

OVERVIEW

NOW ITS MY TURN

SAYING GOOD BYE, THE HARD WAY

By Elena De Vos

I'm that rarity, an L.A. native, direct from this neighborhood. Every street brims with memories of three generations of my family.

My grandparents and parents regularly took me to the pony rides at Griffith Park and to ride the trains at Travel Town and to visit the Old Zoo, full of its cages and dank walkways, smelling the way a kid thinks a zoo should smell. Friendship Day Camp met at the big fountain by the tennis courts on Riverside Drive; it was there I caught my first frog in the L.A. river. I rode the merry-go-round hundreds of times as a child and attended (what only can be called) love-ins at the same spot in my late teens.

I strolled with my mother through shady Fern Dell when you could do so safely. My brothers held their Cub Scout picnics at the barbecue grounds by the Greek Theater where our family would come for the hot-dogs and sunsets. My Saturday art lessons in elementary school were at the Barnsdall Art Center, topped off by pastry and singing at Sarno's.

Sometimes my father and I would go to Thrifty's together to buy nickel ice cream cones and look at the magazines at its newsstand. At 16 I learned to drive on the streets winding up to the observatory, my teenage haunt. Yes, this is home.

When I returned to L.A. after finishing graduate school and ending my marriage, I gravitated here, leasing a house on Hollyvista where I convinced the owners to sell to me at the peak of the housing boom. By not using a broker, I saved a bundle, but I still paid a small fortune, "After all," I told myself, "If I don't buy now, when will I be able to?"

The former owners cleared over a quarter of a million dollars after living in the house fourteen years. Unfortunately, I did not do so well, by any accounting method, creative or otherwise.

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Tree planters applaud John Yingling of ABC-TV. The studio provided everything from parking to T-shirts, from restrooms to lunch

FHRA'S "GREEN FOR A DAY" DRIVES URBAN UGLIES AWAY

By Bruce Carroll

What do Socrates, KABC weatherman Dallas Raines, and Lila the cat have in common? If you weren't wielding a shovel along Prospect and Talmadge Avenues on Saturday morning, March 27th, you probably haven't a clue...so read on.

That was the day when over 200 volunteers recruited by the FHRA, the Los Feliz Improvement Association and ABC-TV planted 58 trees to beautify the neighborhood. The group assembled at 8 a.m. in the ABC-TV parking lot where a last-minute refueling on donuts and coffee, plus a commemorative t-shirt were provided by ABC. Under the slogan "Green for a Day," the mostly green (in experience) volunteers were tutored by the very green (in clothing) troops from the Los Angeles Conservation Corps. All the trees, tools and a mighty amount of assistance were provided by the LACC.

Project manager Peter Lassen, who headed the LACC staff of 20 youthful workers, rated the planting "among the better ones." Lassen, who spends several days a week turning novices into tree planters, praised our "good turnout and good workers." Noting we planted "very fast"—58 trees in about three hours—Lassen indicated

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Officer Paul Afdahl
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

One Down, One to Go

What was the proper action? We had a major uprising in the city in May of 1992, resulting from a jury verdict that many (possibly most) citizens of all races didn't believe was just. A segment of our society had revolted against the system by burning and looting, mostly in their own neighborhoods but in others as well.

We had seen nearby stores looted and knew about the attempted fire-bombing of a residence in the Los Feliz hills. Now we were looking at two upcoming related trials with a possibility (even a probability) of more unpopular verdicts.

The board of directors of the Association had worked to come up with a practical preparedness plan for a possible crisis. The Association joined a loose coalition of neighboring associations to develop an area-wide strategy.

We talked with a consultant, previously active in earthquake preparedness, who was now consulting on riot preparedness and who recommended street blockading. There had been some blockading in other Hollywood Hills areas during last year's events and this was considered successful by these groups.

Should we do the same? Should we close off our entrance streets, with residents manning the blockades? Or should we do it with hired security personnel so as not to endanger our own residents? What would be the liability position of the FHRA if some accident happened?

We needed information: how serious could this become? What is the likelihood that there would be any riotous events in our neighborhood? We had sources for information, both police and civilian, and all were, while tending to push us toward mobilization, extremely hard to substantiate.

The entire purpose of our March meeting was to give our members information on what we were planning to do to help protect lives and property from possible disaster and to prevent any incursion into our neighborhood.

Unfortunately, we made a serious mistake - we quoted an unverified rumor. Also unfortunately, the news media was feeding on items like this to stay alive since the indicators steadily tended toward a non-riot. The Los Angeles Times published a particularly negative and inaccurate piece which was picked up by other media outlets, including KFI, Channel 13, KCRW and Inside Edition, and brought negative publicity for our Association.

This we regret, hoping that no lasting damage has been done. But more importantly, we want to know what you, our residents, want. Do you want the FHRA to concern itself with the possible repercussions of the Reginald Denny / L.A. Four trial in July or not? Should we enter again in what some believe is a political minefield without a way out or should we be concerned at all? Please write us, or call the FHRA Hotline at (213) 664-7247 and give us your opinion.

— DON WALDROP

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RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
HOTLINE (213) 664-7247**

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FHRA ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Members come and vote
for your Board of Directors

Thursday, MAY 20, 1993

Check in starts at 6:45 p.m. Meeting at 7:15 p.m. sharp
L.I.L.A. (THE FRENCH AMERICAN SCHOOL)
4155 RUSSELL AVENUE

(Entrance to campus one block east of Talmadge on Russell Avenue)

HOMEMADE GOODIES

Nominations for the Board of Directors

Submitted by Jim Churchill, Chair
Nominating Committee

The job of the Nominating Committee is to find the best people we know to serve on the Board of Directors. The slate that we have submitted below represents our best effort. It's important to note, however, that there are a lot of people in Franklin Hills that we don't know. **If there is someone that you think would be a good board member (including yourself) we urge you strongly to nominate that person.** You can do this in a couple of ways: anybody may be nominated from the floor at the Annual Meeting, which this year will be on May 19; or you could call any Nominating Committee member and arrange for one of us to nominate your candidate or have him or her nominated at the Annual Meeting.

