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TOGETHER IN HOPE

· Jerry Hornof

The theme for 2020 was Westdale – Sharing a Common Environment. Unfortunately, starting in March of 2020 our understanding of a common environment became very real as we began dealing with the COVID-19 Pandemic. For all of us it has



been a very challenging year. Some of us have lost family and friends to the virus. We have missed the close contact with family, friends, and neighbors. Our normal routines of work, school, sports, travel, dining, and entertainment have been changed, interrupted, or canceled. In the midst of this disappointment, it is also important to reflect on some of the positive outcomes we have realized. In many cases we have been able to spend more time with our immediate family and developed a greater appreciation of each other's daily routines. We have all become more technology savvy with video conferencing and, at the same time, gained insight (often humorous) into our colleague's families and pets. We have done a lot of walking and exploring of our neighborhood. We have enjoyed Dodger and Laker championships. As a society, the pandemic has amplified our awareness of the social and economic disparity in our country. At the same time, we appreciate and thank the essential workers (delivery workers, medical staff, first responders, grocery store works, cleaning staff, and many more) who are helping to keep all of us safe. The theme for the 2021 year will be Together in Hope. Hope is "a desire for things to change for the better", or as Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu states, "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." I know that we all share hope as we move forward.

The Westdale Homeowners Association Annual Meeting was held on January 26th. We met over Zoom. I usually open the meeting by recapping the yearlong events that include the annual block party, Boo on Purdue,



PRESIDENT
JERRY HORNOF
310 391-9442
JERRY.HORNOF@NOAA.GOV

EDITOR
MARJORIE TEMPLETON
310 390-4507
MPT@RWTIA.COM

NATURALIST M. UMAR

ADVERTISING
INA LEE
310-397-5251
INA_LEE_M@YAHOO.COM.

EDITOR/GRAPHIC DESIGNER
DICK HENKEL
DICK@DKDICK.COM



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P.O.BOX 66504

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90066
WWW.WESTDALEHOA.ORG



year. I did thank the Westdale Homeowners Association Board of Directors who have been meeting regularly: Leah Oye for her work to organize and coordinate our Block Watch Program, and Ina Lee, Dick Henkel and Marjorie Templeton who publish and manage The Villager and our website (www.westdalehoa.org). The speakers included Los Angeles Police Department Senior Lead Officer Karwon Villery, 11th District Council Member Mike Bonin, Mar Vista Recreation Center Director Andres De La Hoya, and Historic Fire Station 62 Chairperson Rob Kadota. The meeting was recorded and both the minutes and the link for the recording will soon be available on our website. Meeting highlights included: Mike Bonin's introduction of our new Mar Vista Field Deputy, Vishesh Anand; Mike Bonin affirming that the proposed Mar Vista Community Development Plan will not include any up zoning for our neighborhood, especially regarding our concerns along the west side of Sawtelle Boulevard between Palms Boulevard and National Boulevard; Director Andres De La Hoya hoping that limited programming will begin at the Recreation Center during the winter session; and Rob Kadota describing the Historic Fire Station 62 vision with additional information available at https://historic62.org/.

Many of you are familiar with the Mar Vista Community Council. If you are interested in serving

CRIME & SAFETY REPORT

· Leah Oye

Liason to Pacífic Police Devision

Pacific Division is divided into 8 sections with each section having a senior lead officer. Our Senior Lead Officer is Officer Karwon Villery. He has been with Pacific Division for over 10 years.

Some areas are geographically larger than others with varied population density, diversity and number of crimes. Most crime reports on the news programs are city wide which do not reflect our part of town. Our area is called "14A25" which covers Mar Vista, East Venice and Penmar. The boundaries are:

- North Santa Monica Blvd. & 10 Freeway
- East Sawtelle Blvd.
- South Venice Blvd.
- West Lincoln Blvd

and park activities. These activities did not occur this year. I did thank the Westdale Homeowners Association Board of Directors who have been meeting regularly: Leah Oye for her work to organize and coordinate our Block Watch Program, and Ina Lee, Dick Henkel and Marjorie Templeton who publish and manage The Villager and our website (www.westdalehoa.org). The speakers included Los Angeles Police Department Senior Lead Officer Karwon Villery, 11th District Council Member Mike Bonin, Mar Vista Recreation Center Director Andres De La Hoya, and Historic Fire Station 62 Chairperson Rob Kadota. The meeting was recorded and both the

In closing, please consider the ways you can bring hope to our community. Your involvement, and encouraging others to be involved, is essential in keeping Westdale wonderful. As I did at the annual meeting, I want to acknowledge the wonderful poem our National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman recited at the inaugural. Her closing lines capture our hope and our challenge:

When day comes we step out of the shade,
Aflame and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
If only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it...

As you can see this takes in a large area as well as diverse populations.

