



# NEWS

West Pasadena Residents' Association

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

ESTABLISHED 1962

WINTER 2009

## Arlington Garden Comes of Age

By Betty & Charles McKenney

### 2008 was a special year for Arlington Garden.

In a crucial and welcome decision, the City and Caltrans have agreed to a new 10 year lease for the garden, assuring that it will continue to grace our City, with the support of the City of Pasadena.

The basic aim of Arlington Garden is to develop a water-wise garden to demonstrate how beautiful, practical, and enjoyable a well planned and maintained climate-appropriate garden can be. It has exceeded all expectations.

But missing were the garden's bones—the benches, walls, fountains, that make a garden, not just trees and plants.

- So, we installed a beautiful split concrete (urbanite) retaining wall in the garden's center. It holds our new Wish Tree Garden and wraps you in an enclosure for contemplating the garden's great variety of trees and plants.
- We installed an amphitheater, where people can sit and enjoy performances.
- People now are welcomed by several entrances to the garden, in particular the striking entrance at the garden's west end on Arlington
- People can walk by the solar powered fountain and view the perspective of the olive and lavender alley.

We also implemented significant water conserving measures such as installing a pipeless drain and berms around plants to contain water. And, with the help of Pasadena Water and Power and the City of Pasadena, we installed solar powered waterwise drip irrigation. It is welcome and is working well.

We were blessed to participate in a major art event with One Colorado and the Armory Center for the Arts. We were given 21 crape myrtle trees from the Yoko Ono Wish Tree Exhibit at One Colorado. During the three

months of the exhibit, people hung nearly 90,000 wishes on the trees, which Yoko Ono will take to Videy Island off the coast of Iceland and place



them in the John Lennon Imagine Peace Memorial. On November 15, some 70 persons welcomed the trees to Arlington Garden where they will blossom beautifully each summer in our Wish Tree Garden.

We hope in these tough times, we can continue to count on your support to help pay for these additions and for the garden's maintenance. And, of course, in these tough times, come to the garden for the respite that this quiet place of beauty offers.

*Editor's Note: Contributions to Arlington Garden, a 501c3 organization, can be sent to 295 Arlington Drive, Pasadena, CA 91105, c/o Betty and Charles McKenney* ■

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# President's Message

By Audrey O'Kelley

**T**he more things change, the more they stay the same.

Back in November 30, 2002, the Los Angeles Time's Business Section carried a page one article on Pasadena's residential development boom "orchestrated by city officials and private investors." According to Pasadena's Business Development Manager, the groundwork was laid in the early '90s when the city updated its general plan.

Well, six years have elapsed since that article was written and the boom has gone bust and buildings are still going up. Make no mistake, development has slowed a bit, but it is not over. Development will continue to be an issue and we are left with the enduring question: will we be able to protect the quality of life and character of our city?

With the New Year comes good news. The city is in the midst of updating the General Plan and City leaders want to hear from us. Further, we have an advantage not available to those in the early '90's; we can evaluate our plans and the underlying assumptions. We have a chance to

step back and ask: Did we get what we expected? Do we like what we got?

Figuring out where to go from here will entail some soul searching. I think it is essential that we address the motivations and assumptions held when we embarked on the development track for our city and determine whether they should continue to drive our city planning.

## **Inevitability and Fair Share**

First, developers and certain city officials have said that given Pasadena's location near the heart of metropolitan Los Angeles a more dense and urban Pasadena was inevitable. The LA Times article stated, "To some, a more dense and urban Pasadena might seem out of place in a city known for its leafy neighborhoods of restored bungalow homes and Craftsman mansions along the Arroyo Seco." Los Angeles-based developer Dan Rosenfeld of Urban Partners summed it up: "It's the next logical, evolutionary step for Pasadena. It's not a distant suburb anymore."

State mandates imposed upon California communities plays into inevitability as well. The idea that we

have to accept these mandates and take our "fair share" of the state's burgeoning population should be questioned along with the growth scenarios motivating them. After all, some of these scenarios are questionable and one safely could predict that absorbing endless population growth will destroy the Character and the Quality of Life in our city.

Certainly, we should question the assumption that proximity is destiny and attribute it to the motivation behind this statement. I would say that taking steps to make Pasadena denser and more urban would be logical for a developer, but not necessarily for the citizens who moved here for the quiet, leafy neighborhoods.

## **Money and Economic Vitality**

Developer and real estate interests were factors in the development boom. Another factor was the City's anticipation of opportunities for a modestly increased tax base. Certain City officials said that the surge in new residences would help to sustain a vibrant downtown, that there is a positive correlation between economic

## **NOTIFY YOUR CITY LEADERS**

There is much going on in the city—Open Space and Conservation policies being set, General Plans being updated—these and other ongoing work will affect our quality of life. Our representatives need to hear from you. Take a few minutes to make your voice heard.

### **Mayor Bill Bogaard**

bbogaard@cityofpasadena.net

### **Vice Mayor Steve Haderlein, District 4**

shaderlein@cityofpasadena.net

### **Councilmember Jacque Robinson, District 1**

jacquerobinson@cityofpasadena.net

### **Councilmember Margaret McAustin, District 2**

mmcaustin@cityofpasadena.net

### **Councilmember Chris Holden, District 3**

cholden@cityofpasadena.net

### **Councilmember Victor Gordo, District 5**

vgordo@cityofpasadena.net

### **Councilmember Steve Madison, District 6**

smadison@cityofpasadena.net

### **Councilmember Sid Tyler, District 7**

styler@cityofpasadena.net

### **City Clerk Mark Jomsky**

mjomsky@cityofpasadena.net

### **City Manager Michael J. Beck**

mbeck@cityofpasadena.net

vitality and growth. How is this measured? And, while charming and vibrant urban areas are an important part of Pasadena, how much more is needed?

