

# SHHOA

Shadow Hills Property Owners Association

Dedicated to Preserving Rural Community

Volume 34, Issue 5

*A Neighborhood Where Families Grow*



September-October 2011

## **New Heaven on Earth Ranch” Begins Fundraising Campaign**

The New “Heaven on Earth” Ranch (NHOER) will begin a major fundraising campaign to match the monies they have raised for construction of the “Johnny Carpenter” Arena. This general appeal campaign will begin September 1, 2011 and conclude December 31, 2011. Over the designated four months, they will use a combination of targeted calling, mail, email, their website, meetings and Facebook.

NHOER hopes to begin final construction of the arena in November 2011 and hold its grand opening by year end. The tentative grand opening is November 19th, 2011, and NHOER is confident that with community support



the arena and riding program will become a reality and available to the public in 2012.

NHOER will be participating in the “Ride for a Cure” event at Gibson Ranch on Saturday, October 1st

with a cowboy bean bag toss game booth. They also will be asking for nominations and choosing the 2011 “Spirit of Johnny Carpenter” Award recipients at the end of September. The 2010 honoree were Eva Lund, Andrea and James Guttman, and Richard Troy.

To learn more about NHOER, their fundraising campaign, the arena construction, “Spirit” awards and how you can help please call 818-470-5235, email Mike Carpenter at lamikec@yahoo.com or visit [www.NHOER.org](http://www.NHOER.org)



## **Tips to Enjoy Nature...Even More!**

Hiking/Camping is a fun way to get family and friends together to enjoy the outdoors, and to get some physical activity. However, you should always be prepared for the unexpected. You should tell family and friends what your plans are and provide a list of who will be going with you.

That is why the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department would like to remind residents that having a hiking/camping plan is crucial to survival in case of an emergency.

Before you leave, fill out a Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue “Hiking Plan” sheet and give it to a loved one to hold onto in case something happens to a member of your hiking/camping expedition. Download the form from [http://file.lacounty.gov/lasd/cms1\\_163961.pdf](http://file.lacounty.gov/lasd/cms1_163961.pdf)

## **Farmers’ Market – New Location!**

The Sunland-Tujunga Open Aire Farmers Market has relocated to the lower parking lot at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, 7324 Apperson St. (intersection of Mountair Ave.), Tujunga 91042. Market hours remain the same: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The new location has more parking space and room for more vendors.

With over 22 vendors, the market features an assortment of organic and pesticide-free fresh fruits and produce, flowers, bakery goods, antiques, jewelry, crystals, crafts and more! For the kids, there’s a kids’ zone with a petting zoo, pony rides and jumpers. For those who enjoy swap meets and garage sales or have items to be re-homed, there’s a community market.

If you would like to get more information about becoming a vendor or to reserve a spot at the community market, contact Manny Hernandez at 818.447.5191 or by email: [mbc43007@yahoo.com](mailto:mbc43007@yahoo.com). A 10x10 space rents for \$25.



## **Shadow Hills Presbyterian Church**

Shadow Hills Presbyterian Preschool has been part of the community for over 60 years and we once again are looking forward to opening our doors for our upcoming 2011-2012 school year!

We just completed our Summer Recreation Program and after a well deserved rest our teachers are now anxious to begin the new school year. If you are looking for an exciting, hands-on preschool where learning is spontaneous and fun, please come by and see us or call the office at 818-353-7554. We are always ready to show off our school!



## **Delphi Academy Graduate from Shadow Hills Awarded Scholarship**

2011 Delphi Academy graduate Rebecca Benest from Shadow Hills has been awarded a \$15,500 per year academic scholarship to DePaul University in Chicago.

Rebecca says this of her education at Delphi: “My time at Delphi was an evolution of purpose, and an evolution of dreams. With what I’ve learned here, I can try new things along the path to my goals, and be successful in them. I can start something completely new and I’ll succeed. “My purpose has evolved into something that will carry me, always productive and happy, through life. I am a leader, and I am an ethical person. Life is an evolution, and my path will always be changing, but no matter where I end up, I will be prepared and successful.”

Delphi Academy is located in Lake View Terrace and is a year-around college preparatory school for preschool through 12th grade. To schedule a tour, please call Joan or Virginia at (818) 583-1070. Website: [www.DelphiLA.org](http://www.DelphiLA.org)

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**Got Manure?**

The Department of Sanitation has a weekly equine manure pick-up service which serves three equestrian areas in Los Angeles: East Valley, West Valley and a small area in West L.A. To initiate brown container service:

1. Call the Bureau of Sanitation at 800.773.2489 (800.773.CITY) or call 3-1-1. Request to be added for service and specify the number of containers you want.
2. An inspector will come out and meet with you to: confirm the service is for a residence; that the address is correct; and that there are horses on the property. The inspector will also need the LADWP account number to confirm service for the address.
3. Containers are \$10/month per 60 gallon container. Each container may only be half-full (trash trucks cannot lift a heavier can) for each weekly pick-up. The usual ratio is 1 container/horse. There is no restriction as to the number of containers a customer can request.



