

# Highlights

A Quarterly Publication of the Village Green Owners' Association

Summer 2010

## Manager Robert Bonfiglio Resigns

By Steven Keylon, Board of Directors Vice President, Court 3



**Robert Bonfiglio**

Our General Manager Robert Bonfiglio's last day was on June 18. He has accepted a position at a larger facility in Van Nuys now undergoing a condo conversion.

When I was elected to the Board of Directors in early 2006, one of my first tasks (with then-President Barbara Washington, and Pauline Carroll) was to interview candidates for the position of

property manager. What was needed was a manager who could help us reverse decades of neglect and deferred maintenance, not only of our buildings but of the landscape as well. Unlike other candidates, Robert had taken the initiative and toured the property on his own the weekend before his interview—and he was excited about the history and potential for the place. His effort, enthusiasm and energy really stood out. We offered him the job, he accepted, and fortunately for the Green, Rob worked with us for four great years.

Some of Robert's major accomplishments include:

**Rehabilitating our landscape.** When he started in early 2006, our landscape was in poor condition. Sprinklers barely functioned; trees and shrubbery

(*Bonfiglio Resigns Continued on page 2*)

## A Tribute to Robert Bonfiglio

By Dagmar Buck, Court 1

*I was elected to say a few words honoring Robert Bonfiglio's fourth anniversary working here at Village Green at a small ceremony at the April board meeting. Many past managers simply saw this as a job and not a calling. Robert has changed that. I'm pleased to share my tribute to Robert. -D.B.*



**Resident Dagmar Buck at the April celebration of Property Manager Robert Bonfiglio's fourth year at the Green**

(*Tribute to Bonfiglio Continued on page 6*)

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Village Green Owners' Association  
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were neglected and overgrown; and, of even greater concern, more than 50 dead trees had been left standing. Robert began by removing the dead trees (and has removed over 50 since), and he worked with TruGreen, our landscape vendor, to get our antiquated sprinkler system working properly. With much controversy at the time, he also took on the huge task of corrective pruning of our shrubbery and trees, and putting them on a regular maintenance schedule. Robert was able to get TruGreen to mulch our flower beds at no cost.

**Rehabilitating our buildings.** In the past, the Association had deferred and, in some cases, ignored maintenance on the buildings. The paint on many buildings was peeling, exposing the buildings to water damage. Previously, when structures were painted, new paint was often applied over rotting or damaged wood. Robert had the damaged wood repaired or replaced before it was painted. A total of 57 buildings have been repainted since he started. This is especially important as we apply for the Mills Act since peeling paint is prohibited for a Mills Act property.

**Rehabilitating the Maintenance Yard.** After nearly 30 years of neglect, our maintenance yard was overhauled. Over 3,600 gallons of flammable paint was removed, one room was almost completely reconstructed, and four forty-yard containers of trash were removed.

**A 10-Year Plan.** Robert developed a proposal for a 10-year plan to correct deferred maintenance and replace failed or are failing infrastructure items.

Robert initiated schedules for annual roof cleaning, purchased new tools for the staff, worked tirelessly to find matching tiles for the re-piping project, had the clothes drying yards

restored, began hydro jetting sewer lines to help prevent backups, and set up a work order summary sheet and process to reduce the backlog of work orders from 12 pages to a quarter page (now down to a 24-hour turnaround).

While there are more accomplishments I could list, suffice to say Robert has made a significant difference at Village Green, and his drive, energy, initiative and passion for this place we call home will be difficult to replace. He truly cared for our property as if it was his own, and Village Green and all of us who live here are better for it. With a steady, determined hand he has helped us to build a strong foundation, and hopefully we will maintain this momentum.

Thanks to Robert and his team, Village Green hasn't looked or worked this well in decades.



## Spring Birdwatching

By Robert Nicolais, Court 8

Village Green is a great bird habitat. Our site is not only beautiful, but it also provides homes and food for lots of bird species. Once again, the Los



Angeles Audubon Society came over to talk about the different birds here and then led a walk around Village Green to see what is here.

This bird walk was timed to coincide with spring bird migration so we could see birds that were only passing through, as well as resident species. We saw a nesting pair of Western Bluebirds, nesting Nuttall's Woodpeckers, two types of hummingbird, and a variety of little grey birds that all looked the same. The Audubon Society folks always bring lots of binoculars for residents to use, and coffee and snacks were provided for all the early risers.

