

VILLAGE GREEN

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

HIGHLIGHTS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE VILLAGE GREEN OWNERS ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2013

Smoking Ban Ignites Heated Discussion at Annual Meeting

By Shumway Marshall, Court 4

At the Village Green Owners Association's Annual Meeting, held on Saturday, February 2, a new smoking ban proved the hot topic. After the customary committee updates and statements from candidates for the VGOA Board of Directors, the presiding Board sought feedback about a proposal to ban smoking inside units for all future residents.

Late last year, the Board approved a measure to prohibit all smoking in common areas and exclusive use areas, such as balconies, garages and patios, after sending a mailing to all owners and seeking comments. The proposal under discussion at the annual meeting would extend the ban to the interior of units for all future residents. Existing residents would not be affected.

Residents opposing the ban spoke about respecting personal freedoms, the difficulty of enforcement, and the potential loss of property value since prospective residents who smoked would

be banned even if they were otherwise thought to be excellent neighbors.

Those supporting the ban talked about the reality of smoke seeping through walls and open windows, and health concerns. Some felt the ban would have little immediate effect because it would only apply to future residents.

In a straw poll following the discussion, 32 people supported the ban, 24 people opposed it and 6 people abstained. The Board promised more discussion on the issue before deciding the issue.

TREASURER'S REPORT

After the vote, Steve Haggerty, VGOA treasurer, reported that the Green's finances are in the black. For the month of December, of the Green's 629 units, 56 units, or 8.9%, were delinquent one month or more on their HOA dues and 77 are delayed in payment, which he said often happens at year end.

(Annual Meeting, Continued on page 9)

Safety Concerns

From a Dealers' Den to an Urban Oasis

By Ethan Markowitz, Court 8

When I moved with my family to Village Green in December 2010, we were in a crisis: The once proud fourplex where I had lived for 12 years (located near Olympic and La Brea) was rapidly turning into a drug house.

Just the year before, my wife Teresa and I had worked with the LAPD narcotics unit to expel a crack dealer named Tony and his crew of zombies from the duplex next door. Transactions occurred beneath our bedroom window.

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The Village Green Owners Association
5300 Rodeo Rd. Los Angeles, CA 90016
villagegreenla.net

New Policy In Effect for Security Doors

By Wendell Conn, Court 11

Starting around 1989, the Village Green Owners Association Board of Directors restricted the style of exterior security doors to a single model. At that time, the VGOA required owners who wanted a security door to install a specific mesh door manufactured by a local company, HIMCO Security Products, to ensure design uniformity across the property, while providing residents a reasonable option to meet their security needs.

Over the years, a patchwork of mismatched doors has taken root at the Green because the VGOA did not consistently enforce the installation of the approved door. Recently it was discovered that HIMCO no longer manufactures the model approved in 1989. More recently, some owners requesting approvals for security door installation were provided with a simple, unadorned option from HIMCO, but the latest style was never reviewed or approved by the Design Review Committee or the Board.

A resolution passed last year by the Board allows all owners to keep any existing security doors and reserved the

Board's right to replace these with an approved model in the future if funds for such a purpose become available. As of November 2012, the Design Review Committee has documented, by photo, all current security doors and provided a file of record to the



DRC members examine a possible prototype during a visit to CR Laurence factory

office, so it can be easily determined which doors were in place at the time of the new policy. Unapproved security doors installed after the date of this policy will be subject to rules enforcement, including removal at owner expense.

The manager recently sent a letter to all owners explaining the facts of the resolution and indicating that the DRC is working on clear and unambiguous guidelines, recommendations, and specifications for the Board to review, which will provide an approval process for future owners desiring to add a new security door or change an existing one.

When the DRC has established a standard for all future security screens, management will send out another notice as to when the Board will consider approving those standards.

You can help determine what

kind of future security screens are allowed here at Village Green by participating with the DRC the first Monday of the month at 7 p.m. Security door requests will continue to be approved on a case by case basis by the Board after review

FOR SALE - TABLE

By Village Green resident Georgia Lumpkin. Table is **33x54x29**. It is a simple clean design, solid maple, antique, and handmade. If interested, please call 323-295-1278.

by the DRC. **VG**

LADERA TOASTMASTERS

Come and learn to speak well before an audience.

