



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



Walter Ordway was from Soldier, Iowa. We first met when I picked him up hitchhiking on I-79 outside of Charleston, WV.

I was returning to our homestead in the rural Appalachian Mountains, while he was returning to India to resume his around the world bicycle trip. He had been called home after three years on the road by his ailing father. I offered him a place to stay for the night and a return ride to the interstate the following morning. Anyone who has traveled on their thumb knows this is a welcome offer.

Walter was in his late 20s (this was 1978) with an athletic build born of midwestern high school sports programs, years of farm labor, and thousands of miles pedaling his bicycle. He was quiet but open, with a likable smile and alert eyes that served him well with his minimalist pen and ink drawings that he created throughout his travels.

After dinner it only took a few questions to get him talking about his time on the road. And oh the stories!

Walter stayed with us for a week, helping out on the farm with my projects and meeting the other members of our community, who he subsequently stayed with working on house building, logging, pasture clearing, and crops. He

liked WV. He said it was more like the rest of the world than any place he had been in the States. His stay stretched into the months of summer, and everyone loved

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him.

He returned to India where he spent the next year traveling from south to north. Four years later, when we saw him after completing his journey, he told us this story after dinner one night.

He was in the northern part of India and was traveling past the monastery where the Dalai Lama lived. He thought he should drop in. The monastery was an imposing place with guards standing in front

of doors so large that there was a smaller door cut into them for ease of use by mere mortals.

Walter was standing in front of those doors when the smaller door opened and out stepped a Tibetan man in a western suit. He walked over to Walter and inquired about his presence there. Walter told him he was bicycling by and wanted to stop and see the Dalai Lama.

Asking if he knew anything about the Dalai Lama, Walter replied he did not. The man told him to wait there and went back inside. He returned with a book on the life of the Dalai Lama, which he gave to Walter and said, "Read this and come back Monday morning at 9:00." It was Friday, so Walter had the weekend to read into the life of the Dalai Lama, his flight from the Chinese government in Tibet, and his move to northern India.

Walter traveled with two shirts and two pairs of shorts, so on Monday morning he put on his clean polo shirt and shorts and went to the monastery where he was ushered into a great hall by the guards.

The hall was flanked with chairs on both sides that were already full of people who had waited years to get an audience with the

Neighborhood Meetings 2026

Aug. 3 • Oct. 5 • Dec. 7

7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Madelyn Helling Library
Community Room

ALL ARE WELCOME!

SAVE THE DATE!

Annual GCHNA Party
Saturday, October 17
Stay tuned for more
information
via email!



President's Message *(continued)*

Dalai Lama. There were ambassadors with medals and sashes, scholars with piles of papers, and holy men of various faiths, all with their entourages and each dressed meticulously, waiting for their moment with the Dalai Lama.

Walter was taking this all in when the man who gave him the book appeared in traditional Himalayan garb and said that the Dalai Lama was beginning his appointments, but first he would like to speak to ... and he pointed to Walter. Walking up the grand hall in front of everyone, Walter assumed he was going to get a handshake and the bum's rush. The man who was leading him turned out to be the Dalai Lama's brother taking him into a room with chairs and a large couch. Before Walter could sit down, the Dalai Lama rushed into the room with his arms up, saying, "Walter!, Walter!, Walter!", walked over to him putting one arm around his shoulder and escorted him to the couch where they sat down. With the arm still around him and face to face, the Dalai Lama looked into Walter's eyes and asked, "What is it?"

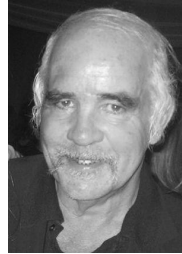
Walter said he never had time to recover. The Dalai Lama was extremely interested in Walter's trip around the world. The Dalai Lama was jovial and easy to laugh. After forty-five minutes the Dalai Lama's brother came into the room and reminded him that there was a hallway full of people out there waiting to see him.

It is protocol that when you meet the Dalai Lama, you present him with a saffron scarf as a symbol of deference and respect, which of course Walter did not have. Walter

said his feet were not touching the ground as he left the room and moved down the hall in front of the waiting dignitaries, when suddenly, he heard the voice of the Dalai Lama calling his name. He turned and the Dalai Lama was rushing down the hall towards him clutching a saffron scarf which he presented to Walter with a bow.