**Dial 3-1-1 - One Call to City Hall**

*by Bonnie Mason*

The 3-1-1 Call Center is open daily, including weekends and holidays. Effective July 19, 2011, the 3-1-1 Call Center hours of operation changed to:

8:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. Open  
4:45 p.m. - 8:00 a.m. Closed

- From within the City limits: Dial 3-1-1 from any wired telephone line or by Cingular wireless to connect with the 3-1-1 call center.
- Calls from the greater Los Angeles area: Toll free: (866) 4-LA-CITY.
- Calls from outside the greater Los Angeles area: (213) 473-3231.

3-1-1 agents process customer inquiries using the Citywide Services Directory: <http://publiccsd.lacity.org> or accessible at the Official website of the City of Los Angeles ([www.lacity.org](http://www.lacity.org)) which provides accurate information for more than 1,500 non-emergency City service requests, such as:

- City Services: Garbage Collection, Non-Emergency Police & Fire, Business Permits, Street Maintenance, etc.
- City of Los Angeles Office Locations and City Phone Numbers
- Public Meeting Schedules, e.g., Council, Committees, Neighborhood Council Meetings, Citywide Events, etc.
- General Information for the City of Los Angeles



**Southern California Dig Alert**

Call 1-800-227-2600

To identify your home's underground infrastructure, call Dig Alert before you begin any underground project. Dig Alert is a free service for which you must call at least 2 days in advance. Local utilities will send crews to your home to mark sewer lines, water lines, gas lines, and electric and telephone lines.

We are currently looking for someone to do the Ad Collection for the SHPOA newsletter. It's a great way to volunteer for your community and get to know your neighbors! And it doesn't take much time at all. Call Dave at 352-7618.



## Prevent Identity Theft

by Elektra Kruger

**DETER** identity theft by safeguarding your personal information:

- Shred financial documents and paperwork with any personal information in a cross-cut shredder before discarding them.
- Protect your S.S. # - do not carry your S.S. card in your wallet
- Don't give out personal information on the phone, through the mail or on-line unless you yourself initiated the contact and you know who you are dealing with.

**DETECT** any unexpected activity in your financial accounts by monitoring your accounts and billing statements:

- Are you expecting a bill that does not arrive?
- Are there any credit card charges you did not make?
- Have you been denied credit for no apparent reason?

**DEFEND** yourself against identity theft as soon as you suspect it:

- Place a "Fraud Alert" with the three nationwide consumer credit reporting companies: Experian at 1-888-EXPERIAN (1-888-3997-3742), TransUnion at 1-800-680-7289 and/or Equifax at 1-800-525-6285
- Contact the fraud department of each company where an account was opened or a charge was made without your ok.
- File a Police Report to help you deal with creditors in the future who may want proof of the crime.



## Five Ways ID Theft Happens

by Elektra Kruger

**Dumpster Diving:** Thieves rummage through trash looking for bills or other paperwork with personal information on it.

**Skimming:** Credit/debit card numbers are stolen using a special storage device either as you process your card or by walking close to you with the device in their possession.

**Phishing:** Thieves pretend to be financial institutions, companies or government agencies calling or e-mailing or sending computer pop-up messages trying to get you to reveal your personal information.

**Hacking:** Thieves hack into e-mail or on-line accounts to access personal information or a company's database to access its records.

**Stealing:** And then there is plain old everyday stealing - wallets, purses and mail. Mail includes things such as bank and credit card statements, pre-approved credit offers, newly printed checks or tax information. Personnel records may be stolen from employers or employees with access to records may be bribed to provide information.

To learn how to Deter-Detect-Defend-Avoid identity theft, visit [ftc.gov/idtheft](http://ftc.gov/idtheft) on-line or request information packets in writing from the Consumer Response Center, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, H-130, Washington, D.C. 20580.

