot on any equipment, the gas may not be burning completely and this can create carbon monoxide.
- Maintain a clear path for the delivery of propane. Keep the area around your tank free of flammable undergrowth or overhanging branches. Don't hide your tank or enclose it in a flammable lattice screen which makes access challenging and creates a fire hazard.

Don't run out of gas. Your tank is filled to a maximum 80% of capacity. Monitor the gauge on your outside tank to ensure the fuel does not drop

below 30%. This will allow time to schedule a delivery. Ferrellgas offers a free automatic delivery option where they are responsible for filling the tank and you will not be charged if a delivery is required on a weekend or holiday.

You may request a Ferrellgas Installation Review (FIR) if you have recently moved into the neighborhood. The FIR is a 27- point inspection of your outside propane system. It is provided free of charge to all new customers, periodically to existing customers, and upon request.

Ferrellgas has a very informative booklet available to customers. Don't hesitate to stop by the local office (364 Lower Grass Valley Road) to say hello to General Manager Greg Dickey and to the friendly staff who provide our service and ask for the safety booklet. Delta Armtrout is the customer service specialist responsible for our neighborhood program.



Waste Management Update

Residents in unincorporated Nevada County must now separate food waste from regular trash to comply with the state mandate under Senate Bill 1383. The law aims to divert organic waste from landfills. Many other communities in California have already been separating out food waste since 2022.

What now goes in your Green Cart:

Food and yard waste combined. This includes breads, rice, pasta, coffee grounds/filters, tea bags, **cooked** meat, fish and poultry (including bones), dairy products, egg shells, food soiled paper (non waxy such as pizza boxes, paper plates, napkins and paper towels), fruits, vegetables, yard waste (grass, brush and tree trimmings), and **untreated** wood.



FIREWISE COMMITTEE

by Karen Wcislo

2024 Accomplishments

It was a busy, fulfilling year!

- Early in the year we met with Evan McLenithan, the new Nevada City Fire Reduction Coordinator and discussed concerns about city properties that are in our neighborhood. Evan facilitated the removal of multiple trucks worth of Scotch Broom from Indian Flat, the removal of eight dead trees on the Hirschman's Pond property at Woods Ravine, mastication of roadside vegetation on Indian Trail and Indian Flat, clearing roadside vegetation along lower Cement Hill Road, and significant clearing on the Old Airport property along Airport Road and West Airport Road. The work was done with partnership funds from PG&E. **KUDOS TO Evan!**
- We provided educational emails about evacuation planning, the Firesafe Council chipping program (no longer free), the landowner required 10' vegetation management along roadsides, and the California FAIR Plan. If you missed them, the contents of these emails will be posted on the GCHNA website.
- Lieutenant Michael Vingom from the Sheriff's department spoke at a GCHNA meeting on wildfire preparation and the evacuation process.
- We worked with one homeowner who was successful in receiving a \$3,600 grant from the County Office of Emergency Services to improve vegetation along a hillside coming up from the Yuba River canyon.
- We obtained a large green waste dumpster for community use.
- We participated in county meetings assessing needs for the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.



*Committee Members (right to left):
Karen Wcislo, Will Hart, Ellen Hagan, Joy Elson.
Not pictured, Cheryl Haines.*

- We updated the community about the large Hoyt-Purdon shaded fuel break on private property and their burn schedule.

What is in store for 2025?

- The OES is planning to have many \$20,000 grants available for vegetation removal along private roads for evacuation safety. We will let you know when the requirements are published. Hopefully homeowners in our community can band together with their neighbors and apply for a grant to make roads safer in an evacuation.
- OES hopes to be able to provide free green waste drop off at the WM facility, and provide green waste dumpsters for neighborhoods.
- We have begun exploring options for forest management of the three parcels of BLM land on Cement Hill, perhaps in conjunction with the Old Airport property. This is a long term project which will involve evaluating the parcels, putting a proposal to the county OES and Nevada City to apply for a grant, etc.
- We hope to have a formal presentation at a GCHNA meeting about using prescribed burning for vegetation management and to provide more information on home hardening options.

