

# OVERVIEW

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE No. 11

SPRING 1994

## Tree Planting Day Revealed Our Best And Worst

by Carol Mason

Something went terribly wrong and wonderfully right on Tree Planting Day on March 12. It wasn't the weather that went wrong—it was a warm, clear Saturday morning. Nor was it the delicious food, the hot coffee and cold drinks, the fledgling trees or the tight organization. The problem was people—over 80 adults who had called to sign up just days before the event never showed up. Breaking commitments is all too common these days, but when 80 adults all break their commitment to an event like this, it has an effect on everyone else involved.

When the Los Angeles Conservation Corps trucks rolled up to the corner of Prospect and Talmadge at 8:30 am with 40 trees and lots of shovels, they were met mainly by children. Dozens of Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts and their stalwart leaders from four troupes rose cheerfully to the task. The kids truly carried the day, and unfortunately, the brunt of the hard work of digging, shoveling, lifting and planting.

See TREES, page 9

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Lyric Avenue, in 1925, looking east, over Hyperion Avenue. First cross-street is Griffith Park Bl.

## THREE SCORE AND FOURTEEN YEARS AGO...

That's when baby Clarabelle Westberg and her six year older sister Bernice moved to the house they still share, "I remember Franklin out here was a dirt street when we built in 1920...My folks got a big assessment when they paved it [about 1922]. They were buying the house and they got all these bills and then they got this big assessment and they had to struggle with that."

Bernice Westberg Fletcher also remembers that Franklin Avenue stopped before it got to what we now call the Franklin Hills. "You couldn't go up Franklin. There was no street there. We had an Easter egg hunt there when I first moved here...just east of what's Talmadge, there wasn't any Talmadge there either. And when it was rainy the first couple of years there would be a pond and we'd catch polliwogs and we had a little raft there one time."

The neat white bungalow built by their father, an electrician who kept the Red Cars running on the Pacific Electric Railway, has fared well over the last 74 years according to Clarabelle, "it hasn't fallen down yet to earthquakes or termites, no, it's in pretty good shape." Bernice adds, "we talk about moving but then we think we've got too much stuff."

Included in that "stuff" are the accompanying photos. After 69 years Clarabelle no longer remembers exactly where she was standing when the photograph above was taken. But she does recall, "we were just hiking

See SISTERS, p. 6

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Though many have been the times I've felt life is an isolated endeavor – we are actually inseparable, with my actions affecting you, yours affecting me and with consequences scarcely imaginable by either party.

Recently, we acquired a neighbor, young and female, who lives a very quiet life during the week in her large house immediately adjacent to and above our property. We have not had the opportunity to meet her (and would welcome the chance), yet she has affected our lives and her other neighbors lives in ways she clearly cannot conceive.

I'm talking parties here...major PARTYING! Not your ordinary party, which we've been known to do with relish, but parties that seem to start somewhere else earlier in the evening and then migrate, full-blown, with blow-out-the-windows rock music and full-voice multiple person conversations outside. All this starting at 2:30 a.m. and going into the wee hours.

Now I don't want to seem like a curmudgeon and I didn't stand out in my back yard and try to get their attention, nor did I call the cops, so I suppose I deserve blame for not confronting them. But summer is on its way. Are we going to have to sleep with all our windows closed so she and her friends can do their thing? What happened to the concept of "consideration for others?" Clearly it's not just her – her friends are standing on her balcony or in her yard laughing and yelling at 3:00 a.m. Don't we all have to abide by some cultural rules here? "Can't we all get along?"

As Rule 10 of Ann Landers' "10 Commandments of Neighborliness" states: "Thou shalt not hold wild parties or orgies that lasteth until the wee hours unless thou inviteth thy neighbors too.

— DON WALDROP

Dear friends:

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you for the many kindnesses shown me during my recent illness. The many trips to the doctors, to therapy, to the grocery store and to those expensive pharmacies have made my life more tolerable and were done with such good humor and patience.

I think it is indicative of what my activities have meant with the Association and Neighborhood Watch. Although I have wonderful, good, close neighbors, no other way would I have had such a network of willing friends to befriend me. It is what our associations are all about. Expanding our relationships with each other to make friends, to know our neighbors, and to help in times of need.

I thank you all from the bottom of my heart and hope to once more be a part of it all in the not-too-distant future.

VI WEBER

*Ed. note: Vi Weber, FHRA Board Member and Disaster Preparedness Chair, suffered a stroke in February and is recovering at her home.*

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The Franklin Hills OVERVIEW is published as often as possible. We invite your comments on matters relating to articles and the community and, space permitting, we will publish letters mailed to *Editor, OVERVIEW, Box 29122, Los Angeles, CA 90027*

# EARTHQUAKE

WE MUST BE ABLE TO CARE FOR OURSELVES

## Disaster Preparedness Response Training

Conducted by the Los Angeles Fire Department - Free

**Classes begin Wednesday, June 29,**

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Location: L.I.L.A. (French-American School) Library, 4155 Russell Avenue

Sign up TODAY - Registration limited to 60 people

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### OPINIONS

## Dreaming of Community

by Sandra Harper

For those of us who worked hard on the FHRA March 12 Tree Planting Day, the low turnout of volunteers from Franklin Hills was a huge disappointment. We were delighted that 120 volunteers actually made the phone call to register but, inexplicably, less than 30 showed up. We had to depend on the crew of 50 workers from the Los Angeles Conservation Corps to get the trees into ground that was rock hard from years under cement or without water.

Apart from the LACC and in the absence of more adults, the difficult work of the day fell mainly to children – yes, children. Four Boy Scout and Cub Scout troops from areas outside Franklin Hills lined up at 8:30 a.m. sharp to help us beautify our streets. The few adults present had a chance to show these kids that some of us love and care about our homes and are interested in creating a more beautiful world for them.

We achieved our goal that day: we planted 40 new Cinnamon Camphor trees, and we know they will grow to be very beautiful indeed. Twenty years from now, the barren cementscape of Prospect Avenue will look much like Hillhurst Avenue north of Los Feliz Boulevard. The same camphor trees planted there 50 years ago now give that street its luxurious character, charm and grace. The neighbors on Hillhurst Avenue 50 years ago were thinking of the future, and now a new generation is reaping the rewards. That is what some of us want for Franklin Hills, but we simply cannot do it alone. We need more folks to get involved in building our neighborhood into a friendly, lovely place to live. There is actually a powerful urgency to this need these days: the dramatic increase in gang encroachment, graffiti and crime is unmistakable and the only way to stop it is to band together.

I know many of you have a hard time imagining how planting a tree can fight crime. In the short run, you're right, there's not much correlation. But it's exactly those small acts of coming together, meeting your neighbors, talking with them and caring not just about your street, but your neighbors two or three blocks away – that's what creates a united community. Our Tree Planting Day wasn't just about planting trees. It was also about nurturing this sense of community, and in that goal we failed miserably.