If you know of such a person, we won't be offended – we'll be glad, because we're always looking for additional contributions of time and energy. Our numbers are listed below. The primary qualifications for serving on the Board are (a) you have to be able to come to the monthly Board meetings; (b) you need listening skills – you must be able to hear someone speak whom you may not agree with, and still get along with him or her. That's all it takes (plus you have to be a member of FHRA.)

Six Board positions are open this year: terms expire for Chris Boutelle, Bruce Carroll, Gene Cornell, Bryant Crouse, Arnie Netka, and Don Waldrop.

Under the by-laws, the nominating committee reports its nominations to all members two weeks before the Annual Meeting. At the Annual Meeting, any other member in good standing may be nominated from the floor.

This year's nominating committee consisted of Vi Weber (663-6427), Bryant Crouse (666-0307) and Jim Churchill (663-0580).

Of the six Board Members whose terms are due to expire, five have been able to be continually active, showing up at Board meetings and strongly pro-active. Those five are nominated to serve another term. That left us with one vacancy to fill, and we're pleased to have found a nominee who we think will do an excellent job on the board. She has already been working with the organization for about a year.

The nominees are:

Chris Boutelle — Chris Boutelle joined the Board in May 1991. An unfailing source of cheerful labor and a thoughtful,

See Nominations, p. 8

Disaster Preparedness: THE "BIG ONE" HITS FRANKLIN HILLS — NOT yet

by
BRUCE
CARROLL



Chris Boutelle and Jay Glassman act as stretcher bearers.

The contrived cries and mimicked moans of volunteer victims may have awakened some Franklin Hills residents Saturday, April 24th. The ABC parking lot was the scene of a disaster...not the kind TV is sometimes accused of foisting on the viewing public...but the kind we should all be prepared for.

A dozen members of the FHRA disaster response teams joined with ABC teams to triage the two dozen teenagers sporting fake fracture and more serious simulated symptoms. The rehearsal for the BIG ONE was a joint exercise involving the fire department and local hospitals where the "victims" were transported to test emergency room readiness.

Fire officials, on the "disaster scene" only as observers, sensed a lack of coordination as the root of most problems. One paramedic who observed that we "need a lot of training," also noted that, "it

probably went as well as it would have if it was a real disaster." Vi Weber, who heads the FHRA Disaster Preparedness program said one message was very clear, "what it taught me was that when no one is in charge, take charge."

The fire chief observed big problems, like the lack of leadership, and small details that could turn rescue workers into casualties. Chief Tucker noted, "I saw very few legs bent when lifting." Using your back instead of knees when lifting stretchers could lead to back injuries.

Another LAFD observer termed it a "good effort" that pointed up the need for more practice. Vi Weber intends "to have more and regular refresher courses" for our FHRA disaster teams, hopefully two a year. All agreed with Ms. Weber that they "learned a lot" and that knowledge applied and practiced will likely save lives and suffering when the real big one hits. •

ARE YOU EQUIPPED FOR FIRE?

The FHRA Disaster Preparedness Group, headed by Violet Weber, urges every household in the Franklin Hills to have at least one household-sized fire extinguisher on hand at all times. This may help a great deal in controlling a fire until the city firefighters can reach your home. In times of a large scale disaster such as a major earthquake, this may mean the difference between saving your home (or your neighbor's) and a potential great loss of property and human life.

You should have one 5lb, dry chemical fire extinguisher rated at least 2-A:10-B:C for each 600 square feet of your home. One should be located in the kitchen since that is the number one place fires start in the home. Others could be near sleeping areas and possibly in the garage and your car.

Type A:B:C extinguishers fight wood, paper, cloth, plus flammable liquid and electrical fires. These are basically all of the fires that a homeowner should need to

needs & wants

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sponsored by the
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Sunday, May 23
from 11 am to 4 pm
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Fine food, gifts, exhibits, music, magic,
petting zoo, games and much more.

Information: Ellie Sandler, 662-7747
Stephanie Chiacos, 663-2430

LOS FELIZ LIBRARY

Volunteer TUTORs are needed for a tutorial program, estimated time per week: 2-3 hours.

Donations needed: Books and videos to sell, patio furniture, indoor plants and watering can, outdoor planters and plants.

The Los Feliz Library is beginning a rental program with multiple copies of books taken from the best seller lists. The books will rent for 10 cents a day, with no reserves being taken. PROJECT BESTSELLER is being funded by the Los Feliz Friends of the Library.

The Library has urgent need of a working typewriter. If you can donate one, please call.

CONTACT: Thea March, Los Feliz Library, 1939 1/2 Hillhurst Avenue, (213) 664-2903

fight. Read the picture instructions on the box when purchasing. Familiarize yourself and your family with the operation of the extinguisher before you need to use it.

2-A:10-B:C type fire extinguishers are available at our local Baller Hardware on Hyperion at Tracy as well as at major discount hardware stores such as Home Depot or HomeBase from \$20.00.

Isn't it worth a little money for the peace of mind that comes from knowing you are prepared for an emergency? We think so.

For more information call the FHRA HOTLINE (213) 664-724 7 •

• community phones •

IMPORTANT COMMUNITY PHONE NUMBERS

ABC-TELEVISION:

John Yingling, Plant Manager, (310) 557-5000
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
District Office, 625 S. New Hampshire (213) 485-4377

ENVIRONMENTAL:

Recycling: (800)-CITYSAN

Rebate for Ultra Low Flush Toilet installation.
(213) 481-5800; (800)-722-1122

Rebate for Super Efficient Gas Water Heater.
(800) 852-9820

Hazardous Waste Hotline (213) 237-1634

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Emergency 911;

Non-emergency: 485-6235;

GRAFFITI:

On private property: (213) 253-2687

On public property: (818) 772-7753

FHRA Graffiti Action Coordinator: (213) 661-4351

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.

