



OVERVIEW

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

ISSUE No. 5

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 1991

THE VIEW FROM SHAKESPEARE BRIDGE

by ROSALIND LIEBERMAN

The other morning I talked with a lovely neighbor you may know, Mrs. Catherine Metcalf McGowan, about the Franklin Avenue Bridge which, I recently learned, was designated a Historical-Cultural Monument in 1974 and has been nominated to the National Register. Mrs. McGowan's father, Robert Metcalf, was the contractor who built the bridge, which was designed by J. C. Wright, a civil engineer with the Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering.

Begun in 1924, the bridge was completed in 1926 at a cost of \$59,960. Mr. Metcalf was also the contractor who graded and paved the streets and laid the sewers in the Franklin Hills. As Mrs. McGowan remember it, the whole job took less than five years.

"What else can you tell me about Shakespeare Bridge?" I ask.

"Well, my father never did understand where that name came from," she said, "because that bridge was modeled on a bridge in France."

We tossed around a few possibilities. Did someone spot Juliet's ghost, leaning over the balustrade, mooning over some Romeo down

See BRIDGE, p. 6, Col 1

"Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that can change the world."

- Anthropologist Margaret Mead



Happy

Holiday

Season From

The Franklin Hills

Residents Association

'Twas the season of Xmas, and all thru L.A.
varied cultures preparing a bright holiday.

The children are clutching their wish lists so tight,
with prayers Santa's reindeer can find them at night.

The stores all do beckon - with trees, lights and sales.
Some say our greed, this holiday's message derails.

Excesses abound - in this land called La La,
though the creatures do pray - to God, Buddha or Allah.

So from our little corner, around Franklin Hill,
let's sing out a message of peace and goodwill.

From the
Members of the Board
FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

WANTED: Membership Chairman and You!

I am serving as temporary chairman of a new Membership Committee, and one of our committee's first goals is to find an individual who would have the interest and time to serve as a permanent Chairman. The principal functions of this person will be to establish a new member outreach program and member retention program strategy and then direct its implementation through the committee members efforts. We already have a group of people who are willing to work on the committee, including myself, but we need someone who is able to call and assemble meetings of the committee on a regular basis and direct its activities. We are all willing to assist the chairman and provide effort to accomplish the committee's goals.

If anyone has some interest in this role, please call me at 666-0307 to discuss this in greater detail. Even if you are not sure you can do it, please give me a call, because the role is very do-able if you have the interest and four or five hours a month that you can spend on this. We can help with the rest: strategy, implementation, etc.

I would also like to take this opportunity to invite all our readers who have not joined or who have let their membership lapse (fortunately there are not too many in this latter category) to fill out and send in the membership form in this issue. We want you and we need you to join us"

We have begun to create an organization which is helping our residential community to speak to and act upon the issues which shape and impact the quality of our lives in Los Angeles, the leading urban center in our country! Whether we deal with these issues with reason or neglectful folly is up to each and every one of us! So join us; It is step one in supporting the quality of your residential life!

And finally, I would like to say that the most important thing we are doing through our activities is creating a sense of community for those that participate in our organization's activities. The biggest drawback to living in an urban environment is the difficulty in finding and/or maintaining a sense of community because of the absence of a shared history and the sheer volume of people. So come help us evolve our sense of community in the Franklin Hills area! JOIN US!

- BRYANT CROUSE

Vice President, Franklin Hills Resident Association

LOS FELIZ HILLS SCHOOL HISTORICAL-CULTURAL MONUMENT STATUS

by TONY MICHAELIS

On November 12, the Los Angeles City Council, acting on an application submitted by the Franklin Hills Residents Association, designated the four buildings (currently known as Los Feliz Hills School) designed by renowned architect John Lautner and their site as a Historical-Cultural Monument. This means that any effort to demolish the site for potential residential development will mandate a six to twelve month delay to allow efforts to retain the site in its existing state. The Association would like to thank Councilman Michael Woo and his staff for their assistance in this achievement.

