

## History of POA

# A History of the Paradise Pines POA

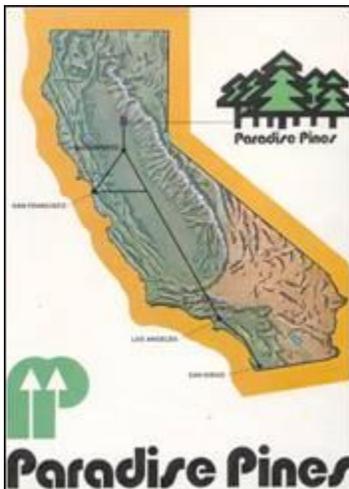
(Including relative information regarding this Association)

*Preface: After having worked at the POA as Administrative Assistant and Nugget newsletter editor over a period spanning almost 14 years, I garnered a great deal of information about the Association and its history. However, much of what I learned about the “early days” is based on details from longtime residents as well as the legal documents retained in the offices. With this in mind, please excuse any errors in this writing and feel free to advise us of changes that would add to the accuracy. Thanks to Realtor Maureen Johnson for clarifying some of the earliest history.*

**Donna Drickey, January 2004 ([donnadrickey@sbcglobal.net](mailto:donnadrickey@sbcglobal.net))**

In the early 1970's, a number of large real estate investors began establishing planned unit developments which were aimed at providing an environment conducive to those who were beginning to think of second homes and/or retirement locations. Del Webb, Boise Cascade and Larwin Corporations were among developers who began early planned communities, many of them considered “gated;” i.e. Sun City, AZ, Lake Wildwood, Lake of the Pines, Pine Mountain Lake.

*(Photo, from cover of original sales brochure.)*



The Larwin Corporation of Beverly Hills developed Paradise Pines and worked with Sam Fortino as their local broker and other realtors during its earliest stages. Part of their promotion included advertising on television in Southern California and the Bay Area and offering to fly potential buyers to come visit the area, enjoy a hosted lunch, and hopefully, “sign on the dotted line.” Although some communities designated themselves as “retirement” or “over 55” in their real estate information filings with the State, Larwin **did not** make that part of the declaration for Paradise Pines POA. Although some purchasers assumed the area would be predominately retired individuals, there was never any intention by the developer to limit residents due to age in any way. Nor did the developer make this a gated community. Some may feel that not being “gated” is a disadvantage in that it doesn't allow for restriction of visitors. However, on the

positive side, the streets were deeded to Butte County. Gated communities usually put in and maintain their own streets. This is why the annual assessments of many gated communities are so much higher (\$800 – \$1600 annually) than those here in Paradise Pines. Another plus of having the County responsible for the streets is the fact that they take care of snow removal and maintain the culverts, street signs, and visibility problems

due to bushes, etc. Butte County Public Works Department is very responsive when notified of problems under its control.



Another beautiful mobile home.



Village for community activities.



Pool and Club House.



Pro shop and putting green.

Lots were sold in a price range from \$3500 to \$4400, and a majority of the early purchasers chose to purchase and place mobile homes on their property (in fact, some of the earliest deeds referred to the lower Pines as Country Club Mobile Estates). There was also a scattering of circular dome, chalet-type, and log homes. In the core of the area, known as The Village, Larwin offered a clubhouse, tennis courts, and pool for community activities. A campground on Skyway, Greenbelt sections offering walking trails, an amphitheater on Wycliff, and an Equestrian Center (now the Racine Center) with stables were also a part of the promotional amenities offered. Although the Paradise Pines Golf Course was later owned independently by the Fortinos (Safor Corporation), it was also included in the advertising as available for resident's use – at costs established by the course owners. (Yes, Bob Fortino, Sam's son, is also Safor Corporation and Del Oro Water Company!)

Once the community was established, the Larwin Corporation turned the development over as a homeowners' association to a Board of Directors. Remaining properties (equities in deeds) were offered to Sam Fortino in exchange for brokerage fees. Thus, some of the commercial areas on Skyway are still under ownership of Safor/Fortino. The original Bylaws and CC&R's (Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions) were put in place and filed September 4, 1970 in Butte County. Several revisions and amendments have been made to these originals. Proposed amendments must be presented in an election and require approval of 60% of the property owners in good standing (assessments paid for current year) in order to be passed. Properties were designated as Paradise Pines and Country Club units. Thus, your annual assessment and membership cards reflect this information.

*(Photos on left from original sales brochure – note that the Pro Shop and green are mentioned; however, a disclaimer was printed elsewhere stating that the course was privately owned.)*

## **ANNEXED PROPERTIES**

Although there were properties in what is commonly known as Paradise Pines Units 1, 2, 3, Sierra Del Oro and Fir Haven which were NOT a part of the Association, the interest from some of the homeowners' in those areas in the 1970's and early 1980's resulted in allowing those properties to be annexed into the Association. This voluntary annexation by property owners outside the Association was held open for a limited time period and then closed permanently.

