

Highlights

A Quarterly Publication of the Village Green Owners Association

Winter 2012

Year-in-Review

By Peter Fay, VGOA General Manager

2011 has been a very busy and productive year for the Village Green Owners Association (VGOA) and ends with the VGOA financially stronger, in better condition, more productive, and offering improved service to its members.

There have been so many positive strategic initiatives developed for the property this year. Our projects differ in complexity of execution, importance, and cost. However, they are all designed to make the Village Green a better place to reside and visit.

We have renegotiated most of the contracts we have with those companies who provide services to the property. Benefits include more and better services at lower cost. The negotiations produced a substantial decrease in projected 2012 operational cost (approximately \$80,000), while increasing transfers to the reserve accounts (approximately \$740,000), a figure that does not include the additional 2011 portion of the special assessment (\$581,010).

We are very pleased with the progress made with the VGOA's reserve projects. Clearly defining scopes of work, then aggressively bidding and negotiating contracts, has allowed the Association to maximize productivity and cost effectiveness on projects such as reroofing and repainting garage and residential buildings, interior and exterior domestic water line re-piping, and garage court building restorations.

We are particularly satisfied with the progression of two projects: the sewer project, and concrete repairs. This year we undertook and completed the single largest replacement and repair project to date of some of the elements of the approximately 4.35 miles of sewer lines located on the property. Repair and replacement of concrete walkways and patios has also been systematically pursued to make the property safer for residents and guests.

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2012 Annual Meeting and Election

The VGOA Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 4, at 10:00 a.m. in the Baldwin Hills Elementary School auditorium.

Submit ballots to the office in advance of the Annual Meeting, so that we can ensure a quorum. You can also bring ballots to the meeting.

Meet the candidates for the Board at one of these events in the Clubhouse:

Tuesday, January 17, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 21, 10:00 a.m.

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<http://villagegreenla.net>

Residents Showcase Their Creations at 3rd Annual Bazaar

The afternoon of November 19 found the Clubhouse alive with people buying and selling their wares. It was the third annual Crafts & Holiday Bazaar, sponsored by the Village Green Social Recreation 50+ Club.

Tables displayed jewelry, books, hats, handbags, plants, candles, hand-knit products, and cosmetics. There was even a reflexology chair for those who needed some relaxation from the holiday rush, or just life's little stresses.

Diann Dumas, Christine Boardley, Dianne Rhodes, Lillian Newman, Rosalie Hughes, and Priscilla Browner each had a table. Participating for the first time, Georgia Lumpkin and the Village Green Landscape Committee offered plants for sale. Diann sold her own creations of beautiful semi-precious and polished stone jewelry. She makes the rounds of various bazaars selling her creations.



Barbara Collins, a member of the 50+ Club, helped her daughter Sharon sell some wonderfully scented candles from Sharon's business, Hand Craft Candles.

Emma Price, a retired teacher, had a table pitching her latest children's book, *Portia's Incredible Journey*. Kim of Sukari's Spa and Gifts sold her line of one-of-a-kind body wash and lotions.

Kathy Banks, 50+ Club hostess, served chili for everyone. There was a table with baked goods for those with a sweet tooth.

Congratulations to Priscilla Browner and other members of the Social Recreation 50+ Club for hosting this wonderful and well-attended event. What a pleasant way to spend the afternoon.

Holiday Cheer at the Green

In December, the Cultural Affairs Committee hosted two holiday events: a family cookie decorating party on December 10, and a holiday dance party on December 17. Thanks to the beautiful decorations from the Court Council, we were able to enjoy a Christmas Tree, Kwanza decorations, and a Hanukkah display at both events.

About 25 families joined us in the Clubhouse for some very messy, very pretty cookie decorating. The kids seemed to have a blast, whether they were decorating or just eating! There were lots of sticker and art projects that seemed to occupy children of all ages.

The holiday dance party welcomed over 30 people to the Clubhouse. There were refreshments, and DJ Fred McZeal kept everyone on their feet.