PARKING ENFORCEMENT DISPATCH: (818) 904-1418

POLICE: Emergency 911;

Northeast Division: Non-emergency (213) 485-2563

RECYCLING INFO: (800) CITY SAN

SANITATION: (213) 485-4906

STREET LIGHTING: (213) 482-5483

STREET MAINTENANCE: (213) 485-5661

TELECOMMUNICATIONS: (TV Cable service) 485-2751

TRASH RECEPTACLE INFO: (800) 248-9726

WATER & POWER: (800) 722-1122

FHRA HOTLINE

The Franklin Hills Residents Association reminds you that we now have our own telephone number. By calling **(213) 664-7247**, you can ask questions, leave messages for board and committee members or make suggestions.

It's not exactly a "hotline," and getting an "800" number didn't seem to make much sense, so we hope you find our plain old neighborhood number useful.

FHRA HOTLINE

(213) 664-7247

HAMS

If you are a ham radio operator or if you have handheld Ham or CB radios, or a CB base station and are willing to help on the Disaster Preparedness team, please contact Bruce Carroll at 665-9875

GRAFFITI ALERT

Plans are being made for another FHRA community paint-out. If you would like to be involved or if you know of a trouble area, call Isabel Dietz: 661-4351.

Patronize "Our" Businesses

Traveling to other areas to shop has become troublesome now that the population and traffic have increased so much.

The businesses that have shown interest in reaching you and your neighbors by advertising in this news-letter are charged the absolute minimum possible advertising fees. Their ads pay for the paper and any surplus supports FHRA on-going projects.

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

TRUE BLUE: OFFICER PAUL AFDAHL PROFILED

By Violet Weber

Let's turn the blazing media spotlight to the positive side of the police force in our city for a change and get to know the person in charge of protecting those of us who live in Franklin Hills.

Senior Lead Officer Paul Afdahl didn't dream of being a police officer when his parents moved him and three brothers from South Dakota to California when he was seven years old. Nor did he imagine that someday he would be one of the thousands of men in blue caught up in a drama focusing the world's attention on a police force once held up as a model to the nation and the world.

To 23-year veteran Afdahl, the LAPD is still the best. His career as a policeman wasn't intentional as careers go. A recruitment ad in the newspaper in 1970 looked interesting to the footloose young man fresh from a three-year stint in the Army during the Vietnam conflict. After being stationed in freezing Korea, warm Southern California seemed like a pretty good idea. He still enjoys the 40-mile drive to the Northeast Division station where he oversees a staff of twelve assigned to car 11A1.

Afdahl is the quintessential police officer, but with a really big difference. It's not putting bad guys away that keeps his adrenaline flowing. The strapping 6' 2" officer most enjoys the daily patrol and public relations aspects of his job. Afdahl directs his officers where and when to respond, settles problems within the Division, liazes with our councilpersons, keeps close tabs on area complaints, and still makes time to get out on patrol, his first love. He likes keeping in constant

contact with the area's residents and business people. He even answers his telephone. If you dial his personal telephone number, 213-847-3138, you'll get the affable officer in person. If he isn't there, he always calls back.

In addition, Afdahl puts in hundreds of extra hours attending the local Neighborhood Crime Watch meetings. He not only addresses the problems of the latest crimes going down, but also offers valuable advice on the prevention of personal crime, crime in the home, and the latest crime trend, carjacking.

Afdahl waxes angrily eloquent about drugs as a continuing threat to peace and tranquillity on our streets and a major reason for the increase in violent crime worldwide.

In spite of his service longevity, Afdahl is still a young man and retirement is only a topic of conversation now. However, he and his wife are improving their golf game and Afdahl carefully maintains his fishing rod. Their frequent travels take them to likely retirement states like Arkansas, Utah, Nevada, and North Carolina, his wife's home state. But then you hear his enthusiasm for the good-neighbor police programs he works for like the original Paint Out Program, Parenting Program, Youth Athletic League, and his and his wife's work with youths in the Episcopalian Church, and you know he is having a much better time now than any retirement plans could provide.

Paul Afdahl is the kind of police officer you would like to have as your next-door neighbor. I wish he was mine.



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FHRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WHAT WE'RE UP TO

Since the mission of the *Overview* is to trumpet the message of the FHRA, and since FHRA President and *Overview* publisher Don Waldrop is a professional horn blower (albeit trombone not trumpet), this column on the actions of the FHRA Board of Directors usually has only a few minor notes to sound.

But there has been one major theme replayed at this year's board meetings. What Waldrop termed the need for "new vitality." We always have enthusiastic spectators and at the tree planting we gathered an outpouring of helping hands. What we seek is enough leaders willing to actively head up committees and provide the spark to ignite action. Arsonists need not apply. If you see a something that needs to be done and have the desire to work with others to see it through, call the hotline, 664-7247, and let's talk.

The February Board meeting was a special dinner treat hosted by board member Frank Yogus. We all got to know each other better, enjoyed delicious food and drink and still got some business done.