Please let us know if there is a topic of particular interest regarding fire safety for an educational email or presentation at a GCHNA meetings.

Annual Firewise Community Certificate Renewed

We completed the 3-year action plan required to be a Firewise Community, and successfully submitted the annual renewal report. The 2024 Firewise Community Certificate, which can be used to obtain a discount on FAIR plan insurance, is available on the GCHNA website.

SUMMARY

- Forms submitted: 119
- Hours of work reported: 15,550 (credited at \$31.80/hour equals \$494,490 worth of time invested)
- Out-of-pocket investment: \$1,828,221 (amazing!)

The best part was reading the descriptions of what the time and money was spent on over the year.

The annual amount of vegetation removal was huge.

- Many hundreds of trees were removed and limbed up.
- Debris was chipped or taken to the sponsored dumpster or dump.
- Shrubs and downed limbs were masticated.
- Grasses and weeds were weed-eaten – several times.
- Goats were used prior to burning.
- Roadwork parties cleared sides of private roads.

The descriptions of the home hardening accomplishments were astounding.

- Old wood decks were replaced with Trex.
- Roadwork improved access for emergency vehicles.
- Propane tanks were relocated further from houses.
- Landscaping rock, cement and stonework replaced vegetation close to houses.
- Wood storage was moved away from houses.
- Gutters were replaced and gutter guards installed.



- Irrigation was laid to plants close to houses.
- Water storage tanks and sprinklers were installed.
- External wood siding was removed and replaced with cement composite board.
- A fire truck turn around was created.
- A roof was replaced with one that is fire resistant.
- Eaves were enclosed.
- Windows were replaced with tempered glass meeting WUI standards.
- Vents were replaced with Vulcan firesafe vents.
- Metal skirting was installed under decks to prevent debris buildup and ember intrusion.
- Ditch water irrigation pipes were repaired for water access.
- Gorilla bark was removed and replaced with gravel.

This list of accomplishments by our neighbors is a great reminder of all we should be doing to help be as fire safe as possible!

KUDOS TO our Greater Cement Hill Community for the tremendous amount of work done in 2024 to mitigate wildfire risks!

2025 Fire Safe Mitigation Form

The form for 2025 will be due October 31, and will be posted on the website sometime in the summer.

Please keep track of hours worked and money spent on green waste disposal, equipment and contractors for home hardening projects or vegetation removal.

No Room for Scotch Broom

by *Ellen Hagan*

Scotch Broom is a highly invasive and flammable perennial shrub 6-10 feet tall. One medium-sized plant can

produce over 12,000(!) seeds per year. Now is the time to dig it out.

Pulling with a weed wrench is effective. It removes the entire mature shrub. The problem is that disturbing the soil disperses seed, so monitoring and removing seedlings for 5 to 10 years will likely be necessary.

Cutting plants above ground with a saw or lopper at the end of the summer drought period can be effective, but again there will be seed dispersal. Plants greater than one-quarter inch in diameter cut below two inches from the soil surface have less than 1.5 percent resprout rate. Again, monitoring and removing seedlings for several years will likely be needed.

Heavy grazing by goats during the growing season for 4-5 years has been reported effective. The disadvantage with goats is that they are not selective and native species are also eaten.

Good luck with your Scotch Broom removal!

PG&E Tree Removal - A Reminder

by *Cheryl Haines*

I don't know if any of you have experienced an uptick in the amount of work that PG&E is doing, resulting in more abandoned cut down trees. I certainly have in the Excelsior Ditch Camp Road area.

Reminder: when they come to trim or remove trees they must contact you for your permission first. Make sure they have your phone number or other contact details so they can get in touch. If you want the downed wood, that's great, but if not, tell them you want the tree debris removed.

Please have them add to your record that "THEY MUST REMOVE ALL TREES AFTER THEY ARE CUT DOWN."

Otherwise they will NOT unless you call to complain.

If you need to complain call PG&E (1-800-743-5000). It works. They removed 37 trees from my property last year that they cut down. Be persistent. It makes our whole neighborhood safer.

