

SHPOA

Shadow Hills Property Owners Association

Dedicated to Preserving Rural Community

Volume 31, Issue 1

A Neighborhood Where Families Grow



January-February 2009

Inconsistent Regulations Equal Fire Threat

by Elektra Kruger

The Sesnon fire in the Fall of 2008, which burned approximately 15,000 acres and totaled 15 homes, was determined to be caused by a downed power distribution line on land that was EXEMPT from brush clearance regulations - land privately owned by the Southern California Gas Company. While the City of Los Angeles strictly enforces its brush clearance ordinances, the lack of consistent regulations in neighboring jurisdictions poses a serious fire threat to our own residents.

Fire does not recognize municipal boundaries. To prevent future disasters like that of the Sesnon Fire, in late October 2008, Councilmember Dennis Zine presented a Motion to City Council that the Chief Legislative Analyst be directed to prepare a comprehensive report to be submitted to the City Council's Public Safety Committee for their review covering all current brush clearance regulations on the City, County and State levels, including any loopholes that must be closed to prevent any further instances such as the Sesnon fire.

The report should coordinate the efforts of the LAFD, Los Angeles County officials, the California Public Utilities Commission and any other agencies with relevant input. SHPOA will keep you abreast of any ongoing progress with coordinating the described group and the report they might be directed to produce.



Athens Waste Proposal for "Residential" Sun Valley/Stonehurst

by Dave DePinto

For more than a year, Athens Services, which is the new owner of the waste facility formerly operated by American Waste on Pendleton Avenue in Sun Valley, has been working on a draft Environmental Impact Report for a proposed expansion. They are a company we do not know well. They have no track record in the Sun Valley area, they have not involved themselves in any community organizations, and they have not conducted any community outreach.

Rather than notifying residents throughout the area of their plans, they allowed the City to simply send notices to a very few people within 500 feet of their property prior to a November 2008 public hearing about their project - the bare minimum required by law. Further, they failed to attend a Foothill Trails District Neighborhood Council meeting on December 2, to which they had been invited, and they sent an unprepared and ill-informed consultant to a Sun Valley Area Neighborhood Council meeting on December 9. Thus, the community has not been able to pose questions and obtain answers to basic technical and operational questions.

Athens is proposing construction of several buildings, not all of which are fully enclosed, in which they will

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A Heartfelt Thank You!

SHPOA wishes to thank the Office of Councilmember Wendy Greuel and the tireless efforts of Field Deputy Angela Motta as she took the reins in seeing to the removal of the abandoned cargo container from the roadside on Wentworth St.

New Year's Resolution: Join SHPOA in 2009!

by Roberta Cole

Shadow Hills is a unique and interesting rural community within the city limits of Los Angeles. Residents share a sense of well-being and belonging, with spacious properties and miles of trails, and the freedom to pursue a "country" lifestyle.

The volunteer members of the Board of Directors are dedicated residents of Shadow Hills who relentlessly work toward keeping that lifestyle we all treasure and have come to expect.

For a lot less money than a restaurant dinner, you can become a voting member of this courageous and progressive organization. With your support, SHPOA will continue to provide benefits such as:

- Representing SHPOA interests at local, city and governmental meetings in such a way that preserves the "country" way of life
- Preventing unrestrained development in opposition to the Community Plan
- Challenging development and encouraging open land for the Wildlife Corridor
- Preserving, developing and connecting equestrian trails
- Associating with neighboring communities in their efforts to preserve open land
- Bi-monthly meetings featuring informative guest speakers on current affairs, with an open forum
- Sponsoring community activities such as pancake breakfast, BBQ dinner and dance, garage sale, ice cream social, pizza night, etc.

Imagine all that for a \$20.00 per year membership fee! Annual membership runs January through December. Membership is open to all residents (owners and renters) of Shadow Hills. Please refer to the attached form/envelope to become a new member or to renew your membership

Look for a brand new feature in this Issue of SHPOA...

"Letters to the Editor" - see page 7

2009 SHPOA Board Members

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West Shadow Hills/Stonehurst:
Kristin Sabo 818-896-4986

East Shadow Hills/East LVT:
Dale Gibson 818-968-8670

Emergency Animal Hospitals:

Animal Specialty Group www.asgvets.com
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Animal Emergency Centre www.valleypet911.com
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East Valley Animal Shelter

...now located at 14409 Vanowen in Van Nuys, one block east of Van Nuys Blvd. at the corner of Vanowen and Lennox. Call toll free 1-888-452-7381 (menu option 1, then 4, then 5). Or call 213-485-8613 or 818-756-9323.

Shadow Hills Presbyterian Church Update

Shadow Hills Preschool announces its annual Pizza Night Social and Fundraiser. We invite you to come and enjoy a fun-filled night at Round Table Pizza in La Canada on January 29, 2009. This is a tentative date; please call the school office at 353-7554 to confirm. Current students and families, staff members and families, and alumni families will be there. Come and join us for good fun and food, and our Preschool will receive a percentage of the proceeds.

We are looking for past students and families who may be reading this. We would love to see you at this event. Please stop by, say hi and visit with us. We love reminiscing. We also invite you to come by and see our school. We are a play-based, top quality preschool enrichment program and if you or friends are looking for a fun, hands-on Preschool, then come by and we will show you what we are all about!

