

# 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

*continued on page 10*

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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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## New Principal

### For Thomas Starr King

by Mary Rodriguez

Principal Dr. Thelma Yoshii announced her retirement after over forty years of service to the children of Los Angeles. Although Dr. Yoshii had not planned to retire this year, unfortunately due to health reasons, she had no choice but to leave King. She was excited about all the new and challenging changes at King such as the magnet school, the year round calendar, all the new teachers and students, not to mention the physical enhancements at King, like the new paint, landscape, the beautifully restored statue, and the new courtyard. We wish her all the very best. She set us on a positive path, and we are forever grateful.

She was replaced for 3 months by an interim principal, Dr. Marta Bin, who supervised the Human Resources Committee through the many LAUSD rules and challenges involved in finding the right person for the job of principal. After reviewing many resumes and much deliberation the committee decided to waive its authority for selecting a new principal to the Superintendent of Local District E, Dr. Liliam Leis-Castillo. She was able to choose from a much broader group of candidates and had personal knowledge of the kind of leadership skills they possessed. The committee trusted Dr. Castillo to find a Principal that would keep the school on a positive path of reform and be the right fit for the very exciting and challenging changes that King is currently going through.

Luckily for us Dr. Leis-Castillo chose Mr. Byron James Maltez. On November 1, 2001 he became the new principal at Thomas Starr King. He is fluent in Spanish and was most recently the Operations Administrator for District E where his responsibilities were to respond to schools for life threatening incidents, campus disturbances, child abuse, and other emergencies. He worked as a parent council liaison and made interim placements for student expulsions. He was Assistant Principal at Nightingale Middle School, John Muir Middle School, and Virgil Middle School. He was Title I Coordinator and Dean of Discipline for Chester Nimitz Middle School. He was a teacher of science at Charles Drew Middle School, and a teacher of biology & algebra at Bishop Amat High School. He served as a science teacher from 1977-1978 for the United States Peace Corps in Ghana, West Africa.

On Saturday Nov. 3rd Mr. Maltez was moving into his office while we conducted another King Beautification Day. He came over and helped us plant, and I talked about the many plans still in the works at King. He pledged to help accomplish these goals. I feel that he is someone who will help us to keep moving in a positive direction. He will keep the children in mind first and always consider the surrounding community. He wants King to succeed just as much as we do. Welcome Mr. Maltez.

## Los Feliz Branch Library

As always, we continue to improve library service to the Los Feliz community. The library will begin stocking DVD's. The selection is limited at this time, but as funding and space becomes available we will expand. We are testing out this new format, so please let us know if you like DVD's by checking them out or telling us.

The annual reading program for Children, Wild About Reading, continues until the end of this year. Children earn small toys, bookmarks and after 2,000 hours of reading, a free pass to the Los Angeles Zoo. Former Children's Librarian, Connie Dosch, has moved to a library closer to home as a Young Adult Librarian. New to the library and taking on the children work is Saralyn Otter. Saralyn will be having regular story times and programs. Laura Stickney from Barnsdall Jr. Art Center continues the monthly art class for children 7 years old and up.

Seth Nasatir has replaced Willow Nardoni-Teays as the Young Adult/Teen librarian. He has started a chess club open to all ages. The club meets every other Monday evening at 5:00. Other programs of interest to teens are in the planning stages. You can call the library and speak to Seth for specific information.

Adult computer classes continue to be offered by Adult Librarians Catherine O'Connor and Michael Leonard and by Computer Aide, Jair Thomas. In addition to the monthly book discussion group, the meet the author series and Los Feliz Library League Architecture lectures, beginning in January the Los Angeles Opera will present a monthly lecture.

Also coming next year will be the return of the Los Feliz Woodwind Ensemble with Klamon Bloch, a *History of Los Feliz* presentation and a *Travel: Using the Library* series. For information about these and other adult programs, call the library at (323) 913-4710.

If you would like to receive notification about upcoming adult programs join our email list by sending us a message at [lfeliz@lapl.org](mailto:lfeliz@lapl.org) and ask to be added.

The library will close at 12:30 on December 24th and re-open at 10:00am on December 26th. We will also close at 5:00 on December 31st and re-open at 10:00am January 2, 2002.

We wish our Franklin Hills neighbors a safe and happy holiday season.

-Pearl Yonezawa

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## Annual Meeting:

**Membership Up Over 125% In Last 3 Years**  
*By Bruce Carroll*

Headed for its third straight membership record, 2001 has been a lucky year for the FHRA despite the fact that we picked the 13th of June to hold our 13th annual membership meeting. But there was no triskaidekaphobia (fear of 13) in evidence among 150 members and guests who attended. As usual, it was a great place to renew old friendships and meet new neighbors. Many newcomers and veterans signed up to help with various FHRA activities and they enjoyed the delicious snacks and refreshments donated by our hosts at ABC-TV Center.

The official business of the meeting was the election of six members of the FHRA Board of Directors. Four incumbents: Chris Boutelle, Bruce Carroll, Shirley Mims, and Carol Skinner were re-elected. Community Garden coordinator Norman Harriton was also easily elected, but determining the winner of the 6th Board position had to wait until the end of the meeting. Ballots mailed in by 98 FHRA members had two neighborhood lawyers, Joseph Hahn and Richard Shafran, in a dead heat. It was up to those members who voted at the meeting to decide the race after hearing briefly from all the candidates.

