



# Westdale VILLAGER

SPRING 2020 QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### WESTDALE - SHARING A COMMON ENVIROMENT

•Jerry Hornof



The theme for 2019 was Westdale – Planning is Essential. Throughout the year there was an effort to inform our Westdale community about planning and development activities occurring and impacting our lives. Topics included safety, homelessness, development, and zoning. The theme for the 2020 year will be *Sharing a Common Environment*. This geography theme addresses questions like: Where is it located?; What's it like there?; What is the relationship between humans and their environment?; How and why are places connected with one another?; How and why is one area similar to another?. Our Sharing a Common Environment encompass health, location, growing things, transportation, and moving together within a shared space. It emphasizes that we are all in this community together.

The Westdale Homeowners Association Annual Meeting was held on January 28th. Mike Bonin joined us and provided an excellent presentation that covered: 1) current status of the Los Angeles Police Department officer deployment; 2) transportation including the LANow shuttle service and vehicle traffic flow measures; and 3) the challenges and actions taken to address homelessness.

Leah Oye was recognized for the work she does to organize and coordinate our Block Watch Program. Leah introduced our new Senior Lead Officer (SLO) Officer Karwon Villery.

The meeting concluded with presentations by Mar Vista Park Director Andres De La Hoya, Mar Vista Community Council Board Member Rob Kadota, Treasurer Jay Swerdlow, and Real Estate report by Debbie Kaplan. I want to thank all the Board of Directors for their work and support during the year. I also want to acknowledge the



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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
WESTDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION  
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## WESTDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



## WESTDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

efforts of Marjorie Templeton, Ina Lee and Dick Henkel who publish and manage the *Westdale Villager* and our website ([westdalehoa.org](http://westdalehoa.org)). The minutes from the Annual Meeting are available on the website.

A major topic at the Annual Meeting was homelessness. In November, Council Member Mike Bonin hosted a Town Hall Meeting on this subject. No one is happy with the present situation. As a community we recognize the dignity of everyone. We also recognize that the reason for homelessness varies by individual. Causes include mental illness, addiction, unemployment, and the overall cost of housing in Los Angeles, specifically in West Los Angeles. The Mar Vista Park Advisory Board developed a flyer that includes the types of issues you might encounter and who to call to get resolution. This flyer was developed with a focus on park issues, however, contacts like homeless services, sanitation, and Los Angeles Police Department are appropriate for situations beyond the park. A copy of the flyer is on the website. I really encourage Westdale residents to make use of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority ([www.lahsa.org](http://www.lahsa.org)). Transitioning homeless individuals to housing is the most desired and successful outcome. Read more about this in Leah Oye's article.

The topic of damaged, unsafe, and inaccessible sidewalks was brought up at the Annual Meeting. State law dictates that adjacent property owners are responsible for sidewalk repairs. The City of Los Angeles launched Safe Sidewalks LA, a 30-year, \$1.4 billion program to make sidewalks accessible to everyone. The City of Los Angeles has assumed responsibility to fix sidewalks damaged by street trees. The City is committed to repairing sidewalks and improving accessibility. However, this is a large undertaking that will take time, effort and resources. There are three ways to request sidewalk repairs:

- 1) Access Request Program: The Access Request Program makes repairs requested by /for people with a mobility disability who encounter physical barriers such as broken sidewalks, missing/broken curb ramps or other barriers in the public right of way.
- 2) Rebate Program: The City is also offering a limited-time rebate to property owners willing to pay for their own sidewalk repair through the Rebate Program.
- 3) Report a Sidewalk Problem: To report any other sidewalk issue I encourage Westdale residents to visit the Los Angeles Safe Sidewalks website ([safesidewalks.lacity.org](http://safesidewalks.lacity.org)) and report damaged sidewalks and determine the optimal approach to achieving repair.

In closing, please consider the ways you are part of a Shared Common Environment. Your involvement and encouraging others to be involved is essential in keeping Westdale wonderful.



## SAFETY REPORT

•Leah Oye/Liaison to Pacific Police Division

### BRIDGE HOUSING

The homeless continue to be the main concern for the residents of our community. The Los Angeles city budget has allocated funds to create temporary housing in each of the 15 council districts. The Bridge Home in our district is located in Venice on Main Street near Pacific in the former MTA yard. This housing complex will open the end of February with a capacity for 154 persons; 54 are for youth. The adults and youth will have separate housing. Meals are provided.

The location for this housing complex was selected because it is in the area of greatest need. Outreach workers created a list of persons who are eligible for housing, so there will be NO line up to get in. These persons are all from the Venice area. Each person will have a caseworker, with support from social services, as well as addiction specialists. The Venice Family Clinic will also be on site.

