Vote on VGNA Proposed Amended Bylaws

The December Town Hall will be an important event for our Association as the VGNA Board presents proposed Amended Bylaws for approval by the membership. Our bylaws, last amended in 2008, are overdue for an overhaul. The bylaws should reflect how we actually do business, and comply with the California Corporations Code. Finally, we must add specific provisions to qualify for tax-exempt status under IRC §501(c)(3).

We will post the Proposed Amended Bylaw on the VGNA website at: www.valleyglen.org/proposed-amended-bylaws/ for review before we vote at the upcoming next Town Hall. We’ll send an email blast with the link. Although the document is not a fun read, we hope that the membership will thoroughly review the document and contact us with question or comments.

Under the current bylaws, we can only amend by a two-thirds majority vote of members present at a regularly scheduled members’ meeting. We are excited about getting our internal processes squared away, and want you all to know what we plan. Please come out and be counted!

About a year ago, we looked at information available to homeowners contemplating hiring a contractor for home improvement work. We want to provide more information about California law regulating home improvement contracts. Elements of the Contractors License Law govern transactions between a homeowner and a contractor, in order to minimize homeowner risk through mandatory notices and required content in home improvement contracts. Unfortunately, many contractors fail to provide contracts that comply with the law because they are unaware of the law’s requirements.

In December, we’ll post an article on the VGNA website describing the risks in a home improvement project and how the law helps homeowners manage those risks. If you’re planning a home improvement project, you need to know what the law says your contract must contain. Please take a look! You just might save some money and avoid some serious frustration.
Message from the President

I might be a new face to some of you, but the reality is, I have been hard at work behind the scenes for the VGNA for many years. Now I am front and center of our dynamic, proud community. I am humbled to represent you.

Over the past few years, the VGNA set some impressive objectives. For the most part, we have succeeded! We have a budget that is running in the black. Our newsletter is self-sufficient, attracting new advertisers, and positive feedback is up. Social media engagement continues to rise as well as our reputation in the neighborhood. This is, in no small part, thanks to the hands-on activities such as the “Clean Team” and our “Town Hall” meetings.

All these achievements I had a hand in, but it was one hand in the company of many hands. We have a great dedicated group of skilled, motivated volunteers that helps bring about positive change in our community and I just happen to be one of them.

What you should expect from me is a steadfast commitment to continue to refine the underpinnings of our corporate entity and non-profit viability. We will continue to make progress on the initiatives we have started. They are great activities for our neighborhood and really do make a difference. There are two keys things that I want to improve upon. The first is volunteerism. We need more skilled hands to do the many jobs that we need to do to make Valley Glen a better place to live. If you can help us, please step up. We need you!

The second is revenue generation. We are running in the black as mentioned, but we are not raising enough money to support the many worthy opportunities that exist locally. We are in the process of setting modest financial goals to help our local teachers defray some of their out-of-pocket expenses, the “Helping Hands” project at LAVC, etc. Fundraisers that bring us together as a community are in the mix as well.

If you believe as we do, that these endeavors are beneficial to the betterment of our neighborhood, and would like to help us reach our goals, please join us.

In closing, I would be remiss by not mentioning my predecessor Bruce Gaims and all the selfless, hard work he put into bringing the VGNA to where we are today. He had a huge vision only equaled by his boundless energy. We all owe him a big thank you! ■

I’d like to hear from you. Please feel free to email me at: richardrossi@vgna.org

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I AM JANE POOLE

Valley Glen, meet Jane Poole, tireless education advocate, mother, wife, and passionate food bank volunteer.

That’s Jane second from the right, in a favorite family photo, taken at a pop-up museum. Doug, her husband, is on the far right. The two met in 1990. Jane was living in New York, working for an ad agency and a commercial shoot took her to the Caribbean for a month where she worked with a Prop Master named Doug. They got along, but when the project ended Jane went back to work in New York and Doug returned to L.A.

A colleague, who’d seen the chemistry between them, prodded her to call Doug. But Jane wasn’t comfortable doing that - at least not before a couple of margaritas. When she did call, they talked for two hours. And then talked again just about every day for the next two months. A trip to Hawaii followed and shortly after that, a proposal. When they decided to get married they’d only been face to face for a total of 18 days. It seems to have worked out pretty well - they’ve been married for 28 years now!