## Fixing Sidewalks...“Buyer Beware” - Summary

by Elektra Kruger

In 2005, the Bureau of Street Services budgeted to replace 52 of the City's 6,500 miles of sidewalks. A customer calling in to have a sidewalk repaired could expect to have the job done in 83 years. In recognition of this, in September 2005, Councilmember Bernard Parks presented a Motion to City Council asking the Bureau of Street Services (BSS), the City's Administrative Officer and the City Attorney together with a variety of stakeholder organizations to review a "point-of-sale" plan which would require a homeowner to obtain a City inspection of the sidewalk fronting his property prior to sale.

If the sidewalk was not damaged, the current homeowner need not do anything. If the sidewalk was damaged, he would have to see to its repair prior to completion of a property sale.

In early May 2007, the BSS finally submitted a report to the City Council's Public Works Committee with recommendations related to the point-of-sale plan. Apparently by 2007, the BSS was now responsible for maintaining 10,750 miles of sidewalks and it was determined that 2 out of every 5 miles of sidewalks were damaged and the City's expenditures on "trip-and-fall" lawsuits had increased to a point where they nearly equaled expenditures on repairs.

Responsibility for sidewalk repair has an interesting history in the City of Los Angeles. In 1911, the State of California enacted an Improvement Act mandating that property owners be held responsible for maintaining sidewalks adjacent to their properties. Unfortunately, during the housing boom of the 1950's and 1960's, developers planted fast growing trees with inappropriate root systems and over the years these root systems raised and cracked sidewalks. Recognizing this, in 1974 Los Angeles enacted an Ordinance exempting homeowners from responsibility for root-damaged sidewalks and assumed repair costs. Between 1976 and 1978 the City repaired damaged sidewalks with federal monies - monies that were soon depleted and in 1979 the City reinstated the 1911 policy.

In 2004, Councilmember Wendy Greuel tested a pilot 50/50 cost-sharing program in which a homeowner requesting repairs could split repair costs 50/50 with the City. This program was popular in some respects and was expanded citywide the very next year. Unfortunately, budget constraints resulted in a huge backload of requests and the program had minimal effect in the larger scheme of things and funding was put on hold.

In 2007, the City was considering three competing policies to deal with damaged sidewalk repair:

The City would cite property owners for damaged sidewalks fronting their properties requiring that the property owner have them fixed.

The property owner would be required to fix damaged sidewalks upon sale of the property (point-of-sale plan)

Funding would be provided to the City for damaged sidewalk repair via a Bond Measure.

Workshops, interviews and focus groups provided a sample of which of these policies might garner the greater support. 83% were determined to potentially support a point-of-sale policy if it were proposed, 78% were determined to potentially support a Bond Measure if this policy were proposed, but only 22% would potentially

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*Continued on page 9*

## **Underground Flammable Transmission Pipeline Safety - Summary**

*by Elektra Kruger*

On September 9, 2010, an underground flammable transmission pipeline exploded in San Bruno, California, killing four people, injuring more than 60 others, and causing a fire that destroyed 37 homes and damaged more than 120 others.

Los Angeles is not immune. On June 16, 1976, an 8-inch pipeline ruptured by excavation equipment on Venice Blvd. resulted in a fire that killed six people, injured 24 and destroyed six structures. On January 17, 1994, following the Northridge Earthquake, a 20-inch natural gas feeder main ruptured and exploded on Balboa Blvd. in Granada Hills destroying 5 homes in the ensuing fire.

Hundreds of pipelines carry natural gas, petroleum and other flammable products across L.A. Councilmember Bill Rosendahl has initiated reviews related to the safety record and compliance of its flammable pipeline franchises with applicable local, state and federal laws (especially in light of the City's experiences involving bursting water lines). The Councilmember also felt it important for the City Council to review the City's preparedness and response plans in the event of a flammable pipeline emergency.

In September 2010, Councilman Rosendahl presented a Motion to City Council (later referred to the Public Safety Committee) asking the LAFD, the Emergency Management Department, the Bureau of Engineering, the Department of Building and Safety, and the Harbor Department to submit reports to the City Council on the current safety and compliance records of franchises utilizing any underground flammable transmission pipelines as well as on the City's preparedness, response and mitigation plans in the event of a pipeline rupture and/or explosion. He also asked the agencies to work with The Gas Company to prepare a report on the status of flammable transmission pipelines in LA.

Here are highlights of The Gas Company's report:

They operate 11,523 miles of natural gas pipelines in LA and are the nation's largest natural gas distribution utility providing energy to 20.5 million customers.

Of the total 11,523 miles of underground pipeline that The Gas Company owns within the City of Los Angeles, a little over 7,000 miles are of steel and a little under 4,500 miles are of polyethylene plastic.