Meetings

Every Friday from 2 to 3:30 pm
at Ladera Senior Recreation Center
4750 W 62nd St
off Slauson and La Brea.

Visitors Welcome. No obligation to join.

Well Repair Completed in 2012

By George Rheault, Court 2

Nothing in life is free, and our well pump/motor assembly reminded the VGOA of that lesson when it stopped working in late August 2012 and took our irrigation well off-line for several months.

Without the use of “free” groundwater to maintain our landscape, the VGOA temporarily needed a hook-up with the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP), which ultimately charged us about \$30,000 for the water. Fortunately, repairs were expedited and the well pump was functioning normally again in early November 2012.

NOT JUST A SHORT CIRCUIT

The trouble began on August 20, 2012, the height of the hot season, when the well pump shut down. Numerous attempts to restart and locate the problem, initially thought to be merely an electrical short, were unsuccessful.

General Pump, our service vendor for the well assembly, agreed to come out on September 4 to inspect the system. In the meantime, Harold Graves, VGOA maintenance supervisor, arranged for DWP to supply the irrigation system with temporary water service from a Rodeo Road city hydrant, which started on August 27.

During General Pump’s inspection in early September, more attempts were made to restart the system which seemed to work briefly, and



Long way down! A view of our irrigation well head, where our new well pump and motor sits about 300 feet underground.

allowed us to discontinue DWP water service for a day or so, but then the system shut down again. It was finally determined that the entire assembly deep in the well would have to be removed from the well casing to identify the problem.

The assembly was installed in 2006, when the well pump last malfunctioned. Due to its constant use, a well motor is only expected to last 3 to 4 years before having to be reconditioned or replaced. Interrupted well suction, such as from electrical failure, could damage the motor and the pump even more quickly and diminish the overall assembly’s lifespan.

NEW MOTOR NEEDED

General Pump advised that it was cheaper to replace the motor in the assembly than to rebuild it and offered a one-year warranty, including all re-installation costs.

Pump motor failure and excessive wear and tear on it can be caused by many things, including electrical power surges and improper wiring, too much sediment in the well and excessive cycling often caused by suction interruption (pumping of air rather than water).

After negotiations for much of September to determine the project scope and costs, Peter Fay, the VG general manager, submitted General Pump’s proposed contract, dated Sept. 25, to the Board of Directors for their review. At a special meeting of the Board on Oct. 8, the contract was approved.

(Well Repair, continued on page 9)

Fracking Workshop Educates Residents

By Gabriela Worrel, Court 13

The Village Green's Court Council worked alongside concerned VG resident Deborah Attoinese to host an evening workshop on January 17, 2013 with VG residents about the process of fracking and the fracking currently underway in the nearby Inglewood Oil Field.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is a process by which natural gas or oil is extracted from shale rock layers deep in the earth. The extraction is done by injecting chemical-laced fluids at high pressure into the earth to fracture the shale and release gas or oil from the rock formations in which it is trapped.

The use of fracking is increasing around the country and has raised alarms in many states. Despite assurances from oil industry and government leaders that fracking is safe and a necessary "bridge" to more sustainable energy sources, many residents and environmentalists are convinced it is responsible for groundwater pollution, earth movement, and increased air toxicity. Geologists also suspect fracking of triggering some earthquakes.

Complicating matters, Congress exempted fracking in 2005 from the federal Clean Water and Clean Air Acts and left it to each state to

develop their own regulations, something California has yet to do. However, many believe fracking should be banned until studies confirm its impacts on the environment and on human health.

THE USE OF FRACKING IS INCREASING AROUND THE COUNTRY AND HAS RAISED ALARMS IN MANY STATES.

The largest urban oil field in the country, the Inglewood Oil Field is located about a mile from Village Green and has been an oil extraction zone since the early 1920s. Only recently have new fracking techniques been implemented for this production area. Any consequences that may ensue due to oil and natural gas extraction activities, such as hazardous waste discharges into the air or groundwater and movement along the Inglewood-Newport Fault, may quite possibly affect VG residents.

Dozens of local, state, and national community, health and environmental organizations have stated their support for banning or

placing a temporary moratorium on fracking until a more thorough study of its safety is undertaken.

