



OVERVIEW



Photo by Bruce Carroll

The back side of the library may not look like much in this photo from late October but architect Barton Phelps says when the rest of the trees and landscaping are added this will be the buildings' "best side".

STAR DONATES COMPUTER CENTER

by Pearl Yonezawa, Senior Librarian

Two exciting events are helping the library as we move toward opening in the new building in early 1999 (no date set as of press time).

A Los Feliz Library patron, movie star Leonardo DiCaprio has donated \$35,000 for a state-of-the-art computer center. The computers & programs will help patrons improve their math, reading, language, computer & study skills. The new library building is on the former

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Interior (right) and exterior of almost completed Los Feliz library

LOS FELIZ LIBRARY OPENING AT LAST!

Library architect Barton Phelps, center, stands below one of the light chambers in the main reading room while project architect David Haggerty, left, explains the plan to visiting architects.



Photo by Bruce Carroll

ALMOST ONE FOR THE BOOKS

by Bruce Carroll

"The approach from the Franklin Hills is the best." That's architect Barton Phelps' view as his design for our Los Feliz Branch library nears reality. The library has a dual personality design that stems, he explained, from competing community concepts... "very urban on one side [Hillhurst] suburban on the other... for hill dwellers who live on curvy streets off the grid."

Phelps says library patrons will "get out of their car and go through a nice area." An area that he's transforming from a mere parking lot into a woodsy garden with several California Live Oaks (the state tree) wisteria vines climbing to the roof and

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LOS FELIZ BRANCH TO OPEN SOON

By Charley M. Mims

The contractor hopes to complete work on our Los Feliz Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library by the end of this year! They are working on the parking lot area and the interior finish now. Work

A well-founded rumour in the community says that Titanic star Leonardo DiCaprio plans to attend at least one of the opening events!

on the landscaping will start next. The architect is mulling over the right paint color for the exterior finish of our library to make sure it complements his wonderful design.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Adam M. Weisman
President

Seasons Greetings! As the year inches toward the end it is a pleasure to think back about the goals and challenges met by your Franklin Hills Residents' Association. From the start of the year FHRA has worked very hard developing creative events and helping improve our wonderful neighborhood. Since the completion of the Shakespeare Bridge a committee has been working with city officials to complete its restoration. The latter have informed FHRA that additional construction will be necessary to maintain the historical features. This work should begin during early 1999, and we hope will not cause more than one month of a single lane road. After this work is completed a committee will turn its sights to the purchase of two benches along the ends. It was nice to see the bridge pictured in the October issue of Sunset magazine. It was also nice to be invited to the Los Angeles Conservancy 20th Anniversary Festival which recognizes organizations involved in the historical preservation of Southern California. With the help of the students of *Lycée International de Los Angeles* (LILA—The French American Schools of Southern California) holiday lighting will add some seasonal elegance to our bridge.

Currently board members and committees are busy with crime prevention, the Hillside Federation, King Middle School landscape restoration, LILA, the Hyperion Corridor, City Charter, traffic congestion, street fairs, parking and the Franklin Avenue Median. New projects and interests include the reopening of the Los Feliz Public Library, Red Line Shuttle Service and Griffith Observatory renovation. Of course aside from the standing committees, the board is always concerned to address immediate neighborhood concerns. Whether it is a tree, car, pet, skunk, or criminal event, we enjoy tackling each issue and would be glad to gain some new volunteers. The FHRA Hot Line (323-664-7247) always presents us with new challenges, which lead to new resources or linkages with City services.

Through the work of board and area volunteers, FHRA has been faced with extremely LARGE projects coupled with small (in number) volunteer committees. The projects (i.e. the Bridge Party, the median, this newsletter, etc.) have been successful and, not surprisingly, some volunteers burn out and need a sabbatical. More hands to share the project would relieve this problem. They (projects) are not only useful, they are interesting to do, and meetings are actually fun! I hope that many of you readers will make a New Year's resolution to devote some time to your community through FHRA. Big or small, each project is important to us, and you *can* make a difference.

As we end the tax year, please consider FHRA among your tax deductible contributions. Many dues-paying members have given extra donations (Wow! Thank you!) There are an estimated 2000 separate residential units within our boundaries and only a fraction send in dues. This year the fraction is smaller than usual, and the outgo larger (due mostly to the Bridge party). We regard everyone who lives on the hill as a member, and are interested in all of your interest. All we ask is \$10 per person or \$20 per family. Please help us maintain an ongoing donation pool to create projects and events. Another way each active member can help is to get at least one neighbor to join. We have many new residents have moved here. Let -them know about FHRA.