Stonehurst Elementary - Open House for Fall Enrollment

by Ruth Bunyan, Interim Principal

Stonehurst Elementary will be having an open house for parents of prospective students on Tuesday, January 13, 2009 at 9:00 am in the auditorium. We invite any parents who would like to visit classrooms and receive information about our school to visit at that time. Stonehurst Elementary has an API rating of over 800 and is a California Distinguished School.

We have grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Children who will be five years old by December 2, 2009 may attend kindergarten in September. In addition to a strong academic program, all students participate in an arts program that provides classes in fine arts, drama, dance and vocal music. We also have an orchestra for interested students beginning in third grade. Our garden is used for science classes. After school childcare and homework help are available through a program titled "L.A.'s Best Gifted." Students receive an enriched academic program in their classes as well as a periodic pull-out program. Applications for Open Enrollment are accepted in May and student selections are made in June.

Our annual open house will be on April 2, 2009 from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. There will also be an additional school and classroom visitation planned for May 28th. Please feel free to call the office at (818)-767-8014 if you have any additional questions.

Important City Numbers

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Street Service: (800) 996-2489
Large Item Pickup (800) 773-2489
Abandoned Card: (800) 222-6366


Used Tires

by Chris Arlington


Residents serviced by the Bureau of Sanitation may drop off up to four automobile tires (without rims) at their local district yard (11050 Pendleton ST. Sun Valley) each year. Residents must bring their DWP bill and a picture ID to show proof of City residency when dropping off the tires.

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Athens Waste Proposal

Continued from page 1

dump, sort, compact, grind, and transport trash in and out by truck. They also plan to store household trash for up to 48 hours within their facility, as well as park their old, diesel-powered truck fleet on site. While they will argue that they have been permitted to process 1,500 tons per day of both household trash and construction and demolition waste in Sun Valley since 1999, the reality is they have been processing only about 400 tons per day of construction and demolition waste (not household trash) since 1999. Their new proposal calls for 500 tons per day of construction and demolition waste, and 1,000 tons per day of HOUSEHOLD trash.

SHPOA has serious concerns about the appropriateness of Athens' permits and whether they have the right to process municipal solid waste (black container trash), or just construction and demolition debris and green waste.

Based on their own DEIR, this proposed EXPANSION represents a quadrupling of all waste entering the site, and a tripling of traffic. It also represents a very dismaying "first" for this area – **the first time household trash will be dumped, sorted, compacted, processed and trucked on the RESIDENTIAL side of Glenoaks Boulevard, an area that closely borders the residential Stonehurst neighborhood.**

Much has changed since 1999 in the Sun Valley area which borders residential Stonehurst and Shadow Hills. Bradley Landfill closed in April 2007 and Waste Management is relatively far along in the process of obtaining permits



and approvals to build a new material recovery and waste transfer facility on their property near San Fernando Road. The "East Valley City Yard" for the City of LA's Valley trash operations opened on Pendleton, directly across the street from the American Waste site. Sun Valley Paper Stock, located close by on San Fernando Road, was granted an expansion. Hundreds of trash, recycling and transfer trucks per day

visit and will continue to visit these sites moving forward, affecting local traffic, road conditions, noise, views and aesthetics, and air quality.

Lurking very near in the future is a proposal by Community Recycling/Crown Disposal to expand their horrendous facility, also located in Sun Valley off of Pendleton on the other side of Glenoaks. It's very troubling to see Sun Valley, despite years of community activism and years of lip service from the City, remain a dumping ground for the rest of the City. Efforts in the past to create policies and ordinances to locate waste processing facilities equitably throughout the city have been unsuccessful, and Sun Valley continues to receive a disproportionate share of the City's waste stream, as well as waste from other jurisdictions. That affects all of us.

We have many concerns here in Shadow Hills about this proposal – its effect on roads, air quality, traffic, noise and odors. Probably the biggest concern, other than the continued degradation of the quality of life in and around residential Sun Valley and Stonehurst, is Athens' track record. At a November 2008 public hearing, the applicant distributed public relations materials referring to a facility they operate in the City of Industry. It referred to that

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Athens Waste Proposal

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facility as the "gold standard" and the type of facility they would bring to Sun Valley.

Unfortunately, what they did not tell us was that South Coast Air Quality Management District had slapped them with an \$18 million lawsuit as recently as late September 2008 for continued operating violations at that "gold standard" facility. Plus, we know about many violations at the site in Sun Valley under the prior owners. If that's the kind of responsibility, transparency and accountability that we can expect from Athens in the future, we ought to make sure their project receives much greater scrutiny from government agencies and the public prior to any approvals being granted.

SHPOA, several Neighborhood Councils, and others are speaking up loudly as we go to press, insisting that Athens change their approach and their plans. Quite simply, we do not want household trash on the residential side of Glenoaks. While the public comment period for their draft EIR was scheduled to end on December 24, 2008, you may still submit comments to both the city: in the City of LA Environmental Affairs Department - wayne.tsuda@lacity.org; and locally, please contact Council member Wendy Greuel councilmember.greuel@lacity.org.

Ask them to hold Athens Services accountable; ask them to re-do the traffic and air quality studies to include traffic on Sunland Boulevard; ask them to study whether a new CUP is needed for their proposal; and ask them to insist that no household trash is accepted on the residential side of Glenoaks Boulevard. SHPOA will keep you updated on the progress of this matter.