TruGreen generously donated this very lovely tree as they do every year. The Court Council's Christmas tree team, led by Jeanne Gaignard, Court 1 representative, decorated the tree and created the Hanukkah and Kwanza displays. The team included Dagmar Buck and Heidi Oglesby.

Many Benefits to Attic Insulation

By Heidi Creighton, Court 1

This year, as the colder months approached, my husband and I considered adding insulation to the attic space of our unit. We asked around and received some good recommendations from Village Green neighbors and thought many others would be interested as well.

Insulation is a very effective way to improve the energy efficiency of a home. Properly installed insulation helps keep rooms warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. It also makes your home more comfortable by helping maintain a uniform temperature throughout the house, not just near air vents.

The orientation of a building impacts its solar heat gain, which can produce a rise in indoor temperature. Units with east and west facing windows experience maximum solar gain in the summer months and would benefit greatly from added insulation. One neighbor mentioned that after adding insulation to his attic, the upper floor of the unit was a pleasant 76 degrees when it was 100 degrees outside. In the winter months, the same neighbor said he now rarely turns on the

heater, whereas before installing insulation it was on constantly. All insulation materials are rated for their performance in restricting heat transfer. This is expressed as a product's R-value—the higher the R-value, the more effective the insulation. An R-value of 30 is recommended. Two types of blown-in attic insulation are composed of fiberglass and cellulose. Many choices of materials and method of installation are available, and should be researched.

The cost for installing R-30 blown-in fiberglass into an attic the size of a typical Village Green 2BR townhouse is roughly \$550. Some residents at the Village Green have been able to get a discounted price by working with their neighbors to have insulation installed in multiple units on the same day. Be sure to take a peak in your crawl space to see if there is adequate insulation already installed. We have an access door in the hallway closet on the second floor of our townhouse. When scheduling the work, ask that contractors send the smallest person for the installation, as there is very little space between the unit's ceiling and roof.

Southern California Gas Company offers a rebate (\$0.15 per square foot of installed insulation) by sending in a simple form, available here: <http://socialgas.com/for-your-home/rebates/>. Please be sure to review the requirements of the rebate before selecting an R-value for your insulation. One neighbor received a \$93 rebate from the Gas Company. A federal tax credit may also be an option. Contact the installation companies, as they should be able to provide you with details.

As with any modification to your unit, be sure to submit the scope-of-work to the Design Review Committee (DRC) before proceeding and obtain proper permits. A modification request should be filled out and submitted to the office, after which the request is reviewed at the next DRC meeting (first Monday of the month after your request is submitted). The DRC makes a recommendation to the Board, which then votes on it. This process can take some time, so plan accordingly.

(Manager Review, continued from page 1)

The foundations of better operational management established in 2011 will allow the VGOA to move forward with all projects and improvements in a cost efficient and timely manner going into 2012. The primary objective of all our undertakings will be to assure that the Village Green will continue to be one of the best communities in Los Angeles.

From all the VGOA staff, we wish you a happy New Year!

Signs of (Bird) Life at Village Green

By Gordon Brooks, Court 6, and Tree Committee Chair

You may have seen them in early mornings around the Green. Strangers dressed in muted khaki tones, wearing sun hats and equipped with binoculars, silently and discretely prowling and occasionally freezing like statues, peering upwards for their quarry. Who are these strangers and what are they looking for?

To help answer this question and expand our knowledge about some of our other Village Green residents, Richard Barth, Don Sterba, two volunteers from the Audubon Society, and approximately 16 Village Green residents gathered at the Clubhouse on October 16 for an introduction to bird-watching. The Village Green is extremely popular among Los Angeles birders because our abundant trees and ornamental shrubbery form a prime habitat for resident and migrating species. Many birds are now dropping into the Green for a rest and a bite to eat on their arduous flight to a warmer southern clime.

We began our day with refreshments and a slideshow of birds commonly seen at the Green and this region. Over 100 different bird species have been sighted here. A list is available in the Office.