So what went wrong? Only those 80+ people who registered and didn't show up know what turned their good intentions to abandonment. When I asked people in Franklin Hills to sign up, some said things like, "I don't like getting my hands dirty," or "I'm not strong enough," and skittered away. But we needed people to organize food donations, carry water to thirsty workers or put bandaids on a little Cub Scout's blisters. Incredibly, only a handful of people who live on the streets to be planted came out to help. What folks may not realize is just how much fun it is to come out for such an event – there's usually plenty of great food and camaraderie – and how really good it feels to do something meaningful outside our insular little lives.

I hear two statements all the time: "L.A. has no sense of community," and "I'm too busy to get to neighborhood functions." We all have busy lives, but there will always be something profoundly lonely about your life if you stay isolated from your neighbors. To have a community, to keep it safe and beautiful, is simple. All it takes is two or three hours on an occasional Saturday to make an enormous difference in the quality of your life and a lot of others, too – especially our children.

# WHAT WE'RE UP TO

respectfully submitted by Bruce  
Carroll Secretary FHRA

Since the winter issue of Overview the FHRA has been busy on several fronts. The big ones, like our very successful post-earthquake meeting, where 24 neighborhood clusters were organized, and the 2nd annual tree planting are reported on elsewhere in this issue. But others deserve at least a little pat on our own backs.

In January, representatives from the FHRA and five other neighborhood associations met to found the Greater Los Feliz Area Coalition. Its aim is to present a powerful united voice to the powers that be on issues of concern to the whole area from Laughlin Park and Los Feliz Oaks on the west to FHRA on the east. Matters such as traffic flow, community police liaison, and issuance of liquor licenses are some of the topics discussed so far. Frank Carber from The Oaks is the coordinator, Bruce Carroll from FHRA is the recorder, and Gail Brewer from Laughlin Park will be the treasurer

when we have a treasury.

Also in January the FHRA appeared at a zoning appeals hearing on the proposed addition to 2127 Lyric. In the last Overview we reported on our serious initial objections to the project's overall dimensions. At the hearing, with plans altered, the FHRA agreed no harm would be done by a slight side yard setback variance. We still believe the plans may be 2 feet over the 36' height limit, but that's a matter for us to keep after the building inspectors to enforce. As we've said before, if you get a notice that a neighboring property is requesting a zoning variance, PLEASE let us know. The hotline number is 664-7247.

In February, the board signed a petition brought by FHRA member Melinda Taylor. She and her neighbors are trying to get Councilman Ferraro and various city agencies to do something (like demolition) about the burned-out derelict of a once drug infested triplex at

1442 Manzanita. The building, which is mostly boarded up, is an attraction to kids from the nearby Thomas Starr King Middle School and should, at the very least, be securely fenced.

In March and April, we discussed the merits of two liquor license applications. One for Pizza Plus, a take-out place at Vermont and Franklin, next to the 7-11, the other at a now defunct cocktail lounge on Hillhurst around the corner from the Vista Theater. As in much of LA, there are already many more liquor licensees in our area than Alcoholic Beverage Control guidelines permit. And we want to be sure that if any new licenses are brought into the area they will be at the kind of establishments that enhance rather than degrade our commercial surroundings.

In April, we planned an exciting annual election meeting for Wednesday May 25th.

## THE FALLACY OF THE HIGHER GOOD -Or, why nothing works anymore-

by Alan Kishbaugh

President, Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations, Inc.

Have you noticed that nothing works anymore? Life seems to be full of problems and nothing gets fixed right either the first time, or at all. Worse still, there's always a reason why "it" can't be done, or the company is not responsible. "Our computer's down," "Our policy doesn't allow refunds," "We cannot be held responsible."

Or, it's because of "poverty, racism, special privilege, a broken home, low self-esteem, class warfare, sexism, ageism, homophobia, a virus or a glitch." Our machines and our sophistication with public relations techniques have taught us how to come up with varied and innovative explanations for why we can't do something we're hired to do, elected to perform, or paid to fix. We've

evolved the most elaborate inventory of rationales for not taking responsibility for our actions . . . or inactions.

We've given the machines a free pass for electronic and mechanical failure. And, it seems we've done the same for government officials—allowed them to adopt a mechanism, a point of view, a principle, a philosophy with which to duck responsibility. This is the unwritten but often evoked concept of 'The Higher Good.'

You won't find it in any manual, or carved on a lintel over a prominent doorway, but it's as operative as property taxes and parking meters.

What it has come to mean is that some areas of government, some laws, some responsibilities are not seen to,

enforced, fulfilled, because someone or some group of someones decides that they are not as important as other areas.

While every department, every arm of government, must set priorities with regard to procedures and expenditures, none of them have the right to arbitrarily decide not to deliver what the people have paid for and are expecting to receive.

This belief system, the concept of 'The Higher Good,' gets substituted for across-the-board performance, what we used to call accountability.

We've let traffic laws go by the boards. A few places get a speed trap now and then, but mostly the unsupervised driving continues to deteriorate, a

Please see FALLACY p. 11

# • community phones

## IMPORTANT COMMUNITY PHONE NUMBERS

### ABC-TELEVISION:

Security: (310) 557-5354.

**CITY ANIMAL REGULATION:** (213) 222-7138

**COUNCILMAN JOHN FERRARO, 4th District:**

Room M-30, City Hall, 200 Spring St., (213) 485-3337

### ENVIRONMENTAL:

Recycling: (800)-CITYSAN

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(213) 481-5800; (800)-722-1122

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### FIRE DEPARTMENT: Emergency 911;

Non-emergency: 485-6235.

### GRAFFITI :

On private property: (213) 253-2687

On public property: (818) 772-7753

### LOS FELIZ PUBLIC LIBRARY: (213) 664-2903.

Hours: Mon-Tues 12:30-8:00; Wed-Thurs 12:30-5:30; Fri-Sat 10:00-5:30.

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## FRANKLIN FOTOS

As you have no doubt noticed, the editor of the Overview has an affinity for photographs taken in the early years of the Franklin Hills, Los Feliz and Silver Lake areas. We are trying to assemble a pictorial history of our district and would like to hear from anyone with such photos. If you grew up here, or if your parents built a house here, or if you inherited some photographs, please give us a call on the Hotline.

We guarantee they will be handled very carefully while we have a copy negative made and the originals will be returned to you in their original condition. Please call us.

## Disaster Preparedness

**FHRA Disaster Preparedness needs to know about the trained professionals living in our area. There is a clear need for doctors, nurses & trained emergency personnel in a disaster. If you are willing to assist in such an event, please contact the Hotline: 664-7247**

## DOES GRAFFITI BUG YOU?

**FHRA NEEDS YOUR HELP** in fighting grafitti in our area. We need someone to organize paint outs and people to work. We provide all materials. Call the Hotline to volunteer. 664-7247

## HELP CAMBODIAN ORPHANS

Volunteers needed for fund raising events for a new, non-profit organization.