The meeting also provided an informative overview of FHRA and neighborhood issues and paid memorial tribute to the late City Council President John Ferraro who had helped our neighborhood in many ways on many occasions.

With the campaign to choose his successor then in full swing several candidates also showed their interest in the FHRA. Among them was Tom Labonge, the eventual winner, who has long supported various FHRA efforts, even getting his hands down and dirty helping to plant the Franklin Avenue median in 1995.

After welcoming the crowd, FHRA President Ricardo Gomez reported on the months of continuing discussions about the formation of a Neighborhood Council to officially represent Franklin Hills, Los Feliz and surrounding areas. There were also progress reports on the FHRA's efforts to obliterate graffiti, beautify the Myra corridor and start a Community Garden all reported on elsewhere in the Overview.

LAPD senior lead officers discussed crime trends in the area and asked for civilian volunteers to help fight crime by doing surveillance in areas where ongoing drug and

*continued on page 7*

other crimes are suspected.

School Board President Caprice Young praised community support for improvements at King Middle School along with neighborhood resident Mary Rodriguez who has spearheaded many of the efforts to upgrade the campus.

With the usual friendly neighborhood spirit that pervades our meetings, despite the very close ballot count, no one asked for the Supreme Court's help when it was announced at the end of the meeting that Joseph Hahn had been elected to the final seat on the FHRA Board of Directors. You can see his brilliant efforts this holiday when you enjoy the lights on the Shakespeare Bridge.

*photo by Bruce Carroll*



*FHRA President Ricardo Gomez welcomes the year's largest gathering of Franklin Hills residents. How many of your neighbors can you recognize from the backs of their heads?*

## Duelling Signs

*photo and text by Bruce Carroll*

The stepped up security around the ABC TV Center has left some residents looking for parking and has no doubt left some drivers perplexed by duelling signs at the corner of Talmadge and Melbourne. You can almost hear: "But Judge the other sign said 'NO Stopping Anytime.'"



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## Editorial

by Carol Skinner

I hope that all of you in our exclusive distribution area (you have to live in Franklin Hills) enjoy the Overview. There are two things I'd like to ask of you, our loyal readers: *Patronize our advertisers, and tell them you saw their ad in the Overview!*

Without them there would be no Overview, as FHRA couldn't publish it without the ad revenue. We owe these merchants a debt of gratitude; many of them support community projects in many other ways. Let them know that their ads are bringing in business, and that the community appreciates their support.

*Contribute your thoughts, ideas, plans and projects to the Overview.*

I am very grateful for the board members and community members who contribute the articles and photos which make up the Overview. I'm absolutely sure there are people in the community with something to say from whom we have not yet heard, and I would like to have as many voices represented as possible. The summer issue will be out in June; I need to have the content by the first of May. Put this on your calendar for next year: *write*—story, article, poem, restaurant review—whatever is your interest. Put a note on your calendar or send in your stuff right now. Snail mail it to the FHRA mailbox (P.O. Box 29122, Los Angeles, CA 90029,) or e-mail it to FHRA2000@hotmail.com.

Mary Frances Reynolds and Shirley Mims have prepared a list of holiday safety tips, as advised by LAPD. A few samples:

- ◆ Exercise extra caution while shopping—this is the pickpockets' favorite time of the year.
- ◆ Don't have gifts and packages visible through the windows of your home or your car. Burglars love the holidays too.
- ◆ Not everyone with a kettle is collecting for the poor. Check out anyone asking for donations on the street, door to door, by phone or mail. Focus your generosity on legitimate charities.
- ◆ Start a Neighborhood Watch on your street. Contact Mary Frances Reynolds at 323/668-9069 or crandmf@aol.com.

And finally, don't miss the graffiti story on page 20 or the information about the 911 service on page 13. This was written for us by Sandy Rosenberg, the Community Relations officer at Northeast Division. This is the solution to the problem of dropped 9-1-1 calls.



Charley Mims is up a ladder placing a blue ribbon to show support for our police officers on Police Appreciation Day. Next November the city-wide observance will again be marked by community members bringing food to the station through all shifts for the officers. Call the CRO office for information on how to participate.



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## NEW NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUP

BY MARY FRANCES SMITH-REYNOLDS

Calling themselves the Sofra Neighborhood Watch Group, residents from streets south of Franklin Avenue have started a new branch of an established organization. Long seen as an effective way to reduce crimes by working in partnerships with local law enforcement, in these uncertain times Neighborhood Watch can also be a channel for other types of support, assistance and information dissemination in our communities.

