

VILLAGE GREEN

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Highlights

A Quarterly Publication of the Village Green Owners' Association

Spring 2010



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

The Safety Committee

By Reba Glover, Court 1

The Safety Committee is one of the 12 standing committees run by Village Green residents. It has tasked itself with increasing the safety at Village Green by cultivating and maintaining a network of active residents who report suspicious criminal activity to safeguard the community. Brian West and Nat Hutton are co-chairs. Penny Bannerman is the committee secretary and Dan Frank is the Board Liaison.

Several years ago, the Safety Committee worked diligently with the LAPD, Platt Security, and the VG Board to create and implement a Neighborhood Watch program for Village Green. Almost all courts now have Neighborhood Watch Captains and many courts hold potlucks so that residents can get to know each other. Neighborhood Watch signs are posted around the perimeter of the Green and the Neighborhood Watch designation is incorporated into the beautifully designed garage entrance signs.

The Safety Committee has been instrumental in assessing poorly lit areas in Courts 1-3 and 15-17 and was successful in getting Board support to have additional lighting installed

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Report from GAFCON

at the Village Green Annual Meeting

By Susan Edwards, East Circle

The Village Green Owners Association held its annual meeting at Baldwin Hills Elementary School in February. In addition to the usual reports and the election process at this meeting, attendees were given an overview by staff from GAFCON of the Property Condition Assessment Report that was a result of surveys and inspections performed last year.

Some of us may remember a survey that we received from the Board and GAFCON last year, asking us to record any structural issues with our units. These surveys helped guide an in-depth assessment that GAFCON undertook. They looked at all of our building elements and determined the condition, and recommended a replacement schedule for all. The

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Safety Committee: Jolene Pellant, Penny Bannerman, Dan Frank, Brian West, Nat Hutton

Lessons from Little Rock

A Village Green resident shares her experiences attending the famed Little Rock Central High and Black History Month's guest speaker, Terrance Roberts, one of the "Little Rock Nine."

By Reba Glover, Court 1

As a graduate of Little Rock Central High (class of 1980) I was very excited to learn that the Village Green Cultural Affairs Committee had invited Dr. Terrence Roberts, one of the Little Rock Nine, to be their guest speaker on February 21, 2010 for their Black History Month event. During my freshman year in high school, in 1977, we commemorated the 20-year anniversary of the crisis, which, in 1957, catapulted Little Rock, Arkansas into the national spotlight with the political and social unrest surrounding the desegregation of Little Rock's schools.

Molly O'Brien, Chair of the Cultural Affairs Committee, introduced Dr. Roberts with a story about serendipity—she had visited our local Eso Won Bookstore in December and was introduced to Dr. Roberts where she asked him to be a guest speaker. About 50 people showed up for the event. Dr. Roberts began by asking the audience to join him in singing the first stanza of "Lift Every Voice and Sing." He then relayed his story about becoming a part of history's tapestry as one of the Little Rock Nine.



Dr. Terrence Roberts (center), with Daniel Milner (Board Liaison to the Cultural Affairs Committee), and Molly O'Brien, chair of the VG Cultural Affairs Committee. Photo by Victor S. Wright

Racial segregation ended on paper in 1954 when the United States Supreme Court ruled in the case *Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas*. However, Dr. Roberts explained, a decision made on paper by nine white men in the vacuum of the legal world would not easily dispel over 300 years of separatist behavior, ignorance and social segregation. And so it was at the request of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) that nine young black students volunteered to attend the all-white Little Rock Central High School in the fall of 1957 in an attempt to desegregate the Little Rock schools.

The nine students were met by protesters and were turned away from the school on September 4 by the Arkansas National Guard. In response, President Eisenhower federalized the state National Guard and directed the 101st Airborne Division to the high school to patrol and protect the nine students who were admitted on September 25, 1957. I am sure some of you have seen the newspaper photograph from 1957 showing Elizabeth Eckford, one of the nine students, walking past a jeering crowd on that day.