The group then assembled by the Orchid tree on the Main Green. Just as the novices were learning how to

adjust their binoculars, a great cacophony was heard overhead. As if on cue, a chattering mixed flock of Red-crowned and Red-lored Parrots landed atop a Sycamore tree and began grooming one another. These are big, beautiful and non-native birds, straight out of *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Off we went in search of less exotic but equally exciting discoveries.

During our brief circuit around the Green, the group spotted several bird species, such as Black Phoebes, Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds, Warblers, Goldfinches, and Hawks. For a complete list, go to the Village Green website (<http://villagegreenla.net>).

We were shown nesting cavities created by Sapsuckers and Woodpeckers and the nesting site of a pair of Northern Parula Warblers, an uncommon "rare or casual vagrant" visitor to California, whose sighting last year excited the west coast birding community.

The crowning event was in the West Green, where Western Bluebirds flashed their iridescent blue feathers as they flitted into patches of sunlight in search of insects. For these lucky folks who attended the walk, birds will no longer be anonymously lumped together. They have seen first-hand that there is a beautiful and diverse winged community living amongst us.

Where were you in April 1992?

On April 29, 1992 four LAPD officers accused of beating Rodney King were acquitted at trial. Rioting then engulfed Los Angeles.

The 20th anniversary of that event is approaching. *Highlights* would like to gather recollections of this difficult time in our community's history for the April issue of *Highlights* in order to better understand those events.

**Send us your story, or help us gather them:
highlights@villagegreenla.net**

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PARTNER WANTED **Walk-Run-Bicycle**

Any day of the week between

9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Wendell [323-574-9247](tel:323-574-9247)

Trees: Life, Death and Replacement

By Gordon Brooks, Court 6, and Tree Committee Chair

This article will answer questions and concerns from my neighbors about tree replacements. This is also a plea for patience and understanding when the tree you so enjoyed seeing every morning heading to work or during a leisurely stroll around the courts disappears and is not replaced immediately with one of equal size and stature.

All living things get old, and the trees and other plant life at Village Green are no exception. Many of our trees are reaching the limits of their life-spans. Like humans, plants and trees also experience accidents (although most of us generally don't get hurt by wind, moist soil, or bugs). Occasionally bacteria, viruses, or improper care do hurt humans and trees alike, and sometimes the result is terminal.

All these factors, especially age, are taking their toll on our trees. Arborist Dan Jensen visits the Green three times a month to assess the health and condition of what we now refer to as "the Village Green urban forest." He reports his observations and makes recommendations to the Board. When a tree's condition is beyond recovery, or may threaten the life and property of residents, Dan recommends removal. Sometimes, like after a storm or heavy Santa Ana winds, nature makes the decision, and a tree topples.

These trees constitute a significant aspect of our landscape design by landscape architect Fred Barlow, which contributed to our National Landmark status. One of my tasks as Chair of the Tree Committee is to document these trees for posterity with the aim of maintaining the integrity of our defining landscape features. I take photos of trees listed for removal from two directions, measure the circumference at breast height and the lateral spread of their canopies, and estimate their heights.

We are working on a Landscape Report that will be submitted to the Federal Department of the Interior. Until that is completed, only recently removed or downed trees, which can be documented as original Barlow landscape plan species, are being replaced. In certain circumstances, the arborist must be consulted to guarantee the vigor and viability of the replacement trees. The failed trees may be in locations now shaded by mature surrounding trees or are too close to buildings and other hardscape. Or, the cause of death may require special soil treatment or planting instructions.

I have been asked the question "why do we plant such small trees?" Every arborist and tree expert we have asked has advised us to plant what the industry calls '15-gallon trees.' These young

trees are much cheaper than more mature trees, and are less likely to be root bound or to have circling roots (trees need their roots to spread out laterally to gain a footing in the ground). The 36-inch box trees are bigger when planted, but growth spurts in trees happen in their first few years of life. Typically, by the second year after planting either of these, you won't be able to tell which was a 36-inch tree and which was a 15-gallon tree (assuming they were each well taken care of).

If a tree was identified as a "specimen" tree on the original Barlow landscape plan, we do replace it with a 36-inch box, or larger, tree. These trees are usually in prominent locations and include multi-trunk specimens, such as Olives and Brazilian Pepper trees. Just like young children currently being pushed around in strollers, before you know it, they will be asking for the keys to the car, and the trees planted the same year will be offering shade and homes for birds.