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Published by:

Community Computer Services

Editor: Carol Skinner

Contributing Writers:

Bruce Carroll, MJ Levine

Shirley Newland, Charley Mims

Len Mindes, Robert Page,

Mary Rodriguez, Carol Skinner,

Donald Waldrop, Adam Weisman,

Pearl Yonezawa, Marcelle Zonta

Ad Sales & Distribution:

Chris Boutelle, 666-5548

The Franklin Hills OVERVIEW is published as often as possible. We invite your comments on matters relating to articles and the community and, space permitting, we will publish letters mailed to *Editor, OVERVIEW, Box 29122, Los Angeles, CA 90029*

"OLD LA" STILL AN OXYMORON

By Bruce Carroll

On October 11th an official FHRA delegation attended a birthday party at the LA Coliseum. But it wasn't for the Coliseum's 75th birthday. It seems when you get that far up in years many of your old friends...Rams, Raiders, etc...have moved on.

This was a party for the Los Angeles Conservancy whose mission is to see that old buildings like the Coliseum do not have to move on or get mowed down. Dedicated to preserving LA's architectural history, the Conservancy invited the FHRA, and 29 other local groups that help protect our past, to celebrate The Conservancy's 20 years of hard work. Among the treasures they've saved are St. Vibiana's Cathedral, the Bullocks Wilshire Tower, the art deco May Company also on Wilshire and even the oldest living McDonalds...it's been in Downey for 45 years.

The Conservancy provided each group a table, 2 chairs, and a little bit of shade at the peristyle end of the Coliseum...from there we were on our own. Before we were even finished setting up FHRA-land, event organizer Ken Bernstein, the Conservancy's director of Preservation Issues, came by and pointed out that we had the "most ambitious" display and if they'd been giving out awards we would have won.

FHRA President Adam Weisman brought our large stock of FHRA T-shirts in 3 styles and many sizes.

Treasurer Bruce Carroll, hoping to make a few bucks for the FHRA, set up our display of old area photos dating back to 1917. And Median chair Shirley Newland brought her TV/VCR so we could show the official FHRA tape of Bridge Party '98 and Median Magic.

While both sales and crowds were quite modest, it was a good day to meet leaders of other community groups, exchange ideas and tour the Coliseum. I found out the locker room has no lockers. It was also a chance to have a big bite of birthday cake in honor of the organization that works hard to keep bulldozers from taking big bites of old LA.

Editor's note...if you are interested in joining, or learning more, you can contact:
The Los Angeles Conservancy
523 W. 6th St. #1216, Los Angeles, CA 90014.
213-623-2489



Bruce Carroll, Adam Weisman & Shirley Newland in their little bit of shade at the Coliseum Peristyle



By Shirley Newland

I once lived in a house that was intended to be a temporary residence. Except for a few shrubs and a spotty lawn, the yard was bare. I love to garden but, planning to be there for only a few months, I just tended to the plants that were there and replaced a few rose bushes that had fallen to the neglect of previous tenants. Seven years later I was still there and still basically looking at a dirt patch.

I learned several lessons from that experience, one being to not let life pass me by anymore. I may start something that turns out to be not so worth while, but at least I tried. If I get involved with something that does not last very long, like the Shakespeare Bridge retrofitting project, I am glad to have been a part of it while it did last. And if a project endures I get to enjoy it every day.

The Franklin Avenue median is an enduring project that, like my yard, was starting to fall to neglect. Unlike past experience, I did not let this go by the wayside. A maintenance committee was formed to revive the median. I got a little carried away at first and made some poor choices of plants and ended up bringing them home to nurse back to health in a more suitable environment. Melinda Taylor who designed the median selected native California plants that can withstand the harsh exposure they get all day and night long. With her ongoing commitment to the original design, Melinda is guiding the committee to restore the median to its intended splendor of natural colors and beauty.

Under this precept, the median will be around for many years. The purpose of the maintenance committee is to involve local residents for its perpetual care. If you are interested in learning the proper care of native California plants and have the time to spare call the hotline today. One person can do a lot in just two hours. For anyone with a love for gardening this is a great way of contributing to the community and sharing the information with neighbors to ensure the care of the median for many years to come.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In closing, it has been a great pleasure and honor to work in the management of this Association. The responsibilities and duties have been very rewarding. With established committees and new projects, there is enough work and fun to keep us busy for years. And, with the help of your donations and active membership, Franklin Hills Residents Association will continue to provide dependable and quality service.

