

Highlights

A Quarterly Publication of the Village Green Owners' Association

Spring 2011

Annual Meeting of Villagers Held on February 5 at Baldwin Hills Elementary School

By Reba Glover, Court 1

At 10:25 a.m. on the day of the annual meeting, Village Green President Joe Khoury announced to a two-thirds full auditorium that we were 6 votes away from establishing a quorum. He then asked Committee Chairs to present their reports.

Committee Reports

Cultural Affairs Committee chair Allison Grover Khoury gave a rundown of upcoming events, such as Black History Month speaker Daniel Widener, the Village Green Home Companion in March, an art show in May, and the summer concerts on June 26 and September 5. The Ad-Hoc Playground Committee announced plans to hold two town-hall style meetings in March and stated that a FAQ with a map would be distributed beforehand. The Landscape Committee summed up their activities for last year and announced ongoing support for the community garden in Court 1. Muriel Dickerson, co-chair of Court Council, thanked retiring chair Barbara McCully for all of her hard work and commitment to that committee, and asked for volunteers to represent courts 3, 8 and 10, which currently have empty seats. President Khoury read a report on behalf of Priscilla Browner, head of Social Recreation Committee and the 50+ Club, which described trips from 2010 and those scheduled for 2011. He also thanked them for their generous donations to VGOA, which enabled us to have new fans and fixtures installed in the Clubhouse fireside room. The ad-hoc Cultural Landscape Report Committee announced plans for completion of their report in 2011. They thanked Ted Lumpkin and Fred Wilson for their dedication to the committee.

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The New 2011 Village Green Board



Back row: Steven Keylon, Robert Nicolais, Dan Frank, Dee Dee Chappelle, Ruben Ginsburg. Front row: Robert Creighton, Steve Haggerty, Joe Khoury, John Keho

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Candidate Platforms

The seven candidates running for the Board were allowed three minutes to deliver their platforms, some citing public service as their motivation, some citing experience, and some voicing either support for the special assessment, or against it. After this, President Khoury announced that we had a quorum.

Updates from the Board

Director Steven Keylon informed owners that the Mills Act application submitted on behalf of VGOA was approved by the City of Los Angeles—about 70% of the units will see reduced property tax statements in October 2011. Director Dan Frank gave a brief update on the sinking buildings by announcing that the Board approved the hire of JS Egan as the project manager for \$60,000 and will submit requests for qualifications to potential vendors in the future. President Khoury gave his report citing the special election in October and the hiring of the VG new manager as successes from 2010.

General Manager's Report

Peter Fay, the general manager since November 2010, began his report by saying that he is impressed by the Green's tangible sense of active community and the best board that he has ever worked with. He went on to say that he will be gathering information to begin long-term planning and will continue to review processes to make the administration more efficient. The meeting was adjourned until 4:00 p.m. at the VG Clubhouse to announce the results of the voting.

Annual Meeting Election Results

By Reba Glover, Court 1

A huge thank you goes to the 12 Villagers who were recruited by the 2010 Elections Committee to count the 2011 election ballots. Chief inspector Cynthia Cyrus, inspector Betty Harris and inspector Barbara McCully organized the counting of the 317 cast ballots in approximately 90 minutes. It was interesting to note that by 5:00 p.m. the night before the election, on February 4, the inspectors had already received 268 ballots.

Election Results

Robert Nicolais: 216 votes, re-elected
John Keho: 215 votes, elected
Steve Haggerty: 212 votes, re-elected
Robert Creighton: 202 votes, elected
Dee Dee Chappelle: 197 votes, elected
Chris Fairbanks: 106 votes
Larry Fafarman: 60 votes
Jane Housden: 34 votes

Proposal A—approved

Proposal A, concerning the special assessment,

needed 160 votes to pass (one-half of established quorum of 317, plus 1). Yes votes totaled 176, no votes 105.

Proposal B—failed

Proposal B would have removed the proxy voting process form from our governing documents. This had a higher standard to pass, requiring 50% of all eligible voters (601) plus 1, or 302 votes. The yes votes totaled 185, and 95 voted no.

New Board Officers

After votes were tallied, the new Board immediately held its first meeting. First order of business, to elect 2011 Board officers:

Joe Khoury, president
Robert Creighton, vice president
Steve Haggerty, treasurer
John Keho, secretary

Let's all welcome our volunteer board for 2011!