The Sofra group met for the first time on August 20, and again on October 30 with different neighbors in attendance at each meeting. As the fledgling group moves forward, neighbors have volunteered to be block captains and to help in other capacities. Organizers of the new group are planning another meeting after the start of the new year and hope to continue gaining momentum with interested residents. Organizers distributed flyers to the first two meetings printed in English, Spanish and Armenian, (thanks to the help of volunteer translators) in hopes of reaching out to a cross-section of the neighborhood. Ala, from Café Los Feliz, not only provided the Armenian translation on the flyer, but also gave two trays of freshly made pastries for the first meeting. Police officers from the L.A.P.D. made presentations at both meetings. In August Officers Aurora Martinez and George Angulo answered questions about crime prevention in homes and neighborhoods. Officer Sam Salazar, one of our area's Senior Lead Officers, joined by Officers Stacy Miyamura and Officer Warren Tojong attended in October. Officer Salazar, knowledgeably and with openness and good humor, discussed a number of topics. He gave a crime update for our area, discussed how citizens will be affected by the LAPD's current tactical alert, gave tips for Halloween and shared insights on how Neighborhood Watch groups can be most effective. Participants at both meetings left with user-friendly handouts about security, police services and volunteer opportunities in the neighborhood. In addition, LAPD volunteer, Louise Mardirossian was on hand to translate for any Armenian neighbors at the meeting.

Currently the boundaries of the Sofra group are (roughly) Prospect Avenue to the north, Clayton Avenue to the south, Talmadge Street to the west and Sanborn Avenue to the east. The first meeting was held at the now-defunct Prospect of Art space on Talmadge Street and Prospect Avenue. The room for the second meeting was graciously donated at the Mount Hollywood Congregational Church at Prospect Avenue and Rodney Drive.

All residents from the area described above are enthusiastically invited to join the Sofra Neighborhood Watch group. With the goals of increased participation and an expanded Neighborhood Watch network, a committee has been formed within the Franklin Hills Residents Association. By partnering with the FHRA, this Neighborhood Watch committee hopes to network with other N.W. groups in the area to share ideas and resources and to rekindle community participation. The FHRA has also offered to help fund Neighborhood Watch activities and materials.

Taking care of each other and improving our communities are the broad objectives of Neighborhood Watch programs. This is done through reaching out to our neighbors and work-



ing with the police department. These simple actions can provide myriad kinds of support from being the "eyes and ears" of the neighborhood, to assisting with general safety and disaster preparedness, to helping neighbors stay informed and equipped with the right tools for crime prevention and reporting. Neighborhood Watch groups can also work in partnerships with other community organizations on activities such as clean-up projects, plantings and graffiti abatement. In many ways, now is the perfect time to participate in neighborhood groups. Improving our world starts with improving our community.

If you would like more information on Sofra Neighborhood Watch, would like to serve as a block captain, or if you're interested in starting or reviving a Neighborhood Watch group nearby, please contact Mary Frances Smith-Reynolds at 668-9069.

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## President's Letter

watch on your street, contact us and we will help you set one up. If you have any information on crime or nuisance problems, please let us know.

Eric Frase and Shirley Mims have spearheaded our anti-graffiti efforts. We put a lot of effort into graffiti abatement, and we need more help. If you can spare an hour or two a month, or can adopt a wall, please contact us. Almost all of the graffiti abatement in and around the Franklin Hills is done by our volunteers. One problem is cleaning graffiti from sidewalks. If you have any ideas, or have access to a portable steam cleaner, please let us know.

Trees and landscaping are vital to any neighborhood improvement effort. We always need volunteers to work on the median just west of the bridge. There are other projects. Those new trees that you see along Myra Avenue between Fountain Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard? Our Board member Peter Bedard single handedly organized the project. If you are interested in getting

trees planted somewhere in our area, contact us and we will help you organize the project. If you are interested in helping us find a funding source to light and landscape around the Sunset Bridge over Myra Avenue, let us know. The bridge is very blighted, yet many of us pass under it on a daily basis. We would all benefit from improvement there.

The improvements at King Middle School continue although sometimes the pace seems slow. We have volunteers who work landscaping the school. Many thanks to the Silver Lake Gardening Club for their continual help. Mary Rodriguez of the Los Feliz Improvement Association designed the new color scheme for the school. Volunteers are always welcome.

Our neighborhood council saga continues. Various community members are working on the certification application. The Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council hopes to hold board member elections sometime early next year. We have now come up with some fairly definitive boundaries that include Franklin Hills, Los Feliz, Griffith Park and some parts of Hollywood. Atwater Village and Silver Lake have each decided to form separate neighborhood councils.

The Franklin Hills Residents Association is a volunteer organization that is committed to improving our neighborhood for all residents. We exist to help you solve problems. We are volunteers who put aside a few hours a month to improve our neighborhood. We will help you tackle a problem. We provide letterhead, advice, extensive local government contacts, and a network of people with expertise in a variety of areas. We are always looking for volunteers, so please contact us if you can help out. Even if you don't have the time to volunteer, you membership and dues support many good neighborhood causes and provide quite a good return for a \$10 annual investment.

On behalf of the entire Board, happy holidays.

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## New Sprouts on the Median

by Shirley Mims

Many new things have sprung up on the median.

In August, with the help of Charley Mims, fellow board member and expert on the City's inter-workings, the City's Department of Transportation (DOT) installed an historic sign for the Shakespeare Bridge giving credit to FHRA for the landscaping on the median. John Fisher, Assistant General Manager for DOT, arranged for the design, manufacture and installation of the sign at no cost to Franklin Hills. John Sam, an Engineer for DOT, and Douglas Aitken came to install the sign. The sign will be maintained as part of the City's regular services. In appreciation, Bird of Paradise, the City's official flower, will be planted at the base of the sign.

