

# The Village Green

# Highlights

A Quarterly Publication of the Village Green Owners' Association

Winter 2008

## Speaking Out about the Expo Line

A packed audience of over 300 residents, educators and local community organizations filled the Dorsey High School auditorium at a Public Hearing on Monday, November 4th to voice their concerns to Public Utilities Commissioner, Timothy Simon and an administrative law judge about the proposed street-level Expo Light Rail Line. It was obvious that those in attendance opposed the design for a street-level crossing in our community of the Exposition train, which will run down the abandoned Exposition Blvd. The hearing opened with a computer simulation of the proposed plan as it would be built around Dorsey High. Opposition against the 225-ton light rail train that will run near the 2,100-student high school resonated from residents as speakers expressed concerns about the following:

- Safety – The street-level crossing for a high-speed train creates a risk for deaths similar to those that have occurred on the high-risk Blue Line. The crossing gates obstructing the crossing are an open invitation for students to challenge oncoming trains.
- Traffic Congestion – Street closures may increase already clogged streets and affect emergency service access at crucial times.
- Noise Pollution and Health – The anticipated of 30 trains crossing per intersection, complete with crossing gates, bells,

—continued, p. 3

## Save the Date!

### VGOA 2008 Annual Meeting

Saturday, March 8, 2008

The Board has moved the annual meeting to March this year. With the new election rules going into effect last year, many of the deadlines, which are required by law to be 30, 45 and 60 days from the election date, fall in December during holidays. By moving the date of the annual election, the board will allow more people to participate in the process of nominations and meeting with candidates. Last year we achieved a quorum with a slim margin. By moving the date to March, a bigger turnout could be produced. Although the governing documents would need to be changed for a permanent change of date, the Board has the authority to hold the annual meeting within 60 days prior to or after the date proscribed in our CC&Rs of the 1st Saturday in February.

## Looking Back on 2007

### A Report from the Board

Greetings to all—As we witness the close of 2007, I think it's pertinent to review the year in terms in accomplishments for the association. At our February 2007 annual meeting, the discussion centered on making owners aware of the deferred maintenance and the need for a plan to address the replacements now. Since February, the Board has created a new committee, Renovation and Master Plan (R.A.M.P), to involve owners and provide a forum for discussion about the infrastructure replacement and possible methods of funding and implementation. The Board also recognized the need for professional help to develop a plan. During the process of interviewing professional project management companies, directors became aware that our history of deferring maintenance and replacement until it is critical is not unique among homeowners associations. Gafcon was hired by VGOA because of their experience with historical properties, their excellent customer service, very good

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Village Green Owners' Association  
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Los Angeles, CA 90016

<http://villagegreenla.net>

## Village Green Crime Trends, 2000–2006

In order to obtain a broader perspective on crime at the Village Green, the Safety Committee conducted an analysis of crimes that have occurred at the Green since the year 2000. The primary questions the committee sought to answer were, How many and what types of crimes occur here? and Where and when did they occur?

Data from the Los Angeles Police Department show that the Village Green averaged 37 crime incidents per year since 2000, with a total of 260 crimes. The number of incidents has been consistent over that period, although there was a significant drop in 2006, when there were 25 crime incidents.

In order to compare Village Green to other areas, we conducted a detailed analysis of one of the most common crimes at Village Green—stolen vehicles. We have about half the rate of stolen vehicles as the city of Los Angeles as a whole, but about three times as many as the city of Irvine, which has one of the lowest crime rates in Southern California. The neighborhood to the south of us experiences slightly fewer stolen vehicles, and the neighborhood to the east experiences three times as many.

The most common crimes at the Green are burglary from vehicles, stolen vehicles, and burglary from units. The most common property stolen is cash. Stereo and computer equipment are also commonly targeted. The great majority of crimes at the Green involve property (burglary, stolen property, theft, or vandalism). But incidents where residents are verbally or physically accosted do occur. Since 2000, LAPD reported 14 cases of robbery and 13 cases of battery.

Forty-three percent of crimes occur inside units. Other common locations are in parking lots or driveways, or on

the street or sidewalks. Crimes inside a garage or a vehicle are not very common. Criminals tend to enter units through windows and doors. The south side of Village Green has had slightly more crime than the north.

We found that crime incidents are fairly consistent throughout the year. Yet, we noticed a 13 percent increase both in stolen vehicles in the winter in burglaries of units in the summer. This might be due to the earlier sunset in the winter and residents being more likely to leave windows and doors open in the summer.

