

SLRA Newsletter

Silver Lake Residents Association

September, 2000

A Few Words From the President

Catherine Moyers

The articles in this newsletter reflect the highs and lows of living in the big city, and the small town feel we get from living in Silver Lake. While there are stories of crime in our neighborhood, there are also stories of the completion of years of hard work in volunteer efforts of community involvement. Developers have been told a resounding "No" to tearing down the classic Van de Kamp's Bakery Building; Basic Plumbing, an after-hours sex club, has been told to move; and very possibly another developer will be told to clean up his ten-year-old building site on Riverside Dr. between Fletcher and Glendale Blvd. There is an update of the Silver Lake Reservoir Master Plan, which is still looking like the opportunity for real enhancement in our neighborhood. In addition, the 4th Annual SLRA Block Party, was recently held, this year on the block of Tesla between Rokeby and Armstrong, on Sunday September 17th.

All of this work takes volunteers. We are constantly looking for new Board members for the SLRA. Specifically, we need a new newsletter editor (only four times a year), a new Community Police Advisory Board representative (a very interesting time for that position.), and the next few months will see the need to organize several candidates' forums for the

many local races taking place in the Spring including the 13th District City Council seat being vacated by Jackie Goldberg. In addition, there are occasional important meetings, zoning hearings and other daytime events that require people with flexible schedules to attend, and Neighborhood Councils are looming. We are currently spread a little thin, and could really use some new blood. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about becoming more active, you can call our hotline at (323).661-6465, or email us through the SLRA website at www.silverlake.org to see about coming to one of our Board meetings held the third Tuesday of every month.

If you have one issue that is near and dear to your heart, you can chair your own committee and, with the support of the Board, effect real change for the good of the neighborhood. Our latest most visible activity was the addition of stop signs on Griffith Park Blvd. to the relief of residents on that street. Give us a call. With your help, the neighborhood will improve. Without it, who knows?



Working together as a community with the City to make Silver Lake an even better place to live.

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Wrong Place, Wrong Time?

Sandra Gold

I was recently awakened by gun shots. My first thought was that I had not heard these in a long time. It's been since LAPD Chief Darryl Gates' tenure. Subsequently, the CRASH program, the designated Senior Lead Officer, Protection One and some dedicated volunteers working with the LAPD helped clear our neighborhood of the gangs. We patted ourselves on the back and began to feel safe and complacent. Well, things have changed. Homicide in Los Angeles is up 10%, CRASH is disbanded and the SLO's are back in the car and forbidden from having the kind of relationship we once enjoyed. The Rampart scandal has put a lot of thugs back on the street. You've surely noticed the increase in graffiti. All of this is a direct result of the changes by Chief Parks.

It didn't take long for me to have my second thought because it was all wrapped up in my first thought. It went to my friend.

She was going to Baskin Robbins in the SavOn/Ralph's shopping center on Glendale Blvd. at 9:45PM on a Friday night in late June. As she walked past Winchell's, shots rang out. Her companion pulled her to the ground, but it was too late. She had been shot. One might say she was lucky because she was 'only' shot in the leg. I don't think my friend views it this way. The bullet shattered her fibula, tore up tissue and lodged in her Achilles tendon. She will be in a cast for 6 months and faces further surgery after that. Her only consolation is that her 4-year-old son was not with her at the time. Given the level of the shot, he could've been killed.

The police told her that the shopping center is supposed to be neutral territory for the gangs. So they can shop without fear of being assaulted. I guess the shooter was absent the day that agreement was made. I guess the police just view my friend as 'being in the wrong place at the wrong time'.

(Continued on page 5.....See "Wrong")

Silver Lake Echo Park Community Plan Revision

Maryann Kuk

In about 1980, the State of California mandated to the City of Los Angeles that the City of Los Angeles prepare "community plans" for small areas (35 in all) in order to "provide an official guide to future development". The Plan is intended "to promote an arrangement of land use, circulation and services which will encourage and contribute to the economic, social and physical health, safety, welfare and convenience of the people who live and work in the District within the larger framework of the City; guide to the future of the District to meet existing and anticipated needs and conditions; contribute to a healthful and pleasant environment; balance growth and stability; reflect economic potential and limitations; and protect investment to the extent feasible and reasonable."

All of this sounds fine until you begin to reflect on just one issue in our neighborhood over the past 20 years. Silver Lake's traffic has increased to unbearable volume with through commuters. We continually have arguments with the Department of Transportation about their "goals" to keep traffic moving as efficiently [fast] as possible and the community "goals" to minimize both the volume and speed of this traffic. But, DOT will tell you that what they are doing is within the guidelines of the Community Plan. We want speed humps to slow the traffic, only 4 are paid for by the City in each Council District per year. We want more stop lights, only 1 is allocated per Council District per year.