The pandemic has certainly changed the world we live in as well as the crime statistics for our area. So, in our area, 14A25, these are the statistics compared to the same time last year.

- Aggravated Assaults---increased 50%
- Stolen Vehicles---increased 100%
- Burglary from vehicles---increased 107%
- Residential Burglaries---down 33%

Unlocked doors or windows continue to be a major factor in stolen vehicles or theft from vehicles. Do not leave your belongings in plain sight. Your gym bag may just have old clothes, but the thief does not know this. This may result in a broken car window just to get that bag. Catalytic converters continue to be stolen at a rapid pace, with the

Toyota Prius being the car of choice. The converters contain precious metals which is very tempting for these thieves. There are converter locks that can be attached by a mechanic. The best answer is to park your car in the driveway, behind a fence, or in your garage. What a good time to clean out the garage.

Occasionally, disagreements can surface between neighbors that are difficult to resolve by just talking with each other. In that case, the Los Angeles City Attorney has a free Dispute Resolution Program. A neutral third party will help resolve issues. For more information go to: empowerla.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/THE-DISPUTE-RESOLUTION-PROGRAM.pdf

Mar Vista Park is not an off-leash dog park. The LAPD has gotten a number of complaints from the community. Dogs must be on a leash that is not more than 6 feet long. (Velma is very disappointed*)



Senior Lead Officer, Karwon Villery can be contacted for any non-emergency questions at 310 622-3973 or 38717@lapd.online.



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

· Jami Olson

So far, we have 191 households out of 907 that have paid dues for 2021. We also have 86 CERT donations for \$895 and \$610 donated to the 2021 general fund. We have gotten 66 members paying ahead for 2022 dues and 21 more for 2023 dues. You may go to the web site at westdalehoa.org to check to see if your home has paid. If you find that you have not paid, print out the form found under "Membership" and return it by mail or drop it off for Jami Olson. Remember that even if you are a renter, we appreciate your support. We are doing well for another COVID year - thank you to the donation members!



*Unsolicited OpinionsTM



INSECT POLLINATOR FORECAST FOR SPRING 2021

· M. umar

Springtime in the Westside! You're likely either groaning or cheering at this prospect. It's one of the busiest times of the year. Squirrels are hopping, birds are feeding chicks, and humans are cleaning everything for inexplicable reasons. However, you aren't the only busy one. Pollinators everywhere are rushing to get fresh spring nectar from their favorite flowers.

Someone who doesn't quite seem to fit into the cheerful atmosphere is the mourning cloak butterfly. They flap around lawns, especially near Butler Avenue and the Mar Vista park, on velvety dark brown wings with light blue spots at the edges. They resemble the cloaks widows used to wear. In fact, they're busy, too. They need to lay their eggs quickly, before summer approaches.

Other, more vivid butterflies include majestic swallowtails. The giant swallowtail is black with pale yellow markings that are somewhere between stripes and spots. It often flies in swooping circles, looking for a good place to lay its eggs. Its caterpillars are detrimental to the citrus industry. They eat so much citrus that they resemble a dog with a bone, which gives them the nickname "orange puppies." The adults enjoy the nectar of milkweed, lantana, zinnias, and more.

Although the anise swallowtail looks similar to the giant swallowtail, it has more yellow on its wings and is a paler color, with colorful reddish and blue wingtips. They enjoy plants like the fennel at Mar Vista Elementary School, parsley, rue, and of course anise.

There are tinier butterflies as well. Sometimes found at public parks, the small, periwinkle colored marine blue butterfly can be found hiding in the grass or pollinating oleander and many other flowers. Moths have started to come out, too. In the evenings, some lucky people can observe the mocha brown and candy pink-striped, white lined or Carolina sphinx moths around night-blooming plants.

Of course, some of the most iconic pollinators are bees. The bees you see the most often are European honeybees. They buzz busily around almost every plant in sight and are notorious for their painful sting. However, they aren't native. Many other bees have been here long before them. Only one particular species is large and has a loud, helicopter-like buzz. They're huge, about an inch long, look like they've been electric-shocked - and are completely harmless. This species is called the valley carpenter bee and is visible in sunny gardens later in spring. In spite of their size, they have no hive to protect and don't sting often. The males are bulky, golden and fluffy, and look like flying hamsters. The females are sleek and black. They enjoy native plants like the sea lavender on Grandview Hill.

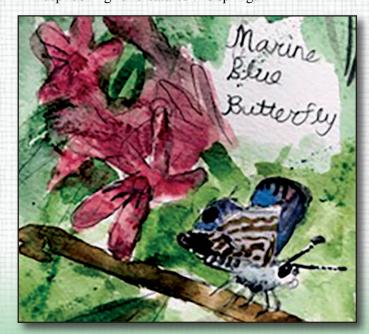
Much later in springtime, you may get an early visitor that is also misunderstood. A few shiny green fig beetles start perpetually bumping into walls and frightening picnic-goers, and yet they do not sting or bite. They are not Japanese beetles, although they're often mixed up, and they will do much less harm to your garden.