Frequently Asked Questions about the Mills Act

By Steve Keylon, Court 3 resident and Board Director

The Village Green became a Mills Act property in December. What does this mean for owners? How will it affect life at the Village Green? When will it take effect? These are some of the many questions I've gotten from some of you in the community. I have served on the Board for the past five years during which time I have been closely involved with the Mills Act process. Below I answer some of the many questions owners have about the Mills Act. I've placed more information about the Mills Act and our process of getting approved on my blog, which can be accessed from the Village Green website at <http://villagegreenla.net/news.html>

What is the Mills Act? The Mills Act Historical Property Contract Program allows qualified owners of historic properties to receive property tax reduction and use that savings to help offset the costs to rehabilitate, restore and maintain their properties. Program participants need to have a plan to restore and rehabilitate the property.

Owners must be actively rehabilitating and maintaining their properties, or have a plan to do so that is compliant with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The City of Los Angeles is taking steps to ensure that the Mills Act benefits target those properties with the greatest need. By our initial estimates, Village Green homeowners will save approximately \$600,000 in property tax each year, combined.

When will the Mills Act take effect? The Village Green became a Mills Act property in December 2010. Homeowners should begin to see tax savings later this year. The tax assessor will begin the process of reassessing all 629 units between March and June 2011. Your October 2011 tax statements should show *both* your "normal" property tax rate, and your new Mills Act property tax rate. You will pay the lower of the two rates—the new Mills Act may be the lower of the two.

Will I have to turn over **all my tax savings to the VGOA?** No. Based on our estimates from last year, a majority of homeowners will see some property tax benefit later this year—some will save tens of dollars;

others will save thousands of dollars per year. None of that need be turned over directly to the HOA. By simply paying your monthly assessment, you are contributing to the rehabilitation plan for the property.

Will the VGOA send us an additional bill, above our HOA dues, to recover these Mills Act funds we receive as a tax savings? No.

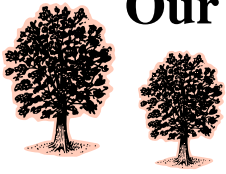
Will a City assessor need to come to my home to determine my new tax? It's not likely. The tax assessors will use a formula to determine the new Mills Act property tax. This will be done at their office in Culver City, using data they have on file.

Will City inspectors be visiting my home to inspect any changes I made to my unit? With 629 units at Village Green, the inspectors don't have time for individual inspections, unless there is reason to believe significant changes were made without permission and which don't conform to code or to Mills Act standards. They do have the right to inspect, however, under the conditions of the contract. They also encourage Mills Act participants to actively update the Office of Historic Resources on progress made, which might minimize the time the city spends monitoring our collective progress.

Will the VG Board be monitoring and enforcing non-historic changes made to units now? The VG Board, working with the Design Review Committee (DRC), has always made an effort to monitor and enforce non-historic or unapproved changes to units. In the last year or so, the DRC has been more proactive. DRC began a court-by-court survey of every unit at the Village Green, photographing each building elevation and making note of out-of-compliance exterior changes. Letters have been sent to those owners who are in violation, and hearings have been scheduled to give owners an opportunity to correct these unauthorized changes, or dispute them.

Can I use my tax savings to make changes/improvements on the interior of my unit? And can

(Mills Act Continued on page 6)



Our Urban Forest

An interview with our arborist Dan Jensen

By Gordon Brooks, Tree Committee Chair

Dan Jensen, our contract arborist at Village Green, accepted the invitation of the Tree and Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) committees, to attend a joint meeting on Monday, February 21, and share his expertise and knowledge about the past, present and future condition of our urban forest.

Dan has been interested and involved in landscape issues and tree care for most of his life. He worked for the City of Lynwood in the Landscape and Parks Department in high school and majored in ornamental horticulture at Cal Poly Pomona. While a college student he interned with James A. Shanahan, the horticulturalist responsible for plant and tree care at Village Green in the 1970s. For several years, beginning in 1978, Dan visited the Green over 50 times, helping James identify tree health problems. His research required him to wander all over the Village Green. He still has clear memories of the Green during that period, a time when the post-flood Winans landscape design was relatively new and many of the original Barlow landscape design features remained discernable.

Dan is a certified arborist by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), past president of the Western Chapter of the ISA (2005), past president of the Cal Poly Alumni Association (1987) and past president of Street Tree Seminar (STS) (2002). He is currently volunteering as treasurer of STS and is planning to help re-write the invaluable Street Tree book. He holds California State Pest Control Adviser and Qualified Applicator licenses, and is a Certified Municipal/Urban Forester.

