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# Westdale VILLAGER

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
WESTDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION  
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THEM SUMMER DAYS, THOSE SUMMER DAYS

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THEM SUMMER DAYS, THOSE SUMMER DAYS

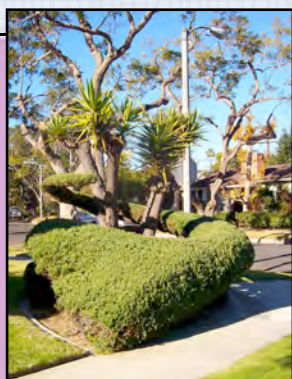


• WESTDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION •



# Westdale VILLAGER

SUMMER 2015 QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

• Jerry Hornof



The theme of this year's annual meeting was Hands On. The challenge is for "active participation" within our community. In the next few months we have two volunteer opportunities emerging within the Westdale Homeowners Association community. Jan Burns, who has done an outstanding job editing the Westdale Villager, has expressed an interest in retiring. I owe Jan a tremendous thank you for her excellent work that includes making sure I get this report to her in a timely manner. Marjorie Templeton who works closely with Jan will assume the editorial responsibilities. Our need will be to have someone volunteering to assist with editing as well as take a lead role in advertising. Also, our webmaster Richard Resnick would like to retire after 15 years of service. If you have an interest in volunteering in either of these roles please let me know or contact a board member. (See article Volunteer Homeowners Needed). Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

One of the groups that is active in our community is the Mar Vista Community Council (MVCC) Green Committee. The Green Committee's mission is to empower Mar Vista area Stakeholders to become more environmentally aware by providing information and methods that promote a sustainable lifestyle. The committee works in cooperation with the other MVCC committees, local neighborhood associations, residents, businesses, public agencies, the MVCC Board of Directors and others to further these goals. A major topic for this committee and for all of Los Angeles and California residents is the extreme drought that persists in California. Governor Brown has begun to mandate water reductions throughout the state. One motion that the Green Committee is discussing asks for the support of the Mar Vista Community Council in requesting that the City of Los Angeles place mulch on all city-owned parkways (including residential), replace existing lawn and instruct home owners to turn off water to the parkway in front of their home. The motion also encourages homeowners to plant native drought tolerant or edible plants in mulched parkways. This is one of many creative ways being considered as we respond to the drought. This action has the potential of





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saving up to 20,000 gallons of water / per parkway / year. I encourage Westdale residents to discuss measures like this motion and attend both the Green Committee meetings and the Mar Vista Community Council meetings ([www.marvista.org](http://www.marvista.org)). This is a way your voice can be heard. Being creative and effective as we respond to the drought is important to the Westdale community.

I have recently received questions about the increasing number of homeless people in the Mar Vista community and Mar Vista Park. This also came up as a question to our Senior Lead Officer, Adrian Acosta, at our annual meeting. It is important to know that in June the federal appeals court struck down a 31-year-old Los Angeles law that barred people from living in parked vehicles, saying the vaguely written statute discriminates against the homeless and poor. This was compounded by a recent homeless census that concluded that there are more people sleeping on the streets and in their cars than there were two years ago. The Southern California Public Radio article reported that the census found 44,359 homeless in Los Angeles County, a 12 percent increase since the last count in 2013. The census also found that fewer people were able to find temporary shelter in 2015 than two years ago. The Los Angeles Times reported that “one of the most striking findings, the number of tents, makeshift encampments and vehicles occupied by homeless people soared 85%, to 9,535”. Our 11th District Councilperson Mike Bonin is quoted as stating, “It’s everywhere now; the encampments are in residential neighborhoods, they’re outside of schools”. He concluded by saying, “It shows we’ve got a lot of work ahead”.

The Los Angeles City Council is pursuing nationally recognized solutions that include rapidly re-housing newly homeless people and creating permanent supportive housing, with mental health and addiction counseling, for the chronically homeless. It is important to be compassionate and recognize that there are no immediate solutions. At this time the police department (LAPD) is limited in their ability to respond. Any solutions will require action by the City Council. My hope is that we can be measured in our response, communicate with Councilperson Bonin’s office, and realize a solution quickly.

Finally, as spring gives way to summer, enjoy and participate in our Westdale community. Be sure to mark your calendar for October 4th when we gather for the 2015 Annual Block party.