### Smart Growth

When embarking on Pasadena's development plans "back then" it was thought that the character of the City's single family neighborhoods could be preserved if "future population growth and development could be steered toward Pasadena's commercial center," stretching between Lake Avenue on the east and Old Pasadena on the west, including transit oriented districts near the Gold Line.

To many, the projects built throughout central Pasadena have had a negative impact on our neighborhoods. Some of these buildings have been built adjacent to single family homes, looming over the homes, and blocking views and light. And of course, there is traffic overflow into the neighborhoods as well as the gridlock encountered as one goes about daily activities in our city.

City planners caution that regional development is a factor in traffic generation as well, noting that it flows in and out of Pasadena from our freeways. Mayor Bogaard has acknowledged the challenges of development, noting, "...the significant increase in housing poses major challenges to the city, relating to traffic, schools, parks, and other burdens on the city's infrastructure." Steering development is tricky in a small, built-out city like ours and I believe it will have limited success because of this. Certainly there will be a diminution of quality of life once density reaches a certain point. The question is has Pasadena reached the point of diminishing returns or will we soon?

### Speak Up

We have a great opportunity here to be truly smart. Let's take a hard look at our city now to see what we like and what we don't and modify our plans accordingly. While control over development rests with our elected leaders, ultimately, we will determine the quality of life and character of

Pasadena. We can stand silently by or we can make our voice heard and support candidates and leaders who demonstrate their commitment to the quality of life and character that has defined Pasadena

*Editor's note: Audrey O'Kelley is WPRA president. She can be reached at [OKelley@wpra.net](mailto:OKelley@wpra.net). ■*

## Guiding Principles

*By Audrey O'Kelley*

Pasadena's General Plan was written based on seven guiding principles, which affirm the values of our community. They are all relevant and work together, one no more important than another. These principles continue to guide all updates of the General Plan so it would be worthwhile to review them once more as we go forward in 2009:

- Growth will be targeted to serve community needs and enhance the quality of life.
- Change will be harmonized to preserve Pasadena's historic character and environment.
- Economic vitality will be promoted to provide jobs, services, revenues and opportunities.
- Pasadena will be promoted as a healthy family community.
- Pasadena will be a city where people can circulate without cars.
- Pasadena will be promoted as a cultural, scientific, corporate, entertainment and educational center for the region.
- Community participation will be a permanent part of achieving a greater city.

These are fine "principles." But what have they accomplished? One citizen stated: "These may be fine statements for policy wonks, planners, people who like to chatter on committees and the like, but they are useless for conveying messages to or motivating citizenry. We need to acknowledge that and focus opinion and interest away from the 'inside game' of planning commissions and wonks and to the outside game of getting citizens get fired up."

I think that is very good advice. The WPRA will continue to work on the "inside game," going to Commission and City Council meetings, reviewing the various plans to make sure they enhance our neighborhoods. This is important and must be done. Unfortunately, it is not enough. You must let your City Council and Commission members know how you feel about the direction Pasadena has taken over the past five years. The good news is that they want to hear from you. They have a renewed commitment to the 7th guiding principle and take to heart the mandate for Community Participation. ■

# Crime, Traffic and Development Top Neighborhood Concerns

By Vince Farhat

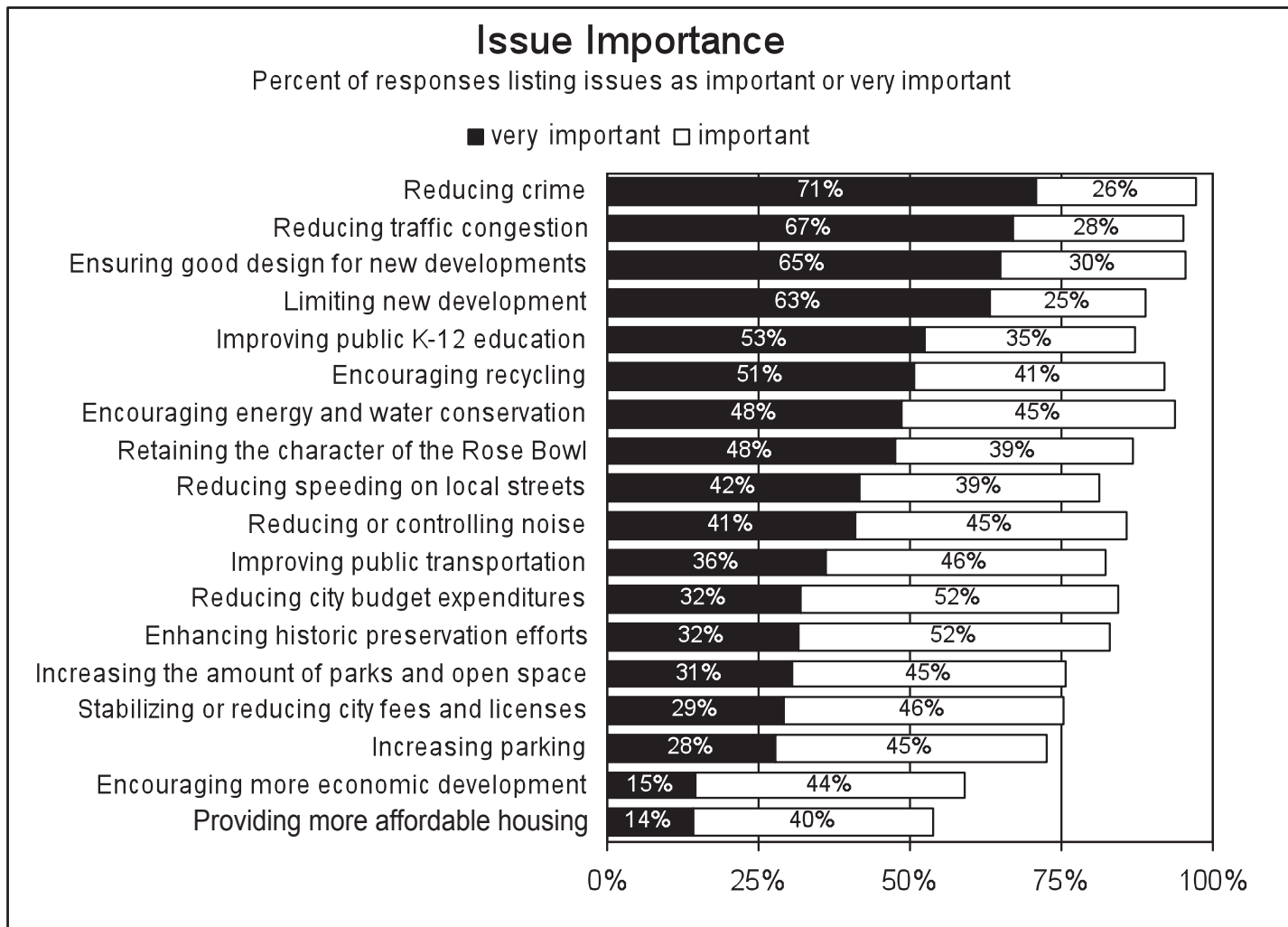
West Pasadena residents are concerned about crime and traffic congestion, and want City Hall to ensure good design for new real estate developments, according to a recent survey. 71% of survey respondents identified reducing crime as a “very important” issue. 67% of respondents said that reducing traffic is very important, and 87% indicated that traffic congestion has gotten worse in the last five years. 65% of survey respondents said that it is very important to ensure good design for new developments, and 63% consider limiting new development to be very important. 75% of respondents believe downtown Pasadena has

