



Valley Glen Voice

Volume 4, Issue 14

www.valleyglen.org

Summer 2005

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Valley Glen - A Decade of Progress

— Peer Ghent

As I looked around the crowd at our June 21st general meeting, I was reminded about how far we have come in the last ten years. From its beginnings as a small neighborhood watch group in the mid-90s, Valley Glen has emerged as a vibrant community that is attracting new families to its neighborhoods. Many of those new families were “first timers” at our meeting.

I have lived in Valley Glen for 18 years and have never seen as much new investment as is going on today. Homeowners are remodeling, new stores are opening and investment properties are being upgraded. Public investment includes the Orange Line, which is due to open in October, and the Tujunga Wash Beautification Project, which should be finished next spring.

The Orange Line busway linking the North Hollywood subway station with Warner Center has been a controversial project. While it will be some time be-

fore we’ll know whether it will be completely successful, there are some benefits that seem clear: 1) the entire right-of-way is being landscaped with over 900,000 drought resistant plants and 4,000 new trees, 2) there is a bikeway along the entire route, which is already being used by cyclists, and 3) it offers easy access to the entire Metro transit system.

The big news for Valley Glen is that we have two stations, one named *Valley College* and the other named *Woodman / Valley Glen*. Valley Glen was included in the station name as the result of the hard work of our Board lobbying with Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky. Many thanks to Zev!

We ask you to support and be a part of the momentum. Visit our website for the latest news and to learn how you can participate at www.valleyglen.org. Join us at our next general meeting on August 16th and at our annual picnic on October 9th.

Mayor Villaraigosa Makes Impromptu Visit To Valley Glen

— Mickey Jannol

Valley Glen residents who participated with senior lead officer (SLO) Darrel Davis in the *Walk for Safe Streets* on July 8th were pleasantly surprised to see the new Mayor and his staff. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa explained that he had been making the rounds at the Van Nuys Police Station, heard about the event and wanted to see how Valley Gleners use innovative ways to promote public safety. The Mayor addressed a group of 20 dedicated residents on how he was excited to see this kind of grass roots activity.

The Mayor aims to get out to all parts of the Valley to better understand the needs of the Valley.

Valley Glen residents, Council District 2 Field Deputy Pat Davenport and retired Field Deputy Candy Campbell, along with Block Captains

from both Valley Glen and Van Nuys, LAPD Van Nuys Bike Patrol and other officers met with SLO Davis behind Walgreen’s, then



walked along Fulton Avenue between Victory and Kittridge to meet neighbors and hand out flyers containing useful public safety information. If your neighborhood is interested in a *Walk for Safe Streets*, please contact our website at www.valleyglen.org for more information.

The Great Wall of Los Angeles (The Longest Mural In the World) — Francisco Gonzalez Nava

The Great Wall was already the longest mural in existence after the summer of 1976, when a team of 80 youths referred by the criminal justice department, ten artists and five historians collaborated under the direction of Chicana artist Judith Francisco Baca to paint 1,000 feet of California history from the days of dinosaurs to 1910 in the Tujunga Wash in the San Fernando Valley. But Baca, Artistic Director and Co-Founder of SPARC (The Social and Public Art Resource Center), with a history of large collaborative mural projects behind her, was not ready to stop at 1910. Mural makers worked in the wash again in the summers of 1978, 1980, 1981 and 1983. Each year they added 350 feet and a decade of history seen from the viewpoint of California ethnic groups; their contributions and struggles to overcome obstacles. To date, the length of the Great Wall totals 2,435 feet, and the number of participating youths has reached 215.

Like the rivers that run through our city, racial relations have deeply divided this place we call home, giving ignorance and racism a clear channel in which to flow. The Great Wall counteracts this problem, creating unity and understanding, partly through collaboration amongst diverse communities and reflecting racial harmony. But this monument is fading away. There remain decades of history to be documented through the completion of the second half-mile of the mural, which will tell the history of California from 1950 to the future. Soon to be more than 30 years old, the paint on the mural is thinning and the

images are losing their luster.

The Great Wall was created through community effort and restoring the work will also be a community effort. It is expected to take \$1.5 million to fund the restoration and completion phases of the mural. With a unified community effort, restoring the mural is definitely attainable.