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Dr. Roberts told the audience in a matter-of-fact tone that, during his nine months at Central High, he was threatened with lynching, beaten up many times, and constantly terrorized. He told us that, one day, all nine students were whisked out of school because of an angry mob, and that there was a discussion about sacrificing one student to save the other eight. He described another harrowing incident in which a white student hit him repeatedly. Dr. Roberts cited his mother's influence on his pacifism, telling us that she taught him only animals fight, because they cannot use their brains or speech to bring about resolution to conflict. He added touches of humor to his story about things that most of us would not choose to endure for any reason.

Only one student from the initial nine would graduate from Central High School, in May 1958, because that year the Arkansas Assembly voted to give the Governor authority to close the public schools in an attempt to derail desegregation. This student, Ernest Green, returned to Central High in 1977, during my sophomore year, to celebrate the 20-year anniversary of the school's integration. At that time, Mr. Green was Assistant Secretary of Labor under President Carter.

In 1958, with the closure of the Little Rock public schools, Dr. Roberts' family moved to Los Angeles, where he graduated from Los Angeles High School the following year. He continued his education at California State University, Los Angeles and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology in 1967. He went on to obtain his Master's degree in social welfare from UCLA, and a Ph.D. in psychology from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Today he is a retired professor from Antioch University and runs a consulting firm.

Dr. Roberts took questions from the audience. One young woman asked if he was seen as a hero at L.A. High School when he arrived in 1958. He replied that he was flying under the radar when he arrived, so there was no fanfare. Another woman asked if he thought this experience was a burden, or a blessing. Dr. Roberts thought this was a good

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in some of those areas. The committee intends to continue to survey the entire Green and request lighting in areas that remain very dark. The committee is also researching environmental safety consultants to interview to improve our security given our open campus with no perimeter barriers.

LAPD representative, Geraldine Thompson, a local Senior Lead Officer (SLO) for the Baldwin Village Area, came to the committee's February 24 meeting. She gave crime statistics for our area and tips on how to contact LAPD to report suspicious activities. She did say that a Neighborhood Watch is extremely important for communities and encouraged us to continue our Neighborhood Watch program. Residents at the meeting commented on the positive roll that the Safety Committee serves at VG, and also mentioned that residents should be vigilant and aware to keep the Green safe.

The Safety Committee hopes to plan a meeting in the spring for residents to meet with LAPD representatives and Platt Security personnel to discuss how to improve safety. In the summer, the committee will organize a Neighborhood Watch gathering for Village Green and the surrounding neighborhoods, such as Baldwin Vista, Veronica Sanchez Sycamore Block Club, and others, in efforts to broaden our community awareness. In the fall, the committee will organize a gathering focusing on emergency preparedness with representatives from the Los Angeles Fire Department. Once dates for these events are set, the committee will distribute flyers and post information on the VG Web site.

There can be no doubts that our Village Green community is safer today than in previous years because of the Safety Committee's efforts. Topics of discussion for future Safety meetings will be interviewing environmental safety consultants, developing a policy of crime alerts to residents, improvements to the Neighborhood Watch network, continued lighting assessment, and developing a policy of perimeter access.

Attend a meeting or join the committee! The Safety Committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Clubhouse.

Read more about safety and safety tips at
<http://villagegreenla.net/committees/safety.html>

The 2010 Census Is Here!

Please complete your 2010 U.S. Census form. It is important that everyone responds because data from the 2010 Census will be used to help each community get its fair share of government funds for highways, schools, health facilities and many other programs we all share. Help us all be counted.

Learn more about the census at
<http://2010.census.gov/>

Upcoming Summer Fun!

Be a part of the community. Meet and mingle with your neighbors at upcoming Village Green social events. Court Council and the Cultural Affairs Committee are planning traditional VG events, and some new additions.

Drinks on the Green

Movies on the Green

NEW! End-of Summer Covered Dish Party

Stay tuned! Information will be posted in laundry rooms and at villagegreenla.net.

Jazz on the Green
Saturday, June 26, 3 - 6 pm
Featuring Barbara Morrison

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first step in the assessment was to rate the elements as either “good,” “fair,” or “poor.” Most of the Green’s elements are “fair” with just a few things that are “good” and a few “poor.” Basically, most of our building items need replacement.