The SLRA worked with (or against) the Planning Department in 1980-1984 to prepare the existing document which was finally adopted by the City Council in 1984. Many of the people

who live in these neighborhoods were appalled by the big box apartment buildings that were replacing the charming Craftsman style homes. Developers would buy up 3 or 4 in a row, raze the houses and build a big stucco box. These big boxes would totally change both the character of the neighborhood, would make traffic and parking a nightmare and would isolate the people who lived in these complexes from their neighbors. The Plan, which downzoned much of the property in Echo Park & Silver Lake, was the only way to stop the insanity.

After much discussion, controversy, revision, and the filing of a law suit by the Center for Law in the Public Interest, the City Council finally acquiesced and adopted these Plans. City Council members who were intent on more and more development (mini-malls, big box apartment buildings) were receiving lots of campaign contributions from developers. Prior to adoption, any City Council member could ignore the un-adopted Plan and, after a large donation to the re-election campaign, a developer could build whatever they wanted. The buildings that qualify are still with us, they are still ugly and they still detract from the character of our neighborhoods.

Up until now, these very general plans have not been updated. The Planning Department goal is now every 5 years. About 2 years ago, Echo Park and Silver Lake heard through the grape vine that the revised Plan was about to be adopted without any consultation with either community. Fortunately, Councilmember Goldberg had some reservations about that and insisted that the Silver Lake - Echo Park Plan be put at the bottom of the list so that there would be time to review and hold public meetings. Conse-

quently, we are number 35 of 35 and our Plan is in the process of review. There have been a few workshop meetings and the Planning Department is reviewing the input from these meetings. For example, there were requests to limit auto repair shops, tattoo parlors, liquor stores, nude dance places, and communication transmission towers. Also, a request to continue or expand the R-1 and R-2 zoning and not upzone back to pre-1980 levels. Generally, Silver Lake & Echo Park welcome new, appropriately scaled, architecturally pleasing development. What we don't want are high rise buildings along Sunset which would loom over the adjoining residential (as they do in Westwood and Carthay Circle) or large, big box apartment buildings. We want cleaner, more pedestrian-friendly commercial streets. We want to maintain and increase the residential qualities of our neighborhoods. We want to discourage our streets from becoming wider and faster.

If you would like to add your input to this project, please call the Planning Deputy in charge of this Plan, Patricia Diefendurfer at (213) 485-6763. If you write a letter, please send a copy to SLRA, PO Box 39587, LA 90039 or fax to (323) 665-2125.

Neighborhood Councils Update

Maryann Kuk

As I'm sure you've heard, the citizens of Los Angeles voted on June 8, 1999 to amend the City Charter and adopt a provision to create a City-wide system of independent Neighborhood Councils. These Councils have the potential to affect the decisions made for our own neighborhoods. The goals are to make the City more responsive, facilitate the delivery of City services, help plan block parties, tree plantings and improvements, link businesses, residents, schools, community based and cultural organizations, and allow input as to how City funds are spent in our own neighborhoods. Whether or not they will reach their potential depends on a number of things; how many of the citizens actually participate, whether consensus about just what we want can be reached and how much actual "power" these Councils will be allowed. Typically, neighborhoods want slower and less traffic, less density (population), fewer car repair places and liquor stores which is contrary to what City planners, developers and retailers want.

At the moment, there are more questions than answers. The Charter change mandated the formation of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (D.O.N.E.) to develop criteria for these Councils and to offer education, training and support to Councils once they are established and certified. Over the past few months, D.O.N.E. conducted 16 public workshops across the City which attempted to gather information from attendees as to what criteria there should be to determine the size, boundaries and makeup of these Councils. For some, these workshops were more frustrating than helpful. D.O.N.E. kept repeating that the citi-

zens are to make these decisions, but actually D.O.N.E. will be writing the plan which will determine the size, boundaries and will certify these Councils after they determine the criteria for becoming the representative of the neighborhood. This plan is due to the Mayor in December 2000. We are told there will be one more opportunity for community input when the draft is completed sometime in the Fall.

The SLRA, Silver Lake Improvement Association (SLIA) and the Committee to Save Silver Lake's Reservoirs (CSSLR) have taken a leadership role to develop some guidelines about the size, boundaries and function. These 3 groups have organized some, and attended all, of the planning sessions to discuss these critical issues. Vince Brook, President of the SLIA, took on the task of contacting 50+ people who represent various diverse groups in Silver Lake and invited them to join these planning sessions. Diane Edwardson (on behalf of her neighborhood on the east edge of Silver Lake) organized the list of interested people and has been instrumental in communication among these people — no small task! The list of interested people is diverse but there's room for more. No decisions have been made as to whether "Silver Lake" should try to have its own Council or whether we should join with other like-minded, neighboring communities (like Franklin Hills, Los Feliz, Echo Park, Atwater, etc.) in order to speak with a bigger and unified voice. On the other hand, while some issues that each smaller neighborhood

(Continued on page 4 See "Councils")

Twenty-Five Years of History...