Where Are The Quimby Funds "Not Going"?

by Elektra Kruger

In 1975, the State passed the Quimby Law which requires developers to pay a fee that is supposed to be used by a local government to pay for the development of parks within proximity of the development. In LA, it is the responsibility of the Department of Recreation and Parks (R&P) to collect the Quimby fees and to use them to plan and develop parks.

The current City Ordinance requires collected fees to be used at City R&P facilities within 2 miles of the collection site. As of October 2007, R&P has collected approximately \$120 million in Quimby fees. Of those \$120 million, only \$17 million had been allocated to various park projects with no plans on how to spend the remainder of the funds.

As a result of this, in late October 2007, Council members Eric Garcetti and Tom LaBonge co-presented a Motion in which: 1) the R&P General Manager was to report to the City Council's Parks Committee on the status of Quimby funds available to each Council District (CD); 2) the Chief Legislative Analyst would report on the possibility of creating a Council-controlled fund to account for Quimby fees collected in each CD (a possible mistake because Council has a reputation for transferring monies from a fund to which they were allocated to another fund of their choosing); and 3) a strategic plan on how to use the fees including a process for community input would be created.

During a Special Meeting held by the Parks Committee in late October 2007, a Public Comment was submitted to the Committee by an organization called The City

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Joe has been a resident of Shadow Hills for 17 years. He is proud to support the SHPOA Newsletter and looks forward to helping his neighbors and friends with any of the above services, including house calls.

Quimby Funds

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Project. They mentioned that City Controller Laura Chick provided a blueprint for creating healthy parks when she published a R&P audit almost 2 years prior. They were dissatisfied with the fact that a Needs Assessment called for in the audit was not scheduled to actually take place until February or March of 2008 (it did take place in late January). They further felt that poorer communities were being "short-changed" by park funding because the distribution of funds was not being based on need as much as on equal distribution among the 15 CD's and this was unacceptable to them.

The Committee moved to adopt the recommendations noted in the Motion adding an additional recommendation that R&P report on the feasibility of utilizing an "economic nexus" distribution of Quimby fees and to provide a timeline for the acquisition process to be used for Quimby Projects. City Council adopted the report from the Committee at its November 6, 2007 session. The file has been referred back to the Parks Committee to proceed with obtaining the respective reports requested in the Motion. As of late January 2008, nothing more has happened.



LA Equine Advisory Task Force Update

by Elektra Kruger

In mid-February 2008, City Council established a Horse Advisory Task Force to solicit input from all Council Offices to identify horse-related issues. In mid-September, the Department of Animal Services submitted a very impressive report to the City Council's Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee for review and recommendations. The Department of Animal Services led the effort to include representatives from the Department of Recreation and Parks, Bureau of Sanitation, Department of Planning and various Council District Offices to work together to compile a "Survey of Equine Issues".

The primary recommendation that arose from the joint input of all these departments is that LA should seriously consider creating an LA Equine Advisory Committee (EAC). It would be modeled after the existing and successful LA Bicycle Advisory Committee formed in 1974 to work with varying City Departments to address equine issues in LA. The Committee would be comprised of members appointed by each of the Council members and the Mayor. They would use regular public meetings and a sub-committee system to focus on key issues.

The Committee's first job would be to review and prioritize the equine issues listed in the Survey. Each issue was assigned a lead City Department best-suited to deal with the issue at hand. The Survey identified five general categories of equine issues: licensing, resource requirements, land-use planning, trails networking, and manure.

Among the items at issue under Equine Licensing is the fact that there is no true census of equines in LA. The equine licensing fee fails to provide any real benefit directly to horse owners such as newsletters or owner oversight as to fund usage. Also, the current \$14 licensing fee fails to cover the administrative costs of collecting the fee. Among items at issue under resource requirements are developing a disaster-preparedness program for equines to provide housing, feed and general care at temporary disaster shelters.

Among the many items at issue under land-use and planning are establishing responsible parties for public

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**Letters to the Editor – You Asked for It
We Heard You**

Letters must be submitted before deadline (in community calendar), full name must be submitted but anonymity or first name only can be requested. Letters will be printed at the discretion of the editor and in order of receipt. Limited space allows for approximately 100 words or less.

Articles from residents have always been accepted, welcomed and usually printed - 250 words or less, full name requested.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

My name is Nanette Wenger, and I own a house in Shadow Hills. I am writing for two reasons.

First, I would dearly love to see a "Letter" column in the SHPOA newsletter. Do you think this is a possibility? I am interested in hearing from more people in our community. I'll bet there are others like me, who enjoy the articles and information in SHPOA, (which I read cover to cover), who might contribute their opinion or question, pleasure or displeasure in a "Letters) column.

Second, what prompted me to write you is in response to an article in the November/December SHPOA newsletter. Perhaps surprisingly it is the "As a Rooster Crows" article which finally motivated me. I vehemently disagree with Elektra Kruger's comment in her last paragraph that "to have a couple of pet roosters wandering freely on our own property, in part, defines what Shadow Hills is all about."

Horses, yes! Rural atmosphere, yes! Peace and QUIET, yes, yes, yes! Rooster, no, no, NO! Just one pet rooster is depriving many residents of my neighborhood in Shadow Hills of our precious restorative sleep. Yes, just one demented rooster, who lives several streets away, is wrecking lives.

