



# OVERVIEW

## FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

ISSUE # 22

WINTER 2001

### ...O'ER THE LAND OF THE FREE...



*text by Bruce Carrol; photo by Leslie Whitlock*

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Our Franklin Avenue median with the flag that sprouted shortly after 9/11 really symbolizes the spirit that made America. The proud patriotism of standing together in a crisis and the often less visible volunteer spirit that binds communities and produces progress.

That spirit can be seen throughout the pages of the Overview with many reports on FHRA projects to cleanup, protect, and beautify our area. The efforts and contributions of nearly 350 FHRA members have literally gotten us "on the map." A recent LA Times article on street repair divided the whole the City of Los Angeles into 80 communities everything from Chatsworth to San Pedro, from Boyle Heights to Pacific Palisades. There among the big guys was Franklin Hills. The smallest in size on the map, but recognized as an effective cohesive community.

As everyday since 9/11 we are dealing with the new global and national challenges and fears. While we hope that Osama and his ilk have never heard of the Shakespeare Bridge, just beyond the bridge on Franklin Ave. car thieves have struck three times in one block in one month. Surely enough for each of us to realize that everyday the battle can be close to home. But community involvement can be an effective strategy.

This holiday season while we remember the overwhelming horrors and thousands lives lost to hatred this year, let us all think of what we can do as neighbors to make our little slice of LA, the nation, the world, the universe a place where safety conquers fears and harmony halts hatred.

## Letter from the President

by Ricardo Gomez

The September 11 attacks have altered our sense of well being, comfort and security. We all feel deep sympathy for the victims of terrorism and wish for swift and sure conclusion of the conflicts in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Unfortunately the daily media onslaught about terrorism is not amply counterbalanced with examples of what we can do as citizens to address our fears while contributing to our communities. We cannot allow the media coverage of terrorism to obscure some serious local problems that we must deal with and my fear, as a community improvement activist, is that our efforts to enhance the quality of life in the Franklin Hills are backsliding. Local crime and blight are not taking the day off for the war on terrorism. We can help local law enforcement deal with all criminal threats by getting involved with local anti-crime and neighborhood improvement efforts. The starting point is to get to know your local government representatives and your local police.

We would like to welcome our new councilperson, Tom LaBonge, who took office on November 1. Tom is a long time area resident. He attended Ivanhoe Elementary School, Thomas Starr King Middle School and graduated from Marshall High School in 1971. Tom lives just east of the Franklin Hills, overlooking Hyperion Avenue, and is well acquainted with our neighborhood and understands its needs. We look forward to working with Tom to improve our neighborhood. We are encouraging Tom to establish community office hours on certain Saturdays where he can be available to meet directly with members of the community. We will keep you informed. The main telephone number for his office is (213) 485-3337.

If you read the recent Los Angeles Times article on street resurfacing you noticed that Franklin Hills is way below the average with respect to getting its streets resurfaced. The Franklin Hills Residents Association has made street resurfacing a priority because many of our streets are in dangerously poor condition. The key to getting streets resurfaced is attracting the attention of local politicians. It is very important that you come to our annual meetings. These meetings are a political "show of force" that demonstrate to politicians that we care about our neighborhood. These meetings have been the principal means of successfully focusing attention on our neighborhood. Politicians love a big crowd, and our annual meetings have been particularly effective in attracting local politicians and bringing attention to our needs. Approximately 150 people turned out at last June's annual meeting at ABC Television Center. We again thank ABC and Charles Williams, Vice President of Administration, for making Rehearsal Hall One available for our meeting. If you are interested in helping us put on our 2002 general meeting, or have suggestions for a program, please contact us.

Get to know your local police. We have two Senior Lead Officers ("SLOs") that cover the Franklin Hills area. They are SLOs Al Polehonki and Sam Salazar. FHRA is creating a network of neighborhood watches so that neighbors get to know one another and the officers that patrol our neighborhood. Franklin Hills has enjoyed a very low crime rate for the past several years. However, some disturbing signs of emerging crime have surfaced this year, and we want to put a stop to it. There has been a resurgence of gang activity in the area south of us particularly around the Sunset Pacific Hotel (corner of Bates Avenue and Sunset Boulevard, one block east of Fountain). I have testified at zoning hearings along with other community members so that the City can close the hotel. The hotel is a center for drug sales and prostitution, and gang members run a protection racket in and around the Hotel. The problems extend to Tang's Donuts near Fountain and to the parking lot of the adjacent mini mall. The area is a destination for crystal meth users due to the abundance of dealers. We feel that many of our recent crime problems emanate from this area. We have traced the recent upswing in gang graffiti around the Franklin Hills to the same gang that is at the Sunset Pacific Hotel. If you don't already have a neighborhood

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## Let There Be Lights

By Bruce Carroll

"It's going to get rave revues," declared John Mitchell, one of the bridge lighting volunteers, when he came back to the Shakespeare Bridge after dark to admire the FHRA team's work and heard other neighborhood residents expressing their delight.

Newly elected FHRA board member Joseph Hahn, who organized the bridge lighting effort, reflected that "the best part of the project was getting the team together, working together to come up with a plan, and getting to know your neighbors: just really just seeing the way everybody pitches in a really generous way."

