



NEWS

West Pasadena Residents' Association

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

ESTABLISHED 1962

SPRING 2010

City Ventures Buys Ambassador West

By Vince Farhat

The real estate investment and development firm City Ventures has purchased a significant portion of the Ambassador West campus. City Ventures has assumed the role of developer previously held by Fortress Investment Group, a New York hedge fund which had foreclosed on the previous owners in 2008. City Ventures paid approximately \$15 million for the property.

City Ventures has informed WPRA that it intends to build out the project according to the plan approved by the Pasadena City Council in April 2007. The Ambassador West plan calls for preserving 12 acres of open space on the former Worldwide Church of God headquarters site, including lawns, European-style gardens and courtyards, while preserving all the historic buildings and 80 percent of the trees. The WPRA was involved in developing the Ambassador West plan, and continues to support the plan.

City Ventures wants to begin construction early next year of the first phase of a 70-unit luxury townhouse complex along Orange Grove Boulevard that could be valued at as much as \$140 million on completion. A historic mansion and 27 existing apartments would remain on the site, but former classrooms and offices dating to the 1960s would be razed. The townhomes, which will be built on four separate parcels on the site, are expected to go on the market for more than \$1 million each. The four development sites are depicted in



Ambassador West site plan

yellow on the site map accompanying this article.

The Ambassador College property has a long and storied history. The

Worldwide Church of God put the entire campus on the market in 1999. Original plans to build more than 2,000 new housing units were scrapped in the face of widespread neighborhood opposition. The Church later sold the property in three pieces. Maranatha High School and Harvest Rock Church—now the owner of Ambassador Auditorium—moved on to the west campus in 2004. That same year, Orange County

developer Sares Regis bought the 12-acre east campus for a high-density residential development, now nearing completion.

In February 2008, then-developers AACP Properties and Ambassador

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President's Message

By Audrey O'Kelley

I am concluding my two year tenure as President of the West Pasadena Residents' Association and would like to thank my fellow West Pasadena residents for your generous and continuing contributions to the WPRA. Despite tough economic times you have supported us faithfully and I appreciate it.

I extend my deep gratitude to the hard working people on the WPRA Board of Directors. You do a tremendous amount of work, week after week, year after year. You are to be commended. It has been a privilege to work with all of you.

WPRA Directors, although volunteers, approach their work almost

as they would a job, taking time out from their busy lives to work toward making our neighborhood and city a

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and I hope that more of you
will join us!*

better place for us all. And as I've said before, this volunteer work is gratifying, and I hope that more of you will

join us! Being connected and working with so many other caring people throughout our neighborhood and city and making a positive difference is a wonderful thing. Our community is the better for your efforts.

Speaking of efforts, one of the best WPRA efforts is the production of our Annual Meeting to hear what you think and deliver important information to you. This year our Annual Meeting will be held at Mayfield Senior School, Tuesday, May 4. You will have an opportunity to meet your new Board of Directors and Officers. I hope you will join us; it will be a great evening in a beautiful venue. ■

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 Victor Gordo, District 5
vgordo@cityofpasadena.net

Councilmember Jacque Robinson, District 1
jacquerobinson@cityofpasadena.net

Councilmember Margaret McAustin, District 2
mmcaustin@cityofpasadena.net

Councilmember Chris Holden, District 3
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Councilmember Steve Haderlein, District 4
shaderlein@cityofpasadena.net

Councilmember Steve Madison, District 6
smadison@cityofpasadena.net

Councilmember Terry Tornek, District 7
ttornek@cityofpasadena.net

City Clerk Mark Jomsky
mjomsky@cityofpasadena.net

City Manager Michael J. Beck
mbeck@cityofpasadena.net

Ambassador West—continued from page 1

Acquisition Coalition Partners II defaulted on a \$44 million loan from Drawbridge Special Opportunities Fund Ltd. The default came after the firms failed to find a builder to replace Standard Pacific Homes, which abruptly pulled out of the project in November 2007. A senior housing complex proposed on another portion of Ambassador West also was abandoned. The owner of that site, Sunrise Senior Living, is trying to sell the property.

Development at Ambassador West has been approved in principle, but City Ventures must face Pasadena's

design review process before construction can begin. City Ventures is currently preparing site improvement plans that comply with the approved entitlements. They also are preparing architectural plans for the portion of the property to be developed on Del Mar Boulevard.

City Ventures has committed to review the architectural plans with the WPRA board before submitting the plans to City Hall. Construction on the project should begin sometime in 2010, starting with offsite and onsite improvements towards the southern end of the Ambassador Campus. City

Ventures plans to start vertical construction on the homes on Del Mar Boulevard in early 2011. The next phase will be the site in the middle of the campus where the library building currently sits. This phase will be built in 2012. The final phase at the northwest corner of South Orange Grove Boulevard and Green Street will be built in 2013.

Editor's Note: The WPRA is closely following the sale of Ambassador West. Please send an e-mail to update@wpra.net if you want to receive weekly updates from WPRA regarding Pasadena civic affairs. ■

WPRA Annual Meeting to Highlight New Developments

By Vince Farhat

West Pasadena residents are invited to attend the WPRA annual meeting on Tuesday, May 4, at Mayfield Senior School, 500 Bellefontaine St. The WPRA will host a reception beginning at 5:30 p.m. The program starts at 6:30 p.m.

The theme of this year's Annual Meeting is *Pasadena Development: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. The program will include discussions about proposed developments at Ambassador West and the Monty's restaurant site. City leaders will be on hand to present new plans for the renovation of the Rose Bowl and the update of Pasadena's General Plan. Councilmember Steve Madison also will give a District 6 update. The program will include ample time for residents to ask questions of the speakers.

West Pasadena residents are encouraged to submit questions in advance of the annual meeting. To submit a question or comment, please visit the WPRA website at www.wpra.net or send an e-mail to questions@wpra.net.

