



OVERVIEW

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE No. 14

WINTER 1997



PHOTOMONTAGE BY BRUCE CARROLL

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Happy Holidays

by Bruce Carroll

*W*ith Santa Claus a comin' to town, better let him know our bridge is down.

Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly.
Re-deck our bridge and we'll be jolly.

Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwaanza, this season everyone wants a...

Peaceful world, cured of its ills.
So let's start here in Franklin Hills...

Wishing Joy to the World...and peace.
May trust and tolerance increase.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



by Adam Weissman, President, FHRA

OH MY! what a year this has been! For many of you, this last year started out peacefully and ended up with the noise of jackhammers and dust swirling about the bridge. Others have been upset by criminal elements, only to be surprised by the police making arrests and apartment owners exercising their power of eviction.

Still others have struggled with city officials regarding quality of life and adult entertainment establishments along the Hyperion corridor. These three issues alone have emerged almost simultaneously within Franklin Hills and have often struggled to become the main course at each monthly Board meeting. As a result, the board members often feel stuffed after each meeting, having to consume so much material and to make so many important decisions which impact us all. For these efforts and long hours, I would like to personally thank all the members, past and present, for their hard work.

Through the efforts of the Board, this past year has once again seen a great deal of organizational growth. Following our birthday celebration for the median, FHRA held its annual Crime/Disaster Meeting. With a packed house, members were introduced to LAPD Northeast Division personnel and were given a sneak preview of the bridge retrofit project. In March FHRA co-hosted a City Charter Candidates Debate at Theatre West, which was moderated by Century Cable President William Rosendahl. This really boosted Franklin Hills' image as a constructive political action group. In May Thomas Starr King Middle School helped to host our annual meeting. With over 150 residents in attendance, this was the largest FHRA meeting to date and provided an open forum for city officials to present the Shakespeare Bridge Retrofit project. During the summer months we were present at the Los Feliz Street Fair, where our gallery of photographs (always available for purchase) was second to none.

The Shakespeare Bridge closure marked an important test of our communication with both city officials and neighbors alike. Shirley Newland, our lady of the bridge, has stood sentry in helping mediate parking and traffic problems associated with the bridge closure and has provided a single point of communication with city officials to help eliminate confusions or misinformation. Shirley has worked with the Tracy-Talmadge Block Watch Association, which is part of the Los Feliz Improvement Association. She provides a strong link between the FHRA and the LFIA in addressing the impact of the bridge. Her efforts deserve our gratitude.

In the midst of the noise of the bridge, a stronger focus on crime problems has been made by the Cumberland Avenue Block Watch Group. Organized by residents on Cumberland, Myra, Manzanita Avenue and Sunset Drive, they have recognized crime patterns along their streets which were not being sufficiently addressed by the LAPD. With the leadership of Rick Gomez and others, they have worked hard with police officials to place pressure on the points of criminal activity. This has met with success, and we congratulate them! The Cumberland group stands out as an example of community organization working towards quality of life goals. FHRA welcomes the chance to work with the group while respecting their independence.

On a different side of the Hill, the focus has been on a proliferation of sexual encounter clubs along Hyperion Avenue. Residents watched as individuals def-

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The **Franklin Hills OVERVIEW** is published as often as possible. We invite your comments on matters relating to articles and the community and, space permitting, we will publish letters mailed to *Editor, OVERVIEW, Box 29122, Los Angeles, CA 90027*

BRIDGING THE GAP OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT

By Shirley Newland
FHRA Bridge Info Coordinator

AUTUMN IS MY FAVORITE TIME OF THE year for strolls through the neighborhood. The air is crisp, the sun is warm, and with skies blown clear by the winds the views from the hills are spectacular. Living just three doors from the Shakespeare Bridge, its span has marked the beginning and end of many of these pleasant walks. Lately, however, I have had to direct my walks to other parts of the neighborhood.