The resident Los Feliz Hills School was foreclosed on in August and has vacated the property. The new owners are Community Bank and Mega Mortgage. They are looking for a buyer for the property but, due to the weak economy and the limitations of the site, they have been unsuccessful in selling the site to date.

The Association's Los Feliz Hills School Committee has been working
See SCHOOL, p. 8

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To better serve the community, committees have been formed to deal with issues that concern our neighborhood on a daily basis:

ABC-TV/COMMUNITY RELATIONS:

Don Waldrop, 664-4124

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Isabel Dietz, 661-4531

NE-TACC (Gangs)

Patti Harrison, 662-8709

The OVERVIEW invites your comments and, space permitting, will publish letters mailed to Editor, Overview, Box 29122, Los Angeles, CA 90027

Editor & Publisher: Don Waldrop

Contributing Writers:

Bruce Carroll, Barbara Dakin
Isabel Dietz, Rosalind Lieberman,
Tony Michaelis, Violet Weber,

Editorial and Advertising Sales:

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DISASTER RESPONSE FUND

Over the past year, forty of your neighbors cared enough to train with the Los Angeles Fire Department for seven weeks to learn how to help themselves and their neighbors in the event of an earthquake or other major disaster.

Out of this forty, a small group of Team Leaders has been working consistently to better prepare the neighborhood in many ways.

The Team Leaders have put together a list of basic equipment to be stored near

a central staging area to care for anyone in our community needing shelter, medical care, fire suppression, search and rescue, and food and water.

This equipment includes generators to provide light and power to the staging area, tarps and poles to shelter the injured, first aid supplies, fire extinguishers and so on.

Obviously, preparing for a disaster is a neighborhood investment. The lives and well-being of you and your family

are at stake, and we need your help.

Most immediately, we need funds to purchase supplies and equipment to care for your family and others. Please send a check or money order today to:
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Thank you for sending \$10, \$25, or as much as you can afford. We will keep you informed of our efforts through the Overview community newsletter.

Franklin Hills Residents Association Disaster Response Training

Your Second Chance!

Last October forty neighbors joined in a seven-week Disaster Preparedness Training Program.

Now divided into Search and Rescue, Fire Suppression, Medical and Logistical teams, these trained people are prepared to help their neighbors survive devastating disasters.

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This is a **FREE** seven-week course, designed to train you to be genuinely able to help in the event of a natural disaster to save your own life and possibly those of your family and neighbors.

Please don't depend on others to protect you. In the event of the "Big One", we could be isolated from police, communications, medical help or the Fire Department for up to 72 hours. **CAN YOU COPE WITH THAT?**

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Thomas Starr King School, 4201 Fountain Avenue

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To sign up or for further information, call:

VIOLET WEBER, (213) 663-6427

Leader, Disaster Preparedness Team

OUR LIBRARY LOOKS LIKE A XMAS TREE

by BRUCE CARROLL

The seasonal forest has sprouted in the empty lot on Hillhurst just south of Franklin Avenue. Next door at the Progress School, students are still hopefully making progress in their "Clases de Ingles." And if you \$850 a month you can lease the little one-bedroom house around the corner for a year.

It sure doesn't look like much has happened in the two months since the Library Commission finally selected the south-east corner of Franklin and Hillhurst Avenues as the site for our new Los Feliz Public Library. But this month the initial environmental report, the Negative Declaration, will be presented to the Commission. The amount of negatives in the declaration will determine how long the environmental process will take. Save Our Library Coalition coordinator Donna Matson is getting positive feedback, "From what we can tell all is going well . . . the Coalition continues to work with the Library Commission to give them information to assist them in the negative

declaration report and in the purchase of the property."