Many organizations representing homeowners and parents in surrounding neighborhoods have committed to support such a ban or moratorium, including:

- Baldwin Hills Estates
- Cameo Woods Homeowners Association
- Culver City Unified School District
- Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council
- Lakeside Village Homeowners Association
- Pico Union Neighborhood Association
- Rampart Village Neighborhood Council
- Raintree Condominiums Association
- Tara Hill Homeowners Association
- Westside Neighborhood Council

About 25 residents attended the January workshop and watched clips from award-winning documentaries, including *Gasland*, a 2010 award-winning film, and *The F Word*, from KCET's *SoCal Connected* news program.

(*Fracking*, continued on page 10)

Can HOA Boards Take Political Action?

By Lucy Fried, Court 13

As events swirl around and beyond Village Green's borders, I have long wondered why our elected boards so often are reluctant to take stands on "outside" issues that affect the quality of our lives or the well being of our property and our association. I know we are a non-profit. Is it possible the law prohibits non-profit homeowner boards (HOAs) from taking political action? I'm not a lawyer, but I decided to find out.

A TRICKY JOURNEY AND SURPRISING CONCLUSION

Where to begin? After a fruitless Google search, I appealed to former board president John Keho and manager Peter Fay for basic sources that could answer my question. They pointed me to three laws—one federal and two state—that define and establish the rights and responsibilities of HOA's and their boards: the federal Internal Revenue Code 528; California's Davis-Stirling Act (Sections 1350-1378); and the California Corporations Code.

Thankfully, all three were readily available online, and I also used the online law firm Adams Kessler for indexing of topics, links to key related cases, and commentaries.

To my astonishment, I could not find any blanket prohibition on our board's legal right to engage politically. In fact, there is language establishing

conditions, guidelines, and limitations for political action, and where this is missing or ambiguous, several judicial verdicts have sought to clarify them.

VGOA A NON-PROFIT AND MUTUAL BENEFIT CORPORATION

First, I looked at the laws establishing our non-profit tax status. We're a non-profit, but not a 501 of any type. The federal Internal Revenue Service has qualified our HOA under IRS Code 528, a non-profit organized and operated to provide for the acquisition, construction, management, maintenance, and care of association property. It is exempted from taxes on income from dues and assessments and has a lower than usual tax rate on other income.

In California, we are incorporated as "The Village Green Owners Association," or TVGOA, a non-profit Mutual Benefit Corporation, with essentially the same tax characteristics as the federal designation. These include that no resident can receive money from the HOA; at least 60% of gross income must come from dues and assessments; and at least 90% of expenditures must be for management and maintenance of association property. So, up to 10% of overall annual expenditures may be used for political activity.

Importantly, the state Corporations Code grants HOA boards the authority to "exercise the

powers of a corporation," including the right to make donations for the public welfare of the association's members. Through the Code's Business Judgment Rule, board members receive immunity for contested board actions if they were made in good faith with the best interests of the association in mind and showed a reasonable amount of inquiry prior to the decision.

After several readings, I could not find anything in either IRS Code 528 or the California Corporations Code that prohibits political action as long as the rules above are met.

DAVIS-STIRLING ACT AND CALIFORNIA CORPORATION CODE

The Davis-Stirling Act, passed in 1985, is the HOA law in California. Sections 1350-1378 cover all "common interest developments" in the state, including those, like Village Green, that were established before the law's passage. It recognizes HOAs as quasi-governmental organizations formed to meet the community's needs as defined

(Politics, continued on page 10)

Empowerment Congress West Area Neighborhood Council

By Wendell Conn, Court 11

You may know that you are in the Los Angeles City Council District 10 and your City Councilmember is Herb J. Wesson, Jr. but, you may be less likely to know that Village Green is part of a neighborhood council - the Empowerment Congress West (ECW) Area 2 and that the mission of Neighborhood Councils is to increase civic engagement and to make government more responsive to local needs.

One of the ways ECW does this is to invite civic leaders to come to the Saturday Board/Community meetings and dialogue, on a personal level, directly with individuals from our community who might not otherwise have their voices heard or who may have never met anyone in city government.

On Saturday, March 2nd, Councilman Wesson came to the meeting to talk about a variety of issues including: Marlton and District Square Development; Botach Tactical; the homeless in Leimert Park; the proposed elimination of fast food density limits in the district; Crenshaw light rail construction mitigation; the quality of grocery stores in the neighborhood; and a Planning Commission proposal for digital signs in the area. Mr. Wesson also heard

from individuals who had other concerns and assigned one of his aides to work to solve their problem.