enough development, and 18% think downtown needs less development. Only 9% believe downtown needs more development.

Last Fall, the WPRA mailed surveys to all residential households in the 91105 zip code asking what residents think about issues facing Pasadena, including parks and open space, development, traffic, crime, and public education. As we prepare for the General Plan update, the WPRA wants to know what West Pasadena residents think are the most important issues facing our City. We are pleased to report that 979 surveys were returned by the October 2008 deadline. Of those who responded

to the question, 56% are between the ages of 35 and 65, and 39% are 65 years or older. Most respondents own their home, and have lived in Pasadena for many years.

Crime, traffic and development were the top concerns. The high level of concern about reducing crime was consistent across all age groups. In addition, West Pasadena residents expressed a desire to improve public education in Pasadena. 88% of survey respondents said that improving public K-12 education was very important or important. 54% of respondents think Pasadena needs more parks and open space, and 82% believe Pasadena’s approach to historic preservation





protects neighborhoods and the City's character.

The survey results will help guide WPRA's future advocacy. The General Plan update will give neighbors a forum to address concerns about traffic and the scale and design of future development. The WPRA will use the survey results to advocate for reasonable limits on the scale of new development and good design for future development. In addition, as reported elsewhere in this Newsletter, the WPRA recently formed a Community Safety

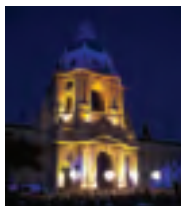
Committee to work with our Police Department to encourage residents to form neighborhood watch committees in their neighborhoods. Finally, the WPRA will work to improve public education by continuing to support our neighborhood public school, San Rafael Elementary School.

The WPRA's Board of Directors extends its sincere thanks and gratitude to WPRA member Laura Kaufman, who volunteered countless hours to organize and tabulate the survey results.

Complete survey results can be

found on our Internet website at [www.wpra.net](http://www.wpra.net). Although the survey is a useful tool to help gauge neighborhood sentiment, survey respondents may not represent a statistically valid sample. The information reported here and on the website represents only the tabulated results of those residents who responded to the survey. ■

	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
Reducing crime	71%	26%	3%
Reducing traffic congestion	67%	28%	5%
Ensuring good design for new developments	65%	30%	5%
Limiting new development	63%	25%	11%
Improving public K-12 education	53%	35%	13%
Encouraging recycling	51%	41%	8%
Encouraging energy and water conservation	48%	45%	6%
Retaining the character of the Rose Bowl	48%	39%	13%
Reducing speeding on local streets	42%	39%	19%
Reducing or controlling noise	41%	45%	14%
Improving public transportation	36%	46%	18%
Reducing city budget expenditures	32%	52%	16%
Enhancing historic preservation efforts	32%	52%	17%
Increasing the amount of parks and open space	31%	45%	24%
Stabilizing or reducing city fees and licenses	29%	46%	25%
Increasing parking	28%	45%	27%
Encouraging more economic development	15%	44%	41%
Providing more affordable housing	14%	40%	46%



# City Hall Update

By Vince Farhat

## New City Manager Appoints Top Administrators

Last year, the City Council hired Michael J. Beck as Pasadena's new City Manager. As reported in the Summer issue of the WPRA Newsletter, Mr. Beck came to Pasadena from the City of Riverside, where he served as Assistant City Manager.

In December, Mr. Beck announced three top administrative appointments. Andrew M. Green has been appointed Director of Finance, Steve Mermell has been named Assistant City Manager, and William K. Huang has been appointed Director of the Pasadena Housing Department. They began their new positions on January 5.

Green comes to Pasadena from Reno, Nevada, where he served as finance director. Previously he led the finance departments of Rialto and of San Bernardino. As Finance Director, Green will be responsible for developing and monitoring the city-wide budget, which this fiscal year is \$614 million and includes 2,230 full-time employees. In his new capacity he will manage 130 departmental employees engaged in accounting and reporting, treasury and debt management, purchasing, risk management, pension system administration, payroll, billing and collections, auditing and information technology.

