

# VILLAGE GREEN

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

# HIGHLIGHTS

*A quarterly publication of the Village Green Owners' Association*

*Fall 2011*

## Building Stabilization Project Update

*By Robert Creighton, VGOA Board member, Court 1*

The Village Green Owners Association is undertaking a large infrastructure improvement project to stabilize two buildings that are sinking due to soil subsidence. These are building 8 in Court 2 and building 14 in Court 3. This stabilization project is one of the improvements being paid for by the recent special assessment and is considered a high priority.

The VGOA has hired JS Egan Design Inc. to act as project manager for the project. JS Egan is responsible for monitoring the progress in every phase and will act as our principal point of contact and liaison to all other design and construction-related consultants, such as architects and engineers. We are currently in the pre-construction phase of the project. Geocon, a geotechnical engineering firm, was hired to perform soils testing. Geocon excavated two 40-foot deep borings near the affected buildings on August 11. A special open meeting was held on September 20 to discuss results from the soil testing. JS Egan and Geocon attended the meeting to present their findings. Based on the

condition of the soils, they are recommending that we use helical piers under the building foundations to stabilize the structures.

In addition to the ongoing project work, the Board has established a special meeting at 6:00 p.m. prior to each monthly Board meeting to discuss and answer questions regarding the project. Three of these meetings have taken place so far and I would encourage residents, particularly those in the affected buildings, to attend so we can better communicate the issues surrounding this project. JS Egan delivers project status reports twice a month. These reports are delivered to residents in the affected buildings and are available to everyone at the monthly building stabilization meetings.

The Board is currently working on a questionnaire for residents in the affected buildings to learn about their specific needs during the construction phase of the project when relocation will likely be necessary. We have also requested qualifications from three relocation consultants who could help in making the transition as easy as

possible. We have had preliminary discussions about how Village Green residents might volunteer to help their neighbors in the affected buildings and have begun research for possible alternative funding sources to help pay their relocation costs.

For more information, please attend the monthly building stabilization meetings. We will also communicate our findings and the project's progress through flyers and here in *Highlights*.

### INSIDE

**P. 2** EXPO LINE

**P. 3** NEW HOME ALARMS

**P. 4** LEARNING TO GARDEN

**P. 4** COMMUNITY GARDEN

**P. 5** WALK!

**P. 5** WHITEFLIES

**P. 6** MEET AND GREETs

**P. 6** MENAGERIE

**P. 7** REPIPE WORK

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# New Expo Line to Connect Village Green to Downtown

By Shumway Marshall, Court 14



*Photos from BuildExpo.org*

When it opens, the 8.6 mile Expo Line will connect Village Green residents to many points throughout Los Angeles. Originally scheduled to open in 2010, the city's newest light rail is expected to start service in early 2012.

Village Green residents will be able to board the light rail at aerial stations on La Brea (0.4 miles from the northeast corner of the Green at Sycamore and Rodeo) or La Cienega (0.7 miles from the northwest corner of the Green at Hauser and Rodeo). Rides will cost \$1.50 and transfers to other lines will be additional. Reduced monthly rates are available for K-12 students, seniors, and people with disabilities or Medicare. Public parking will be available for free at the La Cienega and Crenshaw stations. Commuters will be able to reserve a spot online. Initially, the line will open as far west as La Cienega, travel east

along Jefferson and Exposition Blvds., and curve north at USC before it reaches Downtown Los Angeles. A station at Venice and Robertson has been delayed because Culver City negotiated for upgrades at the stop, including bike lanes, a better pedestrian plaza, parking garages, and street improvements. It is expected to open in 2012.

Phase 2 of the project, which will add an additional seven stops on the Westside and end near the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, is expected to start in 2012 and open in 2015. When it's fully completed, Angelenos will be able to ride the 15.2 miles from Downtown to Santa Monica in approximately 46 minutes, regardless of traffic.