The goal of the Bridge Home is to move people into permanent housing as soon as possible, hopefully within 90 days. These housing sites/complexes will be open for 3 years. This is a start, but not a permanent solution.

### SCAMS

It is tax time. LAPD warns the community to be very suspicious of persons claiming to be from the IRS. The IRS DOES NOT call or ask for money over the phone! Do not give any personal information over the phone. If a solicitor comes to your door, you can answer through your door, but do not open it for strangers.

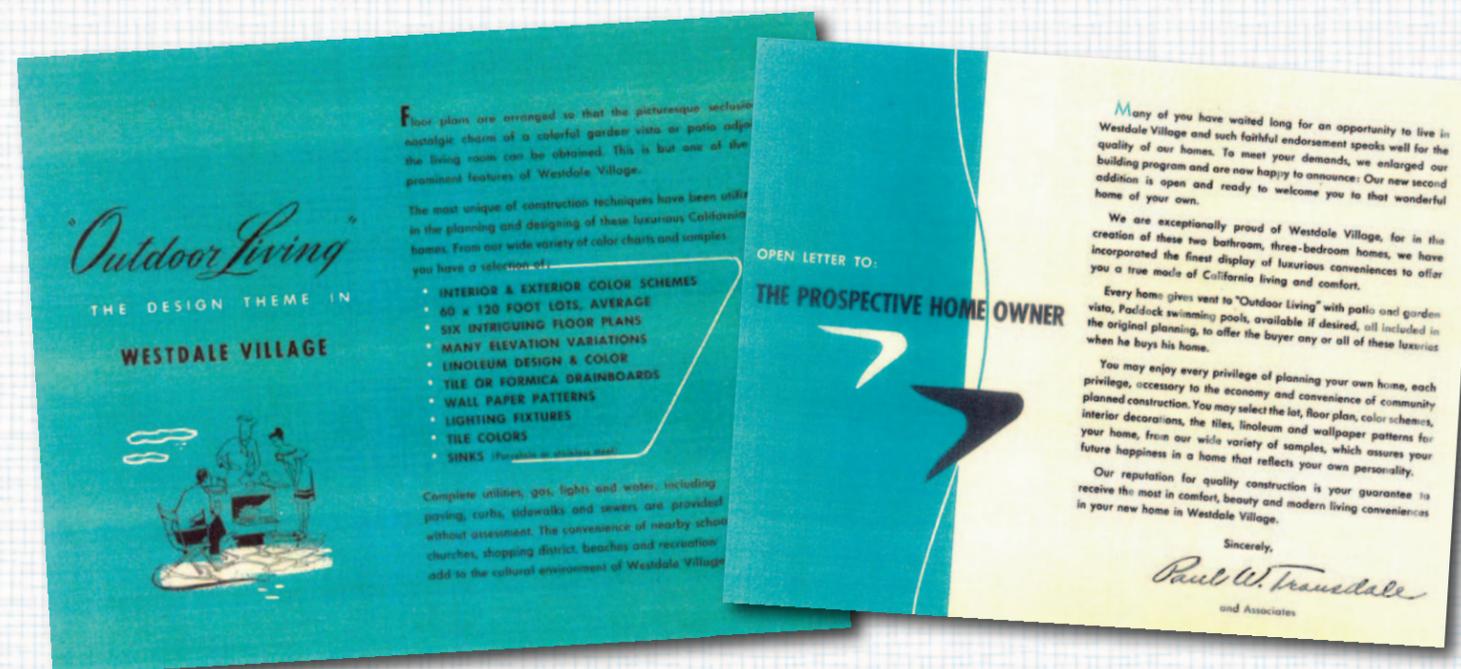
### BURGLARIES

In most burglaries, the persons enter the house by smashing a back door or window. Please be sure to secure your side gates. Do not place your trash cans by the gate. The trash can easily be used as a "step stool" to hop over a fence. In the past, most burglaries occurred during the day. This has changed and can

now be any time of the day. The burglars work in groups of 3-4 persons. Consider putting a window film over the glass to strengthen the glass. This would also help to keep glass from flying in the event of an earthquake. Crime stats and locations can be found at: [www.crimemapping.com](http://www.crimemapping.com)