Happy New Year

Adam M. Weisman
President,
Franklin Hills Residents Association

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COMPUTER CENTER

site of the DiCaprio family home where Leonardo lived during his teenage years. Since the family used the library they wanted to give something back to the community.

Another exiting project is SKYLIGHT'S: LIGHTING: THE WAY TO READING IN OUR COMMUNITY. This special book drive allows you purchase a tax deductible hardcover book from Skylight Books for a 10% discount to donate to the library. Books will have a *Skylights Project* bookplate and Skylight Books will display an ornament for each donation on the tree in the store. Details about the SKYLIGHTS PROJECT are available at Skylight Books, 1818 N. Vermont Ave. and at the Los Feliz Branch Library at 1801 Hillhurst Ave.



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(at the former location of La Conversation)
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Revised 11/98; Thanks to C-PAB for updated info

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ABC-TELEVISION:

Security: (310) 557-5354.

ALARM PERMITS (323)485-2931

ANIMAL REGULATION (323) 485-5765

DEAD ANIMAL PICKUP (323) 227-7179

BRIGHT LIGHTS Streetlight repair (800) 303-5267

BUILDING & SAFETY VIOLATIONS: (323)237- 0685

COUNCILMAN JOHN FERRARO, 4th District-

(323) 485-3337

Room M-30, City Hall, 200 Spring St., L.A. 90012

ENVIRONMENTAL:

Recycling: (800)-CITYSAN

Rebate for Ultra Low Flush Toilet installation.

(323) 481-5800; (800) 722-1122

Rebate for Super Efficient Gas Water Heater.

(800) 852-9820

Hazardous Waste Hotline (323) 237-1634

Operation Clean Sweep (323) 237-1797

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Emergency 911;

Non-emergency: 485-6185.

HOMELESS, Food and Shelter (323) 974-1234

INFO LINE (L.A. County Referral Service) (213) 686-0950

LOS FELIZ PUBLIC LIBRARY: (323) 913-4710

NEIGHBOR DISPUTE: (323) 485-8324

PARKING ENFORCEMENT: (213)485-4184

POLICE: EMERGENCY 911;

Spanish: (323) 485-4333; Asian: (323) 893-8100

Northeast Division, 3353 San Fernando Road, LA 90065:

ADULT/WOMEN ABUSE (800) 978-3600

Community Relations (323) 485-2548

GANG PROBLEMS: (323) 485-7538

GRAFFITI : (323) 237-0511

LAPD ONLINE: <http://www.lapd.org>

Main Desk (323) 485-2563

Reports: (323) 485-4193

Sr. Lead Officer Al Polehonki (323) 485-4079

Sr. Lead Officer Sam Salazar: (323) 847-3135

Traffic Enforcement (Speeding) (323) 485-2799

Los Feliz Outpost: 1965 Hillhurst Ave. (323) 913-4682

POISON CONTROL (800) 777-6476

RAPE HOTLINE (213) 392-8381

RESTRAINING ORDER (213) 974-5587

STREET SERVICES: (800) 996-2489

TRASH RECEPTACLE INFO: (800) 248-9726

BULK ITEM REMOVAL (800)773-2489

MISSED PICK-UP (800) 773-2489

TREE TRIMMING (Hazards)(800) 996-2489

WATER & POWER: (323) 485-4211

WE TIP (Anonymous crime tips) (800) 873-7283

FRANKLIN FOTOS

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

We guarantee they will be handled very carefully while we have a copy negative made. The originals will be returned to you in their original condition. Look for your old photographs and give us a call!

FHRA Hotline: 664-7247

Please Patronize "Our" Advertisers

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

The businesses that are advertising in this newsletter are charged the absolute minimum possible advertising fees. Their ads pay for the paper and any surplus supports FHRA on-going projects.

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FHRA NEEDS YOUR HELP in fighting graffiti in our area. We need someone to organize paint outs and people to work.

We provide all materials.

Call the Hotline to volunteer. 664-7247

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... ONE FOR THE BOOKS

boulders along the path, some even inside the building. Because the site was somewhat larger than needed for the 10,500 square foot building, he was able to create his mini park plus 20% more parking spaces than required.

But a library is primarily for parking books and the butts of those reading them, and here Phelps' creation seems to excel. Having watched the construction since ground breaking, but only seeing the outside, I was thrilled when I walked through the doors. I audibly exclaimed to myself, "it's beautiful."