After the September 11 attacks, a patriotic neighbor hung a large flag from the sign on the median—shown on our cover. It hung beautifully for several weeks. Out of respect for the flag, the neighbor took it down when it became soiled from dragging slightly on the ground. FHRA is responsible for the median. If anyone would like to do something similar, please contact us first. The FHRA hotline is 323/664-7247.

More native plants were placed around the median during planting season in October. They should mature within one or two years and fill in some of the empty spots. A few larger plants that died were also replaced and some heavy thinning and clean up was done at the same time along the slope. One of three Zauschnerias planted at the West end of the median last Spring survived. It bloomed this Summer with a bright red-orange flower. There is a lot of great color this Fall from the purple Mexican Sage and the red Salvia Greggii to varying hues of green, brown, orange, white and yellow.

The median is looking great from the help of many volunteers who have shown up on the monthly maintenance days (some of their pictures are shown here). Fellow board member Bruce Carroll has been particularly instrumental with the maintenance and repair of the water system. If you'd like to help, too, join us from 9 to 11 AM on the third Saturday of every month. Activities include pulling weeds, trimming

shrubs back from the curb, and picking up trash. Tools and drinking water are provided. This is a great time to talk with your neighbors and catch up on local news and events while doing something for your community. If you'd like to get periodic updates and reminders for scheduled maintenance days, send your email address to me at [smims11@hotmail.com](mailto:smims11@hotmail.com). I look forward to seeing you on the median!

*Left Below: Julie Platus, Charley Mims, Shirley Mims, DOT's Douglas Aitken and John Sam.*

*Right: Lynn Hill and Mary Rodriguez at one of the monthly median maintenance days.*

*Photos by Shirley Mims*



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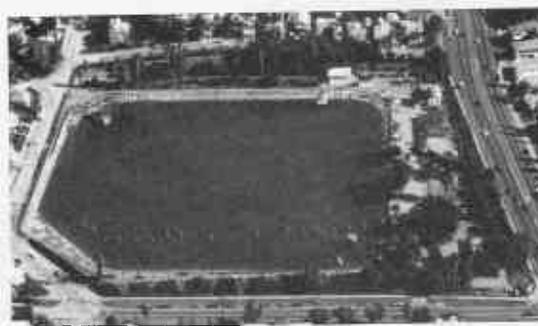
## Water Water Everywhere, But Not The Drops We Drink

By Bruce Carroll

For most of the past decade we've driven past Hyperion and Rowena, or looked down on the Rowena Reservoir, and wondered: What are they doing there? When are they going to finish? The answers came last July 19th when the city dedicated the reservoir's latest incarnation.

It is now a 10 million gallon underground tank, to keep the water clean, with what Hollywood might call scenery, but what bureaucrats call "water features" on top to keep the neighbors happy. Actually the reservoir has been in our neighborhood longer than the neighborhood, and it has alternated between being covered and uncovered.

It's the oldest distribution reservoir in the city, and it dates from 1901 when it was known as the Wicks Reservoir. In 1910 it was renamed Rowena and rebuilt with a wooden cover. That lasted until 1942 when the roof deteriorated and was removed to prevent citizens from getting splinters from drinking water. For the next fifty years the 5.7 acre 31 million gallon reservoir was uncovered. But by 1992, it was also unsafe and the state ordered it drained because of seismic concerns over its earthfill dam.



*BEFORE: Rowena Reservoir before it was drained for seismic safety in 1992*

Plans to once again put the water undercover, in a giant above ground tank, were met with objections from the Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs. But, with laws demanding water meet increasingly strict sanitary standards, the solution was to hide the water under water.



*DURING: 10 million gallon concrete tank under construction. Inside, before it was filled with water, it looked like a very high ceiling parking garage.*

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The reservoir is truly a case of beauty being only skin deep. In this case a shallow four acre pond hides the deep concrete tank. Even so, it's a "look, but don't touch" situation. For security reasons the enticing grounds are off limits, despite the fact that the water on top never gets into the tap. In fact, even the water stored in the tank is not headed for the Franklin Hills. It flows southwest to areas around Wilshire Boulevard.



*AFTER: Waterfalls, lily ponds and fake rocks make what could have been just an ugly tank look better than the old reservoir.*

*Photo by Bruce Carroll*

## 911 & YOU

*Sargeant Sanford M. Rosenberg  
Community Relations Office, Officer-in-Charge, Northeast Area*

9-1-1 should only be used for an emergency. An emergency is a life-threatening situation, crime in progress, or serious crime that just occurred. Obviously, there are many other situations that require police response but are not really 9-1-1 type calls. Direct dialing a 7-digit telephone number for non-emergency situations will ensure police response without overloading the 9-1-1 system. The Los Angeles 9-1-1 system receives approximately 3.5 million calls annually. Sadly, over 75% of those calls are not serious emergencies. Some are not emergencies at all. This has caused the system to become critically overburdened which poses a threat to us all.