For information, contact Laurence Hadja (213) 953-0113. 12 to 6 pm

## Please Patronize "Our" Businesses

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Please support our advertisers by utilizing their services regularly and, by all means, **tell them you saw their ads in the "Overview."**

SISTERS, from p. 1

around with our cousins." Susie and Fred Hammersley were visiting from Salt Lake City in 1925. Clarabelle (left) is standing next to her brother Dwight who now lives in Iowa.

In the photo at right, little Bernice (left) and her older sister Alice (right) are taking care of Helen Griffith, who here looks too little to say "Let's go to my Grandpa's big park and play." Besides, there were lots of adventures to be had even closer to home.

Bernice vividly remembers construction of the Shakespeare Bridge. "That bridge was just about finished and on a dare I walked on the railing a third of the way across before I got scared because then it was clear down just like on the north side. The school wasn't there. Why I didn't fall off I don't know. I was 12 when that happened, almost 13."

They also remember more than 20 years later seeing a daily parade of dump trucks from the Hollywood Freeway excavation filling in the area on the south side of the bridge where the LILA school is now.

But that school isn't the only one built on fill. "Before the Franklin School was built," says Bernice, "I remember when my folks bought the lot they didn't even notice that [the school site] was a dump. That's filled ground. It wasn't a dump for garbage. It was a dump for extra dirt and rock and we played in there a bit...So the school is built on 30 foot piers."

The girls' parents were upset when they finally saw the dump which was right across Franklin from their lot. But they were no doubt pleased when their Clarabelle became one of the inaugural students at the Franklin Avenue school in 1926. "When I think of it, I went to two schools the first day they were built, Franklin and John Marshall. I never went to Thomas Starr King because it was full and John Marshall was empty so they started it with the 7th grade. I was there for 6 years (1931-1937). Can you imagine that? How boring."



But life in the neighborhood wasn't boring. "They made movies up and down Franklin and Hillhurst, you know, old cars and the comedies, because it was so open they used the neighborhood...We had movie people sitting on the front porch while they made movies in the front end of the school ground."

Clarabelle kept a list of movie stars she spotted all around town, from Johnny Weismuller and Lupe Valez in the Broadway Hollywood to Sterling Hayden on a drunken early morning street car ride, "It certainly looked like the cat had dragged him in...nobody paid any attention, but I recognized him." There was one actor she noticed often in the neighborhood. "I don't know if anybody ever remembers Johnny Hines who was a "B" picture person probably...when you go up Franklin there's a big house. I think it's kind of green now, he lived there and he drove by here all the time in some big open convertible. He was nice looking and he did have a name in the movies at that time but not a star."

Both women remember the little red shanty just west of the bridge that gave way to two townhouses in recent times. "We called it the tack house. That belonged to the Haigs. I guess they had a horse." Before that they recall some western star, maybe Tom Mix, had the place. Bernice fondly remembers another landmark that disappeared a very long time ago, "When we first moved here...the block from Commonwealth to Hillhurst [on the north side of Franklin] was a reservoir. It was very big and we used to skate around the side of it. It was an empty reservoir, but there was water in the bottom, you know."

When Bernice married she moved out of the house on Franklin but kept close to her roots. She lived in rather cramped quarters, at 2468 Lyric, right after World War II due to the housing shortage. "I lived in two rooms with my second husband and my two kids...our friends lived above and rented us two rooms." Clarabelle remained in the Franklin Avenue house and took care of her invalid mother and her dad, who died in 1973 at age 91. He'd come to the US from Sweden in 1900 to escape military service. "He just looked at all those grubby soldiers and didn't want to be one." Clarabelle also recalled how her dad saved her from her first radio. "I enjoyed the crystal set and I'd go to bed and listen and my father worked the 3 to 11p.m. shift so when he'd come home he'd come in and here I was all tangled up with the earphones and he'd take them off of me and rescue me."

They can still remember when Hillhurst was called Maubert Street but there have been bigger changes. "Hillhurst was houses and empty lots. It

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wasn't a place where there were stores at all. Only Vermont had stores. There was Canter's dry goods store, Woolworths was north of Hollywood Boulevard on the east side of Vermont at the corner of Kingswell." And groceries came from 1856 Vermont." We went to Doud's Grocery. Their clientele lived above Los Feliz. It was a very nice store at which we had a charge account." They also remember that Samuel Doud kept W.C. Fields at least partially supplied with liquor.

Some things about the '90's irk the sisters: Bernice finds "that some of the new neighbors will be walking two abreast and taking up the sidewalk and I'm walking along and I think, Hey I'm not going to get off the sidewalk and so I just wait." Clarabelle thinks, "people are not so friendly. They don't have time to talk and there are so many foreign languages. I wish people would learn English."

And about the future they both said in near unison "we talk about moving but where do you go?" Clarabelle continues "I feel this neighborhood is a good place to be, we're not in too bad a place." But Bernice chimes in, "you wouldn't want to go walking." After living in the same house for 74 years Clarabelle's words of wisdom should not surprise anyone, "just hang in there."

*(Bernice Fletcher & Clarabelle Westberg were interviewed by Bruce Carroll and Don Waldrop)*

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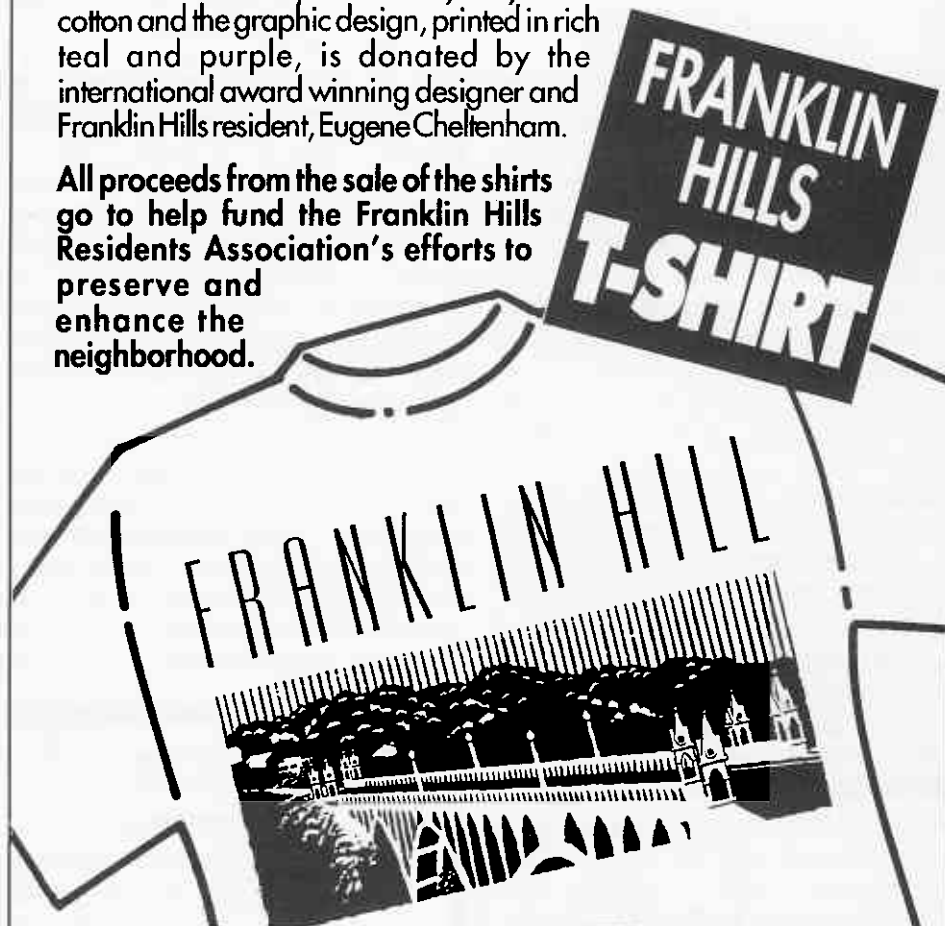
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# A TALE OF TWO LIBRARIES