Mermell will be one of two Assistant City Managers reporting directly to Beck. He has worked for Pasadena for nearly 20 years in a variety of roles, including acting assistant city manager, budget administrator and purchasing administrator. The Assistant City Manager provides leadership and coordination for multiple departments; manages and resolves critical, high profile issues that impact the strategic direction of

the city; performs a variety of difficult administrative assignments; directs city activities and issues requiring multi-department interactions; facilitates and develops collaboration among community organizations and city government; and makes decisions with the authority of the city manager in designated areas of responsibility.

Huang served as acting executive director of the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission, where he oversaw housing and community development, redevelopment, public housing and rental assistance. He previously was senior program associate for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, working with communities on housing development and neighborhood revitalization; and vice president/deputy director for Los Angeles Community Design Center, where he was responsible for all development, planning and architectural projects, including more than 2,000 units of affordable housing. As Director of the Pasadena Housing Department, he manages 35 employees and an annual budget of \$37 million.

## City Faces Budget Deficit

The City of Pasadena could start the new fiscal year in July with a \$20 million deficit. As reported in the Pasadena Star-News, City staff outlined a grim budget scenario at the December 15, 2008 City Council meeting. The staff budget report came after the Council had already instructed department heads to cut five percent from their budgets. The budget cuts will be made through hiring freezes, which staff believes will amount to approximately 40 positions remaining vacant. Even with a hiring freeze, however, a remaining \$6.5 million deficit could carry over into next year's budget.

Pasadena has followed national trends in unemployment and retail sales, and has experienced a decline in tax revenues. The City may also need to spend nearly \$1 million to shore up the police and fire departments' pension fund. To cut the deficit, the Star-News reported that the city plans to explore an extended hiring freeze, renegotiating vendor contracts, cutting staff travel and training, and possible unpaid employee furloughs. Several Council members also have suggested the city look into the possibility of negotiating a pay freeze on staff raises for 2009, or even a pay cut. For more information on city budget issues, please contact the Pasadena Department of Finance at (626) 744-4355 or visit <http://www.cityofpasadena.net/finance/>.

## Local Campaign Reports Soon to be Online

The Pasadena City Council recently approved a proposal by the City Clerk to post campaign finance statements for elected city and school district officials on the city's Internet website. Pasadena is now among a relatively small number of cities that put this information online.

The finance records detail who council members and other elected officials have taken money from to run for office, including the amount donated. The statements also include any independent political organizations that take action to promote a candidate, including printing fliers, running issue ads, or donating any time or services to a campaign. Pasadena's Taxpayer Protection Act bars elected officials from taking contributions from any person or organization that receives a direct public benefit from a council action. For more information, please call the Office of the Pasadena City Clerk at (626) 744-4124 or visit <http://www.cityofpasadena.net/cityclerk/>.

*Editor's Note: Please send an e-mail to [update@wptra.net](mailto:update@wptra.net) if you want to receive weekly neighborhood updates regarding Pasadena city government and civic affairs. ■*

# City Reviews Tree Protection Ordinance

*By Mic Hansen*

As many of you are aware, the City of Pasadena passed the "City Trees and Tree Protection Ordinance" in May of 2002. This action culminated years of community interest in preserving and protecting Pasadena's remarkable urban forest, which is, along with its rich architectural and cultural heritage, one of Pasadena's distinguishing attributes.

The City has available on its website the list of protected trees, which includes 13 native trees as well as 108 additional trees, many characteristically seen in Pasadena such as varieties of palm, eucalyptus, magnolia, and oak.

Last fall, in an effort to improve and further refine the Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO), review of and revisions to the initial document were recommended. During the six years that the TPO has been in force, requests to remove protected native, specimen, and landmark trees on private property have gone through a review process. This process has saved hundreds of endangered trees, as well as provided for the planting of replacement trees that otherwise may not have been required.

Recently, the City's Urban Forestry Advisory Committee and City Staff, responding to community requests, suggested review of the TPO to more closely examine how to achieve a sustainable urban forest, including regulations controlling the removal of protected trees on private property. As a result, the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee and the Design Commission conducted a public workshop on October 6, 2008. This

meeting posed questions such as, are there additional goals and purposes that the ordinance should consider, and what additional means should be employed to evaluate and measure existing trees on private property? Discussion items included evaluation of findings to approve removal of trees on private property, encouragement of



tree retention, timing for tree canopy replacement, advisability or practicality of off-site canopy replacement, revisiting the protected tree list, removal of unprotected trees, fees and permits, unauthorized removals, and monitoring and enforcement of the ordinance.

Homeowners, developers, landscape architects, arborists, neighborhood organizations (including WPRA), and other interested community members attended this meeting. Comments were varied and represented a good cross-section of views and interests.

Recommendations and suggestions were made to better educate the public to the value and care of trees, including their significant contribution

to mitigating heat and improving air quality, as well as encouraging wildlife and birds. Commissioners recommended, "...The goal of sustainable environment should be linked to how the City plants trees." Also, that the ordinance ought to be "easy to understand; use a 'common sense' approach" to make it more useful and accessible. Comments were also made regarding the advisability of planning certain species (such as palms and Chinese elms) that either disproportionately contribute to debris or lack of shade. Summary of comments from this workshop as well as other relevant documents are available on the City of Pasadena's website at: <http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/planning/Trees/Protection.asp>.

