

THE VALLEY VILLAGER

VALLEY VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



VOL. 28 NUMBER 1 January 2018 P.O. BOX 4916, VALLEY VILLAGE, CA 91617

Say No to More Digital Billboards

In May 2017, the City's Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee released a revised version of the Citywide Sign Ordinance (CF 11-1705) that weakens protections against bright digital billboards written into the previous version of the Sign Ordinance approved by the City Planning Commission in 2015. At its August meeting, the Association's Board of Directors approved a motion opposing the PLUM Committee's changes, and a letter was sent to the Committee's members and Councilmember Paul Krekorian.

The revisions proposed by PLUM would:

1. Allow the introduction of digital billboards outside sign districts (high-intensity commercial zones).
2. Change the takedown ratio for the removal of regular billboards in exchange for the erection of new digital billboards in sign districts from the 10:1 ratio recommended by the City Planning Commission to a range of 2:1 to 8:1 (i.e., for each billboard going up, only 2 to 8 will have to be removed, based on the payment of a cap-and-trade type fee).
3. Allow digital flashing on-site business identification signs (which would radically alter the character of communities).
4. Allow digital billboards to be located on City-owned property and on any land zoned commercial (which would include most streets and intersections).
5. Grant amnesty for 900+ existing billboards that lack building permits (thus allowing them to escape the ban on billboards enacted in 2002).

In summary, the PLUM proposal would allow digital billboards just about everywhere in Los Angeles, with or without permits. What do you think? Contact Councilmember Paul Krekorian.

Acting SLO

On December 14, a community "meet & greet" was held at Marie et Cie., to get acquainted with our acting LAPD Senior Lead Officer (SLO) John Antonioli.



Officer John is an enthusiastic and concerned law enforcement professional. He has been in the North Hollywood area since 2005, and seems genuinely interested in being of service to our community. He began his short presentation by citing crime statistics for Valley Village, among which were that violent crime was down 5%, burglary (property) was up, and that most motor vehicle break-ins are preventable (don't leave anything of value in your car, and park off the street, in a driveway or garage, if possible). He went on to discuss property burglary deterrents: installing a video doorbell (like "Ring"); posting a "beware of dog" sign; getting to know your neighbors; and having motion sensor lights around your property. He also urged us not to ignore the knock on the door or doorbell, because non-response might prompt a burglar to enter a house believing it to be vacant. And he stressed the importance of reporting ALL incidents, no matter how unlikely an arrest might seem. When a crime is reported, he explained, it alerts the police to illegal activity on a street or in a neighborhood, and the station may increase patrols in the area.

Local Officials

Valley Village City Councilmember – 2nd District: **Paul Krekorian**
Email: councilmember.krekorian@lacity.org Phone: 818-755-7676

Mayor of Los Angeles: **Eric Garcetti**

Email: Through his website eric.garcetti.com Phone: 213-978-0600

State Assemblymember – 46th District: **Adrin Nazarian**

Email: Through his website a46.asmdc.org Phone: 818-376-4246

SLO (continued from Page 1)

Not surprisingly, homelessness is one of the biggest issues facing Los Angeles, and certainly Valley Village has its share of challenges in this regard. Officer John actively engages these transients and asks whether they are in need of a shelter (he offers to take them there), determines if they have outstanding warrants (often they do), or if they are in violation of local laws. He also urges residents to give to charities that help the homeless rather than to the homeless directly (see article on page 7). Officer John sends out frequent updates on his activities in the community, keeping us informed and "in the loop," and responds in a timely manner to emails. If you would like to contact him or be included in his email updates, you may reach him at John Antonioli 36968@lapd.online.

Emergency: Dial 911

Other Crimes: 877-ASK-LAPD

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A Letter from the President

As we enter 2018, there are two major developments which affect us as home and condominium owners. Renters also have to be concerned.

The first is the recently approved tax reform bill. The second is the exclusive trash pickup franchises approved by the Mayor and City Council. Both of these will add to the already rising costs of housing.