In 1974, Silver Lake dam (the most southern embankment of Silver Lake) was declared unsafe after the 1971 San Fernando Valley earthquake. The lake was drained. It was at this time, the now-30+year-old Silver Lake Residents Association (SLRA) successfully defended against the proposed re-built dam's location. The DWP threatened to move the dam to the north up to 600' with a 10% surface water loss. Thus began the almost continuous adversarial relationship that existed between the community and the DWP until 1988 when the most recent threat was presented---covering Ivanhoe and building an on-site, industrial-style filtration plant on the 6 acres on the east side of Silver Lake near Cove and in front of the Neutra VDL house. At this time, the single-issue Committee to Save Silver Lake's Reservoirs was formed and joined with SLRA and the 10 other reservoir communities to form the Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs (CPOR).

In 1988, Jim Wickser, fresh from 20 years of Mono Lake litigation, and the newly appointed Division Head had a novel idea---why not talk to the community BEFORE a project was planned and perhaps work out a reasonable working relationship for the benefit of both water quality improvement and the community. So, on the brink of City-wide litigation, the 10 skeptical reservoir communities, now the Coalition to Preserve

Open Reservoirs, the not-always-agreeable but certainly better-than-litigation relationship was born and in the 12 years since the formal Mediation began, our community has benefited, as has the DWP. The repaving of Ivanhoe project included new sprinklers and landscaping as well as continuing monitoring of the adjoining, stressed Aleppo Pines. Because our reservoir sides are paved, we currently aren't subject to the Surface Water Treatment Rule that is requiring Stone, Hollywood and Encino Reservoirs to plan major projects in order to comply. Dam safety required that Rowena Reservoir be taken out of service. With Mediation, the DWP would have just put a big water tank in the middle of the now-empty reservoir. Instead, Mediation provided that it be the open water reservoir be replaced with an underground tank and topped off with a garden and ponds and improved and coordinated architecture of the buildings on site. Someday, with ever more stringent regulations, the Silver Lake community we will have to face these water quality issues again. A Master Agreement between the DWP and all 10 of the reservoir communities (now in draft form) will provide those who follow us with the history of Mediation and a formalized process to address water quality issues that will come up. But for right now, there are no plans to cover Ivanhoe and build the filtration plant on site.

FOCUS ON THE RESERVOIRS

Maryann Kuk

Master Plan Background...

While the primary purpose of the reservoirs is both a water storage and a water delivery facility, the reservoir property provides both a focal point and quality of life benefits to our community. In addition to the obvious open space, water and greenscape view shed, the Neighborhood Nursery School (at the corner of Armstrong & Tesla) has been in existence for over 40 years---children of children of children of early attendees are happily participating at this school; the newly opened Silver Lake Recreation Center, just below Silver Lake dam---a 10 year effort to have an appropriately-sized building for this tiny 9/10 of an acre; the dog park, a nuisance for some, a joy for others, is a model for several others in the City of Los Angeles, is an intensively used area for both dog and people socialization.

The Committee to Save Silver Lake's Reservoirs and the Silver Lake Residents Association, seeing the potential for the community of the off-limits property and wanting to provide a safe circumnavigation path around the reservoir (2 fatalities were enough), decided to take advantage of the on-going 12 year DWP/CPOR Mediation and, with the support of City Council members Jackie Goldberg and John Ferraro, approached the current head of the DWP, S. David Freeman, to request planning for the future through the development of a Master Plan. So enthusiastic was he about this idea, he agreed to fund the \$125,000 that this Plan would cost. Over the past year, with consultants Mia Lehrer & Associates, and through 3 workshops and numerous other meetings and planning sessions, the community explored various options, exchanged ideas, proposals and came to a consensus on how both the community and the Department could make changes that would benefit both. This process should be a model for all of the major decisions that are made in our neighborhoods. Hopefully, the changes to the LA City Charter and the development of Neighborhood Councils will take the place of formal Mediation only instituted at the 11th hour as an alternative to litigation. But for now, this joint effort between the DWP and the members of the Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs will continue as a joint effort for the greater good. The greater good of Silver Lake and of Los Angeles.

Reservoir

Facts...

There are two reservoirs in the community of Silver Lake; *Ivanhoe* (the most northern small one) and *Silver Lake*. They were placed in service in 1907, but not used as drinking water until 1920. Improvements in 1937 and 1950 increased water quality and capacity. Today, there are a total of 85 acres of surface water. The walk around is about 2-1/4 miles. Total acreage of the DWP property is about 127 acres. Ivanhoe is 30' deep and holds 59 million gallons, Silver Lake is 39' deep and holds 2 billion, 440 million gallons of water. The water is delivered from the LA aqueduct and blended with groundwater, filtered once and delivered through the River supply conduit. Ivanhoe acts as a sand detention pond (those little grains that end up clogging your faucet aerators) and requires occasional draining and settled sand removal. The water then flows over the spillway into Silver Lake. After a final chlorine treatment, the water is delivered downstream to Elysian Reservoir, downtown and south central Los Angeles. Silver Lake residents drink water from Eagle Rock Reservoir. The entire, extensive water delivery system is based on gravity (with a few pumps) and has been designed conservatively with flexibility and redundancy, should there be outages due to disasters or water quality

Master Plan Update...

