

THE VALLEY VILLAGER

VALLEY VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



VOL. 25 NUMBER 1 January 2015 P.O. BOX 4916, VALLEY VILLAGE, CA 91617

2015/2016 Board Elections

Election of Officers and Board of Valley Village Homeowners Association is held every two years. The next election will be at the January 21, 2015 membership meeting. With several of our board members retiring, the nominating committee did extensive outreach and found many energetic and qualified candidates.

Every candidate said that Valley Village is a great place to live and they want to see the work of the Valley Village Homeowners Association continue and grow.

The following are the candidates for the Board:

President: **Paul Hatfield**
Vice President: **Ken Hearn**
Secretary: **Ellen Wilhelm**
Treasurer: **Ronald Meyer**

Boardmembers at Large (5):

Steve Ajalat	Dorothy Apple
Lynn Haller Hearn	Dios Lorenzo
Gil Shorr	Marc Woersching
Dustin Zahn	

Each candidate may make a short statement at the January 21st meeting and nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

Past Presidents, **Alan Brody, Peter Sanchez, Lori Dinkin, Tom Paterson**, are automatically non-voting members of the board.

If you wish to run, please contact Peter Sanchez before January 19, 2015 to be included on the written ballot. Call 818-506-5158.

Candidates must be willing to serve, be a home or condo owner and be paid up members of Valley Village Homeowners Association. This is a two-year term. The election is by paper ballot. The results should be available at the close of the meeting.

See the back page for additional Election and Membership Meeting information.

Manny's Beat

Friends & Neighbors:

I would like to extend a sincere Thank You to all the North Hollywood officers/ personnel, and the Valley Village Community for your hard work and continued commitment. Our partnership has been an integral part of crime reduction -- 2014 was a successful year for Valley Village! We ended the year with an overall crime reduction of twenty-three percent. This truly was a record year for our area.

As always, I am counting on continued support from members of the Valley Village community for another successful year. You are the eyes and ears of our neighborhoods, and we rely upon you to report suspicious activity! Additionally, your involvement in Neighborhood Watch, Business Watch, and Apartment Watch groups has never been more essential. These efforts, in which the community and police work together, are already having a great impact on crime, and they'll continue to impact our community in positive ways as we move forward. Thank you for your contribution to our community. Your efforts have continued to make Valley Village a safe place to live!

Sincerely, Manny Arreygue
Senior Lead Officer for the
Valley Village Community
818-634-0829



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Greening of Valley Village

Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV) in partnership with Councilmember Paul Krekorian, the Department of Public Works and Bureau of Sanitation has added over 130 trees in Valley Village. The trees are located along the entire length of Laurel Canyon Boulevard, at the intersection of Whitsett and Magnolia, and on Riverside Drive. As they grow, these trees will enhance the visual aesthetic and air quality of our community. The trees were planted in November by members of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps.

To ensure that all of the trees thrive and grow, they must be regularly watered for the next twelve months. Many businesses and residents have volunteered to help water the trees each week for the next year, allowing them to fully root and stand on their own. NCVV provides each stakeholder who volunteers to help with a 5-gallon bucket and watering instructions. There are still trees available for "adoption." If you would like to help, call NCVV at 818-759-8204 today and volunteer to water a tree.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Publisher: Peter Sanchez
 Sr. Editor: Breice Reiner
 Editors: Lisa Miller
 Gil Shorr
 Proofreader: Stuart Simen
 Contributors: Manny Arreygue
 Bob Belz Tony Braswell
 Alan Brody Cathy Flynn
 Ginny Hatfield Suzanne Lewis
 Marc Woersching

Discussion Group

Faith Presbyterian Church will be hosting a new discussion group starting February 2015 called *Great Decisions*. The program, on world affairs, provides the local community with an opportunity to learn about issues of global importance in an engaging and interactive format. Meetings will be once a month on the fourth Tuesday from 3:00 to 4:30pm. For more information: Ginny Hatfield at 818-970-4577.

A Letter from the President

For my family, Thanksgiving is a multicultural event. It is the coming together of many families and generations from many countries. Through our son Andrew's marriage our extended relatives are now vast in number. It is traditional foods prepared in a different way, representing many other parts of the world. The celebration lasts long; for many this is an adopted festival and that makes it a greater joy. As with any celebration the conversation is part of the delicacy.

