

FALL 2008

OPAL NEWSLETTER

HOUSING ISLAND PEOPLE, HELPING TO MAINTAIN ISLAND CHARACTER

NEW WAY TO LEAVE A LEGACY: THANKS, SANDY THOMPSON

In a first-of-its-kind transaction, longtime supporter Sandy Thompson recently sold her second home to OPAL Community Land Trust. Sandy donated a generous discount on the price of the house – 40% below market value – and OPAL will pay her for it over a 20-year period. This adds one more scattered-site home to OPAL's list of permanently affordable residences.

Lisa Byers, OPAL executive director, describes the transaction as a win-win-win-win situation. Sandy received a charitable tax deduction for the land and house that she sold to OPAL for less than market value, and she will get income from the sale for 20 years. OPAL leased the land and sold the home to a moderate-income purchaser at a price he could afford – the proceeds from that sale were invested in order to make the payments to Sandy. The island community benefits from another permanently affordable home, because OPAL's land lease includes a resale formula that sets the future sales price at an affordable level.



Sandy Thompson

Sandy is the first person to leave a legacy gift of a permanently affordable home for future generations of islanders. OPAL hopes she won't be the last. Lisa notes, "This was an opportunity to respond in a creative way. We achieved our mission and met Sandy's needs. We would be delighted to have other transactions similar to this."

Sandy adds, "I'd had it with landlording. And the rent I needed to charge had grown higher than most Orcas renters could pay. If I sold my rental, which was next door, it would likely become a vacation rental, and I prefer long-term neighbors.

Employing creative approaches from the Leadership San Juan Islands program, I figured my income needs and other concerns, and contacted OPAL, who was welcoming and flexible. Now, I have guaranteed income for many years, our neighborhood is enhanced, OPAL has another property, and there's a new path for current and potential homeowners. I feel really good about how this all turned out."

Hilary Canty, a neighbor of Sandy's, said, "We (Hilary, her husband, Hank Date, and son, Rylan) were thrilled when we learned of Sandy's plan to sell her rental property to OPAL. Our neighborhood is an interesting mix of older waterfront homes, newer homes that are tucked into the hillside, and the crowning glory of the road is the Willis Farm. Homeowners include families, retired folks, old-time islanders with seasonal renters, and a few part-timers thrown in the mix as well. Above all, Willis Lane has a neighborhood feel, complete with a shared garden and basketball hoop. Ensuring that Sandy's house remains affordable helps to maintain the diversity of our small part of Orcas, and we welcome having the new family join the neighborhood! Thank you to both Sandy and OPAL for making this possible."

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: LISA BYERS



David Brooks recently commented in his *New York Times* column that recessions are times when people spend more time at home. In times of economic decline, we rely more on our social networks, our community bonds, our social capital.

On Orcas many of us are blessed with a rich bank account of social capital. Our lives are nurtured and enriched by complex webs of social connections, by thoughtful gestures from neighbors, and by networks of friends and acquaintances who come to our aid in difficult times.

And so it is with immense gratitude that I have felt both inspired and enriched this year by an islander who decided that she could convert some of the wealth she'd accrued in property – monetary capital – into social capital. Sandy Thompson chose to sell her home to OPAL at 40% less than its market value so that another islander, and subsequent generations of islanders, could afford a home here.

For me, that choice of Sandy's, that action, provides as much hope and inspiration as the election of our new president. Please join me in thanking Sandy for her leadership.

Lisa Byers

OPAL HOMEOWNERS ORGANIZE TO INFLUENCE EASTSOUND SEWER DISTRICT POLICIES

The Eastsound Sewer and Water District recently extended service lines along county roads near Opal Commons and Bonnie Brae, and adopted a new policy requiring property owners within 200 feet of sewer lines to connect within one year of notification. The OPAL neighborhoods are laid out with private roads leading to the homes. Sue Kimple, office manager for the Sewer District, obtained a Public Facilities grant to extend side sewer lines into the two OPAL neighborhoods so all homes would be located within 200 feet of a sewer line.

The estimated cost for each homeowner for connecting to the sewer line is between \$9,000 and \$12,000 per household.

OPAL homeowners organized a meeting with sewer district commissioners in order to learn more about the District's plans. Homeowners from Opal Commons and Bonnie Brae, and nearby property owners along Enchanted Forest Road, Seaview Street, Blanchard Road, and Mt. View Street, asked the commissioners to reconsider their approach and to reduce costs. Everyone agrees with the goal of protecting the environment, but homeowners don't believe the sewer district's approach is more environmentally sound than existing drain fields that are inspected and fully functioning. Discussions with the sewer district will continue in 2009.