For all individual taxpayers who own homes or condos, your mortgage interest deduction will be restricted even more than before. Determining the impact may not be simple for many. Basically, those who have not refinanced or taken out a new mortgage after December 15 will be grandfathered under the old rules. However, beware if you have any home equity debt. If you used proceeds from a mortgage loan or HELOC disbursements to fund anything other than improvements to your property, you will no longer be able to deduct the related interest – there is no grandfathering for such home equity debt. Calculating what that portion of the interest expense is could be complicated if the debt is co-mingled with that used to acquire or improve your property.

The bill also established a \$10,000 cap on your deduction for state and local taxes, which includes property tax. I have talked to several people who incorrectly assumed this cap only applied to property tax. It applies to the aggregate of state income tax and property, both real and personal. So if you paid \$8,000 in property tax, \$12,000 in state income tax and \$1,000 for personal property, you will lose \$11,000 in deductions!

I will be happy to share my thoughts about the bill at our general meeting on January 17th.

Exclusive trash pickup franchises were established in November. There are many reports of fees increasing substantially, not to mention complaints over the quality of service. If you own a condo, the cost will be passed on through your association dues. This will be more evident in smaller complexes where economies of scale are much smaller. Landlords will most likely pass along the higher fees in the form of rent increases to their residents.

The City claims that the environmental benefits justify the arrangement. This is a specious argument. If environmental concerns were the driving force, then why didn't the City approve the very viable alternative of non-exclusive franchises? Non-exclusive franchises would have allowed residents to choose from a pool of trash companies, all using low-emission equipment. I suspect campaign fund enrichment factored into the decision.

A representative from the Sanitation Department will be available at our general meeting to explain the program. I urge condo owners and renters to attend. You will also be able to voice your concerns.

I urge all of you to be involved citizens. Never hesitate to contact your elected representatives – at all levels – with your concerns. When you do, share the communications with VVHA. The Board can leverage them when we reach out on issues affecting our quality of life in Valley Village.

Paul Hatfield, President

And The Halloween House Contest Winners Are ...



Valley Village is home to many creative people, so the Board pounced on the suggestion by Vice-President Jerry Fagin that VVHA sponsor a Halloween Decorating Contest.

We publicized the contest and then waited for entry submissions. Up until October 31 nothing much seemed to be happening, but then the entries arrived in a flood. We were impressed and awed – so awed that we are considering the contest as an annual event, though the judging team may view the homes the night before Halloween next year, so be prepared!

We are very pleased to announce the winners!

Honorable Mention: Most Magical

5022 Laurelgrove Avenue: Peter Moyer had an interactive electronic magic mirror with an animated character that spoke to the trick or treaters. Young children were enchanted!

Honorable Mention: Most Gruesome

12227 Addison Street: The Dauterive Family had a body chained to a table with its guts hanging out and the head peeled back to reveal its muscles. Ugh!

Third Prize and Winner of a Gift Certificate to Marie et Cie.:

4900 Gentry Avenue: Jim Huppenthal and Sean McMahon have perfected the ghostly graveyard. A haggard witch stirred a pot in the window. Colored lights illuminated wispy ghosts. Jim and Sean have been decorating their home for many years, delighting young and old alike.

Second Prize and Winner of a Gift Certificate to Harvest Moon:

5123 Radford Avenue: Ernie Merlan's haunted home is known outside the Valley Village community and draws hundreds of people to his door on Halloween night. This year he planted a corn maze! Each year he challenges himself with different special effects, and autistic students affiliated with Exceptional Minds Studio assist Ernie with his creations.

First Prize and Winner of a Gift Certificate to Red Moon Restaurant:

4852 Gentry Avenue: Rasha & Stephanie Drachkovitch had a Monster Maze that just wowed our judges. Scary eyes directed visitors to the entrance. Inside there were dozens of skeletons, zombies and ghosts to be seen while "DJ Bones" played scary music. This presentation conjured up everything Halloween and was the penultimate experience.

