



OVERVIEW

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE # 23

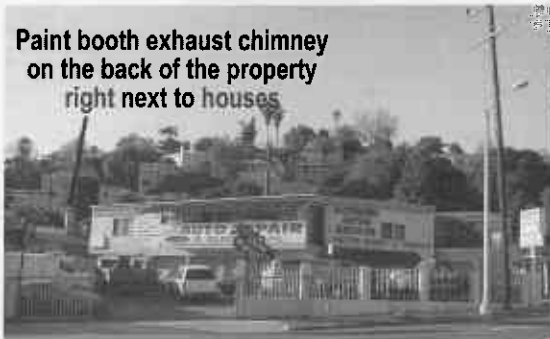
SPRING 2002

ANNUAL MEETING: WEDNESDAY JUNE 12, 7PM, AT ABC—REHEARSAL HALL 1 GOING !

Text and photos by Bruce Carroll

GOING!

Paint booth exhaust chimney on the back of the property right next to houses



The auto repair shop at 1845 Hyperion Ave. was denied a zoning variance after captioned photos presented to the zoning administrator by the FHRA clearly showed numerous problems and violations at the body shop. Its neighbors on DeLongpre and nearby streets had complained for for years.



GOING (too fast)

By Bruce Carroll

"He must have gone pretty fast." That's what Franklin Hills resident Alexandra Weiss thought when she surveyed the remains of her 1985 Volvo before dawn on April 4th. The hit and run accident, which rammed Weiss's parked car into another in front of it, happened on Franklin Ave. just across from the south side of median. It was the second overnight collision on the block within a week. In the earlier accident three parked cars were totaled including a brand new Hyundai and a Nissan. One neighbor reported the driver, who was arrested, "was going an estimated 70 miles an hour," according to police. These accidents are part of a cluster of apparently speed related wrecks in the area in the last six months. In one accident a mother pushing her child in a stroller at Franklin Ave. and St. George St. was knocked down, but luckily escaped serious injury..

One valuable piece of debris left at the April 4th accident scene was the offending car's front license plate. With it police were able to find the

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GONE!!

In May the "Welcome" sign was still up, but so were the chain link fences and plywood barriers designed to keep the Sunset Pacific Motel's unsavory characters from their longtime lair during what a hand lettered window sign calls "remodeling."

Sunset Pacific Motel

Called by the LAPD one of the most dangerous properties in the city, it was nicknamed the "Bates Motel" both for its location at Sunset and Bates and because in sheer numbers its horrors far outdid the motel in Hitchcock's Psycho.

In the past few years police have repeatedly found drug dealing, shootings, prostitution, gang activity and numerous other crimes in and around the motel where the coroner has had to remove three dead bodies.

350 area residents packed the King Middle School auditorium on January 29th for a community meeting. The crowd heard police explain that crime statistics showed "Bates" was a hub from which crime radiated to our community. The school is just 400 feet from the motel.

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GOING (Soon, we hope)

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Letter from the President

by Ricardo Gomez

Another year has gone by and we find ourselves at our annual meeting. The past year has seen a lot of changes for Franklin Hills as well as the rest of Los Angeles. We have a new mayor, a new city attorney and many new council people.

In Franklin Hills we have seen improvements such as street resurfacing, sidewalk repairs and attention to some of the nuisances that plague us. King Middle School continues its steady march towards improvement. More homes have been renovated, especially in the "flats" of Franklin Hills. We started this year again with another round of trees being planted. Overall, things are looking much better. We have you, the residents of Franklin Hills to thank for your continued community involvement and support of your association, the Franklin Hills Residents Association.

People who are familiar with Los Angeles politics often wonder why we need a mayor. In most circumstances, the mayor doesn't even hire and fire the police chief. Mayor Hahn did do something that benefits Angelenos in general and Franklin Hills residents in particular. He answered our requests to create an insurance program for volunteers who do improvement projects on city owned property. Previously the status of these volunteers was unclear if an accident happened. The city council would have to address each instance on a case by case basis to decide whether the city would defend and indemnify the volunteer against any lawsuits or liability. Thanks to the efforts of Board member Charley Mims, Vince Brook of the Silver Lake Improvement Association, Maryann Kuk of the Silver Lake Residents Association and myself, we now have a city insurance policy under which we can register tree planting projects, clean ups and adopted medians among other things. This insurance coverage will protect our median. A special thanks to Eric Garcetti of Council District 13 who introduced the motion to create the program.