The Master Plan is in its final stage of approval with some details being worked out with the Department of Transportation and the Department of Recreation & Parks. The Plan then will be presented to the DWP Board of Commissioners for their approval. Since there are no funds currently committed to implement the Plan, and while we are unsure about obtaining \$3 million from the State through the efforts of Assemblyman Scott Wildman, with overwhelming support of the neighborhood, we have begun to identify a variety of funding sources to get started on this Plan. The Plan itself is merely a general guideline or outline. All of the specific details are yet to be decided and worked through. Hundreds, maybe thousands, of decisions need to be made and the community will be invited to participate in the next round of work. The primary goals will be to establish a safe, separate walking, jogging path around the reservoir, slow traffic to restore the residential tranquility of the neighborhood that workshop attendees want and replace the fence and improve the landscaping --- all without interfering with the Department of Water & Power's need to operate their water storage & delivery facility. Thank you again DWP for providing the funds to develop this Master Plan and thank you again community for your support of this immense and exciting effort.

Silver Lake Chamber of Commerce Update: July Fundraiser a Great Success!

Cheryl Revkin, President,

Our own neighborhood Hollywood Sunset Free Clinic, now established over 25 years, approached me several months ago about the Chamber helping out in fundraising efforts for their next year's budget. I've personally been very proud to have such a successful and broad-based service organization like the Free Clinic right here in Silver Lake. I not only do volunteer work for the Clinic, but frequently refer people over there for a variety of high quality free services. So, I was anxious to get the Chamber involved not only to raise funds, but also to raise the awareness of the Clinic itself. Simultaneous with their request came interest on the part of several people and businesses to do something for Silver Lake in the way of a community event/fundraiser. Off we went — aiming at the summer.

The July 4th weekend proved to be the best time. We started with a sidewalk sale on Silver Lake Blvd. on Saturday. Last December, the "Escape from the Mall" people (Charles Burbridge and laurel Schneider of Pomegranate Designs) organized a terrific event for holiday shoppers on the sidewalks of Silver Lake Blvd. They recreated their event with some new and some regulars from our artisan business community. Local stores and restaurants opened their doors too for a two-day sale that got a lot of people out in the street to socialize and shop. On Sunday, more people frequented the "hood" to stop in at Spaceland for an afternoon of free music. Before the Sunday sale and concert even began though, 150 runners and walkers took over the streets around our reservoir for a competitive 5K run/walk. Paul Lerner, a USC professor, Silver Lake resident and local runner, initiated the idea and put together a terrific event. It was a first effort for all of us and really, it turned out better than "ok". Marshall High School students, their track coach, Gaelen Morton, and some local residents helped out. Jackie Goldberg's office helped arrange the street closures. Many local businesses gave some terrific gifts including a trip for 2 to New York! (Carlson Wagonlit Travel Thank You Again!!!!). Cal Fed Bank donated a mountain bike. Rockaway Records, CM Books, The Coffee Table, Hairlucination, Gilly Flowers, Body Builders Gym and many other local businesses came through with real incentives to win the race and then others made donations to the Clinic. Remember to Shop Silver Lake to thank them all.

Many of you probably came over to the Benefit Breakfast also on the Sunday morning of the 5K. Paul Redmond, a local resident and member of the Men's Division International, volunteered a large group of darling guys to cook a huge \$5 breakfast at the Silver Lake Recreation Center. Santiago Cuevas, Director of the Center, was wholeheartedly behind our event. He opened up the kitchen to the group who not only cooked but entertained the neighborhood with everything from a bagpiper to coordinated dancing to 60's music. Each table that they set up had fresh flowers and a tablecloth. The guys had white shirts, bow ties and a great sense of humor. We thank them too.

We had a lot of trouble getting the word out. We had banners printed to go across the boulevards but couldn't get them up due to a very unfortunate snag in the system. We had limited funds for publicity too. And it was the first year we did it. Paul Lerner and the men's group will not be available to us next year, but we're hoping some of you might come forward to help organize a bigger and better event. Please call us ((323) 665-1281) and we'll do it. Even with somewhat of a novice effort, we raised \$5,000 for the Clinic. They were ecstatic! Most of the participants were ecstatic too. It was a fun weekend for all.

The Chamber will be putting out a new Directory of Members (with important phone numbers) soon. We hope to do our December "Silver Lake Shops" event again too. We might have some other community-oriented projects come your way too. We're all volunteer — so just one event a year is somewhat taxing, but overall the Chamber is thriving as is Silver Lake itself.

Councils....continued from page 2

faces are similar, there are other issues which are specific just to one neighborhood. There is no way that there are enough hours in a day or people available to participate in every neighborhood's issues.

The other item of concern under discussion is who will mediate when there is a dispute between members of one Council and another neighboring Council or even within one Council. None of these questions had practical answers from D.O.N.E.