In 1991 they bought their dream house, a Mellenthin Byrd house, in Valley Glen (then Van Nuys) where they are to this day. Jane works as the Director of Christian Education for Church of the Chimes (near Hazeltreen & Magnolia), Doug still works as a Prop Master, and their two children, both born in Valley Glen, are now 25 and 19. But Jane’s “side passion” is her work with the North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry. It’s easy to see why - the place is a nexus for community members helping community members.

Its mission is simple: Help those in need. They distribute approximately 260 bags of food each week. The bags go to the homeless (including a growing senior homeless population) and those who are living paycheck to paycheck and can’t afford to feed their families.

The pantry is supported by a coalition of 13 churches and synagogues, including, Temple Beth Hillel, First Christian Church and Church of the Chimes. It’s supported by a far-reaching informal network of people, schools, and organizations. Donations come if from:

- Churches and homes with gardens
- Food Forward (a group that collects surplus produce from homeowners & farmers markets)
- The Bagel Brigade, a quiet group of men and women who collect end-of-the-day bread and rolls from a variety of stores
- Those brown shopping bags that show up on your doorstep in the spring each year: the ones that (you hopefully fill with food) and the post office collects. Those go to the Interfaith Food Pantry. (Now you know.)

If you’re so inclined you can donate food, or time (to pack bags or distribute), or even make a small monetary gift. A $10 donation can provide the protein portion for 10 food bags. That’s protein for 10 families. Students can earn service hours as well. ■

Want more information? www.nhifp.org
Please Help the VGNA by Getting Involved!

In 1992 a group of community-aware residents created an all-volunteer service organization that would become the Valley Glen Neighborhood Association, Inc. The VGNA’s mission is to enrich lives in Valley Glen “any which way we can.”

The VGNA accomplishes its mission through several core activities:

- Valley Glen Voice - our newsletter reflecting and informing the community
- Town Halls - quarterly meetings providing a forum to build community cohesion, share ideas and inform about a wide spectrum of public issues
- Clean Team - our monthly beautification activities that target “blight sites”. We clean up trash, clear weeds and scrub, and report illegal dumping to the City’s 311 service for pickup

Our expanded activities will include support for local schools, for arts and entertainment, and public safety enhancement in our community through programs such as RYLAN and Neighborhood Watch.

Obviously, our activities and initiatives require resources—both people and dollars.

Our current funding comes from newsletter advertising, donations, and membership dues. The advertising revenue goes to defray Valley Glen Voice printing costs. Other administrative needs, government fees, liability insurance etc. rely on donations and membership fees.

Can you help the VGNA meet its resources needs and accomplish the mission?

- Volunteer. See the opportunities in the Membership Application below.
- Become a member. Whether a Sponsoring or Business Member your annual membership dues are crucial to our viability and ability to serve the community.

Please fill out the application below and mail it with your membership fee check to Valley Glen Neighborhood Association, 13300 Victory Blvd., Box 385 Valley Glen, CA 91401. Thank you!
LAVC Fine and Performing Arts
Calendar of Events:
http://www.lavc.edu/Master-calendar/Arts.aspx

Upcoming at LAVC Art Gallery:
All events at the LAVC Art Gallery are free and open to the public.
September 19-December 6, 2018
"tautline" Art Exhibition
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Location: Art (ART) Gallery
The LAVC Art Gallery is presenting a new project by Karl Burkheimer.

Music Events:
Friday, November 30, 12:00 PM
LAVC Guitarists and Community
Location: Music (M) Recital Hall 106

Sunday, December 2, 7:00 PM
LAVC College Choir and Chamber Singers
“Wonder - Songs of Hope and Healing”
Location: Music (M) Recital Hall 106

Tuesday, December 4, 11:20 AM
Music 250 Performance Workshop Concert 1 of 2
Location: Music (M) Recital Hall 106

Wednesday, December 5, 1:30 PM
LAVC Small Combos
Location: Music (M) - Music Instrumental Room (112)

Thursday, December 6, 11:20 AM
Music 250 Performance Workshop Concert 2 of 2
Location: Music (M) Recital Hall 106

Saturday, December 8, 7:00 PM
LAVC Holiday Concert
Location: Theater Arts (TA) Main Stage Theater

Attend the VGNA Town Hall
Dec. 11, 2018
Meeting Location:
Los Angeles Valley College
A sincere thanks to the generosity and support of LAVC President Dr. Erika Endrijonas and her staff for making a home for our Town Hall meetings:
LAVC, S800 Fulton Avenue,
Administrative & Career Adv Building
Second Floor, Room 2505
6:30 pm Meet & Greet
7:00 pm Start
Please visit www.valleynln.org/lavc-map to view and download the LAVC map and meeting location.