A professional conservator, Nathan Zackheim & Associates, hired by SPARC, will visit the mural in July 2005 and SPARC will follow-up with a community restoration effort this summer that will include teams of youth and artist specialists in the field of mural restoration. Don't be surprised when you see Zackheim & Associates working on the mural with cleaning agents and treatments to reattach the loosening paint to the wall. They are preparing the surfaces for repainting and brightening. The coatings alone should bring back much of the color on the newer sections. We plan to recruit new teams of young people to work on the first 1,000 feet. This will likely occur next summer after all the preparatory work has been completed.

But we need your help to make this happen. Please consider contributing to the future of Los Angeles [and Valley Glen] by making monetary contributions or volunteer for The Great Wall Restoration Project. Every effort is needed and appreciated. For further info, please visit www.sparcmurals.org or contact me at 310/822-9560 ext. 10, Francisco@sparcmurals.org.



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Improving Valley Glen—It's the Law!

— Michael Randall

Imagine a Valley Glen with shopping that consists of bail bond brokers, Payday loan stores, massage parlors, adult arcades, strip clubs, swap meet and second hand stores, and throw in used car lots and auto repair shops on our most visible corners. Want to go for a walk? Now ask yourself – what other type of business would select a location next door to the massage parlor, etc.?

Imagine these same streets lined with ugly pull-down metal storefronts all locked up at night; add outside immovable bars on all the store windows. The result would be a town that looks unsafe and disreputable. Who would choose to invest here? Who would choose to purchase your home (at these prices!) if this trend were to continue?

This could have been the future of Valley Glen. However, the future will be better here because a law known unofficially as *The Valley Glen Q's Zoning Ordinance* says: no more of this in our community. The law took effect in 2001 after a long petition drive, public meetings, business property owner notification and required legal process. And the law is beginning to work.

A few examples of enforcements creating positive changes are as follows: a massage parlor opened at Whitsett and Oxnard and was compelled to close because of the law. It was replaced by a beauty parlor. Another massage parlor at Victory and Fulton was removed and replaced by a medical business. A new Payday Loan was prevented from opening on Victory, and a Nextel store and a flower shop have opened there instead. A mix of retail businesses that offer more to our residents is one goal. Another section of the law emphasizes the appearance of our businesses and commercial streets. This includes standards concerning storefronts, signs, fences and landscaping in commercial areas.

The law prohibits installation of exterior bars and “cages” outside stores and, as before, all devices and signs must have permits to be considered legal. Certain types of signs cannot be erected, such as pole signs, billboards; signs on fences, sidewalks and freestanding walls. Examples of enforcement are a row of exterior store window barricades was removed at Victory between Fulton and Woodman allowing you to see the window displays. In addition, a new pole sign was removed near Coldwater at a medical clinic, improving the appearance.

This is a non-technical and incomplete discussion of our Valley Glen Q' s (Permanent Qualifications) law. One important excerpt of our law is “uses shall be limited to those uses first permitted in the C1.5 Zone.” The City provides a long list of the types of business that are permitted in a C1.5 zone, a zone intended for neighborhood serving businesses often near residences. That describes Valley Glen well.

More details can be found at the Association' s website at www.valleyglen.org under “Beautification.” Please visit the site.

If you are encouraged by all this, be cautiously encouraged. There are 12 or so commercial intersections in all of Valley Glen. Our businesses are at or near each corner. Seeing them improve will visibly improve all of Valley Glen. Yet the law doesn' t work by itself and the City has many priorities. Enforcement has been “slow” and does not inspire confidence. Only with the active involvement of our community organizations, providing the motivation and follow up, will the City stay on the ball. Our Q' s zoning law is the only law intended specifically to improve Valley Glen. If it is important to you, it will be important to them.

Valley Glen Neighborhood Association merchandise is available at www.valleyglenstore.com

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Wendy Greuel Supports Erwin St. Elementary — Soraya Dosaj

We are fortunate to be in L.A. City Council District 2 with Wendy Greuel as our councilmember. Once again she has demonstrated her support of local public schools. Erwin St. Elementary school was the beneficiary of \$1,000 worth of library books, thanks to Ms. Greuel and Elaine De Leon, her Special Projects Deputy. This donation is especially appreciated in this time of budget cuts.



A total of 21 schools will be receiving books, thanks to Councilmember Greuel. Eleven elementary schools were slated for the first donations, with 10 more to benefit later. LAUSD's Library Services department developed lists of titles for the schools. District vendor Mook and Blanchard will be completing the orders.

