



Westside Village Civic Association
www.westsidevillage.org
September 2008

Westside Village News & Views

5th Annual Westside Village Fall Festival

**Saturday, October 11, 2008
Save the Date**

Put it in your calendars—the Fifth Annual Westside Village Fall Festival will be held on Saturday, October 11 from 12 Noon to 3:00 PM at St. John's Presbyterian Church located at the corner of National and Military. Last year's festival drew over 500 attendees,

year we have to charge a nominal fee for admission —\$3/person for WVCA members, \$5/person for non-members. Admission includes one meal per person.

We are looking for 20 volunteers to help us on the day of the festival. For those that are able to contribute a couple of hours of their time, admission will be complimentary. It's always been a great way to get involved and meet your neighbors...oh and have a great time too. Please email us at westsidevillage-board@yahoo.com if you're interested in volunteering.

We look forward to see you all again this year for the biggest festival yet.



Neighborhood children having fun at last year's Fall Festival.

our biggest attendance yet and this year promises to be even bigger.



Activities this year will include the ever-popular pony rides, petting zoo, bounce house, tattoos and face painting along with many new activities for the young or just young at heart.

We are still in the planning stages so if you'd like to bring us your ideas, please email us at westsidevillageboard@yahoo.com.

The festival has become the WVCA's most costly endeavor. As a result, the WVCA has been operating at a deficit for the past few years. Therefore, this

HP chooses Clover as one of 130 schools nationwide...

Clover Avenue Elementary School was selected as one of 130 K-12 public schools nationwide to receive the 2007 HP Technology for Teaching grant, which is designed to transform and improve learning in the classroom through innovative uses of technology.

During the 2007-2008 academic year, HP Technology for Teaching grant projects will impact more than 36,000 K-12 students nationwide. Clover will receive an award package of HP products and a cash stipend for each teacher with a total value of \$31,000.

Each of the HP Technology for Teaching grant recipients will use HP wireless Tablet PC technology to enhance learning in engineering, math, science, computer science or business courses. Clover will utilize the awarded technology to improve student

mastery of specific California life science and math standards by approaching life science concepts with hands-on gardening experiences. This project is called "T.A.G." which stands for "Technology Assisted Gardening." The HP technology enables teachers to truly bring their classrooms to the garden, and then bring the garden back to the classroom.

School Principal Sharon Fabian explains that "With the help of this HP technology, Project T.A.G. will transform Clover's garden into a high-tech classroom where 4th and 5th graders will internalize life science concepts by raising plants, making compost, and learning a laptop can be as useful as a shovel. We expect this project will be literally ground-breaking!"

Neighborhood Watch Continues to Unite Westside Village

Watch Progress Report

It will be a year at the end of September since the new Neighborhood Watch program got underway. While it may seem daunting at times with the frequency of crime alerts, consider what went on unknown to many of our residents previously. It

afforded criminals to go block by block, even house to house using the same tactics to commit crimes. However, these crime alerts are having a positive impact and we are making progress as well as the added benefit of unifying our community. We're happy to report that the majority of the

blocks in Westside Village have successfully updated their block's contact information and are communicating regularly.

The Neighborhood Watch Network is having other positive effects on our community too. Several blocks have organized to address local issues such as security problems and street resurfacing. And it was especially touching to see how our community responded when one of our neighbors went missing (this had a happy ending). As an example, Louise Simon's block of 3000-3100 Veteran recently organized a block meeting to discuss what they could do to prevent crime. Our Senior Lead Officer Juan Ceja spoke about crime trends with residents and offered tips on neighborhood safety and crime prevention. The impressive turn-out not only raised awareness but also helped to foster a bond among these neighbors, some of whom met one another for the first time and have since formed new neighborly relations. SLO Ceja is happy to speak at block meetings. If you would like to organize a meeting for your block, please contact your block captain or the Neighborhood Watch and we will help you get set up.

