

OVERVIEW

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE # 22

WINTER 2001

...O'ER THE LAND OF THE FREE...



text by Bruce Carrol; photo by Leslie Whitlock

INSIDE

Letter from the President	2
Let There Be Light	3
King Middle School	4
Los Feliz Library	5
Annual Meeting	6
Duelling Signs	7
Editorial	8
Neighborhood Watch	9
Median	11
Rowena Reservoir	12
911 & You	13
Chairman's Corner	14
Community Garden	16
Welcome Neighbor	18
Crime Alert Warning	19
Graffiti	20
In Memory of Mary Orr	22
A New View	24

Our Franklin Avenue median with the flag that sprouted shortly after 9/11 really symbolizes the spirit that made America. The proud patriotism of standing together in a crisis and the often less visible volunteer spirit that binds communities and produces progress.

That spirit can be seen throughout the pages of the Overview with many reports on FHRA projects to cleanup, protect, and beautify our area. The efforts and contributions of nearly 350 FHRA members have literally gotten us "on the map." A recent LA Times article on street repair divided the whole the City of Los Angeles into 80 communities everything from Chatsworth to San Pedro, from Boyle Heights to Pacific Palisades. There among the big guys was Franklin Hills. The smallest in size on the map, but recognized as an effective cohesive community.

As everyday since 9/11 we are dealing with the new global and national challenges and fears. While we hope that Osama and his ilk have never heard of the Shakespeare Bridge, just beyond the bridge on Franklin Ave. car thieves have struck three times in one block in one month. Surely enough for each of us to realize that everyday the battle can be close to home. But community involvement can be an effective strategy.

This holiday season while we remember the overwhelming horrors and thousands lives lost to hatred this year, let us all think of what we can do as neighbors to make our little slice of LA, the nation, the world, the universe a place where safety conquers fears and harmony halts hatred.

Letter from the President

by Ricardo Gomez

The September 11 attacks have altered our sense of well being, comfort and security. We all feel deep sympathy for the victims of terrorism and wish for swift and sure conclusion of the conflicts in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Unfortunately the daily media onslaught about terrorism is not amply counterbalanced with examples of what we can do as citizens to address our fears while contributing to our communities. We cannot allow the media coverage of terrorism to obscure some serious local problems that we must deal with and my fear, as a community improvement activist, is that our efforts to enhance the quality of life in the Franklin Hills are backsliding. Local crime and blight are not taking the day off for the war on terrorism. We can help local law enforcement deal with all criminal threats by getting involved with local anti-crime and neighborhood improvement efforts. The starting point is to get to know your local government representatives and your local police.

We would like to welcome our new councilperson, Tom LaBonge, who took office on November 1. Tom is a long time area resident. He attended Ivanhoe Elementary School, Thomas Starr King Middle School and graduated from Marshall High School in 1971. Tom lives just east of the Franklin Hills, overlooking Hyperion Avenue, and is well acquainted with our neighborhood and understands its needs. We look forward to working with Tom to improve our neighborhood. We are encouraging Tom to establish community office hours on certain Saturdays where he can be available to meet directly with members of the community. We will keep you informed. The main telephone number for his office is (213) 485-3337.

If you read the recent Los Angeles Times article on street resurfacing you noticed that Franklin Hills is way below the average with respect to getting its streets resurfaced. The Franklin Hills Residents Association has made street resurfacing a priority because many of our streets are in dangerously poor condition. The key to getting streets resurfaced is attracting the attention of local politicians. It is very important that you come to our annual meetings. These meetings are a political "show of force" that demonstrate to politicians that we care about our neighborhood. These meetings have been the principal means of successfully focusing attention on our neighborhood. Politicians love a big crowd, and our annual meetings have been particularly effective in attracting local politicians and bringing attention to our needs. Approximately 150 people turned out at last June's annual meeting at ABC Television Center. We again thank ABC and Charles Williams, Vice President of Administration, for making Rehearsal Hall One available for our meeting. If you are interested in helping us put on our 2002 general meeting, or have suggestions for a program, please contact us.