## Passages



**Steve Cain**  
1957 –2009

**Steve Cain** of Court 7 died in his sleep on December 16, 2009 of heart failure. He was 52.

Steve, a California native, was born in Bridgeport, California where he developed a love and concern for the environment. He received a bachelor's degree in sociology from UC Santa Barbara and a master's degree in Communications Studies from Claremont University. He worked for the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB) where he was a senior environmental planner and directed public affairs for the Board. "Stephen was the voice of the Board, an irreplaceable asset and dedicated public servant," Tracy Egoscue, LARWQCB Executive Officer said of Steve.

Steve and his life partner, Jim Muller, moved to Village Green in 2002 and loved living here. He created a drought-resistant garden oasis in their back patio and attended all of the "tree walks" and bird watchers walks while he lived here. In addition to attending Board of Directors and committee meetings, Steve was vice chair of Court Council. "He was an energetic and creative member of Court Council," said Barbara McCully, Court Council Chair. "His dry wit, enthusiasm, and innate sociability kept our meetings lively. He is greatly missed."

In addition to Mr. Muller, Cain is survived by his mother, brother, and two sisters. A memorial service was held on January 3 at Village Green Clubhouse which was overflowing and joyous.

**Yoshiko Joannie Mukai**, longtime resident of Court 9, passed away on March 27 following a brief illness. Joannie lived at Village Green since the mid-1970s, twice serving on the board of directors. Her career was with the City of Los Angeles, starting out as a secretary in the traffic department and rising to director of the Harbor Department's Construction and Maintenance Division, overseeing over 200 people. Joannie is survived by her sister, Yoshiye Mukai, and many loving relatives and friends.

*If you know of someone who has recently passed and would like to share it with the Village Green community, please email a short remembrance to [highlights@villagegreenla.net](mailto:highlights@villagegreenla.net).*

## Books for Free

By Kathryn Carr, Court 12 and  
Evelyn Greenwald, Court 4

The Village Green library has once again been cleaned. Detritus is gone, and the collection has been updated with new and exciting titles donated by "turned-on-to-reading" residents. All residents are welcome to browse and select books for home use. Browsing hours coincide with the Village Green Office's hours.

The Library Committee requests that books taken from the shelves and not selected for home use (as well as those returned from home use) be placed in the "Returned Books" box provided. There is also a "Gift Books" box for those who wish to contribute. Books are borrowed on the honor system.

The Committee also reminds residents using the room to remember that the library belongs to *all* residents. Respect the appearance of the room and leave it in the order in which it was found.

**Welcome! Enjoy! Read!**



# PATIO PEEK

By Laurie Liles, Court 4

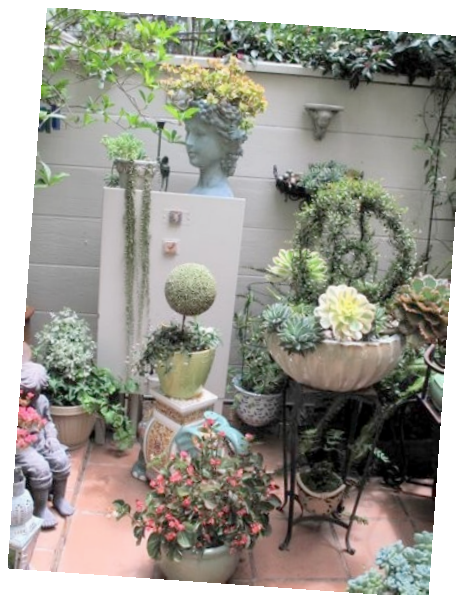
On Saturday, May 15, twelve residents opened their patios for a patio peek, organized by the VG Landscape Committee and planned by committee members Jean Gagnard and Jeffrey Mintz. Over 35 residents and guests met at the Clubhouse for the tour led by Jeffrey.

Each patio was unique and displayed the creativity of the owners. As you might imagine, the twelve patios gave the tour folks many new ideas of what to do to their own patios.

Edible gardens are gaining in popularity, in part due to the economic climate. Folks who are fortunate enough to have six to eight hours of sun a day can grow any variety of edibles. One patio in Court 9, which has a great deal of sun and space, had a creative edible garden, complete with fava beans, one of the best plants to install to restore nitrogen into the soil. A resident in Court 15 has sun and shade in the front, and a large back patio. She has creatively put the edibles on the front patio and filled her back one with a beautiful array of shade and sun plants. She has tastefully planted *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* shrubs in large containers, which thrive in their setting.

A resident in Court 3 has a beautiful retro patio to match the beautiful interior of his condo and classic car. A resident in Court 1 has a lush patio with arbors and trumpet trees. Lovely shade and sun plants fill the entire space of her patio. She chose to serve us delicious treats and cool drinks to keep us going on the two-hour tour.

