



OVERVIEW

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

ISSUE No. 6

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

SPRING 1992

CRIME IN THE HILLS

by Violet Weber

Have you run into your friendly, neighborhood burglar lately? Helen Ariss, a Franklin Hill Community Patrol block captain for Mayview Avenue, recently did, right in her own living room. Brave enough to challenge the 29-year-old man, he told her he came to pick up some tools her husband had offered to loan him. When she threatened him with calling the police, he ran out of the house, down the street and had the chutzpah to steal two bicycles from a nearby house, escaping on one.

Helen phoned Bob Shea, another active crime watch neighbor, who jumped in his car and pursued the criminal as far as Virgil and Santa Monica. He watched the thief bargain with another unsavory character for one bicycle. Bob decided not to intervene with the criminal transaction, but when the police showed up was able to give a very accurate description of the man. The culprit, known to the police as "The Professor," was wanted for eight counts of residential burglary. He worked the neighborhood by playing on residents' sympathies, giving a variety of stories of sick children, death of a wife, etc., to elicit money. Many were foolish enough to be taken in by his tales. He was able to gain access to the Ariss home by means of an open bathroom window "too difficult for any one to enter!" Through

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Photo: Bruce Carroll

Our second Disaster Preparedness course graduates with Instructors, Los Angeles Firefighters Corey Clark, Kevin Poore and Captain Timothy McDonnell (See story, page 16)

CALLING ALL CRIMEBUSTERS

by Roz Lieberman

When my husband and I moved into our house about thirty years ago, our neighbors across the street were Mrs. McCarthy, a frail, elderly widow, and her equally frail elderly sister. More than once, alert neighbors thwarted the attempts of burglars who had targeted these vulnerable octogenarians. Their next-door neighbor, Mrs. Ann Kramer, remembers looking out of her window one day to investigate the sound of running water and seeing a strange man urinating against the wall. She called police, who apprehended him and his accomplices in the process of breaking into Mrs. McCarthy's house. The burglars were armed to commit murder.

The women peacefully passed away a year or two later, within a short time of one another, and their small, immaculate bungalow became the home of a succession of young couples, all about the age we were when we bought our house. They were attracted to our neighborhood by the same

qualities that had appealed to us: an affordable, well-built house in a pleasant, stable, ethnically mixed and visually interesting part of town; good schools for our children; conveniently located for work, shopping, cultural and recreational facilities; and possessed of good real estate "legs." Even today, the charms of our neighborhood are as evident as they were thirty years ago, but these days we are faced with great challenges if we wish to keep Franklin Hills a safe, desirable place for people of all ages.

Nowadays, few of us feel safe leaving our homes or going to bed until we have taken pains to secure our dwelling against intruders. All of us are affected by the social and economic conditions that impact the larger community of which we are a part. All around us we see an increase in poverty and crime, accompanied by civic indifference and a decrease in funds and

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well, Crime's here now . . . it seems the gangs, the burglaries, the robberies have finally found our little pocket of tranquility. There has always been some crime, but in my 22 years in the neighborhood, it has never been like this! So this issue of Overview is dedicated to what's been happening and what might be done to combat it.

Congratulations to the newly graduated Disaster Preparedness class, they completed 18 hours of L. A. Fire Department training in first aid, fire suppression, search and rescue and related subjects. Many of these same people took an eighth class certifying them in CPR. If there is an earthquake or some other major disaster and you see people in green hard hats, listen to them — they have had some serious training and know what they are doing.

Also, a few words of introduction for our new membership chairman, Gene Cornell. Gene will be taking a personal role in welcoming new members, letting prospective members know what FHRA is trying to do, and hopefully, inducing our members to volunteer in the fields of their interest. He's a very personable man, easy to talk to, who has developed his own philosophy of how to get along in this ever more complicated world.

DON WALDROP

WELCOME TO L. I. L. A.

by Don Waldrop

LYCEE INTERNATIONAL DE LOS ANGELES (The French American School) is now comfortably ensconced on the former site of Los Feliz Hills School, which closed in the summer of 1991. The 6.5 acre R-2 site at 4155 Russell Avenue, directly south of the Shakespeare Bridge, has been the subject of an intense campaign by the Franklin Hills Residents Association to avoid heavy residential development. Historic-Cultural Landmark status was won by FHRA for the unique, round buildings designed by renowned architect John Lautner. Now, protection is doubly-guaranteed by the new school, one of six campuses in greater Los Angeles, which envisions a thirty-year occupancy.