May the New Year Bring You and Yours Health, Wealth and Happiness!
“Think Linda Carreon!”
Linda Carreon
“1 Carry On while others quit!”
Realtor® CalBRE# 00569297
(818) 406-1543
Linda@LindaCarreon.com

LAVC Fine and Performing Arts Calendar of Events:
http://www.lavc.edu/Master-calendar/Arts.aspx
Dear Neighbor,

Please join your neighbors for a disaster preparedness and planning meeting for our block. This is a free service offered by the city of L.A.- there is no cost.

After a large earthquake we may be on our own for 7 - 14 days. If we have a plan we'll be better prepared to work together & take care of ourselves.

Crisanta Gonzalez, Emergency Management Coordinator, is going to lead a 90-min meeting for our block that will help us "Map our Neighborhood". This is part of LA city’s "RYLAN" (Ready Your LA Neighborhood) program.

What will happen during the 90-min. meeting? We will:

• Learn a 9-step plan for what to do in the first hour after an earthquake (Like responding to injuries, deciding whether to turn the gas off ...)
• Identify assets on our block (who knows first aid, has equipment to share)
• Identify individuals who may need assistance (seniors, disabled, children)
• Set a meeting place from which we can coordinate our efforts

Have You MAPPED YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

“Nobody’s coming for 14 days!”

Here are some not so fun facts:

• 4.4 million - the population of LA City
• 6 million - the number of people in the city during the day
• 13,000 - the number of first responders (includes those who are sleeping)

In the event of a major disaster, such as an earthquake, we need to be self-sufficient for up to two weeks. That was the message we heard at our September VGNA Town Hall.

Crisanta Gonzales from the LA city Department of Emergency Preparedness gave a presentation on RYLAN (Ready Your LA Neighborhood). It’s a robust and FREE program. One its main goals is to Map Your Neighborhood - that is to prepare each block to work together to survive the days following a disaster. It offers a concrete, 9-step, prioritized plan for what to do within the first hour following an earthquake.

Here’s a flyer you can use to communicate with your neighbors to let them know:

• What the meeting is about
• Where it will be held
• The Date
• The Time
• Who to contact with questions

Gary Gell, Music Space owner & VG resident

“I was surprised at how little I knew and what we could do as a community to cope best with a disaster. Our block meeting also gave me a better sense of security for me and my family having the plan we drafted and can act on.”

How to Set Up a 90-min ‘Map Your Neighborhood’ Meeting

1. Identify your “block” (about 15 - 20 houses, or your apartment building*)
2. Find a place (a driveway with folding chairs works fine).
3. Contact Crisanta Gonzalez to find some dates and times she is available to lead the meeting
   • Call: 213-505-5467, or
   • Email: crisanta.gonzalez@lacity.org
4. Contact a few neighbors to identify which of those dates and times work best.
5. Confirm the date and time for your meeting with Crisanta.

* If you have questions about how large your block should be, contact Crisanta Gonzalez for guidance.

When and Where? Questions? Contact/RSPV

For more here’s a video on RYLAN: http://www.emergency.lacity.org/rylan
“There are two kinds of typical food in Argentina: BBQ and Empanadas. In Argentina we eat everything from the horns to the tail - the whole cow!” says Francisca Reynoso. “I’m not going to give you a BBQ recipe - I don’t eat that way anymore.” Francisca arrived in LA in 1974. She came to join her mother and to learn English, which she did, becoming a bilingual teacher for LAUSD. She’s been a resident of Valley Glen since she and her husband, who has since passed, bought their home here in 1988. She shares her recipe for Empanadas and recommends buying, rather than making, the dough, which you can do at one of these nearby markets: Carniceria Argentina @ Victory and Lankershim or Mercado Buenos Aires near Saticoy & Sepulveda.