As we go to press, a second public workshop, which is a joint meeting of the Design Commission and the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee, is scheduled for Monday, January 12, 2009 at the Senior Center. In addition to the public, members of additional city commissions and committees, including Environmental Advisory, Northwest, Planning, and Historic Preservation have been invited to participate. Updated meeting notices, reports, and relevant background documents are posted at: <http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/planning/Trees/Protection.asp>. Opportunity also exists for posting your comments and suggestions on-line: <http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/planning/Trees/TreeComments.htm> ■





## Ambassador Campus Update

*By Mic Hansen*

There have been no material changes since the last report for the Ambassador West project. Fortress Investment Group, the current owner, continues its upkeep of the property. We do not have further information on progress regarding the completion of the sale of the three single-family residences that were reported in escrow in our last newsletter. The Wall Street Journal reported in its December 29, 2008, issue that "Fortress Investment Group...is now trading below \$1, compared with \$2.30 November 20 and more than \$15 at the start of the year." We hope this does not further complicate the future of The Ambassador West project.

For the Ambassador East Campus—known as the Westgate project—being developed by the Orange County firm

of Sares-Regis, construction for parcel three—bounded by Pasadena Avenue on the West, Del Mar on the South, De Lacey Avenue on the East, and Valley Street on the North—is proceeding according to plan. After completion of the subterranean garage and the foundations, work has now begun on the structures themselves. Parcel two has been cleared, but as of this date, construction work has not commenced.

Sares-Regis recently made an application for a variance to allow an increase in height for block one, at Green and Pasadena Avenue, above the 40-foot height limit specified in the Central District Specific Plan (CDSP). The Variance asks an increase in height to a maximum of 48 feet. The

Design Commission heard the request for Variance for advisory comments on December 15, 2008. Upon review and discussion, the Commission determined that findings could not be made to support the variance, and noted that their initial approval for the Westgate development was partly based upon the applicant not requesting variances or exceptions from the CDSP standards. The matter was heard by a Hearing Officer on January 7, at which time the applicant asked for a continuation. The request will be heard by The Board of Zoning Appeals, but a hearing date has not been confirmed. ■



# Updates and Happenings at San Rafael School

By Alyson Beecher

**H**appy New Year! Though in the world of academia the new year begins in September, January does bring with it some changes. As a teacher, I was always amazed at how much more mature students seemed when they came back from winter break. As a principal, the arrival of January brings with it reminders of how much still needs to be completed prior to May testing and the closing of school in

June. In preparing for this newsletter, I wanted to take time to share with you an array of information about events that will be happening throughout the next few months.



June. In preparing for this newsletter, I wanted to take time to share with you an array of information about events that will be happening throughout the next few months.

## **New School Phone Number**

Over the Winter break the school received a much needed new phone and voice mail system. As a result, we have a new main number which

## **School Tours and Fall Registration**

Open Enrollment begins on January 12th and continues through February 10th. Tours of the school can be made by appointment by calling the school's main number (see above). Registration for the 2009-2010 school year for students who will be new to San Rafael

school will begin in March 2009.

## **Read Across America Day**

Each year in celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday, the schools host a special event. This is one of my favorite days of the year. San Rafael will be inviting Guest Readers to come and read to classes on Friday, March 6, 2009 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. You may bring a book to

read or a selection of books to choose from will be available for you. If you are interested in being a reader, please contact Debbie Ayala at [dayala07@pusd.us](mailto:dayala07@pusd.us) or Jessica Pink at [jpink10@pusd.us](mailto:jpink10@pusd.us) and let us know your time and grade level preferences. Refreshments and goodies will be provided.

## **Recycling**

Do you have old cell phones or ink cartridges? The school has a program to recycle old cell phones and ink jet and laser ink cartridges. You may drop off your old cell phones and ink cartridges at the school's office during the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The money earned from recycling these items goes to fund field trips and educational assemblies.

## **Volunteers**

Thank you to everyone who has already responded to our request for volunteers! You are GREAT! As always, the school is continuing to look for volunteers to help in classrooms. We are also looking for volunteers who are handy at doing small carpentry or electrical jobs (i.e., installing a bulletin board, fixing an overhead projector, etc.) If you are interested in being a volunteer, please contact Alyson Beecher at [abeecher@pusd.us](mailto:abeecher@pusd.us) or Jessica Pink at [jpink10@pusd.us](mailto:jpink10@pusd.us) or at 626.396.5790. Volunteers are required to complete an application, fingerprint clearance, and TB test. This can be done at the Partners in Education Office at 351 S. Hudson Ave., Pasadena. The Volunteer Coordinator is Jessica Hollins. Her phone number is 626.396.3600 ext. 88347.

*Editor's Note: Alyson Beecher is principal of San Rafael School. She can be reached at [ABeecher@pusd.us](mailto:ABeecher@pusd.us).* ■

# Two Prominent Arroyo Seco Park Features Soon to be Renovated

*By Rosa Laveaga*

**T**wo well known park features in the Lower Arroyo Seco Natural Park will soon undergo renovation. The City of Pasadena Department of Public Works will be putting some grant dollars to work and renovating the Casting Pond and the Bird Sanctuary in the Lower Arroyo Seco this coming Spring 2009.

The City's first casting pond was built in 1947 for the purpose of practicing and teaching the principles of fly fishing in Oak Grove Park (now Hahamongna Watershed Park). This original casting pond was condemned in just five years, when it was found to

be in the way of the Foothill Freeway alignment. The present pond was then built in Lower Arroyo Park and dedicated November 1955 with the clubhouse completed in 1958.

The Casting Pond Renovation Project will preserve the pond and repair the pond surface for improved water conservation. The pond is currently lined with asphalt that has proven over time to not be the appropriate material to contain the pond water. Other project benefits include a repaired drainage system for the pond, replacement of benches and picnic tables, removal of the vast asphalt deck at the perimeter of the

pond which will be replaced with a decomposed granite walkway and 30 large pre-cast concrete pavers around the perimeter of the pond to serve as casting stations (see attached Site Plan). Funding is provided by 1992 Proposition A Los Angeles County Park Bond funds and a generous donation from the Pasadena Casting Club.