Tom LaBonge is our new council person. He has been wonderfully responsive to our needs. We thank him for the recent trees planted on Franklin, Hyperion and Fountain avenues among other locations. His staff has been extremely helpful in getting our questions answered and has helped us on particular projects. Renee Weitzer, planning and zoning deputy, has appeared with Franklin Hills residents at critical zoning hearings and is continuing to help us abate unwanted nuisances. Jeanne Chang, field deputy for our area, keeps us informed of events and is always ready to direct us to the right resources. We thank all of the council district 4 staff. Tom can be reached at (213) 485-3337 if you need his services.

Although Franklin Hills does not lie within council district 13, Eric Garcetti and his staff have been extremely responsive to helping us solve problems that straddle both council districts. The south side of Fountain is within council district 13. In addition to strongly supporting the closure of the Sunset Pacific Hotel (he and Tom double teamed this effort), Eric has been very responsive to our efforts to clean up the Myra underpass at Sunset Boulevard. Like Tom, he is very tree friendly and has supported our efforts to plant trees in the Sunset, Fountain and Myra Avenue area.

King Middle School is on a "watch list" for academic improvement. Byron Maltez, the new principal, is moving forward with academic reforms. We are particularly pleased that he and assistant principal Dan Eckstrom, have shown a strong interest in improving the school's facilities. Unfortunately the LAUSD budget doesn't allow a lot of luxury in this area. Fortunately we have people such as Mary Rodriguez of the Los Feliz Improvement Association who are working tirelessly to improve the appearance of King. Call the FHRA hotline (323-664-7247) or email us FHRA@FranklinHills.org if you are interested in helping at the school in any way.

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Franklin Hills Overview: #23 Spring 2002

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Los Feliz Outpost: (323) 913-4682

Sr. Lead Officer Al Polehonki: (213) 509-2964

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WE TIP (Anonymous crime tips) (800) 873-7283

FHRA TREASURER'S REPORT -2001

By Bruce Carroll

The FHRA continued its membership winning streak with 349 memberships paid in 2001. That's up slightly over 1% from the record set in 2000. And the Community Garden received \$2,250 in County and City grants plus \$1,115 from its gardeners. But elsewhere the revenue picture was not so rosy. Contributions from members beyond their dues dropped over 43% to \$605.

Also withering were contributions to the Franklin Avenue Median landscaping, our most visible asset; they dropped 71% to just \$65. While hard work by volunteers managed to reduce Median expenses by one-third, we still spent \$950 on plants, water and heavy labor last year. By the end of 2001 the FHRA had spent \$8,596.79 more on the Median than we received in Median donations since it was landscaped in 1995.

There were winners and losers too on the business side. Overview ad revenue was up almost two-thirds from the previous year. But our record \$5,190 in income was, as usual, eclipsed by expenses that totaled \$5,750. Sales of Franklin Hills T-shirts and historic photos dipped about 10% year-over-year to \$725. Although, because of sales from inventory, the expenditure for sale items was down even more, by 15%, leaving a net gain of \$525.

FHRA's thin investment portfolio showed a gain for the year. We started with 22 shares of ATT worth \$375 and ended with 22 shares of ATT plus 7 spunoff shares of ATT Wireless together worth just under \$500, a 33% gain. On the down side, dividend and interest income dropped 68% from \$14.87 to just \$4.64 due to ATT's decreased dividend.

In case you don't have a calculator handy our total revenue for 2001 was \$13,826.14, up 20% from the previous year. But expenses rose over 37%. In addition to major spending for the Median and Overview mentioned above, startup costs for the Community Garden dug \$5,390 out of the budget.

Other expense categories were much smaller. Spending for membership meetings and printing totaled \$359, graffiti abatement cost \$343, contributions we made were \$250, we spent \$245 to maintain the FHRA message line, \$207 went to the post office, \$188 kicked off the new Welcome Basket program, \$187 lit the Shakespeare Bridge for the holidays, \$96 went toward revitalizing the Neighborhood Watch program, and a mere \$20 fee kept us in the good graces of the California Secretary of State.