The bridge, built in 1926, was closed in June 1997 for earthquake retrofitting. Progress to date has included removal of the roadway and railways and reinforcement of the abutments. Over the next few months the bridge will be rebuilt with stronger support and have the same appearance as the original architecture. Last I checked, it is still scheduled to reopen in March 1998.

At the beginning of the project I volunteered as the contact person for information involving the closure of the bridge. I figured that as long as I was interested in following along with its progress I would be happy to share this information with my fellow neighbors who would also be affected by the closure. I introduced myself to the FHRA and was immediately accepted.

The FHRA is an extraordinary group of people, each member dedicated to the maintenance and improvement of our neighborhood, each friendly and sociable. Becoming part of this group and getting involved with the bridge project has been a sincere pleasure and given me a sense of belonging in the community.

I have also had the privilege to work with several members of the City. Vince Giron of the Dept. of Transportation (DOT) has been instrumental in getting necessary signs to redirect traffic. But, as serious a matter and thought-through the placement of each sign is, I still get a kick from the "Road Closed Ahead" sign that stands at the top of Monon, a street that dead ends at the base of the bridge. Officer Carlos Sanchez and his crew have been quite effective citing trouble spots along the detour route. Dave Spangler, the inspector on site, is very knowledgeable and cordial. He has a great concern for the outcome of the project and makes sure it is running safely and according to procedure. And the contractor, Matt Moetazedi, has been very cooperative and repeatedly says — graffiti and trailer break-ins aside — how much he enjoys working in our neighborhood.

On the day the work began, at 7 a.m. sharp. I was startled awake — as I'm sure many others in the area were — by a loud boom followed by sounds of heavy metal dragging across the road. Boom after boom, steel girders were being unloaded off

a truck. When I called the project manager's office, Raffi Massabki answered and was stunned to hear my complaint (plus, I was cranky from a root canal I had the previous day). While we were talking and he was assuring me the contractor knows to keep within noise limits and to work quietly before 9 a.m., another boom echoed through my phone. There was a long pause in our conversation. At that point Raffi said he'd take care of the matter right away. And indeed he did. The noise, while necessary, has been tolerable ever since and never again before 9 a.m.

To one who looks no further than the apparent, image is everything. Another incident occurred when we were in the middle of negotiating "No Parking" options on Franklin Avenue. Fliers were distributed to neighbors in the area stating that no decision would be made by the City without our input. The very next day "No Parking" signs went up. At first glance, my hopes of working in cooperation with the city became a shattered illusion. Upon further inquiry, it turned out the contractor had an immediate and temporary need for access to the street for a procession of cement trucks to pour concrete into the excavation at the west end of the bridge. DOT had jumped in to help by putting up the signs and didn't have time to notify us. The day after, the work was done, the signs were gone. Negotiations continued and with the support of all involved we have been able to keep parking available and to keep clear the area for turning around at the bridge.

Aside from these two upsets and a few colorful calls regarding the short cut problem on Hazelkirk, the project has run rather smoothly. The cooperative efforts of everyone involved in this project are outstanding. Individually we are each contributing our talents toward the restoration of this grand and beautiful bridge, and together we are working toward one common goal: a great place to live where we all know each other and share our appreciation through our combined involvement within the community.