In late 2005, Village Green hired Dan as our arborist and, with the Board's oversight, collaborated with the manager and the Tree Committee in completing the back log of dead tree removals, managing tree related crises, supervising the scheduled pruning cycle and regularly monitoring the health of the trees.

Dan's paramount concern right now is how to effectively manage what he describes as a mature and aging stand of trees. Tangible evidence of this aging is evident in the recent mortality of some Sycamores and London Plane Trees, motor court Chinese Elms and major limb failures in Eucalyptus, Oaks, Brazilian Peppers and in the Carob Trees, especially those in the fairways surrounding the Green. Though long-lived species like Coast Live Oaks can live hundreds of years under ideal conditions, most trees have limited life spans even with the best of care. Many of the trees planted 40 to 70 years ago are now reaching their maximum age. This problem has been exacerbated by the wet weather of this past year, which has resulted in rapid growth, stressing aging limbs and weak crotches.

Of special interest to the joint committees was Dan's thoughts on how to manage these changing conditions for maximum health of the forest within the mandate of our National Historic Landmark status. Some questions raised included: Can and should all original Barlow landscape plan species automatically be replanted? If almost all of the 115 Carobs are in decline, what is the best plan to replace them? If no cure is discovered for the disease killing the Victorian Box Trees around Southern California, what replacement species is historically appropriate for similar long life, color, structure, and leaf shape? Can we ever safely replant the Olive allees in areas infected by *verticillium* wilt?

Committee members left the meeting with a deeper understanding of the technical and aesthetic aspects of landscape maintenance at a property of historic significance and of large scale and complexity, and rededicated to working together to maintain its distinguishing characteristics for the well-being of Village Green residents.

From the President: Looking back on 2010 And forward on 2011

By Joe Khoury, Board President

Dear Neighbors,

Reflecting back on 2010, there are several outstanding things that deserve mention. A dramatic change took place in the office with the arrival of a new manager, an experienced property manager, who is helping to lower the Green's operating costs in a number of areas, including revamping vendor contracts, and improving the efficiency of the office and the functioning of board of directors. A great deal of time and effort went into our search for a new manager, and the Board was only able to expend this time because we knew that our affairs were in the capable hands of our long-time assistant manager Sherri Giles.

In 2010, we also saw three major projects come to fruition. First was the completion of the Historic Property Contract (a.k.a., the Mills Act). After several years of work and numerous meetings with the City, the Los Angeles City Council voted to approve our contract in December. As part of this project, last year we completed the Historic Structures Report, and the 10-year maintenance plan. In the fall of this year each resident will be notified of their new Mills Act tax rate.

Secondly, after years of investigation, we have taken a decisive step toward solving the soil subsidence problem by signing a contract with JS Egan Design to act as project manager, and beginning the pre-construction phase.

Finally, in 2010 we made the financial commitment to tackle more deferred maintenance with the 20% special assessment. Painful as it was, given the economic crisis engulfing the nation and our region, we've set in motion the impetus to complete four core projects over the next 10 years and to fund our reserves to improve the financial health of Village Green.

These are just a few noteworthy accomplishments of the past year.

Looking Forward to 2011

In 2011, we are committed to continuing the trend of reducing our operating budget. We are moving ahead with the four projects outlined in the special assessment (soil subsidence, sewers, re-piping, and roofs). We also expect to increase the efficiency of our office, including automation of parking tickets and electronic communications.

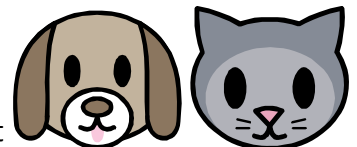
We all know that it takes more than buildings and landscaping to create a community. The Village Green community is composed of individuals and committees, and it is at the committee level that powers of individuals are multiplied in unified action. We hope to foster closer collaboration between the Board of Directors and the committees in the coming year. In addition to acting as channels of communication between the community and the Board of Directors, the committees are also sources of ideas themselves since it is there that diverse individuals consulting together can discover lines of action to explore. One such arena is the Court Council. At their March meeting they decided that court reps would organize quarterly meetings in the courts to which a Board member would attend to listen, answer questions and give updates. The idea is to provide direct and personal contact with the Board. Who wants to go to the Clubhouse on Tuesday night and listen to a Board meeting? Very few people. But who *wouldn't* want to join in a potluck meal with the neighbors in your court? I am thrilled at this development and whole-heartedly support it.

We hope that you will take personal interest in the well-being of Village Green and that you will become as engaged with promoting the health of your community as you are with that of your own family.

