

MIRALOMA LIFE

Issue No. 9

Celebrating, Informing, and Strengthening the Miraloma Park Community

miralomapark.org

October 2	October 7	October 11	October 16
MPIC Board Meeting Call 415-322-0211 to request placement on the agenda 7pm	Neighborhood Clean-up First Tuesday of the month Meet in front of Tower Market 10am-11:30am	Clubhouse Clean-Up Second Saturday of the month at the MPIC Clubhouse. 10am-noon	Fire Safety Workshop MPIC Clubhouse. 6:30pm

FEATURE

A History of Miraloma Park

The early construction

by Christopher VerPlanck

Many of the earliest houses built in Miraloma Park are comparable to those built in several other West of Twin Peaks neighborhoods, including Westwood Park, Mount Davidson Manor, and the “cheaper” parts of West Portal and St. Francis Wood. Most of the houses built in Miraloma Park in the mid to late 1920s are designed in English or Norman-inspired styles, including the Tudor Revival, Norman Revival, Gothic, and Storybook. This is especially true in the oldest parts of the neighborhood along Portola Drive, Marne Avenue, and Juanita Way. Spanish-influenced styles were also used to a certain extent, in keeping with the nomenclature of most of the street names.¹ Although the façades of these early houses were all individualized, they were essentially the same inside. Most of the older houses in Miraloma Park originally had five

or six-rooms atop a raised basement that contained a one-car garage, a laundry room, a shop, and sometimes an additional bedroom and/or “rumpus” room. Unlike St. Francis Wood or Forest Hill, where nearly all the houses were custom-designed by prominent architects, the Meyer Brothers employed little-known architectural draftspersons to design their houses.

Several of the developments in the West of Twin Peaks area are best described as “residence parks,” including St. Francis Wood, Forest Hill, and Balboa Park. Also known as “garden suburbs,” residence parks were an early twentieth century phenomenon. Designed to suggest the feeling of “living in the country,” residence parks are defined by their large lots, enveloping landscapes, non-orthogonal street networks, and luxurious private amenities for residents. Although Miraloma Park is not a true residence park, it shares some features in common with the type, including its master-planned and contour-hugging streets, uniform front and rear yard setbacks, strict land use controls, and the placement of utilities within midblock easements. Miraloma Park also has its own clubhouse, which the Meyer Brothers built in 1940 at the corner of O’Shaughnessy Boulevard and Del Vale Avenue.² The Meyer Brothers also set aside land for an elementary school and a church. But unlike St. Francis Wood or Forest Hill, the Meyer Brothers did not set aside any substantial amount of land for parks or common open space.³ In addition, there are no entry gates or pylons at Miraloma Park’s boundaries announcing the name of the tract, as well



Miraloma

Continued from page 1

as no fountains, plazas, or other notable architectural motifs such as can be found in St. Francis Wood and Forest Hill.

The most notable thing the Meyer Brothers did to “brand” their tract was building a sprawling sign on the northeast slope of Mt. Davidson in 1927. Made of white-painted rocks, the sign spelled out in large block letters: “MIRALOMA PARK.” In 1947, a local wag, or wags, rearranged the rocks to spell: “LA City Limits.” The culprit(s) was/were never caught, so their motives are unknown. Perhaps it was a protest against suburban sprawl or postwar conformity? We will never know. The sign was eventually removed.



As mentioned, the summit of Mt. Davidson was initially to have been developed along with the rest of Miraloma Park. However, in 1927, an activist socialite named Madie Brown formally objected to the development of the city’s highest point, writing that she intended to stop “the subdivider’s axe and steam shovel from destroying in ruthless fashion the beauties of nature on our beloved Mt. Davidson.”⁴ Madie Brown joined forces with the Federation of Women’s Clubs to successfully lobby Mayor James Rolph to save the summit. On April 29, 1927, the Board of Supervisors approved an appropriation of \$15,000 “for a public park serving the needs of the West of Twin Peaks District and also serving as a recreation center and forest playground for the whole city.”⁵ Two years later, the Board of Supervisors closed on the initial 20 acres and dedicated Mt. Davidson Park. A large boulder at the summit is embedded with a plaque dedicated to Madie Brown. Mt. Davidson Park was incrementally expanded in the 1940s and 1950s to its present extent – mostly along the eastern slope, most of which had originally been earmarked for development.