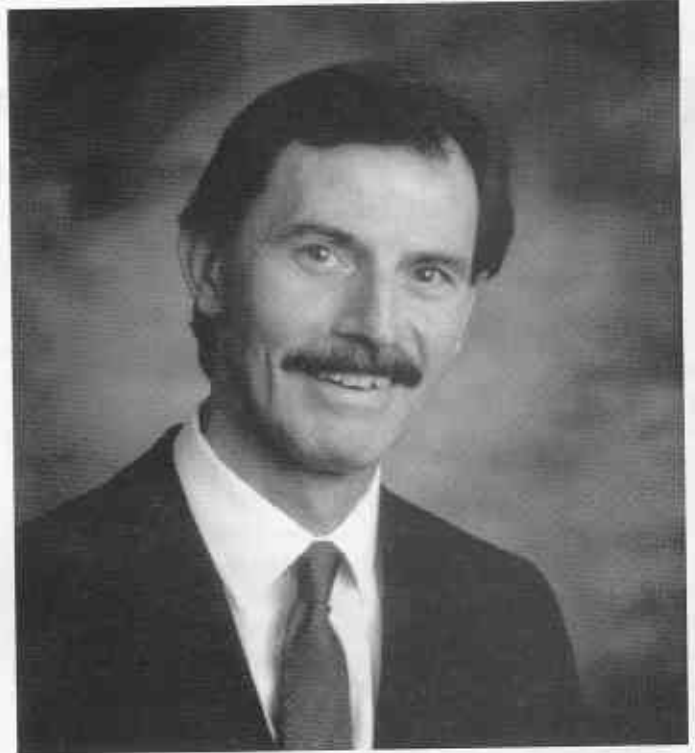
Growing up I never lived in a place long enough to establish any roots. Consequently, when I moved out on my own I hadn't developed a feeling of connectedness to the community. As I got older I began to need this sense of community, and when I moved to Franklin Hills I found it among my neighbors, the City of Los Angeles, and especially from the members of the FHRA. My relations with these people has built a lasting bridge of community spirit that has further joined me with humanity.

When the Shakespeare Bridge reopens we are planning a celebration. Everyone will be invited and I will look forward to seeing you there.

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DONALD BOLTON

By Armida Bolton



The Franklin Hills median is very special to me. As a long-term resident of Franklin Hills and a former member of the FHRA Board of Directors, I have been pleased to be a participant in an important effort to beautify a part of our neighborhood. Most of all, I've been pleased that through the median project my dream of establishing an appropriate living memorial to celebrate the life of my husband, Donald R. Bolton, was realized. Before the bridge retrofitting project closed part of Franklin Avenue, I made it a point to drive past the median every day, noting the changes that were taking place as the tiny native plants that had been put in the ground in November of 1995 took hold and flourished. Often, with a quick glance at my rear-view mirror, I would slow down to catch a glimpse of "the rock" and the plaque dedicated to Donald.

The plaque says simply:

*This patch of green, once covered with asphalt
and weeds now blooms in memory of
Donald R. Bolton (1932-1991)*

*Teacher, nature lover, and resident who enjoyed
nothing more than the beauty of Franklin Hills.*

I am not sure how Donald would have reacted to being the subject of an Overview article or having his name on a public monument. Although warm and out-going, he was a very private person who shunned attention.

Donald and I moved to Franklin Hills the summer of 1968, just one year after our marriage. Here, we shared our lives with six cats and the diverse creatures that also claim

Franklin Hills as their home—blue jays, possum, raccoons, squirrels, skunks, and others. Donald enjoyed these critters plus the varied vegetation that covers our hills and loved living here. Whenever we spoke about the possibility of moving away, we could never think of a place we might prefer, so we remained.

Donald, who had been born in Santa Monica and had lived much of his life near the beach in places like San Diego and Redondo Beach, quickly adapted to life in the central city. He so loved this area and the community that when the opportunity arose to teach at the local high school, he quickly accepted. He was a public school teacher for 33 years—the last eight in the foreign language department at John Marshall High School. As an army lieutenant in his 20's, he served his country based not far from the demilitarized zone in South Korea. Before that he attended UCLA, played tennis, and sang in the Methodist Church choir.

At the median dedication ceremony two years ago, I noted that—because of exploding development and population growth—this country paves over an area the size of Delaware each year.

Donald would probably have been more than a bit embarrassed over the attention the memorial has given him, but would have been thrilled that our Franklin Hills neighbors have done something to reverse the trend of environmental degradation by converting an asphalt, half-covered eyesore into a lovely island of trees and shrubs.

I am especially happy that those who knew and loved him—his family and friends—were able to contribute toward doing this in the memory of Donald R. Bolton.

• community phones •

IMPORTANT COMMUNITY PHONE NUMBERS

ABANDONED VEHICLES: (800) 222-6366

ABC-TELEVISION:

Security: (310) 557-5354.

