

THE VALLEY VILLAGER

VALLEY VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



VOL. 26 NUMBER 4

October 2016

P.O. BOX 4916, VALLEY VILLAGE, CA 91617

Manny's Beat

Greetings from your Area Captain, Stephen M. Carmona! I hope you all had a fun and relaxing summer. As we transition into the fall season, I want to give you an update on what's been going on in the communities covered by North Hollywood police station.

Here is where we are with our crime trends. The City has remained steady with an overall 6% increase in Part 1 crime. As of August 20, I want you to know that North Hollywood was one of only two LAPD stations to show a decrease in YTD violent crime. In fact, North Hollywood was number one in the City for violent crime reduction. Much of this violent crime reduction was attributed to a recently implemented violent crime task force detail that we started a few weeks ago. However, it is important to note that crime trends change and we are still facing about a 4% increase in property-related crime.

As we all know, Manny Arreygue is your Senior Lead Officer (SLO) in charge of Valley Village. We have eight SLO officers. Senior Lead Officers provide the links that help unite the LAPD with the community. They are responsible for monitoring crime trends, working with Community-Police Advisory Boards and acting as liaisons with detectives to stay informed of crime trends and special problems within their area.

With that said, I want to announce a few changes in our Senior Lead Officer (SLO) unit. After over three years of leading our SLO unit, Sergeant Chris Rowland is moving into a new position as the Area Risk Management Coordinator. Chris has been tireless, responsive and worked very hard at a very demanding position. Stepping into this position will be Sergeant Sergio Leyva.

As you know, the law enforcement community was shaken by the horrible events in Dallas and Baton Rouge during the summer months. After each of these events, we at North Hollywood Division witnessed an outpouring of support in the form of pizzas, cookies, cards and letters. The officers enjoyed the edibles enormously, and we have posted and displayed the cards and letters prominently in the station hallway. The small gestures, kind words of support in the field, and genuine sense of caring mean a lot to us.

On behalf of all the men and women working North Hollywood Community Police Station, thank you for your thoughtful and kind expressions of sympathy and support.



In Memoriam Stuart Simen

The Valley Village community was saddened to hear that Stuart Simen had passed away on July 11 this year.

Stuart was very civic-minded, giving of his time and energies to the community. He was an early member of the Valley Village Homeowners Association and the Neighborhood Council Valley Village. He participated in the creation of the VVHA by-laws, served as parliamentarian for both groups and was an avid and dedicated proofreader of this paper.

Stuart, who was sometimes seen as feisty, is also remembered as a down-to-earth, caring man who always knew where he stood, had an unwavering work ethic, and lived a simple life. His days revolved around his profession as a court reporter which he loved and practiced for over 40 years.

Throughout his career, Stu shared his knowledge and experience, lent a hand where needed and mentored new reporters. He served a total of 36 years on the board of the Reporters Association of Southern California and became president in 1972.

Stuart is survived by his brother Bruce and sister Roberta, their loving families, and many dear friends. We will miss you, Stuart.

WANTED! NOMINATIONS FOR THE VVHA BOARD

The Election Committee is seeking nominations for the 2017-2018 Board of Directors. There will be openings for the four officers and six at-large members. There are certain skills and interests that would help our Association become more responsive to its membership. For instance, knowledge of website design and familiarity with the workings of City Hall would be good; someone who cares about Valley Village's park and tree-lined streets would be welcomed, too.

Bottom line, VVHA needs people at the helm who have time to volunteer and get involved in the issues. Not only will you be serving your local community, you will learn so much about it and how things happen.

It's no secret that a successful, vibrant neighborhood happens when people get involved, so we hope you will consider a run for one of the slots.

If you are interested or know anyone who might be interested in running, please contact Peter Sanchez at 818-506-5158 or email at mail@valleyvillageha.com. Our election will take place during the Membership Meeting on January 18, 2017.

Board Meeting Notes – August 15

Following a misunderstanding about VVHA sponsorship at a local event in June, the Board agreed to tighten up its procedures in this area, to include explicit Board approval based on rigorous fact-checking about the event. We also agreed to make sure that promotion of outside events in Discover Valley Village is seen as for information only. ~ We discussed the sorry state of parts of Valley Village Park, and agreed to take action to mitigate the worst of the problems. ~ Following up on a request by VVHA to Councilmember Krekorian's office, the Department of Building & Safety will move to close massage parlors in Valley Village, which are prohibited in the Specific Plan. ~ The Board agreed to co-sponsor a disaster awareness class with NCVV on October 9. ~ Studying the feasibility of installing a Valley Village welcome sign at the corner of Laurel Canyon and Burbank boulevards is ongoing.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Publisher: Peter Sanchez
Editor: Gil Shorr
Editor Emerita: Breice Reiner

Contributors:
Dorothy Apple Ken Hearn
Karen Kaysing Zach Rynew
Ellen Wilhelm Marc Woersching

VVHA Blood Drive

Wednesday, November 9
Auditorium
Colfax Charter School
11724 Addison Street
Faith 5000 Colfax Avenue
8:00 am - 2:00pm

All blood donations go to Children's Hospital LA. Sign up at:
<https://www.chladonateblood.org/index.cfm?group=op&expand=1402&zc=91607> and sign up.