### • NEW SENIOR LEAD OFFICER •

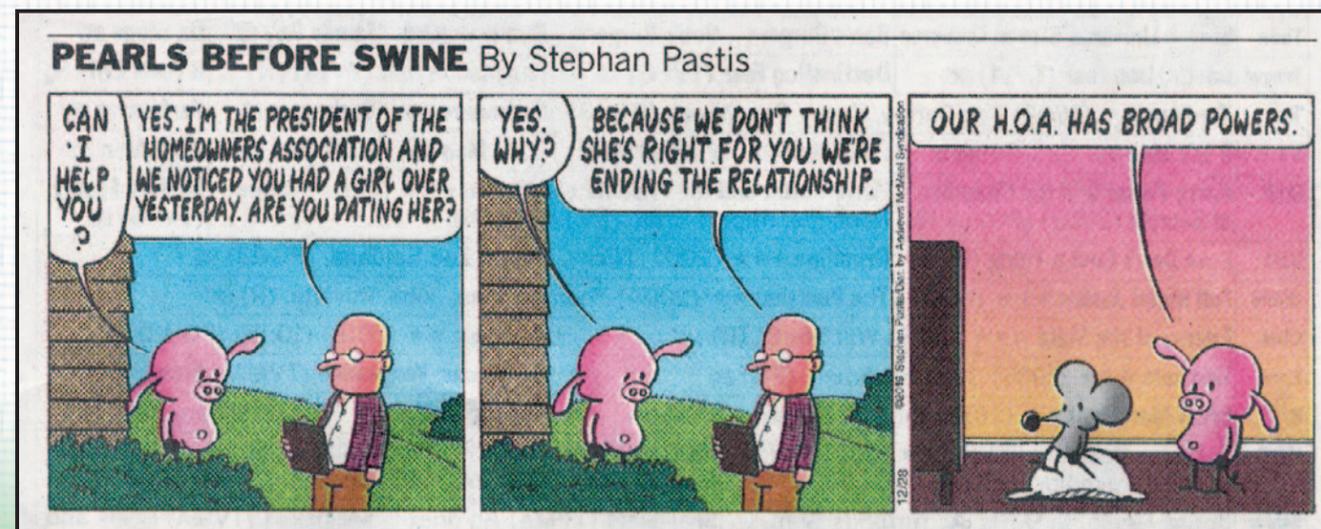
Our Senior Lead Officer is Officer Karwon Villery. He has been working in the Pacific Division for the past 10 years, so he is very familiar with our neighborhood. His contact information is:  
Cell: 310 622-3973 Email: [38717@LAPD.ONLINE](mailto:38717@LAPD.ONLINE)



## MEMBERSHIP STATUS

Our 2020 membership drive has started, but we have a long way to go. We have 896 homes in Westdale. Of those, only 193 have paid for 2020. We have collected \$3870 in dues plus \$815 for the CERT fund. We already have 67 paid members for 2021 and 17 for 2022. Last year, 2019, we finished the year with 301

paid. This is only 30%. Hopefully, we will do better in 2020. At \$20 a year, everyone should be able to contribute their support! The block captains will be contacting unpaid members soon. You may also drop off your dues at the home of Jami Olson (3216 Barry) or mail it to PO Box 66504, LA 90066. The dues form can be printed from our web site. Select the Membership Support page which has a link to the dues form.





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## A TOTALLY TRIVIAL™ WESTDALE VILLAGER FACT

• Dick Henkel

All of the balls on this plate where hit into our yard from the Park. That's 30 years of free baseballs! Thanks MVRC!

FYI: Nothing has ever been broken or any person hurt due to the baseballs. We've never even seen one land in the yard. We just keep finding them...

## WHO ARE OUR NEIGHBORS?

•Jan Burns

Another house was torn down the other day in our neighborhood. I happened to drive by as demolition crews were hoisting a cable around a beautiful mature jacaranda tree. They were preparing to pull it down from the backyard. Half of the house had already been smashed into smithereens with wood and concrete strewn all across the corner lot. A little later in the day I walked by the corner on my way up to the bank. The demolition crew had gone so I peeked behind the fence to see what was left of the foundation. Not much.

The now pile of rubble had been home to a woman named Helen for nearly 60 years. Several years ago another neighbor suggested I interview Helen for this column, "Who Are Our Neighbors?" I'd seen her often, an elderly woman hunched over as she pushed her shopping cart down National Blvd. returning home from Ralphs Market. Her house on the corner of Federal and Clover, overgrown with foliage looked nearly abandoned except for the light on outside her office door on the side of the house.

I stopped by one day to visit and ask if I could interview her for the Villager. Helen invited me into her office where every surface was piled high with books, art sketches covered every wall, and cat food bowls were scattered about

on the floor. I learned that she was a Master Calligrapher. She counted among her accomplishments an invitation she'd calligraphed that had been commissioned by the British Royal family. At ninety something, Helen's hands were still steady enough to continue working. She also taught calligraphy and sold paper and ink supplies out of her office. I was fascinated that I'd lived more than 30 years around the corner from a world-renowned calligrapher and had only seen her as the old woman who fed the street cats and pushed a shopping cart up and down National Blvd.