"Our real estate division doesn't want to do anything until we know the result of the environmental report" say Library spokeswoman Karen Smith. That's confirmed by the property owner J. D. Kelleher's observation, "No one's contacted me except you." With his development plans now in a "holding pattern," Mr. Kelleher said, "I would be willing to cooperate in the sale. It really comes down to the money, you know . . . I know they can condemn it, but then we have a fight. I'd just as soon not have a fight, I'd rather have a respectable offer and make a clean transaction."

Last May, the SOL Coalition got an estimate from area realtors of only \$1.5 million for the parcel. Mr. Kelleher points out that is less than the \$55 per square foot the smaller gas station, now mini mall, across the street sold for nearly ten years ago. "If that's the figure they are kicking around I hope they select a different parcel." Earlier city estimates of land

value have gone as high as \$2.4 million.

Once the land is in hand, the Library Department will unleash the creative talents of architect Barton Phelps. First he will do a conceptual plan, then seek community input. The final plan should be approved about 16 months after the land acquisition. Then, according to Ms. Smith, the timetable looks like this, "The bid process to find the contractor is six months; then the construction process is 12 to 14 months and that's if everything goes well . . . if nothing unusual transpires."

Well, we all know that the unusual usually seems to transpire and where construction and government are involved it's a virtual certainty. But, with fingers crossed for the best, if you had checked out a book from the current library the day the new site was approved, and planned to return it to the new library when it opens, figure that your fine (at ten cents a day) will be about \$146.10.

STAMP OUT JUNK . . . MAIL

by BRUCE CARROLL

So you thought you were making your sacrifice for the environment by spending an extra moment filling that bright yellow box the city gave you. Now Mayor Bradley has asked for an even bigger sacrifice . . . especially if you are a junk mail junkie.

The City Department of Mail Weighing (or whatever) estimates that we each get 170 pounds of junk mail a year and are apparently too: weak bored pissed off (select as many as apply) to open nearly 40% of it. The Mayor suggested that this "unwanted mail" not only fills up our mailboxes, but the City's only landfill.

By calling (800) CITY-SAN (or by reading on) you can get the address of the Direct Marketing Association's "Mail Preference Service." Originally the City printed up postcards to be mailed to D.M.A. explaining the city's "garbage crisis" and asking that, "you remove my name from all mailing lists." But after 7000 requests the supply ran out, along with the

funds to print more cards.

As the founder of the Society To Oppose Postal Junk, Unsolicited & Nuisance Correspondence (STOP JUNC), I can say my personal campaign to keep charities from using my contributions to restuff my mailbox has led to only limited success. My letter says, "If I receive more than two solicitations from you in the coming year I will deduct 10% from next year's check for each such solicitation received." I did actually get a \$20 check from an organization that called the policy "offensive."

If you find the avalanche of redundant pre-election political mail offensive, don't think your card or letter to the Mail Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 3861 New York, NY 10163-3861 will help you. As the Mayor explained with a laugh, "political mail is not included . . . we wouldn't dare go that far."

community phones

IMPORTANT COMMUNITY PHONE NUMBERS

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John Yingling, Plant Manager, (213)557-5000
Security: 557-5354.

CITY ANIMAL REGULATION: 222-7138

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL WOO:

District Office, 4640 Hollywood Blvd., (213) 485-6471;
Room 218, City Hall, 200 Spring St., (213) 485-3353

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Emergency 911;
Non-emergency: 485-6235;

GRAFFITI:

On private property: 253-2687
On public property: (818) 772-7753

POLICE: Emergency 911;

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LOS FELIZ PUBLIC LIBRARY: (213) 664-2903.

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PARKING ENFORCEMENT DISPATCH: (818) 904-1418

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SOON ON HILLHURST

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CAR PHONE OR RADIO?

An effort is being made to coordinate all types of emergency communication equipment in the event of a major earthquake or other disaster.

