



OVERVIEW

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

ISSUE No. 3

FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

MAY 1991

WORLD'S OLDEST LIVING LOT SPEAKS

(From Vitagraph to ABC)

by ISABEL DIETZ

The area where we live is one of the most unusual in all of Los Angeles, and we can say that without fear of boasting or exaggeration. Not only does it have a unique topography of hills and dales, housing and people of great ethnic and cultural variety, but it also houses one of the nation's more fascinating businesses, ABC Television. ABC-TV is located at the corner of Prospect and Talmadge on a lot which was at one time Vitagraph Studio. As we know, this general area of the city is filled with entertainment industry history and presence.

KCET, formerly Monogram studios and later Allied Artists, is nearby, and the old Disney buildings where Snow White was animated still exist on Hyperion. Mt. Lee, complete with tower, signalling the first experimental version of television Channel 2, is plainly visible from the hill at the intersection of Franklin and Mayfield, and the Triangle building, at the corner of Fountain and Bates, was the scene of interior shots for Tom Mix movies.

History tells us that the settlement by Europeans of Franklin Hills began with Corporal Vincente Feliz, who led the first settlers to Los Angeles in 1781. Feliz received a Spanish land grant of 6,647 acres, which stretched from the

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**Important Meeting
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Franklin Hills acquired a new, "old" residence in Fox movie set at Los Feliz Hills School.

FOX DISCOVERS FRANKLIN HILLS

by ROSALIND LIEBERMAN

If Shakespeare Bridge prompts notions of fairy tale adventures, it's no accident. The picturesque charm of Franklin Hills has long attracted movie makers to our neighborhood. Walt Disney left his touch on homes and cottages on Griffith Park Boulevard. Earlier still, D.W. Griffith filmed the epic "Intolerance" partly on the lot where ABC Studios now stand. And John Marshall continues to be one of the most popular high school locations of the past half century.

Now Hollywood has discovered the bosky glen and verdant fields of Los Feliz Hills school. Late last December, representatives of the school and Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation contacted Franklin Hills Residents Association to obtain neighborhood support for the use of the school as a location site for the upcoming feature film, "Jack the Bear," starring Danny DeVito.

FHRA board members Tony Michaelis, Don Waldrop and Jessica Tachibana have been monitoring the proceedings.

In an open letter to school neighbors, Ken Sogg, President of the Los Feliz Hills School Governing Council, explained that financial difficulties have led the school to explore various sources of private and public funding, and that the fees derived from this location use would permit the school to continue through the end of the school year.

Kristan Wagner, the location manager for "Jack the Bear," also sought community support in a letter describing production needs. Readers may have already seen the facade-style residential block of circa 1970 Victorian clapboards, a la Oakland. Construction will have taken about ten weeks to complete. Actual filming

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from the President

Can you imagine looking out from your house and seeing a four and one-half story building being built across the street? A house about as tall as your lot is wide? Some of our residents on Ronda Vista Drive have found out the hard way what "variance notices" from the city really mean. While City Planning can tell us that a building is being proposed that may affect us, it can't make us pay attention.

The result, as described by the architect, is: *"a combination of surprising volumes and playful gestures, a whimsical composition that belies the vigilant and disciplined effort expended on it. ...A 'pedestrian window'...is a highlight for people out on walks that would have been lost with the typical volume type (house) that creates an enclosed two-car garage at the street. . . an eccentric gesture that celebrates the neighborhood and watches over it. A prototypical reply to the typically insensitive downhill house, a call for a community of discreet towers..."* In reality, that translates to a house extending 49 feet skyward above the curb, 57 feet at the back (on a 35 foot wide lot), which the architect planned to cover with sheet metal painted barn red. Discreet?

Needless to say, once the neighbors realized what was being built they complained, loudly. Over fifty residents attended a meeting at Councilman Mike Woo's District office; over 80 people signed a petition to the City asking for a stop to the construction. The Association is supporting requests for a re-hearing by the Departments of Planning and Zoning, and Building and Safety in an attempt to limit the house to three stories above the street.

My reason for bringing this issue up? We are THREE YEARS LATE! The public hearing for the project above was in 1988. We *must* pay attention to the bureaucratic-looking City letters that say NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO PROPERTY OWNERS when we get them. If you get a notice and don't fully understand it, call us. The Association would want to know about the project. Ignore these notices and we may lose our right to protest even more objectionable projects than the one mentioned above.