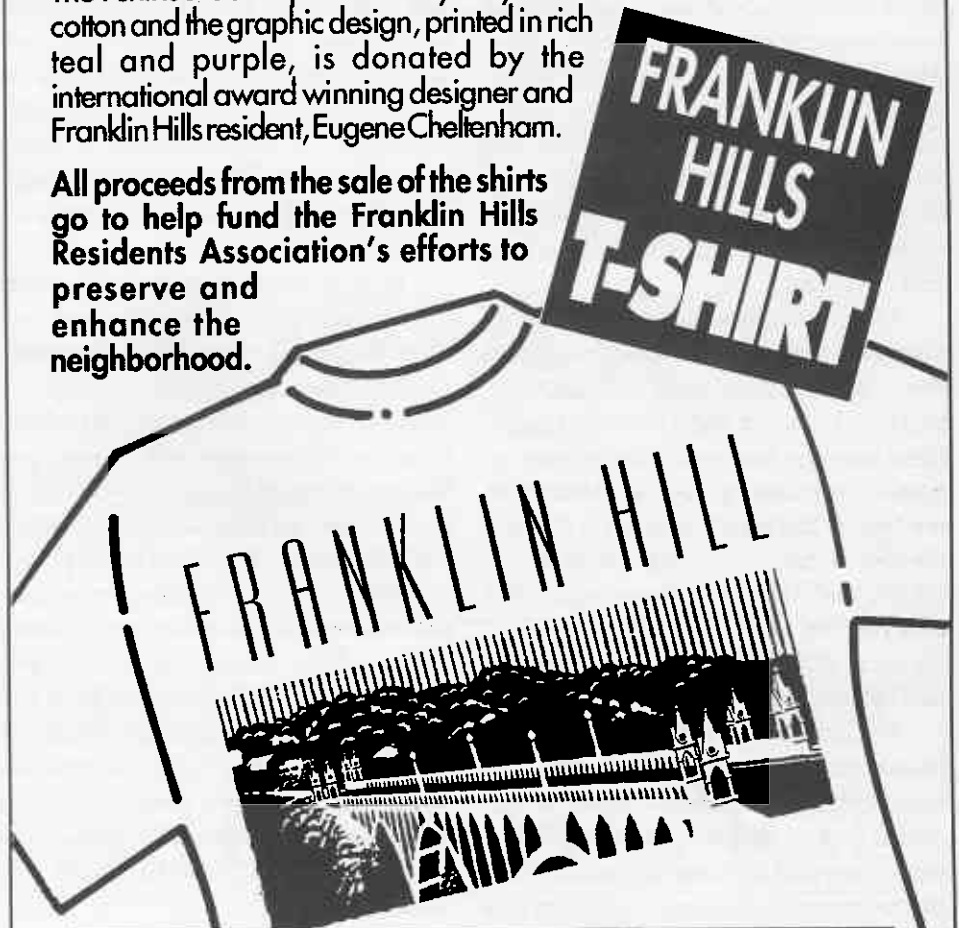
March's board meeting was back to the regular time and place: the 3rd Tuesday of each month at LILA French American school. We heard how the deliberate wheels of bureaucracy are ever so slowly processing our request to have Franklin Ave taken off the list of secondary highways. As part of our disaster preparedness effort, we gave the go ahead to purchase six handheld CB radios and a base station. We discussed the need for additional funds for the median beautification and voted a contingency appropriation for extra trees if needed for the Talmadge tree planting. We also made plans for the FHRA Annual Meeting and elections dealt with elsewhere in this issue of the *Overview*. Let's have a big turnout on Wednesday evening May 19th.

-Bruce Carroll, Secretary

You'll be proud to wear this t-shirt with its classically designed graphics that show the Shakespeare Bridge and a silhouette of our historic Franklin Hills.

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All proceeds from the sale of the shirts go to help fund the Franklin Hills Residents Association's efforts to preserve and enhance the neighborhood.



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ASSOCIATION MEMBER?:

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De Vos, from p. 1

I sunk my entire inheritance and profit from my former house into my new home. Although the payments and taxes were enormous, I loved my house with its fireplace, hardwood floors, privacy, fabulous views, patios with the smell of jasmine, and—of course—the warm neighbors. The house was built in the year I was born, a good omen. As it turned out, it was, though not in the way that I imagined.

Life's path takes its twists. Despite planning never to marry again, I met Bruce and married him straightaway, much to both our surprise and delight. Here was the husband I had given up hope of ever finding—yet he insisted that we live at the beach where he already owned a condo. There were worse things, yes? An old Jewish saying advises that you can't have everything in life at the same time. The house went on the market and I moved to the beach.

For one year, we tried to sell the house, making its huge payments as it stood empty. Ultimately we gave up and rented it. We paid more than a \$1000 a month beyond the collected rent to meet the mortgage and taxes. Two years and thousands of dollars more passed by as we tried to wait out the slump.

This year, we tried refinancing to take advantage of the lower interest rates, hoping to get the payments in line with the rents. The banks said no—the house's value had decreased over \$100,000. To them, we were not any more "qualified" for having had made all payments on time for four years; a person starting fresh could get a much better loan than ours, they advised us. Oh (or was that *ow*?) we said, stunned. Now what? Now you sell ice in Alaska.

We put the house on the market again and there it stayed for seven months. If you read the papers and listen to your neighbors, you'll hear stories like ours from all over town. We started our sacrificial offering to the real estate gods at \$5000 less than comparable homes and continued to lower our price until we

were asking less than what we owed.

The good news? It sold, finally. The bad news? My down payment and inheritance were irretrievable, we depleted our savings, and we took an additional loss at the sale. My dictionary says "loss" is the condition of being deprived of what you once had or ought to have had. That definition works for me.

In many ways, though, we consider ourselves lucky. We still own our affordable condo at the beach. Our credit record should stay intact, although we must come up with the difference between what we owe and what we got. We are fortunate to be young enough to have time to try to make up the \$100,000 plus we lost.

While I had been setting the brilliant real estate deal into action, my husband had been investing his money into Executive Life insurance, the firm that went bankrupt last year. As I said, we were destined to marry. Yes, we are lucky to have found one another in this sprawling town, especially starting out as far apart as Franklin Hills and Redondo Beach.