The most generous of all was Tree King's Mark Bruna, a Franklin Hills resident, who not only donated his time and the use of his invaluable cherry picker truck, but also paid his two assistants for their time. "The end result would have been not as nice without him," was the understatement of Shawn Sites, who spent most of the morning on a ladder attaching the lower strings of lights while Bruna and his crew worked above. "I can't say enough about him," noted Sites, "countless thanks to Mark and his high-flying team without whom this never woulda happened!" Earlier this year Bruna also donated his professional services to trim big palm trees on the Franklin Avenue Median.

The lights went up two days after Thanksgiving. The crew started at 7:30 am on the northwest turrets, then worked their way counterclockwise around the bridge finishing at the northeast turrets. Despite the good planning there were still a couple of emergency trips to Baller Hardware to get a few missing widgets. But the biggest problem, according to Hahn, was "the rain; at the end it got really bad, but thank god we were done by then." Sites agreed, "for sure the weather was the worst part-it got a little slippery."

Overall the project had slipped three years from the first lighting attempt in 1998 after the city, at FHRA's request, had installed electrical outlets on the turrets so we could light the bridge. Even after weeks of careful planning by Hahn's team, trimming the turrets with lights remained a daunting task. After doing the first turret Mitchell felt "it seemed so much tougher than we thought it was going to be," then turret by turret things speeded up and "it fell into the groove."

With the project an instant hit, Hahn has already volunteered to head up the bridge lighting next year and vows, "we have to top ourselves."

Bridge lighting chairman Joseph Hahn holds the ladder for John Mitchell who is working with Shawn Sites to install icicle lights while Deborah Mitchell and David Brinkman untangle the next string of lights. Up above Mark Bruna in the Tree King cherry picker which made the installation possible.



Mark Bruna and Tree King employee Jose Valdez untangle icicle lights before installing them on the wire between the two northwest turrets. Only one turret in each pair has electrical outlets for the lights.



John Mitchell and Shawn Sites cling to the turrets as they attach icicle lights to guide wires that were installed around the base of the pyramid part of each turret. The Tree King crew works where ladders would be impractical.



On opening night, November 25, 2001, the newly lit Shakespeare Bridge attracted rave reviews. Resident Shawn Sites described it as looking "like a little bridge to wonderland."



Photos by Bruce Carroll

# Zero Tolerance Graffiti Kick-Off & King Beautification Day!

by Mary Rodriguez

On July 5th Thomas Starr King began their new school year 2001-2002. It was also the beginning of the new year-round calendar and the new Gifted/High Ability Technology / Arts Magnet. The arriving students found that the school had a fresh coat of paint with bold and lively colors. The thriving courtyard garden and award winning newly restored 1936 WPA statue greeted them as they explored the campus searching for their new teachers and classrooms.

With school in session, campus and community leaders from the Franklin Hills Residents Association were collaborating with the Los Feliz Improvement Association, the Hollywood Beautification Team, and Thomas Starr King to create a "Zero Tolerance Graffiti Zone" around the school. There has been an increase of graffiti in the neighborhood especially around Thomas Starr King Middle School and John Marshall High School. A 'Zero Tolerance' graffiti zone means that we work diligently to remove graffiti on a daily basis. At the same time it

Special flyers were distributed to businesses along Fountain Ave. and Hyperion Ave. explaining our intent and enlisting their cooperation. We have connected with our neighbors, local businesses, the schools, LAPD, our city council offices CD4 and CD13 and made our intent known. We are determined to find others equally proud to keep their blocks clean. Adopt-Your-Block. We can supply paint. Contact Eric Frase or Shirley Mims of the Graffiti Abatement Committee and get involved.



Mary Rodriguez working along with volunteers

On October 6th, a beautiful Saturday morning, approximately 100 students, parents, teachers, community members, and the Hollywood Beautification Team gathered for the first King Beautification Day & Zero Tolerance Graffiti Zone Kick-Off. Groups were formed to paint out graffiti along Fountain Ave., Talmadge St., Sunset Dr., Bates Ave., Manzanita St., and Sanborn Ave. The City of LA's Operation Clean Sweep provided paint in 3 colors: gray, white,

and beige. They also provided all of the tools: paint rollers, paint trays, brushes, gloves, rags, and Graffiti Gold, a special cleaner for street signs. Again, special flyers were distributed informing residents of the program and asking their permission to paint out graffiti on their property. Unfortunately, we did not find a lot of neighbors at home on that beautiful Saturday morning and further efforts are necessary.

Other volunteers helped by cleaning debris inside the campus along the athletic field and outside along the sidewalks and street curbs. Several parents and neighbors began digging large holes for the beautiful "African Sumac" trees that had recently been donated. Other student gardeners weeded and fertilized the "Crape Myrtle" trees on Bates Ave. that were planted last year and are doing fantastically. There was so much activity going on at the school that everyone felt the positive energy. But there's still a lot more to accomplish so lets all continue to work together to keep our neighborhood clean and safe.



activity going on at the school that everyone felt the positive energy. But there's still a lot more to accomplish so lets all continue to work together to keep our neighborhood clean and safe.



Graffiti Girls

would require the business owners and residents to take responsibility for their property.

Realizing that the frustration voiced at local community meetings needed to be addressed, the Franklin Hills Residents Association organized a Graffiti Abatement Committee. This committee led by Eric Frase and Shirley Mims set out to inform both businesses and residents of the intent to claim the area a "Zero Tolerance Graffiti Zone."

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