



# OVERVIEW

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE # 31

Spring/Summer 2006

## ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 14

7 P.M. WEDNESDAY: KING MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM



Refreshments will be served beginning at 6:30. At 7 the meeting will begin with greetings from King's Principal Mrs. Charlene Hirotsu. Speakers will include our Senior Lead Officers from Northeast Division; and Councilmember Tom La Bonge.



*Udell Court: before and after the Sunday of cleanup (see p.7) Prez Charlie featured*

The Los Feliz Villiage Street Fair will take place on June 11. The FHRA will be there, along with food and fun and your neighbors

Los Feliz  
Public Library  
re-opened on  
June 5; after  
carpeting and  
interior  
painting.

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historic  
photos!*



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give away the  
candy!*



## President's Report

*Charley M. Mims*

We are approaching the 2006 Annual Meeting of the Franklin Hills Residents Association and we have had another banner year! On Wednesday, June 14, 2006, the FHRA will hold our Annual Meeting in the Auditorium of King Middle School from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Please come early to hear what we did last year and what we plan for this year and to vote on new Board members.

In the past year Mary Frances Smith-Reynolds continued expanding our neighborhood watch block captain program. In addition Mary Frances has lined up funding for a new mural on the public stairway at Hoover Street below Prospect which is expected to be completed this Fall. She and her husband Chris are the proud parents of a baby girl, Grace! Mary Frances has decided to not run for re-election to the FHRA Board to free up time for caring for Grace (and Chris) and all her other kids at Ivanhoe Elementary School where she teaches. She will still help our neighborhood by continuing to volunteer for specific projects but will no longer serve in an administrative capacity on the Board. Best Wishes Mary Frances with your newly expanded family.

After such a happy note, I am saddened to remind you of the passing of Norman Harriton, our Community Garden founder. Norm was such an earnest and dedicated neighbor and friend that he still seems present in Franklin Hills and certainly in our hearts. The community garden he founded is still going strong at the "French School" or LILA. We have named the garden for Norm. Shirley and I think of him every time we walk past. His wife, Monique still resides here and continues to brighten our neighborhood.

The Shakespeare Bridge and adjacent median island in Franklin Avenue continues to be a gateway to our community and to our spirits. The FHRA still maintains the landscaping which we created just ten years ago. We have also helped to clean up and landscape the area under the bridge and that landscaping is maintained by the neighbors along Monon. Good work neighbors!

The Franklin Traffic Calming Committee co-chaired by Mary Shaw, Alexandra Weiss and Shirley Mims succeeded in getting the City Council (with the aid and support of Tom LaBonge) to downgrade Franklin Avenue from a "Secondary Highway" to "Local Collector Street" status. This has the affect of protecting the historic Shakespeare Bridge from demolition or widening. They have also continued to work with City staff from various departments to calm traffic along Franklin Avenue.

Once again you FHRA volunteers put up the holiday lighting strands on the turrets guarding the Shakespeare Bridge. We really lighted the approach to the Franklin Hills for your holiday pleasure!

Eric Frase chaired a committee to develop a Franklin Hills Residents As-

*continued on page 7*

Franklin Hills Overview: #31, Spring/Summer 2006

## FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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Charley Mims 666-2520

**WELCOME TEAM**

Eric Frase & Anne Marie Ripley

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## COMMUNITY PHONES

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## Enjoy the Red Ink !



### FHRA

#### Treasurer's Report;

*By Bruce Carroll, Treasurer*

In 2005 the FHRA spent \$4,728.61 more than it took in. However, that red ink should really be viewed as the wide variety of colors found on the Myra underpass mural that we paid artist Louie Metz for in 2005, but collected donations for in prior years. Excluding the mural's \$6,750 cost the FHRA ended the year spending just under \$10,000 with income of just under \$12,000.

Nearly \$6,500 of that income came from you through membership dues of \$4,480 and contributions of over \$1,400 plus dues and contributions to the Norm Harriton Community Garden of over \$550. Most of the other 46% of our income came from our supportive Overview advertisers, \$5,120, added to that were interest and dividends totaling just under \$375.

On the expense side, after the mural, the biggest item was bringing every Franklin Hills residence the Overview which cost over \$5,800. That was followed by administrative stuff like postage, website, voicemail, insurance, photo printing etc. which totaled a bit over \$2,100. Next was maintenance of the Franklin Avenue Median, that came to \$840, with only \$245 in contributions specifically for the median. We spent over \$600 on membership meetings, \$275 in contributions, and a little over \$ 250 on the Norm Harriton Community Garden.

Through the first quarter of 2006 expenses seem to be running about the same as last year, but income is down about 24% due to a drop in early year memberships only partially offset by an increase in contributions.



*What makes this nice California hot tub newsworthy? Turn to page 5 and see...*

## Can the Bates Motel Morph into a Cinderella Hotel?

### Neighborhood Voices Cautious Support for Upscale Hotel

By Anne Richardson

On May 4, Zoning Administrator Gary Booher held a public hearing on a proposed new project at the former site of the Bates Motel, the Sunset Pacific Hotel located at the corner of Bates and Sunset. The new owner proposes turning the motel into a 40 room high-end hotel, with rooms ranging from \$135 - \$255 a night; an onsite restaurant/bar/ lounge with seating for 132; and converting one of the houses in back of the motel to a spa with massage and other treatments. The existing structure would remain, but would be substantially renovated, and what is currently onsite parking underneath the original 37 small rooms would be converted into the restaurant and bar. There would be a proposed 22 space parking lot to the north of the hotel and valets would park additional cars across Sunset at Manzanita.

Nicknamed the Bates Motel because of its location on Bates and because its horrors far outdid the motel in Hitchcock's *Psycho*, the motel currently on the site was closed down in 2002 due to public outcry over the crime activity associated with the property's drug use, prostitution, shootings and gang activity. After its closure, the LAPD reported a noticeable drop in crime in the area around the hotel. An application to reopen the hotel in December of 2002 was rejected by the Zoning Administrator because of serious questions regarding the viability of turning the property around.

