

**GVA General Membership Meeting
May 8, 2025**

Guest Speaker, Milton Neira, Public Education Specialist, Orange County Fire Authority

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Stuart Hack, Shel Mende, Tom Stacy, Laurie Bereny, Leah Kushman

GUESTS PRESENT: SK Park (Third Board President)

1. GVA President, Stuart Hack, called the meeting to order.
2. There is a newly elected building captain, Lynn Murphy in 4011.
3. There is a new region #4 representative, Leah Kushman, in 3371.
4. It is now confirmed by the OCFD that the fire alarm boxes in the 3-story building hallways and walkways are NOT connected to a monitoring company nor the fire department.
 - a. The alarms are only local and meant to alert residents of the building that there is a fire, per the OCFD. Please call 911 in case of smoke/fire ASAP and when in a safe place. It is very expensive to connect these alarms directly to the OCFD (an initial outlay of about \$100,000 plus yearly fees of around \$50,000). There will be research carried out on placing notices on the fire alarm boxes to call 911 in case of fire.
5. How do people know what region their building is in? Tom Stacy, GVA Director of Communications, will distribute a spreadsheet with this information to the regional reps for distribution to their regions' 3 story buildings and to the GVA website.
6. The annual GVA fundraising effort began in September (and occurs every year), when 3-story building residents are asked to chip in \$1 each per year to fund current expenses and any potential future expenses the GVA may have. The building captains collect the money and send it to the GVA treasurer, Shel Mende.
7. When dealing with Resident Services it is best to send an email to obtain a service request as this leaves a paper trail, and it is trackable in case there is no follow-up within a reasonable length of time.
 - a. Also please copy agardenvilla+service@gmail.com so the GVA will have a record of requests and results of the requests.
8. Janet McMahon introduced speaker Milton Neira. He is a graduate of UC Santa Cruz, who worked in emergency management for 25 years. He is a public information specialist and reserve firefighter for the OCFD.

Milton Neira Presentation (Please see excellent attachments)

1. Awareness means knowledge. There are fire alarms available that will vibrate for people who are hearing challenged. These can be placed on your bed to alert you at night.
2. Red Cross: 714-481-5300. Installation of smoke alarms for free
Non-emergency OCFD: 714-573-6200
3. In case of fire there is very little time. A room can burn completely in two minutes. There are smoke and toxic fumes. The temperature can go up to 212 F within the first minute. You have one minute to get out. The key to staying alive is preparedness. The average response time for OCFD is 4 to 6 minutes.
4. Get to a safe spot when outside.
5. Build a go kit – backpack, suitcase, etc.
 - a. Insurance policies scanned onto a thumb drive, passports, birth certificates, insurance cards.
 - b. Medications
 - c. First aid kit
 - d. Glasses extra pair
 - e. List of phone numbers loved ones, siblings, out of state loved ones.
6. If there is discoloration of electrical outlets or you see a spark, these must be changed – call maintenance.
 - a. **Smoke alarms are essential.** They save lives every day. Vacuum around the smoke alarm and test it once per month. Check for heat on the wall around outlets monthly. This is a sign of increased fire risk. Turn off power strips and electric appliances before leaving for the day.
 - b. Also essential are working fire extinguishers and uncluttered exits and breezeways. Clear potted plants, furniture and other items from breezeways, walkways and exits.
7. How to use a fire extinguisher. PASS, P: pull the safety pin; A: Aim nozzle at the base of the fire; S: Squeeze the operating lever; S: sweep from right to left and left to right.
 - a. Fire extinguisher classifications: Class A ordinary combustibles; class B flammable liquids, class C for electrical.
8. Fire Safety for Older Adults (FEMA). See
https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa_221.pdf

a. Cooking fires are the number one cause of fire because people leave the kitchen for just a moment.

b. Smoking fires are the number one cause of fire for people aged 65 and over. Also visit: [Osfm.fire.ca.gov](https://osfm.fire.ca.gov) – there is much excellent information here.

c. To more safely put out a grease cooking fire, **slide** the pot lid onto the burning pot.

d. For car battery fires, do not use water. Leave the area and call 911.

9. Make a home escape plan (see handout attachment). Time yourself from being asleep to getting to the exit.

10. First plan and prepare. Grab your go bag. Identify people in the building that need help and only help if safe to do so.

11. If you are trapped in the building, crouch down by a window with something bright (perhaps a piece of red, orange or yellow construction paper in the window and crouch down by the window. This can help firefighters to locate trapped people.

a. Have protective shoes (not sandals), jacket, and eyewear for protection. Keep fire extinguishers in various rooms of the home.

b. Use a wet blanket and/or fire blanket to wrap around if needed to get through smoke/fire. Fire blankets are also great to have to put out cooking fires or to cover yourself if you must get through hot areas.

12. Rope ladders are useful but require much strength to use safely and successfully.

13. Call 911 if you see a fire outside. Beware of embers which can spark fires distances away from the original flames. SK Park explains that there is 30 feet of brush clearance and 70 feet of indigenous fire-resistant plantings between the LWV neighborhood fencing and the surrounding wilderness area.

14. Note: phone number 211. This provides resources and information for your needs post fire displacement.

15. Per Milton Neira, there are two more local fire stations planned to be built.

a. There are between 5 and 20 calls per day from Laguna Woods Village to the Fire Department, mainly for falls and episodes of disorientation/confusion.

16. For those interested, there is a CERT program: Community Emergency Response Training team. This consists of 9 classes to learn how to help in case of disasters/fires. Call OCFD non-emergency number to learn more.

New Business:

1. Common area storage units – in LH21 buildings. Some residents take more than their share of the storage cabinets. To effect positive change, there needs to be people voicing their concerns to the Third Mutual Board Residential Rules Committee Meeting.

a. SK Park says this issue will be on the agenda on 5/20/25. Committee chair Robert Mutchnik.

2. Lynn Murphy explains that in Gate 14 there are two exits but one at the back of the community is locked. SK Park will check with Security to arrange for this gate to be opened in case of emergency.

3. The next GVA Board Meeting is on Thursday, June 26th at 4 PM. Location to be determined.

a. Board meetings provide an opportunity to see what issues we deal with and how we come up with solutions. You are also welcome to bring up your own concerns and issues. GVA is a club and is here to serve the interests of the residents of the 81 three-story buildings.

4. The building captains will do whatever they practically can to aid residents in case of emergency, but it is not their responsibility to enforce rules nor are they responsible for saving lives. Many building captains are not physically capable of rescue. They are volunteers because it is the right thing to do and out of the goodness of their hearts.

5. We are asked by the Third Mutual Recreation Room committee to find out how the residents like their Rec Rooms as regards equipment and amenities. Tom Stacy has sent out a questionnaire for GV building residents to give their opinions via this questionnaire. There have been very few responses as of the time of this meeting. Tom created a flyer that includes facility for Korean and Chinese speaking residents to fill out the questionnaire. The flyer is attached to these minutes.