## CRIME AND SAFETY REPORT

### •Leah Oye/Liaison to Pacific Police Division

Summer is here. The time for vacations, houseguests, and great weather for leaving open doors/windows in our homes. There will be more families with strollers, walkers, runners and dog walkers out as well as people walking through our neighborhood heading to Mar Vista Park. Our area has a true "neighborhood" feel, that's what makes it a wonderful place to live. We know that, so do others. Fortunately, our neighborhood is safe compared to other parts of Los Angeles, but we still have crime. The two residential burglaries in April took place in the evening after 8:30pm, unusual...was someone watching? Neither residence had an alarm or cameras, one had an open window. Packages stolen from porches, mail fished out of freestanding mailboxes continues to be a problem, as well as theft from vehicles. Look at your house; is there another place where deliveries can be placed? Do overgrown bushes provide hiding places for burglars? We are in the process of organizing "block walks" to give suggestions about how to provide better protection around your home. Please contact our Senior Lead Officer, Adrian Acosta, 310 622-3973 or 37285@LAPD.LACITY.ORG for advice on non-emergency situations.

Claudia Martin, Neighborhood Prosecutor for the Pacific Division is another person who can provide crime and safety advice. She was born and raised in Los Angeles, received her B.A. in history from UCLA and law degree from Loyola Law School. After graduating law school in 2003, she was a volunteer attorney for the City Attorney's Safe Neighborhoods Division handling narcotic based evictions. In 2004, she officially joined the City Attorney's office, was assigned to the Central Trial Unit. She became a Neighborhood Prosecutor for the Pacific Division in 2006. In this position she works with law enforcement and the community in "quality of life" issues: vandalism, illegal dumping, blight, gang activity, domestic violence, trespassing, zoning and health code violations, and other problems that affect quality of life. Contact her at: [www.claudia.martin@lacity.org](mailto:www.claudia.martin@lacity.org)

The Special Olympics World Games are coming to Los Angeles, July 25th to August 2nd. This is expected to be a HUGE event with 7,000 athletes from 177 countries, 3,000 coaches, 30,000 volunteers and 500,000+ guests and spectators. There will be 27 venues, all in SoCal. The Westside will feel a tremendous impact starting July 20th with the arrival of participants through LAX. The check in process will take place at Loyola Marymount

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University, where all athletes will receive a health screening. The athletes, coaches and staff will be staying at the UCLA and USC dorms. The torch has already left Greece for its journey to Los Angeles; expect some road closures as the torch run weaves its way through Los Angeles to the Opening ceremony at the Coliseum on July 25th. Yellow school buses will be used for transportation. Please support this inspiring event, go to [www.LA2015.org](http://www.LA2015.org) for further information and updates.

- [www.maps.latimes.com](http://www.maps.latimes.com) look under Mar Vista for up-to-date crimes, dates and locations.
- [www.venice311.org](http://www.venice311.org) Venice crime/safety and events
- [www.westdalehoa.com](http://www.westdalehoa.com) news and information about events in our community.

We still need block captains, especially for Colbert, Rose, Palms, Navy and Stoner south of Indianapolis. Also, if you would like to receive emails as incidents occur in our area, contact Leah at [westdalehoa@yahoo.com](mailto:westdalehoa@yahoo.com).





## VOLUNTEER HOMEOWNERS NEEDED

•*Margie Templeton*

Our Westdale Homeowners Association Board is made up of volunteers from our Westdale neighborhood community. After years of dedicated service, several members of the board are ready to retire. We are looking for some "new blood" to take over two of the jobs. Joining the board is a good way to meet your neighbors and to contribute to the neighborhood. Many new young families have recently joined our community and we'd welcome your participation.

Either of these positions can be fit into "spare moments". Board meetings are held in the evening three to four times per year.

Richard Resnick has maintained our web site for many years and is ready to turn his job over to the next generation. We thank him for his many years of service as web master. With our proximity to "Silicon Beach", perhaps some of our Westdale neighbors would find this job in their circle of interest. Richard also provides a backup site for our homeowner records, which have their home on Margie Templeton's computer. Richard updates the web site for events, lists of dues paid, and the referrals list. Some knowledge of web design is helpful. Changes can be made to the current format or it can be redone altogether. If interested, please contact Richard to discuss the job in detail at (310) 344-3425 or richard@computerconsultingla.com.