The Bird Sanctuary Renovation project will preserve the existing bird sanctuary built in 1935 as a lovely resting spot in the Lower Arroyo Seco. The Bird Sanctuary was constructed in honor of Emma Dickinson, who had donated a portion of her large estate



to the City. Because of her great love of birds, her friends suggested the city honor her gift by creating a bird sanctuary at the current location to overlook this scenic part of Pasadena's Arroyo Seco.

A community meeting is planned at the Bird Sanctuary on Saturday, January 17 at 10:00 a.m. for anyone interested in asking questions of City staff and seeing the proposed plans. The Bird Sanctuary is located south of Arroyo Boulevard and Norwood. If raining, the meeting will move to La Casita del Arroyo.

The Bird Sanctuary project is actually two projects in one. The first part of the work will replace

a broken storm line on the slope; the second part of the project will address the other park feature improvements being considered, including: a restored central fountain, repair of the seating area in the upper terrace, a new semi-circular wooden trellis structure over seating area, a recommendation to abandon use of lower terrace for human use due to vandal problems and instead densely plant with native plants, low level lighting in planters, curb cuts at two locations on Arroyo Boulevard to allow cyclists to access the area as a rest stop, and retention of all existing trees. Funding is provided by 1992 Proposition A Los Angeles County

Park Bond funds, funds from the City's storm drain replacement fund and funding from an Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Grant.

Of the many projects in the Lower Arroyo Master Plan, the Bird Sanctuary and Casting Pond Renovation Projects are fully funded, part of the City's adopted FY 2009 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and ready to be implemented.

*Editor's Note: Rosa Laveaga is Arroyo Seco Project Supervisor for the Parks and Natural Resources Division of the Pasadena Department of Public Works. She can be reached at [rlaveaga@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:rlaveaga@cityofpasadena.net).* ■

**PROJECT GOAL:** To improve the existing Casting Pond and adjacent Clubhouse amenities as described in the "Lower Arroyo Seco Master Plan" document.

**Lower Arroyo Seco Master Plan Objectives:**

- Repair Pond and Resurface Deck
- Repair Drainage System
- Provide Picnic Area (and other amenities)



The existing asphalt surface of the pond has proven over time to not be the appropriate material to contain the pond water. It is old and has been deteriorated over time.

• NEW CONCRETE CASTING STATIONS (4x4', EARTH-TONE COLOR) WILL REPLACE THE PAINTED SQUARES.

• NEW DISTANCE MARKERS WILL REPLACE THE PAINTED MARKS ALONG THE INSIDE OF THE POND EDGE.

• A NEW DECOMPOSED GRANITE WALKWAY WILL REPLACE THE IMPERMEABLE ASPHALT.

• THE NEW POND SURFACE WILL SLOPE TO THE NEW DRAIN LOCATION AT THE SOUTHERN END.

• THE NEW RAMP LOCATED IN THE SOUTHEAST CORNER WILL ASSIST MAINTENANCE WITH QUARTELY CLEANING



PERIMETER CURB  
NEW POND SURFACE  
Neoprene Membrane & Shotcrete  
EXISTING ASPHALT  
CASTING STATION  
D.G. WALKWAY

**POND SECTION:** The old asphalt will remain and be sealed with a neoprene membrane and 4 inches of shotcrete, which has proven at other locations, to be very effective water conservation materials. A new curb with decomposed granite walkway and concrete casting stations will complement the natural surroundings.



ARROYO SECO PICNIC TABLE



ACCESSIBLE DRINKING FOUNTAIN



ARROYO SECO BENCH

## LOWER ARROYO SECO ~ CASTING POND IMPROVEMENTS

CITY OF PASADENA ~ DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS ~ Parks and Natural Resources Division

November 18, 2008





# The Arroyo Seco

By Rick Thomas

The Arroyo Seco, a simple name translated from Spanish meaning dry wash – it's like no other place on Earth. Before I wrote the book *The Arroyo Seco*, I took a walk. I followed the Arroyo Seco from the deep mountain canyon beyond JPL through the Hahamongna Watershed, Brookside Park, South Pasadena and the historic communities of Los Angeles. What began as a nature walk along a mountain stream; ended up being a very long hike to an urban jungle.

The Arroyo Seco ends at the concrete storm channel of the arroyo's confluence with the Los Angeles River. Among the graffiti tagged over passes you can hear the constant hum of automobile traffic. And if you listen hard enough, you can also hear the spirits of people who made history here.

This place has Indian spirits. It has received God's blessing in many

tongues and many religions. It has been visited by American Presidents, world leaders, scientists, naturalists, pleasure seekers, hobbyists, sportsmen, artists and writers. It has nurtured the sick, fortified the weak, and provided solace to the weary. It has stimulated the curious-minded and quenched the appetite of those thirsty for adventure.

From its Spanish arroyo days when the great native grizzly bear were lassoed for sport to the colliding helmets on New Year's Day, this place becomes greater as stories of it are told and retold. After all, this is where legends are made and champions are born. A place where racism once existed then was just as soundly, defeated.

Everywhere I walked in the Arroyo Seco I met people who told me their stories. I did a lot of listening and collecting historic photos. I was very fortunate to meet so many kind people



with the most amazing stories to tell. Thank you all for your time and belief in this wonderful place.