Those who opted to annex did so in order to partake in the many social activities and use of the facilities. Once the time period for annexation closed, these properties were filed with Butte County as a part of the Association. (Photo on left from original sales brochure – note that the golf course was shown, but disclaimer appeared elsewhere that it was not part of the Association.) Those annexed properties are not subject to the CC&R's or any subsequent Architectural Control Committee (ACC) restrictions. Their annexation was strictly for the use and enjoyment of the facilities. Because these annexed properties

were legally recorded and subject to the annual assessment, there has always been some controversy over why new owners cannot remove their lots from the Association rolls.

Subsequent owners frequently are not interested in utilizing the facilities and, naturally, find it difficult to understand why they are “stuck” in an Association which cannot regulate their property or neighbors to comply with the restrictions. Legally, the annexation is a part of their deed as recorded with Butte County, and it is currently not possible to remove their Association annexation. Several of these outside areas also had their own set of CC&R’s which appear to have been more-or-less abandoned over the years.

During the 1970’s and 1980’s, the Association became involved in litigation and lawsuits which soon escalated into attorney’s fees that eventually put the POA into a bankruptcy situation. Some of the problems were external – individual residents who sued, claiming they were never made aware of their responsibility and refused to recognize being a part of the Association; and later, internal troubles brought about by differing opinions among Board members and management. A “watchdog” group consisted of concerned members who disputed the Board’s right to increase assessments and to make additions to the facilities without a vote of the entire Association. On the defensive side, another faction was created called POPPS (Protect/preserve our Paradise Pines).

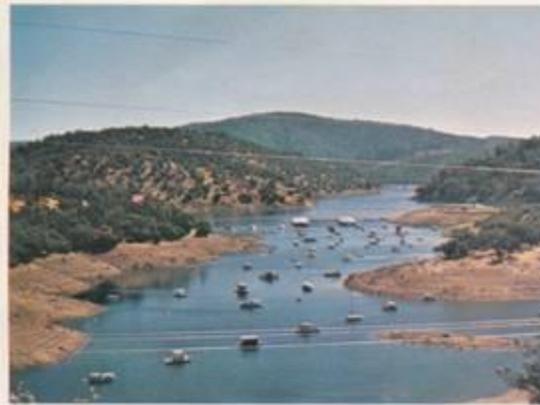
***(Photo, right, from sales brochure)***

It should be noted that the Board hired managers, and until the bankruptcy in 1988, they were individuals who were not affiliated with a property management firm. The Association handled all of its staffing, payroll, and day-to-day affairs with review by an independent CPA/accountant to assist with taxes, etc.

A security staff, working swing shift hours, patrolled the POA grounds; were available during events for emergencies or special requirements (vacation house checks); and assisted as back up with local law enforcement. These staff members were retired policemen or sheriff's deputies and held gun permits. In the early 1990's insurance consultants recommended that these employees no longer carry guns which resulted in some rather unhappy situations. However, they dealt with this new limitation and continued in service. Vacation house checks were eliminated and any situations, which formerly might have put the guards at risk. When staff security members retired or moved on to other positions, new guards were not required to have a law enforcement background. Until approximately six years ago, security wore blue uniforms with identifiable sleeve badges, and the former "security" pick-up bore the POA logos for easy recognition. Over the past few years, the guard/security job description has been revised and blended in with the duties of the POA maintenance crew.

## **BANKRUPTCY**

By the late 1980's the accumulating attorney bills were taking their toll on the Association's finances. In-fighting among board members and groups with differing opinions over the legality of raising assessments and alleged election irregularities brought further discord. In 1987 headlines of the Nugget newsletter indicated complete closure of the Association was pending. Office hours were reduced and volunteers did much of the staffing. In a move to save the Association from dissolution, an application for bankruptcy protection was filed in Sacramento. A group of members known as



Water skiing & boating at Lake Oroville (12 miles)



Feather River Hospital (5 miles)



Panning for gold on Feather River (2 miles)

POPPS (Protect our Paradise Pines) worked diligently to inform members of the desire to keep the Association going and used mailers and phone contacts to save “their” POA.

Prior to determining acceptance of this as a case, the Bankruptcy Judge in Sacramento was persuaded to come up and visit the Village. Those who supported the continuance of the Association worked to clean up the grounds and make the area presentable prior to this meeting. When the Judge appeared, he was greeted with hundreds of POA members who appealed for bankruptcy protection that would allow the Association to resolve its debts. Impressed with the amount of support for “keeping the doors open,” a bankruptcy hearing was scheduled in Sacramento. A four-year plan of reorganization was submitted that would allow for a one-time special assessment, followed by four annual assessments of \$120, 110, 100 and 90 in order to cover the legal debts plaguing the POA.

Deborah Frick, Esq., served as the attorney for the court appointed trustee, Gregg Eichler of Sacramento, who submitted the reorganizational plan, which was later approved by the courts. Members were all provided with a copy of this lengthy legal document. I would like to quote from portions of the plan just simply because it further states the reasons that this Association became involved in an insolvent position.