—DON WALDROP

LOS FELIZ HILLS SCHOOL UPDATE

by TONY MICHAELIS

The long-standing situation regarding Los Feliz Hills School is finally coming to a key turning point. As many of you may know, the School, which is located at 4155 Russell Avenue, near the Franklin Avenue bridge, has had financial problems for some time. They are currently in bankruptcy proceedings and are attempting to find a way to avoid foreclosure and forced sale. The school has contracted with 20th century Fox to use the school's field as a production set for the upcoming movie, "Jack the Bear", starring Danny DeVito. The primary impetus for this project is to provide the school with much-needed financing to get to the end of the term. This is a temporary usage and the field will be restored to its original condition by the end of the summer.

The School's number one strategy is to sell the property to the City of Los Angeles, using funds which would become available if a City Park Bond measure passes on June 4th. The City would likely create a Park and Recreation Center. This is a goal the Association supports strongly. If the City Park Bond measure fails to get the required two-thirds vote, the School will be forced to put the property up for auction in July. Under this scenario, the property could be purchased by another school or a developer.

The School's Board continues to entertain offers from other schools for the property. An offer by Nansay Corporation, a Japanese concern, is pending. Nansay has expressed an interest in using the site for a school. However, there are no
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FRANKLIN HILLS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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VIOLET WEBER

To better serve the community, the FHRA's Board has formed teams to deal with the issues that concern our neighborhood on a day-to-day basis:

ABC-TV/COMMUNITY RELATIONS:

Don Waldrop, 664-4124

PLANNING and ZONING

Charley Mims, 665-8239

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS:

Violet Weber, 663-6427

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LOS FELIZ HILLS SCHOOL:

Tony Michaelis, 666-8166

CRIME/NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH:

Violet Weber, 663-6427

NEWSLETTER:

Don Waldrop, 664-4124

BYLAWS:

Jim Churchill, 663-0580

MEMBERSHIP

Bruce Carroll, 665-9875

GRAFITTI

Isabel Dietz, 661-4531

The OVERVIEW invites your comments and, space permitting, will publish letters mailed to
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The Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting will be held
Wednesday, May 22 at 7:30 pm at John Marshall High School
in the Aural Arts Room.

There will be reports on the previous year's activities,
election of new Board Members and refreshments.
Come on out, meet your neighbors and participate. It's fun !

Report of the Nominating Committee

Submitted by Jim Churchill, Chairman

Six Board positions are open this year. Terms expire for Jim Churchill, Bryant Crouse, Tony Michaelis, Jessica Tachibana, Don Waldrop, and Vi Weber. In addition, Howard Obata, who is in the middle of a two-year term, is resigning. Under FHRA by-laws, the nominating committee reports its nominations to all members one month before the Annual Meeting. At the Annual Meeting, any other member in good standing may be nominated from the floor.

This year's nominating committee consisted of four Board Members: Vi Weber, Jim Churchill, Bryant Crouse, and Charley Mims. (There's no reason for the Nominating Committee to consist of Board Members rather than general members; over time we expect to build up a number of active members who are sufficiently familiar with the organization to serve on the Committee.)

The procedure for arriving at the slate of nominees was this: we went through the membership list and pulled the name of every person who had indicated a desire to be active; we called them all, at least 25 individuals in all. Those who expressed a desire to serve on the Board were interviewed again. Factors we considered important included availability, previous commitment, energy level and interest.

In the slate of nominees listed below, we think we have found seven qualified, energetic, committed individuals who will do a good job representing the community. You will notice that the slate includes three current Board Members, Don Waldrop, Jim Churchill, and Bryant Crouse, two of whom were actually on the Nominating Committee and so are in the position of having nominated themselves. The explanation of this appears next to their names.

Nominees

Chris Boutelle: Chris has lived in Franklin Hills for ten years. He seems to be inexhaustible and is active with the Disaster Prep. and Neighborhood Watch groups. Chris is interested in ridding the area of graffiti.

Bruce Carroll: Bruce has been keeping the membership records on computer and has indicated a desire to be more active in the organization. He has lived on Franklin for many years and is retired from ABC-TV.

Jim Churchill: Jim was instrumental in forming the FHRA and has served as Secretary since the FHRA was founded. He wants to serve one more year to strengthen membership development efforts.

Bryant Crouse: Bryant has been serving as Board vice-president. An executive recruiter and meeting facilitator, he has been very useful in getting the Board to focus its meetings to make the most of its time. The committee feels it would be useful to have him continue in that role.