I never wrote the article. Helen asked me not to. She didn't want to draw attention to the fact that she was an old woman living in her house alone.

Walking home from the bank as I neared my house on Barry Ave., I saw strolling on the other side of the street a couple who lived down the street from me. In all my decades of residence, I'd never spoken to them though I knew which house they lived in.

Thinking about Helen, her untold story and her now demolished house, I crossed the street to say hello.

"Hi, my name is Jan. I don't believe we've ever met but we've been neighbors for more than 30 years. I live in that house down the street from you and I just wanted to say hello."

Do you know your neighbors? Try saying hello. You might be surprised by who you'll meet.



## FOR PATRONS AND NEIGHBORS OF MAR VISTA REC CENTER

### WHO TO CALL

#### FOR HOMELESS, SANITARY AND SAFETY ISSUES

The Mar Vista Park Advisory Board and recreation center staff have prepared this flyer to aid park patrons and neighbors in reporting issues that they see. While recreation staff report what they see, they need everyone's help! The more people that report issues, the more attention they will receive by the City. **If you see it, report it!**

Reporting issues related to homelessness, sanitation, and safety can be confusing and frustrating. Below are the phone numbers to use depending upon what you see. For your own safety, please do not engage directly with people who are perpetrating any of these.

WHAT YOU SEE	NUMBER TO CALL TO REPORT
You want to get help for a homeless person	Call 213-683-3333 for the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority ( <a href="http://www.lahsa.org">www.lahsa.org</a> )  After hours: LA-HOP.org
Someone on the Mar Vista Recreation Center grounds during closure (10:30pm - 5:00am)	Call 877-275-5273, LAPD (non-emergency number)
Unsanitary conditions such as human waste, needles, or using drinking fountains to wash clothes or rinse bike parts.	Call 310-391-5134, MV Rec Center Office  After hours: 800-773-2489, LAsanitation or LACitySAN.org
Weapons (e.g. knives), violent behavior or threats	Call 911
Graffiti, vandalism, or other damage to park property	Call 310-391-5134, MV Rec Center Office <u>if it has already happened</u>  Call 911 <u>if the act of graffiti, vandalism or park property damage is occurring</u>
No improvement in, or resolution of, your reported issue	Call 310-575-8461, Councilmember Mike Bonin 11th District West Los Angeles Office

## OUR HOME IS NOT FOR SALE

•Ron Wynn

As a realtor who grew up in a real estate family in Mar Vista on Barry Avenue and attended Mar Vista school, I've always had a deep connection with this very special neighborhood. To me, there is no question why people say "why would I sell, and where would I go?" Believe me, I have struggled with this question for years.

I remember moving into our home with my parents in 1966. They were proud to become a home owner in Westdale Trousdale paying a whopping \$38,000. The same house today gets grabbed up by a developer for \$1,500,000 if it's a fixer, or for \$1,700,000 or \$2,000,000 if it's remodeled and well maintained.

Back to the "where would you move and why would you move" question. The most common reasons for people selling in Mar Vista are: 1) relocating closer to children or grandchildren (and to get away from the traffic); 2) relocating to assisted living; or 3) family selling for estate liquidation. Many homeowners in Mar Vista are aging and eventually their homes will turn over. A younger generation is coming in to start the tradition all over again having kids, etc.

If you happen to have children who live in California, you may be thinking that one day they may inherit your house. It's always a nice thought that maybe our home might stay in the family. But if circumstance are not quite conducive to that thought, you or your family may need to sell the home

one day. If that becomes the case, one thing you should know is, unfortunately, "our kids don't want our stuff."

Many of my clients are older and have started to give family members things that may have better use in their home and to donate things no longer needed. You are doing everyone a favor and your home will look less cluttered as well. As times change, we unfortunately have a lot of stuff that's no longer used and is no longer of any real value to anyone. The estate sale idea is never as hoped for, with most estate sale companies cherry picking and then charging to haul away items that were not sold. Often donating and taking the tax write off turns out better and is less of a hassle in the long run. My suggestion is: try to put the emotional value of your stuff aside, which I know is easier said than done, but you'll be doing everyone a favor by starting now and not leaving it for the kids to worry about later.

Here's some sad but true reality. At some point, most homeowners come to grips with how little value their contents and furnishings really have. Even with that understood, it's really hard to walk away and turn the keys over to 1-800-Junk. And then what about dad's tennis trophies, the 27 family photo albums, the DVD collection, the VCR collection, mom's spoon collection. Do your kids a favor and start thinking about this now. These all can be sold, but please know that the money you take in won't buy you more than a 3-day vacation at a resort hotel. I sincerely hope you are still loving living in Westdale and enjoying the lifestyle that we are so fortunate to have.