During the Depression, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) improved the trail network originally built by A.S. Baldwin in 1918 on Mt. Davidson, adding several

new trails and building stone stairs, retaining walls, and water fountains. Following the destruction of the first three wooden crosses, in 1934, the Sunrise Easter Service Committee paid to build a permanent, 103-foot-high, concrete cross at the summit.⁶ This cross, which was designed by architect George Kelham, was originally lit up every night, making it visible 50 miles out to sea.

Similar to other subdivisions in the West of Twin Peaks area, the Meyer Brothers restricted the sale or rental of any property in Miraloma Park to “none other than members of the Caucasian or white race.”⁷ The only exception was for live-in domestic staff. Recorded in the covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CCRs) that were attached to every deed, these “racial covenants” were mainly directed against Asian Americans and African Americans – the two largest minority groups in San Francisco at the time. Although racial covenants were declared unenforceable by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948, official racial discrimination continued in residential real estate sales in Miraloma Park until the early 1970s.

By the end of the 1920s, Miraloma Park was approximately 25 percent built-out. By this time, most of the northern part of the neighborhood had been developed, including Portola Drive from Marne Avenue to Evelyn Way, Juanita Way, Chaves Avenue, and the west side of Teresita Boulevard from Portola Drive to Agua Way. As mentioned, the Meyer Brothers had concentrated on the parts of the tract that were closest to Portola Drive because this area was more level and accessible to transit.

Although the Meyer Brothers planned to develop Miraloma Park within only three years, the Stock Market Crash of 1929 put a major crimp in the company’s plans. Struggling to sell houses following the crash, the Meyer Brothers developed a smaller and cheaper house prototype called the “economy bungalow.” In addition to being smaller, the economy bungalow was finished in cheaper materials and had less ornamentation. Whereas pre-Depression houses were finished entirely in stucco, only the primary façades of the economy bungalows were so finished– the rest was painted redwood siding. The only exception to this were the corner houses, which had two stucco-finished façades. In addition to changes in materials, the Meyer Brothers simplified the ornamental program. By the early 1930s, the Meyer Brothers had largely abandoned the more elaborate and difficult-



to-build English and Norman-derived styles in favor of the Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean styles. In addition to having far less ornament, these two styles were more suitable

for homes with flat roofs, which also saved time and money.

To encourage sales, the Meyer Brothers launched an in-house financing division. Unfortunately, as the effects of the Depression grew more severe, many homeowners defaulted on their mortgages. In addition to having to repossess a property from its owner, the Meyer Brothers had to try to sell it again in an abysmal market. Facing a growing stock of unsold houses, in 1932, the Meyer Brothers halted all new construction in Miraloma Park. The last block developed before the hiatus was Block 2955A. Bounded by Reposa Way, Rockdale Drive, Omar Way, and Sequoia Way, this block contains 21 economy bungalows that were built in 1931 – including the author's house on Rockdale Drive. Each of these houses originally sold for between \$4,000 and \$5,000, a figure that did not substantially appreciate until after World War II.⁸

An aerial photograph taken in 1938 shows what Miraloma Park looked like six years after the Meyer Brothers paused construction activity. The photograph indicates that 13 blocks had been fully developed, as well as parts of eight other adjoining blocks. Within the two-block commercial district, only the block between Evelyn Way and Fowler Avenue, which included the Meyer Brothers' sales office, had been developed. The block between Fowler Avenue and Teresita Boulevard, where Tower Market (Mollie Stone's) is now, was still vacant. The aerial view also indicates that Teresita Boulevard had been extended all the way to Foerster Street, opening the steep southernmost part of the tract to future development after World War II. O'Shaughnessy Boulevard, which was then under construction by the WPA, is also visible toward the right side of the image along the edge of Glen Canyon.