LOCAL INTEREST

Musings on Acorns

by *Spencer LeGate*



My homely abode on Cement Hill at the edge of my five acres is tucked against a rising granite escarpment. Fittingly, the house, a single-

wide mobile home, is nicknamed the Tinbox. It's an ancient contraption and though its moniker might suggest a slur to its character, that usage is familiar and respectful.

Eight Canyon Live Oaks are firmly anchored in a vague circle in the granite escarpment just a few feet from the house. Several branches hang over the roof. This last year was the bountiful one for acorns, which occurs in two year intervals. Were there a market for these monk's capped nuts, their value would have plunged precipitously, such was this season's munificence.

The first batch of falling (launched?) acorns several months back pummeled my metal roof. Some of the wind driven assaults were so loud it was hard to imagine that they were produced by such tiny projectiles. The tones elicited were never consistent – and often weird. A single hit might make the unlikely sound of a drum. Once, I swear, one hit and rolled for such a time that I might imagine a steel ball circling in a roulette wheel (place your bets, messieurs/ dames) and finally dropping into the gutter.



And how did one reproduce a bell sound when there are only non-musical tin roof jacks to strike? I also once heard the distinctive crack similar to that made by Louisville hickory.

As the weeks of bombardments became months, I was sure we would soon reach the end of the harvest. I looked up into the branches and couldn't identify many nuts. Yet, following a brief lull in wind and weather, the attackers regrouped and created ever more imaginative sounds with volleys of acorns. Several times as I left the house, an acorn would immediately whiz by my noggin. A target?

The sounds are sometimes so close they seemed to strike within the house. I found one not long ago in the kitchen near the sink. More recently, as I was pulling my socks on, the window where I first see the light of day was struck with force just short of breakage. As of this week, finally a truce. Now how to be rid of them?

Preserve Our Scenic Corridor

by Eileen Jorgensen



(Shortened from the original article. The full version can be found on gchna.com)

In 1987, Nevada City adopted the Scenic Corridor Ordinance. It recognized that the properties along Highway 49 are prime development sites and it enshrined a strategy to protect them as important entryways to town.

The Scenic Corridor is 300 feet from both sides of the edge of the highway right-of-way. The Ordinance requires that development in the Scenic Corridor contain sufficient design and landscaping features to protect and enhance the aesthetics of the Corridor by hiding development from the

highway and preserving the existing tree cover and topography to the greatest extent possible. In addition, all projects require special review prior to approval. Tree clearance within 50 feet of the highway-right-of-way is prohibited except as approved during review of a development plan, and no bright lights or unnecessary signage are allowed.

Over the years the implementation of the Scenic Corridor Ordinance has been a big success. Some of the large government projects approved in the vicinity of our neighborhoods were sensitive to the Scenic Corridor Ordinance. They honored the "low visibility and screening requirements." For instance, the Elks Lodge and new Juvenile Hall were set back from the highway and the natural vegetated berms helped screen the sites. The Indian Trails Subdivision kept a generous wooded setback.

However, recently there has been slippage. The County constructed a solar field without screening, and a new County project was built nearby without minimal setback or screening. Most recently, a large mural was proposed at the North Bloomfield intersection.

Let's get back on track. There are many large projects coming soon along this section of Highway 49 that must be held to Scenic Corridor standards. The new Courthouse and the United States Forest Service facility will be built in the next few years and there are other undeveloped sites slated for residential projects. All of these projects need design review under the Scenic Corridor Ordinance so that they will meet its excellent goals and preserve the rural quality of our environment.

My hope is that interested neighbors within GCHNA would be willing to work together and follow these

projects as they come up. By developing a working relationship with City and County leadership to hammer out some basic design criteria for the corridor guided by the Scenic Corridor Ordinance, we can make sure that no mistakes are made.

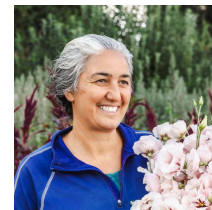
GCHNA has voted to create a committee that would focus on this effort. Please email me (eileen@themagiccarpet.biz) if you'd like to be involved.