To help the Los Angeles Police Department's communications needs, the City has initiated a new number for non-emergency calls for service. The telephone number is 1-877-ASK-LAPD (1-877-275-5273) This number should be used for disturbances (including a loud radio or party,) drinking in public, disputes involving a landlord, business or property, and trespassing and loitering. If you desire further information please contact the Northeast Community Relations office at (213) 485-2548.

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## Chairman's Corner

*Adam Weisman*

By the time this newsletter has made it to your door steps, I hope that the Holiday Lights will be up along the Shakespeare Bridge. It has been many years in the planning, but, with the help of our neighbors, the bridge will be aglow with twinkling lights.

In my years on the board I have noticed that the FHRA projects get implemented either very fast or slowly. Often

### Holiday Greetings



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the projects get presented during a board or committee meeting. Following a thorough discussion and brainstorming, the prototype is presented. Then comes a critical moment - the time to pick up the idea and run. In many cases the idea comes up when everyone's hands are filled with other projects. Or none of the empty hands has the unique skill or knowledge to get the project going. This may lead to months or even years until the ideas are considered again.

In many respects a length of time helps. Like some fine wines, time works to our advantage. It gives us time to think, talk to other neighborhood groups, and seek out specialists in the neighborhood. The result is often better than the prototype. This was the case with our Welcome Basket program. The idea was drummed up many moons ago by Violet Weber. Small productive committee meetings occurred and then everything was quiet. Then Shirley Mims picked up the project and, with Violet, Chris Boutelle and others, the idea became a reality. What a wonderful idea!

One project that was discussed over a year ago was the notion of traffic mirrors. Many of you may have them near the entrance to your driveway as a means to see traffic as you pull out. We also see them around town. The idea of placing them at specific intersections within Franklin Hills was brought up by residents along the upper end of Franklin Avenue. The city does not provide them. While some streets along Franklin may need them, there are many other areas within the neighborhood that would also benefit from them. A few years ago I went shopping and found a few local merchants that sell the mirrors. I also talked to a few neighbors who would permit them to be affixed to walls on their property. So what stopped the project? Other interested neighbors like YOU. I am still interested in completing the project but do not have the time and energy to do it myself. The project lies dormant, awaiting someone with the energy to complete the project. So give me or FHRA a call and let's set up the committee!

Another idea concerns FHRA history. So often as I walk around the neighborhood, people talk about their home and mentioned some claim to fame. They talk about filming done on the property, someone famous who lived there, or some notorious event associated with the house, lot, or even a tree. I think it would be great if all of you could jot down your name, address, and something special about where you live that we can put into our archives. Bruce Carroll often comes across residents that provide photos and stories who grace the pages of the Overview. But now, let's see what kind of bragging rights you have (e.g., the previous owner of my house was an extra for the movie *Lost Horizon*).

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Are there other projects or ideas? Sure. Almost every board meeting generates a few more ideas for new projects. There are many projects that remain dormant, including benches for the Shakespeare Bridge, MTA bus kiosks, street resurfacing (where is the city?), street lighting along Russell Avenue, sealing abandoned houses, and reducing utility poles. Is there something I missed? Is there some project you would like to organize? Well, step right up! Send FHRA an e-mail, come to a board meeting, or contact one of the board members. You need not be a board member (although we are always looking for volunteers). We just need some of your precious brain power and time!

I currently serve as Vice President of the Board of Trustees for Lycée International de Los Angeles, also known as LILA or the French School. The school was founded in 1978 and has been in Franklin Hills for over 10 years. The school has other campuses in Woodland Hills, Tarzana, Monrovia and Orange with a total enrollment of over 650 students. It is the largest French-American school in Southern California which offers both a French and an International baccalaureate program in addition to a high school diploma. Within the last few months the founder and school head, Monique Mickus, passed away after a long bout of cancer. Her spirit and strength was the driving force to the success of the school. The new school administrator is Jean-Michel Simonet, and we wish him success in his new position.

The Franklin Hills campus is owned by the City of Los Angeles and leased to the school. A ten-year renewal lease will be effective 2002. In the last year FHRA has worked with the school and city to develop a community garden. The success of the garden has been....delicious! The project has also activated the school and FHRA to maintain the area along the Sanborn Avenue perimeter. This garden project, in turn, led the city to consider selling the property to the school. Presently, the city's asset management office is completing a property assessment. As a part of any sale a community meeting will be arranged to discuss the impact of the sale. There has been a conditional use permit to control the size of the school. At this stage there is no plan to modify the conditional use permit. In fact, there is a waiting list for the primary grades in Franklin Hills. The number of students in each grade will wax and wane over the years. If the school can purchase the property, long-term capital improvements will be possible.

A 501(c)3 building fund has been established in the name of the founder, Monique Mickus, to assist with the purchase of the Franklin Hills property. If anyone would like to donate to this tax deductible fund, please contact LILA at 323-66-LILA-6.

(See Page 18)

Photos by Shirley Mims



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## FRANKLIN HILLS COMMUNITY GARDEN

*By Norm Harriton*

The Franklin Hills Community Garden opened on April 28, and since then we Garden members have harvested our first crop of vegetables, melons and flowers. The crops included tomatoes (that really have taste) in all sizes shapes and colors, eggplant, zucchini, squash, corn, beans, cucumbers, sweet and hot peppers, broccoli, cantaloupes, watermelons, lettuce, carrots, and radishes.