What drew my unaccustomed compliment was the rich look of the redwood lined columns and walls which cry out for curling up with a good book. Only the lack of any books yet, or a place to curl up other than the very dusty floor kept me looking around. Phelps assured me that not only was the redwood of the wall "not from old growth trees," but there will be tables and chairs in the center of the long reading room and sofa like comfortable furniture at the south end. The stacks for books will run perpendicular to the wall on the Hillhurst side and the books will aid the thick walls in providing that essential library element, quiet.

Another essential library element is light, and Phelps' design expresses his belief that on any day in southern California you should be able to "read a book without turning on a light." To provide that constant light, the ceiling of the main room is made up of six "light chambers"...sort of skylights on steroids...that bring in light from east, west and above, then distribute it evenly on the reading area below. The last of the "light chambers" is the distinctive corner of the building at Franklin and Hillhurst.

It was originally going to be an area for young people where, in Phelps' planning, "kids would want to come here to see and be seen and this would be kind of a neighborhood sort of hang-out." But that plan has changed. The glassed-in area which Phelps refers to as "a lantern at night" is now set to attract all ages; he says, "I think it was decided it was too good."

The kids do have a homework center along the Franklin side, plus a large children's library in the southeast corner of the building. And there is a very special "clearing in the woods" storytelling room that seems to be one of Phelps' favorite places. There he tells of performing architectural magic by turning a square room into a round room and then, by placing manzanita branches overhead and a tree trunk at the door, hoping to turn it into not a room at all.

The building also has a special place for community meetings with a capacity of about 70. In order to get that many folks you'll probably need refreshments and there is even a little kitchen to take care of that chore. The room, on the northeast corner, has its own entrance so it can be used when the library is closed.



Architect Barton Phelps explains the illusion of turning a square room into a round one that with the addition of manzanita branches will become a clearing in the woods

Community input was obviously very important to Phelps who pointed out that while the area is renowned for its works by icons of modern architecture Wright, Shindler, Neutra, Lautner, "There were people in the neighborhood who kept saying 'Spanish Colonial, Spanish colonial. It must be Spanish Colonial' so we said what is Spanish Colonial. It's thick walls. It's light and shade...we said we could do that." But with a modern interpretation.

Phelps also took the opportunity to point out that the green and brown tiles that embellish the window wells along Hillhurst were, you guessed it, "made in Spain." The windows, incidentally, are angled so that library patrons who chance to glance away from the printed page will have their gaze drawn to the Griffith Observatory...albeit somewhat marred by mini-mall signs and utility wires.

Perhaps the unsightly aspects of the view will be softened by the wisteria vines which, if they do their part, will be creeping up guide wires toward the metal poles that extend from the Hillhurst facade. Those poles will also carry big metal letters saying "Los Angeles Public Library."

While the project is several months behind schedule, and some have expressed frustration with the slow pace of the work, it does look like we are going to get a really special place. It has already won at least one award. It will be a library that has both the beauty and importance to command attention plus the functionality and comfort that will make us want to keep coming back.

And coming back will be easy for FHRAers. According to project architect David Haggerty the driveway you see on the Franklin side is "just an entrance...that's for the people from Franklin Hills to be able to enter." Thanks...

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LIBRARY OPENING

On October 27, 1998, David Moss, President of Friends of Los Feliz Branch Library, along with Marilyn Bush of Los Feliz Improvement Association and Charley Mims of the Franklin Hills Residents Association met with Councilmember, John Ferraro, members of his staff, and Lucy McCoy, President of the Los Angeles Library Commission to discuss the opening of our library. Leaders of our community have been meeting to decide how o support can best be generated for our library. A committee chaired by David Moss has agreed to host a pre-opening fundraiser at the library to show the commitment of all the neighbors toward the success of the Los Feliz Branch Library. John Ferraro stated his strong support for our communities' effort to support our new library and to work with us and the Library Department to make our fundraiser and the library opening a premier community event for 1999! Lucy McCoy pledged to work with our committee to make the opening a community event.

We plan on an opening on a Sunday in early February, with a preview fundraising dinner the Saturday night before the opening. Marilyn Bush has volunteered to head the fundraiser subcommittee and will need all of our support throughout the community to assure its success. So save your post holiday dollars for a grand local cause. From our comfortable families to those of us who are struggling financially, our library brings us all together. The opening will be a great time to once more demonstrate our commitment to supporting a great local library, our own Los Feliz Branch! We will have another subcommittee to plan our opening Please contact the FHRA Hotline to volunteer your help and expertise. Our own Don Waldrop has volunteered to work on the committee and, as a reminder, Don chaired our wildly successful Shakespeare Bridge re-opening! So expect another great time at this major community event early in 1999.