The judges were delighted with the response and appreciate the cooperation they received. Everyone who entered the contest will receive free membership with VVHA for this year.

**VALLEY VILLAGE, YOU ARE CHALLENGED FOR
OCTOBER 31, 2018. WITCHES AND GOBLINS,
SKELETONS AND ZOMBIES, GRUESOME AND
MAGICAL AND ALL THINGS HALLOWEEN.
IF YOU DARE!!!**



Weddington Golf & Tennis Update

After 17 years of defending the Weddington Golf & Tennis facility on Whittett Avenue from condo development, the property is now in the hands of its new owners, Harvard-Westlake School, whose use for it appears to be as a sports facility. But as the school's President and Head of School Rick Commons said during a recent presentation, "We'd like [Weddington] to be a place where public access is certainly a primary objective. We'd like it to be a place where open space is a primary objective. We'd like to share use of that property with greater Studio City."

This compromise solution came out of another controversial land use plan that would have taken land across the road from Harvard-Westlake School on Coldwater Canyon for a sports and parking facility for the school, potentially causing traffic congestion and environmental damage.

For the record, VVHA wrote a letter on August 14, 2017, to protest Harvard-Westlake's original plans. There is much more information on this project in the "Have You Heard" section at the Studio City Residents Association website, <http://studiocityresidents.org/> or at the SLAROS website, www.savelariveropenspace.org.

Source: SCRA Newsletter

100s Light Up Valley Village

On December 2, hundreds came together to celebrate the holidays at **Light Up Valley Village 2017**. Sponsored by Neighborhood Council Valley Village and the office of Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Krekorian to highlight our Valley Village businesses, two decorated open-air trolleys carried participants to four parties – at Marie et Cie, Carter Sexton Art Supply, Valley Village Pet Supply and a street party at Magnolia and Whittett. Celebrants were treated to refreshments and goodies at each stop, and special frozen yogurt from Menchie's.



"Tonight was a great way for families and neighbors to kick off the holiday season," said event Co-Chair Ginny Hatfield, who thanks everyone, from Board members from NCVV and VVHA, spouses, significant others and kids, to neighbors, friends and all who pitched in to make this year's Light Up Valley Village one of the best of NCVV's many events over the years.

Santa (aka Joe Mandoky, thanks to Valley Camera) started the evening off, arriving aboard a Trolley (above) with Krekorian and State Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian. More than 50 volunteers supported the evening's festivities, which included live music, free food, a chat with Santa, and lots of holiday cheer to help mark the beginning of the holidays. This annual event keeps getting bigger and better every year, so mark your calendars now for the first Saturday in December 2018!

Quintessentially Valley Village



This magnificently maintained house hasn't changed much since it was built in 1938. How exciting that the owner has a photo of how the place looked back in the day, so we may see how the property has been thoughtfully updated through the years! Like many

homes in the neighborhood, the original floor plan was three bedrooms and one bath; today, there are three bathrooms, in addition to a few other expansions. The current owner bought the property from the family of the original purchaser, and lavishes this lovely house with lots of TLC.

Truly, a Valley Village gem!



Map Your Neighborhood

Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) is a new citywide program that encourages neighbors to come together and learn from the pros how to respond when disaster – man-made or natural – occurs.

What you need:

- A facilitator for the first meeting
- A home on your block that can seat 15-20 people around a TV
- A DVD player for the 1.5 to 2-hour training
- A flyer for the neighbors on your block
- Scheduling the training with the pros

For more information on MYN, check out www.SoCalPrep.us. Neighborhood Council Valley Village can help with the logistics (flyer & contacts; info@myvalleyvillage.com).