by  
Bruce Carroll

Our Los Feliz Branch Library has joined the ranks of the homeless. Even before the January quake, the badly-overcrowded, asbestos-afflicted, Hillhurst storefront was in trouble, now the library is waiting for a new temporary home while work on its long delayed permanent home continues to generate more stacks of paper, than stacks for books.

The city was ready to lease the old Post Office building on Hollywood Boulevard before a flurry of faxes from Donna Matson's Save Our Library Coalition got the Board of Library Commissioners to vote their preference for the former Chef Pierre's Market on Hillhurst at Kingswell. But, whether books and tapes will replace broccoli and tomatoes is a matter now up to the City Council.

The General Services Department, Office of Leasing and Mall Management has reportedly recommended that the old Post Office can meet the library's needs and save the city money with a cheaper lease. But, Bill Garcia, deputy to Councilman John Ferraro, says their office still supports the Hillhurst location as the one better able to serve the community.

How long the temporary site will have to serve the community is still hard to determine with much certainty. Leslie Nordby, who honchos the library's branch building projects says. "That about 18 months from now we should be ready for construction." But, the city still has not acquired the land. The report of an outside appraiser on the current value for the property at the southeast corner of Hillhurst and Franklin is due this month. Then, check in hand, the City Attorney can file it with the court. Ms. Nordby does not expect the condemnation process to slow things down any further.

Actual design can begin once architect Barton Phelps, who was selected about five years ago, signs the city's contract. It's been sitting unsigned since last

year. Mr. Phelps has won awards for projects at the DWP and UCLA where he's currently working on a seismic make-over for Royce Hall. His recent work on the Seeds Elementary school at UCLA will be featured in the July issue of Architecture magazine.

As for the Phelps philosophy, "In Los Angeles something snapped right after World War II and a lot of the civic buildings of 50-60s are mundane. We like buildings with what we call civic memory, but that doesn't mean they look like 1935, they look like 1990's, but we try to overlay them with what we call a civic presence...I think it's going to be a great project. We are really looking forward to it and, of course, we've had lots and lots of thoughts about it. It's just until

we find out more of what other people feel about it, it's not fair for me to say."

Soon—within a month after the contract is signed—there will be a meeting where you'll get a chance to be one of those "other people." Ms. Nordby explains, "what we do is ask the community for input on things that they consider important before any design is started, and then we have a second community meeting after the architect puts kind of a schematic to those ideas that came out of the original meeting."

It's a Dickens of a process, but after the design undergoes numerous reviews, we can only hope that Barton Phelps will be able to say of the Los Feliz Library..."It is a far far better thing that I do than I have ever done."

## earthworks

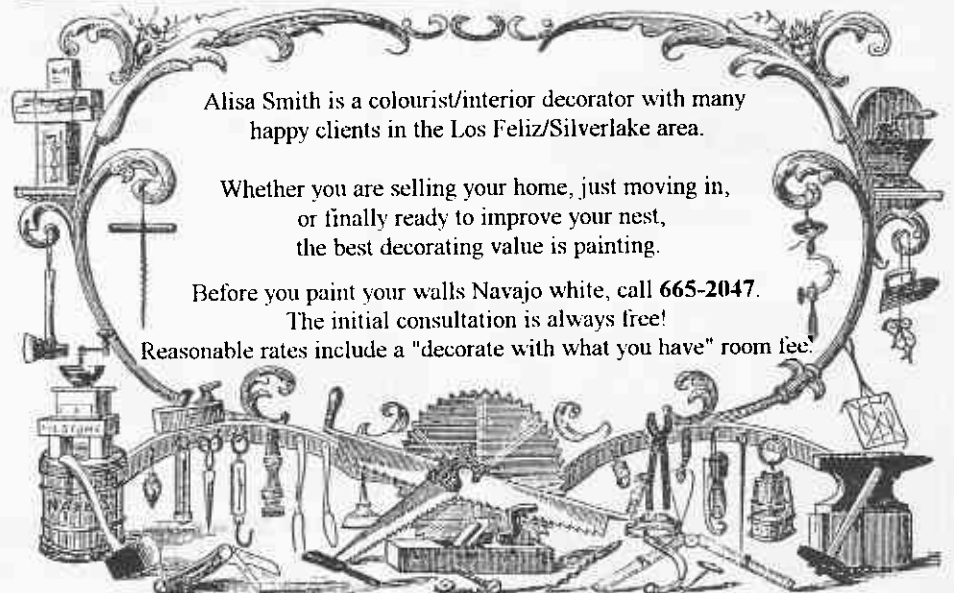
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TREES from p. 1

The spirit and values of the young volunteers shone like bright lights even in the morning sun. Seven-year-old Cub Scout Gerardo Santoso, in full uniform and missing his two front teeth, came because "I wanted to help plant trees for all the people in the city." Gabriel Miranda, 13, from Troup 194 stopped shoveling to explain why he was there: "I feel like I'm making something for the future." His buddy Eduardo Michel said, "I have a heart for L.A. I'm so excited to learn how to plant trees and make things beautiful by working together."

No less impressive were the 50 teenagers employed by the Los Angeles Conservation Corps. In their green helmets and T-shirts, they worked hard to plant the majority of the trees and help the other volunteers with the tougher planting tasks. Rafael Martinez signed up with LACC because he likes trees. "I wanted to help the environment and clean up the city streets." A pretty trio of workers, Wendy Valdez, Veronica Robles and Maria Matias, are all from Highland Park and said they also work for LACC to help the environment as well as "have fun, learn to work with people and be responsible."