## WHERE TO GO ON EXPO

*Here's a brief guide to what you can do at each stop along Phase I of Metro's newest line.*

### Culver City

- > Great cooking gadgets and classes at Surfas
- > Beer and burgers at Father's Office
- > Connect to public transit for the shops and restaurants of Downtown Culver City

### Farmdale

- > Dorsey High School

### Expo / Crenshaw

- Includes Park and Ride facility*
- > Saturday Farmer's Market at Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza (via transit connection)
  - > Mass at West Angeles Church of God in Christ

### Expo / Western

- > Books at Exposition Park Library

### Expo / Vermont

- > Masjid Umar Ibn-Al Khattab (Islamic Temple)



## Expo Park / USC

- > Tojan Football at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum
- > Natural History Museum
- > African-American Museum
- > California Science Center

## Jefferson / USC

- > Basketball at the Galen Center
- > Concerts at the Shrine Auditorium

## 23rd St.

- > Los Angeles Trade Technical College
- > Mt. St. Mary's College
- > St. John's Episcopal Cathedral
- > Transfer to the Blue Line

## Pico

- > Lakers and Clippers games at the STAPLES Center
- > Concerts, nightclubs, restaurants at L.A. Live
- > Los Angeles Convention Center

## 7th St. / Metro Ctr.

- > Los Angeles Public Library
- > Downtown architectural tours
- > Lots of great bars and restaurants

## A New State Requirement: Carbon Monoxide Home Alarms

By Susan Edwards, East Circle



*A combination carbon monoxide and gas alarm, plugged in to the wall.*

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas that is toxic, and can be fatal to humans. It is produced by the burning of carbon-based fuel, and is thus a potential threat to all of us who have gas-burning furnaces, stoves, and/or fireplaces in our homes.

You may have seen a notice in your recent gas bill about a new requirement for home CO monitors. This is a result of California's Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act of 2010, which requires all residential properties with a fossil fuel burning appliance, fireplace, or attached garage to be equipped with an approved carbon monoxide alarm by July 1, 2011. Carbon Monoxide alarms are easy to find at any hardware store, and range in price from

about \$18.00 to \$60.00. They come with various features and installation styles, such as hard-wired, battery-operated, or plug-in. You can also find combination CO and smoke alarms. I recently purchased a combination CO and gas alarm for about \$35.00, which will alert me when the level of CO is high, or when there is a gas leak.

Southern California Gas Company advises residents to use carbon monoxide alarms approved by the California State Fire Marshall, and which have the Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) Certification. These alarms require routine maintenance and replacement at least every three to five years to perform properly.

## FREE YOGA IN THE CLUBHOUSE

Meet your neighbors, get fit and de-stress through Yoga! Resident Karen Cooke, a certified yoga instructor with 15 years of experience, is now offering free, weekly yoga classes in the Clubhouse for all levels.

*Village Green Clubhouse*

*Every Thursday (except 2nd week of the month, when we will meet on Wednesdays)  
7:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m., starting October 6, 2011*

Please bring a yoga mat and wear movable, comfortable clothing. You may also want to bring a towel and water. Residents and guests are welcome  
Please RSVP if interested or for any questions: [karentheater@yahoo.com](mailto:karentheater@yahoo.com) or 310-502-3358

# Learning to Garden from the Master

By Wendell Conn, Court 11

Gardenmaster David King spent a recent August Sunday afternoon in the Clubhouse with a group of about 25 novice to experienced gardeners.

Sponsored by the Landscape Committee, the four-hour lecture and discussion covered the different types of soil, a month-by-month planting guide, and a detailed vegetable delineation. No doubt, the information and lively discussion will help many Village Green gardens flourish.

David King teaches at UCLA Extension and leads a gardening club at Venice High School where they promote a seed bank and cultivate an acre of food crops. For gardening tips, read his blog, [lagardenblog.com](http://lagardenblog.com).



## From the Community Garden: Cherry Tomato in the Rough

By Gabriella Worrell, Court 13

One early morning, I walked through the Village Green, making my way to the community garden. The air was still crisp with moisture, and some dew drops glistened on the carefully cut grass and neatly trimmed bushes. I couldn't help but think, "this place is beautiful!" The natural surroundings are one of the primary reasons my family was drawn to this wonderful community.

### OCTOBER GARDENING TIP

*Be sure to plant flowers such as marigolds or alyssums, between your vegetables, in order to attract a variety of beneficial insects to your garden, and make the place more beautiful and aromatic.*

Upon arriving at the community garden, I realized that the planting boxes look very different from the rest of the landscaping. They are constantly in progress, and this may not always appeal to our sophisticated sense of beauty. Here and there, sill may be bare until tiny sprouts begin to emerge. Some plants may appear ratty, but in the end, they are the ones that may produce the most fruit, becoming the most nourishing. Other times, those that seem least useful for human consumption are the most valuable to the insects and bacteria, helping our gardens flourish.