Host An Organic Farmer This Season

by Malaika Bishop

Bluebird Farm seeks free or reduced cost farmworker housing for seasonal farmers from February 1st through October 31st.

Do you have an extra room, outbuilding with amenities, RV, or second dwelling on your property? You may be eligible to host a seasonal farm worker under a county ag ordinance.



Bluebird Farm is a certified organic farm located on Cement Hill Road at the Jacobson Dude Ranch.

We grow flowers, microgreens and veggies for schools, flower shares, weddings, floral deliveries and veggie boxes.

Why Host A Farmer?

Our farmers feed our community delicious, nutritious, high-quality food and are high-energy, fun-loving people who thrive on working hard. With little low-income housing locally, you can support the next generation of farmers while contributing to the local economy.

- Hosting a farmer can be like hosting an exchange student. It can be a fun cultural exchange and chance to learn some words in



Spanish and learn about another culture.

- Knowledge exchange: Learn more about caring for your own garden or landscape.
- Work exchange: You could offer a place to live in exchange for 5-10 hours a month of labor on your land. This can give you a boost on caring for your property under skilled hands.

About the Farmers

- Fernando Tano is a 40-year-old 4th generation farmer from Argentina. He has been working for 7 years on an organic farm in Baja, California and loves making biodynamic compost.
- Matthew Shefter is a college student from Cornell University majoring in Agriculture Science (with a concentration in Sustainable Cropping Systems) who wants to become a farmer. He is a varsity athlete, musician and horseback rider and has been a backcountry trail worker, biodynamic farmer, ranch hand, and firefighter/EMT.
- Andres and Roberto are good friends from Guatemala and Baja, Mexico. They have each been in the Yuba City area for nearly 10 years and have been working on orchards, mushroom farms and in construction jobs.

If interested, please contact:
Malaika Bishop, 530-205-0903
<https://bluebirdfarm.net/>

Thank you!



*Hellebore blooming on Cedarsong
(Photo by Ellen Hagan)*

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

by Joy Elson

Thank you to all who supported GCHNA in 2024 making it possible for our association to:

- **Publish** the newsletters
- **Pay** for the website, email accounts and online member management software.
- **Sponsor** a fuel reduction/education work day pulling Scotch broom,
- **Host** a large neighborhood gathering party in August.
- **Qualify** again as a Firewise Community.
- **Be a vehicle** for community action. We provided feedback to the Nevada City Council regarding the proposed location of the new courthouse, and to ATT regarding their service to our community.
- **Support** Bear Yuba Land Trust, CHIRP/Uba Seo, and Yubanet.
- **Offer the discount** with Ferrellgas to members.

What's New

Your membership dues are now good for 12 months from the date you last paid. You will have a month grace period after your due date before your household is removed from the current membership list. A reminder email will be sent in the month before your due date.

The current members list will be provided in an email in early February.

TREASURER'S REPORT - 2024

by Janet Johnson

REVENUES:	
Member Dues	\$ 7,710.00
Contribution from Firewise Fundraising Event	\$ 325.00
Total	\$ 8,035.00
EXPENSES:	
Annual Neighborhood Gathering	\$ 2,173.03
Donations (Bear Yuba Land Trust, YubaNet, CHIRP)	\$ 460.00
Firesafe Education	\$ 65.06
Newsletters	\$ 1,018.29
Meeting Room Rental	\$ 100.00
Website, LGL online CRM software	\$ 670.40
Misc: USPS Box, Printing, Supplies, Paypal Fees, etc.	\$ 348.50
Total	\$ 4,835.28
REVENUES LESS EXPENSES:	\$ 3,199.72
CASH FLOW AND BANK RECONCILIATION:	
Beginning Bank Balance, 12/31/23	\$ 4,950.70
2024 Revenues less Expenses	\$ 3,199.72
Total	\$ 8,150.42
12/31/24 Bank Balance	\$ 8,150.42



~ GCHNA STEERING COMMITTEE ~

To contact GCHNA for membership related questions or to reach a member of the Steering Committee, please send an email to members@gchna.com.

