

Highlights

A Quarterly Publication of the Village Green Owners' Association

Winter 2010

VG Community to Meet February 6 for Annual Meeting

By Shumway Marshall

On February 6, the Village Green community will gather at Baldwin Hills Elementary for its annual meeting to discuss issues affecting the Green, elect new board members, and vote on any new proposals.

The community will elect five people to the nine-member board. Any owner can be nominated to serve the one- and two-year terms. Candidates will speak at forums held at the Clubhouse on Tuesday, January 19 at 6:30 p.m. and on Saturday, January 23 at 10:00 a.m.

Topics of discussion at the annual meeting will likely include the need for ongoing maintenance projects such as replacing dated sewer, water and irrigations lines.

“The board of directors will look to the homeowners to help determine the priority and funding for projects to be completed within the next five to six years,” said Steve Haggerty, president of the Village Green Owners' Association.

In November, the board of directors, as permitted in the VGOA bylaws, raised homeowner assessments (beginning in January 2010) by 7% to pay for much needed improvements around the Green. Despite a leaner operating budget to pay for things like landscape maintenance, security and staff salaries, more funds are needed to repair or replace major components of the Village Green's infrastructure.

Haggerty is quick to point out that the increased assessment will not cover all projects the board hopes to fund as part of

(Meeting continued on page 3)



**Bird watching at the Village Green
with the Audubon Society**

Visitors Tour the Green

By Robert Nicolais

From ornithologists to architects, the Village Green continues to be an educational destination for groups interested in our unique setting. Here are a few highlights of recent tours.

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<http://villagegreenla.net>



Around the Mediterranean in 12 Days

A Travelogue from Two Village Green Residents

By Cynthia Singleton and Barbara Washington

From Cynthia

Being able to experience 25 centuries of history, art and culture in 12 days made my recent cruise in the Mediterranean with Barbara one of my favorites. We explored so many incredible places, Barcelona, Monte Carlo, Florence, Sicily, Rome, Corfu,

and Nafplion, just to name a few. Seeing that many destinations by land would be so much more difficult!

Most of the ports of call were home to historical sites and artifacts, hundreds, and in some cases, thousands of years old! I stood in the very same Coliseum in Rome where people were fed to lions for entertainment. The tour guide explained that on Sundays they would also have different animals fight each other to the death. Thank heaven we have Sunday football!

I was fascinated that the people of Venice built their dwellings on water, which comes right up to their front doors. Many of the taxis are wooden, 1940s motor boats, restored to mint condition with beautiful leather interiors.



The Coliseum in Rome, prototype to modern day stadiums and namesake to the Village Green's southern border.

The statues at the Olympic Village in Greece were so lifelike you wanted to reach out and touch them. How can artists carve marble to look like soft and flowing silk?

The Vatican in Rome is a whole article on its own. It covers a massive area with extremely large, solid brick buildings and ornate finishes everywhere. Inside Saint Peter's Basilica, I saw statues and paintings of such wonder and beauty that words cannot describe. I found myself saying over, and over again "How did they do that?"



Venice

(Travelogue continued on page 3)

Voting Policy for Delinquent Owners

Do you owe the VG payment for a fine or work order? You can vote in the election!
Are you delinquent on your monthly assessments? Your voting rights will be suspended.

In order to clarify voting rights, at the November, 2009 meeting, the Board of Directors passed a Resolution providing that voting rights will be suspended only for failure to pay delinquent assessments, not for non-payment of fines, work orders, or other charges.

(Travelogue continued from page 2)

From Barbara

One of the many highlights of this fantastic voyage was spending time on the islands of Katakolon and Kerkyra (Corfu), Greece. Katakolon is the site of the original Olympic Games in 776 B.C. and several of the 2004 Olympic events. As I walked through the remarkable ruins of the original Olympic Stadium, I was struck by the intricate and detailed design of this architectural treasure that remains standing in the 21st century.

Like Cynthia, I was fascinated by the historical diversity of Rome. Madison Square Garden is often referred to as the “world’s most famous arena.” Not true. Looking at the ruins of the Coliseum in Rome, you can see that it is the prototype for most modern day stadiums. As I stood outside of the arena amazed by its enormity, I reflected on the thousands of slaves who toiled to the death to build that great architectural marvel.