Get to know your local police. We have two Senior Lead Officers ("SLOs") that cover the Franklin Hills area. They are SLOs Al Polehonki and Sam Salazar. FHRA is creating a network of neighborhood watches so that neighbors get to know one another and the officers that patrol our neighborhood. Franklin Hills has enjoyed a very low crime rate for the past several years. However, some disturbing signs of emerging crime have surfaced this year, and we want to put a stop to it. There has been a resurgence of gang activity in the area south of us particularly around the Sunset Pacific Hotel (corner of Bates Avenue and Sunset Boulevard, one block east of Fountain). I have testified at zoning hearings along with other community members so that the City can close the hotel. The hotel is a center for drug sales and prostitution, and gang members run a protection racket in and around the Hotel. The problems extend to Tang's Donuts near Fountain and to the parking lot of the adjacent mini mall. The area is a destination for crystal meth users due to the abundance of dealers. We feel that many of our recent crime problems emanate from this area. We have traced the recent upswing in gang graffiti around the Franklin Hills to the same gang that is at the Sunset Pacific Hotel. If you don't already have a neighborhood

continued on page 10

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Let There Be Lights

By Bruce Carroll

"It's going to get rave revues," declared John Mitchell, one of the bridge lighting volunteers, when he came back to the Shakespeare Bridge after dark to admire the FHRA team's work and heard other neighborhood residents expressing their delight.

Newly elected FHRA board member Joseph Hahn, who organized the bridge lighting effort, reflected that "the best part of the project was getting the team together, working together to come up with a plan, and getting to know your neighbors: just really just seeing the way everybody pitches in a really generous way."

The most generous of all was Tree King's Mark Bruna, a Franklin Hills resident, who not only donated his time and the use of his invaluable cherry picker truck, but also paid his two assistants for their time. "The end result would have been not as nice without him," was the understatement of Shawn Sites, who spent most of the morning on a ladder attaching the lower strings of lights while Bruna and his crew worked above. "I can't say enough about him," noted Sites, "countless thanks to Mark and his high-flying team without whom this never woulda happened!" Earlier this year Bruna also donated his professional services to trim big palm trees on the Franklin Avenue Median.

The lights went up two days after Thanksgiving. The crew started at 7:30 am on the northwest turrets, then worked their way counterclockwise around the bridge finishing at the northeast turrets. Despite the good planning there were still a couple of emergency trips to Baller Hardware to get a few missing widgets. But the biggest problem, according to Hahn, was "the rain; at the end it got really bad, but thank god we were done by then." Sites agreed, "for sure the weather was the worst part-it got a little slippery."

Overall the project had slipped three years from the first lighting attempt in 1998 after the city, at FHRA's request, had installed electrical outlets on the turrets so we could light the bridge. Even after weeks of careful planning by Hahn's team, trimming the turrets with lights remained a daunting task. After doing the first turret Mitchell felt "it seemed so much tougher than we thought it was going to be," then turret by turret things speeded up and "it fell into the groove."

With the project an instant hit, Hahn has already volunteered to head up the bridge lighting next year and vows, "we have to top ourselves."

Bridge lighting chairman Joseph Hahn holds the ladder for John Mitchell who is working with Shawn Sites to install icicle lights while Deborah Mitchell and David Brinkman untangle the next string of lights. Up above Mark Bruna in the Tree King cherry picker which made the installation possible.



Mark Bruna and Tree King employee Jose Valdez untangle icicle lights before installing them on the wire between the two northwest turrets. Only one turret in each pair has electrical outlets for the lights.

John Mitchell and Shawn Sites cling to the turrets as they attach icicle lights to guide wires that were installed around the base of the pyramid part of each turret. The Tree King crew works where ladders would be impractical.



On opening night, November 25, 2001, the newly lit Shakespeare Bridge attracted rave reviews. Resident Shawn Sites described it as looking "like a little bridge to wonderland."