Larry Mantle of KPCC asked listeners that day what they would talk about around the holiday table. Would the violence and confusion about Ferguson, Missouri be one of the topics? Around our table we talked about democracy. What troubled my adopted cousins was why, in such a great democracy, so few people voted. It was as if I was expected to know since I was born here. I could give no reason, and that by itself was disturbing. Some of the countries my families come from had no voting rights or they were limited by restrictions. Where they come from voting may not even be possible or outcomes are decided before the vote. But here, where voting is a right, a privilege, an honor and necessary to keep our free process alive, we won't drive even a short distance to do it. This is our most important and viable opportunity to create change. Democracy is a form of government in which eligible citizens may participate equally, directly by voting or running for office themselves. In the last 40 years little over 50% of those eligible to vote voted in a presidential election. Far fewer vote in local elections.

Again as in past *Villager* articles, I beg you to vote and participate in our upcoming elections. A new board will be elected and everyone's vote counts. If you look at the statistics your vote really counts for far more than just one.

Alan Brody, President

The Neighborhood Justice Program

To further enhance community involvement, Mike Feuer, City Attorney, is rolling out a program that will engage members of the community in an innovative criminal diversion project. The Neighborhood Justice Program, a so-called pre-filing diversion program, will recruit and train volunteers who are familiar with quality-of-life challenges in their particular geographic area, and link this with a system of services designed to prevent early offenders of petty crimes from re-offending. The City Attorney's office will give the offender the option of coming before a panel of trained volunteers from the area in which the offence occurred instead of going straight to court.

The underlying philosophy of the program is that offenders should take responsibility for their conduct, work to restore what was taken from the individual or the community, and agree to take advantage of the services designed to reduce the likelihood of their recidivism.

The program is designed to divert those petty criminals who might face a court hearing onto a path that leads them to understand the crime they have committed and its consequences and subsequently diverts them out of the justice system.

Volunteers are being sought for this new program. More information can be found at: atty.lacity.org/community/neighborhood_justice_program.

Judge Invalidates 2002 Billboard Ban

On October 23, 2014, Superior Court Judge Luis Lavin issued an alarming decision to strike down the City's 2002 ban on the construction of new billboards, a ban that had taken decades of political struggle against the billboard companies and their political supporters to enact. The judge based his decision on an unusual reading of the free speech protections in the California Constitution, that the long-standing distinction between on-site business identification signs and off-site signs (billboards) is invalid and that business identification signs and billboards have to be treated the same. Thus, because business identification signs are essential for businesses and are allowed by the City, billboards must be permitted as well. Otherwise, according to the judge, there is a violation of free speech. The judge's decision to strike down the distinction between on-site and off-site signs is contrary to decades of settled law, at least at the Federal level. The Supreme Court in its 1981 decision *Metromedia vs. San Diego* upheld the on-site/off-site distinction.

City Attorney Mike Feuer has already appealed this case and a stay has been issued by the Appeals Court. This will prevent the issuance of building permits for new signs, including digital billboards that have provoked strong protests from impacted communities. The City should vigorously defend the billboard ban ordinance against this dubious decision. The Appeals Court should be asked to uphold the on-site/off-site distinction. If necessary this case should be appealed all the way to the Supreme Court. There should not be a settlement with the billboard companies. There were previous bad settlements agreed to by the City Council, in 2006 and 2007, that allowed the billboard companies to introduce digital billboards into the City and to erect them along the city's commercial streets, which infuriated nearby homeowners due to their bright lights. There should be no capitulation this time.

High Speed Coming to The Valley

High-speed rail is coming to California, and one of the sections, named the Palmdale to Burbank (P-B) Project, will terminate right next door, at the Burbank Airport. Under the auspices of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, and with 56 percent of federal funding, route options using already established criteria are being weighed and public comment sought.

At a public roll-out of the plans in Burbank in early December, not only were the options clearly defined and explained by video and voice, but the advantages of rail travel over other forms of travel were dramatically demonstrated, using independent studies and charts from successful projects already in operation. Also foreseen as benefits, the creation of jobs and the revitalization of both the hub cities and those along the final route.

When finished many years from now, the entire system will extend 800 miles, from Sacramento to San Diego, with a possible 24 stations along the route. The next draft of the P-B Project plan is expected in late 2015 and will provide many opportunities for public input. In the meantime, you can learn more about this exciting look into the future at www.hsr.ca.gov and Palmdale_burbank@hsr.ca.gov.

Colfax News

THE COLFAX WORLD FAIR

The Colfax World Fair takes place on Saturday, May 16, 12 noon to 7pm. Although it's still over four months away, dozens of parents are already planning the event, which is the biggest annual fundraiser for Colfax Charter Elementary School, attracting an estimated 8,000 guests.

Businesses and individuals that would like to sponsor the event should contact Abbe Murray-Cote at abbem@me.com or 818-209-6060. To donate a Silent Auction item, contact Lynn Gruzen at lynngruzen@yahoo.com or 310-408-3333.