For the year we spent \$14,183.78. Those who are still keeping track will note that's \$357.64 more than our income. When combined with the gain in the value of our stocks we ended 2001 with a Net Loss of \$232.64 compared to a gain of nearly \$700 in 2000. . . and that's our red ink bottom line—maybe you can help with a bit of green.

Basket Cases

by Shirley Mims

New to Franklin Hills and didn't get a Welcome Basket? Maybe it's because we didn't hear about you. We learn about most of our new neighbors through local realtors and neighbor referrals. Unfortunately, several of the houses that are sold do not show up on the public listings and not everybody with a new neighbor calls us. We need you, our neighbors, to let us know if you have a new neighbor move in next door. What better way to greet them than to join us when we deliver a basket to them!

After the last Overview was published several people contacted us to let us know how upset they were that they did not get a basket. Be assured we included them in our next round. We don't mean to leave anyone out. Please don't take it personally if you didn't get a basket. Let us know if you have moved in recently and haven't heard from us. Until around February we had delivered a basket to every person we were told about (almost 50!) so long as they fit the criterion of being new to the neighborhood and not just moving across the hill. Also, please keep in mind that this program was only started in June 2001 and is relatively new. So no one who moved in before that date got a basket, including me! We appreciate your understanding.

The production of the baskets has slowed down since two of our three main committee members have taken on other personal responsibilities. Chris Boutelle started back to work after double hip surgery and I started back to school full time. That leaves Vi Weber to manage the program, and she can't possibly do it all herself. So we need YOU to come and help put these baskets together and get them out the door! It might be a while otherwise before the next set of baskets are delivered. We appreciate the help of a couple neighbors who have volunteered with us before. We now need someone committed to overseeing the program to be sure that the delivery of the baskets is continued on a regular basis.

PLEASE help us keep this great program alive. We're all turning into basket cases trying to keep up! Maybe

some of the new neighbors who have gotten baskets would consider being on the committee to share the wonderful feeling they had when they got their basket with other new neighbors when baskets are delivered to them.

As many of you know, the baskets are great. Many local merchants continue to donate lots of great stuff (Alberto Salon, Aloha Flowers, Baller Hardware, Discount Medical Pharmacy, Eastside Records, Opyan's Salon, Palermo Ristorante Italiano, Robeks Juice, Say Cheese, Sunset Nursery, Trader Joe's, and Video Journeys). There has been a *huge* demand for these baskets and the generosity of these businesses has been tremendous. Please thank them when you visit them. Several new businesses have joined the program: Skylight Books is providing gift certificates, Café Los Feliz is putting together a delicious box of pastries, and Penny Layne is giving a certificate good for a half hour massage. We'd like to give special thanks to Joseph and Joanna Lightfoot of DBL Realtors for making a donation for us to buy more baskets. All the free literature from the City of Los Angeles is wonderful, too: Library events, concert schedules, museum guides, City Services—the Bureau of Sanitation recently gave us a crate full of miniature blue recycle bins along with magnets and pencils. It's also fun. Please join us so the program can continue. Call one of us to volunteer: Violet Weber 323/663-6427, Chris Boutelle 323/666-5548, Shirley Mims 323/666-2520.

A New Franklin Hills Home(page)

By Bruce Carroll (webmaster)

There's a new address in our neighborhood. It's www.FranklinHills.org, the brand new website of the Franklin Hills Residents Association.

The site is still in it's infancy and runs on the theory that, if it takes a village to raise a child, it will take a neighborhood to raise our website to the level of informative usefulness that we hope to achieve. Please take a look and e-mail us (at our new address: FHRA@FranklinHills.org) with your suggestions, contributions, etc. for what you'd like to see in the future.



This is something like what you should see when you point your browser to www.FranklinHills.org. Except, of course, there you'll find things in living color.

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A GARDENERS' GARDEN PARTY

by Norm Harriton

Members of the Franklin Hills Community Garden gathered in the Garden May 5th to celebrate a very successful first year. They treated everyone to their favorite foods, many prepared with vegetables and herbs they had grown in the Garden. And there was another special reason for celebration. Just days before the party the long awaited chain link fence protecting the Garden from the adjoining school athletic field was finally installed. As Robert Frost wrote, "good fences make good neighbors" ...especially when the neighbors are playing soccer.