This time, new owner Dana Hollister, who owns Cliff's Edge and the Bright Spot restaurants, has the support of nearby Akbar and other business owners hopeful that the site can be an attraction and not merely an eyesore. Certainly, many expressed interest in having a nice hotel where area residents' friends and families could stay when visiting. Neighbors, however, continue to be concerned over the economic viability of the ambitious project and whether it will revert to a seedy hotel, if the business model does not pan out. Other concerns include noise for the immediate neighbors; the proposal to serve alcohol from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m.; increased traffic



"Bates" Motel shortly after closure in 2002

and parking problems. Nonetheless, the majority of speakers at the hearing appeared cautiously supportive, if these problems could be addressed.

The Zoning Administrator stated that there would be no



Architect's vision after transformation

more public hearings, but that he would accept any written comments until June 9, 2006, on case: ZA-2005-4597 CUB ZV. After that, he will prepare a report, and appeals may be filed within 15 days of the report.



Zoning Administrator takes notes and concerned neighbors listen as Dana Hollister (holding drawing) presents her plans

To see full details regarding the proposed project, the motel's past history, and the zoning hearing, visit the FHRA's [www.FranklinHills.org](http://www.FranklinHills.org) website and click on the Bates Motel .

## the silverlake hotel

Greetings to the community of Silverlake

The Silver Lake Hotel is a revitalization and refurbishment to the notorious Silver Lake community landmark; the Sunset Pacific Hotel. The projects' intentions are to offer the communities of Silverlake and Los Feliz, Echo Park and Atwater Village it's first premier boutique hotel.

Seen as a dormant blight on the Sunset corridor The Silver Lake Hotel will infuse the mid-century structure with a urban perspective. Silverlake residents Dana Hollister and her team of designers; with guidance of Michael Rotundi and the skilled members of Roto Architects will create a hotel experience that will enhance the Silver Lake community.

The project is seeking to notify and illustrate local residence and the community at large to the plans and intentions of this project and assist in informing the community of the impacts and benefits of this neighborhood enriching endeavour.

Dana Hollister will retain the integrity of the original structure while updating the services and amenities with a restaurant, 37 designer inspired rooms, 3 master luxury suites and lower level lounge. The project also has addressed the community concerns regarding the parking impact by acquiring and developing on and off site parking.

We encourage all interested members of the community to engage us in a constructive dialogue and allow the team of Hollister Design and Development to answer any questions regarding the proposed project and its many benefits to the community

## Hilltop Hot Tub Mishappening

By Bruce Carroll

Next time you think you're having a bad day, remember March 7, 2006 in front of 3823 Franklin.



continued on page 23

## BE PREPARED Even if You're Not a Boy Scout

### The Message of FHRA's Winter Meeting

By Bruce Carroll

Coming on the 35th anniversary of the 1971 Sylmar earthquake that killed dozens in LA, 100 years after the really big one in San Francisco, but just months after the deadly results of lack of preparation and planning along the Gulf Coast last year, FHRA's February 9th winter meeting was focused on disaster preparedness.



Residents were welcomed to King Middle School by Principal Charlene Hirotsu, who reminded us that because of strict construction standards schools are among the safest buildings. She said King is the backup disaster shelter for our area, after Marshall High. Hirotsu also delivered the good news that costs of the next Myra Ave. mural created by King students will be financed by the developers of condos going up along Myra adjacent to the Sunset underpass. The first mural was financed through donations to the FHRA.

An LAFD volunteer speaker explained the fire department's Community Emergency Response Team disaster preparedness program. The 7 week CERT course teaches everything from "fire suppression...how to put out a fire and when to know you shouldn't even try"... to casualty triage, to search and rescue operations, plus community organization and terrorism and homeland defense tips. The FHRA has arranged for the CERT course in our area in the past. Those interested now should contact us by phone or e-mail. If we have enough interest FHRA will work to arrange nearby training sessions.

Among the other safety hints offered, replace home fire extinguishers yearly unless they have a gauge indicating they are still good. And extinguishers should be turned upside down once in a while to keep them in good shape.

Red Cross representative Nick Samaniego stressed the importance of planning ahead with an evacuation plan at home and work plus an out of state contact for you and relatives to pass information to. He suggested making copies, digital or paper, of important documents, identity, insurance policies, deeds, medical info and prescriptions plus documenting home contents then storing them someplace away from the home so they can be readily available when most needed after a disaster. Then FHRA board Member George Grace gave tips on protecting your pets when disaster strikes.



LAPD Senior Lead officers Al Polehonki and Gina Chovan told how burglars had been striking all too frequently in the Franklin Hills. More than triple the 2005 average of 7 per month, but they

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delivered good news too, five suspects had been caught red handed in the 3900 block of Clayton after a citizen's tip on February 2nd.

Perhaps most illustrative of the city's most serious problem was Councilmember Tom LaBonge...he missed the meeting because he got stuck in traffic.

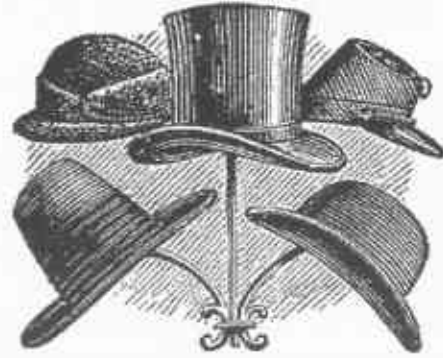
## **PRESIDENT** *continued from page 2.*

sociation card to greet new residents to our neighborhood. Many thanks to Eric and his committee for following through on this latest version of our famous Welcome (baskets)

Bruce Carroll and I continue to serve as your elected members on the Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council Board. Bruce continues to serve as web master, historical pictures curator, neighborhood photographer and generally good guy. I was elected to serve as President of the GGPNC for the 2005-2006 term and have received much support from our large and wonderful group of volunteer stakeholders. This year the GGPNC has worked on improving parking, easing traffic, beautifying our public areas, outreaching to all our stakeholders, and keeping an eye on proposed development to maintain the character of our neighborhoods. We have successfully convinced a developer to re-scope the look and scale of the proposed Derby development. With help from other community volunteers, we achieved an historical designation status for the Derby at Hillhurst and Los Feliz Blvd. We have also had direct input into the revamping of the Griffith Park Master Plan and expect these efforts to result in a new Master Plan that all of us can support. And please don't forget the 38,000 volunteers who turned out throughout our region on "Big Sunday/Mayor's Day of Service" to make so many improvements to our great City! In the Franklin Hills the Radio Walk and the Udell Court public stairways were shoveled free of dirt, pruned of vegetation overgrowth and swept down by volunteers from the FHRA and GGPNC Boards and from the local neighborhood. My thanks to each and every one of you for all the good deeds you do for our community!