Also, if you have any concerns regarding your block

please contact your block captain or the Neighborhood Watch directly so we can work together to overcome them. The WVNW often can assist with facilitating these issues and getting the appropriate public officials involved.

Kingsland/Rose Stairs Clean Up Project

On July 5th Avis Eckelberry, the Kingsland/Ellenda block captain organized and raised \$400 through the generosity of our community to have the shrubs trimmed from the stairs leading from Kingland down to Rose. The overgrown vegetation along the stairs created dark, concealed areas where questionable people have been hanging out day and night with reports of drug activity taking place. Many residents feared the condition of the stairs was contributing to the crime in our neighborhood. Several neighbors came out to lend a hand and even SLO Ceja came to support the cause. Thank you to everyone involved!

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

On June 12th thirty neighbors in and around Westside Village graduated a seven week Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training program, taught by LAFD Firefighter Sergio Mayorga. We learned valuable information about how to keep our community safe in the event of a disaster and frankly, the classes were fascinating. If you are interested in attending this free training program offered by the City of Los Angeles, please contact us at the Westside Village Neighborhood Watch or go to <http://www.cert-la.com/index.shtml> for more information.

The recent earthquake was another reminder of how important it is to prepare ourselves and that we will need to rely on our neighbors as it may take several days or longer for emergency personal to come to our aid after the "big one". A reminder that "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" is the appropriate action to reduce injury and death during earthquakes. Please note that September is National Preparedness Month: Shake Out...Are you Prepared? The City of Los Angeles will hold its 17th Annual Emergency Preparedness Fairs for more information call 213-978-2222 or visit www.lacity.org/emd.

Westside Village Dedicated Neighborhood Patrol

Security Service Systems continues to patrol our neighborhood and it's taken a lot of effort to acquire new subscribers to further increase the hours of patrol. The goal is to be able to reduce the monthly cost from \$39 closer to \$25 if SSS can increase the number of subscribers. Many subscribers have benefited from SSS's close proximity by calling SSS when suspicious characters have been seen in the area and LAPD would have taken too long to respond. And with the recent rash of car burglaries occurring during the night, SSS added an additional

Ask Your Board

When will the Palms and National Blvd. overpasses be completed?

Our local council offices have been leaning on Caltrans lately to finish the Palms overpass by the end of October and the National overpass by January 2009.

overnight patrol to deter further car thefts, which seems to have helped out. SSS often finds open garage doors after the residents have left their homes for the day and work with us to contact the owners as well as finding that occasional dog that ran away from home. The presence of Security Service Systems patrolling our neighborhood is a very important component in our effort to deter criminals and we strongly encourage everyone to sign up if we as a community are going to continue to make our neighborhood a less appealing target. Please support this effort and subscribe to the Westside Village Dedicated Patrol by contacting George Aceves of Security Service Systems at 310-477-2095 or ssspatrol@aol.com.

Other Items

On June 4th our neighborhood was shocked by news of a shooting on Queensland Street. The victim later died from the fatal gun shot wound. Police arrested three suspects and according to LAPD they have a solid case. The individuals were involved in a drug deal but none of them resided in the Westside Village area.

On September 18th LAPD's Pacific Division holds its quarterly Block Captain's meeting at 6:30 PM at the police station. The topic for discussion is Identity Theft. We encourage Westside Village block captains to attend and share what they learn with the members of their block.

We are proud of the close relation Westside Village has developed with our Senior Lead Officer, Juan Ceja. He knows our community very well and his presence has been significant and lead to the arrest of several individuals involved in criminal activity in our area.

Our neighborhood network wouldn't be as effective as it is today without all the hard work that many of our residents and block captains have put into reviving our Neighborhood Watch... but there is still room for improvement. So, if you haven't yet met your new neighbors or had a chance to pass

along your contact information to your block captain we strongly encourage you do so. Let's keep our communication network going! If you don't know who your block captain is, please contact us at WestsideVillageWatch@gmail.com. (Please note that the Neighborhood Watch email address has changed due to limitations of the Road Runner account. While the old email address will remain in effect, going forward crime alerts are being sent from the WestsideVillageWatch@gmail.com account. Any email exchanges should be sent to this new gmail account).