CITY ANIMAL REGULATION: (213) 222-7138

COUNCILMAN JOHN FERRARO, 4th District-
(213) 485-3337

Room M-30, City Hall, 200 Spring St., L.A. 90012

DEPT. OF ANIMAL REGULATION: (213) 485-5761

Barking Dogs: 222-7138 or 731-8281

ENVIRONMENTAL:

Recycling: (800)-CITYSAN

Rebate for Ultra Low Flush Toilet installation.
(213) 481-5800; (800) 722-1122

Rebate for Super Efficient Gas Water Heater.
(800) 852-9820

Hazardous Waste Hotline (213) 237-1634

Operation Clean Sweep (213) 237-1797

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Emergency 911;

Non-emergency: 485-6235.

GRAFFITI :

LAPD-NE Graffiti Cleanup (213) 237-0511

Graffiti Hotline: (213) 485-0511

HOMELESS, Food and Shelter (213) 974-1234

LOS FELIZ PUBLIC LIBRARY: (213) 913-4710

PARKING ENFORCEMENT: (818) 904-1418

POLICE: 911; Spanish: 485-4333; Asian: 893-8100

Northeast Division, 3353 San Fernando Road, LA 90065:

Main Desk (213) 485-2563

Community Relations: (213) 485-2548

Sr. Lead Officer Richard Kanzaki: 847-3138

Sr. Lead Officer Sam Salazar: 847-3135

RAPE HOTLINE (213) 392-8381

RECYCLING INFO: (800) 773-2489

SANITATION: (213) 485-4906

STREET LIGHTING: (800) 303-5267 or 485-3461

STREET MAINTENANCE: (213) 485-5661

SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE: (213) 381-5111

TELECOMMUNICATIONS: (TV Cable) 485-2751

TRASH RECEPTACLE INFO: (800) 248-9726

TREE TRIMMING (Hazards) 485-5661

WATER & POWER: (800) 722-1122

DOES GRAFFITI BUG YOU?

FHRA NEEDS YOUR HELP in fighting graffiti in our area. We need someone to organize paint outs and people to work.

We provide all materials.

Call the Hotline to volunteer. 664-7247

FRANKLIN FOTOS

As you have no doubt noticed, the editor of the Overview has an affinity for photographs taken in the early years of the Franklin Hills, Los Feliz and Silver Lake areas. We are trying to assemble a pictorial history of our district and would like to hear from anyone with such photos. If you grew up here, or if your parents built a house here, or if you inherited some photographs, please give us a call on the Hotline or send them to our mailbox.

We guarantee they will be handled very carefully while we have a copy negative made. The originals will be returned to you in their original condition. Look for your old photographs and give us a call!

Disaster Preparedness

FHRA Disaster Preparedness needs to know about the trained professionals living in our area. There is a clear need for doctors, nurses & trained emergency personnel in a disaster. If you are willing to assist in such an event, please contact the Hotline: 664-7247

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The businesses that are advertising in this newsletter are charged the absolute minimum possible advertising fees. Their ads pay for the paper and any surplus supports FHRA on-going projects.

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BLOOMING IN THE FRANKLIN HILLS

by Robert Page

I am very much an urban "people", a city dweller who took whatever town I was living in for granted. It never came to mind that I might participate to any real degree, or needed to, in local government. The reality was that it was too easy not to. And getting to know, let alone associate with neighbors was certainly not a given. Before we moved to Franklin Hills we were living in northeast Palos Verdes where, of course, we were considered pariahs...because we did not own a horse! Community comfort at work, indeed.

In 1975, we became owners of one of the oldest homes on the hill, a rambling multilevel structure that in many ways typifies Franklin Hills. Our home was even highlighted in "Stairway Walks of Los Angeles." Bragging? Shoot no, not at all. It was just one of the surprises and pleasures of living in this area. And one of the great pleasures in knowing that this really is a special place whether you live on Camero, perch aside Hollyvista or nest along Lyric.