Once again the FHRA is setting records for the number of members and the number of great volunteer activities that we bring to improve and beautify our neighborhood. Thank you for continuing to support your volunteer neighborhood spirit through the Franklin Hills Residents Association!

And PS: don't forget to attend the FHRA Annual Meeting to hear more of what's happening in the Franklin Hills and to vote on your new representatives.



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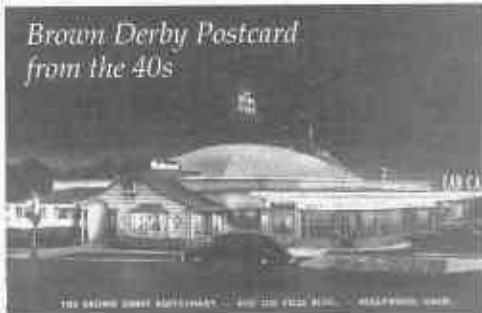
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## Hats Off to the Community Effort to Save the Last Brown Derby

By Bruce Carroll

Starting in 1929 folks headed for 4500 Los Feliz to eat Willard's chicken whose feet never touch the ground. In 1941 producer C.B. DeMille turned it into the 4th Brown Derby Restaurant catering to Hollywood's elite whose egos never touch the ground. For 30+ years after that Michael's of Los Feliz fed the community and since the 1990's its personality has been split between Louise's Trattoria and The Derby Nightclub. And in May 2006



Historic Monument

the LA City Council voted 10-0 in favor of Councilmember Tom LaBonge's motion to approve the building's designation as a city Cultural

In 2005 developers proposed crushing those memories of C.B. and Cobb Salads to construct condos and commercial space. That idea was about as popular in the community as Osama Bin Laden would be at the White House. Last November the Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council organized a public forum to give everyone a voice. The standing room only audience of over 500 stakeholders (almost double what had been expected) heard Adler Realty, who proposed the development, explain its benefits. Then opponents from Save The Derby Coalition and the Los Angeles Conservancy made the case for preserving a precious piece of our history.

Community groups such as the FHRA were given a chance to voice their concerns. In our area with Franklin Ave. and St. George St. being popular alternate routes to clogged Los Feliz Blvd., high density development along Los Feliz means adding to the 11,000+ cars a day that already cross the Shakespeare Bridge. Plus the loss of an important landmark.

At the end of the evening, after stakeholder questions had been answered, comments voiced, surveys filled out and even an impromptu near unanimous show of hands, it was clear the community wanted to preserve the last of the legendary Brown Derbies of Hollywood's heyday. And save themselves from even tighter traffic tangles.

A GGPNC survey filled out by 230 at the meeting showed 95% in favor of preserving the historic building with less than .5% opposed and 4.6% undecided. 78% of the survey takers felt that development at the site should be limited to what would be allowed by current zoning without variances. That would be far less dense than the 88 condos and 47,000 sq. feet of retail space originally proposed.

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Reacting to the forum's message the developers went back to the drawing board and the LA Conservancy went to the city's Cultural Heritage Commission to get the building at Los Feliz and Hillhurst designated a Historic Cultural Monument.

Adler's new plans do envision preserving 70% of the building, but lopping off the south portion along Hillhurst to make room for underground parking. The condos have been cut to 58 and the retail space to shops totaling 17,000 sq. feet.

After initial rejection in a staff report, the Cultural Heritage Commission at two hearings listened to a vocal community plus a passionate plea from City Councilmember Tom LaBonge and voted 4-1 in March to designate the building with landmark status. But that didn't take effect until the City Council gave their unanimous stamp of approval.

Historic designation does not give the building permanent protection, just a one year breathing period during which time it's hoped that plans for long-term preservation can prevail. The neighborhood council's [www.GGPNC.org](http://www.GGPNC.org) website promises to provide up-to-date info on evolving developments.



At the GGPNC's November 2005 public forum an overflow crowd of over 500 overwhelmingly supported preservation of the Brown Derby building and rejected over development at the 4500 Los Feliz site.

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Marty & Elayne  
at the piano bar



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(photo by Doug Mensman, LaBonge's assistant planning deputy)

