

OVERVIEW

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE No. 20

WINTER 2000



photo by Carol Skinner

Looking west from Franklin Hills: west out Hollywood Boulevard, on a clear fall morning.

COMMUNITY POLICING

SENIOR LEAD OFFICERS: Re-Deployed?

BY Carol Skinner

In October of this year the Los Angeles Times carried a short article announcing that the LAPD would be reinstating the Senior Lead Officer program in response to community demand. Ever since the SLOs were put back in the cars community activists all over the city had been writing letters and attending meetings to no apparent effect; so this was good news indeed. Follow-up information for this announcement has been nonexistent at this writing (early November.)

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Here's such information as could be gleaned at a Northeast Division Community Police Advisory

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LAPD Northeast:

Where Are All The Officers?

by Mary Rodriguez

This time last year I remember seeing bike patrol officers riding around John Marshall High and the Los Feliz business district on Hillhurst and Vermont Avenues. They were a much welcomed sight and a beneficial addition to our Community Police Center, 2nd floor of CalFed on Hillhurst. I remember seeing quite a few black & white patrol cars along Sunset Blvd. and Franklin Ave. driving around the neighborhood. Now I no longer see the friendly faces of the bike patrol because it was discontinued, due to fewer LAPD officers. Currently, the Northeast Division, which covers Los Feliz, Franklin Hills, East Hollywood, Silver Lake, Atwater, Griffith Park and many other communities east of the river, is down 29 officers and counting.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Ricardo Gomez

Our June 7, 2000 annual meeting was a success. Approximately 150 residents attended the event at ABC-TV studios. FHRA sends its warmest thanks to the staff at ABC for making Rehearsal Hall One available and for the refreshments they provided, and to our neighbor Vivian Shea for providing her wonderful cookies. A special thanks to Nora Mosqueda of ABC who arranged the space for us. Nora grew up in our community and graduated from Marshall High School in 1969. She is president of the Marshall High School Alumni Association. The Association helps raise funds for Marshall and publishes an alumni newsletter three times a year. If you're a "lost" Marshall alumnus or would like to support the school, please contact the Alumni Office at (323) 953-6542 for more information. Again, thank you ABC for taking the time to get involved in your local community.

Attendance at our general meetings is very important because of the image it projects to City officials and politicians. The mere act of attending a meeting demonstrates significant community involvement and creates a visual "show of force" that tells our local politicians that we care about our community. When politicians walk into a community meeting the first thing they do is count heads. They are thinking of votes. Our feedback tells us that the June 7, meeting certainly passed the head count test. The City and State officials who attended the meeting were very impressed with the large turnout, the content of the program and the level of participation from the audience. Simply put, the large turnout at the meeting significantly increased my clout and that of the other board members when dealing with City government. Our calls are getting returned and the City is finally paying more attention to our local infrastructure needs. Thank you for attending the meeting and enabling FHRA to pursue its goal of improving our community.

Our accomplishments grow each year. We landscaped what was once just an asphalt median west of the bridge. We oversaw the restoration of the bridge. Those trees you see on Talmadge and Prospect avenues in the vicinity of ABC and elsewhere, we planted several years ago in a joint project with other community groups. More recently, FHRA has been instrumental in getting trees planted on Myra Avenue between Fountain Avenue and Santa Monica Blvd. Fourteen trees have been planted and another sixty are on the way. We had to get the City Council to pass a special motion to remove certain legal obstacles to this tree planting. We are actively involved in cleaning up the Myra Avenue underpass at Sunset Blvd. Thanks to lobbying from FHRA, we are finally getting streets re-paved. Sections of Franklin Ave and Cumberland Avenue were recently re-paved and we have a commitment from the City to re-pave several more streets in the area in the near future. We made a substantial contribution towards restoring the statue at King Middle School. We are actively involved in improving King and its surroundings. Recently we helped concerned parents lobby the Board of Education to designate King a computer learning center. These efforts succeeded and the Board approved the request. We are now waiting for implementation once some renovations are done.

There are many other FHRA accomplishments. I have highlighted a few to demonstrate that your membership dues, volunteer activities and attendance at meetings all have tremendous impact on the quality of life in your community. However, FHRA needs more membership participation. We need more volunteers to help us out with projects. If you have time to volunteer or know someone who does, please contact us. If you don't have time to volunteer, your membership dues and donations are greatly appreciated as is your atten-

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THE OVERVIEW — WINTER 2000

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ANNUAL MEETING HELD AT ABC LAST JUNE



photo by Bruce Carroll

Although it looks like FHRA's annual meeting was held in a forest last winter, the cool setting for the June meeting was really an ABC-TV rehearsal hall. A record turnout of over 150 neighbors enjoyed good company, some tasty snacks and re-elected five FHRA board members.

Those winning your vote of confidence: Peter Bedard, the newest board member whose efforts have spruced up the area around King Middle School; Ricardo Gomez, FHRA president; Charley Mims, FHRA secretary; Adam Weisman, FHRA Chairman; and Marcelle Zonta, FHRA transit chair whose aim is getting a DASH bus route connecting the Franklin Hills to the Red Line subway.

