

# Aliso Viejo News

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## Decision nears on association contract

Security cameras,  
dog park, classes  
also discussed at  
AVCA board  
meeting

By **LOIS EVEZICH**  
ALISO VIEJO NEWS

**A**taa Elnaccash, board director for the Aliso Viejo Community Association, said Monday that a decision on the master homeowners' association should be made in the next few weeks.

The AVCA board put the contract out to bid in 2004, and is considering three companies. They haven't revealed company names.

"We've had meetings with each," Elnaccash said during board comments at the monthly board meeting. "It's premature to discuss this now."

The board also talked about security cameras, permanent park restrooms and recreation classes. They reaffirmed their commitment to the dog park and approved more frequent servicing of Acorn Park's restrooms.

### CITY PERMITS NEEDED

Board President Carolyn Adamich said the installation of an alarm system and security cameras at AVCA parks needs city permits. A trial camera at Woodfield Park, site of Little League fields, would be the site for a no-cost trial period.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF SOLOMON RASTAGAR

**AMID THE WRECKAGE:** Solomon Rastagar of Aliso Viejo takes a break from working with tsunami victims in Thailand. The recent UC Irvine graduate was traveling in the country when the tsunami hit and has stayed to help the displaced, contacting home through e-mails.

## A change in plans

Aliso Viejo man stays in Thailand to aid tsunami victims

By **LOIS EVEZICH**  
ALISO VIEJO NEWS

**S**olomon Rastagar, 31, planned to travel from Thailand to the Philippines last week, but after the tsunami hit South Asia he decided to stay in Thailand. He is at the beach town of Krabi.

When the tsunami hit, Rastagar was on a steep road the water didn't reach.

"Initially I was busy at Krabi hospital and trying to help with the relief effort as much as possible," the Aliso

**"I'm really amazed how many teams from so many countries provided all kinds of help on the scene here, ranging from Singaporean air traffic controllers to German search-and-rescue teams, to Japanese, European and American volunteer doctors."**

SOLOMON RASTAGAR

Viejo man wrote in an e-mail Wednesday.

"After the flow of injured tapered down and the hospital didn't need volunteers anymore, I ventured out to most of the affected beaches in Thailand to see what could be

done with the relief effort."

Trained as an emergency medical technician, Rastagar worked in the hospital helping with victims and making arrangements to fly some to a

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## Ventana Ridge OK'd with conditions

Lack of street  
parking worries  
City Council

By **LOIS EVEZICH**  
ALISO VIEJO NEWS

**V**entana Ridge, a 12-unit single-family development at the corner of Eastwing and Skylark, will feature eastern seaboard-style homes in a gated community if the City Council approves specific site plans. The council gave the go-ahead to BMR Development but has conditions to its approval.

Among the council's concerns was a lack of street parking.

"What if people have more than one car?" asked Councilman Greg Ficke.

Bob Bunyan, a consultant for BMR, said the group was clearly aware of that issue.

Council members also had concerns about blocking neighbors' views, but will study specific plans when they are submitted to the city.

The 1.9-acre site would include nine homes built on the bluff, with three inside the development. The homes may feature high porches, columns and traditional picket fences, said Ben Anderson, president of BMR homes.

### STREETS AND TRAILS

RJM Design Group will prepare a master streets and trails amenities plan. The

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# Businesses step up for tsunami victims

Maker of drink adapter, veterinarian among those finding ways to donate

By **LOIS EVEZICH**  
ALISO VIEJO NEWS

**B**usinesses in Aliso Viejo joined schools, churches and private citizens after Christmas to bring aid to tsunami victims in Southeast Asia. The efforts they're making don't come as a result of requests from government agencies, but from the hearts of business owners who want to do their part.

## SAVING BABIES

Something clicked in Susan Espenscheid's mind as she watched the tsunami and resulting loss of lives. The numbers of lost children broke her heart. But what moved her to act was the plight of those babies who survived.

"I was horrified," she said. "I had to do something."

Espenscheid thought about "Drink, Mommy!," a product she developed recently and was busy marketing to discount stores. She calls it a "drink on the go," a convenience for parents and babies who travel.

"Drink, Mommy!" is a high-quality plastic see-through kit that holds adapters with nipples for babies and toddlers. The adapter makes baby bottles out of sterile bottles of water, juice, Gatorade or other hydrating products. These adapters could save lives of children who don't yet drink out of a cup or bottle, and can also be an aid to hydrate the elderly.

The seven-piece set includes a "super-nipple" for older children.

Espenscheid designed the adapters, which are made in Taiwan out of high-grade plastic.

"I had my first child in 1990," she said. "We always drank bottled water. When traveling, it's hard for babies and toddlers to drink out of a bottle, and I wanted to make it easier. We made a prototype and my husband contacted manufacturers in Taiwan."

"Drink, Mommy" is self-financed.

"When we decided to help victims of the tsunami we approached the American Red Cross and FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) but they were so busy," she said. "There were too many people contacting them. So we went to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Aliso Viejo, and they were interested."