Funds for the fence were provided both by the City of Los Angeles thanks to Council member Tom LaBonge, of our 4th district, and by the County of Los Angeles thanks to District 3 Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky. At the party La Bonge said he "wanted to stop by to congratulate the Franklin Hills residents for doing what's right" in creating the Garden as a new resource for the community. After touring the garden Zev Yaroslavsky's Field Deputy, Adinah Solomon spoke of her desire to, "come back again next year and the year after to see what's going to happen because I think you've been very productive up till now and I can just imagine what will happen within the next few years."

School director Jean Michel Simonet, of the Lycee International de Los Angeles (LILA), also attended. The Franklin Hills Community Garden is a joint project of FHRA and LILA; LILA provided the site on its grounds and agreed

to pay the water bills, while FHRA donated and solicited funds and administered development of the infrastructure of the Garden. LILA is gradually beginning to use its plots to complement classroom instruction.

The improvements in the Garden over the course of one year are quite remarkable. As we improve the soil in the Garden plots by adding mulch and other organic material, plants and crops have responded by flourishing. Compost from our first compost pile just became ready for use after six months in process. The end product is topsoil loaded with humus that is just not available at nurseries. It was fascinating to see that corn stalks more than an inch in diameter had been totally decomposed and were nowhere to be found in the end product.

Our second compost heap is almost of sufficient size, and it will work its magic and be ready for use by the end of September. The plots are far more productive now than when we were building our first compost pile, since they'll generate more green waste suitable for composting. We can look forward to larger quantities of finished humus more often in the future.

Other good news at the Garden: the Jamaican Red Banana Trees donated by Wattles Community Garden which appeared to have died and were pitiful brown stumps for a three month period, are now beginning to sprout new green growth. Moral: Don't write off plants which seem dead but may only be taking a long siesta—Be patient!

Gardening is a lot of work, demands consistent attention, but is a lot of fun, and so good for the soul. The Garden is adjacent to a one block dead end street, with virtually no traffic, and probably has less city noises to contend with than any other Community Garden in Los Angeles. It's a peaceful setting where one feels removed from the mundane routines of living.

The plots in the Garden are all occupied, but we have established a short wait list. So if you are a gardener or would like to become one, get on the wait list by phoning Norm Harriton, Community Garden Coordinator, at (323) 663-9695.

photos by Bruce Carroll



Above:
Partying gardeners enjoy the fruits (and vegetables) of their labors protected by new anti-soccer ball defensive fence in the background.

Right:
Councilmember Tom Labonge, Community Garden Coordinator Norman Harriton and FHRA Chairman Adam Weisman pose among the posies...and lots of more edible plants all now protected by the Garden's new fence.



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FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION MEMBER? YES NO

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Going: Auto shops

"It's a blight on the neighborhood." That's how Franklin Hills resident Chela Landau described the auto body shop located on the southwest corner of Hyperion and DeLongpre. Landau and several other Franklin Hills residents were down at City Hall on February 12, 2002, to give zoning administrator David Kabashima an ear full and an eye full and by suggestion even a nose full of just how much was wrong with the body shop.

FHRA member Landau, who lives just up De Longpre from the shop, alerted the FHRA to the zoning hearing. That enabled us to spread the word via-email to all the other residents offended by the noise, unsightly appearance and especially the paint fumes associated with the shop. Landau told the hearing the fumes were



so bad that "there are some days I cannot go outside" and that, even with her windows closed, on bad days "I can still smell paint seeping into the house."

That odorous theme was oft repeated in letters from neighbors presented by Franklin Hills resident Michael Miller. An experienced city attorney, Miller termed the auto repair shop, "a classic public nuisance in a residential area." Another FHRA member and also a city attorney, Stephanie Scheer, said her research uncovered that property owner Gary Rogers, who had applied for the a conditional use permit for his repair shop, actually allowed two or three other shops to operate on the small property in violation of zoning rules. The business even had the nerve to post private "no parking" signs on city property adjacent to the north side of the shop so they could store up to a dozen cars. Residents also complained that the shop's cars clogged the street, which already had limited parking, and sometimes even blocked entrances to houses.