If you didn't know how special it was before you became a resident, you certainly should know now. We may be an island surrounded by the denseness of L.A.'s urban sprawl, but we are city dwellers. Think about it. In how many other areas can you so easily encounter the parade of dog walkers, or stairway joggers, young couples taking their children for a walk, or older couples strolling along enjoying the gardens? How many areas have their very own bridge or garden median? How many areas have such a resident association?

Our home and ourselves are solid parts of the Franklin Hills...as is the Franklin Hills Resident's Association. As an association board member and even more as an area "sharer," I urge you to join FHRA or to renew your membership. At three cents per day it is surely affordable. The real benefit is that, if you so wish, you can easily, actively become involved in your own community. The least that will happen is for you to become aware of what the community is trying to accomplish. And, just perhaps, you will realize that participation by you can actually make a difference and that the lack of participation can also make an impact.

As a late, but enlightened bloomer I urge each resident to join FHRA and to really become a needed part of this community...your community.

PRESIDENT continued from p 2.

ecated on their yards, parked illegally and used drugs publicly. Much more about this will be outlined in a separate article. More important, however, is that our residents independently developed a coalition with residents from Silver Lake to address this problem. FHRA provided monetary support for legal counsel to address the variance issue. This issue is still ongoing and has many twists and turns. Due to the filming of a number of motion pictures and television shows, this area of Los Angeles has become *the* place to live. People attracted to the architecture, cultural activities, Griffith Park, and easy access to Downtown have come in droves to the area.

The Los Angeles media have highlighted Franklin Hills with positive articles. In addition, recently the city came through for us and established neighborhood identification signs around the Hills. As a result of many of these trends, real estate has been purchased quickly and folks who used to rent (such as myself) have found homes they can own (lucky me!). The Hotline often gets calls from out of state, asking about houses for sale or lease in Franklin Hills. In addition, older homes have been refurbished or torn down to decrease the attraction to criminal elements. FHRA hopes that for new residents, whether you are a homeowner or a renter, the entire volunteer Association can help make your neighborhood safe, beautiful and an exciting place to live.

What in the works for FHRA? Much of that depends upon you. On the dinner table the Board is busy feasting on the Bridge Retrofit Opening Day Party, a shuttle bus to bring residents to the new subway to be opened in 1998, the ever-growing median, nuisance abatement, zoning variance, police relations, to name just a few. We are in sore need of volunteers to help Board members in their completion of these projects and more. At FHRA we have always provided the latitude and funding for projects throughout the area. Our membership has hovered around 250 for the last two years and we hope to increase both the number and activity of the Association in the coming years.

I can not express my thanks enough to the Board members and volunteers who were involved in the myriad events during the last year. Franklin Hills has really tested its wings this year as a neighborhood organization and in its work with the city and residents alike. It is my hope that more residents will join in on the fun and feast on the projects which have improved our neighborhood.

Seasons Greetings

Adam M. Weisman

President, Franklin Hills Residents Association

THE CUMBERLAND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

by Rick Gomez

The Cumberland Residents' Association sprung up during April, 1997, after gang members began selling drugs in the neighborhood roughly bounded by the intersections of Myra and Cumberland on the east and Talmadge and Cumberland on the west. Since then, in response to problems near King Middle School, the Association has expanded to include residents living on the following streets: Cumberland east of Myra; Myra between Sunset Drive and Clayton; Sunset Drive; Talmadge; and Manzanita.

The name "Cumberland" merely signifies the historical origin of the Association and does not signify geographical exclusivity. The Association is a member of the Franklin Hills Residents Association. Although the Association started as a Neighborhood Watch group, it now has branched into dealing with neighborhood improvement issues as they relate to quality of life. The Cumberland Residents' Association has no elected officers or formal corporate structure. Volunteer block captains and members run the group. The Block Captains are Andrea Bronte, Rick Gomez, Betty Lacasella and Cliff Welch.