Sponsorship - Your sponsorship pays for this newsletter, graffiti abatement, public plantings, an annual picnic, meetings and more. If you would like to become a sponsor, contact Mickey Jannol, our treasurer, at jannol6@aol.com or mail your contributions to PMB 283, 13659 Victory Blvd., Valley Glen, CA 91401. Thank you for supporting the VGNA.

Help reduce air pollution by calling the South Coast Air Quality Management District when you see smoking vehicles. It's easy! Just call 1-800-CUT-SMOG. The operator will ask you for the license and make of the vehicle, as well as location, date and time seen.

Newsrack Ordinance to Clean Up our Sidewalks

— Maricela Gomez, legislative deputy, CD2

Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) ordinance 42.00 governs the type and placement of newsracks. The Bureau of Street Services, Street Use Division (BOSS) will be in charge of implementing and enforcing this program. Chief Inspector Garry Harris can answer questions regarding the implementation. The new rules will be phased in throughout the City.

PHASE 1

Publishers will have to submit an application with related fees for every newsrack they have in the City. This phase has already begun. After the first 30 days (late May 2005) BOSS will begin to tag for removal those newsracks that do not have an application on file. This will happen Citywide.

PHASE 2 - South Valley

BOSS will be mapping and bar coding the legal newsracks. This means newsracks will be moved so that they are in compliance with the location specifics. Once the newsracks are in a legal location, they will be bar coded and GIS mapped, so that BOSS can track the publisher and their associated newsrack. This process will take approximately three months to complete.

ENFORCEMENT

If constituents notice any NEW racks being placed that are not ivy green, etc., they can report it to Street Use by calling 3-1-1 or 213-473-3711. If possible, take a picture or include written documentation.

As a long term goal, BOSS will merge the GIS info with Navigate LA, so that constituents can see if "X" newsrack at 1111 Ventura Blvd. is permitted. That will empower constituents as well as save our City forces a lot of time!

We are confident a great number of racks will be removed as part of this program. A number of publishers will not want to pay the fees and associated insurance requirements. Plus the location requirements are pretty strict.

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CENTURY 21 · COAST TO COAST

An Alternate Opinion — Shelley Nathanson

A gentle rebuttal to the article on Mansionization (Spring 2005)— I was hoping after the 1994 Northridge Earthquake that many of the newer transplants to the Southern California lifestyle would be leaving our fair city for what they would deem safer pastures, and we would once again return to the orange groves and wide open spaces that so generously dotted our landscape in the 50's and 60's... then I woke up!

Progress is a fact of life that won't be stopped. One must accept the fact that change will happen. In the 100 years it has taken Los Angeles to grow to this number of residents, the Census Bureau has determined it will only take another 30 years to double the population.

There are definite neighborhoods in this city that need to be preserved — Craftsman homes, homes by Greene and Greene, designs by Richard Neutra, Wallace Neff and other known architects — homes that have withstood the test of time for a hundred years.

But part of the greatness of America is that we are free to do and say as we please, including loudly announcing our likes and dislikes. We can change our landscaping, paint our houses a color we like, add a room, even add a second floor. We should feel good that one of our residents has chosen to upgrade our area by constructing million dollar homes.

When my partner and I first moved into Valley Glen, we were concerned that some of the area north of here, with many unkempt yards and homes, would eventually find its way south of Victory. Thanks to property values going up, solidified by the new construction of million dollar homes, that possibility is pretty distant. Now it's up to us to encourage our neighbors to keep up the neat appearance we love to look at as we walk through our tree-lined streets.

Reader's Poll —We're searching for the best of Valley Glen. Mail or e-mail your votes for your favorite Valley Glen restaurant, dry cleaners, florist, coffee shop, pizza, place to take a walk, bakery, etc.

Keep in Touch - Mail submissions to Valley Glen Voice, PMB 283, 13659 Victory Blvd., Valley Glen, CA 91401, or e-mail soraya_d@sbcglobal.net. Letters and columns are the personal opinions of the writers. We reserve the right to edit.

Letters to the Editor

Kudos to Linda Coates for her article on the lack of responsibility of some Grant High School students ("Slow Down and Smell the Roses," Spring 2005). It hit the mark! A temporary solution to the illegal traffic problems would be the assignment of a motorcycle police officer on Ethel at Oxnard between 7:30 am to 8:15 am and 3:00 pm to 3:30 pm.

Mr. & Mrs. Denly Ford
Area A

Editor's Note: Work has now begun to install speed humps along Ethel Avenue north of Oxnard Street.

I am concerned about the mansionization issue for two reasons: I work in the construction industry and appreciate the contribution of that industry to our economy and I regret the intolerance that our community is demonstrating for the taste of others.