So, as of this moment, the development of a Neighborhood Council is being discussed. There are many diverse opinions and the meetings provide for lively interchange. While these Councils have the potential to make a difference in the quality of life in our neighborhoods, but only with your participation. If you would like to be added to the list, call Maryann at 323 665 4145. If you would like to know even more about D.O.N.E. you may visit their web site at www.lacityneighborhoods.com or call for information to (213) 485-1360.

New Principal Named at Ivanhoe Elementary *Catherine Moyers*

Ivanhoe Elementary was one of thirty-one schools District-wide that, as of late August, were in threat of starting the school year without a principal at the helm. But on August 31, with less than a week to go before the start of school, Mary Jane Collier, a former assistant principal with the District, has been named principal of Ivanhoe. Collier comes to Ivanhoe after most recently spending two years as assistant principal at Los Angeles Elementary in West Los Angeles. She replaces former principal, Kevin Baker, who left to work in one of the eleven sub-divisions of the District under the plan devised by the new head of the District, Roy Rohmer.

A hiring committee formed last June when Baker announced his departure, made up of teachers and parents of the school, but only a few qualified applicants responded. For a while, it looked like there might be an interim principal to start the school year.

One of the many issues Collier may choose to address is the possibility of expanding the school that currently goes from kindergarten to fifth grade. Last year there was a committee formed, with Baker an active participant, that explored ideas on how to expand the school to include sixth, seventh and eighth grades. King Middle School is seriously over-crowded. School Board member, Caprice Young, came to a community meeting at the school last Spring to say that she was in favor of expansion, that the need was there. But, expansion is barely on the radar at this time. While there is a need there needs to be a great deal of community participation.

We send Principal Mary Jane Collier a hearty welcome to the neighborhood and wish her well in the work that lies ahead.

Wrong..... continued from page 1

She was not in the wrong place at the wrong time. She was in her neighborhood and wanted an ice cream cone. The merchants want this hushed up and there was no report in the LA Independent's Crime Blotter.

The gangs are back, they're armed and they're thumbing their noses at the police. Until we get our SLO's back and the police begin to take "quality of life issues" seriously again, be aware! In the meantime, read the other article in the Newsletter about crime and about needing to re-establish regular communication with North East LAPD through the CPAB—Community Policing Advisory Board.

SLRA Newsletter

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All Officers & Board members of the SLRA are volunteers.

Officers

President Catherine Moyers
Vice President Sandra Gold
Recording Secretary Anne Jones
Corresponding Secretary Spencer SooHoo
Treasurer Terry Jackson

Board Members

Maryann Kuk , Harry Otto, Kathryn Rowley, Bill Wilbur

Members at Large

Hal Jones, William Taube, Lore Spangler, Todd Wexman
All Officers and Board members of the SLRA serve as volunteers.

Mail Thefts on Rise

William Wilbur

There have been numerous reports of thefts from mailboxes in the last few months in Silver Lake. Typically, criminals steal in- and out-going mail from mailboxes at both homes and apartments. This type of crime is not new, but there has been a recent increase in the number of reported thefts.

The perpetrators are looking for credit card statements with identifying account information, and cash advance checks from your credit card statements. The other targets are bank checks or deposit slips with account numbers. The persons involved in this type of crime use credit card information to run up large charges before these fraudulent purchases are discovered. In the case of checks, the criminals wash out amounts and names with bleach to create authentic looking checks, and then present them at banks or check cashing locations.

Mail theft is a crime of opportunity. It's often a hit and run type of crime with no apparent pattern. However, recently a number of 'rings' or groups have been running operations on a large scale. One such group was found to be operating in Silver Lake. Often, the victim of mail theft doesn't know about the loss until the credit card company makes a call about a missing payment.

There are some precautions homeowners can take. One is to have a locked mail box. A mail slot in a door makes the mail inaccessible to a thief. Leaving outgoing mail in a mail box in plain view is unwise, since reports of thefts of outgoing mail have also been reported. Drop it in a USPS blue box or hand it directly to the mail carrier.

Be alert to people going into mailboxes, even those anonymous and seemingly innocuous advertising peddlers who are a constant presence in the area. Alert neighbors about where your mail is delivered, and let them watch for people taking mail. The U.S. Postal Inspector is constantly prosecuting mail theft cases. If you notice items of mail missing, report it. Talk with your mail carrier, and insist that mail box lids are closed, and larger items placed out of sight. If you suspect a problem with mail theft, contact the Post Office at Griffith Station (in Atwater across from the Library) for zip 90039 or Edendale Station (at the Corner of Alvarado and Glendale) for zip 90026.

If you have had mail stolen, please make a police report and also report the details to the SLRA Hotline. (323) 661-6465.

Rowena Reservoir Project Nears Completion

As you can't help but notice, the Rowena Reservoir site construction project is finally in the last stages of completion. In case you don't know the history of this project, here it is in two sentences (a longer history is elsewhere in the Newsletter). In 1988, with 10 reservoir communities joining to form the Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs on the brink of litigation against the Department of Water & Power (DWP) for replacing the open water of Rowena with a tank in the middle of the drained lake, the DWP offered instead to enter into formal mediation. With great trepidation, the communities agreed.