Since the house went into escrow, I feel as though my family history is being sold too—does it matter I'm the only one left in my family who remembers that our first phone number was also a Normandy exchange? I can barely bring myself to say goodbye to the neighborhood where— a lifetime ago—my father and I ate pistachio ice cream cones while we read magazines at the Thrifty at Vermont and Sunset.

How about *au revoir*, instead? •

MR. ENTHUSIASM!

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Nominations, from p. 3

calming presence at meetings, Chris is active in Disaster Preparedness and Neighborhood Watch; he also coordinates distribution of *The Overview*. He has lived in Franklin Hills for 12 years.

Bruce Carroll: What can we say about Bruce? A retired producer for ABC News, a resident of Franklin Hills for many years, he has been serving the Board as Secretary, Treasurer, Photographer, *Overview* contributor, and Chief Humorist for two years.

Bryant Crouse: Bryant has served as Board vice-president since the FHRA was founded. An executive recruiter and meeting facilitator, Bryant's perpetual goals are (a) increasing active membership, (b) developing a functioning committee structure, and (c) keeping the meetings flowing smoothly.

Arnie Netka: Arnie, an 18-year resident of Franklin Hills, is Director of Purchasing of the Port of Los Angeles; his wife, Suzanne, teaches first grade at Franklin Elementary School. He joined

Continued next page

K-9 Tubs

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Carole & Yasue*

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Tuesday to Saturday 8:00-5:00*

the Board last year, to fill a vacancy created by a resignation. The Committee feels that Arnie is a constructive Board member and should serve a full term. He is particularly interested in crime issues.

Carol Skinner: The nominee who is new to the Board this year, Carol is a retired LA Unified School District teacher of choral music. She has been tending to the FHRA mailing list for close to a year now, updating the database, printing out labels as appropriate, keeping track of the membership. Carol is already working closely with the Board, and has demonstrated reliability, competence and enthusiasm. She has lived in Franklin Hills since 1969.

Don Waldrop: Don has served as President of the FHRA since its inception, and was very active for years before that. He is FHRA's sparkplug, the guy who talks to everybody else on the phone or in person, keeps the ball rolling and the scene active.

This slate will be presented at the May 19 Annual Meeting for election. At that time, nominations will also be welcome from the floor. •



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(213) 666-9357



MY VIEW

by Bruce Carroll

Being a pack rat, with a streak of miserly cheapness, among the attractions when I bought my Franklin Hills house were that it had lots of room for what some call junk, and two rooms that were paneled and thus would never need painting.

23 years later the paneling still doesn't need paint, but all that room has been displaced by the things that "I might need again someday." That's why I am thanking God for my miracle on Mayview.

It was while working to bring the convenience of telephone service to my bathroom that the miracle was first revealed. The hole I drilled for the wire went into the bathroom wall but never came out the other side. Measurement around the walls, nooks and crannies left unaccounted for a space 6 feet by 2 feet. Was it filled with ducts and pipes, or was it hoped for storage space?

I enlarged the hole but could see nothing. I made the hole bigger again and retrieved some of the plaster from the inside wall. Although colored a putrid peach, painted plaster proved previous possessors probably paneled a portal. Eureka! I had found more storage space...a long sealed closet.

Eager for more knowledge, I cut other larger holes. Still, I couldn't see much, a wire hanger, paper on the floor and a door with a shoe rack attached. To open up the door I would have to cut

through my precious paneling and rearrange the furniture, which precisely fits into my office like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. I could, of course, cut a new door in the bathroom, but moving the toilet would be an even bigger problem. So I took some days to ponder and imagine.

Who paneled over the closet door? Why would anyone do that? Should I call Geraldo and let his cameras have another chance to search for secret hidden treasure? According to neighborhood legend one previous owner of my house had moved from here directly to San Quentin. Perhaps he had hidden a victim, or left behind some ill-gained treasure, hoping to reclaim it one day. The man had introduced himself to me once, years ago, as he peered through the fence into my backyard. At his request, I showed him through the house. Was it significant that he never asked, "what became of that closet?"

I felt a constant compulsion to look

through my peep holes, even trying unsuccessfully to snag the papers on the floor with a bent hanger and duct tape. My curiosity was rapidly forcing me to drastic action. I finally moved my desk enough to squeeze by and perform exploratory surgery on the paneling. The door was almost where I had figured it would be. The hinges had been removed and dozens of huge nails held it shut. It was a perfectly nice door but my lack of patience doomed it. A little sawing, a little pounding, it was kindling and I was in my new closet.

There I found 63 wire hangers from the days when phone numbers had two letters and five digits, a dusty straw hat, page 2 of a school book report and an empty envelope addressed to J. E. Giron who mortgaged the house in 1964. But I was not disappointed: the true hidden treasure was 96 cubic of storage space and my relief at finding "no skeletons in my closet." •