Although the Depression posed many challenges, the residents of Miraloma Park embraced their neighborhood and worked hard to improve it. In September 1930, 90 neighborhood residents organized the Miraloma Park Improvement Club (MPIC). Initially headed by W.D. Forbes,

the organization's goals included building a public school, securing a bus line, and building a clubhouse for community events.⁹ The MPIC also worked to help its members stay in their homes after a job loss or a wage cut by putting them in touch with the federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC). This New Deal program, launched by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, helped homeowners refinance their mortgages to lock in lower interest rates and more favorable repayment terms.

¹ Nothing is known today about how the streets of Miraloma Park received their names, but in keeping with typical developer practice, it is thought that many were named for family members, including Rex Avenue, Myra Way, Marietta Drive, etc. Others appear to be named for natural or manmade features, including Rockdale Drive, Agua Way, and Encline Court. Many Miraloma Park street names are loosely of Spanish origin, which was fairly typical for California suburbs of the time.

² Rosalie Kuwatch, "History of Miraloma Park," <https://www.outsidelands.org/miraloma-park.php>, accessed January 16, 2020.

³ The land that became Miraloma Playground was not set aside until 1947. According to the original Meyer Brothers plan, Rockdale Drive would have cut through the land, which would have been developed with houses.

⁴ Jacquie Proctor, "The History of San Francisco's Mt. Davidson Park," <https://jacquieproctor.com/blog/>, accessed January 21, 2020.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder, "Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions for Miraloma Park."

⁸ "Miraloma Builders Plan 21 New Homes," *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 2, 1931), 5.

⁹ "Miraloma Improvers Organize District," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 28, 1930).



Photo 4: Photo by Harrison Ryker, Courtesy of SFPL and the Internet Archive



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President's Message

by Robert Gee,
President

Greetings Miraloma Park,

After a very cool summer, I am really looking forward to at least a few warm and sunny days as we head into the Fall season.

I hope you can join us on October 16 at the MPIC Clubhouse for the workshop on "How to Reduce Your Fire Risk". The workshop will be led by Greg Carey, a fellow neighborhood leader with Resilient Diamond Heights. The MPIC has collaborated with Greg for many years now as part of our MPIC Resiliency program. Residents have reached out to the MPIC about their wild fire concerns in light of what happened in Los Angeles.

MPIC Membership

I'm pleased to announce that MPIC Board Member Cary Matthews has assumed the Membership Committee Chair duties from our departing board member Tina McGovern. Cary will be evaluating the latest non-profit database software options to help us more efficiently maintain our membership records and make it as easy as possible for members to join/renew and receive important information via email. Thank you Cary for volunteering!

Safety Update

Daniel Louie, MPIC Board Member and Interim Safety Committee Chair, met with the new SFPD Ingleside Station Captain, Gerald Newbeck, to discuss the specific safety concerns of Miraloma Park residents including (1) traffic enforcement along Teresita especially at the intersections of Teresita & Stillings and Teresita & Reposa, (2) residential burglary and (3) crimes against our Portola businesses including shoplifting. The MPIC has always taken the opportunity to meet with the new Ingleside Station Captains to educate them about Miraloma Park especially since most of the very limited police resources in the Ingleside Station are directed at higher crime areas such as the Sunnydale and Excelsior. Capt. Newbeck admitted he wasn't familiar with where the Miraloma Park neighborhood is located. Daniel informed Capt. Newbeck pedestrian crossing flags were recently installed again at the intersections of Teresita & Stillings and Teresita & Sequoia. Capt. Newbeck said he has never heard about pedestrian crossing flags being used anywhere in the City. Shortly after the meeting with Capt. Newbeck, a motorcycle officer was spotted monitoring the intersection of Teresita/Stillings.