The company's service territory encompasses approximately 20,000 sq. miles of diverse terrain throughout Central and Southern California all the way from Visalia to the Mexican border. Gas Company pipelines transport natural gas from interstate operators as well as local California gas producers through pipelines that range in size from a half inch to 36 inches in diameter at a pressure of anywhere from 1 to 1,032 psig.

The Gas Company claims they meet or exceed all State and Federal pipeline safety regulations, and covered such things as safety regulations and requirements for operating and maintaining natural gas pipelines.

The Gas Company system ends at the outlet of the meter - all pipes connecting the meter to any burner tip inside the home are typically referred to as "house lines" and are not owned or operated by The Gas Company and their maintenance is the responsibility of the individual homeowner.

For those of you worried about the integrity and strength of plastic pipes, The Gas Company claims not to operate

*Continued on page 9*

## **Pornography in Our Public Libraries - Summary**

*by Elektra Kruger*

A visitor to a City public library was seen viewing pornographic material on a public library computer in plain view of the circulation desk where other patrons, adults and children also were able to see the computer screen. Library policy has been that while "underfiltering" websites might allow for pornographic material to be viewed, "overfiltering" may block patron access to research sites.

The Library Department has taken the position that they cannot prohibit the public from viewing pornography because that would violate their First Amendment Rights. As long as they are viewing legal pornography and keeping it to themselves, doing so even in the venue of a public library, it may not be prohibited. Exceptions are the viewing of child pornography which is considered illegal as well as any attempt to actively engage other library patrons into viewing the pornography.

What about others rights? Even if one does not "actively" engage another patron in the viewing of pornographic material, the very fact that this is taking place in a public place where children may be present makes this wrong.

In late January 2011, Councilmember Ed Reyes presented a Motion to City Council requesting that the library be instructed to investigate the incident in which a public library patron was viewing pornographic material on a computer in clear view of the library's circulation desk and requesting the City Attorney's Office to review and report on the legal options addressing viewing pornography on computers at public libraries while still being cognizant of First Amendment Rights of all people.

The Motion was referred to the City Council's Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee and taken into consideration at the Committee's April 12, 2011 meeting at which time the local community expressed great concern. The City Librarian and Library's Interim Director of Branch Library Services testified that a complaint had been made at the time of the incident and the patron viewing the explicit material was reseated to another computer. The Library agreed to move computers away from the circulation desk and to provide privacy screens for all computers.

The Committee questioned the Library Department as to how often similar incidents are known to occur (2-3 complaints per year are registered), what the sightlines of computer locations are and whether any assessment had ever been made as to limiting screen visibility while still maintaining security.

A representative from the City Attorney's Office said that in regards to First Amendment Rights there also needs to be a balance between protecting "speech" for those who want to access it and shielding things from those that do not care to see it. The Library Department is seeking to meet this balance by repositioning computers and providing privacy screens with signage that removal of such screens is prohibited. Individuals found to be removing the privacy screens, repositioning computer monitors or in any way enticing other patrons to view explicit material would be removed from the premises and Library Security or Police would be summoned.

Following all testimony, the Committee recommended that the City Council request the City Attorney's Office to further investigate all legal options addressing the viewing of pornography on public computers at City-owned libraries while still being cognizant of the First Amendment Rights of ALL citizens. The item was agendaized to the April 26, 2011 City Council hearing. SHPOA will update you on the outcome of the issue in question.

## ***I Can Hear The Plodding of Beetles***

*By Marlene Hitt*

*I have heard of silence  
deep enough to hurt the ear,  
of quiet strong enough to know  
the sound of blood rushing  
through one's own body.  
There was once in this Valley  
quiet enough  
to make public a whisper.  
Murmured conversation  
pushed away miles with silence.  
At night, owl called. Coyote  
sang her blessing over a meal.  
From a dusty trail, once,  
hooves made rhythm  
for a wagon's wheels,  
a duet that entertained mid day.  
The old person sang  
"Lord, I'm Comin' Home"  
and the song was heard  
clear to the hills and beyond.  
The men, tired, dusty, hot  
slept outside on their cots.  
Their lullabies-- the cough of a friend  
from across the valley, a quiet song  
sung in a tent, a murmur..  
Years have passed. Since then,  
new sounds fill the air.  
Jays still squabble,  
small creatures scurry  
breaking branches,  
avalanching piles of pebbles.  
But now, so many years present,  
is a deafness from new noise.  
Hammers tap duets with hand saw,  
A cement truck  
pounds on the ready soil,  
covering the death cry  
of the horned spine flower.  
Roaring, as relentless as waterfall,  
cascades from the freeway.  
Big-rigs speed. Families rush,  
the weary hurry to quieter shores.  
Over a rocky place  
below the asphalt of the 210  
empty flatbeds thump,  
bounce over that stubborn place  
where tough globs of granite  
lay miles deep  
and three inches too high.  
This morning, inside the loudness,  
I see a cat's mouth  
meowing a silent cry  
that forms from my memory.  
Heard only in my mind  
is the call of mourning dove  
and the sigh of breeze.  
In my thoughts  
I an hear the plodding of beetles.*



**Underground Pipeline***Continued from pg 7*

any polyethylene pipelines above 60 psig, and that all such pipelines operated above 60 psig are steel which is more resistant to excavation damage.