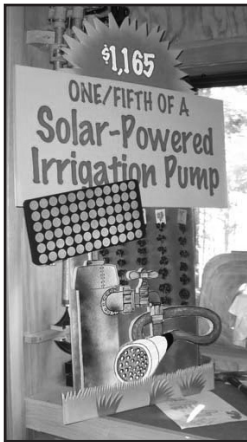
MISSION

The mission of OPAL Community Land Trust is to acquire and own land so that islanders in need may have access to permanently affordable homes and workplaces. OPAL collaborates with others, develops improvements, and stewards the land in a manner that is cooperative, stable, environmentally sensitive, and socially responsible.

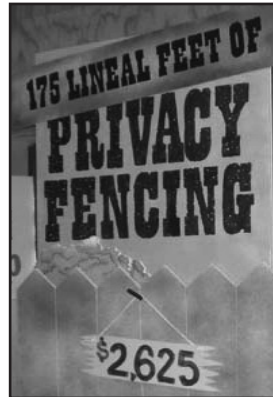
SUCCESSFUL AUCTION INCLUDES WILD ROSE MEADOW ITEMS

Three island businesses helped underwrite the Black and White Soirée, OPAL’s auction, as sponsors this year. Please let Island Hardware & Supply, Terra Firma, NW, and Orcas Excavators know you read in our newsletter that they helped to ensure the successful event.

Wild Rose Meadow will have pervious pavement, privacy fencing, a solar-powered irrigation pump for the common areas, and fruit trees and rose bushes for landscaping thanks to generous donors at the annual OPAL auction and soirée. Here’s a recap of the sponsors of those items.



One-fifth of a solar-powered irrigation pump sponsored by Marie Brennan, Janet Brownell, and Mary Riveland.



175 lineal feet of privacy fencing sponsored by Helen Bee.



16 Tons of pervious pavement sponsored by Marie Brennan and Carl de Boor.

Signs and photos by Chris and Vicki Brems

Three fruit trees were sponsored by Rachel Adams, Mary Blackstone, Craig Canine, Jim Connell, Phyllis Henigson, Bob Mattox, Tom Maiuro, Madie Murray, Justin Paulsen, Charles Stewart, and Cassandra Whellams.

Two wild rose shrubs were sponsored by Gwyneth Burrill, Penny Buttke, Douglas Ellis, Rolf Eriksen, Joe Floren, Tyler Harding, Cherie Little, Madie Murray, Christy Rakow, Sara Smith, Phil Weatherspoon, and Bruce Wiscomb.

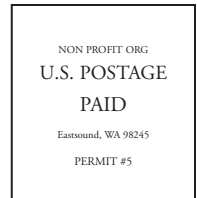
LAVENDER HOLLOW PURCHASE DELAYED AGAIN

USDA did not meet the timeline for completing their analysis of capital needs at the Lavender Hollow Apartments, so OPAL asked the seller for another extension on the purchase and sale agreement and has deferred until spring 2009 its grant application to the State Housing Trust Fund.

Lisa Byers expressed gratitude to Wally Gudgell and his business partners, the current owners of the apartments: “We are very fortunate to have sellers, represented by Wally, who support OPAL’s purchase and are willing to be patient about this complex and long process of transferring ownership and maintaining affordability.”



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AS WE EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE, WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT THE HIGHEST APPRECIATION IS NOT TO UTTER WORDS, BUT TO LIVE BY THEM. ~JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY

You Can Do This

Three things you can do to make a difference for the Orcas community when you support OPAL:

1. Consider a legacy gift like Sandy Thompson's (see page 1).
2. Make a donation to supplement funds for rental or energy assistance programs we administer (we anticipate it will be a hard winter for some local families).
3. Make a generous year-end gift (we still need a significant amount of private donations for the last 14 homes at Wild Rose Meadow).

Contact OPAL at 376-3191, or send your gift to P.O. Box 1133, Eastsound, WA 98245.



Golden Raffle winner Rachel Adams selected "Fall Foliage in New England" – a week's stay at a home on Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire, near her birthplace – when her winning ticket was drawn on October 11 at the auction and soirée. Just before the drawing, she had been reviewing the catalogue of choices she could select from, and she was extra-delighted that her win would take her back to her beloved New England.