MPIC Clubhouse

The MPIC Clubhouse and Finance committees have been actively discussing the most beneficial ADA accessibility upgrades that we can make to our clubhouse given our current financial situation. We previously hired a Certified Access Specialist who provided us a detailed report that helped us identify all of the potential minor and major barriers. The possible upgrades we are considering include the installation of a vertical lift platform and the conversion of one bathroom to a fully accessible all gender bathroom. We have already had initial discussions with an architect, vendors and contractors. Next steps are to finalize the project plan and budget and then seek the approval of the full MPIC Board to move forward.

MPIC Holiday Party

On Sunday, December 7, the MPIC is planning on holding our annual holiday party at the clubhouse. We are seeking some volunteers who can help coordinate this year's event. If you are interested, please contact me at: mpicpresident@gmail.com

The Kensington Bridge Area Project

Have you noticed the completely transformed area around the Kensington Bridge area at Portola/Marne and Miraloma Drive at the entrance to the Miraloma Park neighborhood? This was made possible by the tremendous leadership efforts of Carol Dimmick, a Forest Hill resident. I wrote an article about Carol's efforts in the June 2022 newsletter. Carol has worked closely with Supervisor Melgar, DPW Director Carla Short and DPW crews, SFPUC Water and other City agencies to commit resources to do major beautification and address long deferred landscape maintenance work at this area. It's always amazing to see DPW crews regularly working in the project area, all because of Carol's leadership efforts. I also want to thank all of the volunteers from Miraloma, Forest Hill and the surrounding area that have helped on the project

over the years.

In the last few months, Carol had (1) the City resolve the huge gopher problem that was damaging the area, (2) had DPW crews clean up the West Portal side along Portola (Kensington to Dorchester) and trim the plants in the street median on Portola in front of the Kensington Bridge project, (3) had DPW agree to an expedited request to trim the 5 large trees on front of the Kensington Bridge on the Miraloma side down to the end of the block, and (4) had DPW purchase enough river rocks to fill in the sidewalk around the trees in front of the Miraloma side.



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SAVE THE DATE

The annual Miraloma FUN RUN is Sunday, November 9th at 10am-2pm at the SOTA High School track!

Mark your calendar for this fun opportunity to meet the Miraloma community, get some exercise with your kids and to fundraise for the school.

NB: The run is limited to the children and parents of MES.

Join Us for a Fun Filled Trunk or Treat Adventure on October 31!

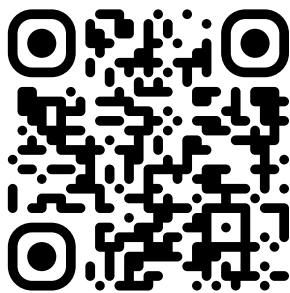
by Cornerstone Trinity Baptist Church

Being a part of the Miraloma Park Community has been a joy for us for all these years. We have had our "Trunk or Treat" for the last 3 years in our church parking lot at 480 Teresita Blvd. Last year, we had so many neighbors come through with their families to enjoy the candies, treats, and hot chocolate and would like to continue that tradition this year.

If any of our neighbors are interested in participating this year with a decorated trunk, please contact Jennifer Okano at 415-566-5756 or at info@cornerstonetrinity.org. We will have limited spots open so contact us by Sunday, October 12th

We do welcome all of you to come and join us for "Trunk or Treat" on October 31st from 6 pm-7:30 pm in our church parking lot.

BECOME AN MPIC MEMBER OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!



From the Resiliency Committee

by MPIC

As this one of the months the MPIC highlights community preparedness in the face of disaster, some timely information from the Department of Emergency Management is here for you.