L. I. L. A. (pronounced Leela) is managed by Elizabeth "Babette" Chaponot and Educational Director is Nelly Beckaert. Classes in the humanities, sciences and the arts are taught in French and the school's offerings culminate in either a high school — college prep diploma or the French *Baccalaureate* degree, the equivalent of two years of college. Students who graduate are able to read, write and speak both English and French.

Babette, interestingly enough, was the school's very first student since her parents, Monique and John Mickus, founded the school to provide her (and other French-speaking students to come) a quality education in the tradition of her French-born mother.

The school currently has 80 students at secondary level with 12 elementary and kindergarten children. While this campus was originally intended by the school's directors to be secondary level only, inquiries have been frequent about elementary through kindergarten age children. The school is interested in enrolling local children, both elementary and secondary; however, they suggest that older English-speaking kids enroll in a summer session to enable an assessment of their adaptability to French-speaking classes. The elementary children seem to have no problem in such an environment, picking up French by immersion. The emphasis is on education — all students are taught calculus, for example, and sports are encompassed only for exercise, not for intra-mural rivalry.

Welcome to our neighborhood, L. I. L. A., may your stay be long and educational.

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COMMUNITY GANGBUSTERS II

by Isabel Dietz

Franklin Hills residents are increasingly bedevilled by crime in the neighborhood. Some of it is gang-related. Barbara Dakin, co-chair of the newly-formed Northeast Target Area Coordinating Council (NE-TACC) and Franklin Hills NE-TACC Coordinator Patti Harrison are our community resource people for this effort. They can be contacted if you would like to get involved or informed about some of the latest grassroots anti-crime activities for our area. Dakin enthusiastically promotes the idea of attacking problems at the source. She says, "These kids may start out tagging walls, then joining gangs – maybe stealing a few little things – but then many of them wind up in serious crime, such as car theft. If we can get these children involved in positive activities before boredom and lack of connection turn them to crime, we can make a difference. Many of the at-risk kids come home every day to a tiny, empty apartment. Both parents are working to make ends meet, and there's no one around to give them direction. The schools have less and less to give in the way of organized after-school activity. The high school years are such a special time in a kid's life – that's when we can make all the difference."

"If more community members could help with tutoring programs, organizing and supervising sports teams, or just plain listening and being a buddy, many kids would never get into crime to begin with."

— Barbara Dakin

Dakin goes on to say that in her opinion the way to solve the problem is to find out "What interests these kids most? What positive, constructive thing do they want? Then we have to help them do it."

She suggests that the community take up the slack left by dwindling school budgets. Kids have said they want apprenticeships. Spending time in the environment of a workplace or office of a profession can get a kid excited about what it is like to be a printer, builder or architect. If more community members could help with tutoring programs,

organizing and supervising sports teams, or just plain listening and being a buddy, many kids would never get into crime to begin with.

The first big public event sponsored by NE-TACC was the recent Marshall High Campus Cleanup, which had excellent participation. Out of a group of about 100, half were students, according to Patti Harrison. At the post-Cleanup meeting of NE-TACC, there were more people than at the previous meeting – representation from local business, community and students from the leadership class. Speaker Marianne Diaz-Parton, ex-gang member and now director of the East Los Angeles branch of Community Youth Gang Services, discussed the causes of gang violence and how her organization has worked with communities to organize activities for at-risk youth

The next NE-TACC meeting will be at Marshall High school cafeteria on April 1 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. You are invited. Even if you do not feel ready for full involvement, drop in and see how the group works and meet some of the students who care about their school. The next projects will be designing an effective follow-up to the cleanup day, beefing up the new tutoring program which pairs adults and ninth graders, and discussing ways to involve more parents and community members. "Does the community have problems?" Barbara asks. "Then realistically, it's time for us to do whatever we can to help solve them. We can see that no one is going to do it for us." Phone numbers: Patti Harrison (213) 662-8709; Barbara Dakin (213) 413-4221.

Anyone who is interested in being FHRA co-chair with Patti to go to meetings when she is out of town, get in touch immediately.

