



# VILLAGE GREEN

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

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# HIGHLIGHTS



A Monthly Publication of the VGOA

April 2022

## NEWS FROM THE VILLAGE GREEN BOARD

Seven directors, two employees, and thirty-three residents and invited guests attended the March board meeting, a long and varied affair that, like last month, was focused mostly on security.

**SAFETY UPDATE** LAPD Senior Lead Officer Gabriel Roybal launched the conversation with an overview of the Southwest Division. He described the corridor on LaBrea between Obama and Coliseum as a “hot spot,” the locus of criminal activity that most impacts the Green. But he reported that the Village Green has “the lowest crime rates throughout the Southwest Division.”

After encouraging residents to share their suggestions, directors turned to matters of lighting and cameras, first acknowledging the 2015 Executive Summary prepared by the Safety Committee which included a report from lighting company Ruzika, but which was not implemented at that time due to its expense and the exigencies of competing projects.

The Board discussed lighting as an affordable crime deterrent, and will explore whether a narrower scope—lighting the Garage Courts, for example—would be prudent. Most agreed that action on cameras—their number, placement, and management—will need further study.

Security Committee liaison Steve Haggerty reminded fellow directors that the Committee is woefully shortstaffed. He urged, practically begged for volunteers to join the Safety Committee. **“We need to put out a call to the community,”** he said. **“We need more people power!”**

**FLOOD INSURANCE** Following discussion, the Board passed an amended resolution to pause annual reimbursements since 2019 to several homeowners whose lenders – following FEMA’s recent flood zone remapping — required them to have flood insurance. Directors will seek additional information.

**BUILDING 8 & 14 SUBSIDENCE** Residents of buildings 8 & 14 have reported new cracks, separations, and chipping plaster in several of their walls since the 2014 building stabilization efforts. The Board reviewed reports prepared by the structural engineers that made clear that given the “swampy” nature of the property’s soils, cracks, separations, and chipping plaster were expected to continue but do not represent a safety issue with the structures.

**NEW HANDBOOK RULES** The directors voted to send to homeowners two changes to the **Village Green Handbook** rules for comments. The first brings the Association into compliance with a new California law governing the duration of unit rental agreements; the second increases fines for Design Review Committee violations. Homeowners have 30 days to comment on the rules. The Board will vote on their adoption at the April Board meeting.

The seven members present unanimously approved resolutions to place a lien on a unit in arrears, purchase of water bags for 20 trees to be planted this spring, and accepted new member Debra Ziegler to the Communications Committee. □



Photo By Don Dongallo

## EDITOR’S NOTE

Recent crimes on the Village Green property has led to increased concern throughout the community on matters of safety and security. In this issue of **Highlights** we intend to look carefully at the problems and potential solutions, and present readers with a bit of recent history, both of crime waves and of the ways the Board, Management, and residents are trying to address them. –P.J.C. □

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## INSIDE HIGHLIGHTS

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**Highlights** is an all-volunteer project of the Village Green Communications Committee.

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## MANAGEMENT NEWS

**GREENCREW** Courts 4-7 will be detailed this month, and workers will be planting trees this month and next; Spring is here, and with it comes weeds. Greencrew said work orders will be honored as soon as possible...Two days of watering were lost last month as two broken irrigation main lines were repaired.

**SECURITY SCREEN DOORS** VGOA's approved screen door vendor, Wynstan, has raised its price from \$1200 to \$1375. A no-interest 12-month payment plan is available.

**GOPHERS** The pest control method we used was successful in trapping six gophers. An ongoing program is needed, and Management proposes to bring the program in-house to deploy the traps where needed more rapidly and cheaply.

**FOOD WASTE DISPOSAL BINS** Food waste containers are now required in Los Angeles, and Maintenance has proposed a solution for accommodating this in our already-crowded trash areas. A date is in the works for a Republic representative (our trash-pick up company) to give a presentation.

**CLUBHOUSE HVAC SYSTEM** The Clubhouse and Fireside Room units are nearing the end of their useful lives. There is a refrigerant leak, and the blower motor in one unit has failed. Management is looking ahead and gathering cost information in case repairs are not doable.

**ELECTRICAL UPGRADE** Five electrical contractors responded to our request for proposals for the electrical upgrade in courts 16 and 17. Management and Hariton Electric hope to present a vendor recommendation to the Board soon.

**COPPER RE-PIPING** Building 80 is completed and 81 is in progress. Last up: Building 82! □

## **PUBLIC SECURITY REPORT** Feb 17- Mar 16, 2022

*Edited by Jordan Deglise Moore*

**RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES** Court 11, 2/25 after 6:30 pm; 2/26 after 9:30 am. Three units were burglarized—two by force, one via an unlocked door.

**CRYING INFANT** 2/28, Court 5, 6:30 pm. A resident reported an infant's persistent crying and was concerned about the baby's well-being.