Owners of car phones, amateur ham radios, CB radios or walkie-talkie radios who would be willing to offer their support and expertise are asked to contact Jay Glassman at 663-3446 or Violet Weber at 663-6427

PHIL LYONS STILL CAN'T DO IT ALL

Do you have a nagging bit of visual pollution you'd like to get rid of? The Graffiti Paint-out Committee can supply you with free paint from Councilman Woo's office. Rollers and brushes are also available. For telephone poles, we can get you some dark brown paint free, donated by Baller's Hardware. These colors are available for a wall you'd like to adopt: white, off-white, mushroom and grey.

Our thanks to everyone who has adopted a wall recently - together we'll make a difference. Call Isabel Dietz (213) 661-4531 for paint, brushes or rollers. We will deliver supplies to your doorstep.

WE HEARD ABOUT YOU IN THE "OVERVIEW!"

The businesses in Franklin Hills, Los Feliz and Silverlake are experiencing the same recession we residents are experiencing. Supporting these businesses is a concept that works to our benefit. Traveling to other areas to shop has become troublesome now that the population and traffic have increased so much.

The businesses that have shown interest in reaching you and your neighbors by advertising in this (locally produced, hand distributed) newsletter are charged the absolute minimum possible fees to have their ads in the paper. Their ads pay for the paper. Therefore, please support our advertisers by utilizing their services regularly and, by all means, tell them you saw their ads in the "Overview."

BRIDGE, from p. 1

below on Monon Street? Or was the shadow of the Immortal Bard himself seen hunched under the street lamp penning his immortal lines? And where before have we seen those steeple-like turrets, those lancet arches and spandrels, Gothic and yet, not Gothic? Somewhere between Honfleur and Agincourt, didn't Laurence Olivier, in the guise of Henry V, lead his stalwart yeomen over just such a span? Or was it the Walt Disney influence?

"Oh, the bridge was here before Disney," she declares. "My father's office was right there on the corner of Franklin and Myra and he kept the mules where John Marshall High School is now."

"Mules?"

"Yes, they used mules to grade the streets. They didn't have heavy machinery out here in those days. I was about twelve years old then, and we lived in a two-family house on Commonwealth Avenue, near Clarissa. There were fields all around. I remember my father and I would go out after it rained and pick mushrooms to eat."

"Did you go to Franklin Avenue School?" I ask.

"No, Franklin School wasn't built yet then. That site was used for a dump, you know. I went to Los Feliz (Elementary) School, and I was in the first seventh grade class at King Junior High. Down below that was Cow Hollow. There used to be a grove of Eucalyptus trees there. And under the bridge where the (Los Feliz Hills) school is now, Japanese flower growers used to raise chrysanthemums. But, when all the building started, they left and never came back. And over where ABC is, that used to be Warner Brother's lot. I used to sit up on the hill and watch them shoot movies." (See photo, p. 11)

I think of the lines of cars that cross the Franklin Avenue bridge day and night. "How did people access the hill before the bridge was built?" I ask.

"They didn't," Mrs. McGowan explains patiently. "That ravine couldn't be crossed until the bridge was built. After that, they graded the streets and laid the pipes and did the pavings."

See BRIDGE, p. 8, Col. 1

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE ROUNDUP DON'T LET L.A. GO TO WASTE

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- Please transport waste in a cardboard box
- Keep all materials away from passengers during transportation
- Keep products in original containers.
- Do not mix products.
- Make sure containers are leakproof; if they are not, place them in larger leakproof containers.
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SCHOOL, from p. 2

with Mega Mortgage to attempt to get the City to purchase the site as a school, recreation center or park. Mega Mortgage has initiated legal action against the city to require it to take responsibility for the cleaning up the landfill site (garbage dump) which sits below the school.

A meeting is planned with Jan Perry (Councilman Michael Woo's Planning Deputy, John Emerson, Deputy City Attorney (and former candidate for our Assembly seat who has been extremely supportive and helpful in our Association's efforts on this issue), the new owners and representatives from the Parks and Recreation Department with a goal of reevaluating the potential of the City purchasing the site. The date of this meeting has not yet been set. Anyone wishing further information on this issue should call Tony Michaelis at (213) 666-8166.