The good news is the Landscape Report is in its final stretch prior to its submission to the Department of the Interior, and the Board allocated additional funds for tree replacement, so it is our expectation you will see many young trees popping up about the Green this year.

What Lies Beneath...VGOA Sewer Reconstruction Update

By George Rheault, Court 2

The flush of a toilet, a bathtub drained, a potful of water emptied. Each never given a second thought. Unless of course an unwelcome sewer backup follows. Only then does the disposal of our watery waste force us to reflect upon the complex network snaking beneath our floors, patios and common spaces.

Like many parts of older Los Angeles, the Village Green has been forced in recent years to confront its antiquated sewer infrastructure. Our sewer pipes and connections, having served us well for decades, in many cases well beyond their predicted lives, are increasingly failing and in need of re-investment and replacement. Since 2004, the VGOA Board has undertaken a court-by-court revamping to address this need, the progress of which is detailed in the chart below:

Sewer Renovation History

Court	Completion
6 & 7	2011
8 & 9	2009
10	2007
5	2005
4	2004

2011 marked a major milestone in this effort, as one of

the most problem-prone sewer sectors, Courts 6 and 7, was tackled from late July through just before Thanksgiving. When the dust settled, over 80 separate digs were done and hundreds of feet of pipe were replaced and upgraded, leaving behind a new long-lasting system far cheaper to maintain and less prone to occasional damage or failure. Including related patio repairs and unforeseen elements, the overall cost of the project came to approximately \$420,000.

Affected residents were solicited by the Court Council for their reactions to the work and many were pleased with the impact on their units, the conduct of the contractors, and the overall experience of this subterranean upheaval.

Much credit goes to Manager Peter Fay and his team of Sherri Giles and Harold Graves for their methodical planning, from the contract bid process all the way through final inspections, and their excellent project management. The Board also deserves praise for ensuring the project received the necessary resources to emphasize long-term fixes. Unlike past sewer repairs, this enabled key elements like proper soil back-

filling and patio repair to be done in conjunction with the sewer work instead of being put off to the future at a likely greater expense.

To learn more about the recent sewer work in Courts 6 and 7, including details about potential next phases, please visit villagegreenla.net. There you will find several items documenting the project, including a technical overview by Peter Fay, a detailed breakdown of project costs, as well as the survey sent to residents of Courts 6 and 7.

Free Yoga Continues, New Night

Free Yoga classes
resume in 2012
on Tuesdays,
beginning on January 3
6:30-7:45 p.m.
in the Clubhouse

All are welcome!

The Green's First Plant Swap

On October 8, 2011, the Landscape Committee sponsored its second year of semi-annual plant swaps. There were lively conversations about various plant types and species and how to grow them. There were some new residents to the Green who came by to get plant advice and went away happy to have some plantings. Michele Jarrett, Court 16 resident, Jeanne Gagnard, plant swap coordinator, and Georgia Lumpkin, committee chair, are such power houses of plant information that they willingly share with any who are interested. That alone made this a special event. The committee decided to limit the event to once a year, in the Spring, when residents are more focused on planting. The Spring event will be announced by a flyer. Residents are invited to come and bring cuttings, plants which are no longer needed in their gardens but that may be welcome additions to the gardens of other residents, and to seek or exchange information with other like-minded garden-lovers in the Green.

Whether one came by the table to just browse or to buy, one went away with good sound plant advice, again freely given by the very knowledgeable women, Georgia Lumpkin, Stacy Alston, Gabriella Worrell and Michelle Jarrett. Many thanks to those who donated plants to sell, helped set up, and manned the table for the afternoon. If you need to share or get planting advice or share concerns about the landscape, stop by the Landscape Committee meetings on the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. New committee members are always welcome.