Photos by Bruce Carroll

Zero Tolerance Graffiti Kick-Off & King Beautification Day!

by Mary Rodriguez

On July 5th Thomas Starr King began their new school year 2001-2002. It was also the beginning of the new year-round calendar and the new Gifted/High Ability Technology / Arts Magnet. The arriving students found that the school had a fresh coat of paint with bold and lively colors. The thriving courtyard garden and award winning newly restored 1936 WPA statue greeted them as they explored the campus searching for their new teachers and classrooms.

With school in session, campus and community leaders from the Franklin Hills Residents Association were collaborating with the Los Feliz Improvement Association, the Hollywood Beautification Team, and Thomas Starr King to create a "Zero Tolerance Graffiti Zone" around the school. There has been an increase of graffiti in the neighborhood especially around Thomas Starr King Middle School and John Marshall High School. A 'Zero Tolerance' graffiti zone means that we work diligently to remove graffiti on a daily basis. At the same time it



Graffiti Girls

would require the business owners and residents to take responsibility for their property.

Realizing that the frustration voiced at local community meetings needed to be addressed, the Franklin Hills Residents Association organized a Graffiti Abatement Committee. This committee led by Eric Frase and Shirley Mims set out to inform both businesses and residents of the intent to claim the area a "Zero Tolerance Graffiti Zone."

Special flyers were distributed to businesses along Fountain Ave. and Hyperion Ave. explaining our intent and enlisting their cooperation. We have connected with our neighbors, local businesses, the schools, LAPD, our city council offices CD4 and CD13 and made our intent known. We are determined to find others equally proud to keep their blocks clean. Adopt-Your-Block. We can supply paint. Contact Eric Frase or Shirley Mims of the Graffiti Abatement Committee and get involved.



Mary Rodriguez working along with volunteers

On October 6th, a beautiful Saturday morning, approximately 100 students, parents, teachers, community members, and the Hollywood Beautification Team gathered for the first King Beautification Day & Zero Tolerance Graffiti Zone Kick-Off. Groups were formed to paint out graffiti along Fountain Ave., Talmadge St., Sunset Dr., Bates Ave., Manzanita St., and Sanborn Ave. The City of LA's Operation Clean Sweep provided paint in 3 colors: gray, white,

and beige. They also provided all of the tools: paint rollers, paint trays, brushes, gloves, rags, and Graffiti Gold, a special cleaner for street signs. Again, special flyers were distributed informing residents of the program and asking their permission to paint out graffiti on their property. Unfortunately, we did not find a lot of neighbors at home on that beautiful Saturday morning and further efforts are necessary.

Other volunteers helped by cleaning debris inside the campus along the athletic field and outside along the sidewalks and street curbs. Several parents and neighbors began digging large holes for the beautiful "African Sumac" trees that had recently been donated. Other student gardeners weeded and fertilized the "Crape Myrtle" trees on Bates Ave. that were planted last year and are doing fantastically. There was so much activity going on at the school that everyone felt the positive energy. But there's still a lot more to accomplish so lets all continue to work together to keep our neighborhood clean and safe.



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New Principal

For Thomas Starr King

by Mary Rodriguez

Principal Dr. Thelma Yoshii announced her retirement after over forty years of service to the children of Los Angeles. Although Dr. Yoshii had not planned to retire this year, unfortunately due to health reasons, she had no choice but to leave King. She was excited about all the new and challenging changes at King such as the magnet school, the year round calendar, all the new teachers and students, not to mention the physical enhancements at King, like the new paint, landscape, the beautifully restored statue, and the new courtyard. We wish her all the very best. She set us on a positive path, and we are forever grateful.

She was replaced for 3 months by an interim principal, Dr. Marta Bin, who supervised the Human Resources Committee through the many LAUSD rules and challenges involved in finding the right person for the job of principal. After reviewing many resumes and much deliberation the committee decided to waive its authority for selecting a new principal to the Superintendent of Local District E, Dr. Liliam Leis-Castillo. She was able to choose from a much broader group of candidates and had personal knowledge of the kind of leadership skills they possessed. The committee trusted Dr. Castillo to find a Principal that would keep the school on a positive path of reform and be the right fit for the very exciting and challenging changes that King is currently going through.

