



# OVERVIEW

## FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

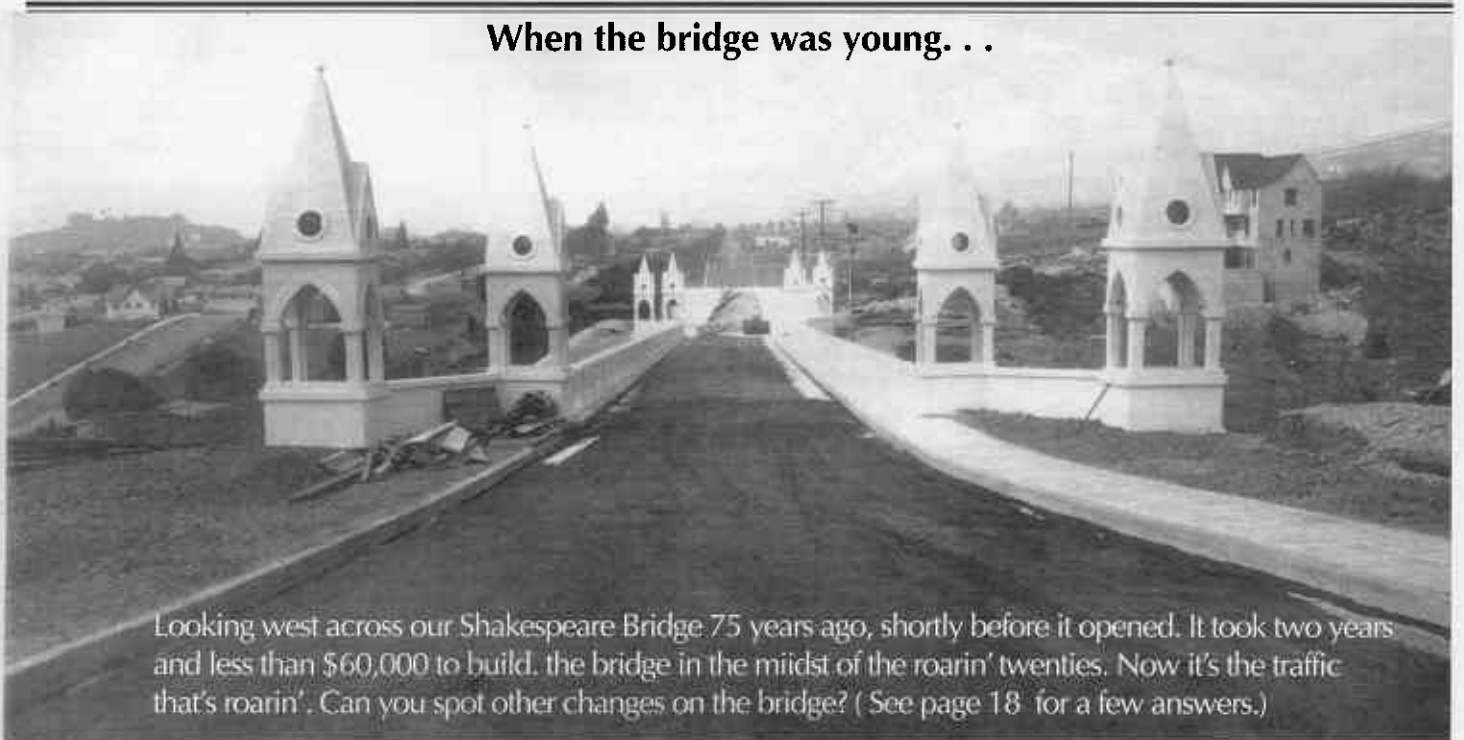
ISSUE No. 21

SPRING/SUMMER 2001

### ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 13 7 P.M. AT ABC

ENTER ON PROSPECT AVE JUST EAST OF TALMADGE; THE GUARD WILL GIVE YOU PARKING DIRECTIONS

When the bridge was young. . .



Looking west across our Shakespeare Bridge 75 years ago, shortly before it opened. It took two years and less than \$60,000 to build the bridge in the midst of the roarin' twenties. Now it's the traffic that's roarin'. Can you spot other changes on the bridge? (See page 18 for a few answers.)