BRIDGE, from p. 6

"And you say the whole job took less than five years, with mules?" I ask again because I still find the idea incredulous.

Mrs. McGowan does some fast figuring of key dates and relatives' ages. "That's right," she declares, "and there are still some sections of sidewalk out there with my father's benchmark stamped in. He went on to do other jobs, or course, and we moved out of the area for awhile, and then he died in 1941."

We talk of the fierce pride and loyalty that local residents seem to develop for this neighborhood. "Yes," Mrs. McGowan acknowledges, "we moved back to the area and all five of my daughters went to school at Franklin Avenue, King Junior High and John Marshall High. My baby is thirty-nine years old," she confides.

See BRIDGE, p. 10, col. 2

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Homeowners News and Views

IS "AS IS" REALLY "AS IS"?

by Karen Weiss

What if a seller knows that the roof leaks and that it must be replaced for \$15,000? Is it sufficient for him just to sell his house "as is" and not be responsible? The answer is "no." Under these circumstances, a buyer purchasing the house "as is" would have recourse against the seller for damages.

Homes are often presented in an "as is" condition. This statement by a seller often sends chills through potential buyers. Brokers often discourage sellers from offering to sell their house on an "as is" basis. This type of representation clearly inhibits the sale of the property. And yet, what does it really mean?

Under California law, a seller is liable for concealing a material fact. An "as is" clause cannot be used to deceive a buyer. Had the seller indicated that he was selling the house "as is" and that the buyer was aware that the house also needed a new roof, then the seller would probably have no legal exposure. Naturally the buyer would have to prove his case. Unless the seller admitted that he knew about the defective roof, the buyer would have a difficult time proving that the seller had knowledge unless the buyer was fortunate enough to have located a roofing contractor who had previously informed the seller of the need for a new roof.

Clearly, the above demonstrates again that California is not a caveat emptor (let the buyer beware) state when it comes to real estate transactions.

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NEW BUILDING AT MARSHALL HIGH

by DON WALDROP

In June the FHRA board was approached by the Shared Decision Making Council of Marshall High School to support an effort by the school to retain an endangered \$313,000 targeted for the new classroom building being built on the Northwest corner of the campus.

With the help of Senator David Roberti, the area community associations and other concerned citizens, this funding was secured and will hopefully satisfy the needs of the school administration while achieving the aesthetic concerns consistently voiced by residents of the Marshall area.

Residents were worried that the façade would not be compatible with the Gothic brick facade of the main building, a historically significant landmark, and were incensed that so little public comment was allowed, with only two public meetings late in the planning stages.

Construction is now underway and while, at a meeting in September, heavily landscaped renderings of the proposed façade were shown, it remains to be seen how much of the proposed aesthetic design will make it to the final stages.

BRIDGE, from p. 8

Shakespeare Bridge, one of Robert Metcalf's babies, is almost seventy. It is considered an artistic example of reinforced concrete bridge construction. In recent years some repairs have been made and the existing sidewalk was changed to the south side of the bridge. Neighbor Phil Lyons is to be applauded for his perseverance and success in keeping the bridge free of graffiti. Our Franklin Hills Residents Association is working closely with Councilman Michael Woo's office and the Department of Public Works developing plans to landscape about 600 feet that form an island at the west end of the bridge, incorporating drought-resistant planting.

Neighbors with green thumbs who are interested in contributing their efforts to this and similar projects are urged to contact Don Waldrop at (213) 664-4124. By contributing our efforts we can help obtain the city's participation in beautifying the area surrounding our beloved bridge. Community gardening is a great way to meet other neighbors who care about our cultural and environmental treasures. And isn't this a great way to pay homage to the efforts of those local pioneers who left us our unique Franklin Hills heritage?

(Ed. - We are indebted to the Los Angeles City Cultural Heritage Commission and to Dianne Kanner for their assistance.)



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Franklin Hill in 1928, after Contractor Metcalf has done his work



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