Burglaries of units occur at twice as often during the week as on the weekend. The greatest number of crimes occur between noon and 1:00 p.m. and between 5:00 and 8:00 p.m.. Yet, many of the burglaries to units occur in the mornings between 6:00 and 9:00 a.m. The most common crimes involving vehicles occur more frequently in the evenings after 5:00 p.m., when it is most often darker.

One of the most effective ways to reduce crime at Village Green is to participate in Neighborhood Watch. It's easy, it's free, and it helps build community. Participating simply means agreeing to report suspicious activity. To get involved, contact your court's Neighborhood Watch Captain or Court Council Representative, or attend a Safety Committee meeting, on the first Wednesday of each month at the Clubhouse at 7:30pm. We can make a difference!

Copies of the full report with detailed charts and an analysis of the La Brea shopping center, contact the Village Green office.

—Amy Noble, Safety Committee  
/Neighborhood Watch

## Cultural Affairs Events Halloween, the Holiday Party, and Black History Month

### Save the Date

Black History Month Program  
celebrating The Nicholas Brothers  
Sunday, Feb 10th, 2008  
VG Clubhouse 3:00 pm

### A New Sheriff in Town

Many VG children turned out for our annual Halloween Party. They enjoyed pumpkin carving, refreshments and once again were enthralled by the story-telling of VG resident Rob Curtis. "Sheriff" Harold Graves and deputy Fred Wilson rounded up the kids for a hayride with trick-or-treating stops at the homes of Sue Hausmann and Jim Paige, Lucy Freed, and Tad Daly and Kitte Felde. The clubhouse was decorated by Gerald Briley and Maryanne DesVignes. A good time was had by all. Thank you to Sue Hausmann for all the candy bags and Jim Paige for scoring the pumpkins.

### Holiday Party

The evening of December 8th found the clubhouse alive with music and dancing with many VG residents celebrating at our annual Holiday Party. The Christmas tree was beautifully decorated by Doug Ware of Court Council. Door prizes were given and refreshments were served. This party would not have been possible without the efforts of committee members Alva Harper, Gale Harris, Jean Wilson and Allison and Joe Grover-Khoury.

—Molly O'Brien, Cultural Affairs  
Committee

## Expo Line, contunied from page 1

and train horns will create an environmental distraction to learning environment at Dorsey High. Emissions from cars waiting to cross could affect environmental health conditions for the neighborhood community

- Environmental Racism - Culver City and USC successfully negotiated an underpass and overpass for their intersections, yet the proposed design for our area means our children will have to cross at street level, which could result in fatal accidents.



Map of the planned Expo light rail route. The line will travel at street level on the existing Exposition Boulevard right-of-way.

Other critics who joined the stream of speakers included, City Councilman Herb Wesson, .L.A. Unified board member Marguerite Poindexter LaMotte, representatives from the offices of Senator Diane Watson and Councilman Karen Bass, as well as various neighborhood community organizations. Commissioner Simon acknowledged that the public hearing was an invaluable and informative step in examining the safety of the proposed crossing at Dorsey. The Commissioner promised to consider the concerns

expressed by the community as the Commission proceeds with formal hearings about the construction of street-level crossing. The sentiment of the many participants who attended the hearing was echoed best by Steve J. Bagby Sr., president of the Dorsey High Alumni Association who stated, “Everyone is for Expo Line. We just want it to be safe.”

—Kathryn Carr and Barbara Washington

## Riding Public Transit from Village Green: One Resident’s Experience

As we all know, an advantage of life here at Village Green is its central location. A 15-minute car ride gets you downtown, to the airport, or the beach. If want to reduce your “carbon footprint,” there are bus routes that also pass us.

Route 439 starts at the airport, travels along La Cienega, with a stop in front of the 7-Eleven on La Cienega at Rodeo Road, gets on the Santa Monica Freeway, and makes its way north through downtown, terminating at Union Station. From Union Station you can take the Surfliner train south to San Diego or north as far as San Luis Obispo.

The bus arrives at the “Patsaouras Transit Plaza” attached to Union Station. A grand staircase, an impressive fountain and a clean tiled corridor lead passengers to the beautiful, restored station with its decorated ceilings, chandeliers and leather seats. Yes folks. On L.A.’s rapid transit, there are real people in business attire, rushing off trains to make connections. It is like Paris or New York , but—get this—cleaner!

I recently took the bus downtown to the courthouse to serve jury duty. As someone who does most of her commuting by

car, this experience with public transportation was a positive one. The bus was right on time. Most of the passengers were dressed for work and using this bus to commute to their jobs downtown. The bus passes right by the court building and I will probably use this bus the next time I have jury duty. The return trip from the station was also on time and left me on La Cienega in front of Carl’s Jr.