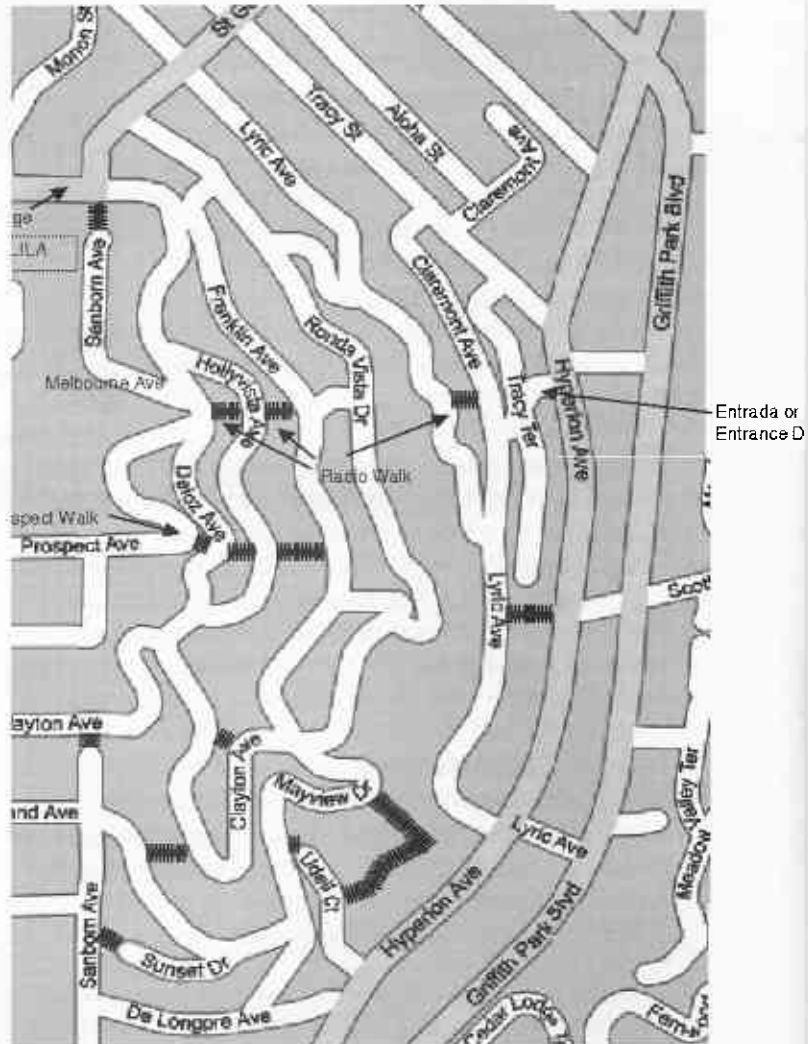
A smiling FHRA and GGPNC President Charley Mims towers above other Derby preservation victors (l-r) Jay Platt of the LA Conservancy which led the battle, Debra Levine from the Los Feliz Towers, Robert Nudelman of Hollywood Heritage, Rebecca Goodman who headed the effective Save the Derby Coalition and Councilmember LaBonge as they pose with a rare photo of City Hall sporting a Brown Derby.

## Stairway to the Stars

Anne Marie Ripley

Six years ago, I moved to Silver Lake from Northern California. My initial impression of Los Angeles was of a huge, unwieldy city that had succumbed to urban sprawl. This impression was confirmed when I looked in the phone book to find a shoe repair shop and discovered that places listed *within* the 323 area code could be anywhere from 5 minutes to 45 minutes away. At that point, I was officially intimidated.

Fortunately, not too long after arriving, someone told us about the book, *Stairway Walks in Los Angeles* by Adah Bakalinsky and Larry Gordon. The book describes a network of public stairways installed beginning in the late 1800s to provide the residents of Los Angeles a way of easily traversing the city's many hills to reach some homes and access the trolley stops that served as the city's first form of public transportation. This book details walking tours of these stairways, organized around



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different neighborhoods. Suddenly the amorphous mass of a city gained form and texture! Over the next several months, my husband and I enjoyed exploring different neighborhoods as we worked our way through the book. This activity was how we initially found out about the Franklin Hills and its own wonderful stairways.

The Franklin Hills has 14 of them. The stairways continue to provide an enjoyable way of shortcutting through the neighborhood, and if desired, quite a workout. (A map of the public stairways is provided at <http://www.franklinhills.org/stairwaywalk.pdf>—a condensed version is above.)

If you walk the hills, like we do, you'll notice that some of our stairways have recently become a popular place for teens to hang out. Unfortunately, certain groups of teens have decided to tag, litter, and occasionally damage fences lining the stairways. This blight on our neighborhood has not gone unnoticed, and several volunteers are actively working to keep the stairways clean.

These volunteers often live close to the affected stairways and periodically remove rubbish, paint out graffiti, and trim overgrown foliage. One recent Sunday, as part of the City's Big Sunday event on May 7th, several neighbors spent a morning cleaning up two overgrown stairways: a portion of Radio Walk and the long stairway that leads from Mayview Dr. to Udell Ct. It was hard work, but it was a good opportunity to meet neighbors and to give back to the community in which we live.

One of the core strategies of Los Angeles Police Chief Bratton's efforts to reduce crime in the city is the "broken windows" principle. His philosophy is that small crimes lead to bigger crimes. The community's effort to keep our stairways clean is a small but significant way to reduce crime in our neighborhood. We commend those who have been quietly volunteering and encourage others who enjoy the stairways to participate in keeping them clean, safe places for all to traverse.

## Surviving the Drive

by Shirley Mims

How often do you drive in the Franklin Hills and get stuck because another car is coming your way and there is no room to get by? As more households acquire more and more cars, and more people use their garages for storage than to park in, the tiny streets of Franklin Hills are filling up making it more difficult to squeeze by an oncoming car. According to DMV code for mountain driving, the car going downhill is the one to back up. This can be difficult on our streets especially if the car going downhill has another car behind it which is also trying to get through.

What I have found works best is that the person driving in the same direction as the parked cars voluntarily pulls over. Usually, there are spaces between parked cars where you can pull over and let the oncoming car pass. However, as people are more often parking their cars across their driveways, there are fewer spaces to pull into. This can lead to heated struggles between two drivers neither of whom wants to back up. So it helps to be on the alert for open spaces if you can find one.

*continued on page 13*

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## Franklin Avenue Downgrade

*Shirley Mims, Mary Shaw, Alexandra Weiss*

In an effort to help calm traffic on Franklin Avenue and to protect our historic Shakespeare Bridge from ever being widened to two lanes in each direction, Councilman Tom LaBonge supported a motion that was passed by the City Council in January 2006 to downgrade the status of Franklin Avenue between Talmadge and St. George from a secondary highway to a local collector street. This is an action FHRA sought to take when Councilman John Ferraro was still in office but was never completed before he passed away in 1999.