The business portion of the annual meeting will include the election of a new slate of directors and officers, and the presentation of the WPRA's annual community service award. Exhibitors at the reception will include the Rose Bowl Operating Company, the Pasadena Planning Department, Arlington Garden, and other community groups.

The Annual Meeting is free and open to the public. For more information, please visit www.wpra.net.



Mayfield Senior School

Proposed 2010-2011 Officers:

Michael Udell, President
Bill Urban, Vice-President
Blaine Cavena, Treasurer
Robert Holmes, Secretary

Proposed 2010-2011 Directors:

Geoffrey Baum
James B. Boyle, Jr.
Vince Farhat
Mic Hansen (Land Use & Planning Chair)
Joan Hearst
Chuck Hudson (Communications Co-Director)
Laura Kaufman
Judith Klump (Communications Co-Director)
Dorothy Lindsey
Audrey O'Kelley (Immediate Past President)
Marilyn Randolph (Education Chair)
Gerry Silver
Priscilla Taylor
John Van de Kamp
Fred Zepeda
Linda Zinn (Membership Director)

Editor's Corner

Spring is here, and with it another issue of the WPRA News. This issue brings you updates on happenings at City Hall and PUSD, and information concerning projects and issues affecting West Pasadena.

More than anything else, Pasadena is defined by the quality of life in our neighborhoods. As residents of West Pasadena, we are truly fortunate to live in one of the most beautiful and unique areas of Southern California. The WPRA is committed to maintaining the quality of life that makes West Pasadena a special place.

We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. The WPRA welcomes your feedback and comments. Please e-mail me at farhat@wpra.net.

—Vince Farhat

Save the Date

Tuesday May 4
Reception 5:30 pm
Program 6:30 pm

City Hall Update

By Vince Farhat

City Employees Furloughed as Budget Woes Continue

Negotiations between city officials and one of the biggest city employee unions fell through earlier this year after the union rejected a proposal to cut scheduled pay raises. As reported in the *Pasadena Star-News*, both sides had been negotiating since October, when the city manager announced Pasadena faces a bigger-than-expected budget deficit this year.

Shortly after the union rejected the proposal, the city announced that it would seek other methods to reduce the budget deficit, including reduced working hours for approximately 250 city employees. About half of these employees will work what amounts to 36-hour weeks, instead of 40-hour weeks.

Based on declining sales tax revenues, city staff now estimates the budget deficit for the current fiscal year will be \$2.2 million larger. City sales taxes declined 15% in 2009 from the previous year. Similar declines have occurred for other revenue sources.

The projected deficit now stands at almost \$8 million. The city wants to bring the deficit back down to \$5.8 million, which is close to the deficit number officials originally estimated in June. According to news reports, a second hiring freeze is among the strategies being considered.

City Manager Appoints Interim Top Planner

City Planning and Development Director Richard Bruckner left in February to take the job of planning director for Los Angeles County. Bruckner had served as Pasadena's top planner for the past 10 years. City Manager Michael Beck has appointed Assistant City Manager Steve Mermell

as interim director of the Planning and Development Department. Mermell will stay in the interim position long enough for the City's other major vacancies—police chief and health director—to be filled.

In the meantime, city officials have been discussing whether to split the Planning and Development Department into two separate departments. While planning staff is responsible for determining whether development proposals are consistent with city rules, development staff focuses on attracting new businesses and housing projects to Pasadena. Some have argued that combining the two departments created potential conflicts of interests, to the extent city staff is called upon to act both as project advocates and project planners.

Update on Police Chief Search

City Manager Michael Beck is moving forward with his search for a new police chief. In mid-March, about 10 semi-finalist candidates from throughout the nation were interviewed by an advisory panel that will evaluate and rank the candidates, and provide their top recommendations to Beck. Beck will interview the recommended finalists one-on-one and conduct extensive background checks that will include visits to the cities in which they currently serve. He anticipates making his selection by late May. Pasadena residents are invited to submit comments at www.cityofpasadena.net/citymanager/policechief. All comments will go directly to the city manager.

City Council Approves Hahamongna Plan

In February, the city council unanimously approved a plan that

could bring an environmental education center, a new equestrian facility and a bike path to the Hahamongna Watershed Park. Pasadena acquired the 30-acre Hahamongna lot in 2005. Responding to concerns raised by WPRA and others, the city council made changes to the plan to ensure that trees will not be removed unless absolutely necessary. Any tree removals will be reviewed by the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee and the city council. The council also directed city staff to put explicit language in the plan stating that the city will not build a new road in the area.

New Police Commander

West Pasadena has a new Pasadena Police Department Area Commander. Lt. Tracey Ibarra was recently transferred to a detective squad. Her replacement is Lt. Keith Jones. He can be reached at (626)744-4620, ext. 8831, or by email at kjones@cityofpasadena.net. Lt. Ibarra has been most helpful to the residents of our area, and the WPRA wishes her well in her new assignment.

Pasadena 2009 Annual Report

Pasadena's 2009 annual report made its debut at Mayor Bill Bogaard's State of the City event. The annual report's six main topics reflect the goals of the city's strategic plan. These goals are: maintain fiscal responsibility and stability; improve, maintain and enhance public facilities and infrastructure; increase conservation and sustainability; improve mobility and accessibility throughout the city; support and promote the quality of life and the local economy; and ensure public safety. The annual report is now available online at www.cityof-pasadena.net/annualreport.

Residents Sue to Stop Playhouse Plaza Project

Pasadenans for a Livable City (PLC) has filed a lawsuit against Pasadena to stop construction of the Playhouse Plaza Project, a five-story office building with underground parking at the southeast corner of Colorado Boulevard and El Molino Avenue in the Playhouse District. PLC filed suit in December after the city council voted 6-1 to approve the project and to give the developer a 10 percent density bonus over and above what the local guidelines allow for the neighborhood. During the environmental review process, the WPRA board joined the Planning Commission and Pasadena Heritage in expressing concern about the scale and size of the project. The PLC lawsuit contends the environmental impact report (EIR) failed to analyze the project's compatibility with adjacent historic buildings, including the Pasadena State Playhouse Theatre and the Arcade. The EIR also is alleged to have underestimated by nearly one-third the traffic the project is expected to generate at already-congested intersections. For more information, please call (626) 792-6463.