*Direct quotes from the Plan as submitted to the courts by Trustee Gregg Eichler:*

## **HISTORY AND NATURE OF THE DEBTOR’S BUSINESS**

In late 1970, LARWIN DEVELOPMENTS, INC., (“LARWIN”) created the Paradise Pines Subdivision which included – LARWIN advertised – a clubhouse for meetings and parties, a pool and spa, a campground for visitors, an equestrian center, a golf course and acres of pristine greenbelt property throughout the 3,365 homesites. The promise of Paradise Pines retirement community was so grandiose, area residents recall, that prospective buyers were flown in, driven by bus up the winding road from nearby Chico and Paradise, and promised the good life within the facility that was first planned in late 60’s.

But, there were flaws in the dream. The “equestrian center” had only eight (8) stalls to meet the needs of the anticipated thousands of property owners. The biggest and most overwhelming flaw, however, centered around the ownership and cost of operation of the club and pool facilities. LARWIN had no planned budget and had conducted no analysis for a pro forma operating budget at any time during the development, sales or operational phase of the retirement community.

On September 1, 1970, the Paradise Pines Property Owners’ Association, Inc. was incorporated under the General Non-profit Corporation Laws of the State of California. The specific and primary purpose of the association was to provide for the maintenance, management, preservation, protection and architectural control of the residential lots and the common areas in the geographical area of Paradise Pines for the benefit of its

members. LARWIN first issued a final Subdivision Public Report through the Department of Real Estate on December 7, 1970. That report was first amended in March, 1971. The report indicated that LARWIN had made financial arrangements to construct a recreation club and swimming pool on a tract of land within Paradise Pines. Memberships would be offered to purchasers of lots. The club was to be privately operated with dues paying members having no proprietary interest in the club nor any voice in its operation and management.

LARWIN had the right to sell the recreation club and its facilities and if LARWIN sold the club, the property owners association would have the right of first refusal to purchase it.

In an early sales brochure, LARWIN made the following statement:

- “Paradise Pines is a planned recreation community. In 1970 we started construction of a complete recreation center with pool, sauna, lounge and game rooms. The overall master plan calls for an executive golf course, equestrian center and an amphitheater. The center is owned by LARWIN COMPANY, a subsidiary of CNA Financial Corporation. The recreational center is for the exclusive use of property owners. Membership is voluntary. Therefore, members will take no part in management and operation of the recreational club. The club is theirs to enjoy. (All information as to costs, restrictions and limitation in club membership available upon request.)”

LARWIN failed to disclose that mandatory membership in the Association did not grant any rights in or to the recreational clubhouse. From 1970 to 1974, LARWIN operated the recreational amenities of the club and the common area facilities of the Association as if it were a single facility, and by virtue of its ownership of a majority of lots, controlled the Association and owned the club outright. The assessment during this period was approximately Seven Dollars and 60/100 (\$7.60) to Fourteen Dollars and 00/100 (\$14.00) a year between 1970 and 1974, and LARWIN charged an additional Thirty-Six Dollars and 00/100 (\$36.00) a year for annual club membership to those members who chose to join the recreation club. What LARWIN had created was the illusion of a virtually free Country Club membership available to the purchasers of the lots. In 1974, LARWIN deeded the common area and club amenities (with the exception of the golf course) to the association at “no cost” and therefore it was a “gift” to the Association. In retrospect, it was clear that LARWIN had nearly sold out its interest and wanted to unload the loss generating facilities. At the time of the transfer from LARWIN’s control to individual lot owner control, the association was still in its infancy, making the transition with little or no consideration to the overall costs of operating the facilities. A majority of the then members voted to accept the newly deeded transfer offered by LARWIN. However, LARWIN represented that the transfer would have no or minimal impact on the Association’s assessments.

LARWIN again amended the Final Subdivision Report, after transfer of the recreation facilities, to state,

“Owners of lots in this unit will automatically be members of the Association and have use privileges in the facilities subject to fees, conditions and regulations established by the Association.” There is no mention of a “club membership” in the CC & R’s or the amended Final Subdivision Report.

Depending upon when a member purchased their lot and depending upon what a particular salesman may have told the purchaser, a great deal of misinformation was given, causing confusion over the use and ownership of the club and common area facilities and over who was going to have to pay for the maintenance and operation.

In 1975, the assessment rose to Thirty Dollars and 00/100 (\$30.00) and increased virtually every year thereafter. Individual members began to protest the increases above Thirty Dollars and 00/100 (\$30.00) as being in violation of the CC & R’s. Even with the increased assessments and user fees, the Association did not and/or was unable to keep up maintenance, resulting in deferred maintenance and a general deterioration of the facilities. During this period, certain expansion of the club facilities was undertaken by the Association. These factors combined with inflation, increased the economic pressure on the Association and its members. These factors also increased the protests of individual members.

Beginning in approximately 1976, various members raised questions regarding the legality and propriety of the manner in which LARWIN had dumped the club facility, the increase in assessments and the manner in which the Association was being run.