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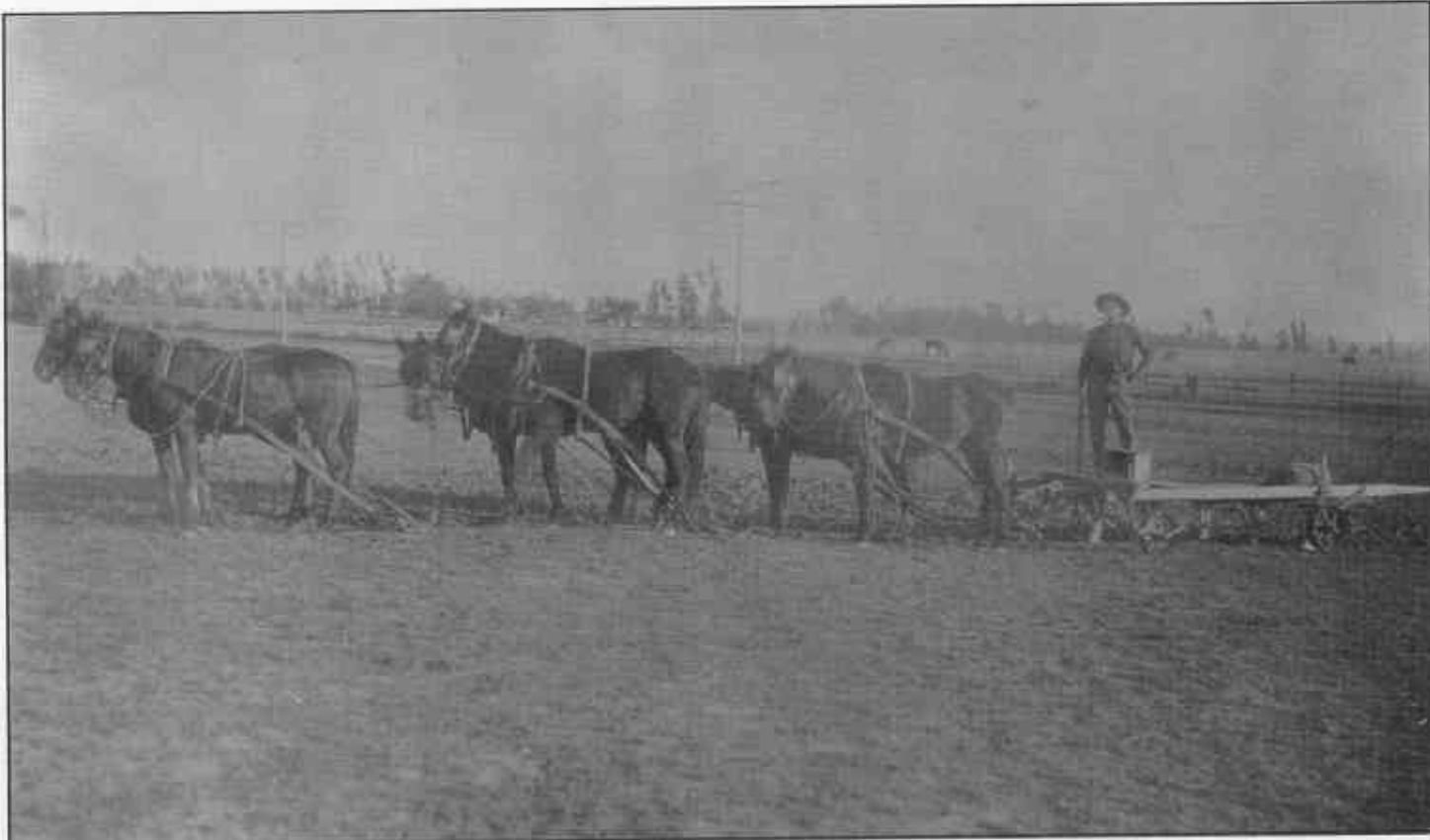
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Vermont Avenue at Normal Street in 1890's

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NEW FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENT FINDS TREASURE

By Bruce Carroll

Since settling into his Franklin Hills apartment last fall, psychologist Adam Weisman has made some interesting discoveries. Walking around, "getting accustomed to the neighborhood," Weisman has uncovered, literally, in some cases, "about 10 stair systems in the hills each with their unique needs and priorities."

Most area residents are familiar with one or two nearby public stairways. Past issues of Overview have pointed out that they were built in the 20's, many by the same contractor who built the Shakespeare Bridge, and that people from all over L.A...drawn by the book *Stairway Walks in Los Angeles*...come to get exercise (and occasionally lost) climbing what Weisman calls, "the treasure of our hills."

But some of the treasure is tarnished, according to Weisman's informal survey, and all is in need of TLC. Rating a "well kept" in the survey are the steps between Franklin & Melbourne and the flight between Clayton and Clayton that lops some curves off of that meandering Avenue. At the bottom of the scale, "worst cared for" is the long system rising from the east side of Udell Court which nearly disappears as it parallels Hyperion then makes an overgrown ascension to Mayview.

Things were even worse last year along southern Sanborn Avenue until residents decided to do something. "You could not even see the stairwell from the street," said Stephen Dreher as he pointed out the now clean steps leading up to Sunset Drive. He termed it "scary," and when neighbors cut down trees and cleared out the brush they "found a lot of syringes and condoms."

Elton Dearman said he "got tired of people hanging out at night...actually camping out," and has worked to make the stairs not only safe but "functional." Once again they are "heavily used by the people in the neighborhood... this is not just joggers' stairway." Dreher has led a campaign that has found the sympathetic ear of Mary Presby in Councilman John Ferraro's office. Recently city workers re-cemented the stairway's rickety

railings and more work on the system's serious drainage problems is promised when funds are available. The city even agrees a light is called for, but not until the other work is done.

If you are interested in preserving, protecting and promoting our public stairways (plus saving the cost of a stair climbing machine) come to the annual meeting where Adam Weisman will discuss his survey, or call the FHRA Hotline 664-7247.

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Trees, from page 1

we did "well enough to say we'll do another one for you." That's gratifying, since the LACC was not able to provide all 89 trees FHRA had requested at once. The area on Talmadge south of Prospect Avenue can look forward to getting its trees at the next planting party.

The trees are Cinnamon Camphors and when they flower in early spring, some say they have a slight cinnamon smell. The flowers are very small and white or yellow. Averaging 10 feet high now, the trees will grow to about 40 feet in 10 to 15 years. Peter Lassen calls them "old fashioned trees," explaining they were popular 70 or 80 years ago and are making a resurgence because they are "drought tolerant." With our recent weather, the question now should be, are they flood tolerant?

To prevent the tragedies and torts caused by ripped up sidewalks, the roots of each tree were surrounded by a root barrier: a 2 foot high plastic ring that encircles the roots and encourages them to grow down before they spread out and ruin sidewalks. Whether the trees will understand this and take the hint will likely take many years to know.

