

2016 Candidates for the Board of Directors



Sarah Holmstrom

Biography:

Sarah Holmstrom is a finance professional who has been working in the finance and accounting industry for over 10 years. She has a degree in Accounting from Central Washington University and is also a Certified Public Accountant (CPA). She is the Chief Officer (CFO) of a multi-million dollar company and her job duties include analyzing new business ventures for profitability, analyzing results of currently operating businesses to ensure they maintain their profitability, interpreting financial results, analyzing the annual budget, and explaining variations from that budget to the Board. Prior to this position Sarah was an auditor for four years. Sarah has lived in Sudden Valley for about a year and her husband has owned here for about 7 years. In her free time, Sarah enjoys running, hiking, and spending time with her family.

Vison Statement:

I believe Sudden Valley is a beautiful location with tons of potential. There are few places that allow you to be one with nature and provide the atmosphere Sudden Valley has. I want to help make this community even better!

My goal is to use my background in economic development and finance to help identify better businesses for the Association and do more analysis of the ones we have. Sudden Valley has fallen short of its potential to maximize its financial resources. There may be some amenities that don't make financial sense to have or that we could restructure and create more revenue from.

Another goal I have it to improve our financial accuracy. The 2014 audit identified several issues with internal controls and recommended, "Board provide adequate oversight over the accounting department's controls and reporting..." I would like to help with this process and ensure there is adequate oversight and review of financial information. It is very important to myself and everyone who contributes their own hard earned money each month to the Association to know where their money is going. The financial information has to be accurate, adequately protected, and correctly reported to all stakeholders (Members). I don't believe this is happening.

Budgeting is another area I see major areas for improvement. The reports brought before the Board this year had tons of errors and were very complicated to read and understand. In my experience, once the Budget gets to the Board level it is in a much more simplified format that is user friendly and easy to follow. The detail is still there and available, but summarized as well. Also, before it gets to the Board it has been thoroughly reviewed to ensure there are not errors. My goal would be to simplify the reporting of this document to make it more user friendly. Board Members and general members should be able to understand the budget since we are all providing the funds that go into this.

There are several areas that need maintenance in Sudden Valley. I believe that the Members want to know that the information they are being provided is accurate and also what the benefit is of doing the maintenance or upgrades to facilities. I hope to be able to provide this by doing thorough financial analysis on all future improvements done to ensure they are financially sound and in the best interest of all of the Members. The financial information on what this will cost them and what the return on their investment will be needs to be clearly laid out so everyone can make an educated and informed decision.

I love the community of Sudden Valley and hope to be able to make it even better with some improved oversight and controls over the financial information. Also, I hope to help the Association become more profitable from businesses and have other streams of income outside of the Dues paid by all Members.



Biography:

I was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana: and have lived additionally in California, Texas, and Washington states.

Education:

I hold three upper level educational degrees as follows:

Azuza Pacific College

Associates Degree in Liberal Arts

California Lutheran University

Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration

University of Dallas

Master of Business Administration

Richard Waltke

General Disciplines:

My career has been based in the financial development sectors within Telecommunications and Financial Services disciplines. In addition, I was past president of the CreekpoinTE HOA in Vancouver WA, having held this position for seven years.

Career Synopsis:

I retired from Verizon in the year 1998, having been at the forefront of the telecommunications emergence from a fully regulated utility structure to the competitive business configuration today. I was asked the same year; and did join a nationwide telecommunications consulting group located in Dallas, Texas as Associate Director of Marketing. Subsequently, I accepted a consulting contract to work for a client firm in Vancouver, WA. This opportunity led to a combined Nationwide Director, and the Pacific Northwest Regional Director position in Vancouver, WA. My wife Benith (Beni) and I then moved from Texas to Vancouver in the year 2000. In the year 2002, I began my own multi-state consulting business, Market Perception, Inc., which operated for eight years. I then became a financial advisor managing my own office with Edward Jones, Inc. for over two years. Next, I became a full service insurance agent; and finally returned to the telecommunications discipline having final oversight of the Sales – Client contracts for Integra Telecom Holdings, Inc. in Vancouver, WA.

