

OVERVIEW

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE # 25

SPRING/SUMMER 2003

Annual Meeting on May 27 at 7 p.m. King Middle School Auditorium



Photo by Bruce Carroll
Councilman Tom La Bonge



Photo by Bruce Carroll



Photo by Bruce Carroll
Senior Lead Officer Al Polehoncki will be at the meeting

Meeting in (2002) in King MS Auditorium. Bring your neighbors!

Reunion Anual
Mayo 27 a las 7 p.m.
en auditorio de
la Escuela King

Le pedimos a cada uno que vive o que trabaja en Franklin Hills que asista a nuestra reunión anual el Martes, 27 de Mayo. Comenzara a las 6:30 y refrigerios serán servidos – esos son siempre importantes. Si usted todavía no ha pagado su membresía para este año, nosotros podemos aceptar su pago. Todos los miembros que atiendan votarán sobre asuntos del FHRA (véase página 5). Si durante la reunión usted desea nominar a un candidato para el Concejal de la vecindad, usted puede hacerlo. Estamos especialmente interesados en tener personas de la vecindad alrededor de la escuela King, alrededor de los Estudios Prospect, y del lado de la calle Hyperion.

Es importante venir y conocer a sus vecinos, y votar sobre asuntos del FHRA. Pero la mejor parte de la reunión es conocer, escuchar, y hacer preguntas al Consejero de la ciudad Tom LaBonge, a los oficiales de nuestra policía quien protege nuestra vecindad, y a otras personas quienes influyen nuestras vidas. ¡Venga preparado para hablar! Estamos trabajando en varios asuntos al momento: Mejor iluminación alrededor de la escuela, pavimentar las calles, y eliminar el graffiti. Deseamos saber que asuntos son importantes para ustedes.

Everyone in Franklin Hills is urged to come to the annual meeting on Tuesday, May 27. At 6:30 there will be refreshments served—that's always important—and we will be happy to take your money if you haven't already paid your dues this year. All members vote on FHRA business (see story page 5). And any member may nominate a candidate for the Board during the meeting. We are especially interested in having people from the south and east parts of Franklin Hills.

It's important to get to meet your neighbors, and to vote on FHRA's business. Everyone's favorite part of the evening is meeting and hearing our City Councilman, Tom La Bonge, the police officers who protect our neighborhood, other people who influence our lives; and being able to ask them questions. Come prepared to speak up! Some of the issues we are working on are: Better lighting around the school, street paving, getting rid of graffiti. We want to hear from you about what issues are important to you.

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Letter from the President

by Charley Mims

President's Report

Charley M. Mims



Well, it's hard to believe, but we are coming up on the end of another year for the FHRA! Just last year I was elected to another two year term on the Board following which the other Board members elected me President.

So much has happened this year that looking back it doesn't quite seem possible. We continued with ongoing projects to beautify our neighborhood and developed new ones. The median island on Franklin Avenue near the Shakespeare Bridge has never looked better. Shirley Mims has continued to work with neighbors near the bridge and with staff from Councilman LaBonge's office to clean up under the bridge, to build a retaining wall, to install an irrigation system and to landscape the area, so both top side and below, the Shakespeare Bridge will look great and be a beautiful landmark in our neighborhood.

Norm Harriton turned over the Chair of the Franklin Hills Community Garden to Tori Kjer, who has continued to improve this project. Besides a new fence, a potting and tool storage shed was designed and built next to the garden. Norm served the Board delicious strawberries from his plot at our last Board meeting!

Carol Skinner has continued to maintain liaison with the local police and has kept us informed as to crime trends. Sadly we learned of the death of one of our favorite Senior Lead Officers, Stacy Miyamura. She was such a good officer, diligent, helpful and never complaining, even when her battle with cancer was at its most difficult.

Mary Frances Smith-Reynolds (whew!) continued expanding our neighborhood watch block captain program. She also helped develop community support for the mural artist who beautified the little commercial building at the south west corner of Prospect and Talmadge. The dedication was just last month and Mary Frances is already lining up funding for his next mural on the public stairway at Hoover and Prospect.

The Bureau of Street Services has finally completed an analysis of the paving failures on Cumberland and other nearby streets. They plan on implementing a correction in the near future. Public Works Commissioner Janice Wood is doing an audit of bulky item pick-up to improve this City supplied service. We look forward to hearing from her at our annual membership meeting on the progress of this report.

We were successful in curbing the illegal uses of auto body shops in the area thanks to the persistent work of Past-President Ricardo Gomez. He continues to be a watchdog for our neighborhood on these and related issues.