JOIN FHRA — See page 15 for Details and Membership Form

DAYS OF OUR LIBRARY

By Bruce Carroll

In the last episode of "Days of our Library," we left the proposed site of the new Los Feliz Branch Library at Hillhurst and Franklin covered with Christmas trees while property owner J.D. Kelleher waited to hear from the Library Commission. Meanwhile, the Commissioners were waiting to hear from the environmentalists they had sent out to dig up dirt (so to speak) about the site.

In the intervening weeks, we've learned that the environmental "negative declaration" was mostly positive: "The project does not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment." And that bureaucracy is the only thing that moves more slowly than soap opera plots.

Today's episode raises the questions: How will Mr. Kelleher respond to the request to test his soil for any errant gasoline that may have wandered from what used to be five nearby gas stations? And, will the Department of Transportation allow cars to enter and exit the library from Franklin as well as from Hillhurst? And will the Board of Library Commissioners take up the matter at this month's meeting? Stay tuned. . . or better yet, read a good book while you're waiting.

THE RED LINE BLUES?

By Bruce Carroll

Cries of environmental foul were drowned out this month by the clink of money saved, and the future clank of 300 heavy trucks a day hauling dirt from Barnsdall Park for the new MetroRail line.

The County Transportation Commission approved plans to excavate 6.2 miles of MetroRail Red Line tunnels from Wilshire up Vermont and west on Hollywood Blvd. to Highland. The Rail Construction Corporation (RCC) claims it can save time and \$7 million by doing all the work from the park's parking lot.

Some parents and teachers from the Los Feliz Elementary School, just across Hollywood Boulevard from Barnsdall Park, continued to demand a full environmental impact report on the \$200 million dollar project, but the School Board and the Transportation Commissioners voted their confidence in mitigation measures promised to protect the area.

The good news for Franklin Hills residents is no trucks will enter or exit the site during rush hours. A maximum of 12 trucks will enter or exit the site between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. The bad news is that 288 trucks, one every two-and-a-half minutes will come and go from the construction nightly between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. But all these trucks are limited to travel south on Vermont or west on Hollywood Boulevard. Up to five empty trucks waiting to enter the site can line up along Hollywood Boulevard between Vermont and Hillhurst.

About 150 workers will work around the clock with the day's diggings piled up (not over 25 feet high and covered and sprayed to prevent dust) waiting to be hauled away each night. The workers will be van pooled to minimize traffic and parking impact on the neighborhood.

And what about all the noise, you may shout. The RCC promises that it won't be any worse than the noise already in the area. The motivation to keep things quiet is the RCC's promise that if work gets too loud, they will pay to air condition the Los Feliz Elementary School so the windows can be sealed to keep out the noise.

Construction officials hope to begin site preparation work this fall, with tunneling underway by next spring. 1998 is the target date for service to begin along this section of the Metrorail Red Line.

To get students safely to and from school during the construction period, RCC will also hire extra crossing guards. To get students interested in math, the teachers might try questions like: if it takes 4 years to move 3 million cubic yards of dirt with 300 double trailer trucks a day, how big are the trucks? Hint: even the experts at RCC can't come up with the answer.

letters • letters

Dear Editor:

Five years ago, a consortium of four major oil companies proposed bringing a 30-inch (bigger than a hula hoop") heated, crude oil pipeline from Santa Barbara fields down through San Fernando, running along Hyperion Boulevard, through south central L.A. and ending at the refineries in Wilmington. The Coalition Against the Pipeline (CAP), a group of dedicated volunteers, worked diligently to kill this proposal.

Now, another group of oil companies is sponsoring yet another proposal to build a 170-mile crude oil pipeline — this time along the Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way, sparking the same fears of a disastrous break as before. The possibility of a break would become a certainty in the event of a major earthquake. Even more important is the fact that another pipeline means more oil refining and pollution at a time when we are working so hard to cut down on our unlivable air. Refineries cause more pollution than car exhaust.

We don't need more refineries in Southern California. What we do need is a clear-cut energy policy and politicians who are willing to sacrifice a little campaign money for the good of their constituents. How can you help? Write to your councilman, to your assemblyman and your senator. Also, the Coalition Against the Pipeline needs more volunteers. CAP will certainly welcome you for any help you can give.

Richard Adams (213) 222-9829

Dear Editor:

To all of you in our community who fought to keep the Los Feliz Library on Hillhurst, we thank you. You all showed great interest and energy in preserving your neighborhood library. Now the staff of the Los Feliz Library is asking you to volunteer your time in order to keep our library not only open to the

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