Current status:

My wife Beni and I with dog Max, now reside in the Sudden Valley area of Bellingham, WA.

Vision Statement:

Sudden Valley is an exceptional geographic, people oriented, and opportunity laden destination that currently provides a welcoming, beautiful, forest rich living environment for her population. My vision for Sudden Valley has five components:

The first is future development of Sudden Valley. The wellbeing of existing and future occupants of Sudden Valley should be the priority of the HOA at all times. It is not the builders and developers, or other business entities with profit making goals. Established rules and regulations, coupled with common sense solutions should be the HOA policy. Open contract bidding should be the norm.

Second is that Sudden Valley continues to provide an excellent lifestyle, remains operationally stable, effectively manages focused growth objectives, and achieves a ubiquitous perception as a viable and comfortable community. Common acceptance of such a reputation provides the conduit for the community to realize the best personal benefits and economic success possible.

My third vision is that residents of Sudden Valley take a participative interest in community affairs. Open Board of Directors meetings should be attended to show community interest, to get an understanding of issues, and know how final conclusions are determined. This is the time for residents to speak with equal voice about concerns, suggestions, and directly influence the Board of Directors with the pertinent committees; via public forum. Reliance upon others for restatement of issues can sometimes lead to misunderstanding, some biased; which can create inaccuracies. Participation is the single best way to reflect the wants, needs, and desires of Sudden Valley residents.

My fourth vision is that the work of the HOA be supported if deserved. The HOA is the face of the Sudden Valley community. It should reflect resident expected qualities of openness, empathy, accuracy, in concert with established rules and regulations; be flexible, unbiased and honest in all decisions it makes for the good of the community.

My fifth vision is that the residents understand that certain activities such as budget generation and revenue resources are the purview of the Board of Directors. The voting residents of Sudden Valley have entrusted the Board of Directors with this responsibility. While performance and the overall goodness of the Board of Director actions should be monitored, suggestions for corrective actions should be taken in the Sudden Valley Board of Directors public forum, and not promulgated outside of Sudden Valley in the general public space. The reason is simple. I feel it is more important that we residents of Sudden Valley (remembering the Board of Directors [volunteers] are residents of Sudden Valley) in a fair and unbiased way; work together as a unified team to provide the best services with the financial resources available. If we, the Sudden Valley community, accept and act on this vision; then positive benefit will surely follow for all of us.

Summary:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my application for the SV Board of Directors.



Carol Bauman

Biography:

Experience

Resident 17 years

Vice President (3 years)

ACC (6 years)

Document Review (3 years)

Located ALL Board minutes

headed team to update

found storage

found ALL historical documents from 40 years

headed team to organize

found storage

with committee

updated Bylaws

Bylaws now online

policies

rescind irrelevant policies

updating policies

Emergency Preparedness

CERT trained

CPR trained

Obtained grant from Bellingham Rotary for CERT trailer generator

Communications Committee

Spirit Day

4th of July

1st responders dinner

Halloween

flea market

clothes swap

Breakfast with Santa

SVCA Auction

Fishing Derby

Holiday Craft Fair

Strategic Planning Committee

Helped:

painting rec center
mailbox clusters, etc.

Vision Statement:

Three years ago I was part of the Board that supported the repair and replacement of the culverts. I was also part of the Board that supported the refurbishment of the Admin Bldg.

Now, I support the next phase, which is having the scoping study done by the experts to tell us where to go with the Marina, Area Z, and the Recreation Corridor.

Because for 40 years little maintenance was done, we as a community need to know how/when to move forward, AND, how much it will cost. I for one am distressed every time I see the roof on Barn 6.

This year we have Wilson Engineering working on a roads plan for the future combining culverts and roads into a cohesive plan.

So my vision for Sudden Valley is to have a routine maintenance plan with lower maintenance costs, lower utility costs, plus, places for seniors and artisans to go; have places for learning and enjoyment for children; have places for meetings without poles.

What a jewel we have here on earth. Sudden Valley, a place we call home. I want to continue on the path we started 3 years ago. I would appreciate your vote!