Organizations involved in regulating and monitoring the gas pipeline industry are the Federal Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and the California Public Utilities Commission.

Safety involving the odorless gas is further promoted through the addition of odorous chemical compounds to the gas that help detect natural gas leaks. The Gas Company monitors odor levels at several locations at regular intervals. In LA surveyors periodically walk along the entire path of buried pipelines. High priority leaks are continuously monitored and repaired promptly.

The question remains: was the San Bruno one of those pipelines that posed "little threat" to the public? To be continued in future issues of the SHPOA newsletter.

**Sidewalk Fixing***Continued from pg 5*

support the City citing a property owner with damaged sidewalks fronting his/her property if presented with that option.

Given that the greatest support appeared to be for a "point-of-sale" policy, in late May 2007, the Bureau of Street Services submitted a report to the City Council's Public Works Committee recommending the formation of a subcommittee that would iron out the details and various issues that would face a Point-of-Sale Sidewalk Repair Program in the City including such things as workforce training, legal issues, ordinance changes, program structure and community/business outreach.

In late August 2007, the Bureau gathered together representatives from numerous City Departments, Organizations, Associations, etc. to consider the various issues that might be related to a Point-of-Sale Program. It turns out to be a very complicated situation and one in which there are as many opinions and options as there are broken sidewalks.

The moral of the story is this: many people fail to grasp that in most cases the City owns easement rights to the first couple of feet of property set-backs and they have the right to do just about anything they want with that easement such as creating sidewalks, landscaping parkways, etc. Thereafter (and let the buyer beware!) it does become the property owners' responsibility to maintain the parkways. So if trees were not properly maintained over the years and were allowed to damage the sidewalks, it is actually the fault of the property owner. To be continued in future issues of the SHPOA newsletter.

## **This Other World: A Myth About Good and Evil**

*By Marlene Hitt*

We want to thank Al Knight for inviting some of the historical societies members on a field trip where we heard Chester King tell stories about the local native people. We are so grateful to Chester. This is one myth about Khra'wiyawi and his family.

In that other time when Khra'wiyawi came to the Sierra Tuhunga - no one knows where - he sat down and turned into stone and is still seated there.

When this legend was to be told, the hearers first washed themselves, then came to listen to the legend of Khra'wiyawi, the Capitan of Tuhunga. Khra'wiyawi had a son and a daughter. The daughter married a man from the village on the Los Angeles side of the mountain. After she had her first baby, a boy, she went to see her family, at the request of her husband, of course.

Her family was very poor so the capitan, her husband prepared a deer for her to carry home. On the way she stopped, roasted and ate the deer, pounded its bones and ate them. When she returned, much too soon, for she never got the deer to her parents, she told her husband that her parents were still terribly poor. He once again gave her a deer, sent her off and she did the same thing again. The third time Khra'wiyawi sent a servant girl along to check things out. The wife repeated the meal, never got to her parents and returned with the servant. The servant told on her at the threat of being killed.

The people were angry with the wife, so Khra'wiyawi thought of a way to punish her by withholding all water from her. She was a great drinker of water, so this was a dire punishment. At her last attempt to find water, someone gave her a jug of liquid which was urine. She drank it all, then went to bed. In the morning all her hair had fallen out - she was completely bald.

Well, then she did go home to mama, hiding in the grain basket until her mother came along, her bald presence scared her mother. While she was on this journey home, her baby became thirsty and hungry, so she killed him by bashing him against a stone.

The young wife's shame about her bald head was great. No one should see her bald. As time went by, her mother, for the cure, sent her to bathe in her brother's favorite pristine pool. She got into trouble there, as her brother did not allow anyone to bathe in his water.

Well, her brother finally caught her in his pool and he kicked her out. So, she went to the place of the waters, the Mother of the Waters, at which point she thought she saw her baby in the water. She grabbed him up and suckled him until he swallowed her up. The mother of the waters had swallowed her.

