

VILLAGE GREEN

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

HIGHLIGHTS

A Monthly Publication of the VGOA

September 2020

BOARD AND MANAGEMENT NEWS

Building Insulation: Building insulation is pegged to the 10-year building painting cycle, causing some residents to have to wait as long as seven more years for heat relief. A discussion item to accelerate the insulation schedule brought a sympathetic board response. Two directors and Ms. Giles will examine the idea in relation to additional cost, scheduling, and cosmetic concerns and report back to the board.

Racism Education and Action: Directors gave a "thumbs up" to a Communications Committee resolution to continue taking actions to create meaningful dialogue regarding diversity, race, and the VG community.

Health, Safety and Neighborliness: Directors agreed to create and distribute a flyer or letter regarding masks, social distancing, mosquitoes, and pathways right-of-way.

Patio Fountains and Ponds: Directors agreed that some patio fountains, bird baths, and pools have become dangerous breeding grounds for mosquito larvae and approved a resolution to amend the **Handbook** by prohibiting any such item that doesn't have a functioning circulating device. A notice to owners will be sent immediately, with a 30-day deadline for comments and a board vote in September.

Bin Pickups Double: Last month, Management met with Republic Services and added a second day of recycling pick-ups each week at no extra cost. **Now both garbage and recycling bins are picked up twice a week – recycling on Tuesdays and Fridays, and garbage on Mondays and Friday.**



The change was needed because, as COVID forced lifestyle changes, the bins in many courts began overflowing, creating messy and some times unsanitary conditions. The Board and Court Council urged residents to crush boxes before dumping them; reps wrote letters to the board requesting action; and Court Council chair Nat Hutton sent an email to management. □

Highlights wishes all our children, parents and guardians, helpers, teachers and school workers →

May everyone earn an "E" for effort and an "L" for love. □

**Best
Health and
Educational
Success this semester.**



HAROLD GRAVES TO RETIRE

After more than 42 years at Village Green, Maintenance Manager Harold Graves announced he will retire at the end of September. He will be greatly missed. Harold's "Letter to the VG Community" is on pages 3-4. □

Inside Highlights

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Highlights is a volunteer project of the Village Green Communication Committee.

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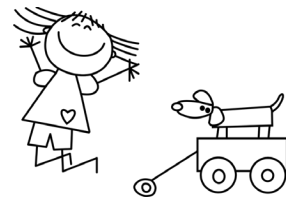
We want to hear from you! Please send comments and submissions to villagegreenhighlights@gmail.com



KIDS NEWS

Children Help Security Find Resident's Keys Last month, Security helped a resident search for her lost keys but couldn't find them. Then, children riding bikes and scooters offered to help and soon found the keys! **THANK YOU, CHILDREN.**

Stop Allowing Kids To Climb Trees Parents, this is a reminder not to allow kids to climb in the Village Green trees. Security has witnessed four dangerous incidents recently that could have turned out badly. Please adhere to VG's policy and help everyone stay safe, including the trees. □



MORE BOARD AND MANAGEMENT NEWS ...Continued from Page 1

From Manager Sherri Giles' August Board Report

Methane Testing for Electrical Upgrade: The 5' deep drilling and test analyses were completed in mid-August, and the 20' deep drilling began on the 24th. Management expects to receive the final report in early September.

Laundry Rooms: Verizon has updated its local cell towers to 5G and equipped all laundry machines in all the courts to be compatible.

Doors, Walls and Patio GateLocks: The manufacturer of the board-approved security screen doors has discontinued the model. Our vendor will provide options when they become available...

Management is inspecting all serpentine walls and prioritizing them for repair work... The Fire Department has verified that gates that are in the sole path of exit from a unit may not use double-cylinder locks; they must have a non-keyed locking device.

Groundwater Monitoring Program: Directors supported a management-generated resolution for twice-a-year groundwater monitoring of our well to ascertain the sustainability of the well in the future.

9/28-10/6, Garage Courts Driveway Striping in Courts 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, West and East Circles: No parking in court on day of painting, but quick-drying paint will be used. Notices will be given to residents in advance. □



PUBLIC SECURITY REPORT July 24 - August 22, 2020

Edited by Jordan Deglise Moore

JULY 25 RECYCLING FROM VG BINS; Obama Place near Court 12, 9:30 am. Responding to calls, officers approached two non-residents looking for recyclables, informed them of our policies, and escorted them off the property.