The GAFCON representatives then gave us some examples of problems we have on the Green. These included items like the brick serpentine walls, many of which are failing and which are not cheap to fix or rebuild. Another costly problem is our 65-year-old sewer system that needs to be replaced. Our garages and roofs are suffering from water intrusion, which could potentially cause structural issues if not addressed soon. Electrical and plumbing systems also need to be upgraded.

There were a few issues that GAFCON discovered during the survey, which owners can fix on their own. These include making sure our smoke alarms are installed and working correctly, and reporting structural issues to the office when we see them. Please fill out a work order and submit these to the office if you see any issues you think should be addressed.

Based on the assessment, GAFCON made a recommendation to the Board for replacing or repairing items on a three-tier schedule. The first tier should be completed within a year. These are issues that pose safety risks, such as fixing concrete sidewalks that pose trip hazards, stabilizing buildings, and roof repairs. The second tier would be completed over one to four years. These items pose no immediate safety risk, but should be completed soon, such as replacing the asphalt, and removing dead trees. Finally, the third tier is on a schedule of five or more years. These items include sewer, electrical, and plumbing replacement.

GAFCON has presented its final report to the Board of Directors, who will decide what the next steps should be. GAFCON emphasized that it is up to us, the joint owners of the property, to decide how we do all of this work. Outgoing Board President Steve Haggerty told the audience at the meeting that the Board is hoping to have meetings with the VG community to discuss the assessment report and the next steps. Stay tuned...

question, one that he had not been asked before, but he hesitated about agreeing that there are only two polarized views of his experiences. He described his own perspective as looking at things and events along a continuum and that sometimes it was positive and sometimes not. Someone else asked about California and racism, and Dr. Roberts poignantly added that we all live in “the South”—south of the border of Canada and that West Coast racism was just more laid back than the racism he experienced in Arkansas. He told us that in 1962 he was rejected as a housing applicant here at Baldwin Hills Village (as the Village Green was then called) because he was black. He went on to describe Glendale and other cities in Southern California as “sundown” cities and asked if we were familiar with that term. Some older members of the audience nodded, and others shook their heads. Dr. Roberts explained that historically some all-white cities expected black people to leave their city borders when the sun went down.

Dr. Roberts ended the seminar by saying that he wanted to make sure that equality for all continues, citing his grandchildren as his motivation. Thanks to Dr. Roberts and the other eight Little Rock students, I was fortunate enough to attend Little Rock Central High during a time in which diversity was widespread and embraced. But I think that Hill Harper, host of the NAACP Awards on February 26, summed up our nation's progress best: "Our struggle will continue until we form a more perfect union, where we spend more on education and health-care than on war and incarceration."

If you are interested in learning more about Dr. Terrence Roberts, he has written two books: *Lessons from Little Rock* and *Simple but not Easy*. You can also log on to www.littlerock9.org to make donations and read more about the nine individuals who endeavored to make important social changes for their time.

By Shumway Marshall, Court 14

Venture up La Brea and you might just miss El Nido, a restaurant specializing in Nicaraguan cuisine nestled in the corner of a non-descript strip mall just north of the 10 Freeway.

The décor is, in a word, kitch. And it's fantastic. Framed postcards from Latin America take the place of wallpaper along one wall. Wooden birds and other knick knacks hang from the ceiling. Fake tropical plants abound. Football (soccer) games, or Colombian music videos blast on a large TV.

El Nido is the kind of place you can pass every day and not realize it's there. But once you stop in, you'll be coming back for more.

CJ's - A Village Green Favorite

Yes, you can get eggs any way you want it. But you can also get chicken and waffles slathered in maple-flavored syrup and fresh fruit smoothies in any combination you can concoct.