### FRANKLIN HILLS IS ON THE THRESHOLD OF PARTICIPATING IN A GREATER AREA NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

By Ricardo Gomez, FHRA President

On June 2, 1999, Los Angeles voters approved a new City Charter. The new Charter, in addition to giving the mayor greater powers, mandated the creation of a citywide system of neighborhood councils. The Charter created the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) and charged it with the task of creating the citywide system of neighborhood councils. The purpose of the councils is to increase citizen participation in government.

Franklin Hills does not meet the minimum population requirement to create its own neighborhood council and therefore our only realistic alternative is to partner with our neighboring communities. As noted in previous editions of the Overview, we are working with representatives from Atwater Village, Los Feliz and Silver Lake to form a greater area neighborhood council. Its provisional name is the Greater Griffith Park Council,

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## WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL?

A neighborhood council is an advisory body that is supposed to promote participation in City government and make it more responsive to local needs. The members of the neighborhood council are called stakeholders. A stakeholder is any person who resides, works or otherwise defines himself as having an interest within the boundaries of the council (e.g., parents with children in a school or attendees of a church within the boundaries). The council must have bylaws that govern its operations and provide for a method of selecting its board. Board members may be "elected or selected" to their positions. The resulting board must reflect the various classes of stakeholders within the community such as residents, businesses and other enumerated classes. The board is the operational unit of the neighborhood council. Its organizational function is identical to that of a non-profit corporation such as a residents or business association. The board's operations must be "transparent", that is, all meetings must be open to the public.

The City Council and certain City departments are required to notify the neighborhood council of proposed legislation and regulations. The City is attempting to develop an early notification system (called "ENS"). The ENS will notify neighborhood councils of proposed decisions probably via email. The neighborhood council board will be responsible for notifying stakeholders of the proposed decisions. The board will get input from the community so that it can take a position on a particular matter if called for. The neighborhood council will be responsible for monitoring the delivery of City services to its area and shall meet with City officials on a regular basis. The neighborhood council will be

able to recommend budget priorities to the Mayor.

Neighborhood Councils are supposed to be independent from the City and may be eligible for City grants. They can be incorporated as non-profit organizations. The minimum population size of a neighborhood council area is 20,000 residents. The persons forming the council determine the boundaries (there is no maximum size) with the proviso that, to the extent feasible, they must avoid splitting an existing community.

A neighborhood council is similar to other non-profit neighborhood associations except that its membership and operating criteria are set by City regulations. Existing associations such as the Franklin Hills Residence Association already handle many "neighborhood council" functions and do so without taxpayer funding. The question is, how will these councils add value to the services already provided by our existing network of community associations?

## THE PROBLEM PRESENTED

The development of a network of neighborhood councils presents significant problems for communities like Atwater Village, Franklin Hills, Los Feliz and Silver Lake where we have a history of active community groups. We don't want the neighborhood council to create another layer of bureaucracy between the community and government. One significant problem is the scarcity of volunteers available to do community work. Within the Franklin Hills Residents Association (and in most other community associations that we are aware of) we find it difficult to recruit enough volunteers to accomplish what we really want to. This is understandable. People have to work and they have a home life. To staff a neighborhood council with volunteers will not be an easy task and may create competition between the neighborhood council and community groups for volunteers. We may end up losing if this occurs. If the neighborhood council is going to sub-

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### Franklin Hills OVERVIEW

*Editor & Desktop Publisher:*

Carol Skinner

*Contributing Writers:*

Peter Bedard, Bruce Carroll,  
Ricardo Gomez Norm Harriton,  
Charley Mims Shirley Mims,  
Robert Page, Mary Rodriguez,  
Carol Skinner, Adam Weisman,  
Pearl Yonezawa,

*Ad Sales & Distribution:*

Chris Boutelle, 666-5548

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*Editor, OVERVIEW, Box 29122,*

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*or e-mail: OverviewEditor@aol.com*

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## THE GREATER GRIFFITH PARK COUNCIL

stantially duplicate the work already being done by neighborhood and business associations, then what is the point of having a neighborhood council? Do we really want to invest taxpayer funds in such a venture?