Cheers! Here's to "Living in Westdale"!

## WESTDALE SIDEWALKS

•Marjorie Templeton

Who is responsible for the sidewalk in front of your house? Can you, the homeowner, be sued if someone trips and is injured on the sidewalk in front of your house?

The Westdale Homeowners Association President's article (found in this issue) discusses the City of Los Angeles Safe Sidewalks initiative (safesidewalks.lacity.org) and the various repair approaches available to home owners. It will take many years for the City of Los Angeles to assess and repair the approximately 11,000 miles of sidewalks stretched over 472 square miles. Throughout the City many sections of sidewalk are cracked, broken and upheaved. State law dictates that adjacent property owners are responsible for sidewalk repairs, however, the City of Los Angeles has assumed responsibility to fix sidewalks damaged by street (city) trees. It is recommended that homeowners should report all sidewalk problems including those caused by city trees, your trees, or other causes to reduce or avoid potential liability. If the problem involves a city tree and has been reported to the city, then the homeowner is not likely to be found liable even if the city does not repair the sidewalk. A homeowner could be liable if the sidewalk problem was caused by a tree on the homeowner's property or

cracks in the sidewalk that are part of your driveway or other causes. Some of the most dangerous sidewalks are those with an uplift of 1" or less. I tripped on one of these when I caught a toe. Many people have painted a red warning line or put tar across an



uplifted sidewalk. The city may also fill in cracks rather than replace it.

It is difficult to sue the city for a sidewalk 'slip and fall'. The city seldom pays the victims. According to an NBC investigation, the city paid claims in only 4% of the cases. If you have specific questions regarding your liability please seek legal advice.

The bottom line is be careful and attentive when walking through our neighborhood. The sidewalks along some streets have gotten worse in recent years. Carry a flashlight when walking in the dark. Also, please remember to water your street trees. Although the city owns the trees, homeowners are responsible for watering them. Many parkway trees in drought tolerant yards are not getting enough water.



Broken sidewalk caused by street (city) tree



Cracks in driveway are the homeowner's responsibility

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## PARK REPORT

•Jerry Hornof

The Mar Vista Park Director, Andres De LaHoya, joined us at the Westdale Homeowners Association Annual Meeting. He provided an excellent presentation on the range of activities at the park. He noted that Winter Season Basketball has started with girls' teams, boys' teams, and co-ed teams. There are 46 teams with over 400 children participating. There are even teams for 5 – 6 year old players. Basketball continues to be one of the most popular programs at the park. The volunteer coaches and the players represent one of the most successful and accomplished programs in the Los Angeles Recreation and Parks (LARAP) system. The spring sports season will include soccer, baseball, and girls' volleyball.

Andres also announced that the Mar Vista Park gymnasium is the beneficiary of a complete new wooden floor installation. The L.A. Clippers and team Chairman Steve Ballmer and his wife, Connie, announced a \$10 million gift to the Los Angeles Parks Foundation to renovate roughly 350 LARAP basketball courts. The Mar Vista Park gymnasium was evaluated and a brand new court was recommended. The new flooring in the gym will be installed March 9th through April 29th. During that period, practices and games will be held at the Windward School Gymnasium.

Andres discussed the homeless encampments at the park. Andres emphasized that the park staff is actively monitoring and to the best of their ability addressing the issues. They are continuously working with city agencies, reporting and logging occurrences, and working with the homeless. Sanitation has done cleanups following the required 72 hour notice. Homelessness is a major issue throughout the LARAP facilities. It was confirmed that the park is closed from 10:30pm-5:00am and folks should not be in the park during those hours. The challenge is enforcing that with the homeless encampments. Due to the public concerns regarding the homeless encampments it was agreed that the Park Advisory Board (PAB) should develop a flyer that includes the types of issues and who to call to get resolution. This completed flyer was presented at the Annual Meeting. The flyer is included in the Annual Meeting minutes found on the Westdale Homeowners Association webpage ([www.westdalehoa.org](http://www.westdalehoa.org)).

Planting of new trees at Mar Vista Park was scheduled to take place in October and November. Unfortunately the wildfire events in other parts of the city have superseded work at Mar Vista Park. Andres completed a survey of the park and fully appreciates the aging of the tree canopy. He is working with the park forestry group to get this situation addressed. If you are interested in becoming more involved with the park please consider participating on the PAB. Please contact Andres if you are interested.



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