Most people know that a rooster will announce the beginning of the day with a nicely pitched "cock-a-doodle-do", but the residents in this part of the hills have learned otherwise! For example, some roosters absolutely can't tell time and some roosters haven't a clue when daylight occurs!

Our neighborhood rooster starts crowing around 3:00am, with frequent encores at various intervals. Lack of sound sleep is making me quite crabby! So, no, I don't think we ought to allow roosters to wander freely in Shadow Hills!!! There, I think I feel better now. Still sleepy though.

Editor: Nanette, I empathize with you as I had a similar rooster issue a year ago. Fortunately, my neighbor took care of it without complaint. I hope the rooster did not wind up in your neighborhood! Good luck!



Equine Task Force

Continued from page 6

trails, identifying funding opportunities for expansion of a Citywide trail network, incorporating a detailed trails element into amended/updated Community Plans, updating the out-dated LA City Hiking and Equestrian Trails Plan, preserving K-Overlay land uses, clearly defining the Rim of the Valley Trail, ensuring that subdivision entitlements implement horse-keeping requirements of Community Plans/Specific Plans, establishing a clear standard for legal non-conforming equine issues, establishing a clear standard for trail design, and establishing a clear procedure for dealing with trail liability issues.

Update: At its mid-October 2008 meeting, the City Council's Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee approved the items presented in the report prepared by the Department of Animal Services.

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Life is Like a Box of Chocolates... Unless You Are a Dog!

by Denise Fleck

The pathetic begging began and "the look" melted Milly's heart as she savored her Valentine Chocolates with her Sheltie Duchess looking on. Resisting those big brown puppy dog eyes and telling her furry angel, "No," grew increasingly more difficult as Duchess whimpered and whined, licking her tiny lips and cocking her head in the cutest way possible. Wanting what was best for her pooch, Milly created a diversion by taking Duchess for a car ride (safely strapped in her doggie seat belt) to the local pet bakery for some dog-friendly treats. Not only did Milly know that once a dog tastes chocolate, she will want more (well, who doesn't?!), but Milly was also aware that the sweet treat loved by humans can be *deadly* to our pets.

According to the ASPCA®, its Animal Poison Control Center hotline receives an increased volume of calls around Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter and Mother's Day – all holidays where candy is abundant. The problem isn't just the fat but worse is the caffeine-like substance known as Theobromine – a naturally occurring stimulant found in the cocoa bean.

A dog that has ingested too much chocolate can experience rapid heart rate, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures and death. The only good news is that it takes a fairly large amount of Theobromine to cause a toxic reaction in your pet. However every dog is different and some are more sensitive meaning they can suffer ill effects on even the smallest amount of a toxic substance. Your pet's body weight, general health and the amount it consumes -- as well as what type of chocolate -- will determine its reaction.

So...how much is too much chocolate for your pet? The darker the chocolate, the more dangerous! One ounce of Milk Chocolate per pound of your dog or cat's body weight can be toxic. Higher Theobromine levels are found in Dark Chocolate, Cocoa Powder and Baker's Chocolate as well as Cocoa Mulch (which often adorns potted plants), so it may only take ¼ ounce per pound of your pet's weight to make the results fatal.

Once swallowed, there is no specific antidote for chocolate poisoning, so if you suspect your pet has consumed a significant amount, induce vomiting at once by administering one Tablespoon of 3% Hydrogen Peroxide for every 15 lbs he weighs. Dribble it onto the back of his tongue with a needle-less syringe until he swallows, collect the vomit and proceed quickly to the Animal ER where the Veterinarian will further flush your pet's system, give intravenous medications to protect his heart and treat whatever symptoms occur.

Forrest Gump always said, "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get." And for your dog, cat or ferret...it will never be a good thing.

Denise Fleck is a free-lance writer and animal care instructor specializing in Pet First-Aid and CPR and Senior Pet Care. She is currently owned by a chocolate-free Black Labrador Retriever and two very energetic Akitas who achieve their sugar rush from apples and bananas. Visit her website at www.sunnydogink.com.



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Horsemanship Clinic

by Jane Shaw

The Over-All Horsemanship Challenge, managed by Jane Shaw, was held November 2nd at Thundering Hooves Ranch in Tujunga. The event, a clinic type competition, was designed by Shaw to test the riders on their complete mastery of the skills necessary to be a horseman. Participants were judged and awarded prizes and ribbons for their unmounted ground work with their horses and their equitation (correct form) in their choice of trail, dressage or jumping. Then the riders had to prove they were knowledgeable about care, feeding and diseases of horses by taking a written test.

Shaw has invited local trainers and individuals who are interested in improving their skills or testing themselves against other riders to attend the next event which will be held early in the year. The format is designed to give riders a focus to work on as they ride and practice. For example, in the ground work class, the judge looks to see that the handler holds the lead rope correctly and gets the horse to move off promptly at the walk and trot. The handler must also get the horse to back promptly and yield his forehead and haunches.

Western judge Erik Olson wanted a horse that was attentive and gave prompt responses. The English judge, Tricia Hamilton, wanted to see riders who were effective but who maintained a look of softness and polish. Both judges were generous in their comments and their explanations to the riders, helping to make the event a very educational experience.

Shaw and Thundering Hooves Ranch are going to host another test-competition event early next year. Information and an invitation can be obtained by calling Jane Shaw at (818)951-1777.