When community representatives from Atwater Village, Franklin Hills, Los Feliz and Silver Lake began meeting last August, our principal concern was how will neighborhood councils add to our efforts to improve our communities? We realized that to be effective, a neighborhood council must not duplicate the functions of existing community groups. We realized our shortcomings, that our respective communities, standing alone, do not have a substantial presence in relation to the rest of the City when it comes to getting our fair share of City services. Therefore, we felt that our neighborhood council should bring our respective communities together to address the common issues that seem to continually escape us (police deployment, blight, adequate street services, beautification projects, etc.). We felt that our resulting size would give us a regional presence in relation to the rest of the City, such as the Valley and Westside where their sheer size seems to give them more clout when garnering City resources.

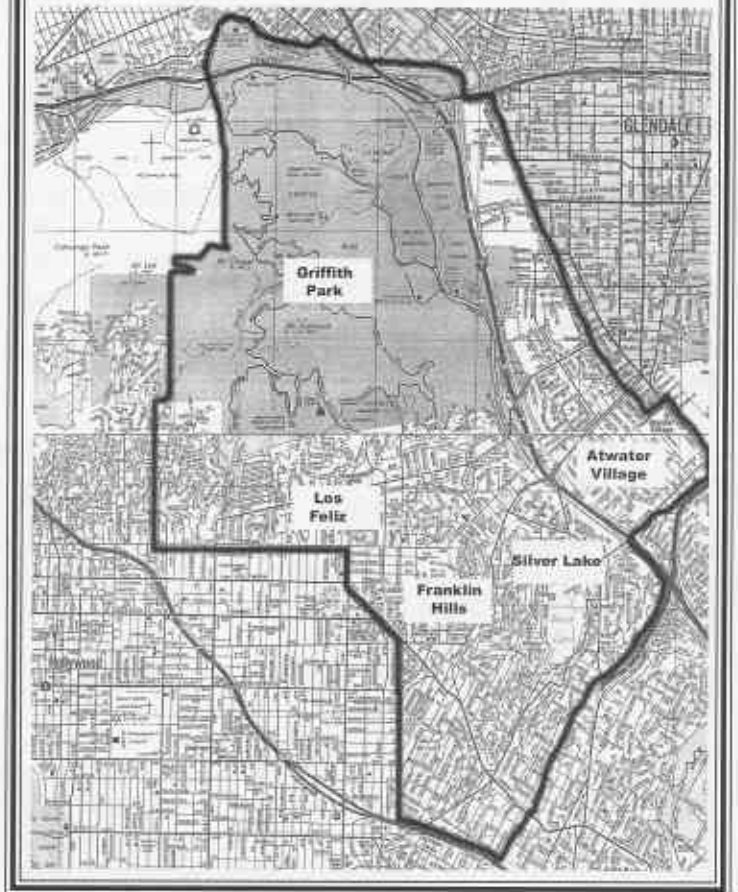
We expect the Greater Griffith Park Council (GGPC) to evolve and fill existing voids in our respective communities. We hope that it will strengthen our political clout in relation to those who continually threaten our efforts to maintain and improve our communities. Presently the GGPC looks like a federation of our four communities. We are in our infancy so what we end up with may be very different from what we start with. Our premise is that we want to work together and that is what continues to hold us together.

### STRUCTURE

The membership of the GGPC will consist of all stakeholders who live, work, own property or a business within the defined area (see map above,) or, who otherwise identify themselves as stakeholders. The GGPC Board will constitute the basic operating unit of the Council. The Board will consist of community representatives who staff the primary operations of the Council and who advocate positions for the Council. The Board members' duties are similar to those executed by board members of community associations except that there are extensive duties imposed by City ordinance.

The GGPC Board will consist of 21 members. There will be four members selected from each of the four communities (Atwater Village, Franklin Hills, Los Feliz and Silver Lake). There will be five at large members who may be appointed by the members of the Board to ensure diversity in representation. Each of the four communities will decide how to select its Board members provided that their selection process and results reflect the diversity of stakeholders in their community to the extent feasible. Organizations that repre-

### PROPOSED BOUNDARIES FOR THE NEW GREATER GRIFFITH PARK COUNCIL



sent identifiable stakeholder groups, such as residence associations and business associations, may select a Board member from within their group. However, we have not reached a consensus on how each community will select its Board members. Currently, each of our communities is developing a selection/election process. If you have any suggestions, please come forward.