Please pick up your animal's droppings.

In addition, please abide the rules of pet ownership at Village Green, which include (but are not limited to):

- Register your pet with the office
- Only one pet, under 30 lbs., allowed per unit
- Pets in transit must be leashed or carried
- Pets cannot be walked in the common areas (the West Green, Main Green, East



(Mills Act Continued from page 3)

I do so instead of sending the \$\$ to the VGOA?

You may use the tax savings to make improvements to your unit.

Does the Association have any liability regarding Mills Act compliance? When does the Mills Act penalty apply to us? Under the terms of the Mills Act contract, the HOA agreed to a list of projects mutually agreed upon by the VGOA and the city of Los Angeles. Before the Mills Act was approved, the Board was confident that we would be able to tackle these projects in the next 10 years, whether or not the Mills Act was approved. If for some reason the HOA does not maintain the condition of the Village Green and does not fulfill that part of the Mills Act contract, the City may cancel the contract. If that were to happen, the county auditor collects a cancellation fee of 12½ percent of the current fair market value of the property as determined by the county assessor.

Who will administer the Mills Act for the Association? The Board of Directors is responsible for seeing that the terms of the Mills Act contract are met, working with the City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.

Are some of the items listed on the Mills Act application the same items that are listed in the recent special assessment category? Several of the items in the 10-year Mills Act contract are the same items the Board used to determine the recent special assessment, including completion of the interior re-piping and sewer projects, and replacement of the roofs. Many other projects on the 10-year Mills Act project list include those things we do on a routine basis as general maintenance—painting buildings, landscaping and security contracts, tree pruning, etc.

How many owners qualify? All homeowners qualify for the Mills Act, as the City signed a Mills Act contract with the HOA, not with individual homeowners. In preliminary research, done by a group of VG homeowners for the city of Los Angeles, we determined that about 70-75% of VG homeowners will see tax savings, ranging from tens of dollars to several thousand dollars per year. Owners who bought their units in the last 10 years or so, when property rates were higher than decades previous, will probably see the most benefit.

Will there be reports to the community concerning the Mills Act and its success or failure? As the HOA gets reports from the City of Los Angeles, any information will be communicated back to the community.

You can read more about the Mills Act program on the Office of Historic Resources website here:

<http://www.preservation.lacity.org/node/464>

Amelia Earhart in Omaha

A report from 1932

by Roberta Diamond

In 1932 in Omaha, Nebraska how exciting it must have been for a young student journalist to be in a group interviewing Amelia Earhart, the famous aviator and first woman to fly the Atlantic Ocean solo. The student wrote an account of the meeting for her school newspaper, the Central High Register, in 1932. The young newspaper reporter, then known as Bertha Braude, is our own Roberta Diamond, a resident of Court 8, who has lived in the Village Green for over 30 years.

Here are some highlights from Roberta's article, written in 1932:

“Despite her fearlessness and her achievements in a field that was thought to be completely man's, Miss Earhart is decidedly not a masculine type...She wears her hair very short, very curly, altogether feminine.

“On the subject of men's clothing for women [Earhart] says, ‘Trousers are not specifically men's clothing. The Scotchmen have always worn skirts, and women in certain parts of the Orient have long been wearing trousers. I believe that it is purely a question of appropriate and inappropriate dress, and not of feminine and masculine. When I made my Atlantic flight, an aviator's costume, with trousers, was the fitting garment to wear, and when I flew with Mrs. Roosevelt in a closed, luxurious plane, evening dress was the proper attire.’

“The main purpose of her famous solo flight across the Atlantic in 1928 was not, Miss Earhart says, ‘to see if I could do it, but to prove to the world that a woman can do the same thing that a man can in this, or any field.’

“The purpose behind [Miss Earhart's] activities are centered always on striving to further the equality between men and women on all established bases. Her interest is constantly on what women are doing, whether it is a new mode of dress or furtherance in the aviation field, that holds the spotlight on the feminine world for the moment.”



Spotlight on the Design Review Committee

Reba Glover, Court 1

The Design Review Committee (DRC) is one of the older standing committees at Village Green. Its mission is to oversee all architectural changes to the structures on the Green. The DRC develops the architectural guidelines for the VG Handbook, advises the Board, and writes policies on proposed renovations (including plumbing) to individual units and common spaces. According to our new manager, Peter Fay, this is a working committee that is knowledgeable and contributes much to the association.