The Association’s members and Directors became embroiled in lengthy and often bitter political battles, contested elections and finally, litigation over many of those same issues. Numerous political opposition groups were formed by dissatisfied and sometimes disenfranchised members of the Association. Throughout the battle, people became polarized and entrenched and less and less able to come to any meaningful compromise.

The most significant of the lawsuits is and was, Paradise Pines Property Owners Association, Inc., v. Robert E. State, et al., Butte County Superior Court, Case No. 69459. This case challenged, among other things, the Board of Directors’ ability to raise assessments in an accumulative fashion without a general membership vote. The case came to trial in May of 1980, the Honorable Reginald M. Watt, Judge of the Butte County Superior Court presiding.

Various Interim rulings emanated in that case, including a finding by the Court that subsection 6.03, A., and .03, B of the CC & R’s, limited the Association’s assessment authority. For a long period of time the case remained under submission. It appears that the Court attempted to allow the association an opportunity to resolve the conflict over the Assessment provisions in the CC & R’s, and other matters, but that the Association was unable to do so.

During the last eight (8) years, additional litigation concerned the use of proxies (Leonard v. POA), and its assessments in excess of Thirty Dollars and 00/100 (\$30) (Medico v. P.OA), which resulted in various writs of mandate and injunctions.

Finally, after the years of litigation that had its genesis in the original LARWIN “slight-of-hand”, the Court held on June 22, 1986, in relevant part, that the Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions did not permit the Board of Directors to increase assessments in excess of Thirty Dollars and 00/100 (\$30.00) per lot per year without a vote of the membership.

The net effect of the Judge’s ruling was to render the Association Insolvent In two (2) respects. One, the Association had, in effect, “overcharged” its membership and those members who had paid the “overcharged” payments were technically entitled to a refund. Two, the Association was unable to meet its current operating expenses and fulfill its contractual obligations.

It was against this backdrop that the Board of Directors elected to seek relief pursuant to Chapter 11 of Title 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code. The Trustee was appointed in this case after it became apparent that none of the underlying political differences could be solved by the Debtor-in-Possession.

It is the Trustee’s hope and belief that this Plan of Reorganization will address and solve the majority of the underlying disputes and put an end to the divisive and costly litigation that has torn the Association apart.

The Trustee’s Plan accompanies this Disclosure statement and has been provided to all members and creditors known to the Debtor. The Plan should be read carefully and separately from this Disclosure Statement. The summary in this Disclosure Statement should not be relied upon for voting purposes.

*(End of quote)*

#### **SUMMARY OF PLAN OF REORGANIZATION:**

From this point on, the legal notices contained the proposed “four-year” plan which outlined the amount of assessments over that time period and also allowed for a percentage of credit to be issued to those who were deemed to have overpaid their assessment previously and remained as the current owners. A voting form was included for all members to express their approval or disapproval or the proposals. In order to cover the legal costs and needed upkeep, the plan called for assessments in the amount of \$120, \$110, \$100 and \$90 for the upcoming four fiscal years.

#### **MANAGEMENT:**

The need to put the administration into the hands of a property management firm, experienced with Associations, was stipulated in the Plan. Bids were received from a

number of firms and in January 1989, awarded to RSC, Inc. of Chico. Their owner, R. Scott Chalmers, was also appointed as the Trustee in Bankruptcy for the Association when Gregg Eichler received a State appointment and could no longer serve in that position.

It was a very slow process getting all the legal records back from court appointed advisors, but within a year, with help from volunteers and temporary help, the entire membership had been transferred into a data base. New computers were installed and it became possible to begin accurate tracking of annual assessment payments, and related bookkeeping functions. A professional attitude was developed with a qualified, caring staff. RSC, Inc., served as the management firm for approximately six years with on-site managers, Carol Spiker and John Miller. The Board then felt it time to advertise the management position and received applications from throughout the state, both from individuals and property management firms. The next eight years were under the direction of Hignell and Hignell, Inc., also of Chico; with Diane Baptie serving as on-site manager. Managers attended annual meetings and seminars that brought them up-to-date with new laws and federal/state regulations regarding mandated Association requirements. The current firm (Board appointed in spring of 2003) is Ponderosa Property Management of Paradise.

Managers are entrusted with the day-to-day operations, including supervision of the staff, and work closely with the elected Board of Directors on all major purchases, renovations and improvements. Contracts with a management firm can be negotiated by the Board and changed with proper notice. Generally, they limit purchases by the Manager to a specific amount and require three bids on all significant projects. The Bylaws state that a manager and/or management firm may not own property within the Association (Pg.16, Section 1. c.) as this would obviously constitute a “conflict of interest.”

#### **AMENDMENTS/REVISIONS TO LEGAL DOCUMENTS:**

Following the reorganization plan approval, the courts recommended that the governing documents be updated and revised to prevent future lawsuits and questions over the authority of Board Members and management, and to reflect new State laws which apply to homeowners’ associations. Attorney Curtis Sproul, a specialist in Sacramento who was experienced in creating Bylaws and CC&R’s for associations was hired and worked with the Board and management to create revisions that would bring compliance and clarification to these documents for the POA. Revisions were filed in 1991 and an “Integrated Version” was approved. Changes included putting a limit of a 20% increase on the amount an annual assessment could be raised over the prior year. Provisions also included a limit of \$35,000 during a fiscal year for any capitol improvements, and approval of 60% of the membership for any future changes to the legal documents.

