

Stonegate Scuttlebutt

The Scuttlebutt newsletter informs Stonegate members about Stonegate HOA financial and operational decisions and elections, and Stonegate Country Club facilities, activities, and neighborhood news.

— Mission Statement adopted by the Board on March 18, 2021

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STONEGATE NEWS: Solar Panels

By Mark Huising



Our own rooftop solar array is projected to save Stonegate well over 1 million dollars!

In early June work started on the installation of two rooftop photovoltaic systems on the roofs of each of our Club buildings. The main Clubhouse will be covered in 88 solar panels, while the fitness club will receive 40 panels. Together, these two systems will cover as much of the available roof area as possible and have a 116 kW capacity of clean renewable energy that we generate during the day time, which is typically when the club sees most of its activity and associated electricity use. The system is installed via local solar brokers RePower Yolo by West Coast Solar, a Northern California rooftop solar installer with a long track record. Since there are no moving parts to these systems that are associated with wear and tear, maintenance costs are expected to be very low. For financial projection and bookkeeping purposes, these systems are written off over a period of 25 years, although it is possible that the system continues to perform well beyond this 25 year window.

Currently the Club is consuming approximately 163,000 kWh of electricity per year at an annual cost of about \$50,000 (2021/2022 numbers). This means

that our club facilities use an amount of electricity that is equivalent to 16 single family homes (<https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/use-of-energy/electricity-use-in-homes.php>). Our new PV solar array is expected to cover about two thirds of this electricity consumption. Electricity rates in CA are high compared to most places in the US, and PG&E electricity rates will rise year over year. Without our new rooftop PV array, our projected total electricity bill from PG&E over 25 years would be around 2.3 Million USD. With our solar array, that bill would be around \$750,000. Add to this the upfront cost of the investment (around \$300,000, minus the 30% federal tax credit that we may be eligible for) and the cost of taking on a short term loan (7 years) with First Northern Bank and the Club and its members are projected to save around 1.2 million dollars. This loan means that our HOA's costs for the first 7 years of owning our PV system will be similar to what they are today: the costs of paying off the loan are similar to the reductions in our PG&E bills. When the loan is fully paid off, the significant energy savings remain and we are expected to save around \$50,000 annually in year 8, with these savings increasing year over year to approximately \$100,000 in year 25 of our PV system.



Theresa Pistoichini and Mark Huising, two of the Stonegate members who worked on bringing solar to the Club.

After several years of conversations about rooftop solar, several Stonegate members including Theresa Pistoichini, Eric Nelson, Travis Milner, David Hungerford, Chas Ehrlich and Mark Huising came together to plan this in earnest in May and June of

2022. This resulted in a formal request for applications in July of 2022, which yielded several bids. Out of these Repower Yolo was selected as the organization with the most complete and most competitive bid. We entered into a formal contract by August of last year. After some delays as the permitting between the City of Davis and RePower Yolo was finalized, the system is now installed. The only thing left before we reap the benefits of clean renewable energy for our clubhouse is to receive ‘permission to operate’ from PG&E. Permission is expected in early to mid November followed by a “ribbon-cutting” ceremony.

And that one third of our current electricity use that is not covered by our solar? That can likely be reduced significantly. We are currently looking into achieving additional energy savings. Low hanging fruit here is the replacement of our pool pump with a more efficient one, and making sure that we do not run our AC units while the exterior doors are open. Suggestions for additional energy savings are always welcome!

STONEGATE NEWS: 2022-2023 fiscal year Audit

The CPA firm Levy, Erlanger and Company LLP has completed an audit of our financial statements for the year 2022-2023.

There will be a special meeting Q and A via Zoom with Bill Erlanger on Tuesday, October 10 at 7:00 pm. (Zoom Meeting ID: 833 9522 7619 Passcode: 463244)

The Board voted to conduct an audit, a closer examination of our financial records, rather than the regular financial review for fiscal year 2022-2023, because there hadn’t been one despite several changes in management and CPAs. Levy, Erlanger and Company also have handled our taxes these past two years.

This is a great way to familiarize oneself with the HOA’s financial situation before next year’s budget is created over the winter. Please look over the special meeting agenda for Monday, October 2 for

links to the draft audit and other supporting documents. We welcome your questions.

STONEGATE ELECTIONS:

Thank you to neighbors Brandon Merritt, Tim O’Brien, Stefanne Haro-Maendly, and Steve Galbreath for running for a position on the Stonegate Master Association board of directors.

Ballots will be mailed on or before October 16 and they are due no later than 5:00 PM on Thursday, November 16.

This fall, three out of the seven director spots are up for re-election and there is the annual question about IRS revenue ruling 70-604 resolution regarding the possible situation of excess membership income.