The Cumberland Residents' Association comprises all forms of residents—tenants, single family residence owners and landlords. Because we are interested in the input of all Franklin Hills residents and business owners, the Association is open to any person who is interested in quality of life issues in the southwest quadrant of Franklin Hills (roughly the area bounded by Sanborn on the east, Talmadge on the west, Fountain on the south and Prospect on the north). There are no particular membership requirements other than giving us your name, address and phone number. The Association can be thought of as a specialized unit of the Franklin Hills

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Franklin Hills/Shakespeare Bridge
Printed teal and purple on a white shirt



ORDER FORM

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(BLUE) End Of Summer Festival	MED:	LG:	EX. LG:	
Add postage and handling:				+\$2.00
Total (Do not send cash.)				

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ APT. _____

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FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION MEMBER?: YES NO

THE MEDIAN IS MATURING

by Melinda Taylor

The median planting has now been in place for two years. For the most part the plants are well established and developing into the character of their mature forms. Certain plants have not responded favorably to the conditions of the site; we have replaced those plants with others that we believe will be more likely to thrive. Others are growing more slowly than expected, and we have augmented them with other faster-growing compatible plants. I would like to share with you the following recent observations I have made about the planting in general and certain plants in particular:

The median planting was installed in November of 1995 because late fall/early winter is the optimum time to plant California native plants and many other introduced plants of a compatible nature. During this period we still have warm soils and mild temperatures, so plants can become settled and established prior to winter cold and benefit from the seasonal rains. Plants installed at this time won't produce much foliage growth, but they will be established sufficiently to grow significantly in spring without having to get established then. From a practical standpoint November is a great month for the median to have a birthday, but from an aesthetic point of view, it's another story entirely. Many of the California natives are coming out of a summer hibernation of sorts, during which their growth has been relatively to completely inactive, and they may have dropped some of their leaves. California natives look their worst at summer's end. Depending upon our September and October weather, which this year was very hot and dry, having the median's birthday party in November is equivalent to having a party for ourselves at six in the morning. We may be up, but we're likely not looking our best.

Still, there's a lot to look at, a lot of growth beginning to show. The big agave, planted near the bridge end of the slope, is sending out many underground stems. The pups of this plant are coming up in profusion, even two and three feet from the parent plant. I welcome the naturally placed pups, but even more, the underground root system which is like jute netting that we don't have to see. Both the *Salvia apiana*, or "white sage" and the *Eriogonum giganteum*, or "St Catherine's Lace" have re-seeded themselves amply, because we didn't cut off their flower stalks when the flower petals started to fade. If you look closely around the parent plants you will see many of these seedlings starting to grow and establish themselves. The *Eriogonum giganteum* frustrates me somewhat because certain of the established plants have died, or look like they may die, for no apparent reason, thus ruining the sweep of their mass in the overall planting de-

sign. If the self-sown seedlings can grow sufficiently quickly to replace their parent plants, however, I will continue to value the plant for its otherwise outstanding sculptural and colorful attributes. I hope the *Salvia apiana* plants will continue to thrive despite the fact that their leaves are being regularly picked by passersby who, I assume, recognize this plant as the source of the incense used for cleansing rooms (or objects) of negative influences, and are taking advantage of the plant's public accessibility. I wish I could ask those people "pruning" these plants to pay more attention to where they are stepping; a recently planted *S. apiana* was stepped on the other day.

Right now the *Eleagnus pungens*, or "Silverberry", is producing its inconspicuous flowers which smell like carnations, and the median air is sweet with their fragrance. This outstanding plant has so many commendable attributes—beautiful silvery brown foliage, fast, angular or spreading growth, adaptability to a variety of difficult conditions. It's hard to imagine that it occurs naturally in cool, inland mountain regions of China and Japan of ample moisture—nothing like its current environment.