Alma Deckert

Biography:

Alma Hromic Deckert (also known as the writer Alma Alexander) has lived and learned and worked in seven countries and three continents, and brings a wealth of life experience into every endeavor. She holds an MSc degree in Molecular Biology, and is also the author of more than three million published words in the shape of novels, short stories, creative non-fiction, journalism, literary critique and review, and blog/podcast. When not writing, she teaches, mentors, takes photographs, does a lot of reading, and worries about the future. She and her family (husband, and two cats) have lived in Sudden Valley since 2003.

Vision Statement:

When we first came to Bellingham looking for a home it took one visit to Sudden Valley for me to recognise it – in its trees, its wildlife, its singular character. This wasn't an ordinary subdivision, it would be a home in the woods where the deer would wander past the back door, and we loved it. The Home Owner Association umbrella that came with this home was something that neither my husband nor I had lived under before, but we took that as part of the package. As a rule I have strong opinions on political issues (and yes this includes the HOA) but as a classic introvert I tend to share them with the

people close to me, and shy away from actual hand-on-the-tiller action. However, perhaps because the current political climate has pushed me into becoming a Sanders delegate in this election cycle, I think the time has come to step forward and tackle some of the things that have been of increasing concern to me, and put forward my candidacy for the Board.

I would like to see this community coalesce into just that – a community. I would like to see – if a Home Owner Association we must have – an HOA with an emphasis on HOME and on ASSOCIATION, and a Board which is elected to serve and not to rule. I would like this to be a home owner association and not a major employer, or a financial corporation. I would like to see the dues cover the basics that we need in the Valley and only then discuss the possibilities that may arise afterwards. If amenities are touted as part of the valley I'd like to see at least some of those amenities – used potentially by EVERYBODY, such as the pool – be included in the dues, and I would like to see changes in the way that the golf course is part of this community's burden of finance. But what I would primarily like to see is a community that can support its needs, first, and ONLY THEN discuss the niceties that might be possible in the aftermath. I am standing for the Board to represent all those voices who have been crying out that the option "if you don't like it just move" is not really an option – and that their association needs to adapt to them, its members, rather than putting forth plans which demand compliance from those home owners here in the Valley who may not be able to accede to the new demands. In the spirit and parlance of today's larger-scene politics, I'm for the 99%, not the 1%. I'm standing for the Board of an HOA presiding over a community which exists, and can exist, rather than for non-transparent plans which are presented to the membership at large as a fiat. I volunteer, as tribute – to listen and to act and to serve on behalf of those who trust me to be their voice.



Carol Houlton

Biography:

- Live in Gate 3, six years, with husband, George.
 - Board of Directors for nearly three years, two as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee.
 - Other committees: Emergency Preparedness, Long-Range Planning, Document Review, and Communications.
 - Amateur Radio Operator, member of SV Amateur Radio Club/ACS Team.
 - CERT trained and recently certified to teach CERT classes.
- Have assisted with various SV events including Breakfast with Santa, Fishing Derby, Holiday Fair, Spirit Day, First Responders Dinner and others.
 - BS in Business Administration, minor in Psychology.
 - Career: Owned my own business – 6 years, 19 years with Kinko's/Fedex – National Training Manager, HR Manager.

Vison Statement:

During the past three years on the Board, I have also been a member of a number of committees and project teams. This is where most of the work is done. It is an effective way to learn about what is going on in our community and to contribute in a meaningful way. To be an effective Board member it is important to understand the focus of these groups and their challenges.

Many of the projects I have worked on revolve around safety and stability such as the forest management study; ongoing culvert repairs and maintenance; the Reserve Study; Bylaws and policies review, sorting and cataloguing off all Sudden Valley documents, etc. These are not exciting or glamorous projects, but they are necessary to sustain our community.