There will be a friendly candidates forum towards the end of October. The date is still being determined. As in past years, this will be via Zoom and it is a time for candidates to introduce themselves to the community and for them to answer questions from the audience.



Did you know?

The Board uses the “hybrid” meeting format with options for both in-person and Zoom attendance for every Directors’ meeting. For the regular monthly meeting on the third Thursday, the Directors gather in person at the Club. For some special meetings, the Directors attend via Zoom; but there is always a Zoom link set up at the Club for members to use to access the meeting. The on-line agenda for every meeting includes links to the documents the Board will need.

Members are encouraged to review the agenda and supporting documents, attend the Board meeting, and submit comments.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS: State of the Lake

By Stephen McCord



(Reuf Celik jumping into the lake at the Club's July 4 festivities. Photo courtesy of Simone Celik.)

Stonegate Lake – What's the Worth of Water?

July was Lakes Appreciation Month

(www.nalms.org/lakes-appreciation-month), so it's fitting now that summer is ending to think about the values of Stonegate Lake. The well-maintained lake serves as a focal piece for our community in both name and spirit. But what are all the lake's values?

The community would be a sad place indeed if our eponymous lake dried. As Benjamin Franklin said, "when the well is dry, we know the worth of water." And that reference to well water is fitting—during dry periods, the lake is refilled from our well located on the north side of the clubhouse. Otherwise, it would dry up from both evaporation and seepage by mid-to-late-summer.

What's a Lake Worth?

A research paper published in the journal Ecological Economics actually put a dollar value to lakes based on a global survey (and then factoring in relative property values and such).* A lake such as ours is worth about \$400 per year per property benefiting. A key finding was that the various services interact—

for example, improving habitat values can increase scenic values but decrease some recreation values.

Another paper in the Journal of Environmental Economics and Management found the average value of lake water in the Phoenix area to be \$6,500 per acre-foot. When full, Stonegate Lake has about 100 acre-feet, so the total value to construct a new lake based on that estimate would be about \$650,000.

The Color of Money

Many people remark that the lake's color looks odd. The grayish tinge comes from suspended clay particles. A clay liner was placed on the lakebed during construction. Wind stirs up some of those fine particles, which settle very slowly. The green or brown color tends to come from the various species of algae that can "bloom" in the lake, as well as from the organic material accumulated in the lake (from decomposing algae, as well as leaves and grasses that fall into it).

A key characteristic of our lake is that algae concentrations remain low because the clay particles shade them out. The occasional "blooms" of algae seem to occur after a few calm days in summer when the clay settles out. Some decorative ponds (like on golf courses) are dosed with blue dye to both shade out algae and give the water a pleasant (although unnatural) color.

Nary a Drop to Drink

While the lake is not a drinking water source, people swimming in the lake or playing in the beach area can incidentally consume some water. The primary drinking water quality concern is pathogens (like from a sewer line break or all those gulls and Canada geese).

During the majority of the dry season, staff monitor surface water for "fecal indicator" bacteria. Occasional high readings indicate the potential for feces, which means the potential for pathogens. But given that human feces entering the lake is extremely unlikely, the suspected source is waterfowl. When readings remain high for an extended time period – usually during a stretch of little to no wind and higher temperatures – 'no swimming' notices are posted out of an abundance of caution.

Irrigation

The club house lawns need to be irrigated year-round—even during the winter in a drought. What if the water ran out? The turf would die in a couple of weeks during the heat of summer.

Interestingly, the same nutrients that we don't want to induce algae growth in the lake are a benefit in irrigation water. So in addition to city water savings, lake water - which now is pumped directly to irrigate the lawns and other greenery- saves fertilizer costs.

Habitat Values

Although not natural, the 15.2-acre lake still provides valuable habitat. In particular, resident and migratory waterfowl enjoy the open water throughout the year. While the sounds of Canada geese honking and flying can be pleasant, staff spend considerable time cleaning up their feces and feathers. The geese are the most likely source of the fecal indicator bacteria monitored in the lake.

These days the most plentiful fish found in the lake seems to be common carp. They are very hardy, so they can withstand the lake's hot, turbid, low-oxygen conditions. But they have little value as sportfish.

Creating habitat in California can be frighteningly expensive. For comparison, creating new open water habitat in the Central Valley can cost \$10,000 per acre, putting the lake's 15.2 acres at about \$152,000 (biased low because most projects would be much larger and have some economies of scale).

Enjoy the Lake

Enjoy Stonegate Lake responsibly with fun activities, such as boating, stand up paddleboarding; fishing; and simply enjoying the natural scenery with friends and family. Staff take great care of the lake and the surrounding landscape. Lakeshore owners can help by keeping trash and organic material out of the water, and minimizing the use of fertilizers and pesticides that can wash or get sprayed into the lake. All community members can help by removing any trash from the lawn or lake, monitoring the lake and alerting staff of any concerns.