JULY 26 LOST PET; West Circle, 11:00 am. A resident called about an escaped dog, security found it and returned it to its owner.

JULY 28 GARAGE BURGLARY; Court 8, 6:00 am. Finding his electric door-equipped garage open, a resident reported two bicycles stolen.

AUGUST 1 SMOKING; Court 5, late night/early morning. Security responded to a resident's complaint of a neighbor's frequent smoking and talked with the neighbor.

AUGUST 3 ATTEMPTED GARAGE DOOR OPENINGS; Court 17, 11:15 pm. Security responded to a resident's report of a male trying to open multiple garages.

AUGUST 7 TRESPASSING PICNICKERS; Center Green, 5:45 pm. Security responded to a resident's report of trespassers. The three picnickers could not verify why they were here and were politely escorted off the property.

AUGUST 9 FALLEN TREE BRANCH; Court 2, 4:15 pm. Security responded to a resident's call, and the area was cordoned off. □

"Life is full of changes."

A LETTER TO THE VILLAGE GREEN COMMUNITY FROM MAINTENANCE MANAGER HAROLD GRAVES

After almost 43 years of continuous service at Village Green, it saddens me to announce I will retire at the end of this month. "Why now?" you may ask. It's time.

I'm sitting here reflecting about making a transition to the next chapter of my life, but my mind journeys back through time and I recall so many changes at the Green. One was the appearance of children - because when I came here in 1978, there were none! (Although children were welcome when Village Green opened as a rental property in 1941, they weren't when VG became a condo association in 1973; the CC&Rs prohibited residency by anyone under the age of 18. A family here had a baby and was ordered to leave. They sued and took the case all the way up to the California Supreme Court.) In 1983, the court ruled that VG's policy was a violation of the Unruh Civil Rights Act, and soon after, I started noticing children on the Green. The racial composition of the Green's residents has also changed. I estimate it was about 90% Caucasian in 1978 and about 60% Black in 1995. Today, I estimate it's about 80% Caucasian.

A RIDE BACK TO THE PAST

There have been so many changes in this first residential National Historic Landmark in Los Angeles. Let's take a ride back to the past.

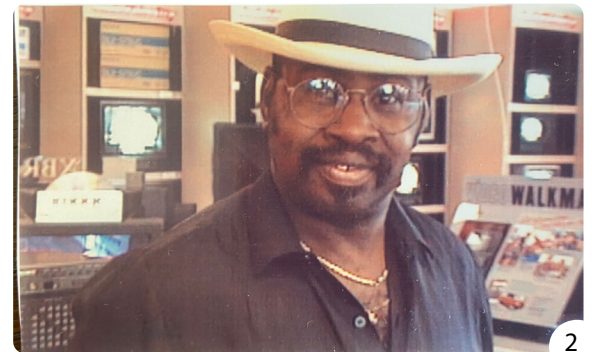
When I started, all maintenance and construction work was done in-house. Security was in-house, and they were very strict. If you didn't live here, you would be escorted off the property without any hesitation. Landscaping was in-house, painting was in-house, roofing, and even interior plumbing repairs (except for 20-ft pipe sections).

When the board decided to use outside vendors, the manager and I interviewed the various companies competing to find the expertise we were looking for. Companies we used included Murphy Plumbing, R.W. Stein (exterior painting), and Andersen Construction (carpentry repair). I was involved in lots of projects the board authorized, including interior infrastructure repairs such as the first water line repair, and two and four-inch interior waste line repairs inside units.

Replacement of the water lines to the buildings was another project I was involved in. Up until then, when a unit's water had to be shut off for a repair, the whole court's water had to be shut down! The Loop Project made it possible to isolate a building when water is shut off without disturbing other buildings.

And when the board decided to upgrade the phone system with new wire, I worked alongside PacBell with the then-new technology to let homeowners have two lines. And then I worked alongside Continental Cable, now owned by Spectrum.