*Editor's Note: Rick Thomas is the author of the recently-published book titled "The Arroyo Seco." He can be reached at [thomassopas@earthlink.net](mailto:thomassopas@earthlink.net). ■*

## The Pasadena Marathon Returns

By Vince Farhat

Pasadena Forward, a Pasadena-based nonprofit organization, recently announced that its inaugural event, the Pasadena Marathon presented by Kaiser Permanente, will be held on Sunday, March 22. The race was originally calendared to occur last Fall, but was cancelled at the eleventh hour due to poor air quality resulting from local wildfires. According to event organizers, the running community is enthusiastic about the new March date, and initial registration figures have been strong.

The Pasadena Marathon, with its range of race-day options (Marathon, Half Marathon, Bike Tour, 5K, and

Fun Run/Walk), is attractive to elite competitors and casual participants, alike. The course features areas of interest throughout Pasadena,



including vibrant commercial districts, beautiful residential neighborhoods, and numerous cultural landmarks. The Start and Finish are located on

Colorado Boulevard adjacent to the Pasadena City College campus.

The WPRA is proud to support the Pasadena Marathon, which we hope will become an annual tradition. There will be temporary street closures in West Pasadena the morning of the marathon.

To register for the Pasadena Marathon, please visit [www.pasadenamarathon.org](http://www.pasadenamarathon.org). The website will be updated in the coming weeks to reflect information about volunteering for the March 22 event and sponsorship opportunities. The website will also feature a link specifically designed to meet the needs of Pasadena Residents. Your participation is welcomed! ■

# Maranatha's Approved CUP Reflects Community Support

By Chet Crane & Dave Harris

During Maranatha High School's 40+ years of service in the San Gabriel Valley, the school has leased facilities in Arcadia, Sierra Madre and Pasadena, each time seeking permission to operate via a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). While there are a number of factors that will affect the outcome of a CUP application, Maranatha has learned that through effectual communication and substantive dialogue with the community, a mutually beneficial outcome can be accomplished.

In August 2007, Maranatha submitted an application for revision to its existing CUP for three conditions: an increase in enrollment from 650 to 800 students; an increase in staffing from 80 to 120; and a modification pertaining to signage

(requested by the City) to bring the existing condition in line with current City regulations. The new CUP was approved on October 9, 2008, after the requisite hearing.



The most significant part of the process was the cooperative and accommodating spirit shown by our neighbors and neighborhood groups, especially the WPRA with its letter of support, and the City staff. Through conversations with former WPRA

president, Fred Zepeda, and now current president, Audrey O'Kelley, we were able to communicate the school's intentions and purpose of the proposed changes. Vince Farhat, Chair of the City's Transportation Advisory Commission, provided invaluable information to better understand the pedestrian and traffic concerns. And we would be remiss if we did not commend our District 6 City Council member, Steve Madison, for his support.

Maranatha appreciates and will continue to work with the WPRA on issues pertaining to this wonderful neighborhood we collectively share and enjoy.

*Editor's Note: Chet Crane is Head of School and Dave Harris is Facilities Director at Maranatha High School. ■*

## WPRA Features Local Artist

By Vince Farhat

The WPRA is pleased to feature the work of Joseph Stoddard on our newly-updated web site and in our weekly Neighborhood Update. A graphic designer since 1974, Joseph Stoddard began his career developing corporate identity programs and print graphics with Sanchez/Kamps Associates, an environmental design firm in Pasadena. He taught graphic design at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena from 1981 to 1994, and is currently teaching painting at the Creative Arts Group in Sierra Madre.

Although he has sketched and painted all of his life, Stoddard began painting seriously in 1987 doing primarily local architecture, urbanscapes, landscapes, and historical landmarks in and around the City of Pasadena. The current interest in

historic preservation through art has brought Stoddard critical acclaim through numerous public showings and publications.

In addition to providing the original watercolors for the Historical Society of Southern California's prestigious Community Enrichment Awards for the past five years, Stoddard also has been the guest location artist at a variety of local history fairs and celebrations throughout the Los Angeles area. In 1995 he took the third place award at the first annual Mission San Juan Capistrano California Art Club competition.

Stoddard's work has been featured in Pasadena Magazine and he has produced cover artwork for a number of books published by the Historical

Society of Southern California. His medium is transparent watercolor and most of his works are done on location in the tradition of early "Plein Air" artist.



For more information, please visit [www.wpra.net](http://www.wpra.net). Send an e-mail to [update@wpra.net](mailto:update@wpra.net) if you want to receive the weekly Neighborhood Update. ■

# WPRA Welcomes Rose Tree Cottage

By Vince Farhat

Last November, the Rose Tree Cottage "English Village Shop and Tea Garden" moved to its new facility in West Pasadena. The Rose Tree Cottage is now located at 801 South Pasadena Avenue, at the corner of Bellfontaine.

Established nearly 30 years ago by Edmund and Mary Fry, the Rose Tree Cottage is a traditional English Tea Room and shop bringing the best of Great Britain to America. The Rose Tree Cottage has been featured in L.A. Magazine and Victoria Magazine for their teas and tours. Rose Tree's afternoon tea was named one of the

top tea experiences in America by U.S.A. Today.

The Rose Tree Cottage was forced to relocate when a developer purchased their former building on California Boulevard about three years ago. With the support of many in the community (including WPRA), the Rose Tree Cottage was able to enter into an agreement with Caltrans to lease a historic home on Pasadena Avenue. The WPRA welcomes the Rose Tree Cottage to West Pasadena. For more information, please call (626) 793-3337 or visit [www.rosetreecottage.com](http://www.rosetreecottage.com). ■



# WPRA Website Redesign

By Bill Urban

The WPRA has redesigned its website, [www.wpra.net](http://www.wpra.net), to add key features and make it easier to use. The website supplements the weekly Neighborhood Update and this quarterly Newsletter as ways to communicate among WPRA directors, members, and the general community. Key features of the newly redesigned website include:

- Contact Us link to e-mail questions, comments, suggestions, etc directly to WPRA. A board member will respond.
- Volunteer page to volunteer for specific committees or projects.
- EZ donate to use credit cards to join WPRA or donate online.
- Helpful Links to city government and services websites, e-mail addresses and phone numbers.
- Archive of quarterly Newsletters. WPRA letters to government agencies and WPRA position papers are being added.
- Descriptions of key committees with their purpose and current projects and activities are being added.