THE CLASSIC BRIDGE T-SHIRT IS NOW IN FULL COLOR



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FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION MEMBER?: YES NO

ROUNDUP OF RECENT RESTAURANTS

by Dave Hall.



The Los Feliz area has been blessed with a number of new restaurants within the last year or so -- too many for this reviewer to visit without a real bankroll like the one provided by the L.A. Times for its restaurant reviewer. (hint, hint.)

Normally when restaurants are reviewed they are visited numerous times, so that one bad day doesn't spoil a restaurant's reputation. However, in this case, even though I have specialized only on the newer restaurants of Hillhurst and Vermont Avenues, this was impossible. Therefore, I want to give a preliminary review of the few new restaurants that I was able to get to multiple times and then just list the important information on some of the other ones. This is by no means a complete listing of all the new restaurants in the area and the reader should keep in mind that there are many really fine ones that have been here for years and are wonderful to visit.

Listed in alphabetical order:

Café Los Feliz – (323) 664-7111. 2118 Hillhurst Avenue, where La Conversation once was. Offering Armenian specialties, sandwiches, French pastries, custom-made cakes. They open for lunch at 11 am. Brunch on the weekends, breakfast every day. Limited seating with indoors and sidewalk tables.

The Coffee Bean – 2281 Hillhurst Avenue. (323) 913-3457. Another in the well-known chain, excellent, the main competitor to Starbucks. The Coffee Bean stocks an interesting range of coffees, takeouts & sweets. A large outdoor seating area with umbrella; a great meeting place! Open M-F at 6:30 am, Sat-Sun at 7:00. Close M-Th. at 11, F-Sat at 12 am, Sun at 11.



The Electric Lotus – 4656 Franklin Ave., next to the Seven-Eleven. (323) 953-0040. Finally, an Indian restaurant to call our own, featuring delicious northern Indian food, carefully prepared. Its location, at Vermont and Franklin, makes it perfect for a pre-movie meal. A little noisy, with Indian pop/rock playing on a hi-fi, it features booth seating in a storefront ambiance, excellent service and wonderful food.



Home Los Feliz – 1760 Hillhurst Avenue. (323) 655-HOME. Fax: (323) 669-0241. With its arching sign, proclaiming "There's No Place Like Home," this new restaurant has great potential. Arguably the place with the most beautiful and inviting outdoor patio, Home has extensive menus for breakfast (18+ dishes) and lunch (20 dishes plus salads) but, as of this writing, has added only a few specials to fill out the menu for dinner. The vegetarian burrito is excellent as are the wraps and the omelettes. The front patio has about 20 tables and there are a smaller number of tables in the redecorated interior dining room. An interesting idea is the TV room, with the plush sofa and lamps, which makes waiting for a table more than bearable.

Unfortunately, Home has a major flaw that seems to be unaddressed at this writing. The only non-smoking area is indoors, and after this writer finished his meals on the patio, he left feeling as if he had smoked an entire



pack of cigarettes during the meal! Upon inquiry, he was told that there were no plans to reserve a part of the patio area for non-smokers, banishing them to eating indoors only. It appears that Home has strong appeal to the adamant smoking crowd and that many of its owners and staff are active smokers. If inhaling second-hand smoke while you eat doesn't appeal to you, Home is not for you. But it provides a wonderful, totally unrestricted play space for smokers.



The Mustard Seed Café – 1948 Hillhurst Avenue. (323) 660-0670. This is an excellent little café with both indoor and sidewalk seating, a fine menu that includes takeout, and careful, friendly service. The menu includes interesting salads and entrees, with some vegetarian dishes as well as unusual meat dishes and some wonderful desserts. The food ranges from a Chipotle Chicken Wrap through Chicken Quesadillas to a lovely Grilled Vegetarian Sandwich, with Portobello mushrooms. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner (8 am to 8 pm, Sundays til 5 pm), although one night we arrived at 7 pm and they were closing. A great place for a relaxing, delicious meal.

More to come, next issue.

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

*Thank you for your patronage
and support during 1998.*

*It is always my pleasure to
serve you. Let's work together
again in 1999.*

*Your Premier Franklin Hills Realtor,
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Robert Kalin
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