With the many ports we visited, it may be difficult to imagine how we could find time to relax. Although we did not have many chances to sleep in, we were definitely able to unwind sitting on the verandah enjoying the tranquility of the ocean. Of course, 12 days of beautiful weather was an added bonus!

This Mediterranean cruise was certainly the best way to visit so many interesting, historical and intriguing sites.

It was truly una bella vacanza! (a great vacation).




































































I viaggiatori felici (The Happy Travelers)



(Meeting Continued from page 1)

a five- to six-year revitalization plan. One likely topic of discussion is the funding to repair sinking buildings 8 and 14, which is causing concerns for the residents who live there. According to Haggerty, the board is still determining the scope of the repairs and soliciting quotes and will then investigate possible funding sources.

It’s possible that the property assessment survey conducted by Gafcon, Inc., will be ready for the meeting. “They didn’t account for some work we’ve already completed,” said Haggerty. “We’re working with them to get an accurate report that reflects the work that still needs to be done. When it’s ready, we will probably hold a presentation if its not ready in time for the annual meeting.”



Senior Halloween Luncheon

By Priscilla Browner

Retired Barnum and Bailey Circus performer Michael Tuba dazzled and wowed 60 seniors at this year's Halloween luncheon. The audience couldn't stop laughing at his witty performance – which included lots of audience participation. Afterward, Evelyn Eccles won a Halloween basket filled with candy for being the best dressed. The other costumed members received a glittered pumpkin. The fun also included several gift giveaways, a delicious meal and the company of our fellow Greeners.

Special thanks to the Cultural Affairs Committee for decorating the Clubhouse prior to our Halloween event.

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October 4: Audubon Society

The Village Green Landscape and Tree Commitees hosted the Los Angeles Audubon Society in a tour and birdwalk. Members of the Society spoke about the various birds they see here, the rare birds seen this year, and the importance of urban forests. I talked a bit about the Village Green and how the landscape has developed over the years. After coffee and snacks, the group of residents, kids, and Audubon Society members toured the Green with binoculars looking for birds. The Audubon members mentioned how important listening for birdcalls is in bird watching—some birds were heard but not seen. The whole group got to see a Northern Parula that day. This is such a rare bird in Southern California that the Audubon Society wrote a notice for its newsletter about the sightings here at the Green.

October 18: UCLA Landscape Architecture Students

Professor Don Marquardt returned to the Village Green with his class from UCLA Extension's program in Landscape Architecture. The field trip has been a perennial favorite for several years. Their visit included a one-hour presentation on the history of Village Green and its landscaping and a walking tour of the grounds where students identified many of our rare trees, shrubs and plants. Professor Marquardt and an eager student even volunteered to come back to help identify a few difficult specimens for our cultural landscape survey.

November 15: Emerging Green Builders

Nine members of Emerging Green Builders, a chapter of the United States

Green Building Council, visited the Village Green to learn about the many sustainable building practices executed here. I talked about the site planning and the Radburn idea and how these models fit with sustainability concerns, as well as sustainable features of our buildings. This group would be a valuable resource if Village Green ever forms a Sustainability Committee; they were spontaneously thinking of possible "green" improvements for us to possibly implement!

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**Take a trip to
Viejas Casino
in beautiful Alpine, CA**

Enjoy shopping
at many fabulous outlets located
directly across from
the casino.

**Trip date: Friday, February 5
Pick-up Location/Time:
Hauser & Rodeo at 8 a.m.**

Cost: \$15

**Contact Sharon
to RSVP by January 15
at (323) 532-8201**

Sponsored by the Haymon family,
VG residents

Didja Know?

Contributions by Highlights Staff

Longtime resident Dorothy Wong received a fellowship from the Clarence Stein Institute at Cornell University. Stein was the consulting architect for the Village Green (1938 to 1942). Dorothy will research and develop preservation strategies to assist Stein's seven major communities in maintaining their National Historic Landmark status and to attract funding. These communities include the National Historic Landmarks of Radburn (New Jersey), Chatham Village (Pennsylvania), Greenbelt, Maryland, and Baldwin Hills Village (now known as our very own Village Green). This project also will help three of Stein's potential National Historic Landmark communities in New York City—Sunnyside Gardens, Phipps Gardens, and Hillside Homes.