My goal was to complete the exterior sewer project before retiring, but since COVID-19 has forced so many restrictions, I decided this would be the time for me to retire. ... Continued on Page 4



#s 1 and 2: Harold in the 1980's

3: Harold coaching basketball at Rancho LaCienega Park. He also coached girls' track and field. One of his athletes, Chewekii Knighting, qualified for the Olympics track trials in 1988.

HAROLD GRAVES' LETTER ... Continued from Page 3

I want to publicly acknowledge my family for putting up with me through all this time. I have been wearing a pager and been on-call 24/7 for almost 43 years.

Without the residents, there would be no “me” here. I have met so many kind and wonderful residents in my time at VG. I’ve known grandparents, children, and their grandchildren. Now, as I go through the Green on the cart, the children say, “Hello, Harold.” I thank them and their parents who taught their children who I am and the meaning of respect.

I thank all the boards of directors who were elected to govern and the many managers hired to operate this first residential property in Los Angeles to be designated as a National Historical Monument. **Since my hiring as a supervisor working with the painters, I have served under 32 different managers! One year there were six different managers.**

I would also like to acknowledge my co-workers who helped me shine with their expertise in many areas. They are the backbone, and I am especially thankful to these loyal and dedicated men for handling the on-call service.

MY BOSS

I close with a special thank-you to a special person in my life, Ms. Sherri Giles. For 20 years, I’ve watched her develop into a superior operations manager. We have had our ups and downs behind closed doors but always found a solution to our disagreements. Ms. Giles is constantly educating herself on the new laws and takes the time to discuss new concerns with the staff. After 32 managers, I know she has all the skills of a professional leader in managing this historical landmark... And she has never missed the opportunity upon leaving for the weekend to text me: “Have a good weekend, H.” with a happy face.

I have enjoyed the ride. Peace and blessings. Thank you.

Harold L. Graves ☐



- #4: On Hallowe'en in the 1990's, Harold drove kids on hay rides through the Green.
#5: Harold with two former managers and the assistant manager (in center).
#6 and 7: In the 1990's, Harold formed a singing group, “The Gents,” who performed for happy residents at VGOA parties and dances. He sang bass.
#8: 2020 – Harold in his cart.

Don't Miss Out on This Year's Election

By Jordan Deglise-Moore, Court 6

The election is fast approaching in unprecedented times. Here are some tips to make sure you are registered and that your vote counts.

#1: YOU CAN'T VOTE IF YOU'RE NOT REGISTERED. L.A. County mail registrations must be postmarked by October 19; the online deadline is October 20th. www.vote.org is an excellent resource for registering or double-checking your registration. Don't delay.

#2: ALL CALIFORNIA REGISTERED VOTERS WILL RECEIVE A BALLOT IN THE MAIL. Vote as soon as you receive it and don't wait to turn it in. The Postal Service has warned states that it may not be able to meet their deadlines for delivering last-minute mail-in ballots.

Alternatively, you can return your ballot in person to the nearest Vote Center. According to the County website www.lavote.net, the Registrar will announce Vote Centers in late September or early October. Bring it yourself or give it to a volunteer ballot collector.

#3 However you vote, you can track your ballot here: www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ballot-status/wheres-my-ballot/ And BTW, polling places will need younger volunteers this year, due to the pandemic that is keeping many seniors from their usual volunteering. L.A. County allows high school students to be polling place volunteers, and they can do it with less risk to their health.

Voting shouldn't be this challenging - but important things, like maintaining a democracy - always are... ☐



Village Green Zoom History Tour

Cultural Affairs Committee

On a hot August Sunday, USC professor and former Greenie resident Liz Falletta walked the Green and - courtesy of Avelene Schodorf - gave about 30 interested residents a Zoom history tour of the vision, development, construction, and modifications of the Green to the present day. Liz answered a barrage of questions, including why the Green was designed to have hundreds of benches sprinkled around the property but only 4 were approved, and why the odd addresses are on Obama and the even ones on Coliseum. She also gave an overview of the changing racial makeup of residents over the years. Cultural Affairs thanks all who attended. Feedback and ideas for future events can be emailed to www.vgculturalaffairs@gmail.com ☐

July 25, 2020: A Journey Begins

Communications Committee

The July 25 "Conversation about Diversity, Race and the VG Community" revealed that many Black and Latino residents have been made to feel unwanted here, snubbed, and even targeted by white neighbors as "outsiders" for nothing more than their appearance. One white participant shared, "I've been here 43 years and didn't know this." Even the event organizers were surprised by the breadth and depth of problems and solutions participants shared.