New Bicycle Master Plan

City staff recently unveiled a new plan to make Pasadena more bicycle-friendly by building new bike lanes, a new biking path, and other improvements. The new bicycle plan would add 16.3 miles of new bike lanes to 18.6 miles of existing lanes that run along the sides of several major

roads, including Union Street, Arroyo Boulevard, Sierra Madre Boulevard and Pasadena Avenue. According to news reports, the plan could cost an estimated \$7.9 million to fully implement. The city council is expected to approve a final plan by this Summer.



There is not yet a schedule for implementation. For more information, please visit www.cityofpasadena.net.

Rose Bowl Loop Improvements

The city council approved a plan in late February to expand the existing 8-foot walking lane at the Rose Bowl into a 13-foot lane that will be more easily marked with bright paint. The Rose Bowl loop is heavily used by pedestrians, bikers and cars. The improvements are intended to enhance pedestrian safety. They will spend approximately \$300,000 in the coming months to re-seal the road and implement the improvements.

New Urgent Care Facility

Pasadena officials held a groundbreaking ceremony in March for a new community outpatient clinic at 3160 Del Mar Blvd. The urgent care clinic will provide non-emergency assistance to walk-in patients. The expectation is that the new clinic will help alleviate long waits at Huntington Hospital's emergency room. The urgent care clinic will open this Summer. It will be more than 10,000 square feet and operate from 7:00 a.m. to 10:10 p.m. daily. The clinic will be operated by the Huntington Medical Foundation and the Community Health Alliance of Pasadena.

General Plan Outreach Report

City staff and the General Plan Update Advisory Committee (GPUAC) sorted through thousands of comments received from the community in 2009, which have now been organized into a draft outreach summary report, which is now available for public review and comment at www.cityofpasadena.net/generalplan, click "Outreach Summary Report." The draft report will provide direction and framework for the General Plan update for the land use, mobility, open space and conservation elements. The GPUAC will hold a special public hearing to receive comments on the draft report on March 31 in the city council chambers.

Editor's Note: Please send an email to update@wptra.net if you want to receive weekly updates from WPRA regarding Pasadena civic affairs. ■

Pasadena Beautiful Foundation Celebrates 50 Years of Service

By Bette Cooper

2010 is the 50th anniversary of the Pasadena Beautiful Foundation. Pasadena Beautiful is dedicated to making the City a more beautiful, healthy, eco-friendly, water-wise, tree-canopied, smog free place to live.

Golden Arrow Awards

It is that time of year again when Pasadena Beautiful begins the "Golden Arrow Awards" process. This consists of recruiting 9 teams of 2 people each, most of whom are on the Pasadena Beautiful board. At a meeting in early March, one of the 9 areas that the City is divided into is assigned to each of the teams. The 9 teams take 2 weeks to drive around every street, avenue, road, and alley in their assigned area and find 8 residential gardens that they think worthy of a Golden Arrow. This process is time consuming, but good fun for the team members. They get to know places in our City that they might not have the opportunity to know in normal day to day life. They will also look for locations where more street trees need to be planted. These can be empty spots or replacement of dead trees.

At the end of the two weeks, each team will send their photos and write-ups to the Committee, who will then give that information to a different team. These teams will then go look at the 8 gardens and choose 4 of those gardens as finalists. Each 4 gardens, chosen by the 9 different teams, are those that will be invited to the Golden Arrow Award event on May 20. There are 36 in all. At the event, a handsome certificate with a photo of the garden is given to the winner, along with the Golden Arrow. The winners are asked to give a short history of their gardens to the assembled audience. Often, there are charming stories about how Pasadena Beautiful—continued on page 14

Red Flag Day Parking Restrictions Coming To Pasadena

Pasadena is implementing a program to enable fire engines to move around, especially in the Linda Vista hills area. Parking will be prohibited on narrow streets when fire danger is high. The city plans to implement the program in late spring or early summer 2010. As part of the program, the city has started to install necessary street signs and will send detailed information to all affected residents. Here is some background information from the city website:

Why is the City doing this?

The objective is to allow two modern fire trucks to pass each other while fighting fires. This is to prevent tragedies like the East Bay Hills fire in 1991 where, in an area much like the Linda Vista hills, fire engines could not get to the fire and five civilians and a police officer died because they could not escape through the narrow, crowded roads. The ordinance is modeled after the City of Los Angeles program.

What is a "Red Flag Day"?

Red Flag days are days of extreme fire hazard. They are declared by the US National Weather Service Los Angeles-Oxnard office, which estimates there will be 30 to 45 Red Flag days per year. Red Flag days are declared for Pasadena when one of the following conditions exist or is expected to exist in the predictable future:

1. Relative humidity of 15 percent or less with either sustained winds of 25 mph or greater or frequent gusts of 35 mph or greater for 6 hours or more.
2. Relative humidity of 10 percent or less for 10 hours or more.
3. Widespread and/or significant dry lightning.



Why do some streets, but not others, have Red Flag signs on both sides?

If a street is narrower than 27 feet (not including gravel or dirt shoulders), no parking is permitted on either side of the street during Red Flag days. If a street is between 27 and 32 feet wide, parking is permitted on one side of the street.

How will I know when Red Flag days are declared?

The Pasadena Fire Department is developing several complementary ways to alert people when Red Flag days are declared. The methods will be described in detail in city communications to affected residents. One method they have mentioned to WPRA is placing signs at major streets that lead into areas subject to Red Flag restrictions. The signs will be changed to show whether Red Flag restrictions are in effect.