Our communities' Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council, (GGPNC), was certified and elected/selected its Board. Our FHRA Board members Char-

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Not To Sound Like a Broken Record...

But FHRA Broke More Records Last Year

By FHRA Treasurer, Bruce Carroll

2002 was a record year for the FHRA. Our membership increased to slightly over 400, up almost 16% from 2001, which was also a record year. Our total income from all dues, donations, dividends, advertising and maybe four pennies found on the bridge, totaled. \$16,118.04. That's well above previous years except 1995 when we had a big fund drive to cover the cost of median landscaping.

The good news is that we didn't need red ink as our expenditures were \$234.72 below income. As usual the biggest item in both expense and income was the Overview. What's new is it turned a profit, albeit quite modest...just 90 cents. Ad revenue brought in \$5,350 and covered expenses of \$5,349.10.

The next two biggest sources of income were the Franklin Hills Community Garden where grants for fencing and a tool shed yielded \$2,500 from the city and \$1,000 from the county. Membership fees and a donation from the FHRA general fund brought the garden's total to \$4,308.15. Just behind were FHRA membership dues at \$4,010. Many members added contributions above and beyond their dues totaling nearly \$2000. And sales of historic photos and FHRA t-shirts brought in just under \$500 although we spent over \$2000 to renew our stock for the first time in several years. Order a T-shirt now while we have a full range of sizes once again.

Other big expense items were the Franklin Avenue Median, where maintenance and water soaked up almost \$1500. Insurance in our ever litigious world cost just over \$1000. We donated over \$800 to various groups from the Griffith Park Neighborhood Council, to the Hillside Federation, to gifts of appreciation for ailing LAPD Senior Lead Officers. We spent over \$500 on various forms of communication from postage, to our FHRA message line (323-664-7247) and our new, last spring, website (www.FranklinHills.org).

Special programs like our revived Neighborhood Watch, Graffiti abatement, and Welcome Baskets for new neighbors got about \$650 from the budget. Mundane miscellaneous expenses of about \$300 rounded out our expenditures.

The FHRA's stock holdings suffered through the same tumultuous year as most stocks. What started out a few years ago as a generous gift of 25 MediaOne shares worth nearly \$1,400, later merged to become 22 shares of AT&T (plus about \$1000 in cash) then last year shrunk to just 4 shares of AT&T after spinoffs of 7 shares each of AT&T Wireless and Comcast. All together our portfolio ended 2002 worth about \$320. For the year down about 20%.

What's expected to go up this year are FHRA expenses. We have already made or pledged donations and gifts nearly twice last year's level, including support for the Prospect & Talmadge mural artists, our insurance rates have gone up, as has the cost of regular median maintenance...and there is so much more to be done. That's why we'll be asking the annual meeting to approve a dues increase...a modest \$5 per year. It's the first dues increase we've asked for in a since way back in 1991.

You can also make designated contributions to pet programs like the Median, Neighborhood Watch, Murals, Welcome Baskets etc...Please join us, be generous. Together we can make this great neighborhood even better.

Attacking Graffiti

by Eric Frase

GRAFFITI ABATEMENT EFFORTS GEARED TOWARD "MAINTENANCE"



As chairperson of the FHRA Graffiti Abatement Committee the past several years, I'm happy to report that I, and my fellow neighborhood volunteers, have had remarkably little tagging and other vandalism to clean up in the past six months. Of all the former "hot spots" of graffiti activity in the area, the small building at the corner of Prospect and Talmadge has seen the most dramatic transformation with the addition of Ricardo Mendoza's glorious mural, "Our Rite To Culture."

I firmly believe our days of group "paint outs" are a thing of the past and that the occasional, small "tags" that may pop up here and there in the neighborhood will be quickly removed by the affected property owner or tenant. In a way, Franklin Hills is like the person who has entered a weight loss regime and achieved the desired results and wants to maintain it. I invite current graffiti abatement volunteers as well as interested new individuals to join the FHRA with these suggestions to maintain and enhance the appearance of all areas of our neighborhood. Updates and announcements will be sent to those on the current graffiti email list (snail mail also available.) If you would like to become involved send your e-mail address to FHRA2000@hotmail.com or leave your mailing address at 323-664-7247.

+ Report graffiti on public property (sidewalks, curbs, etc.) to Operation Clean Sweep (800-611-2489) for removal.

+ Put pressure on businesses that neglect graffiti on their property. We'll alert you of locations, especially along the Fountain corridor, to call or visit to ask for their assistance to do their part in keeping our neighborhood free of graffiti.

+ Have a backup supply of paint if your property uses eclectic color. Taggers know that walls, garage doors, etc. that are ordinary colors (gray, white, beige, etc.) are more easily and quickly repainted than odd-colored surfaces. (This was part of the reason for the on-going tagging at the building at Prospect & Talmadge when it was painted light blue.)