**UNAUTHORIZED USE OF DUMPSTERS** 3/7, Court 6, 10:30 am. A resident reported their former domestic partner was overfilling the dumpsters. Security instructed both to remove the excess, which they did the next day.

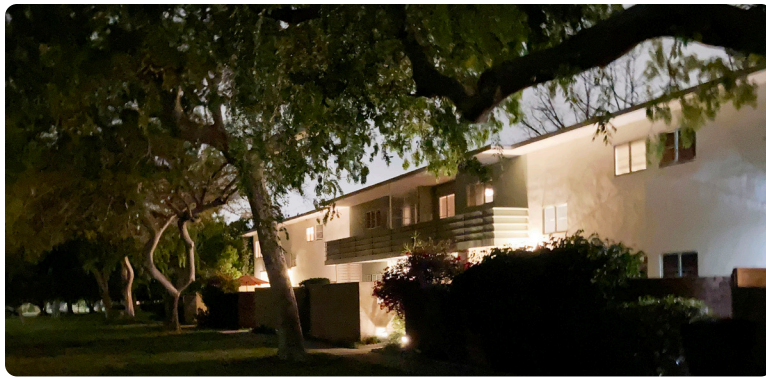
**LARGE FALLEN BRANCH** 2/28, Court 6 parking area, 6:30 pm. Security cordoned it off.

**DOMESTIC DISPUTE** 3/4, Court 15, 10 pm. A resident reported a neighbor's domestic disturbance and feared possible abuse. Officers warned the couple to be quieter, or LAPD would be contacted.

**POSSIBLE ARMED SUSPECTS** 3/8, Courts 8 & 4 parking areas, 4:30 pm. Three residents reported seeing men in ski masks; a resident reported a brief confrontation with one of the men. □

## APRIL EVENT





## A CLOSER LOOK AT SECURITY CONCERNS

by Patrick Comiskey

### Village Green Crime Statistics

Every week, the LAPD lead officer for our area, Officer Roybal, issues "The Basic Car Report," which documents criminal activity recorded by our portion of the Southwest Police Division (0343). Using the reports, Safety Committee liaison Steve Haggerty compiled a list of incidents over a four-month period, from November to March. Of the 82 crimes reported in our area for that period, seven occurred at the Village Green, including the three break-ins in the last week of February. The takeaway, according to Haggerty, is that relative to other parts of the Southwest Division as well as other communities, criminal activity at the Village Green is fairly rare, deterred in part by our visible security presence and patrols.

### Crime Waves, Then and Now

But after every uptick in crime like the one we're now experiencing, the community looks for solutions. At the February Board Meeting, the Board requested the Safety Committee to "obtain information from LAPD on the effectiveness of increased lighting and cameras as a crime deterrent." Outgoing Safety Committee Chair, John Howell, reports that LAPD Officers King and Roybal have in the past told Safety Committee that there are three things the Village Green community needs to implement:

- Neighborhood Watch
- Improved Lighting
- Security Cameras

Over the past 6 years, Safety Committee has worked with Public Security and LAPD to establish a neighbor watch effort focused on replacing burned out light bulbs in the common areas, tree and shrub trimming, and replacing broken fixtures through paper and online work orders.

More than anything however, the Village Green neighborhood **needs community involvement**. The Safety Committee needs volunteers and a neighborhood watch, as well as a Board member who will champion the efforts for improved lighting and a comprehensive approach to security cameras. □

## VG CELEBRATES BLACK ACTRESSES

### Dorothy Dandridge and Halle Berry

by Marie Germaine & Patrick Comiskey



On February 27, the Cultural Affairs Committee brought Black History Month to a close with a stirring Zoom presentation connecting the lives and careers of two famously successful Black actresses from different eras, Dorothy Dandridge (1933-1965) and Halle Berry (b. 1966).

Called "From Tragedy to Triumph," the presentation was given by Village Green resident and UCLA Associate Professor of English and African American Studies Dr. Caroline Streeter. She linked these remarkable actresses as groundbreaking Black talents, but also as performers whose film characters portrayed racist stereotypes in a dogmatic Hollywood image-making machine.

During a time when African-Americans were rarely given lead roles, both Dandridge and Berry were lead female actresses. However, both were cast in roles which relied on the oversexualization of their characters, a marketing tool that Hollywood, of course, uses to this day. Streeter's film presentation powerfully showed how Hollywood capitalized on the stereotypes of the actresses' mixed-race backgrounds, their Eurocentric features making them more marketable, while their African features signaled a stereotype for sensuality. Both actresses chafed at being treated as sex objects.



Credit: Michel Boutefeu

Dorothy Dandridge was the first woman of color nominated for best actress Oscar for her title role in "Carmen Jones", but she died at age 42. In 2002, Berry became the first woman of color to win a best actress Oscar for her role as Laetitia Musgrove in Monster's Ball—a role that purposely and defiantly worked against her status as a sex symbol.