In addition to Gary Rogers' attorney, who pointed out the shop had been a neighborhood fixture since 1953 and promised improvements, one long time FHRA member, Patty Miles, expressed a favorable opinion of the shop. She explained, "I'd like it to stay so I can get my car fixed there." Rogers' attorney also conceded that

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apartments on the second story of the shop building are no longer rented out because of concerns over paint fumes.

Councilman Tom LaBonge's deputy, Renee Weitzer, told the hearing that her boss remembered walking past the shop everyday on his way to school at Thomas Starr King. But, she pointed out, "times change", and "there was a reason why the zoning was changed" in 1986. That was because the current usage was no longer compatible with the neighborhood.

That incompatibility was termed an "eyesore and a health hazard," by Hyperion Ave. resident Lisa Henschel. And FHRA President Ricardo Gomez presented captioned photos showing just what a bad neighbor the shop was. Administrator Kabashima seemed most impressed with one that showed the paint fume vent almost on the property line shared by a house on DeLongrpe Ave. and pointed out unsightly auto body parts stored on the shop's roof.

When the comments were finished, Kabashima told those attending the hearing that he was going to deny the application in part because "I don't think there is any way to reduce the fumes." And from an aesthetic standpoint he noted that storing "parts on the roof show the owner's attitude" toward his neighbors.

In his May 3rd final decision Kabashima detailed all the problems and writes, "there are so many complaints about the existing uses and their operation that it is surprising that a nuisance abatement proceeding has not been initiated against the subject uses."

The shop still has the opportunity to appeal the decision and likely will continue to operate for some time. In fact by the time the decision was issued they had made some changes to the paint vent. It now points toward Hyperion, which moves the fumes only a few feet from adjacent homes. And they still had cars parked on the city land and too many inside their fence.

It's clear that the fight against unsightly, polluting businesses in our area is far from over, but just as clear is that as residents we can make a difference. Through coordinated efforts our words and images can have an impact down at City Hall and other citadels of power. We've won a battle, not the war. To continue with our effective strategy the FHRA needs to hear from you. When you get a zoning notice, see an unsafe condition, spot graffiti or other possible crime, e-mail us at FHRA@FranklinHills.org or leave a message at 323-664-7247. Please, let us know what's going on.



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**COLDWELL
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continued from page 1

GOING--T00 FAST

car's allegedly uninsured owner who allegedly claimed an unfindable friend was the allegedly offending driver.

FHRA is exploring ways to get traffic to slow down on Franklin Ave. and other even narrower streets in our neighborhood. Please drive carefully and courteously on our increasingly congested streets.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH IS GAINING MOMENTUM IN OUR HILLS

By Mary Frances Smith-Reynolds

The basic ideas of Neighborhood Watch are simple and timeless ones: Neighbors knowing neighbors, neighbors helping neighbors, neighbors knowing and working with local police officers to help keep their streets safe, and improve their quality of life. Mayberry in 1955? Nope. Franklin Hills in 2002.

Over the last eight months there has been a growing effort in the Franklin Hills area to revive existing Neighborhood Watch groups and to start new ones. Many residents are expressing interest in joining or starting Neighborhood Watch groups. In addition to empowering every resident to become the "eyes and ears" of their neighborhood, another goal is to have a web of Neighborhood Watch groups throughout our area. The groups in this network can share information, strategies and successes. If you are interested in becoming a Neighborhood Watch Block Leader or joining a Neighborhood Watch group, call Mary Frances Reynolds at 323-668-9069 or e-mail at crandmf@aol.com.)

Neighborhood Watch is frequently mentioned as an effective grass roots crime prevention group. In addition, Watch groups are a way to build community bonds, keep citizens informed about events and problems in their neighborhood and to give a voice to those who have energy and ideas for improving their streets.

Neighborhood Watch groups always work in cooperation with local law enforcement. In our community we are lucky to have proactive, dependable

partners in our LAPD Senior Lead Officers Al Polehonki, Sam Salazar and Stacy Miyamura, as well as the many other officers who have come to our events and supported our community.

In addition to the monthly and start-up meetings being held in homes throughout our area, members of Neighborhood Watch groups helped to organize the January 29 Community Meeting at King Middle School attended by 350 people, and the March 20 "Light Up the Night Walk," which drew 100 neighbors. Both of these events brought people together to address problems in our area. City leaders and officials, present at both events, have been very responsive to the



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