No one wants to hurt other people's feelings. How can we learn more about racism? Who can we talk with, what can we read or watch, what events can we have at Village Green to get to know and understand our neighbors better? Will you help? What's the difference between not being a racist and being an anti-racist? How can we make life at Village Green even better for all of us by tackling racism here?

Our July 25 event facilitator, John Henderson, opened the event by saying, "The purpose of this conversation is to create a space for ALL of us to enter because ending institutional racism requires ALL of us to actively participate." We want everyone's help and input as we move forward on the journey. The "comcom" meets on the second Tuesday of every month. To join in on Zoom, go to the website www.villagegreenla.net and follow the directions.

And contact us at vgcomcom@villagegreenla.net with questions and suggestions. ☐

PEOPLE OF THE GREEN



GAILYN SAROYAN REMEMBERED *By Daniel Millner, Court 8*

Court 8 resident Gailyn Saroyan passed away on Thursday, August 6. Gailyn was one of the sweetest, kindest, and most insightful people I've ever met, warm and generous with a great laugh. She was an artist, had several shows throughout Southern California and used her keen aesthetic eye to make our collective home more welcoming.

At Village Green, she was an early advocate of historic preservation and was instrumental in several initiatives that focused community efforts in that direction. Her contributions here were many, but perhaps her most visible and long-lasting was steering exterior paint colors away from beige to the current color palette we all enjoy today. She also gave many lectures on the history and importance of Village Green. She is survived by her husband Aram and three children, and many who adored her. □

VILLAGE GREEN: '...an inspired piece of urban design ...'

*When Village Green celebrated its 75th, Gailyn narrated a slide show illuminating the historic import of its architectural design and impact on residents' lifestyles. The excerpts below are from her talk and were printed in the January 2016 **Highlights**:*

Village Green's design was grounded in the Garden City architectural movement, which built moderately-priced urban housing that fostered community and connection with the outdoors. It was designed under the leadership of Reginald Johnson, the most distinguished architect ever to design a Garden City in the United States. Early brochures touted the property as a new kind of "Village in the City" that would "Tame the Car," where residents would feel like they were "Living at the Country Club."

Our consulting architect, Clarence S. Stein, was the most distinguished urban planner of the 20th century and an American champion of Garden City principles adapted for the motor age. Stein said that Village Green was the most complete and most characteristic expression of his ideas ever built. What makes Village Green so architecturally significant? In 1998, Pulitzer-prize winning architectural critic Allan Temko characterized its graceful unity of design like this: "Village Green is one of the great monuments of environmental humanism in the United States...it's an inspired piece of urban design...a masterpiece in its grand design and the refinement of its nuances."

In 1970, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) launched its prestigious 25 Year Award, to be given to just one piece of architecture in the nation per year. The first recipient was New York's Rockefeller Center. In 1973, the winner was Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West. In 1972, the award went to Baldwin Hills Village, i.e., Village Green! And later, the AIA also chose Village Green as one of the top 100 architectural achievements in American history." □

SAFETY COMMITTEE NEWS

Foot Beats

Tue, 9/1, 9:30 am - Meet at office, walk VG east area.

Thu, 9/10, 7:30 pm - Meet at Court 3 entrance, walk VG central area.

Tue, 9/15, 9:30 am - Meet at Court 6 entrance, walk VG west area.

Wed, 9/23, 7:30 pm - Meet at Court 5 entrance, walk VG east area.

Wed, 9/30, 9:30 am - Meet at office, walk VG central area. □

Light Up The Green!

For your safety on your porch and patio and to improve lighting in common areas, the VGOA has available Dusk-to-Dawn LED Light Bulbs. Fill out a paper or electronic work order. Maintenance staff will install the bulbs.

Do your part to keep your community well-lit and safe!

www.villagegreenla.net/maintenance-work-order □