Walter asked the Dalai Lama about life. He imparted a story from many beliefs including, as I understand, the local Maidu. There are two spirals from the heavens to Earth and back again. One for good, the other for evil. Everything you do contributes to one or the other. Your choice. Simple but effective self-realization.

I inhaled deeply as I don't think I had taken a breath during his whole telling of the story, and this was just one of many from seven years on the road.



Walter H. Ordway
1947-2014

Walter died in Soldier, Iowa. Twenty some years had passed since we had first met. His best friend was a sheep dog that went out onto the ice of a pond in the early spring and broke through. Walter went in after him.

A random act of kindness brought Walter into our lives in WV, but it was more of paying back a debt as many people had done the same for me as a road weary traveler.

If you open up to people they will open up to you. As I move around and meet the folks in our community, I am always fascinated by the background and stories they have to tell, many having had multiple lives. So, get to know your neighbors; help them out. Everyone's knowledge and experience can enrich our own lives in ways we can't imagine.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS and GCHNA IS LOOKING FOR A NEW TREASURER!

by Joy Elson

Thanks to all members who support GCHNA and make it possible for us to be an organization!

As of July 12, there are 244 active member households. (Our neighborhood has about 457 households.)

New! A list of current members can be viewed at any time by [clicking here](#).

If you are not a member, or your membership has expired, please consider joining or renewing! Go to www.gchna.com/membership/ to renew online or by mail. Membership dues are \$30 per year, effective for 12 months. You will have a month grace period after your due date before your household is removed from the current membership list.

A **huge thank you** to Janet Johnson, who has been our Treasurer since the beginning of 2023. Janet has moved to Colorado, and is graciously continuing to help as Treasurer as we search for a new person to join the Steering Committee in that position. If you or someone you know in the neighborhood has bookkeeping experience and is familiar with Quickbooks, please encourage them to consider becoming our new Treasurer. It is not a time consuming job, but includes providing a treasurer's report a few times a year, helping the Membership Coordinator with banking tasks, and attending the GCHNA neighborhood meetings every other month.

If you'd like more information about the job, please send an email to members@gchna.com.



NEWS FROM YOUR FIREWISE COMMITTEE

Committee Accomplishments and Info

by Karen Wcislo



Cheryl Haines noted there were no cameras in the Cement Hill area on the Watch Duty app. She contacted AlertCalifornia, which installs the cameras and got them excited about having one in our area overlooking the Yuba River Canyon. Five homeowners agreed to have their property evaluated as possible sites. We were able to go out with their team to see how they evaluate the sites by using drones. Fortunately one at the top of Cement Hill was selected!

Chris Owen and Rebecca McDougal have generously allowed the installation of two cameras on their property, which provide an excellent view to the north and east up the river canyon. This provides early smoke visualization directly to Cal Fire. Take a look at your Watch Duty app – just click on the icon to see the high-quality live video feed!

Joy Elson has again worked diligently this spring to coordinate the free chipping service provided by Nevada County OES for 25 properties. She also facilitated the free green waste bin placed in our neighborhood last month which was



Committee Members (left to right): Will Hart, Joy Elson, Cheryl Haines, Karen Wcislo, Mark Ball. Not pictured: Ellen Hagan and Josh Miller.

filled! Utilizing these free services to address vegetation on our properties keeps all of us safer in the event of a fire.

Josh Miller has been doing defensible space advisory visits since he joined our committee last year. **Molly Breen** expressed interest in learning to be one, attended a two-day workshop hosted by Cal Fire and is now certified defensible space advisor. Thanks Molly! To request an advisory visit, go to <https://www.gchna.com/firewise-information/>

Fire Weather Alerts: As you've noticed in the news and weather reports in the past few weeks, there is more discussion about "Fire Weather Alerts." These don't mean there is a wildfire, but rather that there is an increased risk of a fire spreading out of control due to dry fuels, wind, low moisture, heat, unstable atmosphere, and terrain steepness.