Over the years, I have stayed fairly busy working on VGOA committees and just keeping up with issues inside our four borders, ranging from landscape to infrastructure and helping put out this publication.

Yet, what about issues like fracking, crime, air quality, and high unemployment that affect the Village Green outside our perimeter? Like many of you, while working full time, I paid much less notice to these issues than I should have. That changed last October when I was elected to be one of the two Area 2 representatives.

The Los Angeles Department of Neighborhood Empowerment has grown into the nation's largest and most innovative initiative in civic engagement and citizen-based government.

We help provide citizen input to the city budget, challenge development projects not supported by the community, and

(ECW, continued on next page)

CAROB TREES WRANGLLED DURING RECENT RODEO ROAD ROUND-UP

By George Rheault, Court 2

The removal of 19 historic carob trees, including 15 along the Rodeo Road median strip, began in March with replacement plantings expected to be in the ground before spring's end. Crews from TruGreen are doing all phases at a total estimated cost of approximately \$34,000, with oversight provided by our tree consultant/arborist, Dan Jensen.

The effort must proceed in stages, beginning with removal, followed by stump grinding and excavation. To stabilize conditions for the new saplings and enhance their chances for survival, the pits are then filled with new soil and left fallow for several months.

Originally slated for 2012, a number of procedural steps delayed the work. This included obtaining permission from the City of Los Angeles, which has jurisdiction because the median carob trees are located in a public right-of-way. A separate traffic plan was also required to be filed, since the closure of at least one lane of Rodeo Road is required to safely complete each stage. Please watch for street closure notices as the work is ongoing, and plan accordingly.

The City of Los Angeles no longer plants carob trees (botanical name *ceratonia siliqua*) on public byways, as arborists now disfavor carobs as a "street tree" species. However, the Cultural Landscape Report

(Carobs, continued on next page)

New Website Planning Moves Ahead in 2013

By Shumway Marshall, Court 4

Recognizing the need for a deliberate website revamp, a small working group of the Communications Committee has been meeting monthly for the past few months to determine the community's online needs, who will update content in the future, and what functions are essential versus "nice-to-have."

In the ever-changing world of online technology, the current Village Green website is considered out of date. Built one afternoon over eight years ago by the former chair of the Communications Committee, Susan Edwards, villagegreenla.net is hand-coded, meaning one must be proficient with HTML mark-up language in order to make updates. Furthermore, it is not optimized for sharing news and information over social media or for viewing on mobile devices, increas-

ingly a critical function for most web users.

Surveys regarding online needs will soon be distributed to key stakeholder groups such as committee chairs and outside groups with an interest in Village Green, including historians, architects, landscape designers, ornithologists and realtors.

A short in-person survey distributed in February at the Annual Meeting to residents and to residents' homes by Court Council sought key demographic information about who lives in the Green and their internet usage.

The results will hopefully offer insight into not only how information, news and resources are currently used, but also what types of content and functionality are needed and

desired. Results from both surveys will be reported to residents as the process proceeds.

The new website should provide the people who live in and interact with the Village Green community with a resource and tool for information, dialogue, empowerment and pride. Moreover, it will often be a key resource for prospective homeowners and residents when considering moving to our wonderful community, thereby increasing the desirability and value of our property. **VG**

If you have any experience building websites, especially with selecting prebuilt templates, or you would just like to help out in other ways with the effort, please contact the author at: highlights@villagegreenla.net.

(Carobs, continued from previous page)

Committee and Gordon Brooks, chair of the Tree Committee, advised that the replacements be carob trees as these were part of our original historic landscape. The Board of Directors agreed to this in 2012. The City of Los Angeles consented with the understanding that the VGOA

would therefore accept responsibility for the costs of removal and replacement, along with all future pruning, maintenance and liability associated with the replaced trees. Formerly, these responsibilities were borne by the city. **VG**

More information about the carob tree replacement, including a fuller explanation of why these mature trees are being removed as a preventative measure, may be found by visiting the Tree Committee's page on the VGOA website: villagegreenla.net/committees/tree_committee/

(ECW, continued from previous page)

influence city department policy impacting residents. We provide monies to non-profit and city organizations for equipment, events, cultural fairs, and community beautification

projects. We work with the police on safety issues and weigh in on the overall neighborhood plan and redevelopment in the district. The ECW Board is also very receptive to listening to stakeholder presentations and input. **VG**

Town Hall meetings are held 9:30 a.m. every 1st Saturday at 3470 Don Felipe Drive.