Any action recommended by the Board of Directors which would have a major effect on the use or change (including additions) in the common areas (facilities, grounds, etc.) or create a change in the existing ByLaws and/or CC&R’s must be put on a ballot and approved (or disapproved) by a vote of the general membership. Only the Architectural

Control Committee (ACC) has the ability to add or revise their particular Rules and Regulations, and only when such changes are not in conflict with the legal documents. Thus, when the ACC recommended a change in minimum square footage for residences (which was already designated in the CC&R's), this appeared on a ballot and required approval by the membership.

It was extremely difficult to make the quorum necessary whenever the ByLaws and CC&R's have been amended/revised in the past. In fact, in 1995 it was necessary to have volunteers calling members, urging their vote, in order to meet the 60% requirement when the Board Members were reduced from \*seven to five, changes made to ACC home square footage requirements, ability to lease or sell or change original usage of properties (i.e., Equestrian Center/stables conversion to Racine Center, Campground sale). To pass, a majority vote of the 60% is required. Not easy to obtain! Any such proposals required additional input for legality and wording from the Association attorney which was also an added cost to the ballot. (\*The reduction from seven to five Board Members was recommended and passed by the membership due to the lack of finding enough members willing to run for the Board several years in succession.)

## **ELECTIONS/BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Prior to the document revisions, elections proved to be a frequent source of contention among the groups vying for positions on the Board of Directors. In order to alleviate future misunderstandings and to conform to more accepted guidelines for elections, the revisions eliminated cumulative voting and also called for an outside, independent accountant to oversee the mailing and receipt of ballots. A CPA firm is now used to serve as the Inspector of Elections and verifies the ballot mailings by an outside firm. The ballots themselves are directed to their offices, not the Association.

Following a schedule outlined in the documents, an annual election for the Board of Directors is held in August. Members in good standing (all assessments paid current) may file to run for the Board during the month of May. Candidate approval is given by the Board in June and the candidates are featured in the July Nugget. Ballots are mailed out first class during the time period dictated. If there are any issues which the current Board or membership wish to have included on a ballot, added time is allowed for the voting period. Results are announced at the Annual Meeting of the Membership held on the second Saturday morning in September. Following the open meeting, the new Board adjourns to the Board Room and elects its own officers. Duties and responsibilities of each office are clearly outlined in the legal documents.

Board members should be individuals who are sincerely concerned with the overall good of the entire Association and not limited by their own personal interests. These are volunteer positions and those serving should be commended for giving of their time for the betterment of the entire community.

In order to encourage younger members to run for the Board, agenda and board meeting times were also changed during the early 90's. Formerly, these meetings were held during

daytime hours, which made it prohibitive for younger working members to consider being on the Board. The meeting times were changed to evenings in an effort to make it feasible for working members to participate. This also allowed for more participation by members who wished to attend these open meetings and keep abreast of Association matters.

## **BUDGETS/ASSESSMENTS/PROPERTY TRANSFERS**

Beginning in January of each year, the Board, Manager and Financial Coordinator start a review of expenditures and attempt to determine costs for the fiscal year of July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>. Committees are asked to submit requirements they anticipate with associated costs. Following the reorganization plan, a Reserve Fund was set up for all assets and has successfully become well funded. A percent of your annual assessment is allocated to these Reserve Line Items each year in order to guarantee replacement and upkeep of the buildings, parking, pool, grounds, etc. There is also a Capitol Improvement Reserve item, which can be applied to new or required modifications of the Association's assets.

A Pro Forma Budget is reviewed over several months and fine-tuned in order to keep assessments at the lowest level possible while still providing for increased costs and projects. The increase, as stated previously, is limited to 20% over the current amount, and in most years, a more moderate amount has been sufficient. A Pro Forma Budget is just that -a guideline based on the knowledge currently available. At times some items will run more and others less. Following the monthly Treasurer's Reports in the Minutes provides some insight as to just how the Association is doing in relationship to the projections. The Operating Accounts cover the normal day-to-day expenses, including, payroll, administration, overhead, etc.

## **SALE/TRANSFER OF PROPERTY**

A **“transfer fee”** (currently \$100) is charged during the escrow process when property within the Association is sold. This fee is common in all homeowner's associations and many have a much higher fee. This amount helps to offset the costs of the printing and distribution of the required CC&R's/ByLaws/ACC packets to new owners, as well as office costs in maintaining the permanent file changes. Often, sellers call and ask about their annual assessment and how to get a “refund” when their property sells. In the escrow process, the title company will credit the seller with any portion of the annual assessment remaining, and charge the new owner with the difference. For instance, if you paid an annual assessment of \$120 on July 1<sup>st</sup> and sold the home as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, you would receive an escrow credit of \$100.00 and the purchaser would be charged the same amount for that portion of the year remaining. If you are uncertain as to how this works, check with your title company to be assured credit is given where due. The transfer fee is often also negotiable with your realtor, who may suggest splitting the cost or offer other options.