The WPRA website is closely tied to the weekly Neighborhood Update. Important new website content and new website features will be announced in the weekly update e-mail. If you have suggestions or comments, please use the Contact Us feature on the website, or send an e-mail to [Urban@wpra.net](mailto:Urban@wpra.net). ■

## WPRA Wants You!



The WPRA is looking for volunteers to serve on committees and to get involved in neighborhood issues. Whatever your interests, we have many opportunities for involvement and are looking for dedicated West Pasadena residents committed to preserving our neighborhood quality of life.

The WPRA wants you and needs your help! For more information, please contact Vince Farhat at [farhat@wpra.net](mailto:farhat@wpra.net). ■



# WPRA Forms Community Safety Committee

By Robert C. Holmes

**T**he WPRA recently formed a Community Safety Committee to keep West Pasadena residents up-to-date on suspicious or criminal activities in our neighborhoods, and to work with our Police Department to encourage residents to form Neighborhood Watch committees. As we start a new year, here is how you can help keep our neighborhoods safe.

## Report

The Pasadena Police Department wants to know about suspicious or possibly illegal activities in our neighborhood. Your first action should be to call the Police and tell them what is happening. For emergencies which require immediate police, fire or medical action, call 911. Fortunately most of the reports we make will not be of the immediate emergency nature. Suspicious people in the neighborhood, strange cars parked nearby, vandalism that is hours old do not rate a 911 call. For all of these non-emergency situations, please call the police at (626) 744-4241.

## Warn

After you have notified the police, the next thing to do is to warn your neighbors. Alix Reeves maintains a listing of everyone who has asked to be alerted to unusual activities. You can send an email to her at [alixreeves@earthlink.com](mailto:alixreeves@earthlink.com) and she will forward your message to the list. Even better, however, is to get your own copy of her mailing list and send your warning directly to the list. To get your email added to her list, and to get a copy of the list, email her at the address above and ask to be put on her list. She will add you and send you a copy of the list, and then send you updates as her list changes.

## Check

The WPRA web site will soon have a listing of recent warnings which you can access. Use it to see if someone else has the reported the same activities, or to periodically update your self on what you need to be especially careful of to prevent becoming another victim.

## Neighborhood Watch



One of the most successful measures in crime prevention is the Neighborhood Watch Program, in effect for over thirty years in towns, cities and rural areas across the country. Starting a Neighborhood Watch program is a relatively simple process. Here in Pasadena you can do so by contacting Police Specialist Cynthia Murphy, Neighborhood Services Unit/ Neighborhood Watch. She can let you know what is required to form a successful Neighborhood Watch group. You can reach Officer Murphy at (626) 744-7657 or email her [cmurphy@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:cmurphy@cityofpasadena.net)

## New Area Commander

Lieutenant Tracey Ibarra has been named the new Area Commander for the Pasadena Police Department West Service Area. Lt. Ibarra assumed command of the West Service Area in December. She can be reached at [tibarra@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:tibarra@cityofpasadena.net) or (626) 744-4620.

*Editor's Note: Robert Holmes is Chair of the WPRA Community Safety Committee. For more information, please contact him at [holmes@wpra.net](mailto:holmes@wpra.net). ■*



# Thank You to Our Donors

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# Open Space and Conservation Update

By Linda Zinn

The City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, and State of California all are facing budget deficits. As money becomes tighter, the issue of preserving open space will become more difficult. A case in point is Pasadena's Annandale Canyon. The neighbors around this 20.6 acre parcel voted last September to tax themselves \$1.36 million toward the estimated total \$7 million cost of purchasing the land. The Santa Monica Conservancy has extended its \$2.5 million grant to January 2012. However, the

remaining funds needed from the State, County and Pasadena are still under discussion. It is important, as the City of Pasadena moves forward and develops the Open Space and Conservation Element of the Master Plan, that interested residents voice their support of acquiring and preserving such land.

There will be opportunities for West Pasadena residents to fill out questionnaires and give their suggestions about conservation and open space issues. Pasadena's

Open Space and Conservation Committee has tentatively scheduled a Community Fair on February 28 in the City Hall courtyard. West Pasadena residents are encouraged to attend, learn about conservation and open space, and share their ideas about these important elements. For more information, please contact Senior Planner Laura Dahl at [ldahl@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:ldahl@cityofpasadena.net). ■



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# Arroyo Seco Parks and Recreation Historic District Now Official

By Vince Farhat

Pasadena Heritage's nomination of the central and lower Arroyo Seco was officially accepted and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in late November. The nomination, prepared by consultant Teresa Grimes and former Pasadena Heritage Preservation Director Christine Lazzaretto, was a lengthy compilation of documentation and research about the Arroyo as park land. Contributing historic features to the district include the Rose

Bowl, Brookside Golf Club, Fannie Morrison Horticultural Center (now Kidspace), and a host of landscape and architectural features found throughout the area. The nomination is one of the first successful "cultural landscapes" to be listed in the National Register. The WPRA strongly supported the nomination. We are pleased that the wonderful resource that is the Arroyo, with all its public recreational uses, is now officially recognized as an historic site. ■



## In Living Color!!

We thought we'd try experimenting with color for this, our winter edition of the WPRA newsletter. We would like to know what you think; after all, it is your newsletter. Please send us your suggestions and comments. Send them to [editor@wpra.net](mailto:editor@wpra.net).



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