Colfax families are eager to support the businesses that support their school. Every dollar raised goes to help fund programs at this award-winning school.

Publisher's Note: The Valley Village Homeowners Association sponsors and staffs a booth at the fair every year. If you can volunteer one hour on May 16th, we could use your help! Call 818-506-5158.

PARENT ED SERIES

Colfax School continues its Parent Education Series on Wednesday, March 25th at 6:30pm when Gelson's registered dietitian Jessica Siegel, MPH, RD talks about *Food, Eating and Kids*. The event is free and no RSVP is necessary. Free childcare is provided for Colfax families, or \$5 for non-Colfax families.

VVHA Financial Report

1/1/2014 to 12/31/2014

OPENING BALANCE	\$21,452.80
Member dues	+\$8,995.00
Communication Expense	-\$3,957.57
Events Expense	-\$3,647.82
Administrative Expense	-\$1,476.62
YEAR-END BALANCE	\$21,365.79

Finally, A Solution to Mansionization

Finally, there appears to be a solution on the horizon that will protect communities in Los Angeles from mansionization, the construction of large, boxy, two-story single-family homes that are out-of-scale with and loom over older, often one-story, neighboring houses.

In response to the protests from numerous communities about the inadequacies of the Citywide Mansionization Ordinance, on November 4, 2014, the City Council approved a multi-part motion directing the Planning Department to prepare an interim control ordinance (ICO) to temporarily limit the floor area of new single-family homes in 14 neighborhoods, including Valley Village. The limits in the ICO for Valley Village are to be the same as those in the Residential Floor Area District (RFA) for Studio City. During the 18 months that the ICO is in place, the Planning Department is to prepare amendments to the Citywide Mansionization Ordinance to: (1) lower the floor area ratio limits for the single-family home zones that are still too high, (2) scale back or eliminate the density bonuses intended to reduce the boxy look of many large, new homes, (3) scale back or eliminate the exemptions from the floor area limits in the Citywide Ordinance for garages, attached porches/patios, breezeways and double-height entryways that are contributing to new houses that are still out-of-scale with their neighbors, and (4) repeal the density bonus for green energy and water conservation devices. During the 18 months, the Planning Department is also to prepare new RFAs for nine neighborhoods, including Valley Village. The RFA for Valley Village will be an expansion of the Studio City RFA to include Valley Village. The Planning Department is also to prepare new Historic Preservation Overlay Zones for five other neighborhoods.

In 2008 the response of the City Council to this emerging problem was to pass the Citywide Mansionization Ordinance which established lower limits for the amount of floor area relative to lot size but also had density incentives that allowed the floor area to increase by 20% for houses having facades with varying setbacks or second stories with fewer square feet than the first story to avoid the boxy look. However, the Citywide Mansionization Ordinance turned out to be ineffective because the lower limits on floor area were still set too high. For properties zoned R1 the floor area ratio (FAR) limit is one half square foot of floor area for every foot of land area, resulting in a 3,000 square foot house on a 6,000 square foot lot, which is too large. An additional 600 square feet above 3,000 square feet can be built if the density incentives to reduce the boxy look are utilized. The floor area limits and the density bonuses would have allowed many of the existing large homes to be built anyway. In Valley Village, a survey done in 2008 determined that, under the Citywide Mansionization Ordinance, 44% of the existing 66 over-sized houses could have been built and 88% could have been built if the incentives in the Ordinance are utilized. The Ordinance also has a density

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The 4th Light Up Valley Village

Valley Village Homeowners Association and Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV) kicked off the 4th Annual "Light Up Valley Village" (LUVV) on Saturday, December 6th.

Santa Claus officially opened the Holiday season arriving on a hook and ladder truck from local Fire Station 60. He was accompanied by our City Attorney Mike Feuer, Neighborhood Prosecutor Tamar Galatzan and LAPD SLO Manny Arreygue as they welcomed the crowd that was gathered at the Bank of America building at Magnolia and Laurel Canyon.

The festivities also were in full swing at the intersection of Magnolia and Whitsett where local merchants also hosted Santa with a live band. Strolling carolers, hot chocolate, cookies and the holiday spirit all added to the festivities.

Chris Hauser at Carter Sexton Artist Materials and Mike Perrin at Valley Photo Service served as the LUVV Business Co-Chairs.

This annual event is a way to showcase local businesses to the community. Decorated and brightly lit storefronts welcomed participants with light refreshments, snacks and special holiday shopping deals. LUVV served to show the great variety of retailers and businesses that make Valley Village so special.