*Abbott, Joshua K. and H. Allen Klaiber. (2013) The value of water as an urban club good: A match approach to community-provided lakes. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*,(65)(2), 208-224.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jeem.2012.09.007>.

[Stephen McCord is a Certified Lake Manager with the North American Lake Management Society. He holds a Ph.D. in Civil & Environmental Engineering from the University of California Davis and is a registered Professional Engineer in California. He is President of McCord Environmental, Inc., based in Davis, CA. Comments and questions can be sent via email to sam@mccenv.com. Stephen McCord was contracted to do a complete report on the lake in 2021 and has been helping to implement its findings. This information, and more, can be found in the report "Stonegate Lake Management Plan." To access it on the Stonegate website www.stonegatecc.com, visit Members' Portal->Documents->Files->Governing Documents.]

WHAT DO YOU THINK: Should there be winter swimming at the Club?

Since COVID-19, Stonegate has kept the lap pool heated and open over the winter months for members' use. Since then, the Board has been asked routinely to grapple with the value of this activity.

The data are still being determined, but consider this:

- The pool and the buildings are both heated by gas. (There is no way to separate this cost.)
- The cost of therms has risen over the years so adjustments need to be made for year-to-year comparisons, particularly when comparing to a past non-winter swimming year.
- There is a basic heating and cleaning cost even to keep the pool closed, but also additional costs for testing and chemicals to keep the pool swimmable.
- On average 23 people swam/day last winter.
- The pool is maintained at ~80°F.
- Last year's gas bill for the Club from late November-late February was estimated to be \$9,250.

What do you think? Send feedback to the Board via Board@StonegateCC.com or through this Google survey.

<https://forms.gle/YGfUqFNKS8GgJr169>



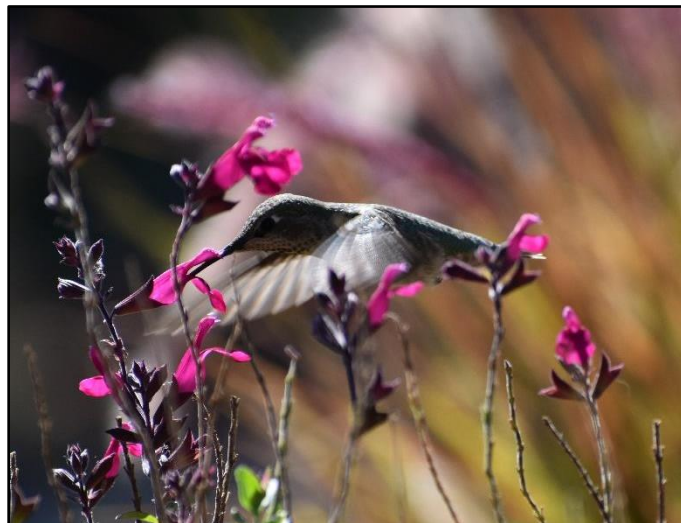
NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS: Maya Meta Bird Photographs



Maya Meta is a 5th grader at Patwin Elementary. She is also very keen on bird watching, both here in Davis and in India when she is there visiting relatives. When Maya was younger she enjoyed sketching birds, but now she is adding photography to her skill set. She started bird-watching and photography when she

was 7, during the start of the pandemic when schools shut down. Since then, her love for birds has grown, and she has had local exhibitions featuring her bird photos. In July and August, 24 of Maya's bird pictures were on show at [Super Owl Brewing](#), our neighborhood family-friendly local micro-brewery.

If you happened to miss Maya's lovely photos here are a few for your enjoyment. These were taken between the ages of 8 and 10, in India and California. Maya used a beginner DSLR camera: (Nikon D3400) with a (70-300 mm) lens. Maya and her parents would like to thank the good folks at Super Owl, especially Joey and Rachel Vida, Lara, Mikhaela, Naomi and Rob who have supported her.



Female Anna's hummingbird enjoying the salvia in our front yard in west Davis.



Red-vented Bulbul sits on a bamboo rafter in our friend's farm in Thiruvanamalai, southern India.



Ruby-

crowned Kinglet enjoying the sunshine in Putah Creek Reserve, Davis.



The annual Stonegate Survey will be launched again this fall. The ad-hoc committee is working on the format. As always, this will be an anonymous survey for the Stonegate community. The goal is to take the “temperature” of the community, appreciate what is working well and gather ideas for improvement.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Special Board Meeting: October 2 at 7:00 PM (Via Zoom - Zoom also available at the Club)

Speaker Series: Should Stonegate ban Gas-powered leaf blowers?

