



# Kent Woodlands Journal

Newsletter #309

August 2021

The monthly newsletter of the Kent Woodlands Property Owners Association

## President's Note

### Building Community by Getting to Know Our Neighbors: Tom Hale, Founder of BACKROADS

Because so many of us are planning post-COVID travel right now, there is no one better to talk to this month than Kent Woodlands resident Tom Hale, founder of BACKROADS, the world's #1 active travel company.

Many Kent Woodlands residents and their families have taken BACKROADS trips, but surprisingly few know that the Founder and President, and his family, actually live in our neighborhood.

Tom grew up in Moraga, CA, where he was a competitive middle distance runner — he set a 2 mile record 50 years ago which remains unbroken at Campolindo High School. For college, he went to the University of Oregon, followed by UC Berkeley and UCLA, where he got a Master's degree in Environmental Planning. Right out of college, Tom took an environmental planning job in Las Vegas, but a desk job doing air quality reports simply wasn't such a great fit. He tells the story of getting the inspiration to start a bike touring company late one night, writing up eight pages of notes and having his mind made up by breakfast, and setting off on a 5,000-mile bike trip around the West, continuing to hone his plans.

He founded BACKROADS in 1979, "by the seat of my pants as a garage start-up." He started small — his first trip hosted four guests. Today, BACKROADS has grown to offer biking, walking and hiking, and multi adventure trips in over 50 countries, expects to employ close to 1000 trip leaders and field staff next year, with over 50,000 satisfied travelers. Much more important than growth and size is that each trip is still small and wonderfully flexible and self-paced. Each guest still feels like an individual traveler with a well-curated itinerary and support along the way. Each trip features three Trip Leaders and two support vehicles.

In the beginning, Tom did it all. He designed the itineraries, led the trips, maintained the bikes, trained the leaders and produced the catalog. He now leads a company with close to 200 headquarters-based employees in Berkeley, Salt Lake City and Provence. The COVID year had a huge impact on BACKROADS, as it did on all travel-related companies. Tom says he isn't sure what has been harder: going into Covid or coming out with a 350% hockey stick rebound in 2021.

Today BACKROADS offers (in addition to its core activity segments mentioned above) active river and ocean cruises, active Safari, active culinary, and Snow Adventures. Their trips showcase the best lodging, dining, cultural attractions—and of course back roads—in destinations from California's Wine Country to classic settings in France, and from the pampas of Patagonia to the hill country of Thailand. A new category of trip, called Dolce Tempo, offers active travel but in a more accessible level for those guests who'd like to dip their toe into the world of active travel. These trips are offering just e-bikes.



*(Continued on Page 2)*

*(Tom Hale — Continued from Page 1)*

As Tom says “I can’t imagine a better way to travel the world than under your own power and in the company of like-minded adventurers. Sure, BACKROADS provides superb accommodations and meals, amazing Trip Leaders and unforgettable local encounters. But whether you are sticking with the group or breaking off on your own, all of our planning and support are ultimately aimed at one simple thing: giving you the flexibility you need to discover the world on your own terms.”

Tom and his wife Liz have three grown children – two are in college, and one has graduated from college and is now working at BACKROADS. During his spare time, Tom loves to run, hike and bike in Marin County and XC skate ski at Royal Gorge in the Sierras, taking full advantage of the natural beauty we are surrounded by.

If I sound like a big fan of BACKROADS, it’s because I am. My husband and I have taken six BACKROADS trips, including “Tuscany’s Chianti Bike Tour,” “Danube River Cruise Walking & Hiking,” “Vietnam and Cambodia Walking & Hiking,” and two trips with our kids, “Costa Rica Family Multi-Adventure Tour – Teens & Kids,” and “Galapagos Ocean Cruise Multi-Adventure trip, for Families with older teens and 20’s.” We already have two more trips planned.

- For more information about BACKROADS: [www.backroads.com](http://www.backroads.com)
- To order trip catalogs: [www.backroads.com/CatalogRequest](http://www.backroads.com/CatalogRequest) (If you order catalogs, be sure to have a good supply of post-it notes handy!)

— Ann Becker, President

*The “President’s Note” is intended to build community by spotlighting local residents. It is not an endorsement by the Association of any commercial product or service.*

*If you know of a Kent Woodlands resident who would be a good subject of a “President’s Note,” let me know by sending an email to [info@kwpoa.com](mailto:info@kwpoa.com) with “Possible Subject of President’s Note” in the subject line.*



# FIRE SAFETY NEWS

## EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS:

Kent Woodlands’ Fire Committee is working in conjunction with Kentfield Fire Department and Central Marin’s NRG (Neighborhood Response Group) to form a neighborhood coalition to coordinate and educate our community on how to prepare and be ready for evacuation in the event of a fire or earthquake. Evidence from past catastrophes has proven that neighbor to neighbor support leads to the best outcomes. In order to prepare properly and make sure all neighbors have the support they might require, we need volunteers to act as street captains. The Fire Committee is creating approximately 50 zones in Kent Woodlands and each zone will need at least one captain. If you are interested in serving in this capacity please email [mwarner@kwpoa.com](mailto:mwarner@kwpoa.com).