Peter Lassen, a Viet Nam veteran and an architect by profession, is LACC's tree planting project manager. He hopped nonchalantly in and out of his wheelchair all morning to show people how to dig and plant. According to Lassen, the tree planting project is based on a grant from the State of California to mitigate the increase in traffic and smog. "My job is to put together the project elements so the original intent of the legislation is achieved, but something higher than that, something more human comes out of it. This is one of the few government plans to actually reach a human level," he explained. "We see neighborhood tree plantings draw people together to do their own work. At the end of the day, they see the difference they can make and realize their power."

To round out the crowd, a hardy contingent from the Los Feliz Improvement Association led by Tony Scarpellino showed their support for sister organization FHRA's event. "We wanted to help out and make both streets sort of an outdoor living space," stated Scarpellino.

Frank and Ruth Drucker have lived on Franklin Avenue for 25 years and can be seen at many FHRA events. Noticing the paucity of Franklin Hills residents among Tree Planting Day volunteers, Frank said grimly "I wish more homeowners on the street would support what's going on here. Some of the trees we planted last spring are dying because no one is watering them." Ruth Drucker looked down the street at the new trees going up at the hands of energetic young people and optimistically reminded us of a line from an old Irish song, "Inch by inch and row by row, that will make the flowers grow."

*The Board of Directors of FHRA would like to heap abundant thanks and profuse compliments on the local restaurants that provided pizza, pasta and pans to feed our hungry tree planters.*

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## MY VIEW

by Bruce Carroll

# CLASSIC COME HOME

Everyday 13 1/2 people call the LAPD to report cars stolen in the Northeast Division, which includes the Franklin Hills. On April 12th I was that half person. Wouldn't any gas blooded Angelino feel like just half a person if their faithful companion of over 22 years just disappeared?

Suddenly my verde mist green 1972 Buick Skylark Custom, the one with the dark green convertible top, had been converted to nothing more than police report #94 11 130 88 and that, I quickly learned, was nothing that anyone cared about. Detective "L" said it well, "The City of Los Angeles has made car theft nothing." Detective "L", who asked me not to use his name because his neighbors "hate cops passionately" and don't know he is one, mentioned in passing that the LAPD "doesn't search for stolen cars," and complained that when they do happen to collar a car thief not much happens. "The problem we're having is the DA's office will not file on these people anymore because of the *three strikes* law. They don't want anyone to have a felony record. When we catch these people now and they don't have a felony record of at least 3-5 pages, they're now referring them to the City Attorney, who lets them go. So these guys are getting out and we are arresting them over and over again. It's a constant battle."

Detective "L" did have a battle strategy. "The only way we are going to stop car theft is as citizens." He calls LoJack and Teletac systems "superb" and suggested installing the type of alarm that disables the ignition when remotely activated, "not just a switch you switch on and off." If that's too pricey, here's a

cheap trick that may help police recover your car even if the VIN number is switched. Write your VIN number on "those labels that rip apart when you try to pull them off, then stick them all over your car. Stick 'em everywhere, because a lot of these thieves don't get every one of them and we may get lucky and find the number." Detective "L" also says having the VIN number etched on your windows works. "A car thief looks at that and goes, 'it's too much trouble to take the windows out of the car' and he'll go to the next car." I didn't do any of those things, but I did have "The Club" on my steering wheel.

While Detective "L" vacationed, I occasionally checked in with Northeast Division detectives. Sev-

eral times I was reassured by Pat that my car was "still stolen." Officer Conrado offered hope. "We find cars that have been gone for a month or two months. A lot of time we just find them parked and abandoned." More precisely, when neighbors call to report them parked and abandoned. Detective Galindo' opinion was "If your car's a classic, that car has probably gone out of state."

With the detectives apparently unable to do much detecting, I decided I might as well try. Detective Galindo suggested places I might look for my car. He mentioned Frogtown, the Rampart area around Alvarado, and the Hollywood area of our division is pretty hot for stolen vehicles. But alas, I found no needles in those haystacks.

Continued next page

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Then I got my cellular phone bill and I called Detective "L" with great anticipation. Three days after the theft the crooks had attempted to make ten calls on my car phone and I have the phone numbers. They ironically included a call to 911. (Perhaps an attempt to confess.) Policy compelled Detective "L" to request I send them the numbers. Honesty compelled him to say "There's not much we can do with them."

So "Detective" Carroll gave it a try. I called the first number in Montebello. A young woman answered and I asked for Richard. "You have a wrong number," was the reply. I tried the numbers in Pico Rivera and La Puente, asking for Harry or Tom, etc. — all with the same response. Although I haven't found the thief, my sleuthing has sure narrowed the field. I now know it wasn't any Tom, Dick or Harry, or George, or Melvin who stole my car.

Lest you worry too much, the car was not stolen in the Franklin Hills, but from the underground "security" garage of a condo very near by...within walking distance, in fact. I look there frequently at the empty space, or listen for a familiar honk in front of my garage, all the while keeping in mind something Pat told me: "Lately we've been recovering a lot of cars down in Mexico, but this is a Buick Skylark. It should have already showed up."

My sentiments exactly, but unlike Lassie, my classy Buick has not yet made her way home.



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FALLACY, continued from page 4

constant reminder of Social Darwinism in action.

Building inspections of illegal units, no-permitted additions, the whole gamut of construction gaffs are spotty and ineffectual. When violations are pointed out and owners cited, the follow up is uneven at best. In the hills we have builders who have been repeatedly cited and never pursued to the end of it. More often than not, violations are never caught.

Why? One can only conclude that some other reason, some 'Higher Good' is usurping the enforcement of compliance with ordinances and codes.

Los Angeles is some \$200 to \$300 million in debt, depending on who's providing the figures—they move around. Yet, the city is owed \$50 million in fees for ambulance services and some \$240 million in overdue parking tickets. What does the city attorney's office have to say about collecting the parking monies? They say it would be too expensive to go after them.

So here's a change of priorities. 'The Higher Good' here appears to be the husbandry of legal monies, and the result is more people learn disrespect for the law. Additionally, this fallacy proves itself on the fiscal ground on which it is fashioned. If we only recapture 10% of the monies owed—and I'm being generous with that amount of wiggle room—that's \$24 million. Does it cost the city attorney's office most of its budget to collect those monies? Is it 'The Higher Good' that's interfering with the enforcement of the law—the one that's on the books?

'The Higher Good' says that MetroRail is king. Is it more important than just about anything? Many behave as though it is. If you look at the legislation that's being crafted in Sacramento to create a CRA-type of tax increment funding around transit districts, you'll see the truth of this. Government has an insatiable appetite for money and it no longer seems to care how it gets it and both parties are equally culpable. But, as they used to say in 19th century English novels, I digress. But not too far.