Officers

- **President:** Will Hart
- **Secretary:** Ellen Hagan
- **Treasurer:** Janet Johnson
- **Membership:** Joy Elson

Committee Leaders

- **Firewise Committee:** Karen Wcislo
- **Events:** Open Position
Interested in joining the Events Committee?
Send an email to members@gchna.com

At Large

- Christy Barden
- Eileen Jorgensen
- Spencer LeGate

Neighborhood Representatives

Airport Road: Uli Paulin (includes Tower Hill Road, West Airport Road, East Piper Lane and Sheriff Road)

Applewood Lane: Elena Rayo (includes Indian Shack Road)

Augustine / Daisy Blue Mine / Excelsior Ditch Camp Road: Will Hart (includes Leisure Lane and Lazy Oaks Drive)

Gochine Drive: Dale Tom Creighton (includes Mt. Auburn Circle)

Sunrock Road: Marlene Widmann

Indian Flat Road: Joanne Brown (includes Indian Trails, Country Circle, Woods Ravine Ct. and Robinson King Road)

Wet Hill Road / Lower North Bloomfield Road: Sierra Buryn (includes Sierra Springs Circle and Elliot Way)

West End Cement Hill: Ellen Hagan (includes Sunshadow Circle, Cedarsong Road and Garesio Ranch Road)

Upper Cement Hill: Jeff Coleman-Hunt (includes Pine Tree Place, Diamond Oak Drive, Bodie Ridge Road, Skyranche Road and Elysian Way)

Central Cement Hill: Joy Elson (includes Whispering Oaks, Merryhill Way, Gold Court, Spanish Quartz, Ragon Road and Fox Hill Road.)

Lower Cement Hill: Brian Waag (includes West Piper, Deer Crest, Rancheria Court, Red Hill Road, Foster Driveway, Picton, Picton Way and Foster Road)

Southside Cement Hill: Debbie Wandro (Highway 49, including Columbine Court, Delphine Lane, Shoshoni Trail, Old Faithful Court, Carli Way, Crooked Arrow Lane, John Barleycorn Rd., Frost Court and Cavanaugh Lane)

GCHNA MEMBERSHIP – JOIN OR RENEW

Dues: \$30/year

Pay online at www.gchna.com or mail this form with your check to
GCHNA, PO Box 1343, Nevada City, CA 95959

Name(s) _____

Property Address _____

Mailing Address _____
(if different)

Phone(s) _____

Email(s) _____

What year did you purchase your property or start living in our Cement Hill neighborhood? _____

- I am / We are: Owners Renters
- Do you live here full time? yes no
- Interested in becoming involved? yes
- Would you like to help plan the next neighborhood gathering? yes





Greater Cement Hill Neighborhood Association

PO Box 1343, Nevada City, CA 95959

Contact Information

GCHNA

President:
president@gchna.com

Treasurer:
treasurer@gchna.com

Membership / Website:
members@gchna.com

Firewise Committee:
firewise@gchna.com

OTHER

Ferrellgas: 530-265-5896
www.ferrellgas.com

**Nevada County Coalition
of Firewise Communities**
www.nccoalitionfwc.com

GCHNA Mission Statement

To protect and preserve the rural qualities of our neighborhood by providing a forum for group action as needed.

Purpose

- Communicate information quickly and efficiently about matters of neighborhood interest to its members and associates.
- Raise funds and supply volunteer labor for projects that enhance or improve our neighborhood.
- Be an organization through which our neighbors can meet and get to know each other in meetings and social gatherings.
- Work to reduce fire hazards in our community.
- Promote safety on Cement Hill Road and local trails.
- Collaborate and communicate with Nevada County Board of Supervisors and Departments.
- Identify and help preserve historic sites in the area.
- Represent and provide balance of diverse interests in reviewing and prioritizing projects or issues of concern to our neighborhood.
- Support other neighborhood associations as their interests coincide with GCHNA.

Newsletter Team

Editor: Ellen Hagan **Design & Layout:** Joy Elson

Thank you to all of our authors and photographers!