It's easy to think that places where we can see the 'process' occurring are less than beautiful because we crave the polished, finished look of carefully controlled landscapes in our lives. However, it is these so-called ugly places where life is emerging, as long as we keep cultivating there. Any gardener will tell you that at the end of the season, you may be quite surprised to find the sweetest tomatoes on the ugliest plant. Now, that is what I call beautiful!

### WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN A DISASTER HAPPENS?

Are you confident you will know what to do for yourself, your loved ones, and your neighbors in the event of a major earthquake or other disaster? Working together will be critical.

CERT training (Community Emergency Response Team) is coming to Village Green Clubhouse beginning on Thursday, October 20 at 6:30 p.m. Conducted by the Los Angeles County Fire Department, the 6-part course will cover preparedness, fire suppression, medical operations, search and rescue, and disaster psychology and organization.

Classes are offered October 20 & 27; November 3, 10 & 17; and December 1. To reserve your seat or for more information, email [safety@villagegreenla.net](mailto:safety@villagegreenla.net)



# Get on Your Feet and Walk!

By Wendell Conn, Court 11

The Village Green is a great place to take a stroll and enjoy nature, but did you know that walking can provide more energy to enjoy life, help manage weight, reduce stress, get more restful sleep, and reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, stroke, high blood pressure, and osteoporosis?

Shelia from Court 11 lost a good deal of weight this previous year but knew that it was not enough to be healthy. Even though she has lived at the Village Green for years, Sheila said she hadn't really appreciated the depth of the beauty of this place until she began walking regularly.

This year she wanted to step up the challenge and started walking up Hetzler Road and the 280 steps of the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook. It was even better when she found a walking partner.

"The time goes by so much faster with another person" she stated.

"We started very slow. It was hard at first. But now we go up the hill with no problem."

Bernie Altman knows the value of walking as a founder of On Your Feet!, an unofficial hiking group for Village Green residents and their friends.

The group organizes occasional excursions throughout the Los Angeles metro area, specializing in local events, such as walks to the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook where they have attended all the park's full moon hikes and the annual Baldwin Hills fests.

Bernie says, "We've also enjoyed occasional hikes in Kenneth Hahn Park. Our annual events include a Fourth of July walk up the hill to witness the myriad of spectacular fireworks displays (legal and otherwise), and a Christmastime walk through the neighborhood to see the many elaborate holiday light displays." The Christmastime

walk is traditionally followed by a pot luck celebration.

One of the most successful excursions was further afield, a walking tour of Downtown Los Angeles's hidden gardens. With the opening of the new Expo Line, the group is planning excursions to Pasadena, Downtown L.A., East L.A., Watts Towers, and Long Beach. Membership is free and open to all.

If you walk to enjoy the beauty of the surrounding area or to enjoy the company of a friend, there are plenty of ways to get on your feet at the Village Green.

*For information about On Your Feet! and to find out about upcoming group hikes, e-mail [hiking@villagegreenla.net](mailto:hiking@villagegreenla.net). If you'd like to get involved with local 5k walks that benefit various organizations, contact Wendall at [wendellconn3@ca.rr.com](mailto:wendellconn3@ca.rr.com).*

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## Whiteflies are Back

By Wendell Conn, Court 11

Have you noticed a spidery, white web-like substance on the underside of the plants around your building? These are whiteflies. After an invasion a few years ago, it appears they have returned.

Whiteflies are small, winged insects that look more like tiny moths than flies. They have a powdery wax, which both protects them and is key to identification. Piercing mouth parts suck plant sap and they secrete a sticky substance, which lures other insects. They can practically destroy a five-by-five bush in one season.

**Here are a few methods I have used to stop Whiteflies in their tracks:** Buy ladybugs or wasps (*Encarsia Formosa* are by far the most effective whitefly predator) and release them into the plant. Hang bright yellow whitefly glue traps on the bush (they like the color yellow). Whiteflies will be readily drawn to them as they leave local colonies seeking new host plants. A non-toxic biodegradable material that can be sprayed for whiteflies is insecticidal soap by Safer or, you can use soap and water.