The GGCP Board will establish committees staffed by stakeholders. Committee membership is open to all stakeholders and broad participation will be encouraged. The following committees are envisioned as standing committees and other committees will be formed as needed: The Early Notification System (ENS) Committee will be the most demanding because it will coordinate the receipt and dissemination of information received from the City through the ENS. The Budget and City Services Committee will work on City budget matters including the submission of proposed budget items (or a proposed budget) to the Mayor. This committee will also monitor the delivery of City services to our area. The Issues Committee will shift through issues and determine who should handle them. The Stakeholder Communication and Outreach Committee will make sure that stakeholders are aware of the GGCP and will encourage participation in the Council as well as participation in the local community associations.

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# THE VANISHING RACE SCULPTURE WINS LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY 2001 PRESERVATION AWARD

by Mary Rodriguez

On May 17th at the Regal Biltmore Hotel in downtown LA, Thomas Starr King Middle Schools' *The Vanishing Race* received the Los Angeles Conservancy Preservation Award for 2001. This beautiful and powerful 1936 WPA sculpture by Djey el Djey graces the school courtyard. Its was a gift to the boys and girls of America from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt under his Works Progress Administration program. The artist Djey el Djey was born in New York City. Half East Indian on his father's side, he sculpted many works around Los Angeles including Nicholas Copernicus on the *Astronomers Monument* on the front lawn of Griffith Park Observatory.

There were seven winners selected by the Conservancy Preservation Awards Jury for 2001. Other winners were the historic Allen House, First Methodist Episcopal Church, Bryson Apts. on Wilshire Blvd. featured in Raymond Chandler's *Lady in the Lake* mystery, the Chemosphere House built in 1960 at the top of a single concrete column in the Hollywood Hills, the residence of John Entenza who served for 37 years as editor and publisher of *Arts & Architecture* magazine, the Pantages Theater in Hollywood, and the USC Edward L. Doheny Memorial Library.

The ceremony was attended by Principal Thelma Yoshii & Assistant Principal Daniel Eckstrom. Board of Education Member Caprice Young's Deputies Monica Rodriguez and Carl Cade, and District E Asst. Superintendent Larry Tash. Representatives from several of the organizations that funded the restoration also attended including Ricardo Gomez, Pres. of Franklin Hills Residents Association, Michael Espinosa City of LA Neighborhood Matching Fund Grant, and from the Los Feliz Improvement Association, Terry Hughes, Charlotte De Armond, Mary Beth Sorenson, and of course me. I was also fortunate enough to have my family with me on this special day: my husband Van, my son Max, and my daughter Ruby currently in 7th grade at Thomas Starr King. My friend Sandra Gold of the Silver Lake Gardening Club so crucial to all of our beautification efforts attended, as well as, Mia Lehrer whose landscape architectural firm Mia Lehrer + Associates worked pro bono as our consultants for the entire courtyard redesign. Andrea Morse of the Sculpture Conservation Studio, the professional conservators hired to restore the statue, also attended as they had participated in several of the winning projects.

Every once in a while all the hours of time, energy, and thought devoted to a project that you really believe in pays off. For the last 5 years I have focused my attention on Thomas Starr King Middle School. It's been a passion that at times had me frustrated, but I believed that what I was doing was important and convinced a lot of people around me along the way. If

*continued to page 19*

*Ms Rodriguez with the statue she worked so hard to save*



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By Charley Mims

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The Honorable John Ferraro, President of the Los Angeles City Council and our Councilman for the 4th District recently passed away after a long fight with cancer. He had served the City for 35 years as a Councilman and a Police Commissioner after a successful business career in insurance. Mr. Ferraro went to the University of Southern California where he was an All American tackle on the Trojan football team.

Councilman Ferraro served for many years as Council President where he maintained order with wit and charm. He was responsible for steering the ordinance providing for the extremely successful 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. He also strongly supported the Los Angeles Zoo and was delighted to see the pleasure brought to young children by the Zoo animals. A strong supporter of public safety, Councilman Ferraro quietly arranged for the financing of new water mains and fire hydrants for Griffith Park to replace the leaky low pressure system that existed. Firefighters now have adequate sources of water to suppress brush fires in the park.