Ride For A Cure

by Elizabeth Swenson

Undaunted by inclement weather, Corral 210 rose to the occasion on Saturday, September 24, with the grand finale to their seven-day fundraising event, Ride For A Cure 2008. The day started off with cool, clear skies, setting a picture-perfect backdrop for the opening ceremonies. Council member Wendy Gruel was introduced by ranch host Dale Gibson along with several knowledgeable representatives from Parkinson's disease and cancer research institutions to discuss the importance of the event.

Several hours into the event, the weather changed and a grey drizzle hung over Gibson Ranch for most of the afternoon, dampening drill team members and calf-ropers alike. Spectators scurried to the cowboy wagon camp, the silent auction, or underneath the bleachers. But they stayed, despite the weather. "It is truly inspiring and validates my own personal philosophy of what life is through Corral 210's selfless acts of kindness to each other and to those in need," said Kathy Artsis, Vice President of the APDA Valley Chapter.

The final tally is yet to be known, but initial estimates put the event gross over \$37,000. Corral 210 has also received the Spirit of Johnny Carpenter Award in recognition of their efforts for Ride For A Cure.



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Corral 210 members (left to right): Michelle Metzger and Wendy Holten at the Ride For A Cure event.

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Who Was Roscoe?

By Marlene Hitt

After looking in the Roscoe file at the Bolton Hall museum with Mary Benson, we found some interesting information about the area now known as Sun Valley. Before 1876 the Maclay land holdings of the San Fernando Valley included the area of Roscoe, a land rich with grain farming, fruit trees, grape vineyards and truck farming.

In the year 1876, the Southern Pacific railroad ran through the center of that area which was to become Roscoe, and became the route linking southern and northern California. The water tank used for the steam engine was located at the intersection of Sunland Boulevard and San Fernando Road, where there was built a tiny train depot, near a general store owned by Roberts, the name given at that time for the area.

In The History of Roscoe by Richard Whitmore, we read "About the time Southern Pacific began its regular run between Los Angeles and San Francisco, there was a train robbery at the Robert's Store intersection where the train stopped for water. It has never been determined how much the robber took – or, if Roscoe were the names of the robber or the engineer who was shot".

On Thursday, February 15, 1884, the robbers struck, seeking a payroll. The fireman, Arthur Masters, was scalded to death after being trapped under the boiler. The San Francisco Examiner called it the boldest train robbery that ever took place in California. In any event, the area became known as Roscoe, and in 1915 was annexed to the City of Los Angeles."

As the result of railroads, and as the area became more populated, hobos often came to the houses for food. Jean Burian tells about her mother who always filled a plate of food for the hobos who ate on the front porch. The children were not allowed out of the house when the men were eating. She says the hobos were always thankful and polite.

And who else knows about the name, Roscoe? From a paper by Mervyn McDonald of Downey, whose uncle worked for the Southern Pacific Railway Company, we learn that one of the younger members of the SP engine operators was a man named Roscoe. Roscoe was courting a young woman who lived in Sunland. The roads then were more like trails through farmland and Roscoe had to drive a horse and buggy all day to reach the girl's home, leaving no time for courting. Roscoe persuaded the engineers to let him ride in the engine, stop when the train got to the right spot, and there Roscoe would jump off and spend most of the day with his girl friend. At the end of the day, the train would stop and let him on to continue the run to Los Angeles. Thus the stop became the "Roscoe stop", later to be known as Roscoe.




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Emergency Ambulance Fee Increase?

by Elektra Kruger

The last time the City of Los Angeles increased fees for Emergency Ambulance Services was September 2006. The fees were set at \$889 for Advanced Life Support services, \$622 for Basic Life Support services and a Mileage Rate of \$14.50/mile. In 2008, the Board of Fire Commissioners initiated a new Council File requesting that the Emergency Ambulance Fee be increased again and in early June 2008, the LAFD submitted a report to the Los Angeles City Council recommending the fee increase.

The recommendation is to increase the cost of Advanced Life Support response and transport fee by 12.88% from \$889 to \$1,004, the cost of Basic Life Support response and transport by 14.47% from \$622 to \$712 and the Mileage Rate by 8.62% from \$14.50 to \$15.75 per mile. These figures were arrived at after a review of the City's full cost recovery policy, salaries, overhead, and all figures used to determine the cost of providing an emergency service program to the citizens of Los Angeles.

The Motion was initially referred only to the City Council's Transportation Committee, but in mid-August was also referred to the Budget and Finance Committee and Public Safety Committee. In early September 2008, the Public Safety Committee of the City Council held its meeting where this item was agendaized.

The Committee recommended that the Council approve the Fire Department's proposal with the following additions: 1) That the Fire Department develop a plan to inform the public of ambulance and emergency fee waivers for qualifying low-income residents; 2) that Fire Department personnel spend less time waiting in emergency rooms for transported patients to be admitted; and 3) that the Department seek full cost recovery from patients and/or their insurance companies for all services performed by the Department - not just for transport, but also for the time and effort that goes into such things as extracting victims from a vehicle crash.

The Budget and Finance Committee approved the Motion and LAFD recommendations in early October 2008 and a later joint Hearing of the Public Safety and Budget and Finance Committees recommended that the City Attorney prepare and present an Ordinance to the City Council amending the Los Angeles Administrative Code, Sec. 22.210.2, which provides a Schedule of Charges to reflect the updated charge recommendations. In mid-October 2008, City Council adopted the REPORT submitted by the Public Safety Committee, but no Ordinance was ever prepared and the Council File was closed in late October. No increased charges were ever initiated.