*(Patio Peek Continued on page 5)*





*(Patio Peek Continued from page 4)*

The tour ended at the home of Jeffry Mintz, who recently upgraded his patio with water features and many tropical shade plants. Guests were also greeted there by cool drinks and refreshments.

The Landscape Committee would like to thank all the residents who generously shared their patios. We look forward to an event of this nature and scope in the future.

*Landscape Committee welcomes residents to meetings on the second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Clubhouse.*



# Pancake Breakfast

By Evelyn Greenwald, Court 4

★ At the Clubhouse, where a profusion of  
★ pink and white roses provided a colorful  
★ backdrop, Village Green residents gathered  
★ on a mild, sunny May morning for an al  
★ fresco breakfast. Sponsored by Platt Secu-  
★ rity and the Safety Committee, attendees  
★ were greeted by members of the committee  
★ and given the opportunity to sign up for the  
★ Neighborhood Watch! At the griddle was  
★ Mr. Platt himself making pancakes while  
★ seven security guards took turns dishing up  
★ sausages and scrambled eggs.

- ★ It was a well-organized, friendly gathering,
- ★ with people enjoying the food and getting to
- ★ meet new acquaintances and old friends,
- ★ and to see the security guards informally.
- ★ The event attracted a good number of peo-
- ★ ple who appreciated the effort, the time and
- ★ the thought displayed.

# Village Green Owners Association Board of Directors

Joe Khoury, President  
Steven Keylon, Vice President  
Daniel Millner, Treasurer  
Robert Nicolais, Secretary  
Daniel Frank  
Drew Furedi  
Reuben Ginsberg  
Steve Haggerty



Dear Robert:

Having lived here 12 years, I remember well what things were like before you became our manager. Managers used to come and go, some were good, some not so, but none of them showed your passion for getting the work done and done correctly.

You jumped in with both feet and attacked neglect and backlogs with a vengeance. And it shows, boy, does it show. Because of your inception of a 10-year plan, we are on a regular painting and maintenance schedule, our buildings look fresh and appealing instead of drab and neglected. Our garages get inspected, garage roofs get cleaned regularly, courts are re-stripped and trees are pruned.

I believe we are fortunate to have TruGreen as our gardening company, but without your constant involvement, our landscaping wouldn't look anything like the wonderful park it is now and which we all enjoy so much. It needed your guidance to eliminate the three-year backlog of tree trimming and removal of dead trees, a job that will soon be completed. And it needed your guidance to coax our aging well into delivering the much-needed water to achieve the miraculous emerald green that I see all around.

I remember vividly how at one general meeting you held up a list of work orders, single spaced, ranging over several pages; all things that needed to be done but had been put on hold. And how you in remarkably short time reduced this list to one page, with the goal of having no backlog at all. Sure enough, when I recently put in two work orders, both were taken care of within 24 hours.

I often take the bus to work and wait for it in front of KFC, which affords me a good look at the corner of our property that used to look so neglected and run-down that it was an embarrassment, the maintenance yard. I used to avert

my eyes, it was so ugly; but no longer.

Unquestionably one of your biggest accomplishments has to have been the total renovation of the maintenance yard, from what was an eyesore and probably a health hazard to a clean, well-lit, inviting facility which must make it so much easier for our crew to do their jobs, and is so much nicer to look at from across the way.

There is simply no substitute for personal involvement. When I see you, Robert, riding around on your little cart, personally checking and overseeing that things are getting done, and done right, then I know that all of us are in good hands and hope sincerely that this shall remain so for many years to come.

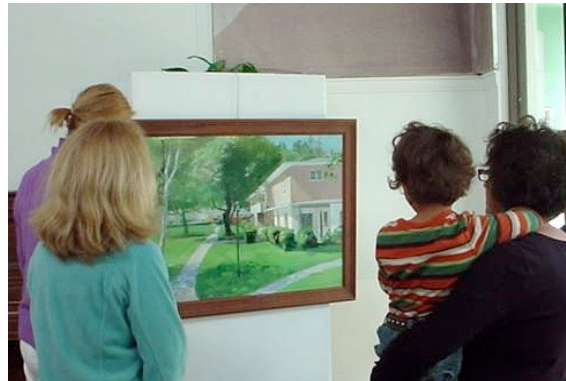
## **Fifth Annual Village Green Art Show**

By Robert Nicolais, Court 8

The Fifth Annual Village Green Art Show was held on May 15. The Mural Room and the Fireplace Room at the Clubhouse were lined with art produced by VG residents. Guests wandered in and out during the afternoon to enjoy the works on display.