I have special permit for overnight street parking, can I still park during red flag days?

Overnight parking permits are not valid during Red Flag days.

How can I get more information?

For more information call Pasadena Fire Department at (626) 744-4655. ■

Rose Bowl Stadium Games May 16!

By Suzanne Orsi

Fun on the Field ...

The Rose Bowl is inviting the Pasadena Community into the Rose Bowl for a day of fun and games on the field. Mayor Bill Bogaard will welcome everyone to come in and play Sunday, May 16, from Noon to 3:00 pm. Admission is free.

Be an Insider ...

Spend some time in the Rose Bowl Locker Rooms. Get a peek at the exciting Rose Bowl Renovation Project that will begin January 2011. Learn all about the Rose Bowl Capital Campaign and be one of the first to join our Rose Bowl Alumni Family!

Games, games, games ...

Football: Field Goal kicks over the Rose Bowl goal posts

Soccer: Penalty kicks into the Rose Bowl soccer goals with the Galaxy Street Team

Basketball: Free Throw Challenge

Baseball: Speed pitch for accuracy

Virtual Games: In the Locker Room

All are welcome – from the youngest children and their parents and grandparents who participate in games, to coaches and athletes that will be invited to join that day – the games are geared towards fun. And, there will be refreshments and great music.

Fun, fun, fun ...

Bean Bag toss
Bounce houses
Face Painting
Balloon "Clown"

The Rose Bowl Jumbotron ...

See the fun up on the jumbotron.

Win Prizes ...

Dodgers Tickets, Birthday Party at a Pasadena Fire Station, Live Nation tickets, including one at House of



Blues Foundation Room, a round of golf at Brookside for a foursome, a Spa Luce Treatment (Hollywood and Highland,) and a ride in a Pasadena Police Helicopter!

Register Now...

A key way for one to participate will be to go online to the Rose Bowl Website www.RoseBowlStadium.com and look for the Rose Bowl Stadium Games page. Register to participate in the Games and become a member of the Rose Bowl family which entitles you to receive the latest information on the Rose Bowl Games and inside information on Rose Bowl Stadium renovations.

Remember to reserve May 16th on your calendar for a fun day at the Rose Bowl!

Editor's Note: Suzanne Orsi and her husband are long time residents of Linda Vista and members of the Linda Vista Annandale Association. Suzie may be reached at suzieorsi@sbcglobal.net ■

Neighborhood Update Co-Editor

Are you a frustrated writer? Then we just may have the antidote to that. The WPRA is looking for someone to co-edit the weekly email Neighborhood Update. If you enjoy writing, and can devote a few hours a week to this project, the editors will train you to assist them. The Neighborhood Update is a vital tool for West Pasadena. It reaches almost 1,000 households each week, informing residents of important meetings that affect our quality of life, as well as arts and entertainment around the city. If this interests you, contact Judy Klump at klump@wptra.net.

San Rafael Elementary and WPRA Sponsor Student Enrichment Programs

By Marilyn Randolph



Mayor Bogaard speaks to San Rafael students.

The exciting student enrichment program continues at San Rafael Elementary with academic experiences most adults would envy.

Water color artist Joseph Stoddard (see his work on the WPRA website and each week on the WPRA e-mail publication *Neighborhood Update*) received praise from sixth-grade students after he taught them to create their own watercolor. Creating the watercolor on December 11, some students used theirs as a holiday gift for parents, with one thank-you to Stoddard being, "I want to thank you for teaching us art. My parents LOVED the painting," and another: "You are the best artist I have ever seen."

Mayor Bogaard talked with students on February 17 and then answered questions:

"What is the hardest part of being mayor?" He answered: "Getting consensus from the city council and attending

to the needs of Pasadena citizens." He asked students: "What is your favorite part of Pasadena?" with answers: "The Rose Bowl and Jack in the Box!"

If you don't have an MBA, maybe you can learn from the students who are receiving a "Junior MBA" from Robin Salzer of Robin's Woodfire BBQ. He presented the school with a new popcorn machine and industrial lemon squeezer. With this equipment he will teach students how to purchase, cook, season and sell—with a smile and a handshake the fresh popcorn and lemonade—they produce and sell at places like the Rose Bowl under adult supervision. Robin's previous students grossed \$100,000 from their "Junior MBA" studies. Salzer also sponsored a San Rafael night at his restaurant with 50% of the proceeds going to San Rafael school projects.

The San Rafael School mascot is the Panda, and the Panda Inn

Restaurant shared its Panda recipes with the first grade. During the cooking demonstration, the students learned techniques and enjoyed their creations for lunch.

Neuropsychologist Dr. Marcel Ponton spoke to the 4-6 grade students, explaining how the brain works. State Assemblyman Anthony Portantino visited the students in the dual immersion program in which students simultaneously learn Spanish and English.

Avery Dennison volunteered to sponsor the District's Math Field Day at the request of San Rafael. Robin Salzer is providing the T-shirts for the San Rafael math team.

Coming Events in April and May

The WPRA is proud to support these upcoming enrichment programs in April and May:

San Rafael—continued on page 9

Continued from page 8

- Student tour of the Cal Tech seismology laboratory
- A team of scientists from JPL will talk about the Mars Rover landing in 2011
- More JPL scientists will launch a rocket on the San Rafael campus
- A presentation on how the body works by Danis Dennis, M.D.
- A visit to Loyola Law School to sit as jurors in a mock trial

Kudos for San Rafael Principal

The WPRA is proud to announce that our San Rafael Principal Alyson Beecher was selected as the Region 15 candidate for Elementary School Administrator of the Year for the award given by California Association School Administrators. ■



Robin Salzer, Principal Alyson Beecher and students with popcorn machine and lemon squeezer



Joseph Stoddard instructs 6th grade students in preparing a watercolor scene of the Arroyo

Thank You to Our Volunteers!

