

# Rancho association working to expand membership base

The Valley Springs News, July 11, 2012



*Rancho Calaveras Property Owners Association clubhouse and pool are two of the amenities open to those who join the organization.*

**By Nick Baptista**

The dog days of summer have arrived and thoughts turn to taking a cool dip in the pool.

While some are fortunate to have their own pool, many don't, but the option to join a community association that has a pool and other amenities is open to all.

The Rancho Calaveras Property Owners Association has been serving the subdivision since 1974, and while the name could imply exclusivity to some, membership is open to residents and non-residents.

Membership for Rancho property owners and residents is \$150 a year, while non-Rancho residents can join for \$200 a year.

The association is on the rebound after membership numbers had been dormant for a few years. An active board with a vision to add more activities and improve the facilities is the reason for the recent growth spurt from 212 to 378 members.

Bill Boos is the association's president and explained the reason for the increase in interest toward the association.

"There's an atmosphere of organization and hard work on the part of the board and a small, but solid core of volunteers."

Word of mouth has gone a long way toward increasing membership, said Bill's wife Sharon.

"Many are coming back saying, 'We heard all good things about the clubhouse and the association,'" she said.

Membership is voluntary, and association members are in the minority when you consider Rancho has approximately 2,500 property owners.

"(Rancho developer) Boise-Cascade had the opportunity to make membership mandatory, but made it voluntary because they felt they couldn't sell as many lots," said board member and past association president Michael Clark.

That decision, he said, has always made it difficult for the association to have enough funding to properly maintain operations.

Those operations have depended upon a small group of volunteers to "step up to the plate" and keep things running, he said, who essentially are unpaid workers.

He would like to see more people volunteer and help shoulder the load to maintain the facilities and operate the programs.

"We all have an obligation to our community," Clark said.

He can usually be found at the association's tennis courts, running programs for the young and old.

While attention at this time is directed toward the pool, the association has a clubhouse that features a variety of games such as pool, air hockey, foosball and shuffleboard. The pool, clubhouse and tennis courts are located at 3995 S. Highway 26, near the intersection with Baldwin.

The clubhouse can be rented for activities such as weddings and birthday parties and association members receive a discount.

"Many can't believe the clubhouse is here," said Sharon.

Other discounts available to association members cover pest and weed control, tree services, heating and air, septic and computer repairs.

The discount alone for propane through Van Unen more than covers the cost of membership, Sharon added.

The list of activities include free tennis lessons, a chili cook-off, horseshoe tournament, Thanksgiving potluck, winter potluck, monthly breakfasts, flea market, January polar bear plunge, Easter egg hunt and the recent Fourth of July picnic where families could bring their fireworks and have firefighters safely fire them off to the enjoyment of all.

The board is also looking at the possibility of resuming the popular Rancho haunted house for Halloween.

Working with Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection and CalFire, the association has plans to clear the vegetation at Dennis Lake and access routes to other ponds and the Calaveras River, Bill Boos said.

That work is scheduled for late August or September and will be carried out by CalFire's Vallecito Conservation Camp crew. Routine maintenance of those areas will also be put in place.

Board elections are under way and the association's annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, July 22. For more information, or to get involved in the organization, call (209) 772-1355.

<http://www.valleyspringsnews.com/>