## FIRE COMMITTEE OPENINGS:

The Fire Committee is working on a number of safety projects in addition to evacuation preparedness. We welcome the participation of anyone who is interested in serving as a volunteer for this important issue in our community. For more information, please contact us at [info@kwpoa.com](mailto:info@kwpoa.com).

## Architectural Applications: August 2021

**Please note:** This newsletter is your **official notice** from the KWPOA regarding property improvements submitted for approval by the Architectural Committee. Please review this section very carefully as some planned development may affect you. Note that Architectural Committee actions are not final until ratified by the Board of Directors.

### ***THIS MONTH'S ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW MEETING IS AUGUST 10th.***

**Important Notice:** Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, AC meetings will be held via video- or teleconference until further notice. Please email [mbarber@kwpoa.com](mailto:mbarber@kwpoa.com) for participation instructions. As this situation continues, it may be necessary to reschedule or change the format of AC meetings. Please consult the KWPOA event calendar at [kwpoa.com](http://kwpoa.com) for any meeting changes.

Applicant	Property Address	Category/Project Description
<b>New Applications for August</b>		
Smith	111 Idlewood	C2 - Minor Addition
Harper	16 Madrone	C4 - Significant change in appearance
Morgan	10 Diablo	C14 - Changes to approved plans
<b>Applications Approved in July</b>		
None		
<b>Open Enforcements</b>		
14 Madrone (enforcement on hold)		
421 Crown (enforcement on hold)		
<b>Exempt and Administratively Approved Applications</b>		
34 Rock Road Ilc	34 Rock	Tree Removal
Hemmeter	65 Rancheria	Solar
Willard	50 Ridgecrest	Tree Removal
Summers	45 Evergreen	Tree Removal

**ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Ann Peckenpaugh Becker (Acting Chair and Board Representative), Bruce Raabe, Cori Snyder Schuman, Julie Johnson, Tom Nicholson

**AC COORDINATOR:** Michael Barber ([mbarber@kwpoa.com](mailto:mbarber@kwpoa.com))

**MEETINGS:** Held via tele/videoconference on the **2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.** To be noticed in the newsletter and placed on the agenda, **COMPLETE** applications must be received by the 21<sup>st</sup> of the preceding month (or the Friday prior if the 21<sup>st</sup> falls on a weekend or holiday). All calls concerning Architectural Committee matters should be directed to Michael Barber at the KWPOA office at 415-721-7429 or via email at [mbarber@kwpoa.com](mailto:mbarber@kwpoa.com). Materials and applications may be mailed to P.O. Box 404, Kentfield 94914, or delivered to the office by appointment only.



Kent Woodlands Property Owners Association  
 PO Box 404  
 Kentfield, CA 94914

## Regular Board Meeting

**Thurs. August 26, 2021 - 6:00PM via videoconference.**  
**Contact [jwilliams@kwpoa.com](mailto:jwilliams@kwpoa.com) for log-in information.**

- Call to Order
- Public Comment
- Approval of June 24, 2021 Meeting Minutes
- AC Report and Ratifications
- Exterior Paint: Proposed Addition of "Lighter Earth Tones" to Approved Color List - Update and Related Votes
- Fire Safety & Hazard Mitigation Report
- Officer Reports
- County Update
- Social Events Update
- Administrator's Report
- Next Regular Board Meeting Agenda
- Adjourn and Reconvene in Executive Session

### Executive Session Agenda:

- Call to Order
- Approval of June 24, 2021 Executive Minutes
- Enforcements and Legal Matters
- Personnel
- Adjournment

*(This is a preliminary agenda. Final agenda will be posted at our office 96 hours prior to meeting.)*

## KWPOA Contact Information

**Mailing address:** PO Box 404, Kentfield 94914  
**Office address:** 1010 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. #200  
 Kentfield, CA 94904  
**Phone:** 415-721-7429  
**Web Site:** [www.kwpoa.com](http://www.kwpoa.com)  
**Email:** [info@kwpoa.com](mailto:info@kwpoa.com)

## Board Members and Staff

Ann Becker, President/AC Rep	<a href="mailto:abecker@kwpoa.com">abecker@kwpoa.com</a>
Bitsa Freeman, Vice President	<a href="mailto:bfreeman@kwpoa.com">bfreeman@kwpoa.com</a>
Sara Wardell-Smith, Treasurer	<a href="mailto:swardellsmith@kwpoa.com">swardellsmith@kwpoa.com</a>
Kirk Baierlein, Secretary	<a href="mailto:kbaierlein@kwpoa.com">kbaierlein@kwpoa.com</a>
Noah Hagey, Director	<a href="mailto:nhagey@kwpoa.com">nhagey@kwpoa.com</a>
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Jeanne Williams, Administrator	<a href="mailto:jwilliams@kwpoa.com">jwilliams@kwpoa.com</a>
Michael Barber, AC Coordinator	<a href="mailto:mbarber@kwpoa.com">mbarber@kwpoa.com</a>
Mike Warner, Hazard Mitigation	<a href="mailto:mwarner@kwpoa.com">mwarner@kwpoa.com</a>