I asked the driver about taking the bus to the airport. She explained that the route ends at a lot for long-term parking. From there one can catch a shuttle to the terminals. One of these days, if I’m flying and traveling light, I may take the bus to the airport. The \$1.85 fare is a lot cheaper than a \$20 cab ride or the Flyaway bus.

In addition, bus route 105 and express bus 705 run along Rodeo Road. You can ride either of these and connect with the blue line for an excursion to the Museum of Latin American Art and other attractions in Long Beach .

For bus schedules go to <http://www.metro.net>

—Beryl Feller has lived in Court 7 for 21 years

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# Protecting Our VG Landscape, An Historical Perspective

One of the most popular topics today is global warming, and discussing ways to conserve the earth's natural resources. Many of these discussions include suggestions on planting drought tolerant plants in order to conserve water. This is a timely question here at Village Green—how can we plan for a future when water will be less plentiful?

In my research about the historical aspects of Village Green, I discovered that many of the early landscape designs were actually very “green” by today's environmental standards. It occurred to me that we may be able to find some answers about how we can sustain our landscape in the future by looking at steps that the original architects of Village Green took when considering this very same problems. When Baldwin Hills Village (the original name of the Village Green) was being created in the early 1940s, the landscape architect Fred Barlow, Jr. designed a modern landscape, inspired by “Old California.” This landscape was designed to use very little water. It was innovative and attractive, and became very widely known and admired. Many of the choices were really ahead of their time—they were choices we might utilize today as “green” choices. Some of these ideas in Barlow's design included:

## **Decomposed Granite**

The pathways of Baldwin Hills Village were originally created from decomposed granite, which is a fine, dense gravel. Decomposed granite is not only pleasing to the eye and to the senses, but it also allows rainwater and irrigation water to percolate back into the earth and down to the water table. Concrete walkways prevent water from getting into the ground because the concrete absorbs the water, which then evaporates into the air.

## **Drought Tolerant Ground Covers and Shrubbery**

In the original plan, all of the large expanses between residential buildings and sidewalks were carpeted with a variety of different ground covers, which can be much more drought tolerant than the grass we currently have. These ground covers also created a greater privacy barrier around buildings, and provided varied color and texture. Other areas on the Green had large architectural masses of shrubbery, which are also more drought tolerant than turf.



This mid 1950s photo shows the original landscaping in Courts 14: ground covers were planted in the areas between buildings and the pathways, and the pathways were composed of decomposed granite, a fine crushed granite.

## **Less Turf**

Grass was originally planted in the three large greens in the center of the property, and in carpets of grass in the middle of each garden court. This grass was meant to draw residents out of buildings and encourage community gatherings, such as informal games, lounging, picnicking, and sunbathing.

This landscape plan and philosophy stayed largely in place, with some minor modifications, through the devastating Baldwin Hills Reservoir break of 1963. Following that disaster, a new landscape architect, Merrill Winans, was brought in to restore the property. He introduced a greater variety of plant material and increased the areas of turf to create a more lush landscape. This landscape plan requires much more maintenance and water than Fred Barlow's original plan.

Within our Rehabilitation and Master Plan (RAMP) project, one of the largest and most expensive items is the replacement of our deteriorating irrigation system. In redesigning this system for replacement, we might keep in mind that areas of turf could be replaced with more drought tolerant plant material, which would require less water. Decomposed granite could be introduced in other areas, reducing the need for irrigation systems in those areas.

—Steven Keylon



# Passages...

Charlena Chew, January 28, 1925–November 28, 2007

Neighbors in Court 7 fondly remember Charlena Chew, who lived here for the last dozen years of her life. She was petit and elegant, but also frank and plain spoken. She worked hard all her life, and was most proud of her stints as a nurse and a teacher. She loved to play the piano and sing and was an accomplished cook and pastry maker.

Last 4th of July, we enjoyed her butterscotch brownies. They are really fattening, but you can eat a few and freeze the rest. Let's whip up a batch and remember Charlena.

—Beryl Feller, Court 7

## Butterscotch Brownies

Melt  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter in a saucepan.  
Stir 1 cup brown sugar into it until dissolved.  
Cool slightly. Beat in well 1 egg and 1 teaspoon vanilla.  
Sift then measure  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup all-purpose flour.  
Re-sift with 1 teaspoon double-acting baking powder and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt. Stir these ingredients into the butter mixture.  
Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 cup nuts or  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup grated coconut. Pour into greased 9-x-9-inch pan. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes in pre-heated 350° oven. Cut into squares when cooled.