Visit us at: ecwandc.org or [facebook.com/EmpowermentCongressWest](https://www.facebook.com/EmpowermentCongressWest)

Five Board Directors Elected; Creighton Chosen President



Meet Village Green's new Board of Directors: *Back row from left:* newly elected Jerri Allyn, Joe Khoury, Steve Haggerty, newly elected George Rheault, Reuben Ginsburg, Daniel Frank. *Front row from left:* Gabriela Worrel, Robert Creighton, John Keho.

Photo by Joseph Taylor

Election Results

With five Board of Director positions up for election on Feb. 2, Robert Creighton won 253 votes, Steve Haggerty 247 votes, John Keho 239 votes, Jerri Allyn 201 votes and George Rheault 164 votes. Candidates not elected to the Board were Gwen Deglise with 131 votes and Wendell Conn with 125 votes.

In a brief Board meeting immediately following the vote,

officers elected were: Robert Creighton, president; John Keho, vice-president; Steve Haggerty, treasurer; and Jerri Allyn, secretary.

In an e-mail response to *Highlights* after the election, Board president, Robert Creighton, said that he was happy to have been re-elected to the Board. "The association has been very productive over the last few years," he wrote, "and I believe that 2013 will be another good year. My top priority for this

year is moving the building stabilization project forward." He added that his other priorities include "completing the Cultural Landscape Report, working with our lighting consultant to develop a lighting plan that addresses areas where safety is a concern and continued outreach to the community by participating in court meetings." **VG**

(Annual Meeting, continued from page 1)

Payment plans were offered to 6 units currently, 20 units are pending foreclosure and the fees of 19 units are in collections due to very delinquent HOA assessments.

Haggerty also noted that the VGOA paid out over \$135,000 in 2012 to repair damage from water-related intrusions to units in 2012, highlighting the need for the ongoing replacement of our aging exterior and interior sewer lines and water supply piping so as to avoid these costs in the future.

The VGOA general manager Peter Fay reported about improvements over the past year, including the recent contract negotiations with Time Warner

which produced over \$75,000 additional income in 2012 and approximately \$16,000 in future years, the renegotiation of several contracts resulting in lower payment and/or increased services, and maintenance performed to date. Fay also promised aggressive progress on a backlog of 30 years of deferred maintenance and the completion of a 10-year maintenance plan.

The meeting concluded by honoring two Board members who are stepping down, Dee Dee Chappelle and Robert Nicolais, and three extraordinary volunteers. Alva Harper helped plan events for VG community as part of the Cultural Affairs Committee for 19 years, and Laurie Liles is taking some

much needed rest after serving for over nine years on the Landscape, Safety, and Communications committees.

Notably, Priscilla Browner will end the 50+ Recreation Club soon, after over 14 years of successfully planning daily midday activities, weekly movie screenings and frequent guided tours to destinations ranging from local dinner theaters to exotic destinations abroad for our active seniors.

The group managed to do it all without any direct Village Green funding and even donated over \$12,000 for improvements to our Clubhouse over the years of its existence. **VG**

(Well Repair, continued from page 3)

COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE

There were three work phases required of General Pump to get the well pump working again. Initial removal of the entire pump/motor assembly and examination, the first step, was done for about \$4,000. Next, General Pump needed to be satisfied as to the well shaft's integrity, and ensure it was clean and clear of debris or other obstructions, before any new pump could be reinserted.

This phase, called well redevelopment, could have cost up to \$150,000 if the well casing had been severely degraded, requiring a full reconstruction. Fortunately, a camera inspection of the well casing revealed few problems. General Pump's initial conservative estimate of \$25,000 for this phase ended up

being well above the actual cost of \$8,950 needed to recondition the well casing and well screen and clean with both with air bursting and sodium hydrochlorine (bleach) treatments.