So, as in the case of Runyon Canyon, local government and MetroRail have said that the park's integrity as open space, a wildlife corridor, can be compromised because 'The Higher Good' (and there's always someone who seems to know what that is, of course) is MetroRail. They've framed an either/or argument, not worthy of Soren Kierkegaard but consistent, at least, with the plethora of 'Higher Good' fallacies.

People in Los Angeles don't want MetroRail or parks, they want **both**. Existing parks must be kept intact, inviolate, especially wild ones, and not subject to the whims of agencies with other agendas. Already we've compromised parks in the system, the most recent being Pershing Square.

And, in the case of Runyon Canyon, alternative routing exists. But if MetroRail is constantly held up as 'The Higher Good' then all manner of crimes and disenfranchisements against the people, the taxpayers, will be visited upon them.

'The Higher Good' philosophy has allowed government to initiate a series of fees for services for the very things we used to get for our tax dollars. Now, with fees, we've taken on another level of taxation (not called that), and more govern

See FALLACY, p. 18

# THEY'VE BEEN WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD

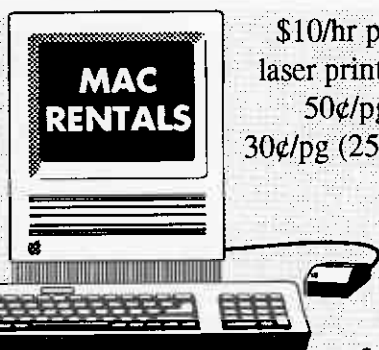
by Bruce Carroll



Exterior of the Vermont-Sunset MetroRail Station (Northeast corner.) Art by Gene Streett.

Despite all the newspaper reports on construction delayed by safety shutdowns and muddy, misaligned tunnels, work on the Vermont-Hollywood Boulevard section of the Red Line subway is making headway. On May 5th, drillers actually saw a light at the end of one of two tunnels they are gouging beneath Vermont Avenue south from Barnsdall Park. The light came from the Wilshire tunnel which, happily, was what they were aiming for. In the other direction, the twin tunnels below Hollywood Boulevard, going west from Barnsdall, are crossing under the Hollywood Freeway and so far haven't disrupted traffic. Officials say the drilling on the Vermont-Hollywood line is a bit more than half way home.

Unfortunately that's probably about where the completed Red Line will leave Franklin Hills area riders. At the April meeting of Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Vermont Citizens Committee, FHRA President Don Waldrop renewed our request for park and ride facilities to enable Franklin Hills residents to utilize the mega-billion dollar



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project. According to Torri Hill-Williams of the MTA, "with stations as planned now there is no parking." Ironically Ms. Hill-Williams also revealed that both the Blue Line to Long Beach, and MetroLink are already "short of parking." And she explained that the no-parking concept of the Red Line dated from fifteen years ago. "At the time it was designed with naivete," primarily just "to replace the buses."

With its old plans apparently more firmly set in bedrock than it's tunnels, the folks at MTA suggested we appeal to the City Council to conjure up some commuter parking at the Sunset-Vermont station. Construction work there is awaiting the demolition of one more building which has been slowed, according to spokeswoman Tricia Murikawa, by a "little bit of an asbestos problem" and utility rerouting concerns. As currently envisioned, (see artist's conception) there will be just one entrance/exit on the northeast corner, with a plaza of shops and open space at ground level. Kaiser may fund a second entrance across the street at its Medical Center. But Fran-

klinites will need good walking shoes.

Despite a continuing water seepage problem in the already open subway tunnels, MTA officials are confident they can contain the Edgemont River. That's the previously unmapped underground stream

whose flow of 432,000 gallons per day, enough to fill one swimming pool per hour, must be pumped out and down the sewers so construction can proceed.

Planners, who were surprised when drillers encountered the river, are counting on the same type of plastic liner that

Continued next page



Interior of the Vermont-Sunset MetroRail Station. Art by Gene Streett.

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# GOT ANY BRIGHT IDEAS?

by Bruce Carroll

If you live in the northern end of the Franklin Hills, you can probably read the Overview while standing in the middle of the street, even on a dark moonless night. While such bizarre conduct is not recommended, it is not even possible for most southern Franklinites. When it comes to street lighting, the northerners are the "haves" and the southerners are the "have-nots" and it's been that way for nearly 70 years.

Many FHRA members have asked what it would take to get better lighting on their streets? The simple answer is lots of money. But before we get to the dollars, let's make some sense of what street lighting we do have.

City lighting maps show all streets in the north, except Russell Avenue, have luminaires mounted atop electroliers. Most people call

them lights on lamp posts. In the south, luminaires are mounted on utility poles...most call them too few and far between. Primarily for traffic safety, they are separated by at least 300 feet, and property owners are not charged. On the other hand, if you can see an electrolier near your house you can also find a charge for "street lighting maint." under direct assessments on your property tax bill. For the average Franklin Hill lot, it's about 45 bucks a year depending on your frontage and proximity to the light.

If you live on a "have not" street, and you and your neighbors want to become "haves," the city Department of Public Works will send, you absolutely free, a "Petition for Public Improvement." You then must get the owners of 60% of the property frontage to sign the petition within

one year. Then it goes to the City Council and if they approve, plans will be drawn and a hearing will held on the proposed assessment. There, protests to the project and/or its costs will be heard. The average construction assessment for a 50 foot lot is \$1,500 for "modern electroliers." Those are the 30-foot poles with cobra-like arms extending over the street. If you and your neighbors don't like that look, you can petition for "ornamental electroliers." They are half as tall and half as efficient; so you'll need twice as many and pay more than twice the price. Either style you'll be able to spread your payments over 10 years, with the city charging 9% interest. If you decide to pay early they'll nick you for a 5% prepayment penalty. This perhaps to cover medical treatment for city workers likely to faint when

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they see money coming in early.

For those smug "haves" who didn't stop reading this earlier, you are about to get your bad news. Peter Prats from the Bureau of Street Lighting told a recent meeting of the FHRA Board of Directors that our existing lights are in bad shape. The old 5000 volt lead cable system has very high maintenance costs and if any major work is needed, it would have to be brought up to higher, modern standards of light levels.

A portion of the maintenance fee paid with property taxes each year goes toward the cost of replacing the system after about 20-30 years, so we are long overdue and could get the modern "cobra head" lights at no additional cost. But if we want to retain the charm of the existing ornamental lights, where 60-70% of the light is wasted up in the air instead of down on the street, we would have to pay for the additional electroliers that would be needed...about \$1,500-2,000 per lot.