In addition to hearing that things at the FHRA were running well, we heard from several experts with suggestions on how to improve the level of service and responsiveness we get from various Los Angeles city departments. Plus the 56 new and renewing members who paid their FHRA dues at the meeting gave a great start to what has turned out to be a record year for FHRA memberships...breaking last year's record of 328.

October 21 saw a truly festive gathering on the bridge: the wedding of two prominent FHRA members. In fact, FHRA would like to claim credit for introducing them. Charley Mims (second from left) is our recording secretary and long time resource person on all matters constructional. Shirley Newland first appeared in these pages as "our lady on the bridge," observing and reporting on the earthquake re-construction and eventually becoming profoundly involved in the bridge party (see Overview 17) and other community events. To the left of Charley is Linda, the presiding minister, to the right of Shirley is her grandmother making sure her crown is right; then Diane Hampton and Shirley's father Bob Hampton, and almost out of the frame, Jean Hampton, Shirley's mother.



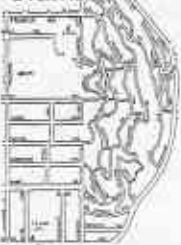
Last overview returned by Post Office

...
they couldn't find City Hall

The FHRA tries to keep in close touch with our city government but after we mailed the last issue of the Overview, we feared for a while that our leaders had skipped town and not left a forwarding address. But it appears that the Post Office has just updated the old saying "you can't fight city hall"...their version, "we can't find city hall."

FRANKLIN HILLS
OVERVIEW

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
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THE OVERVIEW — SPRING/SUMMER 2000

LAPD, continued from page 1

There are many reasons that Northeast is losing officers including retirement, transfers and firings. The entire Los Angeles Police Department is down 1,000 employees. Many of these jobs are civilian, many clerical but somebody still needs to cover the "police" work. Who is covering this work? As for the patrol officers, it is very difficult to deter crime in Los Feliz when you are called across town to Eagle Rock to handle a situation because there are not enough officers covering the Eagle Rock, Highland Park, Cypress Park, Glassell Park, Elysian Valley, Mt. Washington areas; all parts of the Northeast Division.

The news reports that crime is on the rise. Many of us may have experienced this first or second hand. How will crime decrease with fewer patrols? Community policing would be one answer, but I am not convinced that officers from our side of the division, familiar with the problems in our area, are able to commit to patrolling and attending community meetings, especially when the call comes for them to assist with gang activity in the Figueroa Corridor in Mt. Washington.

Recently there were 2 murders along the Los Angeles River in Atwater. Apparently two local gang members encountered someone tagging in their area and shot him. A man biking along the newly installed city bike path may have witnessed the murder so he was killed, as well. Atwater and the Elysian Valley have heavy gang areas along the river. The city has greened, paved, beautified, and installed lights to encourage city dwellers to use the river for recreation, never addressing or alerting the community to the gang issues. The bike patrol should be reinstated along the river and the community should be apprised of the dangers of riding through the area.

Last June the General Manager of the Department of Recreation and Parks reached a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the LAPD Chief that would strip the City's Park Rangers of their law enforcement authority, including subduing violent individuals and making arrests. The Rangers could still enforce the leash law and issue parking tickets, relying solely on the LAPD Northeast Division to patrol and enforce the law in two of the City's largest urban parks, Griffith Park and Elysian Park. The surrounding communities would be severely impacted should this agreement be implemented at this time, when the Northeast Division is so understaffed. The Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners has not approved the MOA and has requested the department modify the plan for the larger parks.

Gang activity is becoming more prevalent in every community. I'm sure that you have noticed more graffiti than usual in the last year.

The dismantling of the CRASH Units in all of the divisions may have given the green light to some gang members. While the new Gang Detail officers are becoming experienced with gang members, boundaries, identities, etc., our communities are paying the price for too few patrol officers covering too large an area.

LAPD officers want to do a good job. They take pride in their work and in themselves. I personally know more than a few really good, intelligent, caring, and well-meaning police officers. I hate it when I hear them apologize for what happened in Rampart, our neighboring division. It is a reflection on them, but it is not them. I am concerned about low morale. I recently asked some officers why in the world they would want to be LAPD. They laughed but they emphatically replied, "Because LAPD is the best in the world." Yes, it has to do with "1-Adam 12", and "Jack Webb." Those images remain carved in their minds as they aspire to protect and serve, sometimes against all odds.

As a law abiding citizen, a community activist and a member of the Los Feliz Improvement Association's Police Committee, I am very concerned that when the LAPD baby boomers hit retirement age, which begins next year, 2001, this city will experience a real crisis in crime management. The police academies are at the lowest enrollment they have ever been. What can LAPD offer young people for incentive? What can politicians do to encourage retiring officers to stay a while longer? I don't hear this subject discussed among any of the mayoral or city council candidates and that worries me. Next time you have the opportunity to speak with a candidate bring up the subject and please let me know what they say.

Mary Rodriguez lives in Los Feliz—just north of our bridge—and is a hard-working community activist, the mother of school age children and a frequent contributor to the Overview.



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