The final phase produced the biggest cost, approximately \$36,400, which included the overall replacement of the whole assembly. Franklin Electric supplied the motor, and General Pump assembled the various parts to reinsert into the well. This phase also cost less than General Pump's initial estimate.

The total cost of the project came to about \$79,000. The overall financial impact of this cost was offset substantially by the receipt of new revenue in 2012 from the new easement/access agreement that the VGOA executed with

Time Warner, also in 2012.

Management advised the Board to set up a special monthly reserve item contribution to anticipate regular well repair like this, which the Board has done. The monthly set-aside of about \$2,500 will ensure the reserve fund for well repair is ample the next time it is needed. Also, the plan is to effect repairs preemptively, rather than waiting for the well assembly to fail at an inopportune time, to avoid higher costs for expedited work. This way the irrigation well could potentially be taken off-line during the wet season, also thereby reducing our water purchase from the DWP. **VG**

(Politics, continued from page 5)

in the tax codes above and governing with representative democracy. It provides that if association members disagree with a board action, they cannot veto it but can remove the board or elect new members at the next annual meeting. (The Village Green's governing documents contain provisions for both.)

As with the tax codes, I could not find anything in Davis-Stirling prohibiting an HOA board from passing resolutions, lobbying, or making donations regarding public issues or legislation.

KEY CASE

My research suggests that California courts may find against homeowners who challenge a board's involvement in political action that meets the tests described above. In an important case, *Finley v Superior Court* (Orange County, 2000), a Cali-

fornia Appeals Court upheld the right of an HOA board to contribute association funds to a community issue beyond its borders. The board had used HOA funds to oppose the planned conversion of a nearby military base into a commercial airport, and some association members sued, claiming it was a misuse of funds and exceeded the board's authority.

However, the Court held that the political contributions were not illegal and that boards can take political actions they believe are in the best interests of the association, even if some association members disagree.

CONCLUSION

One matter that completely eluded my search was HOA Board support for candidates and ballot measures in public elections (as distinguished from community issues or

legislation). I couldn't find one reference! This may or may not be clarified in another law or in judicial decisions...but that investigation is for another time.

It seems clear that, as long as a political activity conforms to the requirements of the law, Village Green's Board of Directors faces no legal prohibition on taking a stand on issues beyond our border that can reasonably be seen to impact the well-being of the community. The Board has a fiduciary responsibility to take care of the business and management of the association and its property. It is an urgent and time consuming responsibility. When events beyond our borders impact the community's safety, health, property values, or something else, the Board may lawfully decide that responsibility includes taking political action. **VG**

(Fracking, continued from page 4)

Attendees also heard presentations from representatives of several local community groups. Paul Ferrazi and Gary Gless from the local non-profit Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community discussed the importance of protecting the environment

and human health. Brenna Norton, from Food & Water Watch, pointed out the need for more environmental research, education, and awareness about fracking. Other speakers included Culver City Councilwoman Meghan Sahli-Wells,

who successfully authored Culver City's resolution calling for a ban on fracking. **VG**

Residents of Village Green who would like to be directed to more information about local fracking activities may contact the author at gabriela.worrel@gmail.com.



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New battery disposal/collection bin at the clubhouse.

(Safety, continued from page 1)

I will never forget a man toothlessly complaining that he had left his dentures with Tony as collateral.

The problem then relocated into our own building, where our landlord, hopelessly underwater on his mortgage, resorted to renting a unit at an inflated price to a man named Mike, a surly pot grower who managed to make our apartment smell like Cheech and Chong's dressing room. When the police dragged Mike's massive frame away, as he swore vengeance to all, we knew it was far past time to go.

Luckily the housing crash had made two-bedroom units that were previously out of our price range affordable to buy, and when Teresa and I first saw our future home at Village Green, we both knew that we had found our permanent solution. I clearly recall carrying my son Silas, then one-year-old, around the West Green, murmuring, "Isn't this place nice? No graffiti, no broken glass. Aren't we lucky?"

I still feel that way, but I started to become concerned about crime at Village Green when last year, a man in our court was beaten on his back porch in a domestic dispute. I knew his girlfriend, and her two children who sometimes played with Silas. The couple moved soon after and I began to think about how to improve safety at the Green. Later that

summer, the Green was locked down while the police searched for an armed robber who had sought refuge in the lush foliage of our property.