Isabel Dietz: Isabel has volunteered to work with the Association on graffiti removal and the newsletter (her writing appears in this issue.) She lives on Talmadge, and has demonstrated competence and commitment.

Waynette Day: Waynette is active in the Disaster Preparedness Workshop and serves on the Medical Response Team. She has taken extra CPR courses to prepare herself for that role. She is interested in recycling and other projects, and has demonstrated energy and commitment.

Don Waldrop: Don has served as President of the FHRA since its inception. He also coordinated, typeset, and designed this newsletter. He has a nearly endless supply of energy, curiosity, good will and determination. He was nominated because the Committee isn't ready to have that particular torch passed on quite yet — FHRA is a new organization and we felt it important that Don continue as President for a while yet.

This slate will be presented at the May 22 Annual Meeting for election. At that time, nominations will also be welcome from the floor.

PROPOSED BY-LAWS AMENDMENTS

By-laws govern the procedures followed by FHRA. When they work right we don't notice them and, so far, they have served their function admirably. However, we are a new organization; we created our by-laws by cutting and pasting from the by-laws of other organizations already in existence. As time goes on, we figure out modifications to make the FHRA function more smoothly. Because the by-laws themselves require that the membership be notified in advance of any proposed by-laws changes, we herewith explain the two proposed by-laws changes recommended by the By-laws Committee and the Board for approval by the membership at the **May 22 Annual Meeting**.

Amendment 1: Removal of Board Members for non-attendance at Board Meetings. Add a new paragraph to the article on the Board of Directors, to state:

A Board Member may be removed by majority vote of the Board of Directors if he/she has missed three or more Board meetings in a calendar year.

Reasons: There is currently no provision providing for the removal of a Board Member. Regular non-attendance by a Board member can lead to lack of a quorum, which means the Board can't do business; and it's unfair to the other Board members. A mechanism is needed for removing Board members who don't attend meetings, so that they can be

replaced by people who will attend. This amendment was modified by the Board to change it from "3 consecutive meetings" to three meetings in a year; and the concept of an "unexcused" absence was removed by the Board from the Committee recommendation so the difficulty of defining an "excuse" would not become an issue.

Amendment 2: Dues: It is proposed that this language be struck: ~~The dues of this Association shall be \$5 a year, payable in January of the year;~~ and this language be substituted in its place: *The Board of Directors shall set the dues, subject to approval by majority vote of those members attending the Annual Meeting.*

Reasons: Having to do a by-laws amendment to change the dues structure is cumbersome. The Board would like to be able to make an in-person recommendation to the Membership at the Annual Meeting and have it voted up or down.

These amendments were prepared by the By-laws Committee, consisting of Marcel DeMiranda, Jeff Goodman, and Jim Churchill, at a meeting on March 6

Some copies of the complete by-laws will be available at the Annual Meeting; and any member can get a copy by calling Jim Churchill at 663-0850.

— JIM CHURCHILL, Chairman, By-law Committee

SAVE WATER — It's The Law L.A.'s New Conservation Ordinance

The four year drought has left Los Angeles with a serious water shortage. To ensure that there will be enough water to serve the city's needs, the L. A. City Council has enacted the City's Emergency Water Conservation Plan. Franklin Hills residents, and all other residents of the City are subject to the following rules:

All residents are required to reduce their water usage by 10 percent from their 1986 levels. Your conservation goal amount will be printed on the Department of Water and Power (DWP) bills. If you fail to reduce consumption by the required 10 % you will be fined 15% of the total water bill plus \$3.00 per HCF unit (748 gallons) in excess of your limit.

In addition, the following uses of water are prohibited and subject to monetary fines:

- Hosing of sidewalks, walkways, driveways or parking areas.
- Watering lawns, landscapes and other turf areas between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (Does not apply to drip irrigation or professional gardeners.)

- Allowing water to run off onto a sidewalk, driveway, street or gutter.
- Failing to repair leaks in a timely manner
- Cleaning, filling or maintaining levels of fountains, ponds or lakes unless the water is part of a recycling system.

PENALTIES: First violation: a written warning; second, third and fourth violations: \$50, \$100 and \$150, respectively. After the fourth violation, in addition to monetary penalties, the DWP may install a flow-restricting device or terminate service (after a hearing.)

We, in the Franklin Hills, can do our part — the recent rains evidently did not ease the situation as much as we had hoped.

For additional information, including exceptions to the above rules, call (DWP) WATER CONSERVATION CONTROL GROUP: (800) 439-7728.