I don't think anyone pays hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy an "ugly box." In response to the person who objected to the loss of privacy, I would be willing to bet that no one is happy to pay nearly a million dollars for a luxury home, only to have a view into their neighbor's yard, but the skyrocketing cost of housing requires these tradeoffs.

I support our association's efforts to curb graffiti and support business, but I oppose the recent trend toward maintaining the status quo by censoring others. Like it or not, those boxy mini-mansions represent the fulfillment of the dream of homeownership for these new neighbors and I hope that one day, Valley Glen will embrace them too.

Gizella Czene - Area A





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Praise for Officer Davis — Sabrina Johnson

I heard about Officer Darrell Davis before I ever met him. My friend and neighbor told me how Officer Davis had helped her family and their neighbors with incidents of homeless people living in their cars, and other problems that affect the quality of one's life. She told me he: (1) gave her his cell phone number and said to call him at any time; (2) followed up daily on problems until they were no longer problems; and (3) sincerely desired to solve troublesome situations (or at least improve them) and make life better for everyone involved – and he did just that!

One day my cul-de-sac was blocked off due to a pipe bomb scare. This "scare" alarmed me into action. I called the Van Nuys Police Department and spoke with a volunteer at the Community Desk who referred me to our Watch Commander, Officer Davis. I left a message for Officer Davis and he returned my call the next day. I told him how I was in a panic wondering if there were any more pipe bombs that I would have to worry about. What I wanted was peace of mind, and that was what I got.

Officer Davis patiently listened and said he would do some research. He called back the next day, told me exactly what happened and answered all of my questions. We had several phone conversations and one meeting in person, during which we talked about initiating a Neighborhood Watch meeting. Officer Davis told me that not only would he be there to conduct the meeting and answer questions about

the situation, but he would also ask Councilperson Wendy Greuel's deputy, Patricia Davenport, to attend. She is another public servant who deserves much praise and gratitude for all her good work.

The meeting was tense at first, but both Officer Davis and Deputy Davenport put the situation into perspective, i.e., these things happen (someone finds a hand grenade in their garage that their grandfather stored away after serving in WWII, or a teenager experiments with making a pipe bomb) and they assured us that it was not something that needed a Code Orange alert. By the end of the meeting, everyone in attendance came to agreement on issues that concerned the neighborhood in general: the need for a traffic signal at Victory and Ranchito, how to deal with homeless people living in cars, parking problems and large bulky items left at curbs. I believe most people considered it a successful meeting.

Officer Davis worked it so that what could have easily become a tense meeting full of accusations and finger-pointing, instead became a meeting where we all made the resolution to work together to improve our neighborhood. During the meeting I observed how Officer Davis made sure that no one was alienated and no one felt ostracized. He treated everyone with respect and dignity and he asked that everyone else treat their neighbors in the same manner. After the meeting, I once again felt truly blessed to live in my little hamlet called Valley Glen, with our Watch Commander Officer Davis at the helm.

Jewish Family Service Adult Day Health Care Center

— Devorah Teyer

The Jewish Family Service (JFS) Adult Day Health Care Center in Valley Glen opened its doors in 1985, when JFS recognized a burgeoning need for medical and social services for younger and older disabled adults and elderly individuals in the San Fernando Valley. The JFS ADHC was one of the first six Centers of its kind in the city of Los Angeles and the year it opened, was one of only 39 such facilities across the state. Today the JFS ADHC is open 5 days a week, Monday–Friday, accommodating up to sixty participants at its site located at 12817 Victory Boulevard.

Serving the unique needs of frail elders and other adults with physical or mental disabilities, the Center provides daily meals, transportation costs to and from the Center and a wide range of services. The JFS ADHC offers

skilled nursing care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, nutrition consultation, counseling, recreation and social activities in a stimulating environment where participants feel welcomed and secure. The regular use of these health and social services can help reduce the risk of hospitalization and nursing home placement and provides a much-needed respite for family members caring for loved ones.

The Center has highly experienced staff members providing therapeutic services. Recreational therapy includes active games, gardening, art therapy, pet visits, musical entertainment, Tai Chi, intergenerational programs, and much more! Go for a visit and see. Call the Center at 818-766-0397 and ask for Devorah Teyer, Program Director. Medi-Cal accepted or ask about a scholarship.

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2005

ERWIN ST. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM, 13400 ERWIN STREET, 7:00 PM