There are still several garden plots available, and it's not too late to get started. Fall and winter are actually ideal times to start a garden. It is less tiring in cool weather to do the manual labor involved in initially preparing a plot for



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planting; when the rains come the ground is easier to cultivate, and watering is needed less frequently than in summer. A wide variety of vegetables and flowers flourish during the cooler months, including cabbage, chard, lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, onions, garlic, leeks, beans, sugar snap peas, chrysanthemums, cyclamen, begonias, calendula, nasturtiums, pansies, and Iceland poppies.

We continue to make improvements to the Garden, and now have our very own street address: 2037 Sanborn Avenue. The Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation has provided trash containers and is picking up waste which can't be composted. A beautiful sign for the entrance to the Garden was created, donated and installed by Garden members Tim and Laura Wild. Two donated Jamaican Red Banana trees have been planted just inside the Sanborn Avenue fence; we plan to turn this common area into a grove of tropical fruit trees and vines.

Our most acute need is fencing to protect our crops from errant soccer and dodge balls and the kids who occasionally trample plants as they go to re-



*Norm, hard at work in the garden*

trieve same. Applications for grant money to install fencing have been filed, and, by year end, we expect to find out whether grant money has been awarded.

In these times of uncertainty few things can be more reassuring and rewarding than growing your own edibles close to home. Each Garden plot is 15 feet by 15 feet, and all plots are cultivated organically - no chemical fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides are permitted. If you are interested in obtaining a Garden plot for your use, or wish to visit the Garden, phone Norm Harriton at (323) 663-9695.

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## Welcome Neighbors!

by Shirley Mims and Chris Boutelle

Here is a great big Welcome! to our new neighbors. Since June we have delivered over 30 Welcome Baskets to happy new residents of Franklin Hills. Many of their photographs are gracing the pages of this Overview.

The baskets are designed to introduce new neighbors to Franklin Hills. They are overflowing with donated items from local merchants, literature on City services, and brochures from local museums, attractions and other fun activities in the area, including information about the Franklin Hills Residents Association. Long-time Franklin Hills supporters have donated abundantly to the baskets: generous gift certificates from Alberto at Alberto Salon, Discount Medical Pharmacy in the Mayfair Plaza, and Eastside Records on Hillhurst; Craig from Baller Hardware put together gift ensembles with a tape measure and golden keys to be exchanged for free key copies; Tony at Palermo Ristorante Italiano gives free pizza certificates and lavishes his new guests when they come in; Glenn at Say Cheese on Hyperion donates gourmet mustard jars; Trader Joe's gave a year's supply of grocery items (with

a greater than expected volume of baskets we've almost used them all up!); Video Journeys, also in the Mayfair Plaza, donates videos and popcorn with free video rental coupons. Other merchants have become involved with our program and have made generous contributions, too: beautiful single cut flowers from Aloha Flowers; luggage tags from Carlson Wagonlit Travel; free haircut offers from Opyan's Salon; travel cups and free smoothies from Robeks Juice on Hillhurst; colorful, live plants from Sunset Blvd. Nursery. Our own board member, Peter Bedard, also donated several home-style gift items from his Los Angeles business. A couple of lucky neighbors got one-time donations from Action Vacuum and Mise En Place. We can always use more. If you have a business and would like to make a contribution, please call us.

Our local realtors provide us with much of the information we need to learn who our new neighbors are. Karen Weiss and Ross Carter of Coldwell Banker take time every month to relay information from a public database about new buyers. Their help has been invaluable. Referrals from neighbors are also appreciated. If you have a new neighbor please let us know. Please provide names, address, and when they moved in. The most challenging part of this program is finding our new neighbors at home! If possible, please also give us their telephone number, or ask them to call us, so we can arrange a time when they will be home to receive a basket. Be sure and leave your name and number so we can contact you with any

questions. Also let us know if you would like to accompany us and meet your neighbors when we deliver their basket. Call one of our committee chairs below, or the FHRA hotline at 323/664-7247.

The intent of the baskets is to introduce new residents to the Franklin Hills area whether they come from Silver Lake, Hollywood, San Francisco or Wisconsin. While everyone enjoys getting a basket, delivery is discouraged to folks who move just across the hill and are already fairly well acquainted with the area. Alas, delivery is also limited to residents who have moved to the Franklin Hills within 30 days of notification to the committee. From organizing to assembly to delivery, each set of baskets takes several hours to complete, and there just haven't been enough volunteers to handle any more volume.