Our goal is to continue to make Westside Village a safer place by making us less of a target for crime through awareness, prevention and a unified community. Get to know your neighbors if you haven't already done so since they are your eyes and ears when you are away from home. Plus it makes for a more pleasant environment to live in! Please contact the Neighborhood Watch at WestsideVillageWatch@gmail.com with any suggestions, questions or if you would like to get involved. We greatly appreciate your support.

Pink Bags, Pamphlets, Menus, Unwanted Mail On Our Doorsteps

Hot pink bags hanging from our doorknob, restaurant menus left on our doorsteps, business cards stuck in the doorjamb—how can we deal with these so it doesn't look like we are away on vacation or just gone for the day? This was a question that aroused a good deal of interest at our Annual Meeting. Unfortunately, some of you reading this article, won't be happy. There is no ordinance that prevents someone from leaving materials on your doorstep. It is a right of free speech v. the right of privacy. If you don't want someone leaving materials on your doorstep, you might have to build a fence and lock your gate – otherwise, all sorts of folks will have the right to leave their handouts—including the Westside Village Civic Association and the Mar Vista Community Council who also leave their newsletters on the doorstep. Add to that list UPS, FedEx, Realtors, political candidates.... And, don't be surprised if you do build a periphery fence and find the leaflets and brochures—and pink bag—attached to your fence gate!

Two suggestions come to mind 1) ask a neighbor to do a daily check of your doorstep and driveway—and be a good neighbor offering to do the same when they go away; and 2) sign on with our security service patrol—when you are away they will do a circumference search of your property, remove the unwanted leaflets from your doorstep and even bring in your trash cans after trash day.



Save The Trees, Save Westside Village

By Russell Johnson

Westside Village has long enjoyed the charm of the stately trees that shade its streets. Many volunteers have tried with varying success to help infill in the areas that have fewer trees. Recently, a disturbing trend has been occurring—homeowners and developers are cutting down beautiful, decades-old trees and not replacing them.

The impact of this action ripples throughout the neighborhood in several ways. First, trees are our only hedge against global warming. Trees sequester or absorb carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. With our carbon dioxide emissions in America at the highest per capita in the world, we need to become responsible world citizens and do our part to help curb the rise of CO2. The levels have risen to 27% higher than any time in the last 650,000 years.

Second, trees also help keep the ambient temperatures down in the summer months. This helps in two ways, one, in reducing air conditioning costs, and the second, in reducing watering needs. Particularly when leaves and branches are composted, the compost and mulch reduce water evaporation from the soil. With the current drought situation and ever more people stressing our water resources in Southern California, this is an important issue.

And finally, It impacts our property values. Higher value areas of the city are inevitably tree lined. One



only need look to Beverly Hills, Bel Air and San Marino, to name a few, to notice that trees add considerable value to a neighborhood. Realtors estimate that a mature tree is worth \$5,000 – \$50,000 when a property value is computed.

There is also the issue of the laws and ordinances of California and Los Angeles. Many people are unaware that oaks and sycamores are protected species and that permits must be obtained for their removal. Permits are usually only granted if the tree is diseased.

If you must cut down a tree, whether it's sick or

causing damage to a fence or some other reason, please do your part and replace it with at least one tree if not two or three. Let's join together to save our beautiful trees, breath clean air, conserve precious resources and keep property values high. All these goals add up to make Westside Village a wonderful place to live.

This article was submitted by Westside Village resident Russell Johnson. Should you wish to submit an article for inclusion in the newsletter, please email us at westsidevillageboard@yahoo.com

Local volunteers honored by LAUSD

By Jeanne Parker

Two Westside Villagers were honored May 22 for their outstanding volunteer contributions to the community.