The Department of Emergency Management recently rolled out a new emergency preparedness website, sf.gov/ReadySF. The site replaces SF72.org and has two main sections with supplemental resources linked below:

sf.gov/GetReady

Five easy steps everyone can take to get ready for emergencies (each step has its own page). 8 ½ x 11 PDFs on making a plan, packing a go bag, and a stay box.

sf.gov/Emergencies

Detailed guidance on how to prepare for and respond to a variety of hazards that can impact San Francisco, ranging from earthquakes to tornadoes (each hazard has its own page). Interactive maps for Storm and Flood Hazards, Extreme Heat, and Tsunami Hazards. 8 ½ x 11 PDF on earthquake safety.

Miraloma Elementary School Traffic and Parking Guidelines

by MPIC

During the school year, the MPIC is contacted by residents adjacent to Miraloma Elementary School about their garages being blocked by vehicles dropping off kids at school as well as cars blocking the pedestrian cross walks.

When you are impacted by a car blocking your garage, you should immediately call the school front desk at 415-469-4734 and inform the administrative staff of the problem along with the location, the make, model and license plate number of the vehicle. The principal, Shelley Reid, should be able to announce to the parents at the outside morning circle about any illegally parked cars/cars blocking driveways and the need to follow the posted traffic guidelines on the school website.

For many years, the MPIC has worked with the different school principals to inform the parents about school traffic guidelines during drop off. These guidelines include not blocking resident garages. These guidelines haven't changed and can be found on the Miraloma Elementary website at: <https://miralomasf.com/traffic-parking-guidelines>



The MPIC Invites You to Attend a Workshop on

How to Reduce Your Fire Risk

at the MPIC Clubhouse
Thursday, October 16, 6:30 to 7:30 pm

As autumn approaches, we can expect to see less foggy evenings and more hot, dry weather. This increases the chances of wildfires in areas with dry vegetation. Some people worry about fire safety after witnessing massive fires in Los Angeles. LA represents the true meaning of a Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) which is the area where houses meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland vegetation according to the U.S. Fire Service. This makes the WUI a focal area for human-environment conflicts such as wildland fires.

Luckily, most San Francisco housing is not in areas that meet the true definition of WUI. At the same time, most San Francisco housing is made of wood with little clearance between buildings. Fires can happen at any moment. There are basic things you can do to protect your household from fire danger, whether from burning vegetation or from a fire in the house or garage next door.

Please join the MPIC for this timely workshop led by Greg Carey from Resilient Diamond Heights on Thursday, October 16 to learn how to reduce your fire risk. Greg will lead off his interactive program with his specially created "Disaster Trivia" Q&A he created for Resilient Diamond Heights. The program runs from 6:30 to 7:30 pm at the MPIC Clubhouse. Please RSVP to: mpicpresident@gmail.com

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Katie Tostanoski's overall knowledge of the world of realty in the Bay Area, specifically San Francisco, was phenomenal. Her help and direction in the task of the sale of the home was helpful on all levels. The sale of our parents' home, the home that I and my three sisters were raised over a 65-year timeframe was emotionally delicate and Ms. Tostanoski was able to assist us through the emotional journey. She was easy to work with and I personally felt comfort in her professional knowledge. She had my full trust, I would certainly recommend her to anyone who is looking to sell a home in the Bay Area as she is an expert in her field.



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☐ \$ _____ Other

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Hello, are you 55 or older? We invite you to join us at Community Connectors, our senior program in Miraloma Park! We have a weekly program that is worth checking out. We have many exciting gatherings this fall and don't miss our Holiday Celebration - Cookie Swap and Holiday Party. We also have a bi-monthly Healthy Aging and Nutrition Class on the Community Living Campaign Website: sfcommunityliving.org. Let's strive together for better health and aging in 2024. Here's the schedule.

Tai Chi on Tuesdays

Always Active exercise on Thursdays
10:30 am at Cornerstone Church

If you are interested in attending, please contact Darlene Ramlose: Darlene@sfcommunityliving.org or by phone at 714-423-8844. You must sign up in advance as walk-ins are not accepted due to limited space.

Miraloma Senior Walks in San Francisco

Contact Darlene (see details above)
We are looking for someone to lead the walking program.
Please contact Darlene if you are interested.