The menu is what you might expect from a restaurant featuring food “from south to south of the border.” Breakfast,

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SOCIAL RECREATION/50+ CLUB

2009–2010 ACTIVITIES IN REVIEW

By Priscilla Browner

In 2009, the 50+ Club journeyed beyond the city limits and explored a myriad of cultural and educational activities within the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The 17 traveled trips and tours included a rich array of theatre, museums, themed entertainment, fun-filled attractions, and gaming. Activities and events gave the seniors new horizons, one can only imagine what is coming up next. December was filled with celebratory activities beginning with a Christmas Banquet and Dance at the Proud Bird Restaurant, Los Angeles and ending with an eight-day New Year's cruise to Cabo San Lucas, Mazatlan, and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

The 50+ Club started 2010 on a high note. Rachel Garner, President; Trudy Williams, First Vice President; Lillian Newman, Second Vice President; Eleanor Boyd, Secretary; Ruby Wilson, Treasurer; Mary Bates and Shirley Scott, Financial Assistants; Kathy Banks, Hostess; and Priscilla Browner, Chair of Social Recreation/50+ Club and Coordinator of Trips and Tours. The Club affiliation is with the City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks, Senior Citizen Section. Priscilla Browner is Board Secretary to the Los Angeles Federation Council of Senior Citizens.

Although 2010 has just begun, the following trips are "sold out:" The Glendale Theatre in February and December, Palm Springs Follies in March, and the Grand Canyon in May. The year's highlight, a nine-day trip to the Islands of New England in September, is also "sold out." Members are anxious to make reservations for the year 2011 Mediterranean Greek Isles Cruise.

On Wednesday, January 20 (first 2010 trip), members traveled to the City of Orange, Rib Trader Restaurant's Dinner Theatre. The afternoon included a Renaissance feast, incredible illusions of magic and outrageous comedy. The February 6 trip to the Tam O'Shanter Inn (Lawry's Restaurant) included a scrumptious Prime Rib dinner or Chicken/Salmon entrée. Then off to the Glendale Theatre for the comedy play "See How They Run." February trips culminated February 23 on a 3-day trip to Buffalo Bills Resort and Casino, State Line.

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New Court Signs at the Village Green

By Georgia Lumpkin, Court 12

Some two years after a resolution to the Village Green Board from the Design Review Committee, new court signage appeared "like magic" in Village Green. The signs say "Court 1," not just "1." The address numbers and arrows pointing towards areas will help those looking for a specific address. In addition, the signs are charming, blending perfectly with the leafiness of Village Green.

Kudos to designer, and chair of Design Review Committee, Christian Daniels, and his committee. The new signs will serve the residents of Village Green in the years to come.

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lunch and dinner items include a range of dishes from soul food to Mexican to traditional diner fare.

What makes CJ's a Village Green favorite is the freshness of the ingredients, reasonable prices and unbeatable location. (Located in the strip mall between Sycamore and La Brea.)

CJ's is open until 8 p.m. So you'll have to get your late night fix somewhere else.

**3655 S. La Brea Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90016
(323) 292-9221
www.cjscafe.net**

The following trips are available. Please join us.

Trip	Dates
Portos Bakery Tour w/Lunch (Huell Howser attraction), \$47.00	4/28
Pechanga Resort Casino, \$27.00	6/15
Broadway in Sandstone, \$315.00 d/o \$369.00 s/o	6/29-7/1 (3 days)
Aquarium of the Pacific w/Lunch, \$60.00	7/13
Salsa Festival, \$35.00	7/24
Monterey Bay/Carmel, \$599.00 d/o \$799.00 s/o	8/1-8/4 (4 days)
Fillmore & Western Scenic Train w/Lunch, \$75.00	9/25
Santa Barbara Culinary School w/Lunch, \$67.00	10/13
Oak Glen A La Mode w/Lunch, \$52.00	10/28
Laughlin, Riverside Resort, \$104.00 d/o \$121.00 s/o	11/8-11/10 (3 days)
Morongo Casino & Cabazon Outlet Shopping, \$40.00	11/30
7-Night Southern Caribbean New Year's Cruise	12/26/2010 – 1/2/2011
Mardi Gras Celebration, \$35	2/10/2011
5-Day Coastal Cruise—Los Angeles to Vancouver	5/2011
12-Night Mediterranean Greek Isles Cruise	8/2011

When the club is not traveling, seniors enjoy weekly activities at the clubhouse that include special events, board games, movies, use of the library, socializing and enjoying prepared lunch meals.

Village Green 50+ residents and community residents stay “young at heart” by participating in the various social recreational activities. Please join us! The clubhouse is open every Thursday, unless specified, 12 noon until 3:00 p.m.