The Flavors of Valley Glen

Prepare the Filling:
1. Combine first 5 ingredients in a large bowl. Mix thoroughly and set aside.
2. Preheat oven to 400 degrees and lightly grease a baking sheet.
3. Sauté onions (with a bit of salt) in oil or lard until onions are soft, about 8 min.
4. Add the meat mixture to the onions. Cook over medium heat until meat is browned, stir frequently to break up meat.
5. Let cool, then mix in green onions and oregano.

Assembly:
1. Place a spoonful of the filling in center of each empanada disc. Add a slice of egg and sliced olive.
2. Brush edges of empanada discs with egg whites to “glue” the edges together.
3. Fold the empanada over and press the edges gently with your fingers to seal them closed.
4. Crimp the edges with a fork to finish sealing them.
5. Lightly brush tops with egg yolk to give them a nice golden shine.
7. Serve warm with chimichurri sauce or other dipping sauces.

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<tr>
<th>Ingredients:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 lb ground beef</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Tbs smoked paprika</td>
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<tr>
<td>½ Tbs ground cumin</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 tsp chili powder, adjust to taste</td>
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<td>Salt and pepper to taste</td>
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<td>1 cup diced onion</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/2 cup lard or butter</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 egg white, lightly whisked</td>
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<td>1 egg yolk, lightly whisked</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Tbs finely chopped fresh oregano</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 bunch green onions, finely chopped</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 hard boiled eggs, sliced</td>
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<tr>
<td>¼ cup sliced green olives</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 egg white, lightly whisked</td>
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<td>1 egg yolk, lightly whisked</td>
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Kill Your Lawn—Save Water—Get Money!
Landscape Transformation Program

You can still get a rebate for getting rid of your lawn through the Landscape Transformation Program! Sponsored by the Metropolitan Water District, this program combines turf removal, irrigation modification, and rainwater retention or filtration to support reuse or soil absorption of rainwater. This program is a bit different than the previous one sponsored by the DWP. To qualify for a rebate under this program your transformation project will need to include:

- 5 plants per 100 square feet of area transformed
- A stormwater retention feature
- No hardscape within the transformed area, except permeable hardscape
- Replacement or modification of overhead spray sprinklers

There is a two-part application process. First, apply to reserve rebate funds prior to starting your project. Then, after the reservation, you’ll have 180 days to complete the project and submit your rebate request. ■ For complete information on who is eligible and how the program works see www.SoCalWaterSmart.com.

Do you know someone who represents the diversity of our community? Please introduce them and share a recipe that reflects the flavors of Valley Glen. Send a note to editor@vgna.org.
Did you Know You Can Get Free Trees?

You can get free trees for your home, or business, or school; for your yard or for the parkway! If you live or own property in the City of LA, you are eligible to receive free trees! (Did we mention they are free?)

“Trees are the leading technology to fight climate change, carbon emissions, and skyrocketing overuse of AC” notes Preserve LA, an organization of concerned LA residents. On a more sobering note, the group reports that “Los Angeles has fallen a full decade behind 20 sustainable cities who are re-growing their urban tree canopies.”

Let’s grow our urban canopy and increase our property values! Besides, who doesn’t want to live on a tree-lined street? Trees keep us cooler. Where they shade the house, they reduce our energy bills. (And they’re so hug-able!)

So, how do you get those free trees? The city has partnered with the non-profit ‘City Plants’ to plant and give away approximately 15,000 trees each year. You can get:

- Up to seven free shade trees
- Delivered to your home
- And planted for you!
- All you have to do is water them!

Such a deal! It’s easy, go to cityplants.org and click on Get Free Trees. Or go old school and give them a call them at 213-473-9950.

Keep Valley Glen Shady!

Drive around the Glen and you’ll see quite a few sustainable landscapes. Leo SantaMaria (whose Cuban sandwich you may remember from our last newsletter) designed his own drought-tolerant yard. He described the process as one of figuring out what he wanted (definitely color) and looking around at other yards to see what plants he liked. Then there was the process of waiting and watching to see which plants would thrive where they were planted, and which would have to be replaced.

Leo’s neighbor Jim Howard short circuited his process by watching to see what worked for Leo, and then adjusting to suit his own tastes. He tore out his lawn two years ago and put in plants from the Theodore Payne nursery.