Dr. Streeter vividly portrayed these two actresses and the ways their lives were linked; there's no better example than Berry's portrayal of Dandridge in the 1999 HBO movie, "Introducing Dorothy Dandridge."

The Cultural Affairs Committee has been sponsoring Black History events for more than 30 years. □



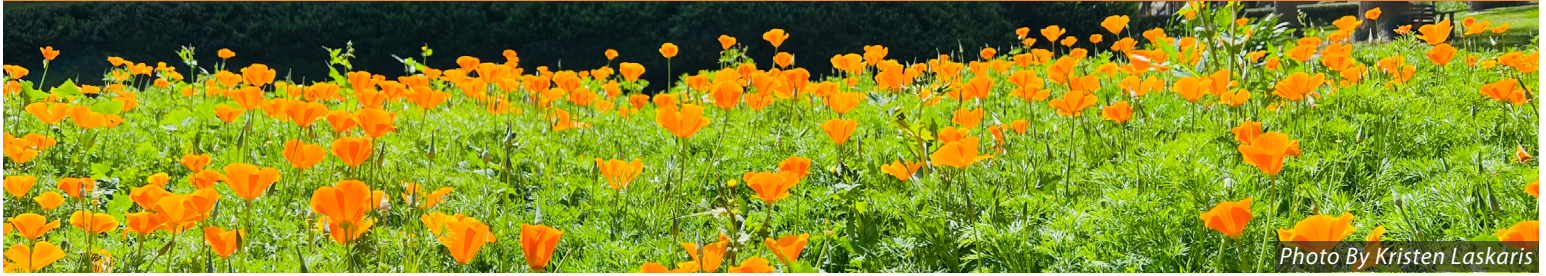


Photo By Kristen Laskaris

## ADVICE FROM A PRO ON HOW TO STAY SAFE *by Ted Robbins, Court 1*

As a retired LA Sheriff's Dept. captain and a current criminal justice instructor, 31-year Village Green resident Ronald Williams knows how criminals behave. There's no single reason for rising crime around the city, he says, but more criminals now seem to think it's okay to steal property from neighborhoods they wouldn't have gone into before. "Notice what's happening in Beverly Hills, on Melrose," he says. "We may feel like we are just working class (in Village Green), but to some folks we're privileged."



Ronald Williams; photo by Zig

The likelihood of anyone being a crime victim is still very low, but Williams has some advice to make it even lower: **pay attention**.

"You can't have your eyes focused on your cell phone and be aware of what's going on around you," says Williams. He says he often sees neighbors outside—day and night—unaware of what's going on around them, their faces buried in their phones. "It's not just a question of looking in front of you, but you know, your peripheral vision and what you can hear behind you; criminals pay attention to that. They spot you before you spot them."

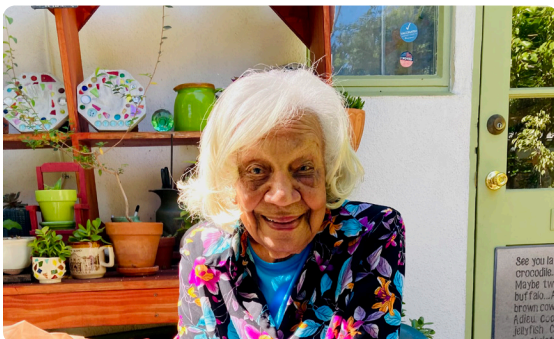
It's all about taking away that advantage. When he's outside his Court 14 unit after dark, for instance, Williams carries a **flashlight**. "If I'm planning on robbing somebody and I see that they have the presence of mind to be carrying a flashlight, I'm thinking, 'Nah, there's no element of surprise there.'"

VG garages can be vulnerable places especially at night. So, he advises, don't pull in if anyone unfamiliar is around. Instead, call VG **security**. They can provide an escort or just act as a deterrent. "We're paying for security; why not use them?"

Williams suggests residents keep a **notepad** or 'cheat sheet.' When you notice someone suspicious, write down their height, weight, hair and eye color, what they're wearing, and their complexion, not their race. "Be very careful about trying to identify race based on complexion. It could just be somebody who's not African-American but they have darker skin, but now the cops are looking for an African-American."

He says residents should always lock their doors when they leave, even for just a minute or two. If you're in the laundry room, **lock the door** behind you.

He recommends alarm systems with window and door sensors as another deterrent. "It's true, if somebody really wants to get in, they can get past an alarm, but we don't have those kinds of burglars," he says. "The people who commit crimes in VG are opportunistic. Being prepared and paying attention helps take away the opportunities." □



*I poked my head into Georgia Lumpkin's beautiful patio today. She had turned 100 on January 6, just a little over a year since COVID killed her husband, Tuskegee Airman Ted Lumpkin, on December 26, 2020 - four days shy of his 101st birthday. Georgia said she still makes dinner every night and eats at the time they dined together for so many years. If you see her gate open, know that she continues to welcome visitors. —Lucy Fried*