Not all was known, however, and the perspective of the parents was that the daughter's husband was the culprit. This wasn't well accepted, so all kinds of deeds were done and with the help of a sorcerer. Khra'wiyawi set out to avenge his daughter. During the process, an old man is flayed, his body parts thrown out from a cave, women in Tuna Canyon were blinded, in the body of an eagle was shot with arrows, while everyone watching died of arrow piercings.

Finally, after murder and mayhem of all sorts, the

stag, the god and king of them all appeared to Khra'wiyawi. The stag promised that Khra'wiyawi would never again harm and turned him into a stone. His wife also turned to stone and both are still sitting there in the mountain facing the rancheria of Tuhunga.

This was a case of the court of good over evil. No penitentiary of brick or stone was needed.



## Photo Red Light Program Fails?

by Elektra Kruger

There has been some question as to the effectiveness of photo red light enforcement at intersections. Statistically, there appears to be little significant improvement in traffic safety as a result of the use of the photo red light cameras. In recognition of this, in late April 2011, Councilmember Janice Hahn presented a Motion to City Council suggesting that the City consider analyzing whether the same or better improvement in safety statistics could be obtained utilizing less expensive engineering solutions such as lengthening the yellow signal time and/or lengthening or instituting the all red phase.

She requested that the City Council instruct the Los Angeles Department of Transportation and Los Angeles Police Department to undertake a pilot project at 32 new intersections throughout the City which would test less expensive traffic solutions such as lengthening the yellow signal time and instituting or lengthening the all red phase. The Motion also asked that the Department of Transportation and LAPD identify 32 intersections that might be most appropriate for this pilot project.

The Motion was referred to both the City Council's Public Safety and Transportation Committees for their review and recommendations.

**Editor's Note:** As you may have read recently, the program is now being put out to pasture. What a waste of time and resources this has been. Why couldn't this research about potential traffic safety improvement have been completed BEFORE the costly program was adopted here in LA? I'd rather see our law enforcement officers have a much greater visible and physical presence in our community rather than relying on ineffective technologies such as this.



## 3-1-1 On-Line?

by Elektra Kruger

By now you have all heard the phrase "3-1-1, One-Call to City Hall". It is the phone number that will get you to a City Hall operator who can forward your call to any City Office or any City Department and you don't have to remember a million phone numbers to call direct. When first set up, it was a dream. Never on hold, three little numbers that could get you anywhere in City Hall. Unfortunately with the cut-backs in personnel that have come with the City's budget crisis you spend a little time on hold now, but for me it is worth it not having to remember a million different phone numbers.

Councilmembers Tom LaBonge and Paul Krekorian feel that the City's 3-1-1 system could also be made available on-line and in mid-June 2011 co-presented a Motion to City Council suggesting that the Council instruct the Information Technology Agency to report on the feasibility of creating a website to complement the 3-1-1 call center (e.g. 311.lacity.org) and to research similar systems that might already be in use in other municipalities. SHPOA will keep you abreast of the progress of this Motion.

## **Graffiti Tracker Program - Summary**

*by Elektra Kruger*

Graffiti is unwelcome everywhere. What are we doing about it?

In 2008, the Orange County Sheriff's Department launched a Graffiti Tracking Program that documented and tracked graffiti in the hopes of catching more taggers. The system relies on cell-phones equipped with cameras and GPS devices and has been used effectively on County buses resulting in a 46% drop in tagging in 2008. The most useful aspect of the system is data-sharing between law enforcement and transit agencies. Similarly, in LA County, the City of Pico Rivera established a Graffiti Tracker Program in 2006 monitoring an 11 sq. mi. area that analyzed and categorized graffiti scrawls. They registered significant reductions in tagging incidents since inception of their program.

In 2007, the LAPD, the Board of Public Works and the Department of Recreation and Parks were asked to report to the City Council on the success rate of the Pico Rivera program. The LAPD agreed that the program was effective, but questioned whether such a program would be effective in a City the size of LA. The LAPD cited concerns about cost, estimating installation of such a program to run around \$3.9 million with added costs of dedicated LAPD personnel as well as local and regional graffiti task forces to coordinate abatement strategies. Maybe they are right to be concerned about the \$3.9 million cost, but a cost comparison shatters that argument as \$32,000 in reward funds was paid to witnesses who reported incidents of tagging and, in 2008, the City spent approximately \$7 million cleaning up after taggers.

Fines on taggers are not enough. In 2007, the Office of Community Beautification collected \$52,000 from more than 100 individuals caught tagging. That boils down to a little over \$500 per individual. Do you really think that is going to sting enough to stop them from doing it again? We have to toughen penalties on law-breaking offenders.