John Ferraro also supported our own Franklin Hills neighborhood. Ferraro convinced the Library Commission to site the Los Feliz Library on its current site at the south east corner of Franklin Avenue and Hillhurst. He also arranged to downgrade Franklin Avenue from secondary highway status to that of a local collector street. This allowed for a 25 MPH speed limit from Commonwealth easterly across the Shakespeare Bridge. Ferraro helped our neighborhood celebrate the re-opening of the Shakespeare Bridge after its closure for one year for seismic strengthening. He presented City Council scrolls to local neighbors who were active on the Bridge party committee of FHRA and thoroughly enjoyed the party himself.

For all of us who had the privilege to know him John Ferraro will be remembered as a giant of a man. His exploits as an All American football player at USC are dwarfed by his long and distinguished service to all the residents of our fair City.

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## LIVING IN THESE HILLS

by Eric Frase

When a member of the FHRA board invited me to write an article for this issue of the Overview, he thought perhaps I'd like to write about my on-going efforts to keep Franklin Hills a graffiti-free neighborhood. However, I think everyone who reads this will agree on several basic concepts in the battle against graffiti. In an urban environment graffiti appears everywhere. Left untouched graffiti will attract additional tags to the same location. A location that has prompt removal of graffiti (say, within 24 hours) will soon no longer be of interest to taggers. After organizing several graffiti paint-outs in the past six months and working with other Franklin Hills residents in removing graffiti from the area, I think I've discovered why Franklin Hills is such a great place to live. We interact with one another. We walk in our neighborhood. We speak to our neighbors. We'll walk outside on a Saturday with a paintbrush and paint over graffiti. And to accomplish all this—we'll get out of our cars.

The day that I wrote this I read a letter in the Los Angeles Times from a West L.A. resident who lamented the fact that he continually sees "decent" neighborhoods in his area (my quotes) that are covered with graffiti — every mailbox, street sign, bus bench, pay phone, etc., and it is not removed for months. Didn't surprise me. I used to take Sunset Boulevard from Franklin Hills to and from my job in West L.A. Last fall I noticed tagging on a utility box between the street and the sidewalk just inside the city limits of Beverly Hills. Day after day, week after week, month after month I drove by, and it remained untouched because no one in Beverly Hills is going to walk around the corner with a can of spray paint and paint out graffiti near their home. Beverly Hills is pleasant, but in a sterile sort of way. I've got a feeling that the gardeners who work on "Any Street" know each other better than the residents who live on "Any Street". On the Westside the streets are jammed and the sidewalks are empty because people won't get out of their cars.

In recent years, Franklin Hills has been a neighbor to several areas that, according to the media, are becoming trendy. We keep seeing the words "Los Feliz" and "Madonna" in the same sentence. Nowadays, no writer can use

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the term Silver Lake without adding the word 'hipsters'. I've lived in Los Feliz since moving to Los Angeles in 1983. Since then, I've bounced around page 594 of the Thomas Guide, between B-2, B-3, and B-4 and have seen the business corridors on Vermont, Hillhurst, Hyperion and Sunset change dramatically. I'm not sure if the new businesses and restaurants are reflective of the residents here now, or if the new residents are a by-product of the changing storefronts. In either case, I hope we don't become a victim of our own success. I'm afraid that my efforts to keep my street clear of graffiti and trash will only encourage someone to move into the neighborhood who has no intention of speaking to the neighbors. Or someone who can't run an errand without climbing into an SUV the size of a conference room. Or someone who, despite being a person in perfect health on a sunny day can't go to a restaurant without valet parking. I fear that my new neighbors are going to be someone who won't get out of their cars.

Now that summer's just around the corner go outside and enjoy our neighborhood. Walk to the Los Feliz Village and Sunset Junction street fairs. Instead of driving to a gym walk the staircases in the hills. Try walking to Mayfair, Trader Joe's, Albertson's or Von's to get a bag of groceries. Walk to the video store. Or drive towards your favorite restaurant, park nearby and walk to dinner. Our streets are clean and safe because residents of Franklin Hills are willing to get out of their cars. If you're new to the neighborhood, welcome! When you see a neighbor outside cutting grass, picking up litter, painting out graffiti or just walking by, don't worry. We won't bite. I promise.