Thanks to the countless hours contributed by generous volunteers in our neighborhood the baskets are of exceptionally high quality. We need more volunteers to ensure the continuation and quality of the baskets. Tasks that each takes an hour or two include col-

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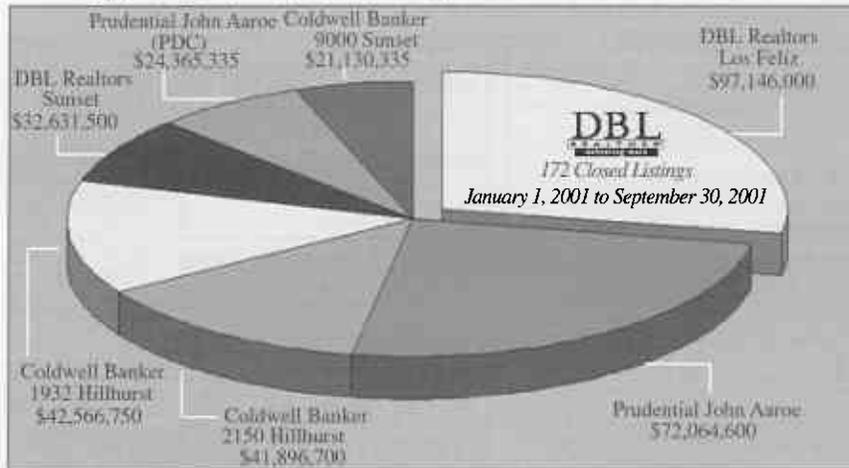
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## New Neighbors Welcomed by Welcome Committee

lection of donations, menus and literature, and assembly and delivery of the baskets. If you have some spare time for any of these tasks, please call now to volunteer. One of our committee chairs will be happy to talk with you: Shirley Mims at 323/666-2520, Violet Weber at 323/663-6427, or Chris Boutelle at 323/666-5548.



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## Graffiti in our Neighborhood

by Eric Frase

Franklin Hills residents may have noticed a decrease of graffiti vandalism in our neighborhood over the past eight or nine months, especially along the commercial corridors of Fountain and Hyperion. 2001 was the year that Frankinites joined together to battle the ongoing assault on our community by taggers and gang members. Resident volunteers, property and business owners, and victims of graffiti vandalism have been working together to take back our neighborhood, one bus bench, one stop sign, one retaining wall, one curb, one block and one street at a time.

The newly formed FHRA Graffiti

Abatement Team (FHRA GAT) currently has almost two dozen residents who have expressed interest in battling graffiti in our area. In addition to numerous group paint-outs, FHRA GAT has held several meetings this year. The first meeting featured Officer Colenzo from LAPD's Northeast Division's PACE (Police Assisted Community Enhancement) program. After showing Officer Colenzo dozens of photographs documenting the numerous incidents of graffiti in our area, he was able to tell us that about 90% of the graffiti that we had removed was done by "taggers". Graffiti taggers are a group of youth that form a "crew," adopt a two- or three-word name, and then leave their mark in the form of the crew's initials, sometimes including the tagger's nickname. The irony of this anonymous search for recognition is striking. Surprisingly, Officer

Colenzo informed our group that gangs despise taggers! And apparently for the same reason the rest of us do. Taggers' sole purpose is to run around making a mess.

The only gang-related graffiti that has appeared in our area, and continues as this is written, is affiliated with the La Mirada Locos, according to Officer Colenzo. Their main tag is LML but will also appear as LM, VLML or BLML. Apparently, this gang deals drugs and the tags identify their territory. Gang members have recently taken up residency at the Sunset Pacific Motel on Sunset Blvd, south of Fountain, which is a whole other battle currently being addressed. Numerous FHRA GAT members have been painting over their tags (sometimes covering entire walls) that have appeared along Fountain Ave. in the past few months. Their mark has also appeared numerous times at the corner of Talmadge and Prospect, and even up Talmadge as far north as Clarissa. Residents are urged to remove ALL markings from this gang, whether spray-painted on a wall or written in crayon on a handrail. Officer Colenzo informed us that gang members will generally not approach someone removing or painting over their graffiti. Another gang crossing out their tag and re-tagging it is a completely different hornet's nest!

FHRA GAT has also distributed letters to every business and storefront along Fountain and Hyperion explaining our mission and asking their assistance in removing all graffiti from their premises and surrounding area on a daily basis. The most visible improvement has been with the auto body shops in the area. It struck us as ironic that businesses that use paint and spray devices were the ones most negligent in removing graffiti from their properties! FHRA GAT members also sent out e-mails and made phone calls to the headquarters of one of our few "corporate" neighbors in the area (let's just say they sell tires cheaply) when graffiti remained on their property for weeks at a time.

Recently FHRA GAT members

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have adopted specific areas or locations to keep graffiti free. It is our goal that graffiti that appears in the morning as kids are going to school will be removed by the time kids are going home from school. Immediate removal of graffiti, regardless of whether it's a small tag on a trash container or scrawled across a large wall, will send a message to taggers and gang members that there are no blank canvasses available in Franklin Hills for their messages.

(Elsewhere in this issue of the Overview is a list of resources and phone numbers for assistance in graffiti removal and other eyesore issues in our neighborhood. If you'd like to be informed of FHRA GAT's activities and meetings, send your e-mail and other contact information to: FHRA2000@hotmail.com or call the FHRA Message Line at 323-664-7247.)