The community support for San Rafael School has been tremendous. The WPRA thanks all the volunteers who give of their time, interest and money. Any omissions are sincerely regretted.

Discussion Leaders and Commercial Donors

John Van de Kamp
Police Chief Chris Vicino
Fire Captain George Gardener
Joseph Stoddard
Mayor Bill Bogaard
Assemblyman Anthony Portatino

Robin Salzer
Professor David McCabe/PCC
Marcel Ponton, Ph.D.
Danis Dennis, M.D.
Vromans Book Store
Panda Inn Restaurant
Avery Dennison
Staples
Jet Propulsion Laboratory
California Institute of Technology

Community and WPRA Volunteers

Barbara Reagan
Sherrill Leavitt
Kitty Hall
John Fauvre
Sherry McLaughlin
Mary Beth Bridges
Chris Kerech
Clifford Cates
Monica Torres
Nino Sutcliffe
Sarah Stidell
Karen Greenwood Henke

Parents

Karla Bluestone
Clynell Jackson
Bailey Spencer Jackson
Irene Wong
David Henrinquez

Teri Griffith
Michelle Calva Despard
Nina Lozano
Nickella Schlanger
Susan Holman
Noeleen Acosta
Monica Mass
Dan Goldman
Mirna Goldman
Susan Bouza
Ana Naranjo
Karen McRoberts
Lynda Ross, Ph.D.
Susan Weise

Staff Family Members

Andrew Silk
Amparo Torres
Kevin Horn
Ray Bemiller

Loyola High School Students

Thorvald Blough
Kevin Hernandez
Ned Kirby
Keenan McDaniel
Kevin Tan
Colin Tanigawa
Gregory Ackerman
Charlie Marquardt ■

San Rafael School Update

By Alyson Beecher

Over the past several months, the school has been busy preparing for several big activities. Our most recent was the annual Dr. Seuss' Read Across America event held on Thursday, March 5. I would like to thank everyone from the neighborhood and community who came in to read with the students. We had some returning guest readers and some newcomers to the event. Some of our distinguished guests included: Takako Suzuki who lives in the neighborhood and is Councilmember Steve Madison's field representative; Julianne Hines, district manager for Assemblymember Anthony Portantino; and California Highway Patrol officers Rick Quintero and Saul Gomez. I can say with great confidence that everyone had a wonderful time.

For the past couple of months the teachers and staff at the school have been busy with a variety of events. In February, the school celebrated Black History Month with a special third-grade performance about Rosa Parks and the famous Montgomery (AL) Bus Protest. We also were fortunate to have local community member Juanita DeVaughn visit and speak to classes. Mrs. DeVaughn is a long-time Altadena resident, retired teacher (Muir, Eliot), and an active member with the NCAAP. During her younger years, she lived in Alabama. She was able to provide for students many first-hand accounts of life in the South during the Civil Rights movement. Students and teachers hung on her every word, and we are eagerly anticipating a return visit next year.

March and early April appear to be our months for math and science related activities. On March 20, the Pasadena Unified School District hosts a Math Field Day Competition for students in grades 4 to 9. Each year, San Rafael prepares four to six



Neighborhood volunteer reads to San Rafael students.



The Dr. Seuss' Read Across America event was a big success.

teams to participate in the competition. This year we have taken extra advantage of our wonderful student volunteers from Loyola High School (January) and Pasadena City College (February) to provide intensive lunch-time tutoring for the students who will be participating in Math Field Day. We are also excited that Robin Salazar, from Robin's Woodfire BBQ

Restaurant and a neighbor has sponsored our Math Field Day T-shirts.

In addition to Math Field Day, San Rafael will be holding our first Science Expo/Fair on Wednesday, March 31. All our students will learn more about science by doing experiments. We have recruited some judges from JPL and also from the neighborhood. I also want to thank Marilyn Randolph, with

the WPRA, for putting us in touch with Laura Kaufman, from Flintridge Prep who is a master at running science fairs. Her knowledge and willingness to share information has been invaluable.

During the first week of April, our fifth- and sixth-graders will be heading up to Big Bear to attend Pali Institute, which is a four-day science camp. After months of fund-raising and hard work our students are nearly ready to go. Each year that we have sent students to science camp, we have noticed significant growth in our students as a result of this experience,

and we are glad that we are able to do it again.

Though we have had several activities focusing specifically on math and science, we haven't completely ignored music and the arts. On February 26, several of our fifth- and sixth-graders participated in the All-District Band Concert at Pasadena High School. I was very proud of our students, who practiced and worked hard. Their hard work was evident in the wonderful performance.

We will also be holding try-outs and practices for a spring musical,

which will be held in mid-June. Further information on the play will be announced in the weekly WPRA update email including information about how to reserve tickets to see the performance.

On behalf of all the staff, parents and students at San Rafael School, I would like to thank WPRA and the San Rafael community for their continued support.

Editor's Note: Alyson Beecher is principal of San Rafael School. She can be reached at abeecher@pusd.us. ■

Help San Rafael School Reach the Technology Challenge!

Pasadena Educational Foundation (PEF) *FANSS* (Families and Neighbors Supporting Schools) is a support group formed by parents to generate additional support for our local public schools.

As its first project, PEF *FANSS* launched a new **Technology Challenge** to raise much-needed funds for PUSD schools to purchase computers and related technology. A local family has donated \$100,000 to PEF in matching funds for the Technology Challenge. Each contribution, as a PEF *FANSS* member for San Rafael School will be matched — dollar for dollar — to San Rafael, up to \$10,000, thus providing up to \$20,000 for new technology for San Rafael.

Please help San Rafael Elementary reach its goal by making a contribution in any amount. To find out more about PEF *FANSS*, visit the PEF website: www.pasedfoundation.org/fanss or call Joan Fauvre, Executive Director (626) 396-3600 x88350 or contact the PEF *FANSS* Co-Chairs,

Tammy Godley (213-683-9232) and Jennifer McCreight.