Prompted by a concerned neighbor, we asked this question in the last Scuttlebutt and received a dozen or so responses, several advocating for no leaf blowers at all as opposed to switching to electric ones.

In response, we will have a community speakers series with City of Davis staff and our local council member Babu Vaitla on Thursday, October 5 from 12:00 - 1:00 PM via Zoom. Meeting ID: 836 6177 9457 Passcode: 096128

Q&A with our CPA: October 10 at 7:00 PM (Via Zoom - Zoom also available at the Club)

Neighbors Night Out

Sunday, October 15 is the 17th annual City of Davis Neighbors Night Out. This is a chance for our micro-neighborhoods (a block or a street) to get together and welcome new neighbors. In the past Jerome, Oyster Bay and Marina by Whaleback Park have hosted events.



People are encouraged to register their event before October 2 with the City of Davis:

<https://www.cityofdavis.org/city-hall/city-manager-s-office/community-events/davis-neighbors-night-out>

To check if nearby neighbors are already planning something, the City maintains a searchable website so that you can see what events have been registered.

Regular Board Meeting: October 19 at 7:00 PM (In-person at the Club and via Zoom)

OktoberFest BBQ

Rolled into the October Wine Down series on Friday, October 27 there will be an OktoberFest BBQ from 5:00-8:00 pm at Stonegate with brats, potato salad and live music by Rob Stevenson. Tickets are \$15.00 per person.

Pool resurfacing has been postponed

Despite several bids and multiple meetings, the decision to resurface the pool deck has been delayed until spring when bids will be reconsidered. Our 2020

reserves study estimated the replacement at around \$110,000, but the bids came in higher. We have already contracted for our mandated 2023 reserves study. This will affirm the current cost of resurfacing pool decks and help us budget for it accordingly.

Strength Training - 66
Senior Fitness - 20
Senior FUNctional Fitness - 80

Committee Reports

- **Budget and Finance Committee** is working with Levy, Erlanger & Company LLP, a Certified Public Account (CPA) firm to review their audit and taxes for our 2022-2023 fiscal year.
- **Rules and Governance Committee** has finished their year-long effort to review the questions from the law firm regarding their proposed governing documents and is determining next steps.
- **Activities Committee** reported that the monthly Second Sunday Neighbors' Breakfasts are going well.
- **Facilities and Grounds Committee** along with the Finance Committee has recommended a new company to conduct our mandatory reserves study. The Board voted to accept the bid from California Builders Association.
- **Communications Committee** is looking forward to updating the website.
- **Lake Subcommittee** has been meeting to discuss lake related recommendations for our governing documents. A meeting for all lake-side homeowners is in the process.
- **Architectural Compliance Committee** reviews several projects by homeowners each month, such as painting and solar installation.
- **Fitness Subcommittee** would like to meet to discuss winter swimming and costs
- **Election Subcommittee** is working on the fall election.
- **Executive Committee**, composed of the president, vice president and secretary, has been meeting monthly to determine agenda items.



Tennis Striping has been completed

The area for tennis courts 1-3 was resurfaced this July. This is a reserves project and the cost was \$30,000. Unfortunately, the owners of Tennis Court Specialists in Woodland are retiring and closing shop. They have promised to give us some recommendations in 3 years time when we need courts 4-6 resurfaced.

In the meantime, the Board is investigating the possibility of turning the basketball court area into a combo sport zone for basketball/pickle ball/volley ball. The cracked asphalt (a reserves project) could be replaced with a special shock-absorbing surface with overlapping courts painted on it.

August Club usage data

Fitness -2366
Tennis Reservations - 698
Swimming - 2917
Activity Field - 171
Lounge -70
Classes:
Chair Yoga - 20

For more details

Stonegate HOA meeting minutes are available in the "access your community" area of the Stonegate Country Club website (<https://stonegatecc.com>). Click "Documents" to access the meeting minutes

and other records, including past Scuttlebutt issues.
For assistance, contact Club Manager Susan Towne
(ClubManager@StonegateCC.com)

General information
Info@StonegateCC.com
(530) 756-2285

Susan Towne
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Steve and Kit Boschken
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CONNECTIONS: How to contact the 2023 Board

Entire Board: Board@StonegateCC.com

President: Tabatha Yang,
Tabatha@StonegateCC.com

Vice President: Steve Cohen,
Cohen@StonegateCC.com

Treasurer: Travis Milner, Travis@StonegateCC.com

Secretary: Gail Hahh, Gail@StonegateCC.com

Carol Smith, Carol@StonegateCC.com

Carson Wilcox, Carson@StonegateCC.com

Lisa MacKenzie, Lisa@StonegateCC.com

COMING UP

In the next issue

- Election Results
- Budget progress