The important thing is for you to know what to do when these alerts are given for our area:

Fire Weather Watch: In the next 12-72 hours conditions may become higher risk, so be sure you and your home ready. Be sure you are signed up for emergency alerts.

Red Flag Warning: Remove flammable items from near your house, have your go-bag packed, and be on alert.

Extreme Red Flag Warning: If a fire starts, it would spread fast. Be psychologically and practically prepared to evacuate.

REMINDER

Annual Firesafe Mitigation Forms due October 15

To continue to qualify as a Firewise Community, each year we are required to report on the work (time and money) that residents in our neighborhood do to reduce wildfire risks.

For the year 2025, our neighborhood reported 18,412 hours and \$1,233,919 spent!

[CLICK HERE](#) to download a form to use as a worksheet. But, when you are ready, **please submit your numbers online on our website**, to make our job easier collecting the data.

All residents of our Firewise Community are requested to submit this form, not just active GCHNA members.

How to Prepare for Fire Season

by Ellen Hagan

Fire Season is here. We've already had Red Flag warning days when high heat, wind and low humidity cause concern. How can you get ready, plan ahead, and remain aware? Nevada County prepares an excellent Ready, Set, Go Handbook you can use as a guide. Here's a summary of things to know, but all 36 pages are available at nevadacountyca.gov.

1. Download the Watch Duty app to your phone to get alerts for fires in our area.
2. Know Your Evacuation Zone: Go to protect.genasys.com. During a wildfire, evacuation orders will be issued by zone. Most of our neighborhood is in one of three zones. (continued on next page)



NEWS FROM YOUR FIREWISE COMMITTEE *(continued)*

How to Prepare for Fire Season *(continued)*

- NCO-E310 contains much of the Cement Hill Road area, the area north of Hwy 49, east of Yuba River State Park, south of the Yuba River, west of Meyer's Ravine and Wet Hill Road.
 - NCO-E311 contains Indian Flat, the area north and east of Hwy 49, south of Cement Hill Road, and west of Hirschman's Pond.
 - NEV-E305 contains the Rood Center, Sugarloaf, north of Hwy 49, east of Hirschman's Pond, Wet Hill Road, and southwest of Hwy 20.
3. Evacuation Routes: How will you get out to Hwy 49? There is an evacuation road from the far west end of Cement Hill Road across private property to Cedarsong Road then Hwy 49. Look for the signage. It is for emergency use only. A video describing the road is available at gchna.com. Cedarsong Road has been recently graveled and graded. Thank you to the Cedarsong neighbors, particularly Michael Taylor, for the road improvement.
 4. Go Bags: Include medications, and copies of important documents. Get a list at ReadyNevadaCounty.org/GoBags. Consider making a video of your possessions for insurance purposes. A guide to creating a thorough home inventory is provided at insurance.ca.gov.
 5. Prepare for pets and animals.
 6. Make a plan with members of your household and share it. If you are separated from family during an evacuation order, where will you meet? How will you communicate?
- Are there neighbors that may need your help?
7. Stay Informed: Monitor local media. Trusted sources include: KVMR radio 89.5, YubaNet.com, 211, KNCO 830. If power is out, utilize a battery powered radio.
 8. The Nevada County Dashboard is an on-line tool that provides information on the status of fires in our area. A map will show the location of the fire and updates. Live web cams can be accessed along with wind conditions.
 9. An evacuation warning means there is a potential threat. An order means to leave now.
 10. If you must evacuate, put an evacuation tag in a highly visible place like your address sign to let first responders know you've gone. They are available at the Nevada County Consolidated Fire Station on Coyote Street.
 11. Sign up for Nevada County Alerts to receive critical updates during an emergency at ReadyNevadaCounty.org/EmergencyAlerts. Add these phone contact to your phone so calls are recognized as legitimate notification: 530 394-6160, 530 248-7554, 530 248-7559, 530 248-7564, 530 385-0422.
- Want more? Wildfire Ready Coalition of Nevada County is a local organization dedicated to reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire. They are an excellent resource. On their Evacuation Safety page, you will find checklist and GoBag suggestions.
- Keeping our community safe from wildfire requires us to be aware and vigilant. We're all in this together!