The Pasadena Educational Foundation is a nonprofit 5013c organization that was founded in

1971 to develop resources and build partnerships to support public education in Pasadena, Altadena and Sierra Madre. ■

Editorial: Development, Design, Dilemma

By Mic Hansen

In the past decade, Pasadena has experienced a building boom, albeit now de-escalated due to economic exigencies. As a long-established city, we must build new among the old. In the zeal to build economically, speedily, and “of our time,” our architectural inheritance accrued over a century is steadily coming into jeopardy.

as “how a building integrates with its surrounding landscape.” In more plebeian terms, it is one of the visible expressions of a community’s character and aesthetic values. Architecture may also be thought of as monumental art or functional sculpture — but within a context and for a specific purpose or use.

get built, the more they erode the inflexible place that is Pasadena. Quality. Beauty. Durability. Timelessness. These attributes seem often lost in our current practices. The intent is NOT to keep Pasadena in the past, but build for the present and the future in a manner that respects what has come before: genuine beauty, high quality materials and decoration, harmony with its environment, respectful of the culture and fabric of the community, visual and mass compatibility with the neighborhood, and making an effort to continue a “sense of place” and durability that are all hallmarks of excellent projects. Let us ask ourselves: Will these buildings we have erected in the past 30 years be standing proud 50 years from now? If so, will our children and grandchildren — with a sense of pride — look upon them with esteem, marveling at their forebears’ foresight in erecting such aesthetically pleasing and high-quality buildings? Will these structures be deemed worthy of landmark status?

Recently, I heard it said about a newly-built glass and wood building in the central district, “...well, it’s better than the parking lot that was there.” Faint praise indeed! That a poorly built and banal stucco box is considered superior to a black-topped vacant lot accommodating transient autos, as a point of comparison, is discouraging. These types of comparisons appeal to the lowest common denominator and degrade the tremendous talent and potential that resides in this remarkable community of ours.

By no means are we advocating cessation of creativity, quality and, yes, contemporary design for future development. Rather we are asking that what is designed in for a specific piece of ground take into consideration the greater whole and the proximal setting to ensure that



Carbuncle—Mixed-use building at southeast corner of Los Robles and East Orange Grove

This is not to say that Pasadena should not be proud of its remarkable achievement to preserve and protect historic neighborhoods and selected individual landmark buildings. Much progress has been made since the late seventies, and the results have been and continue to be remarkable and economically desirable. But we must also look to what has been and will be built, appreciating the relationship between what was already here and what is to come.

Contextual architecture is described as architecture that responds to its surroundings by respecting what is already there, unlike Constructivism or Deconstructivism, which deliberately work against established geometries and fabric. Various other sources define architectural context as the “culture, climate, environment, materials, setting, place, and the inter-related conditions that factor into the design of a building,” as well

In some of the developments that we have seen since the mid-nineties, there has been a tendency to allow isolated rectilinear stone/stucco/glass boxes to rise, devoid of sensitivity to their surroundings, to quality, style, and the aesthetics of their neighboring buildings, thus ignoring the importance of knitting the building into its context. We have repeated this gaffe over and over (to wit, Trio apartments between Colorado and Union at El Molino, Westgate at Del Mar and De Lacey, mixed used building on the southeast corner of Los Robles and Orange Grove, etc.). Understandably cost is a valid and constant consideration, but eschewing Pasadena’s illustrious architectural history and sense of place, as well as denying context and neighborhood coherence cannot help but ill serve all involved interests.

The more of these (in the words of HRH Prince Charles) “carbuncles”

what is new complements the “older” and is in harmony with its surrounds. What may be built next to a National Register Classical building, of neces-



TRIO Apartments, along Union Street

sity, may be very different in style, materials, and size than what may be built next to the Sierra Madre

Gold Line terminus. How we react to a quality glass International Style construction adjacent to the Pasadena Playhouse will differ if that same construction was on Lake Avenue adjacent to the freeway. In our zeal to want Pasadena to be ‘world class,’ we must not forget its heritage and render it into the mold of all other cities and, in the process, homogenize, debase and compromise its uniqueness and local character.

Pasadena is an outstanding community, imbued with unparalleled institutions of higher learning, culture, and service; with involved, highly educated, and participative community members, and dedicated, knowledgeable city officials and staff. It seems incumbent

for all of us to align our priorities and work together so that we may all benefit in achieving Pasadena’s sustained growth and prosperity without taking away from that which brought us here (or keeps us here) in the first place. The new Design Guidelines for neighborhood commercial and multi-family districts are a great start toward design unity and sensitivity, and provide helpful parameters and recommendations that are bound to enhance new construction/remodels in those areas. The General Plan process underway provides a marvelous opportunity to apply such guidelines to specific plan areas and beyond, as well as provide a platform for the community to work together to effect progress that cements Pasadena’s place as a unique jewel.

Editor’s Note: Mic Hansen is Vice-President of WPRA and past Board Chair of Pasadena Heritage. She can be reached at Hansen@wptra.net. ■

La Loma Bridge Spanning the Arroyo for Neoclassical Art’s Sake

By Chuck Hudson

To an architect, it’s an example of the neoclassical style, drawing from Greek and Roman design elements and motifs, as well as Renaissance interpretations of the classical forms.

To an engineer, it’s 379 feet by 42 feet with cantilevered sidewalks, two 101-foot main-span arches connected to the deck laterally by transverse concrete beams, four small girder-approach spans and two 32-foot arched approaches.

To a historian, it’s on the National Register of Historic Places and was built in 1914 by Muñoz and Muñoz, on plans drawn by the LA County surveyor.

To an area resident, it’s a quick path across the Arroyo Seco from the Lower Arroyo Seco to San Rafael Heights.