Jan Burns, editor of the Westdale Villager is retiring from her position and Margie Templeton who took over the editor/advertising job four years ago will be taking Jan's place. Therefore Margie's job as editor/advertising is open. The advertising job is one of primarily notifying advertisers and collecting payments. It does not require advertising sales calls! Most of the advertisers live in the neighborhood and contact us. Some advertisers take annual ads, others advertise irregularly. Margie sends an email two weeks before the deadline to see who wants to advertise and who wants to change their ad. Ad copy is then sent to her. She sends email bills when the Villager proofs are ready. In some cases, paper bills must be sent to those who have not paid. As a member of the Villager staff, we would welcome involvement in the editorial content too, if you so choose. If interested, please contact Margie at mpt@rwta.com or 310-390-4507

Thank you to Judy Bauman who has for many years had the job of welcoming new neighbors to our neighborhood. One of our new neighbors, Heather Butterfield, has volunteered to take over Judy's job. Heather, and her husband Jeremy Gershman, moved to Mar Vista last year. Heather, a lawyer, is taking time off to be with their children, Ford (age 2) and Charlotte (age 3 months).

Volunteers are also needed as block captains, block party helpers, and writers for the Villager. Villager articles are always welcome as long as they are of general interest rather than personal promotion.

### CURRENT EVENTS

#### "WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK"

This freewheeling weekly discussion group will share information and opinions on domestic and international events, in their political, socio-economic, and cultural context.

We'll discuss everything from civil rights and gun control through immigration reform and climate change to the arms race and Islam and the West to ...

**Prerequisite: an open and informed mind.**

The group meets on Thursdays, from 1 to 2:30 pm in the Community Room of the Mar Vista Branch Library (12066 Venice Blvd.)

Moderator Jack Nordhaus has a doctorate in history from Columbia University and has taught at Columbia, the University of Maryland, Santa Monica College (Emeritus College), the Beverly Hills Adult School, and the OASIS Senior Learning Center.

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

•*Margie Templeton*

Our block captains have been busy and as a result WHOA dues payments for 2015 are still coming in. To date 348 homes are paid up out of a total of 895 homes. Eighty-four homeowners have paid up through 2016. Our treasury is now healthy after some hard times last year! If you would like to check on your payment status, go to our web site at [www.westdalehoa.org/](http://www.westdalehoa.org/). Click on the green link in the upper right corner to see the paid address list.



**WE HAVE SOME AMAZING NEIGHBORS NESTLED IN OUR QUIET WESTDALE NEIGHBORHOOD. THE VILLAGER PERIODICALLY FEATURE STORIES TO ACQUAINT US WITH SOME OF THEM. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST NEIGHBORS TO BE FEATURED IN FUTURE VILLAGER ARTICLES, PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO [MPT@RWTIA.COM](mailto:MPT@RWTIA.COM)**

## GETTING TO KNOW OUR NEIGHBORS

•*Marjorie Templeton*

Ward Thompson and his wife Judy moved into Westdale in 2001. They love the area and decided to stay for their retirement. Ward is an architect who received his degree from Penn State. He and Judy worked in England, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pittsburgh, and San Diego before settling in Los Angeles. As an architect, Ward's projects have primarily been large institutional buildings, especially hospitals. When he retired in 2011, he thought about ways he could combine his love of architecture and his enthusiasm for meeting new people from around the world. He decided to reinvent himself as a tour guide for those who love architecture.

His first challenge was to set up a web site that would advertise his tours. He then did a dry run to test each tour so he'd know where to park, where to eat, and how much could be covered in the allotted time. It took some time to build the business, but Ward proudly showed me his perfect 5 star rating on TripAdvisor with many glowing reviews. About a third of his customers are architects themselves and they come from all over the world. He occasionally even gets someone from LA!

The tours may include a specific architect such as Frank Lloyd Wright or Richard Neutra, a specific