Preventing the widening of Franklin Avenue will ensure that the amount of traffic flow is kept to one lane in either direction. It is also a hurdle removed to help us get speed humps if we can demonstrate a low enough traffic count. The maximum allowed in any 24-hour period is 10,000. A count that the DOT did in 2004 came in at over 11,500. We would like to have another count done in order to compare the results and see if there is any correlation to particular days or times of day, such as when school is in session, that could affect the count.

The Franklin Avenue Traffic Committee was formed in 2004 after several devastating accidents totaled many parked cars along this stretch of Franklin Avenue. Our intent is to establish measures to calm traffic along Franklin Avenue in order to lessen and hopefully prevent such accidents from occurring in the future. Working cooperatively with various departments in the City of Los Angeles, we have had the lines you see painted down both sides of the east bound lane, a dip sign installed where coming up the hill, speed indicator trailers placed periodically by the LAPD, and various traffic studies done.

We will continue to pursue speed humps as we are able, and there are still other things we can do with the city to reduce speeding and reckless driving along Franklin Avenue. We have the support of Franklin Hills Residents Association, Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council, Tom LaBonge, and many area residents who have been affected by the accidents. We are grateful to Councilman LaBonge for putting our request through to downgrade Franklin Avenue. That enables us to cross another item off our to do list of our goals to increase safe driving and reduce accidents along this stretch of Franklin Avenue.

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**Surviving** *continued from page 11***WANTED: WRITERS  
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If you have ever thought about writing something for *The Overview*, contact our editor, Carol Skinner, at [FHRA@FranklinHills.org](mailto:FHRA@FranklinHills.org). We would welcome more pieces from members of the Franklin Hills community.

Next issue's deadline: 10/1/06

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If you haven't given much thought on how to prevent your local drive from being as frustrating, try the following suggestion. Look well ahead down the street you are traveling and look for signs of an oncoming car. If you see one, seek out the first available open space where either of you can pull in. If you are the one going in the direction of the parked cars, try to pull into that space before the other car reaches you. If the other car is going in the direction of the parked cars, then you stop just before the open space and invite the on-comer to pull in so you can pass.

This might not work all the time particularly if you encounter a wall of cars with no place for either of you to pull over. Then you should adhere to the DMV code and the one going downhill should be the one to back up because there is more control and it is easier to see the road behind you if it is uphill from you than downhill. Hopefully the oncoming driver will agree and you both can pass peacefully.

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## Northeast Division L.A.P.D.

*by Al Polehonki, Senior Lead Officer A71*



The first three months of 2006 saw an increase in residential burglaries. Community alerts were distributed and information was posted on community group web sites. Alert citizens called when unusual activity was observed and some good old-fashioned police work took place.

This combined effort led to the arrest of numerous suspects and a significant drop in the activity was seen.

I was recently asked, "Who do we watch out for?"

The suspects that were arrested came from a variety of backgrounds. Three were transients, three were high school age juveniles, and several were narcotic abusers. The rest were average Joes and Joans.

The ten suspects had one thing in common. None looked like thieves.

So who do we watch out for? The best advice may be each other.

Meet and get to know our neighbors a little bit better. Be a little more familiar with the types of crimes that are occurring in our neighborhoods by organizing a Neighborhood Watch group, visiting the department's web site for current crime information and community group web sites like [www.FranklinHills.org](http://www.FranklinHills.org) for recent activity.

We also have to consider "What do we look for?"

Any suspicious or unusual activity that looks out of place. If you observe something that fits this description, take a few moments to just watch. Jot down person and vehicle descriptions and call the police if needed. If the activity turns out to be nothing, then no loss.

It's a proven fact that we can reduce crime by working together. We can also help prevent crime by removing visible items from our parked vehicles and securing our residences when we leave them.

The week of May 14th showed no reported crimes in Franklin Hills. The bad guys are still out there. Stay safe and have a great summer.





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## Teenage Tolstoy in the Hills- - -

by Jessicsa Alan

About two months ago I was involved in a crime, if vandalism is a crime. I was the victim, not the perp.

I live alongside a public staircase which also doubles as a favorite hangout for some of the less studious students of the near by schools. My house and fence have long been a canvas for their Art.

One afternoon I came home to find my neighbor painting over the huge tag that had only recently appeared on the side of his house. We chit chatted and lamented as you do. A few minutes later I went over to his house to drop something off. I was at his door for about two minutes. As I walked back over to my house I encountered a pack of boys walking up the steps, one of whom was carrying a can of spray paint. I looked at him and then I looked back at the can of spray paint to make sure I wasn't hallucinating and then I just started screaming. "What is that in your hand? Get it out of here right now! Did you tag my fence?" No response. No response. No response.

As they walked away I ran down the stairs to see that no, he hadn't tagged my fence, he tagged my HOUSE. Insert any and all expletives that come to mind here. His tag was I.B.S., which I confess I did get a laugh out of.



I wasted no time and ran into my house and dialed 911 while standing in plain view in my kitchen window. While on the phone with the emergency operator I counted them. I pointed at them. I described what they were wearing. I mentioned that one kid was carrying a skateboard. I indicated the direction in which they were traveling.

Then the fear of retaliation hit me. Any of them could have watched me on the phone and figured out what I was doing. It was so obvious. I came to the conclusion that if they were bold enough to tag my house and show me the can of spray paint they had no reason to expect I wouldn't take action. Come on!

About 15- 20 minutes later a police car pulled up in front of my house. They were cruising the neighborhood looking for the boys. While we were talking they got a call and drove off. They came back about 15 minutes later to say they had apprehended ten kids "HURRAH" and wondered if I wanted to go and ID them. The officer assured me that since they had the can of spray paint on them they would still be charged regardless of whether I ID'd them. Once the officer described the kids to me, explained that not only did one of them have the can of blue spray paint on him, but

that he had blue paint on his hands and on his clothes as did some of the other kids. It was blatantly clear that they nabbed the right kids so I decided to err on the side of caution and declined the Officer's invitation.