It was determined that the earthen dam on the Hyperion side of Rowena Reservoir was not seismically safe and the DWP's original proposal to replace the open water with a tank located in the middle of the emptied hole was mediated to be the beautiful garden and water feature that the community can enjoy for years to come. There were dozens of community meetings which included the immediate neighborhood and any others who were interested. The community and the DWP reached consensus that this facility not be open to the public as a public park. While to some this might seem a wasted opportunity, those who live immediately adjacent and within a few blocks decided that the additional burden on the DWP and the neighborhood would have been excessive. By special arrangement, and on special occasions, the DWP may allow special tours of this water storage and delivery system facility. In addition, the surrounding community has agreed to an additional assessment for street lighting. The long-awaited completion date is anticipated to be in October.

SLO Joe Writer Bids Farewell to Echo Park and Northeast Division

Los Angeles Police Department Officer Joe Writer, who has been serving the Echo Park neighborhood and other Northeast Division Communities, including Silver Lake, for over a decade, recently scored first in the Sergeant's exam and has been promoted to a new position in Northridge. All of us in Silver Lake thank Sergeant Writer for his years of dedicated service to our community, congratulate him on his well-deserved promotion, and wish him the best of luck on his new assignment.

Silver Lake Branch Library Update

Maryann Kuk

In the previous issue (April 2000) of this Newsletter, the possibility of a new library branch to serve Silver Lake was reported. To briefly recap, as was reported, it appeared to those of us who attended the January meeting that the south east corner of Alvarado & Glendale Blvd (the car wash), was the pre-selected and pre-approved site for Echo Park II. While it was pointed out to the Library staff that while we didn't begrudge a branch in Echo Park, it just wasn't fair that Echo Park was getting a second library branch before Silver Lake got one. But, knowing that Councilmember Jackie Goldberg wanted the library in Echo Park and we didn't have a prayer without her support, we conceded—graciously—that Echo Park could have their second library branch—goodness knows a community with the density of Echo Park can use another—our point was we didn't want this particular location to preclude locating a branch in Silver Lake the next time money becomes available.

The two of us who attended the Board of Library Commission meeting stated our position just that way. We also requested that the Library staff reconsider their criteria that library branches be placed in busy commercial areas and instead, consider sites adjacent to residential. We pointed out that this corner was so busy with high speed, commuter traffic that no parent would ever allow children to walk to this location unescorted. We also suggested that they consider a kiosk type mini-branch in Silver Lake as an interim solution to people who just use the Atwater & Los Feliz branches as pick up and drop off for ordered library books (www.lapl.org).

We pointed out that this Echo Park location was beyond the reasonable distance by some who go to school at King Middle School and Marshall High School, that seniors without transportation couldn't possible walk to the Alvarado/Glendale Blvd location, but because Ms. Goldberg was wanting it in Echo Park, so be it. It turned out there were some clear title problems in acquiring the car wash and that there was some contamination that would increase the costs (although the car wash owner disputes these claims). To the rescue comes the owner of Peerless Hardware and a small apartment building across the street from the car wash. He is willing to sell, he doesn't think there is contamination. So full speed ahead. Until the next Board meeting when some attendees from Echo Park mentioned

that demolition of the store front and elimination of low cost housing and eviction of tenants was not considered with this site selection. Echo Park was on the short list for "Main Street" restoration funds and this storefront could be rescued. The Board, in their genuine attempt to be thorough and fair, requested that the Library staff once again go out to the neighborhood to obtain consensus.

Fast forward to June 27. That is the postmarked date on the notice received for a July 6 meeting. Let us say the notice was received on June 29—the beginning of what for many turned out to be a long holiday weekend. The Echo Park Historical Society Newsletter had this meeting announcement. What did they know and when did they know it? Why am I not surprised that there was an overwhelming attendance from Echo Park and hardly anyone from Silver Lake at the July 6 meeting. The Library staff did what they were told to do, they held the meeting in Silver Lake (at the Micheltorena school), they did send out notices, but because of the low attendance by residents of Silver Lake, the library staff could say there was overwhelming support for the Echo Park location.

Further update: So in a last ditch effort to try to elicit a promise that this location wouldn't preclude a library in Silver Lake, we attended the July 20 Commission meeting, again graciously conceding a second Echo Park branch, only to discover that the only two sites under consideration, the car wash and Peerless Hardware, both might have contamination problems. (Peerless Hardware is adjacent to the Chevron station and gasoline storage tanks are notorious for leaking). So, it was possible that both locations are contaminated. The question is how much and how much additional money it will take to de-contaminate the sites. So, is a location in Silver Lake on the back burner? Who knows. If you would like to serve on the committee to make sure that Silver Lake gets a library branch sometime, please call Maryann at (323) 665-4145. Without active participation and support from the community, we will never be on the list for a branch. We need just 2 or 3 people to work on this.