Luckily for us Dr. Leis-Castillo chose Mr. Byron James Maltez. On November 1, 2001 he became the new principal at Thomas Starr King. He is fluent in Spanish and was most recently the Operations Administrator for District E where his responsibilities were to respond to schools for life threatening incidents, campus disturbances, child abuse, and other emergencies. He worked as a parent council liaison and made interim placements for student expulsions. He was Assistant Principal at Nightingale Middle School, John Muir Middle School, and Virgil Middle School. He was Title I Coordinator and Dean of Discipline for Chester Nimitz Middle School. He was a teacher of science at Charles Drew Middle School, and a teacher of biology & algebra at Bishop Amat High School. He served as a science teacher from 1977-1978 for the United States Peace Corps in Ghana, West Africa.

On Saturday Nov. 3rd Mr. Maltez was moving into his office while we conducted another King Beautification Day. He came over and helped us plant, and I talked about the many plans still in the works at King. He pledged to help accomplish these goals. I feel that he is someone who will help us to keep moving in a positive direction. He will keep the children in mind first and always consider the surrounding community. He wants King to succeed just as much as we do. Welcome Mr. Maltez.

Los Feliz Branch Library

As always, we continue to improve library service to the Los Feliz community. The library will begin stocking DVD's. The selection is limited at this time, but as funding and space becomes available we will expand. We are testing out this new format, so please let us know if you like DVD's by checking them out or telling us.

The annual reading program for Children, Wild About Reading, continues until the end of this year. Children earn small toys, bookmarks and after 2,000 hours of reading, a free pass to the Los Angeles Zoo. Former Children's Librarian, Connie Dosch, has moved to a library closer to home as a Young Adult Librarian. New to the library and taking on the children work is Saralyn Otter. Saralyn will be having regular story times and programs. Laura Stickney from Barnsdall Jr. Art Center continues the monthly art class for children 7 years old and up.

Seth Nasatir has replaced Willow Nardoni-Teays as the Young Adult/Teen librarian. He has started a chess club open to all ages. The club meets every other Monday evening at 5:00. Other programs of interest to teens are in the planning stages. You can call the library and speak to Seth for specific information.

Adult computer classes continue to be offered by Adult Librarians Catherine O'Connor and Michael Leonard and by Computer Aide, Jair Thomas. In addition to the monthly book discussion group, the meet the author series and Los Feliz Library League Architecture lectures, beginning in January the Los Angeles Opera will present a monthly lecture.

Also coming next year will be the return of the Los Feliz Woodwind Ensemble with Klamon Bloch, a *History of Los Feliz* presentation and a *Travel: Using the Library* series. For information about these and other adult programs, call the library at (323) 913-4710.

If you would like to receive notification about upcoming adult programs join our email list by sending us a message at lfeliz@lapl.org and ask to be added.

The library will close at 12:30 on December 24th and re-open at 10:00am on December 26th. We will also close at 5:00 on December 31st and re-open at 10:00am January 2, 2002.

We wish our Franklin Hills neighbors a safe and happy holiday season.

-Pearl Yonezawa

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Annual Meeting:

Membership Up Over 125% In Last 3 Years
By Bruce Carroll

Headed for its third straight membership record, 2001 has been a lucky year for the FHRA despite the fact that we picked the 13th of June to hold our 13th annual membership meeting. But there was no triskaidekaphobia (fear of 13) in evidence among 150 members and guests who attended. As usual, it was a great place to renew old friendships and meet new neighbors. Many newcomers and veterans signed up to help with various FHRA activities and they enjoyed the delicious snacks and refreshments donated by our hosts at ABC-TV Center.

The official business of the meeting was the election of six members of the FHRA Board of Directors. Four incumbents: Chris Boutelle, Bruce Carroll, Shirley Mims, and Carol Skinner were re-elected. Community Garden coordinator Norman Harriton was also easily elected, but determining the winner of the 6th Board position had to wait until the end of the meeting. Ballots mailed in by 98 FHRA members had two neighborhood lawyers, Joseph Hahn and Richard Shafran, in a dead heat. It was up to those members who voted at the meeting to decide the race after hearing briefly from all the candidates.