A Handy List for 6-12 Hours before Evacuation *(Source: Wildfire Ready Coalition of Nevada County)*

People who have been through an evacuation often talk about the value of their "lists." Once adrenaline starts pumping, it's sometimes difficult to think as clearly as you'd like. So, here's a list that might be useful to you if you have time before evacuation.

1. Prepare for power outages throughout the day. Get your car out of the garage. Prepare for cell or telephone disruptions or being out of service altogether.
2. Have these items bagged and ready to go by your doorway: valuables or irreplaceable items, photos, computers, jewelry, firearms, smaller antiques, artwork.
3. Think of your daily responsibilities and gather items for those needs: medicines, toiletries, an assortment of clothes and footwear, pet carriers and pet food.
4. Make relocation plans with friends, family or hotel reservations early.
5. Have your car fueled.
6. If you're planning on taking a travel trailer or motorhome, leave as early as possible or arrange to park it away from the fire area.
7. Have house pets ready to load and go.
8. Move vehicles or wood deck trailers that are parked outside, away from your home or park them inside.
9. When exiting your home: shut off HVAC air circulation, shut off propane tank or gas meter, draw all blinds to prevent radiant heat, fill bath tubs and sinks with water, identify water sources or hazards on your property with signs, set out ladders for firefighters to access your roof quickly, make garden hoses available.
10. Optimize defensible space. Get needles and leaves off your roof and gutters. If you have landscaping bark around the perimeter of your home, wet it down. Cover roof vents with plywood or metal panels. Move outdoor furniture or loose combustible items away from your home or place inside. Move wood piles away from your home or deck. Pull away landscaping border wood or wood fences adjacent/contacting to your home. Clear brush or natural forested vegetation away from the immediate exterior of your home and place it in an open area or push it back into forest land.



FIRESCAPING

by Joanne Brown



In April, the U.C. Master Gardeners of Nevada County presented a program about the placement and choice of landscaping options to maximize the

impact of defensible space. Kevin Marini is an excellent speaker. He held the attention of a standing room only audience for two solid hours. Go listen to him if you ever get the chance. In the meantime, this article highlights some of the takeaways.

We live in a wildland-urban interface with a "severe" wildfire risk. State law requires 100 feet of defensible space from all structures on a property. Note the word "structure" as opposed to "house." Structures include detached garages, shops, studios, even sheds.

Properties are divided into defensible space zones: Zone 0 reaches out 5 feet from structures, Zone 1 is between 5 and 30 feet from structures, and Zone 2 includes 30 to 100 feet from structures.

Zone 0 is also called the Ember Ignition Zone. Studies have shown 80-90% of all buildings destroyed by fire were ignited by blowing embers. Embers can travel from fires as far as two miles away.

The space measured 5 feet out from a structure's foundation (or attached porch, deck or overhang) should be a non-flammable area. No plants, mulch, flammable furniture, decor, firewood piles, dead leaves.... Nothing that could catch fire if embers were to hit the house and slide down to the ground. Our state legislators are in the process of writing a new law regarding Zone 0 but some insurance carriers are already

mandating it be a non-flammable area as a pre-requisite to coverage.

Zone 1 should be kept "Lean, Clean and Green." Lean refers to the spacing of vegetation. Create small clusters of plants surrounded by non-flammable hard scape material (concrete, asphalt, gravel, rock, retaining walls). Avoid horizontal lines of shrubs (hedges). These could act as a wick leading flames directly toward structures. Avoid ladder fuels by limbing trees up 6-10 feet above the ground, or 1/3 the height of trees that are less than 10 feet tall.

Clean refers to the removal of dead material such as pinecones, leaves and twigs that accumulate along walkways and under bushes. Green means well hydrated. ALL plants

will burn if they get hot enough, but well-watered plants could give you that extra bit of time needed for fire fighters to arrive. When shopping for plants, remember some are more resistant

to fire than others. Look for those that hold moisture, are low growing and low maintenance. Sedum (Autumn Joy) is a good example.