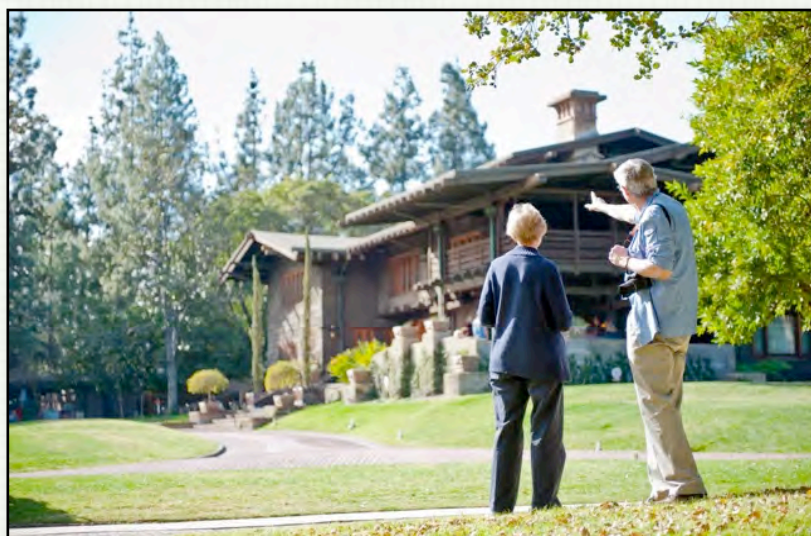
type of building such as churches and missions, or area tours such as downtown LA or Pasadena. He tries to keep the focus on a small area to minimize wasted time driving in LA traffic. A longer tour covers several of the California missions. The pictures show Ward and a guest at the Eames House in the Pacific Palisades and at the Gamble House in Pasadena.

Ward uses his own car for most tours, which are usually for 2 to 4 people. Occasionally he is hired as a guide for a small group with their own mini-bus or has to rent a van for the tour. His guests have included children in strollers and elderly people with walkers. The advantage of a small group is that he can customize the tour for the abilities of the group.

One of his favorite groups included five cousins aged 78 to 95.

Ward finds that he has also become a travel advisor for tourists. He gets inquiries from people who are looking for the typical set bus tour, which costs much less than he can charge for his private tours, and also from people who really want to travel on their own. He does his best to direct them to a tour that fits their interests. He often recommends the LA Conservancy walking tours or trips to museums.

To learn more about Entasis, Ward's company, visit his web site at [www.entasistours.com](http://www.entasistours.com).





Mar Vista Neighborhood

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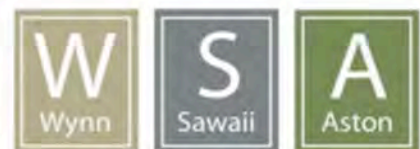
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## LOCAL REAL ESTATE NEWS: HOW MUCH IS HYPE AND HOW MUCH IS REAL?

•Ron Wynn

Reading the real estate news section of the LA Times and the postcards received in the mail could be a very exhilarating experience to a property owner. We are fortunate to be property owners in one of the greatest places in the country. The Westside and more specifically the Westdale area of West Los Angeles, is "eye candy" to people from all over the country. Our weather is glorious, the ocean breezes beautiful and employment opportunities seem plentiful. We can walk to coffee; we are minutes to the ocean and have easy access to downtown, Century City, and UCLA. Great restaurants are just minutes away. That is solid truth. What follows, however, is a little bit overstated. That there are hundreds of people coming here daily from overseas with pockets full of money is somewhat of an exaggeration.

It is true that Google has recently purchased 12 acres of land in Playa Vista and apartment buildings are being built frantically all over Jefferson and outside Playa Vista. How does that really convert to multi-millionaires coming into Mar Vista and plunking out \$2 million in cash right and left? It is all a little bit overstated. Yes, we do have the entertainment industry on the Westside. There are sound studios all over Santa Monica. Yahoo and Fox are here on the Westside and Sony is just two miles away. Many people coming from Northern California to take jobs at Google and Yahoo, but how many of them have huge down payments, can pay cash or are really able to afford \$2 million homes in Mar Vista? Most of today's buyers require

the equity from a real estate sale. True, some people in their late 20s and early 30s are earning a lot of money and several years from now will be contenders to purchase the multi-million dollar homes in Mar Vista and Westdale. But they will still need \$400,000 in cash for a down payment.

The reality is that there are a limited number of foreign investors, but they also have many options. We also have buyers who bring inheritance and family money, which allows them a realistic monthly payment with current mortgage rates. There were at least half a dozen properties sold in the last year that prove Mar Vista has hit the \$2.5 million market. In fact, four properties have sold above \$2.2 million in the past few months. Those properties are: 3169 Coolidge Avenue, sold for \$2,296,000; 11840 Westminster Avenue, sold for \$2,320,000; 12300 Navy Street, sold for \$2,600,000; and 3281 Mountain View Avenue, sold for \$2,830,000.