Can We Party on Your Block?

Catherine Moyers

As we go to press, the 4th Annual Block Party is yet to happen. But due to bulk mail and the Labor Day Holiday, this newsletter will get to you after the event (held Sunday, September 17th). This year brought the refreshing addition to the Block Party Committee of Mike Hain, leader of the local Boy Scout troop, and the participation of some of his scouts. The party was held on the block of Tesla between Rokeby and Armstrong, which includes Mike's house. In past years the party was held on Rokeby and Kenilworth Streets. If you would like the party to be on your block next year, and have willing neighbors, give us a call. Then all you would need to do is provide extension cords, a place to store tables and chairs provided by the City, and a cool place to store cakes for the cake walk. Ask Lloyd and Joyce Peyton what it takes. They were the "host house" two years in a row when the party was held on Rokeby in front of their house.

While it hasn't happened yet, I feel safe in thanking certain people that made (are making) the event a success for another year. First, thanks to the office of Councilmember Jackie Goldberg for ar-

ranging the street closure once again. And to talented musician Guillermo Bordarampe for once again arranging the sound system and providing lively music that adds to the festive air of the party. Genevieve Hain is providing children's songs for the first time at this event, with her group Hugs & Kisses. And as there is a raffle and cake walk in the works, thanks go to all the local businesses who contributed to those efforts (More on those names later). Each year brings out a variety of tasty treats to this community potluck, and thanks go to those people who turn up year after year with delicious dishes to sample. As they drop by every year, it is probably safe to thank the local Police Department and Fire Department for coming out, especially for the big red fire truck that kids love to crawl through. For the fourth year in a row the Block Party Committee is Catherine Moyers, Todd Wexman and Gail Crosby.

“Mosswood” Don Wood

KIM KRALJ and DEE JOHNSON and their son EVAN, who is the first child to live here, would like to introduce you to their home of four years — “MOSSWOOD” — which they are lovingly renewing.

After many, many long hours searching for the “right” colors to best reflect the “craftsman” feeling that they wanted to achieve, they and the very experienced PEGGY MC CLOUD, owner and “hands-on” manager of “JILL OF ALL TRADES (I can honestly say this is because Peggy and her very expert and dedicated staff painted my home last year) decided on the following four colors: the main house stucco is “Texas Leather”; shingles are “Mid-Summer’s Night”; gutters and other details are “Army Green”; window trim is “Primer-Rusty Metal”. *Feng Shue* dictates that the front door remain red. This change from the original white, turquoise and red blends in with the beauty of the tree-covered lots on which this home is located. Kim and Dee were looking for an area that was secluded, a bit

rustic...the land has many native and also some rare imported trees.... and yet a peaceful location. They found all of this on the 1900 block of Micheltorena Street.

When walking by this home, one has a feeling of a rather modest, small home until, when you thought you should be past it, you aren’t yet. This 8400 square feet, six bedroom home with large living spaces, wide halls, two fireplaces and understated elegance was commissioned by, it is said, ALMA ESTELLE LLOYD, heir to the Lloyd’s of London family and principal patron of the Theosophical Society. The architect she chose was B.J. BLOSER. Building commenced in 1948. Shortly after building began, Ms. Lloyd visited the site, didn’t like what she saw, and insisted that everything be demolished and rebuilt. She was, indeed, a most eccentric individual. Kim and Dee want to preserve what they felt when first encountering the exceptional Silver Lake neighborhood — beauty, peace, tranquility plus stability. WE APPLAUD YOU!

Riverside Drive — 10 Years of Stalling

Maryann Kuk, Terry Riemer, Don Johnson

And, unfortunately, it will continue. Unless the City Attorney takes this case seriously. But, here is some background. I’ll just go back 10 years. This building site (on Riverside Dr. between Fletcher and Glendale Blvd.) was part of the apartment building project that went into foreclosure in about 1991. The current owner, Sam Menlo, bought it and attempted to build on the site in about 1993, but in order to make the project “pencil” he needed a “density bonus” (93 units) vs. what the Code allowed (54 units). For the bonus, he needed the support of the City Councilmember, Jackie Goldberg. Her staff organized meetings and the developer presented proposals. The best that these developers could offer was a 25 foot high (almost three stories high) 900 foot long wall (yes that is three football fields) along the street to hold the soil and the bigger buildings. And, they wanted to build the least-attractive-to-tenants kind of building called a “double gang” hall.

(Continued on Page 8See “Riverside”)

Why is it that the City of Los Angeles seems determined to homogenize and Moreno Valley-ize our neighborhood? Why is it that in some areas of the city great old buildings are cherished, honored, updated, adapted for re-use, but that in our part of the City, they are abused, ignored, allowed to become derelict without any existing code enforcement to the point that they either burn down (Pan Pacific Auditorium) and are razed with developers gleefully rubbing their hands together “good riddance to bad rubbish and bah on the community.”