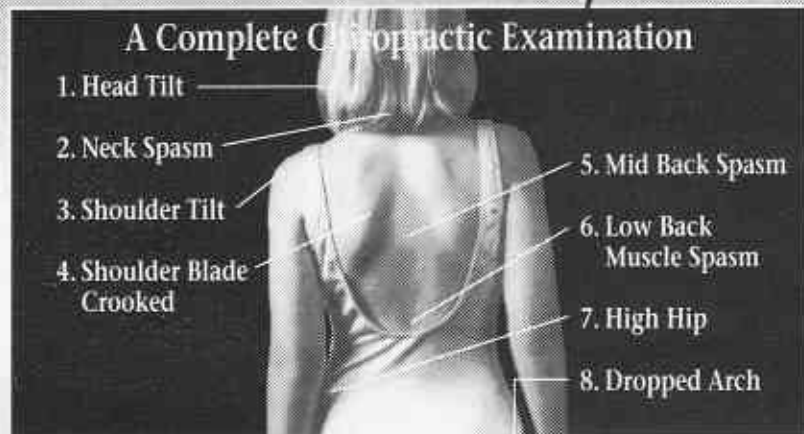
If you are tired of lighting candles or cursing the darkness and want more info on getting more light on your street, call the FHRA hotline and we'll try to put you on the shining path to a brilliant, albeit expensive, future.

METRO, from p. 13

failed in the earlier tunnels. But they've made a simple change. The old liners were all black and damage was hard to see in a dark tunnel. Now engineers, apparently relying on their tendency to see all things in black and white, have added a white layer to the plastic so that if it becomes torn, the holes will be easy to spot. This is important because once construction is finished, the pumps installed from Edgemont to Alexandria will be turned off and the river will flow over and under the tunnel. Don't worry, you have until 1998 to get your water wings for the inaugural ride.

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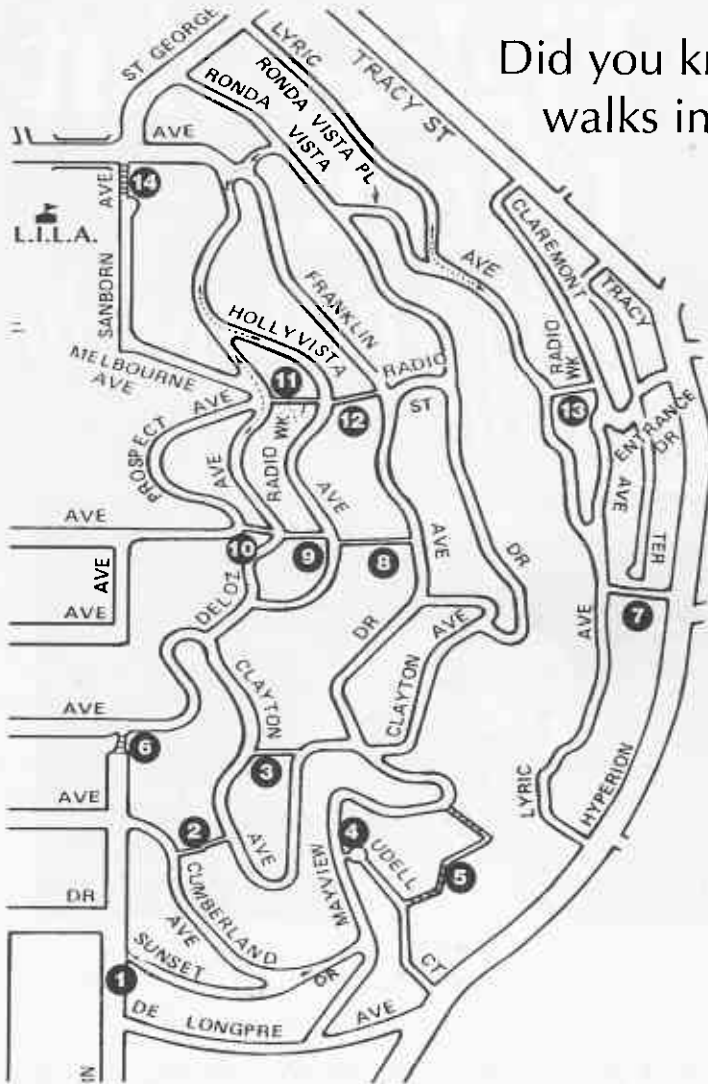
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| 5 Udell Court Walk        | 12 " "             |
| 6 Sanborn-Clayton Stairs  | 13 " "             |
| 7 Lyric Stairs            | 14 Franklin Stairs |

The FHRA Stair Committee has developed a personal program for the stairway or walk closest to your home. By selecting the stair number (see map), FHRA will help you develop a special STAIRWAY CLEANUP PROGRAM. Each of the stairs has a unique set of maintenance needs, most of which would take less than an hour of work each month.

FHRA can help with tools, rubbish bags, and extra laborers. We will also liaison with city officials to deal with structural repairs, graffiti, and hauling away the rubbish bags.

Our First Annual FHRA Stairway Cleanup on the Udell Court-Mayview Stairway was an extraordinary success. For over 30 individuals with diverse backgrounds, the hours of hard work paid off with a beautiful and safe walkway for everyone on the most scenic of our walkways.

Our thanks go out to many unsolicited sponsors who have been voluntarily caring for a portion of a stairway or walkway. Our hope is that, within the year, all of the stairs and walks will have sponsors and quality of life will continue to improve in Franklin Hills.

Please fill this out and send it to FHRA, P.O. Box 29122, L.A. 90027 or call the FHRA Hotline at (213) 664-7247 and give the information listed below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Stairway number: \_\_\_\_\_ Best times to reach you: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_



FALLACY, continued from p. 11

ment with less accountability than ever.

Sure we need more police, and we'll find a way to get them, but we need to be vigilant and not let fueled fears and 'Higher Good' arguments sink all the other amenities that make for a more livable city. Councilperson Jackie Goldberg said it best several months ago at a public meeting when she reminded her audience of the need for libraries and youth services. "NO amount of police can solve the problem," she said, stressing the necessity of giving our youth meaningful alternatives to gang life and, in the main, hope for the future.

Two other points about 'The Higher Good:' First, it is subject to the vagaries of the marketplace. That is, it is mutable and highly responsive to the flex of political muscle and the stench of political correctness. We're not talking about a consensus of values here, but about an **interpretation** by some of what's best for the many.

Secondly, almost by simple definition, the concept is theoretical, meaning many different things to different people. As such, in the hands of politicians and bureaucrats it becomes a device for jumping pet projects ahead of real problems. Talk of ultimates and superlatives sends coded language to seasoned veterans that other "opportunities" exist along the way to the stated objective.

We've got serious work in front of us. Our new Mayor seems to have a taste for it. The City Council with some fresh new blood also seems ripe for a new direction. Poised to enter a new century, facing our persistent and pressing problems, we can ill afford to drag along our tired old baggage with its faded destination stickers to 'The Higher Good.'

—Alan Kishbaugh

(Reprinted with permission from the May 1994 issue of the Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations News.)