Design Violations Survey

By Steven Keylon, Court 4, and Board Director

Starting this year, the Village Green Design Review Committee (DRC) will embark on a project to survey all the courts in the entire Village Green and identify design violations. The project begins with a test phase, examining a few courts. We anticipate that all courts will be surveyed in 2012, and that the Office will send letters to owners, notifying them of any violations of the Association's rules.

The DRC will conduct the survey by entering violations into a spreadsheet and making photographic documentation of each unit and building in each court. The DRC then sends the spreadsheet to the Office, which will send letters to owners asking that any violations be corrected. Homeowners can either correct the violation, or choose to appear at an enforcement hearing.

Because of the large scale of this project, after the test phase is completed, the Court Council has kindly agreed to collaborate on the inventory phase with the DRC.

What Are Design Violations?

The most common design violations are (this is not an inclusive list):

- Satellite dishes that are visible above balconies or fences
- Exposed cable wires—cable wires that run along buildings, rather than being contained within conduit
- Any modification to the original windows or doors; or replacement of aluminum sliding glass doors with vinyl, wood, or French doors.
- Out-of-compliance security doors, such as those with ornamentation or decorative scrollwork, or painted a color other than the existing exterior door color.
- Visible, window-mounted, or unapproved air conditioners

What If I Have a Design Violation?

Letters notifying owners of violations will be mailed in 2012. If you are concerned about something that you think may be a violation, but aren't sure, contact the Office or the Design Review Committee. Even if you did not create the design violation, it is your responsibility to correct it.

What If I Don't Correct a Design Violation?

If you don't correct the violation after receiving a letter

(Design Violations Survey, continued on page 8)

An Historic Setting for an Historic Play

By Mark Seldis, Court 11

On October 24, an historic, free reading of Sinclair Lewis and John C. Moffitt's 1936 adaptation of Lewis's novel *It Can't Happen Here* was read by actors in the Clubhouse, with support from the Village Green Cultural Affairs Committee.

The reading was part of a nation-wide event in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Federal Theater Project's own nation-wide presentation. On October 27, 1936, the play opened in 22 theaters in 18 cities simultaneously, and was seen by more than 316,000 people in its 260 weeks in theaters.



In honor of that event, 22 theater companies (the same number that participated in 1936) presented free readings across the U.S. The Ghost Road Productions and Trade City Productions decided to present a reading at the Village Green because the Green itself is a product of that era, that embodies the spirit of community. As it happens, Trade City artistic directors Maureen Weiss and Josh Worth, and Ghost Road artistic director Katharine Noon and producing director Mark Seldis, also happen to be proud residents of the Village Green. This event gave us the chance to show off the Green to our colleagues and audience. Maureen and Josh produced the reading, which Mark directed and Katharine performed in, alongside members of both ensembles and guest artists, such as KPCC radio's Steve Julian. In addition, Ghost Road board member and VG resident Michael Wallenstein also performed.

On the Facebook page for the anniversary of the reading, Hank Rosenfeld posted a review of the VG event in which he described the setting: "An historic set for an historic play."

The reading was a great success and hopefully the beginning of many more theatrical presentations at the Village Green. Thanks to those of you who attended, and to the Cultural Affairs Committee for allowing us the opportunity to share our work with the community.

(Design Violations Survey, continued from page 7)

from the Office, you will be asked to attend an enforcement hearing, at which time you can let the Board know why you disagree with the finding.

According to the Village Green Handbook, the Board may take the following action, including, without limitation:

- A) Require the owner to remove and/or remedy the non-complying or defective alteration
- B) Remove and/or remedy the non-compliance itself, after notice and hearing
- C) Impose monetary penalties against the owner, after notice and hearing, until such non-compliance is corrected
- D) Institute legal proceedings to enforce compliance or completion.

This project will ensure that the VGOA establishes a level of maintenance in compliance with the Association's rules. Because of our National Historic Landmark status, and our recent inclusion in the state's Mills Act program, it is important that we adhere to our own CC&Rs and Association Handbook.

Village Green *Highlights* is the community newsletter of the Village Green Owners Association, incorporated on August 9, 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 VGOA Board of Directors or the Management. Please submit submissions or comments to the editor at highlights@villagegreenla.net, or to the Office.