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## Looking Back on 2007, continued from page 1

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references, and their demonstrated professionalism. Gafcon will be tasked with providing the Board with an assessment and an organized, detailed plan to move forward in addressing the major renovations that are needed. Choosing a professional company to give our association expert advice is the second step in this process of infrastructure replacement. The first step was raising owners' awareness and acceptance of the problems. Once a detailed assessment is provided by Gafcon, next steps will include presentations and meetings with owners to discuss costs, timelines, and funding, and ultimately to vote on the options.

On the facilities front, in 2007 major projects were funded from reserve monies: buildings 19, 22, 87, 88, 89, & 92 were re-piped this year at an approximate cost of \$270,000; 16 residential buildings were prepped and painted for approximately \$228,000; and all patios and fences were repaired with the exterior painting; Court 10's sewer lines were replaced with combined patio repairs for approximately \$105,000; and late this year, the property manager was able to address termite treatment, wood repairs and painting of garage buildings in Courts 9, 11, East Circle and West Circle for approximately \$90,000.

Per the annual report from the property manager, our grounds survived an extremely dry year. Yet, the lawns remained green due to TruGreen's excellent attention. TruGreen put over 300 tons of mulch into the gardens and continued the systematic approach to trimming throughout the grounds. Minor, but important items completed in 2007 include: roof cleaning of all buildings and garages, replacement of clothes lines in most drying areas, and new painted striping of Rodeo Place. In addition, over 225 trees were trimmed, 22 trees were removed, and new security gates were installed along Sycamore Street. In addition to all this, about 1,500 work orders were addressed, including broken pipe repairs and sewer backups.

This has been a pivotal year for our association. We have realized and understood that a chaotic approach to our association management has caused major repair expenses, and acknowledged that we need professional help in developing a detailed plan to address these issues.

Looking ahead to 2008, we will remain focused on obtaining a clear, detailed plan to address the infrastructure repairs and on communicating with owners about the progress towards that goal. Concurrently, the Board will continue to address administrative functions and make decisions to operate the association on a day-to-day basis.

—VGOA Board of Directors

## The Platt Pancake Breakfast

On a beautiful, crisp fall day, the Village Green held its first Platt Pancake Breakfast, from 9 a.m.–11 a.m., Saturday November 3rd, at the Clubhouse. Marc Platt, owner of Platt securities, hosted this event, with further assistance from members of Court Council, Safety Committee, and the Board.

Munching on plates piled high with eggs, sausage, and hot cakes dripping with maple syrup, the attendees rubbed elbows with their neighbors and the Platt staff. When asked what she thought of the breakfast, Georgia from Court 12 said, “How perfectly delightful! How nice to bring people together. This really shows me that Platt Security wants to be a part of the Village Green community. The food is delicious, too! Everybody is saying we should have more of these!”

The Safety Committee had a display table featuring its new Neighborhood Watch Program. Kim, Neighborhood Watch Captain for Court 6, loved the breakfast. She said, “The breakfast offered a chance to meet neighbors I did not know. It was great to talk to people about neighborhood watch—it’s something so easy to be a part of and so helpful to everyone as a community.” The program is growing throughout the Village Green community. Currently over 8 courts have active programs, with more joining in every season.

If you would like to participate in your court’s program, or start one, please contact the chair of the Safety Committee, Denise Brady, at 323.295.5494.

—Denise Brady, Safety Committee Chair

## ADVERTISE IN HIGHLIGHTS

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for information and a rate sheet. Rates  
start at \$20.

## The Mayor’s New Gang Reduction Zone in South L.A.’s Baldwin Village

Continuing his effort to reduce gang-related crime citywide, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa launched a new Community Law Enforcement and Recovery (CLEAR) site in Baldwin Village on Wednesday, November 28, 2007. Baldwin Village historically suffers from some of the highest crime rates in the City. The Southwest CLEAR site will be the seventh such program, which have proven to be one of LA’s most effective anti-gang strategies. This inter-agency effort dedicates funding and manpower to targeted areas facing gang violence. Since its inception, gang-related crime at L.A.’s CLEAR sites has decreased by 20 percent.

The City will infuse the area with prevention and intervention services to complement the enhanced law enforcement efforts. The mayor hired the Reverend Jeff Carr to oversee all of the City’s gang reduction and youth development efforts, reach out to community organizations, and develop a set of effective suppression, prevention and intervention programs. Guillermo Cespedes, the new Gang Reduction and Youth Development program manager for Baldwin Village, will be responsible for overseeing, coordinating and implementing the City’s prevention, intervention and re-entry services in the area.

In April 2007, Mayor Villaraigosa initiated his Gang Reduction Strategy, which takes a comprehensive approach to combating gun and gang violence in L.A. The mayor worked with Chief Bratton to identify and target the top 10 gangs and gang members in the City, resulting in the arrest of six of L.A.’s most dangerous criminals.