+ Cover the "canvas". Our hillside geography is full of retaining walls that tempt the taggers who pass by every day going to and from school. Colorful vegetation draping over walls is an excellent deterrent to graffiti. (Check out the verdant wall coverings on Clayton between Talmadge and Hoover!)

+ Lighting deters. Driveways, garage doors, etc. near sidewalks are easily protected with lighting triggered by motion sensors

+ Visual blight is visual blight. Need to post notices in your area for yard sales, lost pets, neighborhood watch meetings, etc? Remove them A.S.A.P.!

+ Sneakers hanging on power lines. Identifiers of gang activity? Drug dealing? Or, urban legend? Whatever the true meaning, everyone, including Mayor Hahn acknowledges the "unspoken" message this visual conveys. To report the removal of shoes from overhead lines, call the new City Services hotline at 3-1-1.

Northeast Division LAPD



I hope that this article finds everyone in the Franklin Hills community in good health and looking forward to a great summer. Most of us spend a

considerable amount of time on the road driving to and from work, to shop for groceries or perhaps to that special place for an enjoyable evening out. Just driving in and out of the hills can be a daunting task, especially during rush hour with the commuter traffic that short cuts through the area.

Patience is certainly a virtue but when combined with defensive driving habits and following the rules of the road our daily drives can be safe ones.

A traffic collision is defined as an unintentional occurrence in which the movement of a conveyance causes death, injury or property damage. Interesting definition in that the word unintentional means, "not caused on purpose". Its true that most drivers don't want to intentionally cause an accident but at the same time will intentionally speed, fail to yield the right of way or stop for posted stop signs or

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signals. Not to mention the drivers that are distracted by cell phone usage, eating, shaving or reading the paper.

The latest statistics from Operations Central Bureau for our Top Collision Intersections from February 9th 2003 to May 3rd 2003 are as follows:

- * Riverside Drive and Fletcher Drive 11 Traffic Collisions.
- * Vermont Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard 6 Traffic Collisions.

Traffic enforcement is a priority and efforts are being made to make our streets safer by the issuance of traffic citations and educational programs. But success can only come if we work in partnership. Make the commitment to be a defensive driver and watch out for those who may not be.

Make plans to attend the Semi-Annual Basic Car meeting on June 12th 2003 at 6PM. The meeting will be held in the community room at the former Cal Fed bank at 1965 North Hillhurst Avenue. Command personal from Northeast Division, Senior Lead Officers from the adjoining Basic Car areas and other speakers will attend.

Don't forget to check out the Los Angeles Police Departments official web site at WWW.LAPDONLINE.Org.

Sincerely,
Senior Lead Officer Al Polehonki

FHRA Seeks To Change Space, Money and Time

By Bruce Carroll



In addition to electing new faces to the FHRA Board of Directors, members attending the May 27th meeting will also be asked to vote on three important ques-

tions. The first two are follow-ups to last year's approval of by-laws changes giving those attending the annual meeting the power to adjust FHRA boundaries and dues. The third measure is a change in the FHRA by-laws allowing greater flexibility in scheduling the Annual Meeting.

The FHRA Board recommends approval of a measure to include residents on both sides of our boundary streets...Talmadge, Franklin, St. George and Tracy. The old by-laws set our boundaries at the middle of those streets meaning that technically only half of our Shakespeare Bridge was in FHRA territory.

The Board is also asking FHRA Members attending the Annual Meeting to approve the first dues increase in a dozen years. We've debated the idea for a couple of years, but it finally came to the point where increasing costs and our desire to do more for the community made the \$5 per member increase, effective in 2004, seem like the prudent thing to do. Both the change in dues and boundaries will require at majority vote of those attending the meeting.

The current FHRA by-laws specify that the Annual Meeting be held in April or May. The change, which will require a 2/3 vote of members attending the meeting, would allow the Annual Meeting to be held anytime during the second quarter of the year...from April through June. Before the little noticed by-laws provision was rediscovered, FHRA's most widely attended meetings had been held early June so we decided to make sure our by-laws permitted this timing.

Whether you vote yea or nay on any or all of these changes, please join your neighbors in helping to make the FHRA an effective neighborhood voice by attending the Annual Meeting on Tuesday May 27th at the King Middle School Auditorium.