Eleven artists showed their work: Claire Bergen, Muriel Dickerson, Diann Dumas, Mickey Fielding, Norma Flynn, Dottie Gruzenski, David Mellon, Robert Nicolais, Gailyn Saroyan and Marcia Thelemaque. We also showed a group of the late Ken Washington's paintings.

The Cultural Affairs Committee sponsored the event again and provided refreshments.





# Cultural Affairs Committee

By Reba Glover, Court 1

One of the longest established committees on the Green, the Cultural Affairs Committee is committed to sponsoring events that get residents out of their units, meeting each other and celebrating life here. The events they plan are at the core of what makes the Village Green a unique place to live. The committee strives to offer a variety of events to appeal to the diverse VG residences. If one event doesn't appeal to you, another certainly will.



**Residents enjoy a summer concert sponsored by the Cultural Affairs Committee in 1995**

So far this year, the committee has sponsored numerous events. In February, the VG community celebrated Black History Month with special guest Terrence Roberts, one of the Little Rock Nine. In March, we enjoyed the incredible talent at the Green at the third annual Village Green Home Companion. In April, we hunted for eggs at Easter time, and went on a birdwalk tour of the Green with the Audubon Society. In May, we sipped cocktails on the Green, enjoyed the movie "Babe" *en plein air*, co-sponsored with Court Council, and saw the art of VG residents at the annual Art Show.

The committee itself is as diverse as the activities that they sponsor.

Until recently, Molly O'Brien was the driving force on the committee, acting as the committee chair. As one committee member put it, "Molly was the talent manager," arranging groups to perform at summer concerts and locating guest speakers for Black History Month. Molly is taking a sabbatical from the action and hopes to return to active duty later this year.

Taking over at the helm is Allison Grover Khoury, the current chair, whose contributions include face painting for kids at the summer concerts and drawing in younger residents to volunteer on the committee. Robb Curtis, who was invited as the storyteller at a Halloween Party and stayed on as a committee member, is now vice chair. He hosted this year's Village Green Home Companion. Alva Harper is the corresponding secretary tasked with the duty of sending thank you notes to event participants and cards to committee members. Marcia Thelemaque is the recording secretary and provided the archival photo from the 1995 Jazz Concert showing former committee members Bill Hill and Rosalind Goddard, the chair of the committee that year (above).

The committee also has a treasurer, Jeanne Winn, whose brainchild was the annual talent show modeled after Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion*. Jean Wilson is the assistant treasurer. Other standing members include Claudia Bestor, Gerald Briley, Becky Shaw, Elisa Surmont and Euna Kim.

Future events this year include the second summer concert on Labor Day (Monday, September 6), more drinks and movies on the Green, a Halloween party and the holiday party in December.

*The Cultural Affairs Committee meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. in the Clubhouse. If you would like to join or have an idea for an event, contact Allison Grover or Robb Curtis.*



# Container Gardening for the Village Green

By Reba Glover, Court 1

On an overcast Saturday morning, Village Green residents learned techniques they can apply to transform their patios into urban gardens at an outdoor workshop presentation for container gardening sponsored by the VG Landscape Committee.

The workshop presenters included VG resident and Master Gardener Louisa Cardenas and visitor Julie Strand, also a master gardener.

The presentation was divided into three sections: container gardening, worm bin composting and square foot gardening. The presenters provided step-by-step instructions for each with questions and comments from the approximately 36-member audience. They answered questions with humor and enthusiasm for gardening and vast amount of knowledge. Two residents brought sample problem plants from their own garden, asking for advice. They received instructions on how to cope with powdery mildew. Everyone was invited to take home handouts, sample seed packets and even free sample plants.



**Master Gardeners Louisa Cardenas and Julie Strand**



**The Landscape committee sponsored a container gardening seminar for VG residents and guest**

Throughout the seminar, the audience listened attentively while sipping complimentary coffee and nibbling on the donuts provided. Members of the Landscape Committee were on hand to sell raffle tickets for a variety of gardening items, including a plant stand, decorative pots and sample plants. Towards the end of the presentation, as the sun burned off the marine layer, the audience was invited to view the beautiful patio belonging to Louisa Cardenas while several residents stayed behind to assist with the cleanup.

Where else in Los Angeles could a group come together under the shade of large Sycamore trees and not be distracted by the traffic and noise, to hear tips from experts on gardening? I don't know but I am thankful that we have an active Landscape Committee to provide us with this opportunity for community living!

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](mailto:highlights@villagegreenla.net), or to the office.