When considering limited use of mulch in Zone 1, remember

to spread the material no more than three inches deep. Avoid shredded mulch, such as cedar or redwood, because it ignites the fastest. Avoid wood chips that have been kiln dried and are sold in plastic bags. They are highly flammable. Your best option is "arborist wood chips." This is what tree service companies create when they chip live and dead plant material at the same time. These chips contain

some moisture and the companies will deliver piles of it for free.

On Red Flag days, it is advised you hydrate Zones 0 and 1. By watering your landscape, you combat the drying effect of the windy, hot weather. This will reduce the chance of ignition should embers blow your way.

Zone 2 requires heavy-handed removal of brush, dead trees and fallen branches. Look up. Is there space between the tops of your trees or do you see a canopy where flames could race over your property dropping embers?

Your propane-fueled BBQ needs to be kept away from structures. If a propane tank is on fire and the pressure relief valve has been activated, the flames can jet out with significant force, often

reaching several feet high. If the tank ruptures the resulting fireball can be massive, potentially reaching heights of 30-50 feet depending on the amount of propane in the tank.

Another state law will affect you if you decide to sell your home. Houses in areas with high or severe wildfire risk cannot close escrow unless the seller has had an official defensible space inspection. This inspection can only be performed by a trained firefighter and any problems noted must be disclosed to potential buyers.

A parting thought ... When Hot Shot firefighters arrive at a wildfire in a residential area, the first thing they do is break down all wood fences and gates that abut structures. The debris is then moved to a distance of at least ten feet away from those structures. Consider this: If removing wood fences and gates away from structures is a Hot Shot's first priority, perhaps it should be yours, too.



LOCAL INTEREST

Mello Pello Acquisition Update

by Eileen Jorgensen and Will Hart

Thanks to all of the Greater Cement Hill neighbors and others who responded to the Go Fund Me call for the acquisition of the Mello Pello property. The drive raised over \$7,000. The 2.2 acres at the intersection of Cement Hill and Highway 49 has been for sale for many years. With the county's continued development of Highway 49 and now the proposed Courthouse nearby, our neighborhood, together with the Sierra County Land Trust, hope to acquire this property and transfer ownership to Nevada City reuniting the property to the popular 35 acre Hirschman's Pond and Trail Open Space.

Our goal is to provide:

- An undeveloped protective buffer to the beautiful Hirschman's Park Open Space by restoring the site to its natural state.
- An intermittent seasonal stream fed by drainage along the road from the north.
- Stream restoration in Laird's Ravine on the western side of the property.
- Fuel management of the forested area in the north and west side of the property.
- An aesthetically pleasing entry to the cornerstone of our neighborhood and historic Nevada City and beautify the scenery along the Highway 49 corridor which is designated by Nevada City as a Scenic Corridor.
- A trail over the hill to join Hirschman's Pond Trail.
- Potentially additional parking for the pond and trail.
- Historic interpretation of the Nisenan use of the area as well as the mining era and the owner, Mello Pello, whose family has graciously entertained our proposal.



Photo by Joy Elson



Artwork by Jennifer Rain Crosby

To date we have:

- Assembled existing reports of the property including a Phase 1 Environmental Assessment.
- Received written support from tribal interests.
- Received support from Nevada City, Nevada County, Bear Yuba Land Trust and SYRCL. Nevada City has guaranteed acceptance and caring for the land in perpetuity.
- Conducted our own biotic assessment and received advice from a hydrologist to ensure that the wetland recreation is feasible.
- Created concept maps of our proposal of Wetland Restoration and Vegetation Restoration Site Plans.
- Applied for numerous grants which have not come through. We continue to seek and apply however.
- An appraisal underway.

We are in negotiations with the Pello family now and hope to come to an acceptable agreement soon. At that point, we plan to launch a major fundraising campaign supported by grants to complete the purchase.

The generous contributions of the Greater Cement Hill residents and many others have provided the support and funds to get us this far and we are deeply appreciative.

If you would like to help or contribute, please send an email to: president@gchna.com or call 530 822-1480.

Join us as we aspire to reunite the Pello property with the Hirschman's Trail and Pond!