I think we should impose the equivalent of a significant maximum fine that can only be paid off in the form of manual labor at the hourly minimum wage level to be worked off ONLY in the form of trash removal, weed removal and graffiti clean-up from public right-of-ways, beaches, riverbeds, etc. under the supervision of a graffiti task force so that this is treated as the hard-labor job it really is on a full-day, 9-to-5, 5 day a week basis and not the BBQ lunch party that goes along with a 2-3 hr, 1-day a year community project (I don't, by any means, mean to sound as if I am belittling the efforts a whole community puts forth in these projects. It IS hard work and it is gratifying for a whole community to care enough to take it upon themselves to keep their communities a place to have pride in).

On Oct. 20, 2010, the City Council's Public Works Committee finally dusted off the files of a Motion presented to the City Council by Councilmember Jose Huizar in mid-Sept. 2008 and submitted the following recommendations to the City Council for their approval:

Request the Board of Public Work's Office of Community Beautification to report to the City Council on steps necessary to implement a Graffiti Tracker Program and the feasibility of partnering with the County of LA as well as the other 87 cities in the County to share in the costs for establishing and utilizing such a program

Instruct the City's Chief Legislative Analyst and the City's Administrative Officer to report to the City Council on possible funding sources for a Graffiti Tracker Program

Instruct the City's Administrative Officer to report to the City Council on procedures allowing for the transfer of funds from Public Works into an LAPD account for the purchase of necessary hardware to implement/run a Graffiti Tracker Program as well as for the Office of Community Beautification to increase its graffiti abatement efforts.

In early December 2010, the City's Chief Legislative Analyst submitted a report related to Graffiti Tagger Tracking Programs in other cities as well as pilot programs in the LA area. They referenced the Tracker program developed by the Orange County Sheriff's Department which maintained a database of photographs downloaded from SmartPhones as well as other documentation identifying suspects, monikers and specific locations of each vandalism incident. In 2009, the Orange County Sheriff's Department provided the LAPD with a link to its database which enabled the LAPD to implement a pilot program of it's own at their Van Nuys Division. The LAPD coordinated the pilot program with the Department of Public Work's Office of Community Beautification which supplied SmartPhones to its graffiti abatement contractors servicing the Van Nuys area. To be continued in future issues of the SHPOA newsletter.

Note from the Editor: in my opinion, graffiti is a precursor to decline in a neighborhood, a precursor to breakdown of a community. I believe we have become far too tolerant of such unsightly expressions on both public and private property. Who is protecting those of us who find the graffiti ugly and illegal? Far from art, it represents lawlessness. Find me one property owner – public or private – that would willingly allow graffiti-ists to deface their property? Again, as with the failed red light camera program, let's see our law enforcement community prioritize being more visible and physically present in our communities.



## **Our White Elephant Museum – (Summary as of Mid-October 2010)**

*by Elektra Kruger*

Readers Digest Version to date: The Children's Museum of Los Angeles (CMLA) filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy in April 2009. All exhibits they owned were personal property and were sold in the bankruptcy proceedings. The City took possession of the museum facilities. Councilmember Alarcon began trying to get the Science Museum of Los Angeles or any other entity to take an interest in supplying displays for the Museum. No go.

Twelve months later in 2010, with no word to the community, I came across a City Council Agenda item to be voted on the very next day - a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed between the CMLA and the Discovery Science Center. Not that this isn't manna from heaven to have something as wonderful as the Discovery Channel to take an interest in the CMLA facilities, but it would be nice for the community to know more about it even though the proposed Memorandum of Understanding was agendized and posted the legally required 72 hours prior to a public meeting of the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners.

At their meeting on October 20, 2010, the Commission approved the Memorandum but there was no way meaningful public input could have taken place. How many community folks can review a 90+ page document and be able to speak knowledgeably either in favor of or in opposition to the Memorandum as written in that amount of time? I couldn't.

On October 20, 2010, the Board of Recreation and Park

## **Increase in Late Renewal Fees for Alarm Permits**

*by Elektra Kruger*

The City Council requested the office of the City Attorney to prepare and present a Draft Ordinance to effectuate an increase in the Late Permit Renewal Fee Payment Penalty for Alarm System users from \$10 to \$15 and establishment of a Reapplication Fee of \$60 for alarm permits not renewed within 90 days of expiration as recommended by the Board of Police Commissioners.

The City Attorney, upon reviewing the Los Angeles Municipal Code, determined that the Code already required a reapplication fee of \$30 if the permit owner failed to renew his/her Alarm Permit within 90 days of expiration, so the Draft Ordinance would be written to read that a new "penalty fee" of \$30 would be added to the reapplication fee of \$30 for a total of \$60.