Besides digging the hole, placing the root barrier, preparing the soil, planting the tree and placing the supporting pole, much work needed to be done. Where the sidewalk extends all the way to the curb, cuts had to be made in the concrete, when LACC couldn't do the whole (pun intended) job, the Southern California Gas Company's Rudy Muñiz sent out a crew to cut ten additional holes along Prospect.

Working together with Los Feliz Beautification Committee chair, Tony Scarpelino, FHRA board member Riccardo Accorsi,

whose mission seems to be to plant the town green, made the whole event possible by lining up all the necessary elements from LACC to ABC. One unexpected measure of the day's success was voiced by Rachel Holincheck, in charge of providing the free lunches at the ABC Commissary. As burgers gave way to macaroni and cheese, she regretted, "we're sort of running out of food. We didn't expect so many."

The job of rounding up all those people willing to get down and dirty on a Saturday morning fell to FHRA volunteer coordinator Sandra Harper, who was "thrilled with the turnout." While planting trees may have been alien to many, Ms. Harper said it was "great to see people support their neighborhood and their planet."

Once the trees were tenderly tethered to their support poles, each was named by its platoon of planters. Some proudly honored their own handiwork, like the scouts of "Webe Pack 20," or "Blooming Barristers" from John Marshall High. Other names reflected arboreal adversity as in "Mr. Difficult" and "Rockhard." But most altruistic of all were those who named their tree for another.

Perhaps even "Socrates" the tree, will see wisdom in Socrates the philosopher's words: "Fields and trees teach me nothing, but the people in a city do." A tree named "Dallas" now stands near the KABC entrance weatherman Dallas Raines uses, a reflection of the gratitude we all felt for a planting day without his namesake. And if FHRA President Don Waldrop wants to name the tree he planted "Donald's Lila" after his favorite cat, he and maybe even Lila, have earned the honor. •



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THE GREENING CONTINUES: ONLY WITH YOUR HELP

By Sandy Harper

FHRA is committed to establishing more trees in the neighborhood, but we need your help to continue our efforts. We are already planning for a Fall tree planting: to finish placing trees on Talmadge Avenue (from Franklin down to Fountain) and also up Prospect Avenue on the north side as far as Sanborn.

And, of course, the effort to landscape the median on Franklin Avenue near the Shakespeare Bridge is in its final planning and fund raising stages.

We need your help to:

- Round up volunteers to plant
- Organize and schedule the planting days
- Get "permits to plant" from homeowners
- Seek available funding for trees
- Act as translators in Armenian, Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Spanish

Please, please call us!! We can't accomplish these projects with the few folks we have now! We have big plans and we need enthusiastic volunteers.

Please call Sandra Harper at 661-7674 and help us help Mother Earth!!

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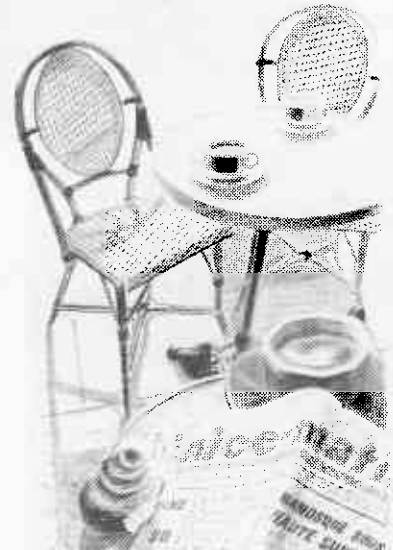
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Tree Planting Day on Talmadge and Prospect

The event even attracted far away royalty. When Monrovia Day Association Queen Kim and Princesses Heather and Carey planted on Prospect, only Carey wore her Tiara.



More than 200 volunteers intently watched how to plant a tree, then put their knowledge to use.

Peter Lassen of the LACC (The Conversation Corps, not the college) teaches tree planting 101 to the volunteer students.



It seemed everyone except one guy and his dog was heading out to plant a tree



Among the youngest, Mack Cook provides his expert perspective on the perfect hole.

It took mighty efforts from Timothy, Jimmy, Nicholas and Darien, with instruction from Dominique, to get their hole on Prospect ready for a tree.



You didn't have to work up a sweat to take part. For those who did, Ruth and Frank Drucker turned their blue Honda into a much welcomed water wagon.

Former FHRA board member Isabel Dietz, getting down and dirty, checks out the soil. It ranged from sandy, to muddy to concrete



MORE PHOTOS, PAGE 20

Neighborhood Councils Movement Forming

By Jim Churchill

An ad-hoc group of people has been working for several months on the idea that City Hall and other governmental bodies can and should be more responsive to neighborhood needs, that a greater degree of real participatory democracy is possible and would be useful in Los Angeles. On March 29, at a meeting hosted by United Streets of Hollywood, the group adopted by consensus the following statement of purpose:

The purposes of this organization are:

- 1) To promote effective neighborhood access to and participation in governmental decision-making affecting Los

Angeles in ways including but not limited to:

- a) developing a process by which people at the neighborhood level develop genuine authority over issues that concern them. This includes support for neighborhood empowerment and effective two-way communication between neighborhoods and government agencies;
- b) working with appropriate organizations and individuals to secure the formal implementation of such a process by city, county and special district governing bodies;
- c) monitoring the success or failure of such implementation over time.

The group is still ad-hoc, still in the midst of figuring out what we want to accomplish and how we think we should go about accomplishing it. We have documents from four cities that have some form of what we're calling "Neighborhood Councils" - Portland, St. Paul, Dayton and San Antonio. We've also become aware of a book that serves as a kind of primer on the subject - The Rebirth of Urban Democracy, by Berry, Portney and Thomson, published by the Brookings Institute.