Village Green resident Greg Smith, by trade a TV cameraman, won an Emmy for his work on the American Idol finale! Greg got his start while in college. His first job was in the mail room at KABC radio located on La Cienega Boulevard. He has worked with stars such as Johnny Carson, and on the sitcom "Living Single," starring Queen Latifah. Greg has lived in the Green for 24 years.

United States Ambassadors make great travel agents! Ask longtime VG resident Evangeline Hutson. She flew to Fiji to visit her son Steven McGann, U.S. Ambassador to Fiji, and spent six weeks enjoying the day-to-day routine of an ambassador. We look forward to a longer travel article from her in the spring 2010 *Highlights*.

Longtime resident Tom Brown and his family left the Village Green last summer. Mr. Brown participated in many boards during his residency here, including serving as Board President in 2000 and 2001. We wish him and his family good fortune in their new home.

Village Green Black History Month Celebration

Featured Speaker Terrence Roberts

Sunday, February 21

3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Village Green Clubhouse

One of the "Little Rock Nine," Terrence Roberts was one of the first African-American high-school students who were the first to integrate the city's racially segregated schools and is now a professor of psychology at Antioch University.

Seniors on the Move - The Black Hills of South Dakota

By Priscilla Browner

On October 3, 50 seniors departed by motor coach on a nine-day, escorted, historical journey to the Black Hills of South Dakota. The spectacular scenery along the way took us into nature's most enchanting creations, crossing California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, and South Dakota.

The scenic, historic, and scientific places visited along the way included the Utah Museum of Fine Arts; the Tate Geological Museum in Casper, Wyoming; and the Western Wyoming Natural History Museum, in Rock Springs, Wyoming.

Arriving at our destination, we encountered four days of snow and temperatures dipping into the 20s. What an adventure! The motor coach driver

even had to place chains on the bus tires. However, the weather did not deter us from visiting the breathtaking treasures of Mount Rushmore National Memorial, America's "Shrine of Democracy," the Crazy Horse Monument, the High Plains Western Heritage Center, and Deadwood, former home of Wild Bill Hickock and Calamity Jane.

A tour of Wildlife Loop Road at Custer State Park driving through the rolling prairies and pine-covered hills offered one of the best spots in the region to view native wild animals. We learned about the adaptations and behaviors of the bison, moose, elk, and wild burros. How exciting visiting the Buffalo Corrals, the largest land mammal in North America, it can stand six feet at the shoulders and weigh over 2,000 pounds. The adventure was awesome and enjoyed by all.

Expo Line Opening Delayed

By Shumway Marshall

Village Green residents will have to endure continued street closures and heavy traffic on La Cienga Boulevard and La Brea Avenue as construction on the new Expo Line has been delayed by an additional year on the line's aerial stations.

The first part of the city's light rail into the westside will hopefully open this summer, taking passengers from 7th Street/Metro Center in Downtown to Crenshaw Blvd. Transit officials had hoped to open all of Phase 1 this summer. Delays were caused by complications laying track along the Blue Line in Downtown, as well as adding an unplanned stop at and safety features at USC, reports the *Los Angeles Times*. The price tag has risen more than \$220 million over its original \$640 million budget.

When it is finished, the first phase of the project will connect the Village Green to the shops and restaurants of downtown Culver City, furniture shopping at the Helms Bakery building, new learning experiences at the museums at Exposition Park and USC, entertainment at L.A. Live and the Staples Center and the nightlife and businesses of downtown Los Angeles.

Village Green residents will be able to enjoy 8.6 miles of landscaped bike and pedestrian paths that will run along the train line and also the artwork of local artists at each station.

A second phase of the project will continue through Culver City and West L.A., ending at Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade. In December 2008, voters approved Measure R, a half-cent sales tax increase, enabling the project to be completed without federal funds as early as 2014, though that timeline is now uncertain. The first phase was funded by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) with over \$500 million of state funding.

In recent years Metro has placed an emphasis on connecting the city through a series of light rails, or above

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The stations will feature the creations of local artists. Pictured here, a rendering of the La Brea Station. Photo Credit: Greg Starosky, idexpo.org

(Expo Line continued from page 6)

ground trains. Though sometimes criticized for not being as safe as their underground counterparts, light rails are aptly suited for our city's vast sprawl, enabling builders to cover more ground for less money.

It's unclear how the budget overruns and delays on the Expo Line will effect other projects.