I attended the meeting downtown that was to be the final hearing after the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on May 26. Even though the developer bused in supporters and offered them free Burger King burgers, those of us in favor of adaptive re-use of Van de Kamps, were equal in numbers. Even though these hearings are held mid-day, mid-week and parking costs a lot of money, \$17! Even though most of the *Save Van de Kamps* group work full time and had to take time off from work to attend. Even though the final EIR arrived only 7 days before the hearing. Even though the EIR cover memo from the City did not mention the hearing date, time or place.

Once again, I left feeling depressed. The deck was stacked, the hearing officer was just going through the motions, the developer had high-priced consultants, the owner pled poverty, hardship and effort to do his best. The EIR was prepared for/by Home Base. Home Base has disappeared and the developers slipped in another tenant, Loew’s. What is wrong with this picture? A lot. Does CEQA allow that sort of shuffle?

Then came the final meeting in front of the newly installed Planning Commission (on August 10). Once again, the developer bussed in supporters and once again about 25 of the die-hard opposers took time off work and attended. In my heart I was sick. Sick that the newly appointed Area Planning Commission had turned down the wonderful Cornfield pro-

Van de Kamps Update

Maryann Kuk

posal for a mixed use of that degraded land along the LA River the previous week. Sick that it was likely that the developers of this site had gotten to the same City people who like to dump big warehouses in our neighborhood, but wouldn’t dream of foisting this type of structure in the “better” neighborhoods. Sick of writing yet another letter to what I thought was deaf ears. The hours, oh the hours.

This hearing was in front of the Planning Commission. The final deciders. It started out with the newly-appointed Commissioners fumbling and bumbling along and asking the question—“just what is our role here today?” Scary. But, fortunately, one of the first opposers to speak was Ken Bernstein of the LA Conservancy who was very patient, articulate and clear that the Commission could turn down the proposed project if they didn’t feel that the community would be better off with than without it.

And, much to my utter surprise, shock and happiness, that is just what the Commission did. Unanimously. A few days later, Loew’s also withdrew their offer to be tenant. So, the work really begins now. The community must approach the owner and get his support for what we want. There are dozens of proposals. For example, State Senator Polanco has committed \$3 million toward the possibility of a college campus, a Hollywood developer who has successfully recycled buildings just like this one into office suites for film and television industry-types. He also thought if he could put it together, he would add a small bakery as homage to Van de Kamps. The LAUSD is desperate for sites. So, we need to make sure that this historic and unique building doesn’t fall to fire like the Pan Pacific and that we secure a buyer with vision and integrity who really supports the community. If you’d like to work on this committee, call Maryann at (323) 665-4145.

Riverside.... Continued from page 7

Our community, Silver Lake, is known world-wide for having the most significant collection of residential architecture in Los Angeles. Why is it so difficult to convince developers that building something interesting and innovative would be even more profitable than the usual big stucco box?

But, I digress. This design was turned down and that was the last we heard from him. He continued to own the site, but didn't care for it unless a complaint was made and the City threatened him. One of our members spent about 40 hours trying to get to the bottom of why he is allowed to ignore existing Code and let the site be so unsightly. She spent 40 hours over about 6 weeks and finally threw in the towel. Then, we heard through the grapevine that the owner had been cited in November 1999 and, with letters and pictures, the hearing officer told Mr. Menlo he had to comply. But, because of the Northridge earthquake, buildings Code changed again and he couldn't just dust off the old plans. Once again, Mr. Menlo failed to meet the City's deadlines for submitting plans and getting permits. Mr. Menlo requested a year's extension. The Building & Safety Commission said "no" after hearing from Councilmember Jackie Goldberg and seeing the pictures of the site. So, here it is September and nothing has happened. Mr. Menlo will be arraigned in a couple of weeks. If he pleads "not guilty" there will be a trial. The civil court calendar is busy. It might be January 2001 before a court date. In the meantime, we are stuck with his mess. We don't want Mr. Menlo to go to jail. We want Mr. Menlo to do what the Los Angeles City Code already obligates him to do. Restore the site to its original state. Must we wait another 10 years? Would this happen in Brentwood?

Community Calendar

Modernist Silver Lake 2000. Architectural House Tour sponsored by the Committee to Save Silver Lake's Reservoir. Tickets are \$50 for Sunday House Tour; \$125 for House Tour plus Cocktail Reception.

Sat. Oct. 21 7 pm Donor's Cocktail reception at Silvertop, designed by Lautner.

Sun. Oct. 22 9 am -5 pm House tours of homes by Schindler, Neutra, and Ain.

For more information and tickets (213) 612-5271.

Sat. Sept. 23 A low cost animal clinic is held at the Silver Lake Dog Park twice each month in the main Dog Park from 6:00 to 7:00 pm. The Silver Lake Dog Park is located at 1850 Silver Lake Blvd. Los Angeles,

90039 - at the base of the Silver Lake Reservoir. Info: Edward Skaats-skaats@earthlink.net

*Check the Silver Lake website at
<http://www.silverlake.org>
for more events*