The kids were all arrested and charged. Each of them will have to do two to three hundred hours of community service. At last, victory was mine!

continued on page 16

## Adolescent Crime *continued from page 15*



If you find yourself in similar straits here are some tips.

1) Call 911 immediately. They will dispatch a car to the area right away.

2) If you can, try to stay anonymous to avoid any kind of retaliation.

3) If you can, take pictures of the kids to show the police.

4) Make a note of where they are headed so the Police can track them down.

5) By all means don't let them get away with it!

## What's happening at the Hoover Walk?

*By Mary Frances Smith-Reynolds*

Agaves are taking root on the slopes at the end of North Hoover Street, foreshadowing a mural that will soon cover the walls here. This site, a public stairway called the Hoover Walk at the juncture of North Hoover Street and Prospect Avenue, is the location of an ongoing community improvement project. The mural that will go here is currently in production in the Los Angeles studio of artist Ricardo Mendoza. Agave-type plants are among the motifs in Mendoza's design, which will give the artwork an organic and indigenous feel, once it is installed on the three walls here.

If you've read articles in the Overview about this project, or heard my presentations on it at community meetings, you already know that this project has been in process since spring of 2003. Much positive change has happened at this place since that time when we received our first of two grants from the Neighborhood Matching Fund. (This grant program is through the City of Los Angeles' Board of Public Works, and is now called the Office of Community Beautification.)

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While the site is still the unfortunate, occasional victim of dumping, tagging, illegal public drinking and pot smoking, it is nowhere near the unsavory, dangerous place it once was. The plantings on the slopes, mended and extended handrails, repaired stairs, and upgraded signage are among the improvements which have happened here over the last three years. We hope that with greater beauty will come greater safety and community "ownership."

The goal is for the murals, being painted on a material called non-woven fabric, to be completed and installed this summer. In the meantime, a low retaining wall will be constructed to help hold the soil in place and to add a garden- or park-like feel to the site.

Neighbors do trash clean-ups at the Hoover Walk. Officer Dominick Colenzo of the LAPD's Northeast Division comes promptly with his crew whenever he is called to paint over graffiti. The Los Angeles Conservation Corps' Clean and Green program comes monthly to weed. The Hollywood Beautification Team helps with plantings, bulky item pick-ups, and other projects. City Councilmember Tom LaBonge and his staff support and help us through every step of the project. The Franklin Hills Residents Association and the Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council have embraced this project and provided financial support. To all of these people we extend huge and ongoing gratitude.

The community will be informed when the mural is installed, so we can celebrate together the centerpiece of this beautification effort.

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## Theatrical History in Franklin Hills

by Eric Frase

Los Feliz, Silver Lake and Franklin Hills continue to morph from communities that had once declined into areas of neglect and disrepair into neighborhoods filled with renovations and renewal. One local business whose product has varied dramatically over its 80-year history is the Vista Theatre, which sits on the former site of the expansive Babylon set of D.W. Griffith's 1916 *Intolerance* at the corner of Sunset Dr. and Hillhurst. The theatre's recent refurbishing reflects both the history of the area as well as the recent revitalization of Hollywood proper.

In 1923 an exhibitor/showman named Lou Bard opened the Bard Hollywood Theatre where D.W. Griffith's massive set once stood. The Spanish-Revival-on-the-outside/Egyptian-on-the-inside theatre was Bard's attempt to follow in the footsteps of Sid Grauman's Egyptian Theatre, which has just opened the year before on Hollywood Boulevard. (The Egyptian motif was a wildly-popular design element across the country as a result of the opening of King Tut's tomb in

late 1922.) The opening attraction that October night in 1923 was the silent film *Tips*, with child star Baby Peggy. The program included a vaudeville show and the theatre was equipped with a modest Wurlitzer theatre organ. Approximately a year later, the theatre became the venue for previews of films made by an up-and-coming outfit on nearby Kingswell Avenue called the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio. The theatre was known as the Bard Hollywood until about 1930 when it was re-christened the Vista.

For the next 60 years or so the Vista was run by both exhibition chains and independent operators, each with their own strategy for programming and booking. Various incarnations of the theatre showed everything from 2nd and 3rd run features, art films, repertory or calendar bookings of classics, and eventually porn films (of both persuasions). By the early '80s the Landmark chain of art houses was trying to return to revival programming at the Vista with 3 or 4 different double bills a week but the neighborhood was still mired in seediness, including a Le Sex Shoppe where Uncle Jer's currently operates, and business at the aging theatre continued to languish.

In 1993 the Vista was acquired by Five Star Theatres owner Lance Alspaugh, who just a few years earlier had managed the Vista for another entity. The Tulsa, Oklahoma native who had started his career in the late 70s



at Mann's Chinese, realized that the potential for the Vista was there but that it would require a sizable chunk of change to make it happen. In 1997 restoration began with Alspaugh bringing in designer Ronald Wright to supervise the project and

ply listened to these folks, we reduced total seating by half and the audiences do love it. Director John Landis filmed there one day and was puzzled about the enormous legroom and thought we could fit more people in. He loved the fact that he could track his camera anywhere he wanted.

When the renovation was completed in 2000 and locals (and not-so-locals) made the Vista a favorite for first-run movie-going, the area in general was experiencing a turnaround in popularity as new bars, restaurants and shops also appeared in the vicinity. Unfortunately, in

*continued on page 20*

oversee the work on some of the detail pieces throughout the theatres. Using archival photographs, Alspaugh's restoration team (including theatre staff) rebuilt the box office, adorned the lobby walls with Egyptian hieroglyphs and restored the Egyptian busts along the auditorium's walls. Besides a new screen and digital sound upgrades (just short of THX-certification) the most striking part of the auditorium's makeover (and the audience's favorite) is the extraordinary legroom between the rows of new seats. Alspaugh explains: the biggest complaint we got prior to the renovation project was that the 800 seats were just too cramped to be comfortable and had far outlived their useful life. So I sim-