Of particular interest to me is the Emergency Preparedness Committee. We should do much more to prepare for emergencies; not just disasters such as major earthquakes or wildfires, though how we plan can help us deal with such events. More likely are windstorms, flooding, power outages, downed trees, and heavy snowstorms. Regardless of the emergency, we need good communications and a network of people helping people, from the Sudden Valley to the Federal level, if needed. The committee recently expanded to three different groups working on various aspects of preparedness. We work closely with our Amateur Radio Club which has created an emergency communications plan. Our goal is to train, educate and communicate. Their ongoing work will help us all prepare our homes and families first, and then help our neighbors and other residents in an effective way.

Also critical to our safety is the condition of our facilities. My hope is to end the debates we have been having for decades about what to fix and what not to fix, to identify what we want the future of Sudden Valley to look like and how it will operate, and take steps to fix it now. We need healthy buildings in which to work and play, robust annual maintenance programs, and reasonable dues that keep our facilities safe and sturdy for decades to come. Our legacy should not be to pass down the same dilapidated buildings, all the costly maintenance problems, and the hours of debates to our children and grandchildren. Let's create a new future for ourselves and for them.

Sudden Valley is a rare gem. I never take the beauty for granted. In my daily walk around Lake Louise I marvel at how lucky I am to live here. I am committed to helping keep it safe and sustainable.



Larry Brown

Biography:

Lived here 5 years, most of that time helping Sudden Valley improve its functions and standing in the County. With various teams of volunteers, and staff, updated and improved the Bylaws, located and logged Association records thought lost, modernized accounting, began rigorous, scheduled maintenance, etc. We have gotten County, Bellingham and School District recognition of the need to coordinate with SVCA as the 4th largest community in the County. Born in Dallas; educated in Texas, Chicago and San Francisco; law career in Washington, DC about 30 years; retired early to this slice of Paradise.

Vision Statement:

As noted in my series of Views articles, Sudden Valley is a complex creature: not a city by law, but a city nonetheless, with responsibilities that burst simple categories of "homeowners association" or suburban neighborhood. Sudden Valley has to do things a city must do, and do them with far more transparency and public involvement than any city. This is made even harder by relying so heavily on volunteers, with their own schedules and personal duties. Worse, those volunteers change frequently, and there is little

way to preserve their knowledge and experience. As a result, Sudden Valley has been forced to constantly start over, re-do, and learn again. That must end, now.

For the first time in years, there is a core of volunteers and staff with enough experience, knowledge and mutual respect to finish creating a renewed, re-energized, thriving community--one that works for every one of all the various folks who live here. Of course there are frictions--we're all just humans trying to do the best we can with what we have. Those frictions, though, are not a reason to throw out all that's been gained and - once again - start all over from scratch, making the same old mistakes and wasting even more precious time and money. Sudden Valley needs to hold a steady course, calmly, despite uncertainty and even fear.

There is a process in place for planning, and for reaching real consensus, instead of just hastily reacting to the loudest shouts. We need to use that process, work together, and continue moving forward. We've succeeded far beyond expectations over the last 4 years, and we can successfully complete that work. I believe I can help, and hope to do so.



Eric Trower

Biography:

After graduation, I escaped the harsh winters of Northern Michigan by joining the US Marines. While serving, I became a Marksmanship Instructor before returning to my primary duty in Cryptographic Systems Management. After returning from the Gulf War, I moved to this area and enrolled at UW before starting a Business Networking Services company.

My wife, Carol, and I are in our 3rd year in SV. Over that time (with some effect), my job as a Community Member has been to be a part of our “checks and balances,” to speak up in a responsible way and challenge our Governance.

Vision Statement:

Here is a sample of what I have heard in Sudden Valley lately:

“Dissolve the HOA so we can be absorbed by Bellingham!”

“Close the gates and keep the outsider’s out again!”

“They should pay more than us to park at the beach!”

“The Golf Course is financially killing us!”

“I moved here because of the Golf Course!”

These sentiments are only a few of those I’ve heard lately. I believe that most of the negative ones, however, are born in the vacuum of a simple lack of facts – a lack of transparency in our Corporate Accountability to our Members. If elected to our Board of Directors, my goal is to reveal what’s “behind the curtain” in our governance so that WE don’t have to play “20 questions” and a lawsuit anymore to get a clue. Yes, WE. This year, if you recall, even a Board Member was at length denied by Management

and our Executive Committee access to information that he was – by Law – entitled to. I will fight for transparency.