The Associated Administrators of Los Angeles of the Los Angeles Unified School District presented a scholarship to Ai Takahashi who lives with her parents in the 3500 block of Military. Ai is a student at Venice High School, and plans to go to Berkeley this fall to study Molecular Biology. Ai has successfully combined her academic pursuits along with organizing Cleanup Days, Animal Shelter volunteer, LA Marathon volunteer and Service Clubs.

A separate plaque was given to Walter Renzi, resident in the 3500 block of Greenfield, for his years of tutoring at Charnock Road School and helping the school financially to have a Wonder of Reading Library. He is a member of the Library Leadership Team. His other volunteer work includes Block Captain with the LAPD and Westside Village, graffiti buster with Pacific Graffiti Solutions, Neighborhood Watch, Greenfield-Military Alley patrol and assisting the elderly in the neighborhood.

This dinner event was held in the Gold Room of the Biltmore Hotel, downtown Los Angeles with City of Los Angeles officials in the audience.

Expo Line Update

Although there are some legal and engineering challenges for the Exposition Construction Authority, the first phase of the light rail line from Downtown / Staples Center to Culver City (Venice / Robertson) is on schedule and under budget to achieve completion in 2010.

Ongoing work for the Draft EIR of the second phase of the line from Culver City to Santa Monica is ongoing and slated for completion in the next 1-2 months. Issues to be addressed include the routing (such as whether the line goes through Rancho Park

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or along Venice / Sepulveda Blvds., and the specific routing in Santa Monica), parking, adjacent zoning and development, and whether the line will be at street level or elevated across intersected surface streets.

The final routing and the Draft EIR will be approved sometime from late 2008 to early 2009.

On another transportation-related note, the latest update from Caltrans suggest that the Palms Blvd. work related to I-405 widening will be completed at the end of September (or shortly thereafter), and that the National Blvd. work will be completed approximately by the end of the year.

Barking Dogs

For those Westside Village residents who are troubled by neighborhood dogs who bark incessantly, H. May Spitz, writing for the Los Angeles Times, had this advice:

“Your rights are protected by law in virtually all jurisdictions. The Los Angeles municipal code states, ‘It is against the law for a dog owner, or anyone in control or custody of a dog, to allow the dog to make excessive noise, after receiving a legal notice of the noise complaint and a request to make it stop.’

Dogs cannot disturb their neighbors. Your local animal services department takes the issue of dog barking seriously. A formal process exists in most places, starting with a properly written complaint. In the city of Los Angeles, visit www.laanimalservices.org, which provides the link to barking dog situations and forms. According to the site, interfering with your ability to enjoy your residence is considered ‘excessive noise’ and a violation of law.

When you’re ready to file a complaint (it) should detail the circumstances and nature of the animal noise. If

possible, enlist the aid of neighbors who also may be affected and willing to file a complaint.

You’ll also need to include the name and address of the offending party as well your own name and address. According to the site, personal information will not be released to the animal owner. Once the complaint is submitted, the animal services department will issue a formal letter to the dog owner warning that the noise must be stopped



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immediately. If the noise continues after a specified period, usually about two weeks, another complaint can be filed. To give the complaint more teeth, keep a ‘barking dog log.’ A sample is available at www.crd.bc.ca. Ultimately, the case may be referred to court or mediation. At that point, you or any other complainants have to be willing to testify under oath regarding the disturbance. In extreme case, animal services may opt to remove the animal from the premises, taking it to a local shelter or animal rescue agency.”

MVCC Update

The newly-elected Zone Director for Westside Village (Zone 1) is Babak Nahid, and he’s lost no time getting active with the MVCC and with issues that affect our area. Babak is a key player in creating a new MVCC website, and has been active with the Transportation/Infrastructure Committee.