LOCAL INTEREST

A Young Man's Mining Adventure

by Spencer LeGate



Our driver turned the wheel a hard left on the hill and braked the 4x4, his three passengers sliding against the downhill pointed doors. The descent was now too steep to proceed in the pickup. We grabbed our bedrolls, the three of us tumbling out into the whispering chorus of snow-dappled conifers and the approaching winter. We finished the journey down to the cabin on foot. Smoke curled from the chimney as we approached, the old miner waiting greeted us. It wasn't much of a cabin, with only one room and no facilities. Nor was it much of a mining claim we were to work either. The entire operation consisted of a cobbled together double drum winch powered by an ancient splash-oil overhead Chevy 6 engine.

A reservoir fed water to a monitor, a small artillery looking piece that is actually a mounted swiveling metal water hose, but not garden variety. The massive ones employed in the heyday of hydraulic mining could demolish small buildings and lob 200 lb boulders great distances. They were designed to pulverize landscape, the reward being a few pinches of gold per ton of mountain removed. The unsolicited detritus flowed down to valley farmers, choking rivers and burying farmland.

One will ask how anyone could still be hosing away real estate in the mid-twentieth century, as hydraulic mining had been on the losing side of the controversy which by a famous legal ruling had mostly ended it. The Sawyer decision of 1884 enjoined the practice, not always successfully, but the Caminetti Act of 1892 only temporarily revived it by requiring holding ponds that would capture the tailings and allow just water back into streams and rivers.

This claim high above the Middle Fork of the Yuba River had no future, thankfully. At that time, it was hoped that with a crew working a couple of weeks, enough color would show up raising expectations that there was much more near bedrock justifying deeper digging underground.

The work was plagued with mechanical failures. Not much of the mountain was blasted away and sluiced in the time we spent there. Two of us, just youngsters, dawdled a lot and reveled in the stories of the aged miner. He had been a teenager at the dawn of the twentieth century and spent his life in a number of gold fields. Several of my uncles and my stepfather had worked in the mines during the depression, one of them dying from silicosis at a young age. The other teen was the son of the mine owner. His uncle, our boss, was a thin fellow who didn't have the look of a miner or any manual worker.

The old mining veteran recounted a frightful tale about working in a vertical shaft years before in Nevada repairing deficient timber wedging. The rickety shoring suddenly failed and the broken timber bounced him down nearly a hundred feet. He wasn't expected to survive, but after a long recovery and some permanent injuries, he returned to mining. He was now in his seventies and this gig was probably his last hurrah.

We lived on a miner's diet of beans and canned food; not a single meal do I have any memory of, so humdrum was our grub. But we were more creative when it came to decorations for the approaching Xmas. Along with the dynamite was the usual paraphernalia, blasting caps, fuse, and waterproofing. We cut a small white fir of about 24 inches height and placed it atop the fireplace mantle. Decorations consisted of six inches of bright green fuse stuffed into the shiny copper blasting caps then dipped in the bright red protective solution. We hung a dozen or so on the tree, lit a candle on each side and banked up the fire. It was most Christmassy.

We arranged our sleeping bags on the floor near our only source of heat and dozed off. I don't remember who was first awakened but when the commotion brought me up, I could barely breathe, or see, so badly was the tiny space choking with a foul, acrid smoke. We fled the cabin, some of the smoke in pursuit but realized that a fire had started somewhere and demanded attention. Someone started looking for buckets to fill. I ventured back in to see a tiny strip of flame curling up at the top front edge of the wood mantle. The blaze had started thanks to our overcharged fire, kindled by years of mouse furnishings in the hollow of the mantle. Hence the terrible smell.



LOCAL INTEREST

A Young Man's Mining Adventure *(continued)*

While the fire was being extinguished, I thought about our Christmas decorations and wondered if someone hadn't quickly been roused, would the eventual popping blasting caps have awakened us to death by asphyxiation? Or



rather been a 12 pop salute to our passing.

The day of the walk to our ride rendezvous at a down river bridge arrived. We'd be home for Xmas. There was little to cheer for in our work though a clean-up (for gold,

not the cabin) was in order. There was no need for me to pretend that I had any interest in whatever the yield. Gold's lure had passed me over.