#### Useful phone numbers

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1-877-CALL LAPD (877-275-5273)  
non-emergency police response

Northeast Desk 213-485-2563  
Officer Calenzo 213-847-0511  
CRO Office 213-485-2548  
**FHRA:** hotline 323-664-7247  
email FHRA2000@hotmail.com

#### City of Los Angeles Services (Free)

HBT (Hollywood Beautification Team) 323-463-5180  
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## E-Mail Reports of Neighborhood Crime

*On Sunday Nov 4th Bruce Carroll, the keeper of the FHRA e-mail list sent this message:*

Dear Neighbor,

The Franklin Hills Residents Association has been advised of a couple of disturbing incidents recently in the 3900 block of Franklin Ave. where one car was stolen on October 30th and another vandalized on October 15th. A new Accord was stolen between 5 pm and 7 pm from the driveway of a resident who was home watching the World Series. The car was unlocked and the thieves may somehow have gained access to a key.

The earlier incident happened between 11 pm and 1 am. A Honda had its windows smashed, the trunk was opened and the stereo was stolen. This was not a new car, and the car's stereo was not a fancy high end model.

While the FHRA is awaiting more information from the LAPD, we are aware of no arrest so far in either incident. That likely means the culprits are still at large and know our neighborhood. If you have any information about these crimes, or

others, please call the LAPD's Northeast Division at 213-485-2563...or 911 if it's an emergency or you are witnessing a crime in progress.

Our LAPD Senior Lead Officer, Al Polhonki, suggests a good way to fight the numerous property crimes in our area is to form more Neighborhood Watch groups. If you are interested in joining or leading a group near your home, now would be a good time to reply to this e-mail and we will work with the LAPD to get to more groups activated.

The holiday season traditionally sees a rise in property crime so we should all be extra observant. Lock your cars. Lock your homes. Open your eyes. Report ALL incidents to the police. Work to make our neighborhood safe and secure.

Within the next few days many emails came in response; each telling of another incident in the neighborhood. Up on the hill equally with the lowland areas.

To join the e-mail list send a message to: <fhra2000@hotmail.com>

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## IN MEMORY OF MARY ORR

by Violet Weber

One of Franklin Hills Residents' Association's most dedicated community activists died alone in her hillside eyrie in September.

Born in February 1917 in Des Moines, Iowa, Mary graduated from that high school and drove back to her high school reunion every year until frail health finally denied her her trip two years ago.

Mary Wry Orr had dedicated her every living moment in the past twenty years to heading up the Franklin Hills Residents' Association's Neighborhood Watch program. Many innovations were put into place with her leadership to help make the area safer in keeping crime at bay. New lighting was effected, signs prohibited heavy trucks on our streets, stop signs kept cars from tearing through four-way auto crossings and signs were erected to warn criminals that they would be watched if they were in the neighborhood.

Over the years Mary increased membership in the Watch Program from just twelve to over 40 interested neighbors who wanted to live in a crime free neighborhood. She was able to present many interesting speakers not only from the Police Department but also many of the department heads who run our city.

Her efforts were hailed by beautiful plaques from the California State Senate, California State Assembly, City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, City Fire Department, City Police Department as well as the Congress of the United States.

Mary came by her public interest honestly by being the daughter of a fire captain in Des Moines as well as a mother who was involved in city pursuits until the day she died at the age of 90.

Mary's interests were very varied but her greatest love was cars. She owned three big parking lots and a garage, but during World War II left Los Angeles to work for the FBI in Washington, D.C., returning to Los Angeles when victory was declared.

Mary is survived by her brother Jack Wry and his three sons.

According to her wishes there were no memorial services. Mary wanted to be remembered only by the good she felt she could bring to her community and her home "high on the hill!"



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As the Overview went press FHRA membership was just one away from breaking last year's record. If you haven't made your tax deductible dues donation *already*, why not send it now and become the one who sets the new record.

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**Larger contributions are extremely welcome. Thank you for joining FHRA!**

# Looking For a New View

By Bruce Carroll

Past issues of the Overview have featured "then and now" comparisons contrasting photos from our historic collection with current views. Often houses and trees have made it difficult to shoot from exactly the same location, but I could usually find a spot where I could get a pretty good match. However, this Overview's "then and now" is really just a "then" because I couldn't find anyplace to shoot the "now".

*Sometime in 1925, somewhere in the Franklin Hills, looking east along Hyperion Avenue. l-r: Dwight Westberg, his sister Clarabelle, and their cousins Fred and Susie Hammersly.*



The FHRA obtained the 1925 photo from long time Franklin Avenue resident Clarabelle Westberg (second from the left) who was 6 years old when it was taken, perhaps along Lyric Avenue. When she was interviewed by the Overview in 1994 she recalled, "we were just hiking around with our cousins."

Recently I did a little hiking around on Lyric and also on Ronda Vista, but peering between houses I couldn't find a vista that was a good match for the old photo. The big intersection in the right center of the picture is Hyperion and Griffith Park Blvd. The large house along Hyperion at the right edge of the photo is still there.

For the next issue of Overview we'd love to hear from that someone out there who looks out on a match for this photo everyday from their deck or living room. Just call the FHRA at 323-664-7247 or e-mail FHRA2000@hotmail.com. Those contacts will also work if you have other old photos of the Franklin Hills area or would like a copy of this or other historic photos in our collection.



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