As a new addition this year, NCVV arranged for a free shuttle to transport participants between the Laurel Canyon intersection and the intersection at Magnolia and Whitsett. Also, a record number of non-perishable food items were collected for the 7th annual NCVV Holiday Food Drive during the month of December at Marie et Cie, Valley Photo Service and at Light Up Valley Village, benefiting families in our community.

Mansionization

(Continued from page 4)

incentive for green energy and water conservation features that is unrelated to controlling mansionization and is no longer needed due to energy and water conservation measures added to other sections of the City Code.

It appears that, finally after over ten years of communities protesting against mansionization, the City will get it right and enact regulations that will actually solve this problem. While representative democracy is imperfect and there are often special interests that resist change, it should not have taken this long and required such an effort from the impacted communities to bring about an end to mansionization.

Elected Officials

City Councilmember

District 2

Paul Krekorian

V.V. Deputy: Nikki Ezhari
Land Use: Karo Torossian
818-755-7676

LA County Supervisor

District 3

Sheila Kuehl

818-901-3831

State Assembly Representative

District 46

Adrin Nazarian

Deputy: Steven Butcher
818-376-4246

State Senator

District 18

Robert Hertzberg

818-901-5588

The Villager Advocate

Your Voice in the Halls of Influence

Standing Water Danger Abated - City Hall Responds Quickly to VVHA

VV Homeowner asks:

The Village Advocate recently received a query from a VVHA member, regarding a longstanding problem in her area of Valley Village: standing water. Approximately a dozen children live in the affected area, and cannot go to school or play outside without close exposure to the problem.

The Villager Advocate answers:

A quick visit to the Health Department website supports concerns that standing water provides a hospitable breeding ground for insects, some of which are vectors for infection with serious insect-borne diseases (West Nile, etc.). The VVHA Village Advocate team paid a visit to the affected streets, photographing blocks of standing water near homes where about a dozen children live and play. The Advocate sent a letter and packet of photos to the office of the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles. Within a few days, the Mayor’s office provided a response, promising to re-pave and adjust the street grade to eliminate the problem.

VV Homeowner wrote us:

Wow!!! ... I just got a letter from City of LA Eric Garcetti's office. It's a notice of street work. Ben Ave from Albers to Chandler. Starting Dec. 1 for possibly 4 weeks. Excellent. And thank you for your advocacy.

The Villager Advocates:

We’ll be watching to see if this water problem has been solved.

Questions? Problems?? Issues???

Contact The Villager Advocate, at editor@LMillerConsulting.com

An Advocate Follow Up: In our last issue, a VVHA member asked, “Why has my disabled mother been unable to get the City to paint a blue curb in front of her home?”

According to a very recent 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling (*Fortyone v. City of Lomita*, 12-56280), the federal law commonly known as the Americans with Disabilities Act requires local governments to provide handicapped-accessible on-street parking.

The Appellate Court stated that “...Title II requires public entities to maintain accessible public sidewalks, notwithstanding the fact that no implementing regulations specifically addressed sidewalks.” The Court relied on another 9th Circuit case, from 2002, *Barden v. City of Sacramento* (where the court cited an earlier case in holding that local governments must maintain accessible sidewalks because “maintaining public sidewalks is a normal function of a city and ‘without a doubt something that the City does.’”)

This bodes well for Valley Village’s handicapped residents, some of whom have been suffering without reasonable access to blue-curb handicapped parking for far too long.

The City has stated that it had initially resisted painting blue curbs because it asserted that sidewalk ramps were not available to support them. Now, it seems, the City’s counsel should consider *Fortyone* and *Barden*, and re-think its stance that sidewalk issues are standing in the way of painting blue curbs. According to the 9th Circuit, the City must maintain handicapped-friendly sidewalks, which is the key that should unblock the blue-curb embargo.

The Village Advocate brought all of the above to the attention of our City Councilmember, Paul Krekorian, with a plea that the Councilman take up the issue and push it forward on behalf of all handicapped Valley Village denizens.

Homeowners Association Membership Meeting

Wednesday, January 21, 2015 - 7:00pm
Colfax School Auditorium
11724 Addison Street
Valley Village

Officers & Board Election

Election to begin at 7pm

Also at the Meeting:

- >Senior Lead Officer, Manny Arreygue will give an update on Neighborhood Watch and police department activities.
- >Open Panel Discussion. Meet & greet the newly elected boardmembers & officers. Discuss the Association's goals. Consider new ideas for Valley Village issues.

Light Refreshments will be served.

**Mark Your
Calendar:**

2015 Membership Meetings will be on Wednesdays
*January 21 * April 15 * July 15 * October 21*
2015 Board of Directors Meetings will be on Mondays
*February 2 * April 6 * June 1 * August 3 * October 5*

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Neighbors Working Together To Improve The Quality Of Life