Questions? Contact Dorothy Apple at appledorothy@gmail.com.

A Letter from the President

Dear Neighbors,

I am sure all of you know about the growing problem of homelessness in Los Angeles.

It has hit Valley Village in a big way.

Aside from the freeway off-ramps, Valley Village Park is a hot camping spot for the homeless. We recently had a large encampment removed from the base of the 170 embankment, just the other side of the chain link fence. Since it was CalTrans property, we required the assistance of Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian.

Councilmember Krekorian's office has assisted with removing homeless campers from the City side of the fence.

They will return.

We are not insensitive to their plight, but overnight use of the park is not allowed...and it creates a health hazard.

Citywatch, a popular on-line publication read by almost every local politician, activist and political junky, published an article I wrote about the problem. Follow the link: <http://www.citywatchla.com/index.php/the-la-beat/11824-los-angeles-homeless-field-of-dreams>

It concerns the \$1.2 billion City bond on the November ballot (Proposition HHH). The bond would fund housing and related services to the homeless.

On paper, a good idea; in practice, a waste.

As the article points out, there are an estimated 26,000 homeless just in the City. The bond would amount to \$50,000 per unfortunate soul.

How much housing could \$50,000 provide? I believe you know the answer.

If the City had a plan to triage the segments of the homeless population – say, focus on those who could be helped in the short-run it would be worth considering.

But there is no plan. The \$1.2 billion would go into a big pot and get frittered away on administration, applied to half-baked solutions, or just slowly seep away without anyone being held accountable.

We should not trust that much money to our local government upfront.

Instead, provide a much smaller sum to fund a specific plan that deals with a segment of the homeless, for example, those who have suffered economic setbacks, but are ready to live with minimal supervision in dormitory-style housing. There are other segments which cannot be assisted at any cost.

If limited funding is handled well, then we can approve more.

Whatever the program, it must be designed to discourage or prevent those from other regions from benefiting from and overwhelming our resources.

There are no guarantees of any effective planning with this measure.

VVHA has not taken a position on this, but I recommend a NO vote.

Paul Hatfield, President

Valley Village Project Updates

Developments proposed in Valley Village and nearby during the past six months:

1. **11700 Magnolia Boulevard:** This is a redevelopment of the former auto repair shop at the corner of Magnolia and Colfax Avenue to include 19 residential units and 1,510 square feet of retail space. The modernist, eco-friendly design is considered by some to be incompatible with the more traditional architectural styles of the surrounding area, particularly North Hollywood High School on the north side of Magnolia Boulevard.
2. **4137-47 Colfax Avenue:** A 12-unit small-lot subdivision immediately south of the above project, taking in a former restaurant and small office building at this commercial intersection, with residential units, all permitted by current commercial zoning. The architectural style is also considered to be out of keeping with the surrounding area.
3. **11825 Kling Street:** A four-lot single-family home subdivision with lot sizes larger than zoning requirements, resulting in the project fitting well into the surrounding neighborhood.
4. **11443-47 Riverside Drive:** This is a density bonus project to replace two single-family homes and a duplex with 29 apartments, seven of which are density bonus units in exchange for several units set aside for low-income renters. The architectural style is modernist with colors that will likely not fit into the surrounding neighborhood.
5. **5133 Whitsett Avenue:** A six-lot small-lot subdivision on the west side of the street, immediately south of the retail enclave on Magnolia Boulevard. Among the concerns are that the three-story, 33-foot-tall homes will look down on and diminish the privacy of the single-family homes to the west.
6. **NoHo West:** This is a major redevelopment of the Laurel Plaza Shopping Center currently containing a Macy's department store, now closed; its 189,000 square feet is scheduled to be converted to office space. The project also comprises 642 apartment units on its east side and an open-air, town center-style shopping center on the west side with 383,000 square feet of retail space. The project is controversial with supporters and opponents alike, in particular the Laurel Grove Neighborhood Association that would like the height of the apartment buildings to be reduced from six to four stories and more traffic mitigations.

Light at Laurelgrove

In December last year, Eugene Drabinski was killed while crossing Riverside Drive at Rhodes Avenue, one block from Laurelgrove. Immediately following the accident, the Association sent a letter to Councilmember Paul Krekorian asking his office to prioritize this signal's placement at Laurelgrove, approved seven years ago but stalled for lack of funds. This was the culmination of years of pressure from the community and VVHA, and we are happy to report that new traffic signals have now been installed and will soon come online at this intersection, in front of Temple Beth Hillel, making crossing that busy street safer for all.