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## GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY EXPANSION

by Kara Knack

Griffith Observatory is currently in the final planning stages for its first and major renovation and expansion since opening to the public in 1935. Nearly two million people enter the doors each year. After 66 years of tremendous use the building is in great need of refurbishment. In 1935 the population of Los Angeles was only about 1.4 million people. The current population deserves to have a better look up into the tremendous advances in astronomy. The expansion will nearly double the Observatory's size and will greatly improve the visitor experience. Kara Knack serves as the Renovation Communications Officer for Friends Of The Observatory (FOTO) which is raising nearly half of the funds necessary for the construction. A public meeting will be held on Monday, June 18, 2001, 6:30 pm at Griffith Observatory.

(FHRA note: Ms. Knack will give a brief presentation on the closure of the Griffith Observatory at our annual meeting on Wednesday, June 13.)



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## COMMUNITY GARDEN OPENS

by Norm Harriton

The Franklin Hills Community Garden, on the grounds of the Lycee International de Los Angeles, (LILA) is now in operation and planting has begun. It has been a slow and at times discouraging process obtaining the necessary governmental approvals and fundin, but after ten months our Community Garden has become a reality.

Back in July, 2000 Board Chairman, Adam Weisman first proposed the idea of a community garden to Elizabeth Chaponot, Principal of LILA. Mme. Chaponot was quite supportive, offering to provide water and the land if FHRA obtained funding and supervised the construction.

Next came the task of obtaining a soil test to determine if the soil was free of contaminants and obtaining approval from the City of Los Angeles, which owns the land occupied by LILA. The soil test was favorable, but initially the City was not, objecting to development of a community garden on their land. FHRA's persistence finally persuaded the City to grant official permission for the Garden in February, 2001.

Now, to get the project built we needed the kind of green that doesn't grow in a garden. FHRA offered a match of funds for the Garden obtained from other sources. John Aaroe Charitable Foundation became the first contributor (\$500) at the urging of Hattie Ramirez of the Los Feliz office of John Aaroe Realty. Alan Long and Robert Kalin of DBL



*There were no golden shovels or flowery speeches at the Community Garden ground breaking. Garden Coordinator Norm Harriton gets right to work doing what gardeners do, as FHRA Chairman Adam Weisman behind him appears to do what chairmen do*

Realtors each donated \$250 toward the Garden. FHRA matched the realtor contributions with \$1,000. On motion by Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky the County Board of Supervisors granted FHRA \$2,000 to help fund the Community Garden.

That provided enough funds to get started. To keep work going, during tougher than expected grading of the site by the Hollywood Beautification Team, Tony Fanara, owner of Palermo Italian Restaurant donated a mountain of pizzas to feed a very hungry 30 member crew. FHRA Board Member Charlie Mims, with surveying experience in the distant past, provided the expertise and labor to fix the corners of the Garden precisely per our paper layout and measurements. Bruce Carroll, FHRA Treasurer, made a photographic record of each stage in the development of the Garden.

The grading and clearing process generated 150 heavy sacks full of weeds and rocks, and a large pile of rock, concrete, lumber, pipe, and other debris which won't fit in sacks. Nearby residents Tad Brady and Greg Nelms, joined by FHRA

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leaders Adam Weisman, Ricardo Gomez and your Community Garden Coordinator then participated in what might be called cleanup aerobics, moving the weeds and debris from the Garden area to LILA's dumpster some 300 yards distant.

With the installation of irrigation pipes, plot dividers, hose racks, and a new entry gate in the fence along Sanborn the Garden was ready in late April. Please stroll by and watch our progress. The Garden is on the Sanborn avenue side of LILA (check the map on the back of the Overview). Most of the plots have been assigned, but a few are still available. If you are interested in applying for one of the remaining plots reserved for Franklin Hills residents, contact Norm Harriton at (323) 663-9695.



*Penny Layne, hose in hand, became the first to start working on her garden just minutes after individual plots were selected at the end of April*



*In March, an army of yellow shirted Hollywood Beautification Team members were brought in to battle the weeds and break up the soil. They needed mechanical help to remove large chunks of concrete and level the garden area. They needed pizza help, donated by Palermo Restaurant, to keep working.*

*By mid May, Norm Harriton, after plenty of planning and preparing his plot, precisely places plants . . .the garden's first . . .corn and squash.*



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