Projects In Development:

- **4712-28 Vantage Avenue.** This is a 16-unit small lot subdivision with 32 regular and 12 guest parking spaces, totaling 48 spaces. The project site is one block west of Laurel Canyon Blvd. and south of Riverside Drive. The zoning for the 28,500 sq. ft. property is RD1.5, resulting in density for the project that is about a half of that permitted by R3, the standard zone for multifamily residential developments. Proposed height is 31'11", requiring an adjustment from the 30-foot maximum as permitted by the Valley Village Specific Plan. The architecture is modernist with a brick exterior on portions of the façade and lighter, subdued colors.
- **5328 Agnes Avenue.** A 4-unit, small lot subdivision with eight parking spaces. The project site, zoned RD1.5, is one block east of Laurel Canyon Boulevard and south of Chandler Boulevard. An existing single-family home will be demolished. The height is proposed to be 32'11", due to other structures along Agnes having a greater height, but it will require an adjustment from the 30-foot maximum permitted by the Specific Plan. The architecture is a mix of traditional with some modernist elements. The colors will be lighter and less garish than on original plans.

Projects Applying For Building Permits:

- **No Ho West.** This is a major redevelopment of the Laurel Plaza Shopping Center home of a Macy's department store, now closed. The project consists of 642 apartment units on its east side and an open-air, 383,000 sq. ft. town center-style shopping precinct on the west side. The 189,000 sq. ft. former Macy's building is to be converted into office space. The project is controversial, with supporters – who include Councilmember Paul Krekorian and the Mid-Town North Hollywood Neighborhood Council – and opponents – in particular the Laurel Grove Neighborhood Association, which would like the six-story height of the apartment buildings reduced to four stories and more traffic mitigations.
- **11700 Magnolia Boulevard.** This is a project to redevelop the former auto repair shop at the southwest corner of Magnolia and Colfax with 19 residential units and 1,510 square feet of retail space. While the applicant's representative stated that their desire is to create a quality design that will improve the neighborhood and be eco-friendly, the modernist design, similar to the look of the Beverly Center, has been judged as being incompatible with the more traditional architectural styles of the surrounding area, particularly North Hollywood High School opposite the site, on Magnolia Boulevard.
- **4137-47 Colfax Avenue.** This is a 12-unit small lot subdivision immediately south of the project at 11700 Magnolia Boulevard. It is a redevelopment of a former restaurant and small office building at this commercial intersection. It will be rebuilt with residential units, which the zoning permits.
- **Galaxy Car Wash site.** This is a mixed use, density bonus project at the southeast corner of Chandler Boulevard and Whitsett Avenue. 70 apartment units are planned, along with 1,750 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 80 parking spaces for the project. Because it is a density bonus project, its height of five stories and 56 feet is allowed to exceed the limit of 45 feet established by the commercial zoning for the project site. In exchange for the additional height and units permitted by the density bonus, nine of the 70 units will be set aside for renters with low and moderate incomes.
- **11680-94 Riverside Drive.** 16 single-family homes with 36 parking spaces in a small lot subdivision on the southeast corner of Riverside Drive and Irvine Avenue. Height of the project: 30 feet. The alley on the south side will be vacated. The architectural style: modernist with a white exterior.
- **5303 Hermitage Avenue.** This is a 26-unit small lot subdivision along both sides of a short section of Weddington Street west of Hermitage. An area with two mature Camphor trees at the northwest corner of Weddington and Hermitage will be preserved as open space. Cape Cod architectural style.
- **11457-57 Riverside Drive.** A density bonus project to replace three single-family homes with a 3-story, 29-unit apartment building on the north side of Riverside Drive west of the Hollywood Freeway. In exchange for the additional units, two very-low-income units will be provided. Height of project: 36 feet. Architectural style: modernist with façade.

Communicate, Participate, Legislate

The Magnificent Eight

It isn't often one encounters a real unicorn, but that's just what happened last month, right here in Valley Village.