The MVCC and WVCA will be focusing on neighborhood impacts of potential developments at Exposition/Sepulveda (tentatively, a nine-story commercial/residential project) adjacent to the future rail station at that site, and with other developments and traffic-related issues in our area. Babak’s energy and innovations are a welcome addition to our neighborhood and to our region, and all MVCC stakeholders (who work, live or own property within MVCC boundaries) are welcome to attend and participate in the Committee and Board meetings of the MVCC.

Committees include Transportation/Infrastructure, Urban Planning/Land Use, Safety/Security, Green/Environmental and Outreach Committees.

The Wonder of Reading Foundation Opens New School Library at Charnock Road School

Students at Charnock Road Elementary School in the Palms area of West Los Angeles are learning that the 3R’s do not just stand for reading, writing, and arithmetic. Charnock Road Elementary has opened their newly renovated library. This elementary school library will be the 198th that The Wonder of Reading has opened in the greater Los Angeles area.

The Wonder of Reading’s purpose is to inspire in children the love of reading by implementing their unique 3R Program—Renovate, Restock, and Read at public elementary schools. By the end of 2008, The Wonder of Reading will have expanded and renovated 203 school libraries, worked with the schools to restock the libraries with more than \$2.1 million worth of new books, trained 5,500 volunteers to read one-on-one with students in the new libraries, and

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reached more than 340,000 children and their families.

Spending only three percent of what other states spend, on average, to support their school libraries, California is ranked near the bottom in the nation in library quality by literacy and education experts. Although the national average of books per student in school libraries is 22, some Wonder of Reading schools have had as few as three books per student when applying to the organization. In some schools the average copyright date of their collections is 1982. It is not uncommon to find science books that look forward to day we may reach the moon! Fortunately, The Wonder of Reading is addressing these critical needs by providing a new solution to an old problem.

Founded in 1994, The Wonder of Reading develops a long-term partnership with the schools, providing them with the resources necessary to transform their library into a vibrant center of learning. Volunteer reading partners dedicate one hour every week to reading one-on-one with struggling students, and many volunteers return year after year building a strong mentor relationship with their students. Teachers observe improvement in their students' reading fluency and comprehension, as well as positive changes in students' attitudes towards reading. As part of a comprehensive package designed to enhance literacy initiatives on an ongoing basis at the school, The Wonder of Reading also offer parent trainings, library introduction workshops, and grants for library books. By implementing the 3R program in 16 schools each year, more than 10,000 of Los Angeles's most needy students now have the opportunity to experience the wonder of reading in an inviting environment.

Although the Wonder of Reading Foundation finances the basic construction of the new library, recipient schools are required to raise additional funds to complete the library with new furniture and books. Major Charnock supporters include school board member Marguerite LaMotte, who provided a major grant of school improvement funds, and local community groups, such as the Palms Neighborhood Council, Westside Village Civic Association and the Charnock PTA, who made major gifts to restock the library's book collection. In addition, local community members, community volunteers, faculty members, parents and students have all pitched in to make the dream of the new school library come true. At one successful fundraiser, families purchased decorative tiles to adorn the new library's outside wall. Using their favorite books as an inspiration, the children happily decorated and painted over 150 tiles. Hanging beside the entrance, the decorated tiles will greet visitors as they enter the new library.

Charnock's Wonder of Reading library project has also inspired a range of new and exciting literacy

programs. The library leadership committee's plans include expanding library hours, initiating a before school story hour, hosting a lunch-time book club, providing homework help in the afternoons, and sponsoring literacy training programs for parents and volunteers. "We want the library to serve the entire Charnock community, becoming a center for literacy for families and children," said Connie Carpenter, third grade teacher and library committee co-chair.

According to Jason Buchalter, Charnock's literacy specialist and library committee co-chair, "The response to the new library has been overwhelming. Teachers are busy planning literacy programs for the library, students are rehearsing presentations for the grand opening celebration, and community members are making donations and volunteering to read with struggling students. The Wonder of Reading project has renewed my faith in the power of the teachers, parents, and community members to bring about positive changes in neighborhood schools. What we thought was an impossible dream two years ago has now become a reality."