Welcome Baskets Need YOUR Help

by Shirley Mims

Many deserving neighbors have not received a welcome basket since before the publication of the last Overview. As previously announced, the program is on hiatus until someone volunteers to take it over. There are lots of volunteers willing to help out and lots of merchants and City services willing to donate their wares and information, but we still have not heard from anyone who will oversee the project. Please contact FHRA if you have an interest in helping to continue this worthwhile program 323/664-7247 or fhra@franklinhills.org

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An Update on Neighborhood Coyotes and Other Matters.

by George Grace

My lab Lucky and I are still taking our morning walks. We haven't spied a coyote since last February. It happened in a flash. A ball of fur streaked across the street and down the hill. And that was that. No more coyotes. I figure that the recent rains and subsequent explosion of vegetation in Griffith Park prompted the Coyotes to return to their old Park stomping grounds where they are finding water and rodents in abundance. At least, I hope so. Which leads me ask whether the "Wildlife Drinkers" I wrote about in the last newsletter are really needed.

In January, Adam Weisman our FHRA Board Chairman, an interested neighbor Dave Shindle, and I had a meeting with Steve Lane, the Griffith Park Maintenance Supervisor to discuss the installation of "Wildlife Drinkers" in Griffith Park. Steve brought along a large map that showed the location of a number of horse watering troughs along the 52 miles of horse trails in the park that could be used by all the native wildlife. He told us about one where Park deer queued up every morning to get a drink of water. This was a welcome surprise, in spite of the fact that large areas of wildlife habitat are not adjacent to the horse trails. We were invited to take a ride with Steve through the park, and I was able to do this in late January.

Steve took me for a two hour tour in a 4 wheel drive vehicle on paved and unpaved roads throughout the Park. It is magnificent but seemed sadly neglected. We passed by a film shoot - location shooting costs only \$300 per day in Griffith Park. There must have been 25 vehicles along the side of a road only accessible to hikers, horses, and film crews. A little further along, we came to an idyllic spot with a horse watering trough, a "people" water fountain, and even some roadside sprinklers that were still operable. Yes, there is a vast sprinkler system already in the park, but it is mostly in ruins. Steve told me that there are plans to shut down more sprinklers in additional park areas. We rode by the Condor area, a breeding place for the nearly extinct California Condor; and by old and new water towers. We stopped at Amir's Garden, a beautiful spot faithfully tended by volunteers, drove along paved roads closed to the public in the 1980s, and stopped at the 1,680 foot top of Mt. Hollywood. During our trip, we talked about the plight of the native wildlife in drought conditions, and speculated if this was re-

ally why coyotes were appearing in local neighborhoods. In the end, it seems to boil down to this: The key to a healthy park and healthy park wildlife is an adequate water supply.

At this point, the neighborhood coyote problem became part of a bigger question. Did the City have a long range plan for Griffith Park that addressed this need? Research provided the following:

At least two "Master Plans" exist for Griffith Park dating from 1968, and 1978.

The 1968 Master Plan is available at the Public Library, and was created under the administration of Mayor Sam Yorty. This plan is by far the more ambitious, and would have attempted to transform Griffith Park into an Eden for wildlife and park visitors. Plan features include 100 foot high waterfalls, forty boating, fishing, and swimming lakes, and a coastal rain forest. Per this plan, "The Park's irrigation system would be completely automated to include moisture sensitive devices located throughout the park." "All portions of the park will receive optimal irrigation for their particular vegetation." Long range objectives included "improving facilities encouraging wildlife habitation throughout the park."

The 1978 Master Plan, created when Tom Bradley was Mayor, dramatically scales back the 1968 version. Nevertheless, park irrigation is its' Centerpiece, and it recommends that "Through the development of water the wildlife populations could be encouraged to stay in these more remote areas (park wildlife habitat) giving them greater protection..."

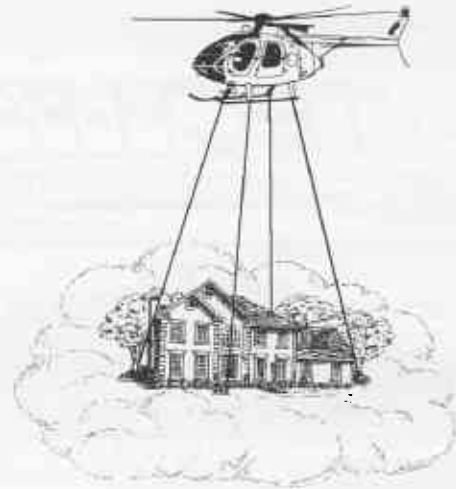
Now here's really important news:

Work is beginning on a New update of the Griffith Park Master Plan.

Last Fall, our City Councilman, Tom LaBonge successfully acquired City financing to update the Griffith Park Master Plan. The work has been contracted to the planning firm Melendrez Design Partners, and is just beginning. They expect to complete the update by the end of 2003, and are presently developing a community outreach program for those interested in providing input to the Master Plan. They can be reached at 213-673-4400.