50+ CLUB BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

The Thursday, February 11, 2010 celebration featured Priscilla Browner's personal African-American Daddy's Long Legs Doll Collection. The history, display, and workmanship captured the hearts of those in attendance. The unique doll characters depict eras that reflect different fashion styles dating back to the 1800s. The collection has become an eye-catching conversation piece. In 1990, Priscilla joined the Daddy's Long Legs Collector's Club and purchased 27 dolls and accessories. Signed dolls have a Certificate of Authenticity. Throughout the years, the unique doll collection has been displayed at the UCLA Art Show and at various clubs and churches.



Photo courtesy of Priscilla Browner

Earthquake: Are You Prepared?

The recent earthquakes in Haiti and Chile are reminders to us in Southern California to be prepared for an earthquake. Learn more on the state's Earthquake Country Alliance Web site:

<http://www.earthquakecountry.info/10.5/Bprepared.html>

Correction

In the last issue of *Highlights*, Priscilla Browner's name was spelled incorrectly. The editor of *Highlights* and the Communications Committee apologizes for this mistake.

Hiking Club Goes on Full Moon Hike

By Bernie Altman, Court 6

“What *are* we doing?” As we gathered on the street corner at 4:00 p.m. Saturday afternoon, clad in raingear and huddled under umbrellas, it started to rain again. Six plucky souls—Joan Anglin, Cynthia Cyrus, Nick Antonio and his two English friends, James and Clarissa Langham, and myself—were walking to the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook for its Full Moon Hike. James wryly noted, “In Manchester this would be considered a sunny day.”

All week the weather forecast predicted a 70% chance of rain on Saturday, and the weather gods didn’t disappoint. It rained all morning, sometimes hard, and in the afternoon there was a flurry of phone calls: “Are we still going?” “My friend in Beverly Hills says there’s a downpour there.” “What if we get wet and melt?” “The worst that can happen is we call a cab.” At 3:45, we decided to go. Sometimes you take a chance and it pays off magically.



Cynthia Cyrus, Bernie Altman, James Langham, Clarissa Langham, Joan Anglin, Nick Antonio; photograph by Nick Antonio

Once we actually began our walk to the Overlook, the rain stopped. Upon arrival at the Jefferson Boulevard park entrance, we headed up the trail, defying multiple patches of mud with mixed success. Occasionally we paused to take in the views. For the most part the city below was gray, and Downtown was somewhat obscured by moisture in the air, but we all agreed that our efforts were rewarded by what we saw.

Arriving at the Visitor’s Center, Kristin, a park ranger, declared that unless it was pouring rain, the hike would take place shortly. Meanwhile she invited us inside to see a video presentation on Baldwin Hills, which included historic television footage of the dam disaster (including aerial shots of cars floating around Court 4) as well as color slides of the whole area (one was of the original entrance sign of “Baldwin Hills Village”) taken by a local resident over the span of many years.

When the presentation concluded, we returned outside. There had been a dramatic transformation in those 20 minutes. The sun was low in the west, peeking under the heavy sable cloud cover, casting a dazzling gold light over the entire city. Los Angeles never looked so beautiful. The cloud formations above, in all shades of gray, were breathtaking. The moon, however, was shrouded by clouds, a minor disappointment; after all, this was supposed to be a “full moon” hike. With a dozen or so other visitors, Kristin then led us through the upper trails in the dimming light, describing native plants and exotic snails (two little boys asked her, “Is it okay if we play with the snails?”) as well as the undertaking of restoring the park’s flora to its original pre-urban state.

At the end of the hike our group chose to descend by way of the paved access road instead of the muddy path. That’s when the moon appeared through a break in the clouds, making our adventure complete. We returned to Village Green by 7:00 p.m., mutually delighted that we took a chance on foot, on a rainy winter night, out to the great unknown beyond Village Green.

The next scheduled Full Moon Hike at Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook will take place on Saturday, June 26 at 8:00 p.m., and we’ll schedule it as an event for our walking/hiking group.

Contact Bernie Altman to get added to his e-mail list about future hikes: [berniealtman\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:berniealtman[at]gmail[dot]com)

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.