We bid adieus to the old man who stayed behind, bundled our belongings and started down toward the river. There was just enough snow to greet the holidays, and the sun-filled walk took us through some fir giants that had been hidden from logging by the steep ridge.

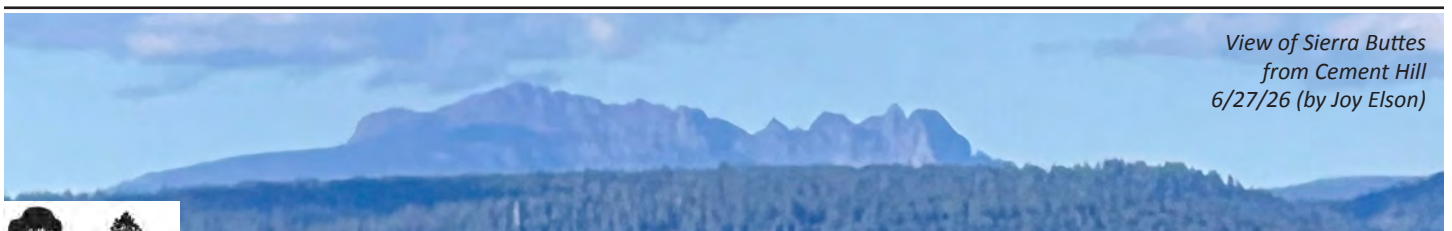
Nearing the bridge, we saw the portal of a hard rock claim on the opposite side of the river and investigated. It was a more serious mining undertaking than our own with a head rig and skip car. A lone, friendly swede was on guard during what might have been the seasonal shut down. Thinking back to the pleasure of our old co-worker's storytelling, I inquired of his mining adventures. He told of a winter in British Columbia, as I remember, on a tributary of the Fraser or that river itself. They would cut a stack of logs to a certain dimension and build a crib at a prospective spot in the river and set it afire. The goal was to melt down to where pockets of gold were expected to gather, then bucket out the gravel to be washed.

The swede noticed me studying the cable-attached skip car which appeared of dimensions that might hold a single folded body. He asked me if I wished to dare a ride down into the mine. I accepted, how enthusiastically I don't

recall, likely not having given it thoughtful consideration. The instructions were that I keep down because the very wide open mine opening where we began was going to narrow, providing little head room. The cable that lowered the car on the rails I discovered was guided by dead rollers as the tunnel veered or the angle of descent increased. As we moved an occasional light would reveal the shrinking walls. I ducked my head well below the lip of the car. Suddenly I appeared to drop almost vertically into a dark hole, and I worried that it might have jumped the tracks. Before panic could set in the ride began to level somewhat and the mine walls opened to a large well-lit drift. I poked my head up and realized we were heading for a lake the rails disappearing into it. The skip car stopped within a few feet of the water's edge. What happens now?

I waited a few minutes until finally the car began moving back up to where we started. Returned to the winter sun I found the Swede and our boss talking mining adventures. We met our ride and thus ended my brief mining career.

A few years later, as part of a college graduation writing requirement, I chose to research and submit a history paper on hydraulic mining. Though still immune to gold fever, the story about its rise and retreat bit me hard. The historical significance of hydraulic mining I learned was manifold with much focus on subjects far more critical to California's evolution than the search for gold: water distribution and conservation, to name a few. My thesis as I remember in writing about that period was to explore how and why Nevada County fared better than other areas as mining dried up. Riding the school bus way back in late 1956, I had witnessed the striking miners gathered along the road next to the closed Empire Mine, never to reopen, another dying gasp of the industry. That the area survived following hard times and then flourished by other means was testimony not only to the community's survival, but also its solidarity and strength.



*View of Sierra Buttes
from Cement Hill
6/27/26 (by Joy Elson)*



LOCAL INTEREST

The Rainbow Market has New Owners

by Eileen Jorgensen



The Rainbow Market situated on Highway 49 at Newtown Road and Indian Flat Road has new management. The original owners recently sold the business to seasoned entrepreneurs Bishnu Subedi and Indira Basnet of Grass Valley, a husband and wife team, originally from Nepal.