# Committees:

## Architectural Control Committee (ACC)

**This is the only committee designated and covered within the governing legal documents** . With a staff employee, volunteer members of the committee issue requests for permits and variances (as required in the Rules and Regulations), investigate and document complaints, and recommend (to the Board) assessment fines on uncooperative members who do not bring their properties into compliance. A strict schedule of notification, including allowances for mediation and appeals is followed. **All property owners are given (by the title company handling the escrow) the ByLaws and CC&R packet. (In cases where property changes ownership without an escrow, copies of these legal documents are available in the office for a small fee.) Included is additional information relative to the ACC Rules and Regulations, current budget and required disclosures.**

It is the responsibility of owners to familiarize themselves with the ACC Rules and Regulations in particular and avoid any unnecessary actions by the Association. It is also the responsibility of owners who have **rental properties** to see that their renters receive this information (as stated above, copies are available in the POA offices). Property owners are notified by the ACC office whenever complaints are received involving their renters. Ultimately, it is the owner who must pay the price for tenants in violation. Owners are encouraged to file rental information with the front office (forms available) to enable issuance of privileges (if desired) and to keep the ACC office aware of current residents.

Every property, original and annexed, has a file folder maintained in the ACC office which includes, where applicable, plot plans, permit copies, complaints, all original correspondence from property owners, and title company changes. This office is truly the most vital source of information on individual properties and requires constant updating.

**Other committees and groups** organized as needs would arise. During the reorganization period in the 1990's, a number of committees were created by volunteer members. Among these were Greenbelt, Buildings and Grounds, Finance, Social Activities, Welcoming, and Rules Committees. They met on a regular basis and served as advisory bodies for the Board and management. An Activities Council was also organized for several years and served as a meeting ground for all groups, classes and events.

## GREENBELT COMMITTEE/FIRE SAFETY ISSUES

Evolving from a small group of volunteers trying to keep up the Greenbelt Trails and remove dangerous or dying trees, the Greenbelt Committee has grown and become a vital part of the fire safety issues which face our mountain community. In the past few years, Don Steele has applied for and received grants to enable clearing of underbrush and

removal of fuel materials in an area that surrounds both the POA and other adjacent Upper Ridge areas. Working with the Fire Safety Council and California Department of Forestry in Butte County, POA members have become informed and acutely aware of the dangers a forest fire would impact our community. Both the ACC and Greenbelt Committees are dedicated to reducing the danger of fire, both within Association properties and the Ridge perimeters.

## **CHANGES IN AMENITIES**

During the 1990's, the Association found it necessary to tear down the **amphitheater**, located on Wycliff Way, and return it to a natural state as part of the Greenbelt. In its early years, I understand the amphitheater was used for Easter Sunrise services, weddings, and other special occasions. Due to neglect and a state of disrepair, the insurance company found it a liability and recommended that it be removed. Another major change was the sale of the **Campground**, which had also suffered from neglect and upkeep. Security guards would make rounds nightly to check it and maintenance kept the bathrooms clean, etc., but in return for the minimum income from the few who chose to stay there, it, too, was no longer a viable asset. The purchasers have a fairly long-term purchase contract with their monthly payments reflected in the Association income statements. The campground had served, no doubt, as a useful amenity during the earliest years when prospective buyers could utilize it while looking for property in the Pines.

In recent years, the former **equestrian center** was converted into the Racine Center with remodeling which added kitchen facilities, updated bathrooms and a spacious room for the use of various groups. The upkeep of the former center, riding ring, and stables, weighed against the boarding of only two – three horses, brought approval to this conversion. Some of the stables continued to be used for storage of decorations, etc.

During the past eight years, many improvements were also made to the **Recreation Hall**; i.e., roofing over the front patio area, carpeting, wall coverings, replacement of kitchen floor, replacement of tables and chairs, installation of a commercial dishwasher, purchase of dishware, and most recently, purchase of glassware for the bar. Stage components were purchased for use of the Pines Players and other groups.

The **Tribute Garden and Landscaping** of the grounds occurred over the past ten years. An area next to the front Administration Building doors was landscaped when member Betty Macfarlane wanted to honor her husband, Mac, on the occasion of his 75 th birthday. The raised garden area was created and planted professionally and for many years, the pruning and weeding was accomplished by Mac and Betty. This couple was also responsible for planting the areas next to the swimming pool with colorful impatiens for many years.

In the 90's, the Board agreed to set aside an area adjacent to the main building to be known as the POA **Tribute Garden**. When donations are made in remembrance of a loved one or active POA member, the funds are accumulated in a special account. At any time that one individual receives donations totaling \$25 or more, a bronze nameplate is

also ordered and placed on one of the Tribute Garden plaques in the main hallway. Cards acknowledging donations are sent from the office to the family. Funds are used to add plantings and landscaping projects to that area by the front walkway. In some cases, individuals and/or groups have also donated a particular tree or plant for placement in this designated area. Professional landscaping and drip watering systems were accomplished to other areas of the Village grounds over the past eight years.