If you want to read the documents from the different cities, contact Jim Churchill at 213/663-0580. There is a charge for photocopying, which I'll let anyone know after I've made the first set. The Rebirth of Urban Democracy is available from the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC, tel 202/797-6000, for about \$16. And possibly from local bookstores; we haven't tried yet.

And, for free, anyone may attend a working session of this group. Meetings rotate around the City; the next meeting will be at Churchill Films, 12210 Nebraska Ave., West Los Angeles, on April 19 at 7 pm. Churchill Films is one block north of Olympic and one block west of Bundy; exit the Santa Monica Freeway at Bundy North, and turn left on Nebraska after the 3rd stoplight.

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Continued from page 17

Groups of four made the ideal planting team. That allowed Troy and Howard to mug for the camera while Jim and Carlos were doing the dirty work.



Eco Home founder Julia Russell, who brought her own shovel, takes a short break

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Mosquito Alert!!!

by Lisa Brenneis

Lovely winter and spring rains have produced a lush, green, LA landscape and A BUMPER CROP OF MOSQUITOS. Mosquitos breed in stagnant water, and it doesn't take a lot of water to create a mosquito nursery.

There are some simple things you can do to discourage these little biters:

1. Check your yard for standing water in any form:
 - unused spas or pools
 - fish ponds
 - clogged rain gutters
 - old rainwater in flowerpots or buckets
 - water collected in boats

2. Drain any standing water you find. Mosquito larvae cannot survive without it.

3. If draining is impractical, try using mosquito fish. Mosquito fish are tiny minnow-like fish with an insatiable appetite for mosquito larvae.

The Los Angeles County Mosquito Abatement District will supply free mosquito fish to anyone who will come to one of their distribution centers and pick them up. Bring a bucket or a wide mouth jar of at least one gallon capacity, it's strictly B.Y.O.B..

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HOW TO PREVENT MAIL THEFT

By Pamela L. Prince

Postal Inspector, Los Angeles Division, Pasadena

The Postal Service emphasizes crime awareness and prevention by having inspectors and other postal managers speak with our employees Neighborhood Watch groups. We appreciate opportunities like this column to reach local residents. The Postal Service offers rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of mail thieves for postal-related crimes. Anyone with information that may help us solve any postal crime or find suspects is urged to call our 24-hour hotline 818-405-1200. Postal customers who are victims of mail theft may also call this number to file a complaint.

Meanwhile, what can citizens do to prevent mail theft?

- Be observant of activities on your street, particularly around your letter carrier's normal delivery time. Thieves don't want witnesses and will leave your neighborhood.
- Immediately report all suspicious activities by calling 911, the postal inspectors and your local post office.
- Be a good witness. Record suspect and vehicle descriptions as well as license plate numbers. If you really want to get into the act, point your camcorder in the direction of ongoing crimes and capture the thieves on film.
- Arrange for direct deposit of your checks from the sender into your bank account. Thieves haven't quite figured out how to overcome wire or computer entry systems.
- Arrange for your mail to be delivered directly into a post office box (not a box at a private mail receiving agency). This way your mail will not be subject to attack in a delivery vehicle.
- Do not leave your mail unattended for long periods of time in an unlocked mailbox. Contact your local post office to arrange for a locked mailbox unit to be installed in your neighborhood.
- Write out in full the "payee" line on your checks and take up as much space as possible. It's easy for a forger to erase or alter initials such as DMV, GTE, GMAC, etc. Also, complete the "amount" and "check memo" sections in full rather than abbreviating.
- Join a Neighborhood Watch program.

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FRANKLIN AVENUE MEDIAN BEAUTIFICATION

A FEW MORE WORDS IN ANTICIPATION OF A FEW LESS WEEDS

It seems the Overview has reported the imminent beautification of the Franklin median nearly as often as the Star has reported Elvis was sighted by space aliens. But with the great success of the Talmadge and Franklin tree planting in March as inspiration, and some \$\$ as fertilizer, we should now be able to actually get on with it. The city has already cleared the spring weeds.

Of course comparing the median project to a morning of tree planting, is like equating a pyramid with a sand castle. Landscaping the median seems to require more planning than plants. After negotiating the maze of city permits and approvals, providing for erosion control

and a water supply, we thought the paper work was done and the spade work could begin. Now alas, red tape has been replaced with red wire...the current problem is providing electricity for the irrigation system. We hope to have that solved in time for summer planting.

There we go making another prediction. But as anyone who's ever planned a home improvement knows, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that time estimates aren't worth the calendar they're written on. (Actually if this had been the April Fools Day issue of the Overview we could have reported the job was done. We had the ex-NASA design firm of Brown, Weeds & Grass

develop the lovely stealth median you've seen recently.)

But things can change, and you're the one who can change them. As the old saying goes "it takes Green to make Green." After a strong initial spurt contributions have slowed to a trickle, and while the plants will be drought resistant, getting them in the ground and established will take a flood of help from guys like Lincoln, Hamilton, Jackson, Grant and Franklin...checks are fine too. After you make out yours, spread the word, then cross your fingers and visualize the next Overview headline: Franklin Median: Clean and Green. •

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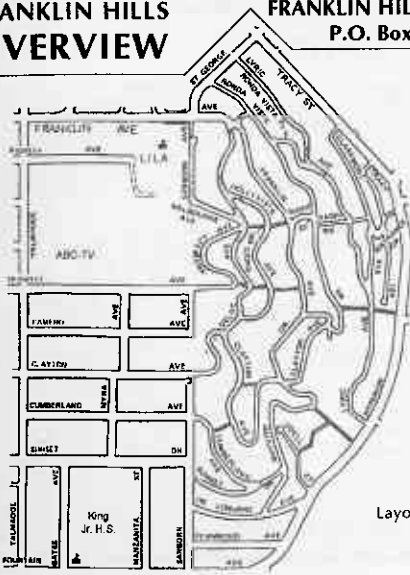
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