Ukulele Class

Miraloma Clubhouse
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• • •

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MPIC Safety Committee Update

Crime Stats from August 1-August 31, 2025

Date	Time	Incident #	Description	Status	Intersection
8/16/25	1:56 AM	250454156	Malicious Mischief, Breaking Windows	Open or Active	PORTOLA DR \ TERESITA BLVD
8/18/25	5:19 PM	250458982	Hazardous Materials, Dumping in Unauthorized Location	Open or Active	PORTOLA DR \ TERESITA BLVD
8/26/25	1:34 AM	250478112	Vehicle, Stolen & Recovered	Open or Active	BELLA VISTA WAY \ CRESTA VISTA DR
8/29/25	10:42 AM	250485214	Burglary, Store, Unlawful Entry. Officers Seavey and Scott responded to a report of a theft at a local CVS. Upon arrival, the store manager informed officers that a subject entered the store and filled a suitcase with nearly \$1,000 worth of merchandise. The subject then exited the store without attempting to pay and fled the area.	Open or Active	FOWLER AVE \ JUANITA WAY
8/31/25	8:31 PM	250489642	Driving While Under The Influence Of Alcohol	Cite or Arrest Adult	KENSINGTON WAY \ MIRALOMA DR \ PORTOLA DR

prepared by Mathew Wong, MPIC Safety Committee

ANNOUNCEMENT

Clubhouse Clean-Up

MPIC’s Second Saturdays to clean up the Clubhouse grounds continues. This month’s date is **October 12**. The event takes place from 10 a.m. to noon. Come join us! Meet your neighbors! Rain cancels.



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Patti Moran	Matt Boschetto
Kate Clements	Jessi Harrison

Programs at the MPIC Clubhouse

Jazzercise

Wednesday and Saturday 9:00am
Monday 5pm
650 888 6129
sbjazzercise@comcast.net

Changs International Folk Dancing

7:00–10:00pm Friday
One hour lessons on the first and second
Fridays of each month.
changsdancers@aol.com

Fort Mason Artists

Learn to sculpt, paint and draw
Monday 6:15–10:15pm
Friday 10:00am–2:00pm,
2:30–5:30pm
Konrad Dunton; 650 868 6336
Fortmasonartists.org

Grace & Truth Baptist Church

10am- 2pm Sundays
7pm-9pm Tuesdays (2nd, 4th)
7pm- 9pm Wednesdays (1st, 3rd, 5th)
SFBaptist.church / Faithsaves.net

Ukulele Class

Tuesdays 2:00pm–3:00pm
abbymmargolis@yahoo.com

Mary L. Harden Botanical Drawing

Monday 10:00am–1:30pm
maryharden@me.com

Figure Drawing from the Live Model with Linda Hope

Saturday 11am–2:30pm
415 334 3603
Lindahope.art@gmail.com

Guide Dogs For The Blind

2nd/4th Wednesdays 7:00 – 8:30pm
info@gdbsanfranciscopuppyraisers.com
or guidedogs.com/puppy

MPIC Directory

www.miralomapark.org

General Inquires for MPIC	(415) 322-0211
Clubhouse Manager + Rentals	(415) 322-0211
Webmaster: Ron Proctor	(415) 322-0211
Miraloma Elementary School	(415) 469-4734
Miraloma Playground	(415) 337-4704

Miraloma Life Staff

Contact: miralomapark@gmail.com
(415) 322-0211

Editor	Kate Clements
Advertising	Kate Clements
Graphics/ Layout	Butler Looney

Article Submission Policy:

Email submissions to: miralomapark@gmail.com
with **Miraloma Life** in the subject line.

Articles submitted must be 800 words or less in length and should not be selling or promoting a product or service. Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication.

Deadline for submissions are the 12th day of the month prior to publication.

Submitted articles become the property of MPIC.

Miraloma Park Improvement Club

350 O'Shaughnessy Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94124