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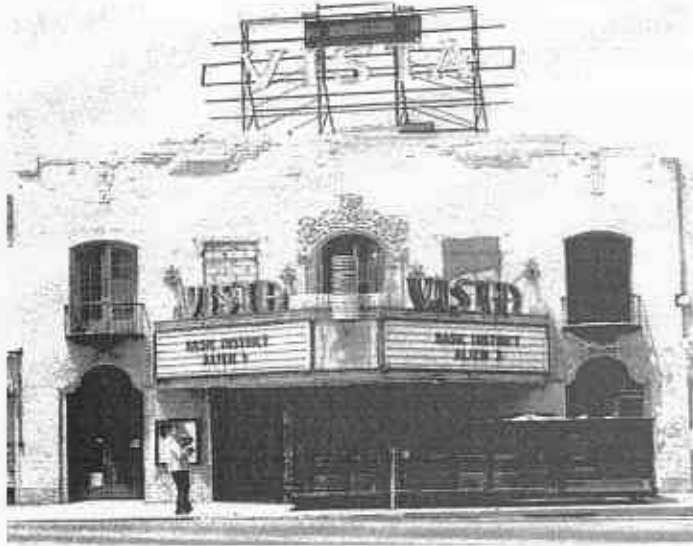
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L.A. more people mean more cars and more cars mean less parking. Apartment dwellers on the streets east of the Vista grew tired of not being able to find parking near their homes so permit parking was recently instated on Rosalia, with similar restrictions taking effect this summer on Commonwealth and possibly Hoover. Alspaugh reports that discussions with Councilmember Tom LaBonge's office did not appear to generate much sympathy for the theatre owner's concern. Alspaugh



notes the irony: Prior to the renovation of the theatre we got many letters and phone calls from customers and local business associations requesting that we restore the building. Now that the theatre has become a destination venue, the thoughts of encouragement have turned to complaints from angry neighbors who have difficulty finding parking in the area. In addition to investigating sites for paid parking for theatre patrons (KCET or Asian Pacific HealthCare's large lot around the corner on Hillhurst) Alspaugh has also suggested converting the parallel parking along Sunset Drive to diagonal parking which would allow more parking spots.

In the lobby of the Vista there is a display case with photos and other memorabilia from the theatre's past, including a shot of the crowds swarming the front of the theatre on that glamorous opening night back in October 1923. It seems safe to assume that foremost on the minds of attendees that night was the entertainment at hand.

Eighty years later the thing that moviegoers at the Vista may end up anticipating instead is a place to park.

## This list of neighborhood preschools may help parents and grandparents looking for children's resources.

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Lycee International de Los Angeles	(323) 665-4526
Lyric Preschool and Kindergar	(323) 667-2275
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## Update on the Griffith Park Master Plan

by George Grace (gmrnet1@gmrnet.com), May, 2006 -

The furor caused by the Melendrez Draft for the new 25 year Master Plan for Griffith Park - two years in the making at a cost of \$400,000, and a blueprint for Park development - led to the formation of a Master Plan Working Group to vet the Melendrez Draft. The Working Group is comprised of 12 representatives of Griffith Park user groups, neighborhood organizations, and other Park stakeholders jointly appointed by Councilmember Tom LaBonge, and Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) General Manager Jon Mukri. I was appointed to represent the FHRA. Senior management from Council District 4 and RAP provide staff support. RAP Assistant General Manager Kevin Regan is the group facilitator.

The rocky beginning in July, 2005, included some Working Group and RAP personnel changes, acrimonious exchanges among Group members and support staff, and discussions of the exact nature of the Group's "mission". It was determined that the Working Group would offer its own version of the Griffith Park Master Plan, and that this along with the Melendrez version, as well as inputs from other sources would be provided to a City appointed consultant who would craft a new Griffith Park Master Plan.

To date, the Working Group has completed:

1. A new "Vision" chapter advocating that Griffith Park be forever maintained with an Urban Wilderness Identity. At the April meeting, RAP reported the receipt of over 8,000 petitions (some duplicates) supporting the concept of defining Griffith Park as an Urban Wilderness.
2. A "Plant and Animal" chapter recommending maintenance, rehabilitation, and restoration of all existing Natural ecosystems in the Park, and a commitment to continuously preserve native species.
3. A "Human Dimension" chapter that identifies the various Park users (hikers, active sports participants, picnickers, equestrians, etc.) so that all groups will be treated equitably in the Master Plan.
4. A new "Built Facilities/Maintenance" chapter that inventories all man-made structures including playing fields, golf courses, visitors centers, utilities, restaurants, etc. and establishes guidelines for upgrades and additions. This chapter emphasizes that existing Park users will not be evicted or displaced. It also recommends forming a permanent Citizen Advisory Board to review all proposed facility changes, modifications, and additions.

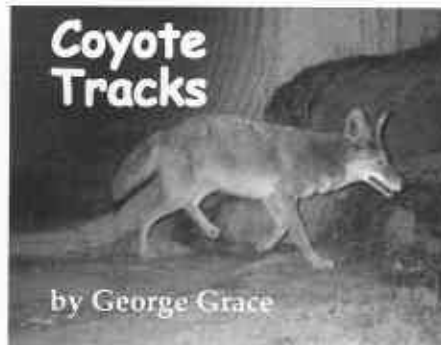
Link to the text of these chapters and read additional Master Plan commentary and information at:

<http://www.gmrnet.com/MasterPlan.html>

Major work remaining includes chapters on Vehicular/Nonvehicular Park Access and Circulation, Watershed/Water Management, and Park Management.

The Working Group has made real progress in crafting its version of a new Master Plan. I believe the completed document will be a well researched, thoughtful blueprint for developing the final Griffith Park Master Plan. It is also encouraging that officials from Council District 4 and RAP favor continuing Working Group participation in choosing and advising the new consultants.

Working Group monthly meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at 6:30PM in the Park Ranger Station Auditorium on Crystal Springs Drive. I invite you all to join the 50 to 100 people who show up and provide input and comments at each meeting.