All three of the grasses planted on the median have performed beautifully, and been notable accents throughout the year. *Muhlenbergia rigens*, or "Deer Grass", a clumping cool-season grass (meaning its active growth begins in the late winter or early spring), is just about to finish flowering and resume its active growth cycle with the cooler weather ahead. This California native grass has proven itself as useful and adaptable as it is beautiful—excellent for holding the slope and preventing erosion damage and heat and drought tolerant as well. We have recently augmented our original planting of this grass, adding it to two additional portions of the median as it has shown itself to be such an outstanding plant. *Bouteloua gracilis*, or "Blue Gramma Grass", the small clumping grass on the flat part of the median, is a warm season grass which will become dormant with the onset of winter and begin growing again in spring. It has been a vigorous grower in the past year, and its flowers, attached to their stems at a right angle and resembling tiny combs, have provided and continue to provide special interest. A clump of *Cortaderia selloana* 'Pumila,' "Dwarf Pampas Grass," now stands imposingly at the transition between flat area and slope, a sentinel of architectural form and prolific bloom. The manner in which all three of these grasses take on different forms, catch light, and move in the area's breezes has been a source of delight to me all year long.

I hope everyone is enjoying the growth and development

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Happy Birthday Median

By Bruce Carroll



Dessert for the Median's 2nd birthday party makes rebuilding the bridge look like a piece of cake

The Median landscaping, like any 2 year old, still needs plenty of attention. Birthday volunteers pulled up plenty of weeds.

Landscape designer Melinda Taylor instructs Marshall High's Clean & Green team on how to plant and weed



Photo by BRUCE CARROLL

"It is much more beautiful here. It makes a big difference." That's how Franklin Avenue resident Theo Welch described the impact of the median landscaping, and why he turned out, weeder in hand, to celebrate its second birthday in mid-November. The six year resident recalled what he and his neighbors used to see. "It was quite an eyesore for all the residents...It was good when the neighborhood got together to make the change."

To landscape designer and median chair Melinda Taylor the getting together is almost as important as lending a hand to mother nature. Volunteers who've come to median clean-up days, she observed, "really had a chance to talk about the neighborhood and that seemed to me as valuable as getting the weeds out of the ground...It's kind of like a community meeting where you don't have to sit in bad chairs."

In fact community outreach, to get a core cadre of median volunteers, is high on Taylor's agenda for the coming year. All those interested are encouraged to call the FHRA Community Message line 213-664-7247.

Median Notes Continued from page 8

of the median planting as much as I am. Together, all of us who have been involved in the conception, development and maintenance of this project have created something of lasting value for our neighborhood and for the city at large. It is not often that a group of people gets together, decides that visual design is important, and collectively does what is needed to realize their vision. Thank you to everyone who has contributed time, money, labor, and above all, good will towards this project.

Among those getting' down-and-dirty to spruce up the median for its birthday were members of Clean and Green. That's a city funded agency that enlists students to serve their community in various projects. Team leader Melissa Hurtado brought along seven Marshall High students: Anna, Dulce, Jesse, Joanna, Jose, Robert and Sarah. They not only got some planting pointers and weeding warnings, but Hurtado explained her group is also "learning how to plan projects, project management and how to organize community events like this." If you have a community project and need some help, Hurtado invites you to call her at Clean and Green, 213-389-3229.

She also mentioned that ever since she started working with Marshall Students, about a year and a half ago, she's noticed the "very very beautiful" median. Hurtado admitted that the other day she thought of coming to do weeding on her own but, "I don't know which are the weeds and which are the plants, so I didn't touch it."

That's a problem shared by both young and old volunteers. And, despite a bit of over aggressive weeding, Taylor feels the median is "growing in pretty well. The plants are starting to show the shapes that they will eventually have." But she says, because many of the plants are very slow growing, it will be another three years before the median fully matches the vision of her original plan.

And how will El Niño impact that plan? (No reputable publication can be printed at this time without mentioning El Niño) According to Taylor the median should weather the storm. "Because we have a combination of plants that grow very deep tap roots and very fibrous shallow surface roots we have a pretty good mat on the hill. So we are probably in good shape." And those who come out to weed the median on a regular basis will probably get in good shape too...since heavy rains mean heavy weeds.