They’d all be right, of course. After all, it’s just a matter of perspective. What they’d all agree on, however, is

that it has been known variously as the California Street Bridge, Huntington Terrace Bridge, “the handsome small sister” (of the Colorado Boulevard Bridge), and, when grouped with the Colorado and San Rafael bridges, one of the “three sisters.”

They’d also agree that it is the La Loma Bridge, and that it has spanned the Arroyo Seco for 96 years and must now be retrofitted to meet current seismic standards. (See article on page 15).

Looking back

In 2004, the bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Much can be learned from the application Pasadena Heritage completed to request that listing. For this article we’ve edited and, when necessary, paraphrased the information provided in that application.

Rancho San Rafael—The area west of the Arroyo was part of the Rancho San Rafael. Granted in 1784 to Jose Maria Verdugo, the rancho consisted of 50,000 acres, including what is now Glendale. The Arroyo served as the rancho’s eastern boundary.

The British stake a claim—In 1883, Englishman Alexander Campbell-Johnston purchased 2,200 acres of the rancho. Although he returned to England, three of his 10 sons remained to manage the land they called the San Rafael Ranch. In 1886, the sons subdivided the ranch, which they promoted as San Rafael Heights and sold as large lots for residential purposes. In time, they would develop numerous other subdivisions on their ranch and develop the Annandale Golf Course.

La Loma Bridge—continued on page 14

Necessity is the mother of invention — During this same time, the advent of the automobile and an increasing population in the area created the need for new bridges. It was all part of the



The graceful La Loma Bridge, photographed from the Arroyo Seco it spans.

land boom that turned Pasadena from a valley of orchards into a bustling town. However, only a rudimentary road system supported the urban tilt. The Campbell-Johnsons, in need of cash and increased access to their new subdivisions, built a toll road and bridge across the Arroyo. A steel-deck truss with timber approach spans, the bridge was called the California Street Bridge because it nearly aligned with today's California Boulevard.

Time for a new bridge — That first bridge, however, began to deteriorate. In early 1913 (the same year the Colorado Street bridge to the north

opened), LA County ordered it closed. A year later, Pasadena had completed its annexation of San Rafael Heights and opened the new bridge, which had been built slightly north of the original bridge at Huntington Terrace,

“Advocates of the movement believed that such beautification could thus promote a harmonious social order that would increase the quality of life and help to remove social ills.”

Translation of that bold idea

The concept was also expressed through bridges that were, as Pasadena Heritage puts it, “not designed solely to move vehicles over the Arroyo, but also to create something picturesque for the community, and provide an opportunity to express architectural beauty.”

whose name the new bridge took. Later, the bridge was renamed when Huntington Terrace was renamed as La Loma Road.

City Beautiful — The early development of the open-spandrel arch bridge, seven of which were constructed in Pasadena, coincided with the City Beautiful movement, which was largely inspired by the success of the World Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago.

“The movement did not seek beauty for its own sake, but rather for the common good to create moral and civic virtue among urban populations,” according to Wikipedia.

in Pasadena resulted in exquisite civic buildings, such as City Hall, the Central Library, and the Civic Auditorium. The concept was also expressed through bridges that were, as Pasadena Heritage puts it, “not designed solely to move vehicles over the Arroyo, but also to create something picturesque for the community, and provide an opportunity to express architectural beauty.”

Editor's Note: Chuck Hudson is co-editor of the weekly WPRA Neighborhood Update. He can be reached at chuck.hudson@yahoo.com. ■

years of hard work have paid off with beautiful gardens. All 36 gardens enhance the neighborhoods that are lucky enough to have them. Pasadena Beautiful is pleased to bring pleasure and pride to those recipients. It does help the City to continue to live up to the name, Pasadena Beautiful!

Wednesday Work Days

Every Wednesday morning, weather permitting, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., Pasadena Beautiful members work in a City location to beautify that area. For instance, we pruned the rose bushes in Central Park, weeded the Senior Center garden, dug out palm tree volunteers at the Children's

playground area at Brenner Park, and trimmed the grass plants at the Santa Catalina Library. These projects are in collaboration with the City. These “Wednesday Work Days” are for one hour only. A lot of work is accomplished; it is ideal for visiting with one another and we have fun. We welcome volunteers. The more enthusiastic hands there are, the more projects we can tackle. To volunteer, please email us at: www.pasadenabeautiful.org or leave a message on the office phone: (626) 795-9704.

Pasadena Street Trees

Pasadena street trees are the reason Pasadena Beautiful exists. We receive

many donations restricted to the planting of Street trees. This is our main focus. We need your help in locating places where street trees are needed. We welcome suggestions. One of us will go to the location you give us to scout it out. We collaborate with the City's Department of Public Works, Parks and Natural Resources to replace or plant the appropriate designated street tree. Please contact us at the website and phone number above.

Editor's Note: Bette Cooper is president of the Pasadena Beautiful Foundation. She can be reached at: president@pasadenabeautiful.org. ■

La Loma Bridge Retrofit, Rehab Gets Underway ... Again

By Chuck Hudson

Construction will run from Spring 2011 to Fall 2012. On October 17, 1989, a 6.9 magnitude earthquake struck the San Francisco Bay area.

It was known as the Loma Prieta earthquake, named for a mountain peak in the Santa Cruz Mountains near the epicenter. It rumbled through California during a televised World Series game, which coincidentally featured two California teams (the Oakland Athletics and the San Francisco Giants). In all, 63 people died, 4,000 were injured and 12,000 were left homeless. Shortly after the quake, California municipalities began inspecting all their bridges to determine whether they could withstand a similar earthquake.

Pasadena bridges found to be deficient

Analysis revealed some high profile Pasadena bridges — including the Colorado Street, La Loma, Holly Street, and San Rafael bridges — were “seismic hazards.” The first to be retrofitted was the Colorado Street Bridge. It was reopened to traffic in 1993.