Something clicked, and I decided to join the Safety Committee. Rushing to the Clubhouse to attend my first meeting, I found my neighbor Robert Nicolais, then the Board liaison, presiding over



an empty room. "Is there a Safety Committee meeting tonight?" he asked. I was the only person who came that evening.

Robert and I talked for a long time about how to improve safety at Village Green. I learned that Penny Bannerman had, for years, heroically carried the mantle of disaster preparedness (and still does), but no one was focusing on property crime. A month later, I was named co-chair, and the following month Neighborhood Watch, which had been dormant for four years, was revived.

Today, the Neighborhood Watch has 16 members, and we have been working with Platt Security, the Village

Green Owners Association Board of Directors and our senior lead officer at the Los Angeles Police Department to mitigate a rash of car burglaries on Coliseum and to work towards our goal of zero home burglaries in 2013. The committee has urged residents to keep their porch lights on at night, install home security systems in their units, and walk the Green, dutifully reporting suspicious activity to Platt.

Each month, the Safety Committee and its four hard-working members review reports from Platt, LAPD and our neighbors to paint a complete picture of safety issues affecting our community. We propose solutions to our safety partners and implement what we can, in addition to Penny's efforts to improve disaster preparedness.

We are lucky to live in a neighborhood where crime is currently decreasing, but I know firsthand how quickly things can change. If you are concerned about safety, please take action by joining the Safety Committee or the Neighborhood Watch. There is a lot we can do to improve our safety here, and everyone can make a real difference even with a small contribution of time.

The Safety Committee meets the fourth Wednesday of each month at the Village Green Clubhouse at 7 p.m. Email safety@villagegreenla.net for more information. **VG**

UPCOMING EVENTS

BIRD WALK

Saturday, April 20, 7:30 a.m.

With Richard Barth and Don Sturba from the Audubon Society
Meet at the Clubhouse

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE LECTURE

Thursday, April 25, 7:00 p.m.

Featuring Charles Birnbaum. Watch your mailbox for details.

PATIO PEEK

Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m.

Led by Jeffrey Mintz. Meet at the Clubhouse.

ART SHOW

Sunday, May 19, 3 p.m.

Sponsored by Cultural Affairs Committee.

All art media welcome. For details, call the office or Dearmond Bebo at (323-) 903-6346.

VILLAGE GREEN YARD SALE

Saturday, June 22, Time TBA

FANDANGO ON THE GREEN

Sunday, May 26, Time TBA

JAZZ ON THE GREEN

Sunday, June 30

3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

JAZZ ON THE GREEN

Labor Day, Monday, September 2

3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

VILLAGE GREEN COMMITTEES

BUDGET & FINANCE

Chair: Pat Brown

Liaison: George Rheault

2nd Thursdays in January, April, July, Oct, 6:30 p.m.

Monitors the Association's finances.

COMMUNICATIONS

Chair: Shumway Marshall

Liaison: Jerri Allyn

3rd Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.

Publishes *Highlights* quarterly and manages the VGOA Web site.

COURT COUNCIL

Chair: Nat Hutton

Liaison: Robert Creighton

1st Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.

Each court has a representative.

The Council is the main liaison between residents and the Board.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Chair: Allison Grover-Khoury

Liaison: Joe Khoury

1st Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.

Puts on various events such as the summer concerts.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Chair: Holly Kane

Liaison: George Rheault

4th Mondays, 7:00 p.m.

Developing a historical landscape inventory and treatment plan.

DESIGN REVIEW

Chair: Wendell Conn

Liaison: Reuben Ginsburg

1st Mondays, 7:00 p.m.

Oversees all architectural changes to the Village Green's structures.

LANDSCAPE

Chair: Wendell Conn

Liaison: John Keho

2nd Mondays, 7:30 p.m.

Oversees maintenance of the Green's landscape.

SAFETY

Chair Ethan Markowitz

Liaison: John Keho

4th Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.

To increase and maintain resident awareness in safety and emergency preparedness.

SOCIAL RECREATION

Chair: Priscilla Browner

Liaison: Steve Haggerty

Thursdays, 11:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Senior Club 2nd Thursdays, 12:00-1:00 p.m.

TREE

Chair: Gordon Brooks

Liaison: Jerri Allyn

3rd Mondays, 7:30 p.m.

Oversees renewal and restoration of VG trees.

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.