If you haven’t heard of the nursery, their mission is to “inspire and educate Southern Californians about the beauty and ecological benefits of California native plant landscapes.” They are a non-profit nursery located in Sunland. Among other things, they sell native plants and seeds, offer demonstrations and classes, promote ‘going native’, and sponsor an annual native garden tour. They even have a wild flower hotline! TheodorePayne.org

A Note on Replacing Lawn with Rocks:

Don’t. Replacing grass with rocks does save water and you’ll never need to mow them ... BUT ... there are a several reasons NOT to fill your front yard with rocks.

First is the heat. One reason the city is giving away free trees is that they are cooling and thus promote energy conservation. Rocks hold heat. The increased temperature can stress nearby plants and trees.

They can also create alkaline soil, which hurts plants and trees. They do nothing to aid plant growth or contribute to soil health. Eventually wind will blow dirt between the rocks giving weeds the perfect place to grow which pretty much defeats the purpose of installing a low maintenance yard cover. Just sayin’. ■
Did you know that dry Christmas trees burn really hot? And really fast? LA Fire Department Captain John Ignatczyk suggests that you not leave them on the curb for several days after Christmas. Too often they become a tempting target for kids with matches. And definitely don’t leave them lying next to a structure. There have been instances trees burned so hot and so fast that the structure caught fire before the LAFD could get there.

Here’s what he does recommend:

- Keep your trees hydrated - water DAILY! Dry trees are fire hazards inside and outside.
- If you can, recycle your tree by putting it into the green bin
- Take your tree to any fire station - starting the day after Christmas they have large green bins available for just this purpose!
- Take the decorations off the tree before you recycle - tinsel and ornaments don’t compost well!

Also:

- Use battery operated candles; Candles start almost half of home decoration fires
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking; Unattended cooking equipment is the leading source of home cooking fires
- If you’re cooking with a turkey fryer do it outside. And when filling it with oil, don’t forget to leave room for the turkey, this has caused of more than one holiday accident!
- Take holiday decorations down promptly: rats like to eat the electrical cords, which can start a fire, and decorations in yards and on roofs create obstructions for fire fighters.

HOLIDAY TIPS FROM THE LAFD

Erwin School is making solid, positive academic progress as shown by the test scores over the last four years. Principal Koudsi’s goal is to make Erwin Elementary the neighborhood school of choice. Also working tirelessly and passionately towards that goal are PTA President, Yvette Diamond and PTA Treasurer, Yaneth Romo. They raise funds for the buses so that every child at Erwin Elementary can go on the field trips. And they make sure that every child has a yellow Erwin T-shirt to wear on that trip. They organize book donations and buy PE equipment and tools for the teachers. They collect box tops that can be redeemed for 10 cents apiece and make sure there are refreshments for special events—like the one for parents who children are about to go to their very first day of school. These women work hard and work long hours and do it because, as they say, “It’s very rewarding.”

Erwin School’s PTA membership is open and the invitation is there to anyone in the community who might want to get involved. If you’re interested in connecting see: www.facebook.com/ErwinStreetElementaryCommunity.

Erwin Elementary School – Go Eagles!

If you spend any time in the main office of Erwin Elementary School you’ll get to experience a fun, friendly, family kind of a feeling. It’s there between the teachers and students and administrators and parents, all of who are coming and going. And as they do, they tease and encourage one another. It will put a smile on your face.

Principal Marie Koudsi is proud of the family atmosphere at Erwin. She’s proud of the welcoming environment, the growth she sees in the teachers and the students, and a lot more. She’s proud that the data shows
REQUIREMENTS:

- A sense of pride in the community
- A desire to keep the place clean
- The willingness to devote a couple of hours a month (as available)
- The ability to sweep, pick up trash, or at least hold a dust pan

The Clean Team is a volunteer group whose membership changes from month to month. Which is a delicate way of saying that the Clean Team is made up of whoever shows up on a given Saturday morning. And in September only two people showed up. (Pause for that to sink in.)

Really?! There are 62,000 of us in Valley Glen!

Surely, we can assemble more than TWO PEOPLE to tidy up some of the spots around the ‘hood that need attention!!!!

Volunteering is easy - you just show up! Read further for when and where.

Won’t you put us on your calendar? We meet:

- The second Saturday of every month at 8:00 AM
  *(Starting in 2019 we will meet the second saturday of the month)*
- At Valley Glen Park (near the corner of Ethel & Erwin)

Next Clean Team Meetings are:

- December 1
- December 29
- January 12
- February 9
- March 9