There have been 32 coyote sightings reported via the online sighting survey in the last six months. I'm happy to say, that none of the sightings were threatening - in

fact, our neighbors seem to take the wily critters for granted. As more sightings come in, I'll submit them to the Overview for publication. I'm not sure you'll see them in print though. They aren't very exciting- and that's for the best!

*Reported on November 13, 2005:* Around noon I was driving up Clayton and at the DeLoz intersection spied a coyote. He turned down DeLoz to avoid my car, and was facing another car coming to the intersection from DeLoz. He jumped up onto the driveway of the house there, and sped away down their driveway. I have seen him before on Clayton. He is very wary of humans, and avoided me - and my car.

*continued next page*

## Coyote Tracks *continued from page 21*

*Reported March 3, 2006:* It jetted out in front of my car and ran part way up the hillside and stood about 20 feet away from my car. He was very comfortable with me, perhaps hoping to be fed. I had leftovers and wanted to toss him some but I didn't want to encourage it even if other people do. He stared at me and didn't scamper away until I started hitting my car door. Even then, he stayed within the area.

*A long report on April 6, 2006:* At 6:15 am I saw a coyote near the bottom of my driveway about 10 feet from the street at 2000 Hollyvista Ave. The coyote appeared to be a young animal, or possibly a female, if the females are smaller than the full-grown males. I believe it was the same one I saw and reported a month or so ago.

It appeared to want to go somewhere along Hollyvista but was thwarted by traffic. It tried twice to enter the street, but cars came by forcing the coyote back onto my driveway. It then came up the driveway to the more or less level turnaround at the top. It climbed a small ivy-covered wall bordering the turnaround that also faces the street. I thought it was going to go over the wall and down the ivy slope to the street as it started to go over the wall, but it stopped, stood on the wall, and looked around.

Apparently it was looking to see when traffic would stop. It then came back off the wall and went down the driveway to the street. At this time two young men on either side of the street were walking south on Hollyvista, from Franklin, delivering telephone directories. The coyote was apparently frightened by the thumping sound of the dropping directories and fled south on Hollyvista away from the young men toward DeLoz. I could not see it after it left my driveway.

*And here's one more report from April 24, 2006:* They were going down Liberty St. towards Scott Ave. in Echo Park. There were two of them. It was so cool. It was between midnight and one. We parked facing down on the west side of Liberty, they were traveling down towards Scott and Sunset on the East side. One, and then a few feet behind, the other. They were using the sidewalk.

That's all folks! Post your Coyote sighting at:  
<http://www.gmrnet.com/Coyotea.html> and we'll keep you posted in this column.

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**Hot Tub** *continued from page 5*



Things started out looking fine with a huge crane in place to lift the hot tub to the up-slope backyard. The tub was almost in place when workers in the back yard guiding it may have pushed or pulled just a little too hard and upset the delicate balance. They managed to scramble to safety as the falling boom came within two feet of power lines and knocked an awning off a neighboring house. Power was shut off for several hours while fire trucks and tow trucks worked to get the crane back on its wheels.



At the end of the day: Jacuzzi OK, crane driver dejected.



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We need your membership, but if you can't bear the thought of tearing the coupon below out of this issue of Overview you can go to our website: [WWW.FranklinHills.org](http://WWW.FranklinHills.org) and click on "Join FHRA" and you'll get an FHRA membership form that you can print and mail

**FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**  
P.O. BOX 29122, LOS ANGELES, CA 90029

DATE \_\_\_\_\_  NEW     RENEWAL

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TEL \_\_\_\_\_  
(H) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ TEL(W) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

I'm willing to help in:     Planning /Zoning     Graffiti     Crime/Gangs     Traffic     Library- Tutoring     Newsletter  
 Historic Preservation     Environmental     Youth Activities     Public Relations     ABC-TV     legal  
 Telephone tree     Membership     Beautification     Disaster Prep      
 other \_\_\_\_\_

DUES are \$30.00 per couple or \$15.00 per person; AMOUNT ENCLOSED:  \$15     \$30     \$50 larger contributions are extremely welcome. Thank you for joining FHRA! Contributions are tax deductible.

# The Sweet Dove Flourishes...

This elegant lady has been supporting herself in Franklin Hills lately, She certainly does add to the beauty of the neighborhood but I'd be happier if she had her cage door between herself and the coyotes, and the owl . The report from the neighbors:

*"Here's an interesting one. We have a domesticated white dove hanging around our part of the Franklin Hills — double banded (one green band, one blue band), and she almost allows herself to be captured. Anyone have any thoughts? She seems to be finding enough food, and here you see her this morning"*

If you know where she belongs, please call our hotline (323/908.6078) or e-mail [FHRA@FranklinHills.org](mailto:FHRA@FranklinHills.org)



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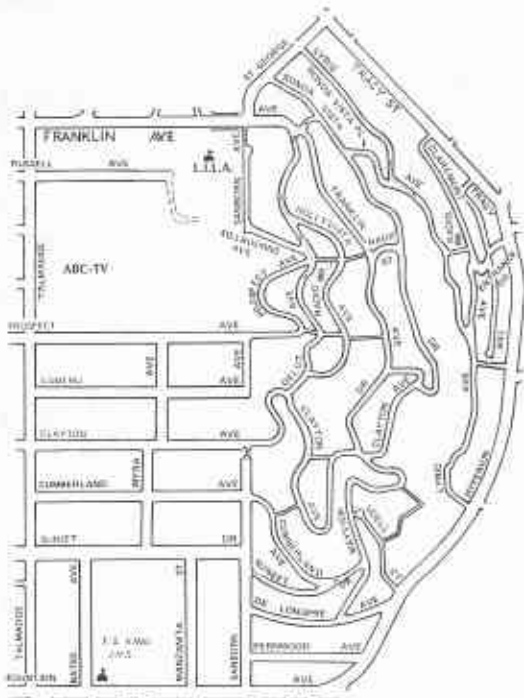


Karen Weiss Ross Carter  
323 - 210 - 1421

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## OVERVIEW

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION  
P.O. Box 29122, Los Angeles, CA 90029



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