Federal matching funds are currently being sought for an underground subway extension of the red line along Wilshire Boulevard to Santa Monica. Other priorities include a light rail



The opening of the La Cienega and La Brea stations has been delayed to 2011. Photo Credit: Greg Starosky, idexpo.org

along the Crenshaw corridor to connect the Expo Line to LAX and the Green Line, and a Green Line extension to Torrance. Last summer a second arm to the Gold Line was completed from Union Station to East Los Angeles.

Village Green Hikers on the March



With December 17th's group walk through the neighboring hills to the south, Village Green's new walking and hiking group has completed three local excursions in as many months. Each time there has been a full 50 per cent increase in participants from the time before. In October, 10 strong, they went to Baldwin Hills Overlook State Park, which offers dazzling views of Village Green and other various sights, including the Pacific Ocean, the Hollywood Sign, and downtown Los Angeles. The day after Thanksgiving, 15 hikers took a three-mile circuit through Kenny Hahn Park. There were 23 souls (and 46 soles) participating on the nighttime holiday lights walk. One member reportedly stated, "World domination is our goal," but this could not be verified. The evening sky was clear with relatively mild temperatures, and the walkers enjoyed festively decorated houses and lawns, spectacular city views, and warm companionship. A highlight was the locally famous Gift House on Sanchez and Cochrane, dark for the last couple of years but this season back to its full bedazzling splendor. Following the walk every-

one gathered in Court 6 for a festive party to replenish all those expended calories.

Currently being planned is a city bus and light rail excursion with walking tour of Boyle Heights' wonderful murals, tentatively slotted for Martin Luther King weekend. Also being discussed is a walking tour of Downtown's hidden parks. To have your name added to the notification list or for further information, contact Bernie Altman at berniealtman@gmail.com or (323) 294-4476.

Mark Your Calendars!

**Village Green Owners'
Association Annual Meeting**

**Saturday, February 6
10:00 a.m.**

**Baldwin Hills Elementary School
(across Rodeo Rd. at Hauser Blvd)**

Meet the Candidates for Board of Directors

**Tuesday, January 19
6:30 p.m.
At the Clubhouse**

**Saturday, January 23
10:00 a.m.
At the Clubhouse**

**Learn more from each of the candidates
who hope to join the
Village Green Owner's Association.**

PASSAGES

Compiled by Reba Glover



Atara Mont, age 83, died July 9, 2009. She is survived by her son Dan K. Morhaim of Owings Mills, MD, granddaughters Emily, Sarah, and Elizabeth Morhaim and daughter-in-law Shelley Morhaim. Atara lived in the East Circle for over 25 years. Raised in New York, she arrived on the West Coast to attend UCLA and resided here ever since. She worked at UCLA helping people to stop smoking. Atara was very active in the Village Green community, serving on several committees. She was a also member of the 50+ Club.



Alice Haggerty, age 88, died on November 3, 2009 of congestive heart failure following a heart attack. Alice is survived by her son, VGOA President Steve Haggerty and his family. A native of New York City, she came to Los Angeles to work in the shipyards during World War II. Alice has lived in Court 13 since August 1996 and served on the Court Council as court representative, first as the alternate and later taking over the primary responsibilities for supplying her court with flyers and information. She also served on the Budget & Finance Committee. She was a charter member of the 50+ Club, traveling with the club and meeting on Thursday for games at the Clubhouse. According to her family, Alice was lively and alert until near the end, and had a long and adventuresome life. They will miss her upbeat spirit.

Volunteer Ballot Counters Needed

Eyes and hands are needed to volunteer and help count hundreds of ballots after the VGOA Annual Meeting on Saturday, February 6, 2010. Counting takes place in the Clubhouse after the meeting and will take several hours. Please contact the office if you are interested in helping. All owners are welcome to watch the counting!

Guided Full-Moon Walk **Saturday, February 27 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**

Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook
6300 Hetzler Rd.

(Just over a mile west of the Village Green, off Jefferson) Culver City

Take in breathtaking views of the city of lights and marvel at other night sky wonders. Past events have included fun for all ages, such as shadow puppetry, stargazing with telescopes and more strenuous hikes. Be sure to pack a flashlight and water, and wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

Sponsored by California State Parks. www.parks.ca.gov/bhso

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 vghighlights@yahoo.com, or to the office.