My commitment to bringing factual information to you is well documented. I created a Facebook Group “Sudden Valley – And Now The Rest Of The Story” with the simple goal of uncovering and understanding our Governing Documents (that we may not realize even exist) and moving discussions forward from there. Evidence. Discourse. Documentation. Process. Civility. As a candidate and (possible) Board Member, I will continue expressing those important traits.

Some of you know me from my participation in the many Committees I enjoy sometimes daily, and especially the “fake Committee” I created last year: The “Airport Committee” is where we get together at El Agave after many “actual” Committee meetings and become neighbors again over a glass of whatever. That “fake Committee” ended up brainstorming how to push Management to get our Parks and Adult Pool opened though this year, for example. It’s amazing what we accomplished together when the “official hats” came off.

Think about that. It really is amazing what we can do together if we treat each other as neighbors, as well as partners. In reality, we all have the same basic need to be valued and respected by each other. We need our basics like roads and culverts; things that make our homes viable. Beyond those, we start to place value in things that other neighbors might not, like: the Golf Course; the Library; the YMCA; the Adult Pool; the Dog Park; the Marina; Serenity; Security; and our Community. Just because my neighbor, my friend, places value in these differently than I do, will not break my friendship.

Importantly though, among many other incredibly important issues, our present trend of Dues Allocation just approved by our Board that feeds valuable funds into Operations at a greater rate than last year causes a real cliff-hanger for our Roads funds in a couple of years. The seeming lack of understanding by our current Officers of this basic fact is what pushes me to ask for your vote.



Cheryl Taylor

Biography:

I have spent the last 14 months working with various SVCA committees and have found that in the past few years, SVCA has been severely challenged to:

1. recover from poor management practices and policies,
2. identify expectations and priorities,
3. clarify accounting and balance the budget, and
4. improve community relations.

To promote the success of this effort, I offer 36 years’ experience with project management, systems analysis, process/cost-savings analysis, team-building, collaboration, and technical communication. I have led quality improvement teams and implemented over \$1M in cost-saving process improvements. I have also been successfully self-employed for 23 years.

Vision Statement:

What are my goals for SVCA?

“We can do anything if we do it together”—William S. Knudsen, 1938

If elected to serve on the SVCA Board of Directors, I promise to:

- ★ Encourage SVCA to work within a responsible, balanced budget and employ Best Practices in all its policies and practices so that SVCA activity is above reproach and criticism.
- ★ Advocate that the Recreation Corridor Revitalization Plan be worked in cooperation with the Long-range Planning Committee (LRPC) so that congruency between board members can be created from year to year without major disruption.
- ★ Advocate for the review of SVCA policies and other pertinent business documentation to ensure they are organized, accurate, and accessible.
- ★ Coordinate the establishment of a Board of Director’s pre-orientation training presentation in order to create some continuity between incoming and outgoing Board members and minimize the disruption between elections. This presentation would cover things such as (but not limited to), what it means to serve on a Board, what current projects are underway that will need to be monitored and supported, any emerging issues, and Code of Conduct expectations.
- ★ Promote Board and committee-driven process and cost savings analyses to assist in the review and update of the organizational structure of SVCA.
- ★ Recommend that Community Association meetings occur more frequently than once per year where conversation and dialog prevail over Robert’s Rules of Order.
- ★ Advocate that SVCA governing documents be updated and simplified to support current laws as applicable and reduce the expense of enforcement.
- ★ More specifically and directly, I would advocate and encourage the following:
 - Tighter controls on SVCA spending and a prioritization of activities that meets the needs of all the gates
 - Better communication between the Board of Directors, the General Manager, staff, and the membership
 - Elimination of the negative image this community and its leaders have propagated
 - Increased pride in ownership in Sudden Valley and improved property values
 - Restructured lease agreements so that all amenities pay fair market value for their space so that we don’t have to subsidize ANYONE with our dues monies.