Increased Impound Fees Approved

by Elektra Kruger

The Los Angeles City Council approved an Ordinance that will increase the current \$48 impounded vehicle release fee to \$100 and, additionally, make that same fee applicable to impounded "pocket bikes". The Ordinance has been effective since December 1, 2008.

The California Vehicle Code defines a "pocket bike" as a two-wheeled motorized device that has a seat or saddle for use of the rider and that is not designed or manufactured for highway use." The California Vehicle Code authorizes a city to adopt an Ordinance "imposing charges relating to the removal, seizure and storage costs of a pocket bike" but that "the charges shall not exceed the actual costs incurred for the expenses directly related to removing, seizing and storing a pocket bike".

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My Personal Bag

by Andrea Gutman

How the meaning of words can change. Used to be that a bag lady (or man) was a derogatory term for someone without resources and likely to be living on the street. But the other day when my husband endearingly said to me, "hey, lady, don't forget your bag," I was grateful to be reminded to be green, to be in vogue, and to be mindful that plastic is out and cloth is in.

It's hard to imagine now how I used to surreptitiously carry my reusable bag under my arm while shopping and once at the checkout stand, quickly snatch it from under my arm and slide it between the crunched grocery items, all the while feeling exposed as I committed to being a "greenie" (environmentalist was the term used in those days). And, when it was my turn, I would say discreetly, "Oh, I have my own bag." Of course, I didn't dare open my mouth to remind a forgetful checker of the five cent bag refund the customer was to receive for each reused bag or to even insist that the checker use my bag.

There were many times, it seems, when my bag just went for the ride. And, reflecting now on confidences shared with well-meaning friends and family members that have claimed, "It's not the lack of bags, but the lapse of memory," I wonder whether it's not a touch of subconscious embarrassment that might be stifling their green goals too. Or, in spite of all, maybe a tad bit of subconscious rationalization. After all, the awesome challenge associated with the cat litter detail and the trash can liner and the doggy poop bag seem to suggest that plastic has no substitute. Like cats and trash and doggy poop didn't exist before plastic.

So, may I suggest that through the transition period, until the age of "post-plastic," we encourage skepticism. That we actually make use of the re-useable bag, those perfectly good bags you see strewn along the sidewalk, in the gutter and in big piles along fence lines. I know the cats won't care.

Anyhow, I digress, I'm glad that, on the whole things have changed, Now, at least, I can take my bags into the market and proudly, but firmly tell the checker, "Use my bag." No longer meek, I even use the opportunity to proudly display bags boldly imprinted with my favorite political cause. There are, after all, more causes out there than just deciding to use plastic or paper.

Habitat Restoration

*Copied from Big T Washline
 (Publication of the County of LA Dept. of Public Works)*

Other conservation projects to look for at the Big T will include tamarisk removal. This invasive plant was introduced from Africa by the end of the 19th century for windbreaks, firewood for steam locomotives, and shade trees. It's a water loving species that is highly salt tolerant and has been known to dry out water sources when established at desert springs. Tamarisk is highly invasive and will exclude native plants such as willows and cottonwoods. Each tamarisk tree may use approximately 200 gallons of water a day (wow!), so the removal of tamarisk will allow more water to be available for native plant species.

To help fill voids where exotic plants are removed, native cottonwoods and willows, along with other native riparian plant species, will be replanted between late winter and spring 2008. Many of these, including willow, are fast growing and should start to green up the Big T in just a few years.

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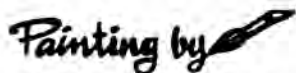


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As a Rooster Crows - Part 3

by Elektra Kruger

In late October 2007, Councilmember Janice Hahn presented two Motions to City Council dealing with how to handle noise complaints from residents adjacent to properties having roosters as family pets, and how to get a legal handle on breeding and keeping roosters used for cockfighting purposes. Many communities in the Los Angeles area have banned roosters within their borders altogether while others have limited the number permitted per property thereby successfully abating noise nuisances created by roosters. At the same time, this provides law enforcement with a powerful tool in the prevention of cockfighting since those keeping roosters for the purpose of cockfighting generally maintain large flocks.

Cockfighting needs to be prevented, but for semi-rural communities like Shadow Hills, there needs to be a balance between the desires of individuals to keep roosters as pets on their private property and the rights of neighbors to live in peace. In an effort to procure this balance, one of the Motions presented by Councilmember Hahn recommended that ownership of roosters be restricted to one per property within the City of Los Angeles excepting: 1) any person already having a permit for more than one rooster such as a person owning a petting zoo; 2) any person in media production having received a temporary permit for retaining multiple roosters for a time period limited to the purpose of filming; 3) any person who can provide a legitimate reason for being allowed to keep up to three roosters that can be shown not to cause nuisance to adjacent neighbors; and 4) any person owning up to three roosters as pets at the time of enactment of a restricting Ordinance may be granted a "grandfathered" permit for retaining the pets.