Riverside Drive has experienced a high number of collisions in recent years and is listed on the city's high injury network where 65% of deaths and serious injuries happen on 6% of our streets. Many cars drive above the 40 mph speed limit and crosswalks along this stretch have been unsafe. Work still needs to be done to restripe the intersection for crosswalks and clip overhanging branches, but the poles, lights and signage are ready for unveiling.

While traffic signals do reduce injuries, streets with higher speed limits, like Riverside Drive, are more likely to produce fatalities. With the number of children that attend school at the synagogue daily, the new traffic signal is the start of making this well-used street safe.

Prop M Explained

The MTA is behind Proposition M to fund a variety of rail transit, bus transit and highway projects in Los Angeles County. The measure proposes a new ½-cent sales tax that would begin in 2017 and increase to a one-cent tax in 2039 when Proposition R, a ½-cent sales tax approved in 2008, expires. It would generate an additional \$860 million a year in 2017 dollars.

Rail and bus transit projects planned for the San Fernando Valley are (1) a light rail line along Van Nuys Boulevard from the Orange Line station to San Fernando, (2) a bus transit connection between the North Hollywood Red Line station and the Gold Line in Pasadena, (3) grade separations for the existing Orange Line busway, and eventually (4) conversion of the Orange Line busway to a light rail line.

Rail and bus transit projects planned adjacent to the Valley are (1) an extension of the Purple Line Subway from Century City to Westwood, (2) a light rail line tunneled under the Santa Monica Mountains from the Orange Line station in Van Nuys to the future Purple Line station in Westwood, (3) either a light rail line or an express bus from the Westwood Purple Line station to LAX, and (4) a northward extension of the Crenshaw Line from the Expo Line station to the Red line station at Hollywood and Highland.

Highway projects affecting Valley commuters: (1) widening I-5 through Santa Clarita, and (2) adding two express bus lines to I-405 through the Sepulveda Pass.

Other projects planned for the Valley: (1) construction of a bike path along the Los Angeles River, (2) construction of a bike path along the Pacoima Wash in the City of San Fernando, and (3) a rapid transit bus line to serve the North Valley.

The merits and demerits of these transit improvements are of course open to discussion and change, but the overall improvements proposed by Prop M could well improve our ease of access to these areas of Los Angeles.

Soundwall

The latest word on the soundwall to be constructed on the 170 freeway between Riverside Drive and Oxnard Boulevard is that on CALTRANS approved permits for Soundwall Package #11 on June 30, and a contractor has now been chosen. There may be slight adjustments to the overall plans, but we have been assured that construction is still scheduled to begin in early 2017. Councilmember Krekorian is continuing to push this project forward.

Source: Councilmember Paul Krekorian

Burbank Airport Replacement Terminal

In early August, the Burbank City Council voted 4-1 to approve the Airport Authority's Environmental Impact Report on the project to build a new 14-gate replacement terminal at Hollywood Burbank Airport on 49 acres north of the existing terminal which was built in the 1930s; other placements are under consideration. Also approved was the development agreement between the City and the Airport Authority that lays out the ground rules for the project. The project will now have to be approved by Burbank voters in November.

Councilmember Paul Krekorian has written a letter to the Burbank Airport Authority to alert them to issues important to L.A. residents.

Did You Know?

You can recycle your electronic throwaways in the Gelson's parking lot on the 4th Saturday of the month (the next collection will be October 23). So give the landfill the slip and bring all your cast-off televisions, computer parts, radios, cell phones, electronic toys to Gelson's and fill up the recycle truck instead.

Proposed Project on Riverside Drive

Your Association wrote the following letter in response to a resident's query:

September 15, 2016

The Honorable Councilman Paul Krekorian
Los Angeles City Council
City Hall
200 N. Spring St., Room 435
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Building Permit for 11748 Riverside Drive in Valley Village

Dear Mr. Krekorian:

It has come to our attention that a serious violation of a condition use permit could be taking place at the property on 11748 Riverside Drive. VVHA is requesting that your staff contact Building and Safety and ask them to investigate concerns that neighbors have regarding the validity of the permit. VVHA would appreciate a response and will either assist in hopefully put an end to false rumors or support disgruntled neighbors.

A Valley Village resident residing on Morella Ave sent an email raising a serious problem with the building permit. In his correspondence the resident stated that the adjacent neighbors have been informed by the contractor that a Synagogue is being built at this address rather than a remodel of a building that previously housed an insurance company. The owner of this property is said to have purchased neighboring properties at 11732 Riverside, 11754 Riverside and 11751 Blix Street with the intention of building a faith-related school. None of this is reflected in the permit for 11748 Riverside so the neighborhood has become concerned with the impact on traffic since it is near a preschool that already congests the street with school drop-off and pick-up. Moreover, if the rumors are justified and this project is being built under the radar, neighbors are being denied their fair opportunity to express their concerns regarding the impact on their lives.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul S. Hatfield
President

The Urban Forest

Trees are a critical part of our neighborhood. Our streets, sidewalks, parks and backyards are lined with trees that create a peaceful, attractive environment. They improve our quality of life by introducing birds and wildlife into urban settings.