An adequate irrigation and watering system, for preserving Griffith Park's ecology, needs to be an integral part of the new Master Plan - as it has been in the past. The 1978 Master Plan is an interesting read. You can download a PDF copy of the plan, and sign up to receive additional information about the Master Plan update, on the internet at <http://www.gmrnet.com/MasterPlan.html>

Thank you Mr. Coyote. If I hadn't seen you strolling down the street, I'd never have known how much your presence in my neighborhood had to do with big doings at City Hall.



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COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO HYPERION BRIDGE ATTACKER: AN EXAMPLE OF COMMUNITY POLICING

By Mary Frances Smith-Reynolds



The ongoing campaign to help find the Hyperion Bridge attacker is a powerful example of citizens becoming involved in crime-fighting and safety issues in our area.

Over the last six months, residents from the neighborhoods of Los Feliz, Franklin Hills, Atwater Village, and Silver Lake have focused tremendous effort on raising awareness about the suspect who has been sexually assaulting girls in our area since 1995. This sexual predator, known as the "Hyperion Bridge rapist," has victimized 19 girls, most between 11 and 17 years old, all attacked when walking alone. Many of these girls have been students from John Marshall High School in Los Feliz.

The involvement of the community - a collaborative effort with LAPD police officers and detectives, city officials and area schools - has been three-pronged. The first goal is to educate people who live in the area to be more proactive: That is, to never walk alone, to report anything unusual or suspicious, and to avoid areas that leave a lone walker vulnerable. Second, local activists are working with city representatives to improve the well-worn routes to and from Marshall High School by clearing brush, adding lighting, and increasing police patrols. The third, equally important objective is to raise the awareness of what this suspect looks like, and

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where he has struck, so that people can be on the lookout for him.

LAPD describes the suspect as a Hispanic male 30-35 years old, 5-foot-6 to 5-foot-8, weighing 200 to 280 pounds, with brown/gray hair. He has large fleshy hands, a "potato-shaped" nose, a pot belly and a strong odor. He has been unshaven, and has often worn a black knit cap. If you have information, please call Detective Greg Stone at 213/763-5061. For after-hours calls, contact Detective Headquarters Division at 877/529-3855.

The efforts of the many people involved with this issue have paid off with two recent developments. First, Council Districts 4 and 13 (the offices of Councilmembers Tom LaBonge and Eric Garcetti) have joined forces to offer a \$20,000 reward for information leading to the prosecution of this suspect.

The other recent success was a well-attended evening march and candlelight vigil on April 4, when the \$20,000 reward was announced. The event, presented by Students Together Organizing Peace, (STOP) a student group at Marshall High, attracted about 200 people. Its purpose was to raise public awareness about this attacker, and get more people involved in the efforts to catch him and protect our community. The evening started with a rally at Marshall High, followed by a march to the Hyperion Bridge where a candlelight vigil fanned out on the bridge's sidewalks.

Speakers at the event, each of whom made heartfelt and articulate statements about this issue, included Mary Rodriguez, a neighborhood activist and mother of two Marshall High School students; Councilmember Tom LaBonge; State Senator Jack Scott; and Marshall High School student and STOP member Marisol Pineda.

The STOP Club, a project of the L.A. Commission on Assaults Against Women, is very active at Marshall High School. In response to the Hyperion Bridge attacker problem, STOP is offering self-defense classes for students, as well as other consciousness-raising activities. It was clear at the April 4 event how focused and empowered these students feel to take back their streets and their neighborhoods.

Actions being taken to respond to this serious problem in our area are potent examples of active neighborhood organization and involvement in community policing in the Northeast area.

The Los Angeles Police Department, under the leadership of Chief William J. Bratton, is making a concerted effort to get communities more involved in improving safety and quality of life in our city. At each of the public forums where Chief Bratton has addressed our corner of Los Angeles in re-

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cent months, he has emphasized the need for more community policing, and the huge results that can follow from a partnership between police officers and citizens. Community policing is tried and true, and takes many different forms.

Starting or joining a Neighborhood Watch group is one tested, effective way to become involved in improving your quality of life, and in building community. At meetings in December 2002 and March 2003, community activists gathered at the LAPD Northeast Division station to brainstorm ways to increase the number of, and involvement in, Neighborhood Watch groups. If you would like to start a Neighborhood Watch group on your block, or if you would like to know if there is already one on your street, call Mary Frances Smith-Reynolds (323/668-9069) or call the LAPD Northeast Station, Community Relations, (213/485-2548.)