The meeting also provided an informative overview of FHRA and neighborhood issues and paid memorial tribute to the late City Council President John Ferraro who had helped our neighborhood in many ways on many occasions.

With the campaign to choose his successor then in full swing several candidates also showed their interest in the FHRA. Among them was Tom Labonge, the eventual winner, who has long supported various FHRA efforts, even getting his hands down and dirty helping to plant the Franklin Avenue median in 1995.

After welcoming the crowd, FHRA President Ricardo Gomez reported on the months of continuing discussions about the formation of a Neighborhood Council to officially represent Franklin Hills, Los Feliz and surrounding areas. There were also progress reports on the FHRA's efforts to obliterate graffiti, beautify the Myra corridor and start a Community Garden all reported on elsewhere in the Overview.

LAPD senior lead officers discussed crime trends in the area and asked for civilian volunteers to help fight crime by doing surveillance in areas where ongoing drug and

continued on page 7

other crimes are suspected.

School Board President Caprice Young praised community support for improvements at King Middle School along with neighborhood resident Mary Rodriguez who has spearheaded many of the efforts to upgrade the campus.

With the usual friendly neighborhood spirit that pervades our meetings, despite the very close ballot count, no one asked for the Supreme Court's help when it was announced at the end of the meeting that Joseph Hahn had been elected to the final seat on the FHRA Board of Directors. You can see his brilliant efforts this holiday when you enjoy the lights on the Shakespeare Bridge.

photo by Bruce Carroll



FHRA President Ricardo Gomez welcomes the year's largest gathering of Franklin Hills residents. How many of your neighbors can you recognize from the backs of their heads?

Duelling Signs

photo and text by Bruce Carroll

The stepped up security around the ABC TV Center has left some residents looking for parking and has no doubt left some drivers perplexed by duelling signs at the corner of Talmadge and Melbourne. You can almost hear: "But Judge the other sign said 'NO Stopping Anytime.'"



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Editorial

by Carol Skinner

I hope that all of you in our exclusive distribution area (you have to live in Franklin Hills) enjoy the Overview. There are two things I'd like to ask of you, our loyal readers: *Patronize our advertisers, and tell them you saw their ad in the Overview!*

Without them there would be no Overview, as FHRA couldn't publish it without the ad revenue. We owe these merchants a debt of gratitude; many of them support community projects in many other ways. Let them know that their ads are bringing in business, and that the community appreciates their support.

Contribute your thoughts, ideas, plans and projects to the Overview.

I am very grateful for the board members and community members who contribute the articles and photos which make up the Overview. I'm absolutely sure there are people in the community with something to say from whom we have not yet heard, and I would like to have as many voices represented as possible. The summer issue will be out in June; I need to have the content by the first of May. Put this on your calendar for next year: *write*—story, article, poem, restaurant review—whatever is your interest. Put a note on your calendar or send in your stuff right now. Snail mail it to the FHRA mailbox (P.O. Box 29122, Los Angeles, CA 90029,) or e-mail it to FHRA2000@hotmail.com.

Mary Frances Reynolds and Shirley Mims have prepared a list of holiday safety tips, as advised by LAPD. A few samples:

- ◆ Exercise extra caution while shopping—this is the pickpockets' favorite time of the year.
- ◆ Don't have gifts and packages visible through the windows of your home or your car. Burglars love the holidays too.
- ◆ Not everyone with a kettle is collecting for the poor. Check out anyone asking for donations on the street, door to door, by phone or mail. Focus your generosity on legitimate charities.
- ◆ Start a Neighborhood Watch on your street. Contact Mary Frances Reynolds at 323/668-9069 or crandmf@aol.com.

And finally, don't miss the graffiti story on page 20 or the information about the 911 service on page 13. This was written for us by Sandy Rosenberg, the Community Relations officer at Northeast Division. This is the solution to the problem of dropped 9-1-1 calls.



Charley Mims is up a ladder placing a blue ribbon to show support for our police officers on Police Appreciation Day. Next November the city-wide observance will again be marked by community members bringing food to the station through all shifts for the officers. Call the CRO office for information on how to participate.



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