Already arriving is the white or pale chartreuse cabbage butterfly, who likes to start early and is persistently laying many eggs on vegetable gardens near Colby, Coolidge, and Federal Avenue. It's amazing how such a pretty creature can frustrate so many gardeners.

Honeybees and flower flies, another underappreciated pollinator, are zipping around near Kingsland Avenue. Some people have chosen to plant pollinator gardens especially for every insect I just mentioned, and who knows what others might show up there? I recommend planting one to find many pollinators.

With all that said, you can see for yourself why spring is the perfect time to see pollinators. Their mutual relationship with flowers is spectacular. Everywhere there is new growth and insects hard at work. After all, spring is the busiest season.

Keep looking for creatures this spring!





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A FREE VEHICLE MUSEUM!

· Marjorie Templton

I have been fascinated by the variety of tanks and fire engines that have been coming and going at the gas station at National and Sawtelle. I talked to Sina Khodadadi who has owned the station for 20 years, about the collection. He has been collecting old police cars, fire engines, and WWII vehicles for several years. He has a network of people who help him to locate vehicles of interest. He then restores them for his private museum in a local warehouse. Since people can't visit his museum, he brings vehicles to the gas station so that they can be enjoyed. He encourages people to stop in for a closer look.











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REAL ESTATE REPORT

· Debbie Kaplan, MBA, Broker

Corona virus rates are dropping! I will discuss issues both statewide and local to our neighborhood. Just this week, Los Angeles County announced it will allow students to return to campuses for the first time in a year. Students will have to wait a bit longer to allow the teacher's union and District officials to negotiate as to what a return to campus will be like. In order to allow students back in, the county had to maintain a key threshold of a seven day average of infections below 25 cases per 100,000 residents. As of this writing, the official daily rate was 20 cases per 100,000. Little by little, schools are posting the forms that are necessary in order to reopen. With more and more restrictions being lifted, our lives are becoming a bit more tolerable. Restaurants are permitting outdoor dining once again. In time, we will be able to eat in a restaurant and fly to visit relatives once again.



As for Real Estate, there is a huge demand for houses. On a recent local news program, the head of the California Association of Realtors spoke of the increased demand for housing. In California, we need 180,000 new houses this year to satisfy demand. Only one-half that number was built. That puts pressure on existing houses. Prices are up 17% over last year. Statewide, he spoke of some houses getting close to 30 offers. One third of all listings sold for over the asking price. If you are interested in buying, they recommend getting pre approval and having all underwriting done prior to submitting an offer. If you are selling a property, you can expect these hurdles to be cleared by your buyers.



In Westdale, since the middle of last May, 7 houses sold. Two houses were sold without even being on the market. Homes sold on Stoner, Granville (2), Inglewood, Corinth, Butler, and Woodbine. Two on Clover and Rose are in escrow. The average price per square foot is \$1,100 for one story houses; two story houses sell for approximately \$870 per square foot. The highest priced house was on Purdue and sold in May for \$3,195,000. It had 5 bedrooms and 6 baths. The lowest price was on a house on Stoner with 3 bedrooms and 2 baths. It sold for \$1,696,000 in August.

It seems that we will be wearing masks for a long time, especially if a new strain comes our way. Open houses are not happening yet. Please let me know if you have any thoughts of selling in this market. I promise to adhere to all guidelines for showing properties. One person (or pod) at a time, and masks and slippers will be de rigeur.

Having fallen on an uneven sidewalk, it is my concern to remind homeowners of the dangers posed. You may not have heard that I spent 5 days in intensive care at UCLA Reagan Hospital a little over a year ago. I had a subdural hematoma. I was not aware of how serious this was. If you have an uneven sidewalk in front of your house, it is incumbent on you to address it. You can add tar to even it out, you can call the City to report it, or you can hire a contractor to replace the affected sidewalk. If you leave it as it is, someone could fall and get seriously injured.