# Residents Host Court-Wide Meet and Greets

By Robert Creighton, Court 1

Earlier this year, the Court Council proposed regular individual court meetings as a way for neighbors to connect with one another and find out what is happening at the Green. At least one member of the VGOA Board will attend each meeting to provide updates on projects, finances and other issues, answer questions and listen to residents' ideas.

I have had the pleasure of attending meetings as the Board representative in Courts 1, 11 and 12. At each gathering, I met new residents who have just moved in, people who have lived here for 25 years or more, and everyone in between. As a Board member, it is a great opportunity for me to listen to residents who have seen the community progress through many changes and learn about what has and has not worked in the past.



*Residents in Court 1*

There have been excellent discussions at each meeting, with questions and concerns ranging from satellite dishes in patios to security concerns and the financial health of the Green. Penny Bannerman from the Safety Committee also attended these meetings to provide an update about safety at the Green as well as the

work being done to update the Village Green Emergency Preparedness Plan.

I encourage everyone to attend these meetings and connect with neighbors. Please speak with your Court Council representative about organizing a meeting of your own.



*Residents in Court 11*

## Menagerie on Jefferson

*By Evelyn Greenwald, Court 4*

Driving on Jefferson Boulevard, in Culver City, one passes a building with a large, prominent sign: “Eco Station.” Unlikely as it may sound, there is a menagerie tucked behind the sign. STAR Eco Station is both an environmental science museum and an exotic wildlife rescue center.

On a stroll with a staff member through the museum, I experienced a series of environments: deserts, wetlands, rainforests. On the journey are the animal inhabitants, from brilliantly colored birds, to reptiles (alligators, snakes, turtles, geckoes), to felines (bobcats, a serval), to all manner of creepy-crawly insects.

Many of the creatures housed here have been rescued from neglect or abuse and have been brought here for their safety and maintenance. The Station motto is “Preservation through Education.” Many environmental science education programs are conducted for students and for the community.

Public tours are given Fridays, 1:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m, and on weekends, 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Tours begin every half hour, with the last tour one hour before closing. School field trips and group tours are by reservation only Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m, 12:00 p.m.– 2:00 p.m., or 2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. Admission is \$8, \$7 for seniors, and \$6 for children. Hours and prices are subject to change without notice.

*The station is at 10101 Jefferson Boulevard. Culver City, CA 90232 (between La Cienega and Overland). Tel: 310-842-8060, e-mail: [ecostation@starinc.org](mailto:ecostation@starinc.org) [www.ecostation.org](http://www.ecostation.org)*



*An Eco Station staffperson shows a chameleon to a group of kids. Image ©STAR Education*

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## Repipe Work in Court 6 Gets Snagged

*By Wendell Conn, Court 11*

According to the sewer replacement workers, the repiping work can proceed fairly quickly when backyards are emptied prior to the start of digging and there are no trees over the sewer lines.

Digging down five or six feet removes a lot of soil. It is going to be piled next to the hole from whence it came. If your property is in the way it may be damaged. The workers also need room for themselves and their equipment.

Then things can get slowed down even more by the tree roots' strangle hold on the pipes—the main reason why Ficus is on the do not plant list. Its roots are very invasive. One tree caused the workers to get creative and pipe around the roots themselves.

As owners we can't do much about 40-year old trees, but we can help save money by providing a safe and open space for our contractors to do their work.

The Tree Committee is documenting the work on tree roots with photos and is developing recommendations for treatment of tree roots for future sewer replacement.



# HIGHLIGHTS NEEDS YOU!

The Communications Committee welcomes new members to help with creating stories for our quarterly publication. Have a good story idea? Great at copy editing? Want to be incredible well-informed about issues affecting the Green?

Attend a meeting on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m.,  
or email [highlights@villagegreenla.net](mailto:highlights@villagegreenla.net) for more information.

The Highlights Committee is:

Kathryn Carr  
Wendell Conn  
Susan Edwards  
Evelyn Greenwald  
Laurie Liles  
Shumway Marshall  
Reatha Simon

Board liaison:  
John Keho

This issue designed by:  
Gigi Jack

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.