The Motion additionally requested that the City Attorney recommend what an appropriate penalty might be for violation of the proposed new law. While both Motions were adopted by City Council in early May 2008, neither has been acted upon. There is no report from the Department of Animal Services on the practicality of having its officers address noise complaints related to roosters and other birds in the same way that they currently handle complaints about barking dogs; there is no report from the City Attorney regarding the best mechanism to respond to repeated noise complaints from roosters and other birds; and there have been no new Ordinances enacted relating to restrictions of roosters per property. Perhaps it is time to contact Councilmember Janice Hahn councilmember.hahn@lacity.org and our own Councilmember Wendy Greuel councilmember.greuel@lacity.org to urge them to initiate these actions.



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Hillside Slope Stability Standards

by Elektra Kruger

Remember back in 2005 when we actually had water - a lot of it? More than 37 inches of it fell during the 2004 to 2005 rainy season - the 2nd highest total on record. The City was enormously impacted by frequent severe rain storms that year. Mudslides closed off key commuter roads between the Valley and West LA and many homes suffered physical damage. Remember recently the danger of mudslides in burn areas here in the Valley and in Orange County. Evacuations were ordered due to evidence of soil movement in hillside residential areas.

In light of this, in mid-January 2005, Councilmember Tom LaBonge presented a Motion to City Council emphasizing the need to re-evaluate existing soil slope stability standards as they relate to varying degrees of soil saturation. Councilmember LaBonge recommended that the Department of Building and Safety (B/S), Bureau of Engineering (BOE) and Office of the City Attorney get together to review the current standards in steep hillside areas and recommend any Code changes that may be necessary.

The Motion was referred to the City Council's Planning and Land-Use Management Committee (PLUM), where the file collected dust over the years until mid-January 2008. Now we are in a drought. Is it now a truly relevant issue? Was this the time to bring this Motion to the table? Well, maybe better late than never. One day the rains will come again and we might as well have up-graded codes in place.

Following a meeting with representatives from the above mentioned departments, Building and Safety submitted a report to PLUM. The report stated that landslides of varying degrees had been reported to the City following the storms of 2004-2005 initiating B/S and geologist inspections to evaluate building safety of hillside properties. These inspections resulted in a total of 105 Red-Tagged buildings. The findings: 24 of the Red-Tagged buildings were affected by slopes graded prior to enactment of current LAMC grading requirements and NO Red-Tagged buildings were affected by slopes graded after the enactment of the current LAMC grading requirements.

So what does this tell us? 81 of those Red-Tagged buildings were tagged by reason other than inadequate grading standards - there is obviously something else that needs to be taken into account when approving building applications to avoid those 81 Red-Tagging events from occurring again in the future. And yet, the determination of the B/S report? "A review of the performance of graded slopes, natural slopes and building damage from the 2005 storm events indicate that significant changes to the current code are not necessary". YOU HAVE TO BE KIDDING ME!

Eighty-one Red-Taggings fail to indicate a need for "significant Code changes"? The only recommendations proffered in the B/S report were some added verbiage to the existing LAMC to define the "intent" of the existing code and to "facilitate enforcement" of current grading requirements. 81 Red-Taggings were found to have nothing to do with grading codes. What will "facilitating enforcement" do for those 81 buildings? The existing Code Section 7014.3 relating to Flood and Mudflow Protection stated only that protection shall be provided on sites determined by the department to be subject to Flood and/or Mudflow Events with no real description/specification as to what those "protections" should be or how they should be implemented.

Continued on page 15

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Luxury Tax on McMansions? - Part 2

by Elektra Kruger

Councilmember Richard Alarcon presented a Motion to City Council suggesting that a "Luxury Tax" be levied on homes at or greater than 5,000 sq. ft. In late October 2008, the LA Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) submitted a report in response to the Motion and its proposal to levy an annual tax of \$1,000/very 1,000 sq. ft. over 5,000 sq. ft. up to a maximum of \$6,000 per year.

Representatives from several different City Departments, referring to data supplied by the City's Planning Department and LA County, worked together to discuss the proposal and its feasibility. I, personally, would hope such a tax would serve as an incentive to retain homes at a smaller more reasonable size. However the analysis also stated that, as proposed, the Motion might be invalidated as an Ad Valorem tax (a tax in proportion to value) that would violate Article XIII A of the State Constitution. Article XIII A caps Ad Valorem property taxes at 1% of the assessed value of real property and LA County has already reached that limit.

To avoid this possible legal interpretation, the City Attorney suggested looking into other ways of levying a Luxury Tax, perhaps levying the Tax on only 2 "categories" of homes: a) those greater than 5,000 sq. ft.; and b) those greater than 10,000 sq. ft. Another option recommended was applying a surcharge on energy or H2O usage or revisiting the current documentary transfer tax on transactions involving homes in excess of 5,000 sq. ft.

The main point, according to the City Attorney, was that whatever form that additional proposed tax takes, it must not relate to the value of the property being assessed to avoid being interpreted as an Ad Valorem tax. Further, the City Attorney noted that any Luxury Tax as proposed in the Motion - or any other form of property-based tax - would be subject to Prop. 218 and would require a 2/3 voter-approval to be enacted whereas the addition of a documentary tax surcharge may require a simple majority vote if the measure were to be structured as a general purpose tax and the item were to be placed on the City's Primary or General Election ballot.

I don't know where City staff got their statistics, but, according to their data, in the Sunland Tujunga Community Plan area, there are only 7 homes in the 5,000+ sq. ft. level, 1 in the 6,000+ sq. ft. level, 1 in the 7,000 sq. ft. level, 1 in the 8,000 sq. ft. level, none in the 9,000 sq. ft. level and 2 over 10,000 sq. ft. The report prepared by the CLA was referred to the City Council's Budget and Finance Committee and Rules and Government Committee in late October 2008 for review and recommendation.