My outlook for the future of our neighborhood is very good. Recently, however, a controversial modified moratorium called the ICO was passed effecting properties in Mar Vista and 14 other areas. There are still plenty of homes being flipped and lots of "new builds". Prior to the ICO passage, more lenient restrictions allowed an additional 20% of lot coverage if the buyer was in compliance with a modified front elevation or the property was energy and water conservation green. With the passage of the most recent amendment, the green requirement and design bonus was scratched, now limiting construction to 50% lot coverage with no right to appeal.

A developer/owner must be within compliance of the setback, which is 15 feet from the back and 5 feet on the sides and in compliance with the prevailing setback in the front. As a rule, typical lots in Westdale range from, on the lower size of 5,200 square feet to on the higher side of 7,500 square feet with



a number of exceptions on cul-de-sacs and Mar Vista Hill to up to 10,000 square feet. Considering the average lots in Westdale/Trousdale being 7,000 square feet, new construction would be limited to 3,500 square feet; far less than some of the mcmansions built previously. People who built large homes of 4,000 and 4,500 square feet in the past are holding a rare diamond. These homes can no longer be duplicated and can now be sold for a premium.

Although many people of the neighborhood will take a very strong stand, either in favor of the recently passed amendments of the building code, or against; the fact remains that at this time and moving forward, there will be strong limitations to the maximum building size for any given parcel. There is some argument that maybe this change in law could affect the value of land and there might be a chance that property has lost value due to the inability to build to maximum size. By the same token, there is no proof or indication that home values have or will go down and it seems that people will adjust by building fewer square feet and still selling for the same price as before. Homeowners who have lived in the neighborhood for many years seem to be pleased with the passage of the ICO, with some exceptions.

People who live next door to large homes complain of losing their light and their ability to see the sky. They also feel dwarfed by some of the large homes that were built. The idea of the ICO shows courtesy to neighbors and allows them the airspace and light they value. The controversy will continue to grow with some owners rallying in one direction and the rest in another. Those that have purchased their property with ideas of expanding are now very upset. They feel they were not given adequate notice and feel cheated



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paying a “top dollar” price with a kibosh on their plans. By the same token, others who have been threatened by large homes not yet built are breathing deeply and appreciate that the local government has stepped in. Rest assured, our neighborhood remains strong and very much in demand.





## PARK REPORT

• **Jerry Hornof**

In the spring edition of the Westdale Villager, I introduced Lizka Mendoza as the newly installed Park Director. At the time I indicated that Lizka's special interests included camp programming. As summer approaches, under her leadership, the park camp program is in full development. There are four camp options: 1) Sports Camp, 2) Teen Camp, 3) Day Camp, and 4) Preschool Camp. Camp programs will run from June 8 through August 7. Online and walk in registration is now underway. This is a great summer opportunity for families. My sons participated in the park camp programs both as campers and councilors and it was a wonderful experience. See [www.laparks.org](http://www.laparks.org) (Mar Vista) for additional information.

Many Westdale residents do not realize that besides scheduled park programs there are also a variety of walk-in opportunities for teens and adults. These include table tennis (Thu 8-10pm; Sun 1-3pm), badminton (Thu 10am-1pm), basketball (Fri 1-4pm) and roller hockey (Tue & Thu 8-10pm). Come by and check them out.

This summer mark your calendar for Family Movie Nights. On tap are The Sandlot (Jun 20), Despicable Me 2 (Jul 18) and The Lego Movie (Aug 8). Bring a blanket, chairs and refreshments (also available at the park) for a very enjoyable evening. Movies begin at 8pm.

The Park Advisory Board (PAB) and the Mar Vista Community Council Festival Planning Committee are working on this year's festival. The theme for the event, scheduled for Saturday, October 17, is "HEROES AMONG US". Festival profits go to support park projects



and there is consensus building for this year's profits to go towards the installation of sound reducing panels in the park gymnasium. The sound during events in the gym (like basketball) can be deafening. We would combine funds with other sources including the L.A. Parks Foundation ([www.laparksfoundation.org/EN/](http://www.laparksfoundation.org/EN/)) to raise sufficient funds to complete this project.

The synthetic sports field is approaching nine years of age and requires resurfacing. I am happy to report that Los Angeles Recreation and Parks (LARAP) have identified funds to resurface it. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power owes money to LARAP and these funds have been earmarked to pay for this needed project. The Park Advisory Board (PAB) is always looking for members. Please consider serving on this important board. The board's mission is to work with park officials to insure that our park is providing the programs and services that best fit the needs of the community. As always, please enjoy your neighborhood park.





# Villager Bulletin Board



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