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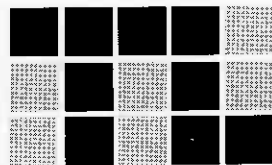
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Second installment of historic 1927 aerial photograph, showing right section, most of Franklin Hills. Shakespeare Bridge is at left center. The bridge and many of the Franklin Hillside streets were completed in 1926. Hollywood & Sunset Boulevard at bottom.  
Copies of full photo available, call FHRA Hotline: 664-7247.

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## **NETWORKING: Modern Approach to a Time Honored Tradition**

by Thomas Ziegert

Every wednesday morning at 7:00 a.m., a group of business men and women meet in a local restaurant on Hillhurst Avenue to engage in what is known as "notable networking." Like all chapters of the Business Network, founded by Ivan R. Misner in 1985, the Los Feliz/Atwater chapter's sole purpose is to increase each member's business through referrals by the other members. The dues-based organization which allows only one person per profession in a chapter, claims as its motto, "Givers gain." In essence this means that if you freely give business to others they in turn will give business to you. And, it works. The members give referrals to each other, the referrals give referrals, and so on. This is the epitome of using word of mouth advertising.

Members in the chapter had this to say about the

Please see NETWORKING, p. 21

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NETWORKING, from p. 20

Networking business approach: "For the first time in my business career, I am receiving real support," said Cheryl Johnson of StarChip 2000 Computer Consultant Service. Dr. Virginia Row of GlenFeliz Chiropractic Associates reported, "The Network augments my professional skills. I see this as a way I can expand my service. It is a reflection of how extensively I can provide service to my clients." However, Joan Huebl of Catalyst, a Human Asset Development Consulting firm had the most dramatic observation, "I was expecting an 8:1 return on my investment. Instead, my return was 19:1."

With so many options available and marketing funds at a minimum, networking through such organizations provides more power to the punch for many business people. This can be an important tool for consideration by any business looking to the future. For more information, contact Steve Ropfogel at 818.547-3227

*Thomas Ziegert is Manager of Travel Lab, a full service travel agency in Los Feliz and a member of the Los Feliz/Atwater Business Network.*

## TRANSLATIONS

\*\*\*

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THEATRES, from p. 24

The pair opened Moving Arts on a shoestring in 1992. "We do theater because can't not do theater," states Briggs. "There's no drug like it in the world, and we're addicted. There is something so vital, so immediate in the connection between the audience and the performer in a small theater. Only there can you find those moments when a performer hits a groove and transforms completely into a character, into a moment that is so electrifying and alive!"

When asked what kind of plays they select, Wochner replies, "We decided if we're going to do theater, we're going to do real theater—not TV sitcoms or talent showcases. We only do new work that's fresh and can't be seen anywhere else." Adds Briggs, "We do wicked theater. When I read a script that sings and the hair stands up on the back of my neck, I know we have to do it. It's usually a satire or black comedy that's strong, but still a fun show. All our plays are very entertaining."

Moving Arts' current production, *Beguiled By Choice*, has been so entertaining, and well received, it has been extended until July 2. The company's first gay-themed production, the two one-act plays are about cruising, craving and k.d. lang—about choices of the heart and sexual orientation. Performances are Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 pm through July 2. Tickets are \$10 and may be reserved by calling 213.665-8961.

**Theatre 1761**, 1761 North Vermont Avenue, 213.664-0680

It all started with Sal Romeo, a veteran acting teacher, and

a few talented students who wanted a space where they could explore their art without necessarily having to do *South Pacific* every year to stay alive. Eight years ago, they built that space on Vermont south of Franklin, called themselves Friends & Artists Ensemble and quickly became one of the most respected production companies in L.A. Although no longer the owners, the reputation and professional legacy of Friends & Artists is carried on by company member Bill Kohne, who took over and renamed the space Theatre 1761 in December 1993. A working actor for 14 years, Kohne is also a businessman. "I loved this theater, and it broke my heart that it might disappear when Friends & Artists gave up management," he explains. "I looked at the books and realized it wouldn't take much to keep it alive by renting the space to other artists, so that's what I did."

Kohne has been very successful booking a wide variety of programming and is excited about extending the range even further. "In March alone, we had two traditional one-acts, a dance exploration piece and late-night sketch comedy on the weekends," he says. "I'm anxious to explore new mediums. I'm looking for productions that mix dance, technology, video, whatever. I may also do something like screenings for young filmmakers and throw them a party! If I could rent the space 24 hours a day, I would—not for the money, but for the life, the juice it creates."

Opening June 24 at Theatre 1761 will be *Weird Romance*, a smash off-Broadway musical starring Marguerite MacIntyre,



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who also starred in the New York production. Call the theater for details at 213.664-0680.

**DISCAFE BOHEME**, 4430 Fountain Avenue, 213.662-1597.

At Sunset and Virgil, an enterprising talent agent has established a showcase for comedy, music and theater artists. Mike Bujko is a teacher by trade who worked tutoring on sets then moved into the talent business.

Productions at Discafe Boheme have ranged from Shakespeare to a Serbian comedy group. A small kitchen, tables, a dance floor and patio make the space perfect for private parties, weddings, classes and casting calls as well as performances. "We're planning lots of productions for Franklin Hills residents to enjoy this summer along with an exotic coffee or a glass of wine," says Bujko.

Call Discafe Boheme at 213.662-1597 for performance schedules.

**Some of the other local theaters:**

**East West Players**, 4424 Santa Monica Boulevard, 213.660-0366

**Company of Angels**, 2106 Hyperion Avenue, 213.466-1767

**Colony Studio Theatre**, 1944 Riverside Drive, 213.665-3011

**Skylight Theatre**, 1816½ North Vermont Avenue, 213.666-2202

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by Bruce Carroll

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# Local Small Theaters Glitter With Summer Entertainment

by Carol Mason

So another weekend stretches ahead. What are you going to do? Sure, you can spend \$10 on yet another movie and popcorn, or you can walk or drive to a small theater just minutes away and spend that same \$10 to see something completely different, something exciting and alive and personal that happens only once—and even meet the cast and crew afterwards!

Seven small theaters are scattered like jewels around Franklin Hills. Sparkling with creative energy and a passion for their art, each one is colored differently according to the personalities of their owners. This article introduces you to a few of these lively cultural forums practically in your own backyard and invites you to experience the richness and variety of their summer productions.

**MOVING ARTS**, 1822 Hyperion Avenue, 213.665-8961.

Just south of Casita del Campo, two people who truly love theater have built a home for original plays. Lee Wochner, a playwright from New Jersey, and Julie Briggs, an actress and director, both have an eye for riveting new plays and a passion for producing them.

Please see **THEATERS**, p. 22



Actors Scott McCray, Jan Claire and Stuart McLean from Moving Arts' local production of *Beguiled By Choice*.




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