There had been murmurings about the Agricultural program at North Hollywood High School for some time – that it occupied a sizable portion of the campus, that it was rare and special and worth preserving – but its placement on the property wasn't apparent or visible from the main streets. Where was this hidden gem? At a meeting on the upcoming construction at the high school, MaryKate Harris, the president of the North Hollywood Community Garden (which is affiliated with the NHHS Agricultural Department), was approached and asked if a tour of the fabled acreage might be arranged. She graciously coordinated an afternoon walk-through for several members of the community, together with the faculty head of the Ag Department, Andrew Lepore. What was revealed was nothing short of marvelous!

The NHHS Ag program is the second oldest in the LAUSD, founded in 1927 (only Canoga Park is older). When it began, the program encompassed 200 acres, but as the valley developed and land became more valuable, much of it was sold off in the 1950's for housing projects. While only eight acres of dedicated land remain, it is still the largest parcel at any LAUSD school.

Upon entering the Ag program gardens, one is transported to another world. The first garden you encounter is *Puhawvit* ("in the farming fields"), a replica of a Native American Tataviam village, currently slated for restoration in 2018. Next to it is the erstwhile working vineyard which grows four varietals of grapes. Across the way, the Breast Cancer Awareness garden comprises many varieties of rose bushes. The nearby orchard occupies only one acre of the property, but boasts 300 citrus and stone fruit trees!

The animal husbandry section of the Ag program is impressive: pigs, ducks, goats, rabbits, donkeys, alpacas, a turkey, a peacock and chickens – all enjoying ample living space and well cared for by the students, who seem to relish their farm chores. Mr. Lepore is on call seven days a week, and is responsible for feeding the barnyard creatures and tending to their births, deaths and general health.

Further into the acreage is an outdoor stage, a picnic area surrounded by the vestiges of a proper Japanese garden, a prodigious potting shed, and more garden acreage. Adjacent to this area is the last barn in LAUSD, dating back to the original 1927 establishment of the school. It is a red barn, much as you imagine it might look, condemned as uninhabitable, but with enough integrity to shelter hay, equipment, soil and fertilizer.

In 1999, one acre of the agricultural area became a community garden, dutifully and lovingly tended by a culturally diverse assemblage of local gardeners who pay 25¢ per sq. ft. per year to work their respective plots (31 all told). The garden designs and styles are as different as the people who work them.
(Learn more at www.LANHCG.com)

The LAUSD had 86 Agricultural programs in 1986; today, only five remain. The NHHS Agricultural Department squeaks by on limited funds from the school district, donations of plants and fertilizer from benevolent companies, a small annual stipend from the Future Farmers of America, and financial contributions from the North Hollywood Community Garden. What the program has done with these modest resources is nothing short of amazing.

The VVHA is contemplating how it might develop a mutually beneficial relationship with the NHHS Ag program. Please watch for further articles and information as we work toward acquainting Valley Village with the miraculous eight acres off Weddington!

Valley Village Homeowners Association Website:
www.ValleyValleyHA.com

Helping The Homeless

There is no single profile to describe the homeless: they are male and female, old and young and in between, all the colors of the rainbow, veterans, parents, children, and more. They are not all alcoholics/addicts or criminals. They are not all on the street by choice. The complexity of their demographic is what makes the solution to the problem so difficult.

While there are people who carry new pairs of socks or "blessing bags" to give those seeking a handout, it's a pretty sure bet that giving street-dwellers a dollar will not appreciably change their situation. Established organizations and collectives, however, are able to multiply your dollar several times over and make a difference in assisting those people who want help. Numerous groups do important work to ease homelessness; the following are just some of the local charities to which you may wish to contribute:

North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry (www.nhifp.org)

4390 Colfax Ave.
Studio City, CA 91604
818-760-3575

Thousands of bags of groceries are given away every month. Assistance for finding shelter and other benefits is also offered. Donate food and/or money at the address above or at Temple Beth Hillel on Riverside Drive.

Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission Help Center (www.hopeofthevalley.org)

6425 Tyrone Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91401
818-804-5507

Donate food/money/clothing.

St. Charles Borromeo Church (www.scbnh.com/center.htm)

10800 Moorpark St.
North Hollywood, CA 91602
818-766-3838

Clothing donated to their "thrift shop" is given without cost to those in need.