In late June 2010, the City Council's Public Safety Committee, following its review of the proposed Draft Ordinance, recommended that, rather than having the Ordinance express a fixed amount for the penalties, penalties be made to reflect a percentage of the Alarm System Permit Fee since that annual renewal fee may change over the years.

In late March 2011, the Office of the City Attorney released a revised Draft Ordinance to reflect that a Late Permit Penalty paid within 90 days of expiration be 50% of the Permit Fee and that a Late Permit Penalty paid after 90 days of expiration be 100% of the Permit Fee - and that that Late Permit Penalty shall be in addition to the Alarm System Permit Fee itself.

At its early April 2011 meeting, the Public Safety Committee reviewed the revised Draft Ordinance and recommended that the City Council adopt it as revised. The Draft Ordinance calling for increased penalties for later renewal of alarm permits was approved at the May 3, 2011 City Council session and the new penalty rates became effective June 20, 2011.



## **No Food Vendor Styrofoam?**

*by Elektra Kruger*

California State Senate Bill 568 (SB 568), if passed, would prohibit food vendors from distributing cooked food items in polystyrene (Styrofoam) containers. This is an effort to reduce the amount of polystyrene in the waste stream and littering the environment as Styrofoam is rarely recycled.

SB 568 passed the Senate Environmental Quality Committee on April 4, 2011 by a vote of 5-2, passed the Senate Floor on June 2, 2011 by a vote of 21-15 and is headed for the Assembly Floor. Aside from the large volume of waste created by the product, manufacturing polystyrene exposes workers to many dangerous chemicals that increase the risk for many forms of cancers. In addition to this, the Styrene from Polystyrene food containers migrate into the foods in those containers when heated or when in contact with fatty or acidic foods thereby endangering the general public to carcinogens and neurotoxins.

Polystyrene containers have also become a danger to marine wildlife. Because Polystyrene is so light, it is easily swept off of streets where it is commonly littered, enters our storm drain systems and becomes the second most abundant form of litter found on our beaches. Polystyrene containers tend to break down easily into smaller pieces which are mistaken as food by marine life. SHPOA will keep you abreast of the progress of SB 568.

## White Elephant Museum *Continued from pg 13*

Commissioners submitted a letter to Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa with an attached copy of the proposed Memorandum with the Discovery Science Center for the design, fabrication and installation of exhibits and the operation and maintenance of the Children's Museum and Environmental Awareness Center facility at Hansen Dam formerly known as the Children's Museum of Los Angeles. The CMLA had been developing a 57,000 square foot Children's Museum with funding from Prop 40, Prop K and private funding sources prior to filing for bankruptcy.



## Imposing Sanctions on Fraudulent Developers?

by Elektra Kruger

In early 2011, two Building and Safety (B/S) Inspectors were found officially guilty of accepting bribes while an investigation into an anonymous complaint about bribes being accepted at 52 known construction sites uncovered private contractors or land-use consultants having a real "buddy system" going on with certain B/S employees.

Surprisingly, Councilmember Dennis Zine publicly admits that such abuses do exist in the City and in late June 2011 presented a Motion to City Council asking that they call for the City Attorney to work with B/S and the City's Chief Legislative Analyst to prepare and present a report to the City Council's Audits & Governmental Efficiency Committee on what type of legal action or sanctions could be imposed against developers found guilty of violating our zoning laws.

Additionally, there have been instances where a Project has been cited for violations but continue to be granted permits to continue work on a different aspect of the same Project. Councilmember Zine presented a second Motion riding on the shoulders of the first that this should not be allowed and that once a Project has been found to violate the law and has been issued a "cease and desist" order, no aspect of that Project should be allowed to continue until such time as developers have complied with the first violation.

The County of LA has what is referred to as a "Clean Hands Ordinance" which states that if a zoning code is violated, no new application of any kind will be processed for that Project until existing violations have been complied with. The City of LA has no such "Clean Hands Ordinance," leaving a major loophole in land-use regulation enforcement. A developer may have violated the most basic zoning code and still be able to pull grading permits, building permits, etc. until they are so far into the process that the City feels it can no longer shut them down for being totally out of compliance with the initial most basic zoning code, and we are the ones that end up with something totally out of place and out of character in our neighborhoods. SHPOA will keep you informed as to the progress of this Motion.

### LAYOUT ARTIST FOR SHPOA NEWSLETTER

If you work in Adobe InDesign or QuarkXpress and would like to contribute your talent to this community, please contact Linda Fullerton at 818-246-8877.