Military Avenue

Learn and Earn: A Senior Tip

Did you know that the California DMV promotes safe driving education for drivers 55 and over with a class designed specifically for seniors by AARP? The class is either 8 hours classroom style (\$9.95) or online, e-learning style (\$19.95). Your choice.

Insurance companies offer a significant discount on automobile liability insurance with evidence of completion of the mature driving class and a good driving record. The certificate is good for three years and then can be renewed with a 4 hours class. Check with your insurance agent for details.

The California DMV website www.dmv.ca.gov/ lists all the organizations offering the mature drivers classes statewide but if you want to find out about local classes, call AARP (1-888-687-2277) or Wise & Healthy Aging (310-394-9871). Both offer a class designed by

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AARP and approved by the California DMV.

The certificate discount lasts 3 years and the small charge for the class is more than covered by the discount most insurance companies provide on your premium.

The classes use adult learning principles: building on what the learner already knows, learning from others in the class and experiencing immediately useful strategies. You'll improve your driving and save money at the same time. For more details, see <http://mature.drivesafely.com/California/info>

And, "no" the class does not require you to re-take a driving or written test.

Palms Rancho Park Branch Library Book Sale

There will be bargains galore at the Book Sale on Saturday, Oct. 25 at the Palms Rancho Park Branch Library from 10 am to 2 pm. If you have donations for the sale, bring them to the Library the week before.

Two Approaches to Retirement

In the U.S. there seem to be two schools of thought regarding retirement. People who wish to "age in place" that is, continue living where they are, and those who wish to move elsewhere, preferably a gated and age-segregated community with no home maintenance issues and a full program of active adult activities.

If you are planning to retire soon, you'll want to look at two recent resources that focus on these two outlooks. The authors highlight the pros and cons of "aging in place" with aging in a retirement community.

The first of these resources is a short column in the August 2008 Consumer's Reports on page 9, "New Alliances Help Seniors Avoid Assisted Living." According to AARP, 9 out of 10 seniors want to stay in their own homes as they age. The problem is that as they mature, they increasingly need help with health care, transportation and home maintenance.

Communities like Westside Village were designed for younger generations. Consumer's Reports outlines how in some communities groups of like-minded neighbors pool information and expertise to help one another stay more safely in their homes. This article links to several different alliance models. For links to existing groups, go

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to www.aipsupport.org or check out www.beaconhillvillage.org

The second resource is a book, *Leisureville: Adventures in America's Retirement Utopias* by Andrew D. Blechman. It is devoted to age-segregated communities—the good, the bad, the anecdotal and the historical. The author explores retirement as utopia. As a real estate concept, it works for many people.

Both the article and the book provide relevant retirement information and are likely to spark readers over and near 55 to think about their future. For instance, on the issue of whether to move or not to move, think about your support network built over the years. Do you want to find and vet an entire new address book of service professionals such as doctors, dentist, optometrist, veterinarian, accountant, attorney, beautician, auto mechanic, computer geek, and on down the line including friends? Some people will find this an exhilarating challenge while others who have had the experience remember it as extremely frustrating.

Which approach appeals to you?



Please let us know what you think.

If you wish to contribute to News and Views, please email us at westsidevillageboard@yahoo.com Visit us at www.westsidevillage.org

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Please join us in
celebrating our community
with activities for all ages.



Activities Include:
 Food ✿ Pony Rides
 Petting Zoo ✿ Moonbounce
 Face Painting/Tattoos
 Music ✿ Local Artists
 and More...
 Admission (including lunch) \$5 per person,
 \$3 for WVCA members

	National	
Tilden	St. John's Presbyterian Church	Military
	Clover	

Saturday October 11, 2008
 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm
 St. John's Church
 11000 National Blvd.
 (across the street from Clover Avenue Elementary School)