Valley Village is fortunate to have many areas with healthy trees, and it is important to maintain our urban forest in the face of drought conditions and to plant drought-tolerant trees whenever possible. To help us navigate the new norm, we are planning to invite a working arborist to speak at our Membership Meeting in January.

And if you want to see more trees in your neighborhood, you can contact our Councilmember at paul.krekorian.org or 213-473-7022.

The Mystery of "Jitters Marquenie"



My wife and I have been residents of Valley Village since 2000, and enjoy walking around our neighborhood to check out what new landscaping is being installed as well as the progress of newly constructed or remodeled homes.

So it was on a day while walking our pups near our house that I happened to notice what appeared at first glance to be a plain slab of concrete propped up near a fence next to a home under construction. Since work was taking place at the site, I figured it was just debris waiting to be hauled away.

It wasn't until a few days later while on another stroll with "the girls" that I saw what looked like writing on the slab. As I got closer, I could see that inscribed on its face were the words "Our Little Pal Jitters Marquenie - Born May 1, 1936 -

Died June 14, 1939." Also embedded in the concrete was a dog tag license that was good "To July 1939."

As a lover of all creatures furry and four-footed, and a local (and neighborhood) history buff, I was intrigued about Jitters Marquenie – who he/she was, how she/he died (being only three years old at the time), and whether the slab was in fact a tombstone. The slab had obviously been there since the late 1930s, probably covered up underneath shrubs and other foliage that existed at the site before being removed to construct the new residence.

I later met the owner of the home next door, who reassured me that the "tombstone" was on her property, and it wasn't going anywhere (i.e., removed as construction debris). Unfortunately, since she was relatively new to the neighborhood, she didn't have any information about Jitters Marquenie. My attempts to find out more through the Los Angeles City Animal Services was also a dead end, as I was informed licensing records going back that far no longer exist.

So I guess the full story about Jitters Marquenie will remain a mystery for now. If anyone can shed some light on the plaque, please feel free to email me (Ken Hearn) at khj93am@gmail.com. But based on that "tombstone," I know she or he was a cherished member of a family for those three short years, and I'm glad the marker will remain at the site as a tribute to one family's love of its "Little Pal."

Neighbors Working Together to Solve Problems

Neighbors residing across from Valley Village Park, led by Valley Village resident Jon Sanserino, attended the Neighborhood Council Valley Village Board meeting on September 28 to address the issue of weekend noise at the park. The noise is coming from the compressors of as many as five rented bounce houses droning throughout the day on weekends and severely disturbing these residents' relaxation. Add loud music to the mix and the situation becomes unbearable.

When Mr. Sanserino contacted the NCVV City Services Committee, he learned that the use of bounce houses is illegal at Valley Village Park because the park is bordered by single-family residences.

Following recommendations made at the meeting, it was agreed that signs will be placed at the park stating that bounce houses are illegal (they are, however, legal on the east side of the 170 in North Hollywood Park). Bounce house rental agencies will also be notified. Second, the City will chain off the driveway entrance to the park, prohibiting vendors from driving into the park. Third, if there are still bounce houses located on the park after these steps are taken, Councilmember Krekorian's office will contact law enforcement and offenders will be fined.

Quintessentially

Valley Village

There are distinctly different feels to different areas of Valley Village. West of Laurel Canyon, the lots (and the houses) tend to be much larger than those east of the boulevard. Many of the properties around Colfax Charter Elementary School were built in the late 1930's and have survived with original tile and hardwood floors. Put it all together and we are blessed with a largely cohesive, well-constructed community that is about as "Norman Rockwell" as it could be in the environs of the megalopolis that is Los Angeles!



The house pictured here is just such an example: single-story, well situated on the lot with a front yard and a back yard and beautifully maintained. It honors the integrity of the other houses on the street while retaining its own charm and character.

If you know of a house you think deserves to be featured here as "Quintessentially Valley Village," please submit information about it to mail@ValleyVillageHA.com marking "Quint VV" on the subject line.

Light Up

Valley Village - Dec. 3

Mark your calendar and come on out for the 6th Annual "Light Up Valley Village & Merchant Open House," another Village event organized by our Association and Neighborhood Council Valley Village to bring residents and merchants together for a few hours of fun and getting acquainted, 4pm - 7pm. Remember the wonderful shopping, dining and other merchant opportunities that Valley Village has to offer.