LA Family Housing (www.lafh.org)

7843 Lankershim Blvd.
North Hollywood, CA 91605
818/255-2610

Donate clothing, money, or volunteer at their facility.

Made Any Great Decisions Lately?

Great Decisions is America's oldest foreign policy discussion program and its mission is to increase the average citizen's awareness of world affairs and how they impact our country. The program model involves reading a chapter in the *Great Decisions Briefing Book*, which each participant purchases, and coming together once a month to watch an accompanying [video](#) and discuss the topic at hand.

The local group meets the fourth Tuesday of each month from 3:00-4:30pm at Faith Presbyterian Church, 5000 Colfax Avenue and is led by Ginny Hatfield. The subject for the meeting on January 23rd is *The Waning of Pax Americana?* If you think you might be interested in joining the group, please contact Ginny for further information at: 818-970-4577 or immigrationlady@aol.com. All are welcome.

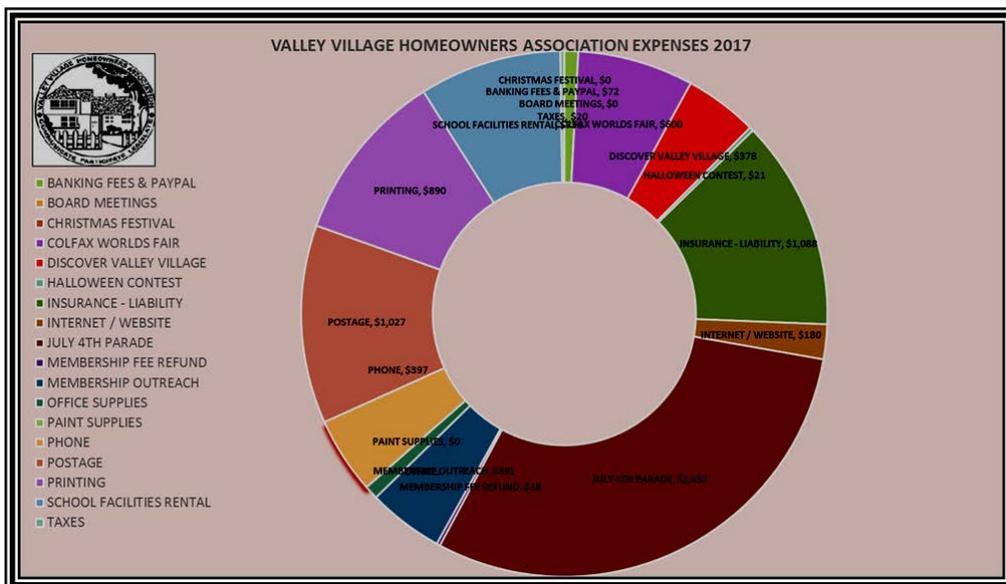
VVHA 2017 Financials

Dues:* +\$9,958.00

Expenses: -\$9,194.00

\$764.00

*Representing 359 Valley Village Households



Homeowners Association Membership Meeting

*Wednesday, January 17, 2018 – 6:30pm refreshments – 7:00pm meeting
Colfax Charter School Auditorium
11724 Addison Street, Valley Village*

A Representative from the Sanitation Department

To discuss the exclusive trash pickup franchises for condominiums & apartments
Also, Luisa Franco, ReCycLA Representative

Alan Smith from the Water Conservation Group
Offering weather-based irrigation controllers to VVHA members

Also at the meeting:
Senior Lead Officer John Antonioli (LAPD-NH Division)

This meeting is neither sponsored by nor is it in any way connected with the Los Angeles Unified School District

**Mark Your
Calendar:**

*2018 Membership Meetings will be on Wednesdays
January 17 * April 18 * July 18 * October 17
2018 Board of Directors Meetings will be on Mondays
January 22 * April 9 * June 11 * September 17 * November 5*

VALLEY VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



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