Improvements (resealing/new filter system, etc.) were also made to the **swimming pool**, spa and toddler's pool areas with new concrete steps and decks added during this time period. Outdoor coverings now provide shaded areas adjacent to the pool. A rather expensive device was purchased two years ago which enables the handicapped to be directly lowered into the pool. Handicapped requirements have also been complied with in restroom and access upgrades. Along with volunteer help, the **playground** area in the upper parking area was a new amenity for the younger children to enjoy. The Board has recently approved resurfacing of the **tennis courts**, a project that should be completed this spring.

## **LIBRARY**

Thanks to a POA member, George A. Lundburg, who donated hundreds of books from his personal collection, the Association was able to establish a library in 1974. Thanks to continuing member donations, it has grown extensively over the years, and new shelving and lighting was accomplished about six years ago to house this popular amenity. Based on an "honor" system, members can remove books and return them at their leisure. Thanks to volunteers, sections have been maintained by author and subject matter. Both hard cover and paperback selections are available. The Library walls also provide an ideal spot for the Art Guild members of the POA to display their works. The Library is also made available for Butte County to use as a Polling Place for elections.

## ***NUGGET* NEWSLETTER**

The Paradise Pines *Nugget* serves as the official publication of the Association. Mailed out monthly to the members' address of record, it contains legal information and notices, a copy of the monthly Board Minutes, and reports from many of the committees and social events. As space allows, other community groups are covered, such as the two women's clubs and golf results. Using the paper to publish the annual year-end financial report and proposed budget, with required disclosures, has reduced the amount formerly spent on First Class postage. Guidelines for the publication were set in place in the late 1980's and remain in effect to date.

## **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS**

**Membership privileges** allow owners and/or designated renters to participate in activities, classes and events in the Recreation Hall/Bar. Dependent upon the class/group and its popularity, outside guests have also been allowed to join in on many activities. Those which are/were very popular, such as Swim & Trim, Line Dance Classes, still limit

their participants to POA members. Membership cards can be mailed out upon payment of annual assessment or picked up in the office. Records are maintained on all paid members and those requesting identification cards.

Socially, the clubhouse, pool and tennis courts served as vital centers for those residing here on a permanent basis. During the early years, there were few other organizations or entertainment available on the Ridge. Thus, the retirees created social activities and clubs to serve their interests. The Pines Players theatrical and the Lumber Company lip sync groups offered members the opportunity to explore their talents and became important functions, ones that also contributed to the income of the Association. There were some fun musical groups, including the ukulele girls, and bands (the Country Cousins) that entertained. The Equestrian Center arena and stables were home to those who had horses.

The Recreation Hall (original clubhouse) was expanded and the kitchen and bar updated in the 1980's. A core group of volunteers accomplished much of the work and upkeep at The Village center. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday night of each month was designated as an Extended Happy Hour "Hamburger Night" and our local bands would play during the evening while members enjoyed hamburgers and dancing at a cost of \$3.50. Yes, things and prices have changed!

Browsing through the Social Activities scrapbooks, you can quickly see that those enjoying the Association's offerings were having a great time. There were 4<sup>th</sup> of July barbecues, Oktoberfests, Luaus, Halloween and Hobo costume parties, Night at the Races, Tee Shirt contests, numerous potluck gatherings, Monte Carlo Night, Enchilada and Italian Dinners, and newcomers affairs (frequently potlucks) which were all planned and hosted by volunteers. In the early 1990's, an Oldtimer's Reunion was held in the Recreation Hall that brought out a large number of the early residents. Rows of tables displayed memorabilia from those early events and photos of the development from its beginning stages.

Lillian Falk and friends initiated a "Games Day" for members during the 1990's. On one Sunday afternoon a month, residents gathered to socialize and play games of their choice- Bunco, Canasta, Scrabble, Mexican Train, Shanghai, etc. In time, attendance dropped and the event went by the wayside. There were also a number of Fashion Shows, which featured clothing from Paradise, and Chico women's wear sources. Often Jean Newstetter and Betty Macfarlane would serve as the moderators, and members, escorted by Board Members or their husbands would delight audiences as they modeled down a runway in the Recreation Hall. Beautiful and unique settings were used during these presentations that included luncheons. Again, volunteers did all this and any profits went back into the Association funds. There appeared to be about 2-300 people who comprised the core group of volunteers and attendees at events. A "**Friendship Luncheon**" met in the Recreation Hall once a month at noon for a potluck and featured entertainment or talks from members. It was an extra feature to get new members acquainted.