Only 10 days after the tsunami hit, a 53-foot truck came from Salt Lake City to the Espenscheid home and picked up 4,000 kits. The shipment was expected to be there by the following Saturday.

The shipping cost is about \$20,000. According to an LDS church news story, Islamic Relief Worldwide paid shipping costs.



MIKE SCHWARTZ/FOR THE NEWS

**FUND DRIVE:** Dr. Matthew Wheaton is donating 50 percent of the dog bathing fees at Alicia Pet Clinic to tsunami relief efforts. With him is Punch, one of his three dogs.

This isn't the first time the Espenscheids have come to the aid of victims of natural disasters. In September they shipped 400 kits to Florida to help after the hurricanes hit. According to Mark Espenscheid, county officials there brought the kits to the attention of national service agency and emergency officials who were on-site for the hurricane clean-up.

"Drink, Mommy" kits should be in every home in case of emergency, say the Espenscheids,



SAM GANGWER/THE NEWS



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUSAN ESPENSCHIED

**DONATIONS ON THEIR WAY:** Mark Schaff, member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, truck driver Jim Schneider and church elder Cary Bird prepares boxes of "Drink, Mommy!" for distribution to victims of the southeast Asia tsunami. Above is a "Drink, Mommy!" kit.

and they are talking to major retailers about selling the kits to the public. The suggested retail price is under \$10.

"The retail value of our donation is \$40,000," said Espenscheid. "That's a very significant expense for a small start-up company like ours. However, that's what we have to offer."

"With these kits we can save lives."

## VET SHARES PROFITS

Veterinarian Matt Wheaton will donate half the proceeds from dog grooming through January and February to Oxfam, an international relief organization.

His animal hospital, Alicia Pet Clinic, wants to make a difference in the recovery effort in tsunami-affected areas through the compassion of his clients, he said.

"Oxfam seems to be doing work directly with people," he said. "They try to encourage poor people to change their thought processes (to help themselves)."

Wheaton isn't a newcomer to relief efforts. In September 2001 after the World Trade Center attack he held an event for animal victims and donated the proceeds to the New York animal shelter. Many animals were left homeless, wandering the streets or locked in residences and their owners would never come home.

Tsunami victims are in danger of disease and malnutrition, he said. Though international governments have pledged help, Wheaton said financial donations from private businesses can make a difference in the recovery effort.

Wheaton's practice is for dogs and cats. He bought the practice from a retiring veterinarian who'd been in business at that location for 30 years. He's also a second generation veterinarian.

"It's true that dogs have a sixth sense for natural disasters," he said. "They can be traumatized by thunderstorms and some need sedatives. Cats also have stress-related diseases."

"Sometimes animals are smarter than people."

Wheaton suggests dog and cat owners have kits ready for emergencies. Water, dog or cat food, extra medications, a copy of pertinent medical information, collapsible water and food bowls, leashes and collars are important items for preparedness.

"Dogs should have an ID," he said. "Microchips can be inserted under an animal's skin and they stay put. They're no larger than a grain of rice."

"We welcome anyone to have their dog groomed, and are bringing this effort to the attention of our own client base," Wheaton said. "We hope to raise a couple of thousand dollars."

- For information about Alicia Pet Clinic's effort to aid tsunami victims, call (949) 768-1313 or go to [www.mypetsdr.com](http://www.mypetsdr.com).
- For information about "Drink, Mommy," go to [www.drinkmommy.com](http://www.drinkmommy.com), or e-mail [mark@drinkmommy.com](mailto:mark@drinkmommy.com).

## Civic Calendar

► **Aliso Viejo City Council:** Meetings are scheduled for the first and third Wednesdays of the month. The next meeting is at 7 p.m. **Jan. 19** at City Hall, 12 Journey. For information, call (949) 425-2500.

► **Aliso Viejo Community Association:** Regular meetings of the board of directors are the second Monday of each month. The next regular AVCA meeting is at 7 p.m. **Feb. 14** at 81 Columbia. For information, call (949) 362-5890.

► **AVCA's Master Architectural Committee meets** the fourth Thursday of each month. The next meeting is at 7 p.m. **Jan. 27.**

► **AVCA's Events Committee meets** the second Wednesday of each month. The next meeting at 81 Columbia is at 5:30 p.m. **Feb. 9.**

► **AVCA's Parks and Recreation Committee will meet** at 7 p.m. **Feb. 7** at 81 Columbia.

► **AVCA's Youth Commission will meet** at 5:30 p.m. **Jan. 20**, 81 Columbia.

## AROUND TOWN

### HONORED

Choate Rosemary Hall in Connecticut has sent word that **Jay Li**, son of **David Weiqiang Li** and **Shujuan Chen** of Aliso Viejo, has earned a spot on the school's Dean's List. The secondary school has boarding and commuter students from 37 states and 32 countries.

### NEW CAFÉ

There's a new café opening on March 1 at the Aliso Viejo Library. "The Neighborhood Cup" will be open for library users during regular library hours.

The community room at the library is available for meetings and programs and a kitchen for the use of nonprofit groups.

The library is open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; closed Sundays.