The committee, which consists of approximately five owners, is chaired by Christian Daniels, and reviews about 1 to 4 requests per month for modification of individual units. These requests submitted by owners are for such things as installing appliances that require plumbing or electrical changes to the common area, such as a washer/dryer hook-up inside the unit, an on-demand (tankless) water heater, or a dishwasher. Other requests range from simple flooring changes to larger cosmetic changes. The committee also reviews requests to modify patio common areas. When asked about the common mistakes made by owners that create delays, the committee members replied almost in unison that owners are sometimes not clear in their request forms what work is being done. They urge owners to include as much information as possible, with drawings, photographs, diagrams, etc.



Back row: David Morioka, John Delarosa, Francie Moore, Steven Keylon (Board Liaison). Front row: Larry Fafarman and Christian Daniels, committee chair.

When asked why they chose to volunteer their time to this committee, most members agree that it is because they were asked to join the committee and they enjoy the camaraderie and collegial interactions among members. All the committee members either have a background in design or are acutely interested in design. For some members, the architectural design is the reason they chose to live at Village Green.

Past contributions to the Association by the DRC include researching and compiling the current historic painting palette that is being used to paint the exteriors of all buildings and issuing the 2007 updated edition of the Village Green Handbook, which concisely defined association property and owners' responsibility from the antiquated CC&Rs and Bylaws. Their most recent contribution is the newly designed court entrance signs and the larger VG sign at the main entrance.

Because the Village Green is a condominium property, individuals only own the interior air space of the unit, up to the paint and finished surfaces of the walls, ceilings, floors and doors. Village Green's designation as a National Historic Landmark in 2001, and most recently as an approved participant in the City of Los Angeles' Mills Act program, has mandated that we all follow the architectural guidelines to protect the status of our participation in these government programs. To this end, the committee has begun the process of completing a court-by-court survey to establish the existing violations to architectural guidelines. These include unapproved

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Passages



Patricia Graham, Court 17 (June 15, 1953–November 18, 2010). Family and friends gathered together in November to celebrate Patricia's life. Each person held a white balloon and recalled precious memories of her. After singing "Bless be the Tie That Binds," the balloons were released as symbols of her spirit, soaring to a loving, grace-filled God. She will be loved and cherished always. Our sincere condolences to her mother, Mrs. Helen Washington, long-time resident of Court 8.

William Wood, Court 3, passed away on September 20, 2010 at the age of 75 and is survived by his daughter Laura Pierce. He lived at the Village Green for about 18 years. He retired from the U.S. Post Office and was an avid skier, belonged to the Four Seasons West Ski Club, and was a self-taught guitarist who enjoyed playing jazz music.

Frank E. Cardenas (1948–2011), a 10-year Village Green resident, passed on January 5, 2011. Frank loved cooking and BBQing, gardening, and UCLA sports—especially women's basketball. His holiday pumpkin bread was a hit with neighbors. He collected succulents, tillandsias and rubber duckies. Frank thoroughly enjoyed the Green's open spaces, amazing birdlife, and even those pesky squirrels. He assisted with the very popular container gardening, composting and raised bed gardening workshop sponsored by the Landscape Committee last year. Frank is survived by his sister Louisa and cats Mona and Lisa, as well as numerous cousins, nieces and nephews. He will be missed.



Thanks to the Social Recreation/50+ Club!



Feeling a cool breeze under the bright lights? You must be in the Clubhouse recreation room where beautiful new ceiling fans and lights, as well as a much-needed 55-cup coffee pot, were generously donated by the Social Recreation/50+ Club. Next time you see someone from that club, you might want to say "Thank you!"

(Design Review Committee Continued from page 7)

modification of windows and doors using vinyl replacements, window air conditioners, exposed cable, unapproved security doors, and unapproved satellite dish receivers. These results will be given to the Board of Directors for action as sections of the property are surveyed.

The DRC encourages all owners to submit their requests for modification early with as much information as possible, and to attend the DRC meeting when their requests are discussed so that the decision will be timely. If you are interested in joining this committee or contacting them, they meet the first Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Clubhouse.

Village Green *Highlights* is the community newsletter of the Village Green Owners' Association, incorporated August 8, 1973. We make every attempt to ensure the accuracy of all information. However, we are not responsible for errors, omissions, or inaccuracies in this publication. The editor reserves the right to edit articles and letters for tone, clarity and length. Opinions expressed in *Highlights* do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Board of Directors or the Management. Please submit submissions or comments to the editor at highlights@villagegreenla.net, or to the office.