With the addition of a "**Club**" liquor license, a **bar** was established for the enjoyment of members. Prior to the license, gatherings were BYOB (bring your own bottle) affairs, and

it appears many opposed the obtaining of the liquor license. For a time after getting the license, a paid bartender was on staff and the bar available on a daily basis. With the advent of the pending bankruptcy and limited funds, a group of about ten volunteers manned the bar for special events and Friday Night Happy Hours for many years. More recently, bartenders have again become paid employees. The Club license does have limitations in that it is for use by “member’s and their guests” only. This accounts for the necessity of signing in guests and presenting your membership card when entering the bar area. Activities such as plays, private parties, etc. which are open to non-members require a special license permit, ordered in advance, from the State Alcohol and Beverage Control offices. As another condition of the license, the Association was encouraged to also offer annual activities open to the community such as the children’s parties.

An annual **Crafters’ Boutique** was held in late November or early December under the chairmanship of several individuals. A nominal fee was charged to each exhibitor and they also contributed cookies and offered coffee, tea and goodies at the event. Ceramics, wood crafts, novelties, hand made knit and crochet household and clothing items, floral arrangements, decorated sweat shirts, and paintings were among the great variety presented. It was a requirement that exhibitors be limited to POA members only. Upon the retirement of the last chairperson (Arnold Swanson) several years ago, no one came forward to take over this chore and interest faded with the numerous other seasonal craft shows offered in this area. Any leftover cookies were set aside for the annual Children’s Christmas party.

Although not a part of the POA, community oriented organizations (i.e.; the **Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Services, Upper Ridge Coordinating Council, S.T.A.R.S, Magalia Beautification Association, etc.**) were given space to meet at the Association. In addition a group known as The **Upper Ridge Wilderness Areas** also was started and maintained many years by Dale Harter, and continues currently under the leadership of David Anderson. This group worked with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to create a **park**, establish trails and a kiosk in that portion of land belonging to the BLM, located opposite the Pines Elementary School, off Compton drive. Each spring, these volunteers enlist the aid of a group of Pines Elementary School students to clean and further maintain this park. The POA Library was also utilized by the American Red Cross several times a year for their **blood drives**. POA volunteers assisted by furnishing juice and snacks to the donors in the Hobby Room. A lack of participation eventually resulted in the service no longer being offered in the Pines.

In more recent times a Singles Club, Computer Club, Line Dance classes, book discussion group, quilters and more card groups have been added to compliment the amenities offered. Early on, Knit & Crochet, Art and ceramic/pottery lovers, card and tennis players and pool enthusiasts organized and sustained groups and classes. Independently run, Wednesday night Bingo games were held each Wednesday evening in the Rec Hall until competition (and casinos, now) diminished attendance. Monday night football and Superbowl Sunday events were POA sponsored, but failed to draw enough response to continue.

**Slim and Trim** in the Library has been under the direction of Beverly (Myrtle) Smith for over 26 years. Three mornings a week, the faithful gather to exercise under her expertise. Swim exercise has always been a favorite offering during the summer pool season. These exercise-oriented classes have been taught through the dedication of volunteers. Swimming lessons for youngsters have also been offered by certified paid pool employees.

## **FAMILY/YOUTH ACTIVITIES**

Younger families created the “Momma’s and Papas” in the 1980’s and, in the 1990’s, a family oriented Parent Youth Committee/New Generations followed suite. Due to lack of interest, both of those groups dissolved and fell by the wayside. Volunteers did create the playground area with swings for the young at the POA. During this time, added activities and classes aimed at the youth of this area were also offered – some of which (annual Halloween, Christmas Tree Lighting, and Easter events) proved popular and survived. Others (story time for tots, teen pool parties, family movie nights, drama classes, Mommy and Me group, dances) did not succeed due to lack of participation.

Members have expressed frustration when these offerings for young families were not well attended. Times have changed! Young families today often consist of two working parents whose free time is limited. Choices must be made as to what and where to direct that time. Between the youth baseball, basketball, soccer, and then middle and high school sports and related functions, decisions for spare moments don’t come easy. Despite those who complain about not having enough activities for young people, there exist plenty of opportunities IF you want to explore them. Centrally located on West Park Drive, the Mountain Ridge Middle School (next to Pines Elementary) has basketball courts open for use after school and weekends. Paradise Recreation and Parks District also offers competitive sports and family activities at this facility.

## **ACTIVITY/EVENT CHANGES**

A decline in the social events, along with the demise of the lip sync (Lumber Company and Kopy Katz) groups has occurred over the past five years. Primarily, this can be attributed to the loss of many of the dedicated volunteers who found this Association to be their primary outlet for socializing. Age related changes (health problems, and the desire to move into senior complexes or homes that were less demanding on upkeep) played a major role in these changes. Added choices for social contact, available for the retired, through Elks, Moose, SIRS men’s group, two Women’s Clubs, Red Hat Society, men’s and women’s golf groups-to name a few- now fill the gap that once existed.

Many of the new people buying in the PPPOA are interested in seeing the fun activities and events continue. However, due to the changing population, which has brought more young families into the area, volunteer support of the social activities has been difficult to sustain. As of this writing (January, 2004) word has it that the Pines Players theatrical group may be reviving and hope to once again present quality drama productions for the enjoyment of the community. We also have a new Activity Leader who will be exploring

and encouraging more events. Working with the Social Activities Committee, it appears many activities are on tap for the upcoming year.