—from Mayor’s Office press release

### IT WAS MY PLEASURE TO PROVIDE THE CLOWNS, BALLOONS, FACE PAINTING & BUBBLES FOR OUR LABOR DAY CONCERT '07

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# Village Green Homeowners Association

## December 2007 Newsletter

### Notes from the Board Meeting on December 18, 2007

Board accepted the Safety's proposed packet to be distributed through the Neighborhood watch group. Board accepted Landscape Committee's proposed January 12th program on a walking tour of Green. Board denied owners' request for appeal on parking fines. Board approved motion from floor to accept Stein as the painting contractors for 2008 for the residential buildings. Board approved motion to replace sycamore trees in the East Allee. Board postponed action on owners' unauthorized exterior renovation while seeking legal advice. Board denied owners' request for appeal for additional time for garage violation of storage. Board approved action for owner to use garage to recharge electric vehicle contingent on using a kilowatt counter. Board approved the 2008 Platt contract for \$318,656. Board tabled owners' request to January for background information. Board authorized manager and Director Keylon to work together to gather documentation for D. Wong reimbursement request. Board discussed need for structural and soil engineers for several buildings.

### Managers' Report

Will change insurance premium payment methods for monthly increments rather than bulk payments. Recommends board to use Stein as contractor for 2008 painting. West Circle and East Circle will be completed by Christmas. Tree trimming is scheduled for December. Clubhouse floors have been stripped, waxed and office carpet shampooed.

### Report from Platt Security

#### Incidents in the VG, November 15–December 10, 2007

**November 15**—Auto burglary while car parked in unlocked garage.

**November 15**—Truck stolen from West Circle.

**November 19**—Officer responded to reports of gunshot and observed unknown security officers trying to restrain a man on Sycamore Street. LAPD arrived and arrested the unknown security officers and freed the man they were trying to restrain.

**November 28**—Resident reported two people loitering near a garage area. Security officer spoke to them and they left.

**November 28**—LAFD Paramedics responded to a resident's call.

**November 29**—LAFD Paramedics responded to a resident's call. An LAFD truck damaged a garage building while on a call and asked security for office information to report the damage.

**December 2**—LAFD responded to a resident's who had fallen.

**December 4**—Officer dispatched regarding a possible missing person.

### Los Angeles Police Department Crime Stats

#### November 2007

Crimes that occurred  
in a one-mile  
radius of Village Green

• Burglary	9
• Grand Theft Auto	7
• Theft from Vehicle	16
• Personal Theft	5
• Robbery	13
• Aggravated Assault	6
• Rape	0
• Homicide	0

## Committee Reports

**Court Council**—In December Court Council notified all residents of Village Green via a letter to address court guidelines and policies. The letter also invited residents to get to know their court representative and to become involved in VG activities such as joining a committee. It was the Council's opportunity to wish Holiday Greetings and a Happy New Year.

**Cultural Landscape Committee**—At the November meeting Sara Loe reported the USC Graduate Students translating our VG inventory information into CAD is proceeding. Fred Wilson reported continuing progress towards completing the VG Inventory with the Sunday 10 a.m. volunteer's activities. It is a slow process, but it is anticipated the inventory surveying will be completed during 2008. CLR Committee will not meet during the Holidays, but will meet Jan 7 and January 28, 2008 at 7:00 PM in the VG Clubhouse.

**Cultural Affairs**—Black History Month Program: Anthony Nicholas, son of Fayard Nicholas and nephew of Harold Nicholas and Dorothy Dandridge will be the featured speaker for our Black History Month Program. The Bahai choir will also perform. Feb 10th at 3:00 p.m.

**Landscape**—Landscape Committee is monitoring the progress of the mulching at the Green. It should be completed shortly. We have also established a-committee to monitor the care and growth of the bouganvillas in the garage courts.

### Residents Photograph the Green



*Village Green*  
by Mike Underwood  
Court 15

### City of Los Angeles Free Security Services

The Home Secure Program provides free installation of home security and safety devices to low-income seniors (62 years or older) or disabled homeowners or renters in the City of Los Angeles. Income limits apply. Free installation includes labor and materials. Services are provided only once per year. Devices are limited to items that do not require a City building permit or formal inspection.

**Services include:** deadbolts, turn bolts, slide bolts, entry locks, window locks, patio door locks, peep holes, night lights, smoke detectors, grab bars for the bathroom, and shower hoses.

For questions and information on eligibility, call:  
**(323) 313-1631 or (323) 890-1555**

Funded through a community development block grant administered by the City of Los Angeles Housing Department.

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