For the last 30 years, the Rainbow Market convenience store has been a crucial last stop for the traveler and the local as they traverse the northern stretch of Highway 49 before the terrain dramatically drops into the Yuba Canyon.

Bishnu and Indira bring experience and a great work ethic to the Rainbow Market. They recently sold the Brighton Street Grocery Store in Grass Valley which they ran for seven years. We are delighted that they chose our neighborhood to serve next. They have remodeled and now carry more organic snacks, healthy sodas, a line of dairy items, beer, wine and, of course, propane. Stop by and say hello and welcome them to the neighborhood! They are open Monday thru Saturday 7:00 am to 8:30 pm and 8:00 am to 8:30 pm on Sunday.

Wondering how they got here? As Indira tells it, as a young married couple with a young daughter in Nepal 20 years



ago, they applied for and won a lottery for a green card to come to the US. They began their life here in the US on the East Coast but once they visited friends in Nevada County, they decided to put roots here. Their son was born here and their children are as accomplished as their parents. At 16 and 23 years of age, their son and daughter are exceptional students. I know because their 16 year old has been best buddies with my grandson since kindergarten. They could pass as brothers!



Interesting History

The Rainbow Market is situated at an important crossing that had been established far back in our history. Our Indigenous people first traversed trails to this high, flat, open terrain as they walked to the crossway on their way to and from Nevada City, Marysville, Downieville and beyond. Eventually, the trails became established byways and in the 1850's during the gold fever, the Nisenan of the Ostomah Village, situated above what is now Hirschman's Pond, were relocated to these crossroads.

Also in the 1850's, the first Indian School was built on the west side of what is now Highway 49 and Newtown Rd. and the first reservoir (Red Hill Ditch) was established on the promontory above what is now Country Circle. Indian Flat Road got its name as it was the road to the Indian community established at "the flats."

NEW ROAD REPRESENTATIVES FOR UPPER CEMENT HILL NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

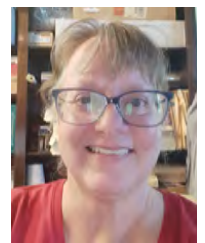
Erin and Laura are honored to serve as Co-Road Reps and will work to help keep the neighborhood connected.



Erin Smith, a potter, grew up in Auburn, but spent much of her childhood at the property her father purchased with Chris Owens and others at the end of Cement Hill Road. Erin married her husband, Mark Ball (a member of the GCHNA Firewise Committee), on that property nearly twenty years ago.

Missing the beauty and community of Nevada City, Erin and Mark returned with their two children five years ago to make Cement Hill their home. They now share Still Moon Ranch with a dog and cat and are hoping to add goats and chickens soon.

Laura Pappani and her husband Bill purchased the property next to Erin and Mark twenty years ago. They fell in love with the view, the peacefulness, and the wonderful neighborhood.



Laura has worked for the Nevada County Library in a variety of roles over the years, currently managing the Doris Foley Library.

Bill is a financial controller for a company in the Bay Area. Their son, Zephyr, will be a sophomore at Nevada Union in the fall.



GCHNA STEERING COMMITTEE

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

Officers

- **President:** Will Hart
- **Secretary:** Ellen Hagan
- **Treasurer:** Open Position
- **Membership:** Joy Elson

Other Positions

- **Firewise Committee:** Karen Wcislo
- **NID Representative:** Laurie Segal
- **Events Coordinator:** Open Position

At Large

- Christy Barden
- Eileen Jorgensen
- Spencer LeGate

Neighborhood Representatives

Airport Road: Todd Krein (includes Tower Hill Road, West Airport Road, East Piper Lane and Sheriff Road)

Applewood Lane: Susan Zdarko
(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 Sun Shadow Circle, Cedarsong Road and Garesio Ranch Road)

Upper Cement Hill: Erin Smith & Laura Pappani (includes Pine Tree Place, Diamond Oaks Drive, Bodie Ridge Road, Skyranch 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: Brad Reynolds (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 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.

CONTACT INFORMATION

GCHNA

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Firewise Committee:
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OTHER

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**Ready Nevada County
(OES)**
www.nevadacountyca.gov

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