Update: The Rules and Government Committee waived consideration of this item and it was scheduled to be heard in the Budget and Finance Committee on October 27, 2008. Can anyone tell me how they can write a report, submit it to Council members for proper consideration by October 28, 2008 - the date this item ended up scheduled to the City Council Agenda. It's amazing how items with major significance manage to get squeezed through under the table so fast the public has next to no chance to be aware it is up for consideration when such things as Lighting District issues which effect only a few people run on-and-on for months!



Hillside Slopes

Continued from page 14

The recommended expanded verbiage per the B/S report: "The recommendations for mudflow protection shall be contained in a site investigation report made by persons qualified and licensed in civil engineering, engineering geology and/or soils engineering to ascertain the location, magnitude and extent of potential mud flow hazards and to recommend measures for protection or elimination of such hazards." A report with "recommendations" is nothing more than a piece of paper. Where is the Code amendment calling for REQUIRED IMPLEMENTATION OF those recommendations?

The other recommendation in the B/S report related to LAMC Sec. 7016.4.2 dealing with instances of prehistoric landslide locations. The recommended expanded verbiage included that not only must there be a "stated approval" by a soils engineer attesting to the safety of a proposed development, but that there must also be "calculations" submitted demonstrating a "minimum safety factor of stability" of the site and any access thereto. Hey, if there was EVER a landslide in the past, some day it is going to happen again. There is NO acceptable "minimum safety factor" in my book!

In early August 2008, PLUM approved the minor additions to the Code recommended by B/S and City Council approved the recommendations in mid-August 2008. Heaven help the 81 homes that might become Red-Tagged in the future and the commuters finding their roadways between the Valley and the City blocked yet again - this paucity of Code amendments is not going to make a d--- bit of difference!



History and Up-Date on Public Campaign Financing: Part 6

by Elektra Kruger

In Part 5 of this series, I mentioned that Councilmember Wendy Greuel expressed concerns with the Ethics Commission's proposal of the Fully Publicly Financed City Official Election Campaign System. She urged that the proposal be released to the Neighborhood Councils to insure maximum public input. She stated that the Neighborhood Councils and the City Council needed to seriously address some of the following concerns:

- what funding source or sources would be most appropriate since Special Taxes are quite unpopular with the public?
- how could a publicly financed system take into account independent expenditures?
- here's one of my favorites: how do the roles of property ownership (which would be the basis of the "parcel-based" Special Property Tax recommended by the City's Chief Legislative Analyst) overlap?
- could individuals owning property be taxed when they are, for whatever reason, ineligible to vote in the very election they are financing?

In early May 2007, the City's Chief Legislative Analyst provided recommendations for the nature of the informational package concerning the full publicly financed City official election campaign guide. The recommendations were referred to the City Council's Rules and Elections Committee for their review. Little, if anything, has happened regarding this issue since May 2007 - I am assuming because of the financial distress of the City of LA and the residents of LA. SHPOA will keep you updated on this issue as it progresses.

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Community Calendar

Sundays Through March

- Bolton Hall "Horsin Around" Museum exhibit
- Sundays 1 pm – 4 pm

Tuesday, January 13

- 9 a.m. - Stonehurst Elementary school open house for parents of prospective students – see article

Tuesday, January 13

- SHPOA General meeting - 7 pm at Tierra del Sol

Thursday, January 22

- SHPOA Newsletter deadline for articles, ads, letters to editor

Thursday, January 29 (Tentative Date)

- Shadow Hills Presbyterian Church
- Preschool Round Table Pizza night social and Fundraiser
See article – call 353-7554 to confirm date and time

Tuesday, March 10

- SHPOA General Meeting - 7 pm at Tierra del Sol

Sunday, March 23

- SHPOA Newsletter deadline for articles, ads and letters to editor

Thursday, April 2

- Stonehurst Elementary School annual open house
- 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm - see article

May 28

- Stonehurst Elementary School classroom visitation – see article

3rd Tuesday of Every Month

- 6 pm Neighborhood Watch - East Valley Municipal Bldg

Key Community Locations & Contact Information

- All Nations Church:** 10000 Foothill Blvd., Lakeview Terrace
- Bolton Hall:** 10110 Commerce Ave., Tujunga, 352-3420
- Lakeview Terrace Rec. Ctr.:** 11075 Foothill Blvd., Lakeview Terrace
- Shadow Hills Church:** Johanna at Sunland, Shadow Hills, Pastor Janet Winslow.353-3500
- Stonehurst Park:** 9901 Dronefield, Sun Valley, 767-0314
- Stonehurst Elementary School:** 9851 Stonehurst Ave., Sun Valley
- Tierra del Sol:** 9919 Sunland Blvd., Shadow Hills, 352-1419
- Village Christian School:** 8930 Village Ave., Sun Valley
- North Valley Council Building:** 7747 Foothill Blvd., Sunland

Mark your calendar...
SHPOA Meetings
 Tuesday, January 13, 7pm
 and
 Tuesday, March 10, 7pm
 at Tierra del Sol



Shadow Hills Property Owners Association
 P.O. Box 345 • Sunland, CA 91041



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