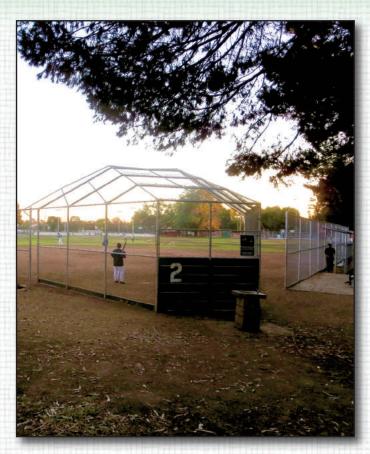




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PARK REPORT

· Jerry Hornof



Mar Vista Recreation Center continues to experience major changes during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Currently, Adam Smith who was the acting Senior Program Coordinator at Mar Vista Park has moved back to Westwood Recreation Center (RC). Program Coordinator Cooper has joined the Mar Vista RC Staff. Andres De La Hoya (Mar Vista RC Director) has completed his detail at the Ritchie Valens Recreation Center in Pacoima (San Fernando Valley) and is now at the Hubert H. Humphrey RC also in Pacoima. Andres is still overseeing all activities at Mar Vista RC. Park staff continue on reduced hours but log sufficient hours to maintain their benefits including health insurance. Mar Vista Park is still having limited staff coverage daytime and evenings. At this time park coverage is from 8am – 7pm with restrooms closing at 6:45pm. Most park facilities remain closed to discourage activities that do not comply with physical distancing requirements.

There is the hope that some classes will be offered in the Winter Session for youth (ages 5-15). The focus will be on providing clinics and practices. No games will be programmed. Sports will include soccer, hockey, and outdoor volleyball. Staff is training on COVID-19 protocols and reporting requirements. All programs will be managed by small groups (12 participants) and follow CDC requirements for exposure and quarantining. The staff is ready and excited for programs to begin but await clearance from Los Angeles City officials. I encourage you to visit the LARAP COVID-19 website at www.laparks.org/covid-19 for COVID-19 status updates.

Los Angeles City has instituted an early retirement opportunity to address an ever increasing budget deficit. As a result, LARAP is experiencing the retirement of many senior staff. Although this represents opportunities for staff advancement, it also reflects the loss of significant corporate knowledge. Of note, Anna Garbraith (MV Staff) and Mark Israel (Regional staff) have announced their retirement. There is also discussion about returning to four regions (Metro, Valley, Shoreline, and South) which would split the current Valley-Shoreline region. If realignment occurs, it will have impacts on Mar Vista RC staffing.

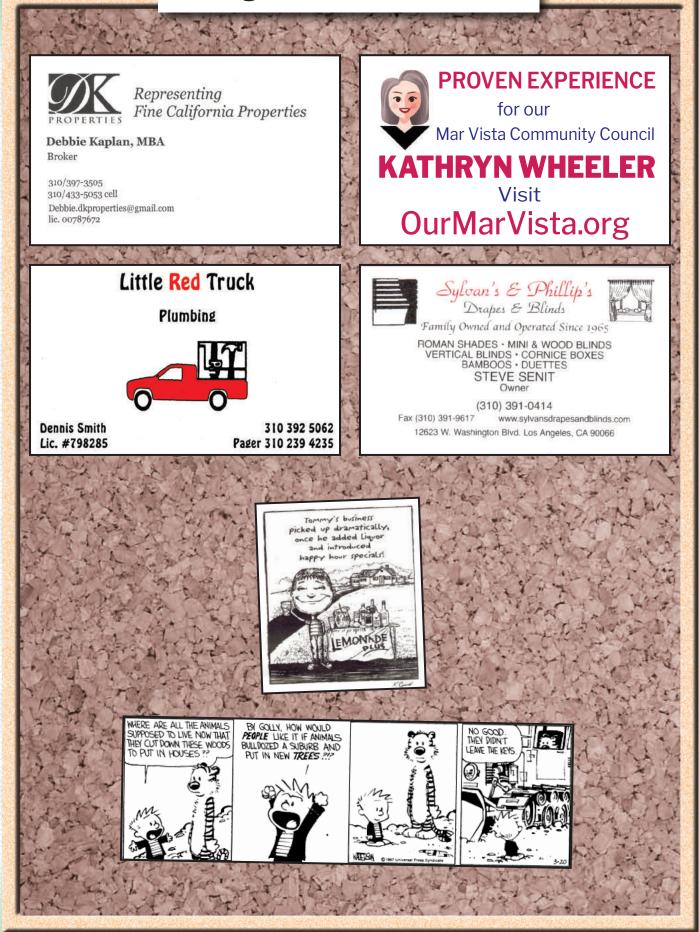
Park Director Andres De La Hoya noted that there has been continued homeless use of the bathroom facilities including bathing in the bathrooms. This is most likely due to additional campsites in the northeast corner of the park. Although there has been minor cleanup of the area, the current situation is not healthy, safe, or sustainable. There is continuous discussion with LARAP administration, the Mayor, and the City Council to find a better outcome for everyone involved.



Finally, Andres noted that efforts to re-seed the grass fields on the east side of the park are on hold due to budget constraints. Budget concerns are also affecting the resurfacing of the auditorium floor and other work orders.

Hopefully we will return to normal activities sooner than later. Until then, please exercise, keep well, and be safe.

Villager Bulletin Board



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