Next up was the La Loma Bridge. It was determined to be “deficient in strength,” receiving a sufficiency rating score of 70.5. Sufficiency ratings help determine both how quickly bridges may need to be repaired or replaced and their eligibility for Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding. For the La Loma Bridge, the sufficiency rating means it qualifies for federal rehabilitation (not replacement) funding. For replacement funding, the rating must be below 50.

“The La Loma Bridge’s sufficiency rating does not mean it’s unsafe for

traffic,” Roubik Mardirosian, manager of the project for Pasadena, hastens to add. “Deficient in strength,” in this context, refers to how it could react



Time has left its mark on the underpinnings of the once stylish La Loma Bridge.

in a ‘maximum credible earthquake’ happening at the fault line under the bridge,” says Mardirosian.

And while no bridge is earthquake-proof, Pasadena’s objective is to make sure that they will remain standing in the event of an earthquake. “Although they might be severely damaged,” Mardirosian adds, “they should still be standing.”

The project begins

In 2006, the Pasadena City Council approved the final environmental impact report and assessment and gave the green light to the approximately \$16.5 million project to retrofit the existing bridge to meet current seismic standards and repair deteriorated and damaged surfaces. Mardirosian estimates that approximately 85% of the funding will come from the FHWA, through Caltrans. Local funding must pick up the rest.

Of special note is that the project will restore the original historical lighting and bridge rail features that were removed during a prior repair project. Mardirosian says the La Loma Bridge will once again look like a “sister” to the Colorado Street bridge.

A new fault is found; the project stalls

During the preliminary design stage in 2007, the city discovered that the Eagle Rock fault crossed directly under two of the bridge’s footings. This discovery required significant revisions to the retrofit design and, as a result, required additional time.

The project begins again

And now, after several years of additional geological study and analysis, the La Loma Bridge project design phase is moving forward. The plan is for the design to be completed this Fall. Construction should begin next Spring (2011) and be completed by the Fall of 2012.

Design advisory group represents public interest

In a nod to the significant interest the community has in this project, Pasadena has created a design advisory group. That group will “consult and advise staff and the consultants during the design and reconstruction of the bridge.” The five-person group will meet quarterly, or as needed, and include those with special interest in or knowledge about the bridge. The group will include one member from each of the following groups:

- The Historic Preservation Commission
- The Transportation Advisory Commission
- The Pasadena Design Commission
- Pasadena Heritage, and
- The community at large, appointed by Councilmember Steve Madison.

La Loma Bridge—continued on page 17

Pasadena Police Department and Nixle

By Lisa Rosales

The Pasadena Police Department has signed up for Nixle, a tool to communicate crime incidents, events, and general information about the police department. Other topics to be disseminated via Nixle, include meetings, awards, commendations, competitions, crime alerts requests for the public's assistance, and numerous.

If you have not signed up, please go to www.nixle.com and subscribe. Then, mark Pasadena Police Department as an agency you would like to receive messages from. Note that there is no cost for the service, however, if you include a cell number to receive text messages, standard messaging rates on your cell phone plan will apply.

What is Nixle? Nixle is a community information service built exclusively for secure and reliable communications. The Nixle service operates on the most authenticated, secure, reliable, and high-speed platform, ensuring communications are trusted and accurate.

How much does it cost? Nixle is completely free to all governments, their agencies and organizations, and

approved non-governmental organizations.

Does advertising appear with any public safety messages? No. The government communication platform will not be commingled with any advertising or other content. Nixle's "Municipal Wire" will always be a separate and secure service with no advertising attached.

Is Nixle secure? Yes. Nixle is a partner with Nlets, the International Public Safety and Justice Network. Nlets is the international, computer-based message switching system that links together local, state, and federal law enforcement and justice agencies for the purpose of exchanging information. Nixle's servers are housed within the Nlets secure facility.

Why is Nixle important? Until now, no authenticated and secure service has connected municipal agencies and community organizations to their residents in real-time, with the same ease and in the same way that current services such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter provide users with an unauthenticated platform for connections. Nixle solves this problem by

providing one standardized service for consumers to receive immediate and credible neighborhood-level public safety and community information, via SMS, email, or web.

How do consumers receive information? Nixle currently delivers information to consumers over their cell phones (SMS text messaging), emails (computers and smart phone devices), and simple web access at www.nixle.com.

Will Nixle market your personal information to anyone? No, Nixle will not market or use your information for any other purposes. It will, of course, have advertising on its site. You may on occasion, receive information directly from Nixle, as I did earlier this week, but it was related to holiday safety and shared much of the same information that the police and fire departments also issue every year. Both the fire department public information officer and I thought it was useful and helpful to the messages we try to impart every year.

Signing up is simple, and there is an online tutorial that will guide you:

- Go to www.nixle.com.
- You will be asked to create a user name and password.
- Then you can request alerts, advisories, community news or all of the above sent to your e-mail and/or mobile device.
- As more agencies come on line, you can choose what you want to receive and from whom.

Editor's Note: Lisa Rosales is a commander with the Pasadena Police Department. She can be reached at (626) 744-4572 or lrosales@cityofpasadena.net ■



Pasadena Police Department

Stay connected to the information that matters most to you!

Register to receive trusted, neighborhood-level public safety and community information at no cost, by text message, email and web.

Register Now www.nixle.com

Arlington Garden's 5th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, May 8, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Come see how the garden has matured from its first plantings in July 2005.

- Coffee and snacks
- Try delicious Arlington Garden Sweet Navel Orange Marmalade
- Music and art sales
- Socialize with your neighbors and new and old friends
- Festivities and recognitions begin at 11:00 a.m.

For more information, please visit www.arlingtongardeninpasadena.org



Garden Conservancy Open Day in Pasadena

Sunday, April 25, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Six beautiful gardens in Pasadena will be open for public viewing to benefit the Garden Conservancy, a national foundation committed to the conservation of private and public gardens throughout the United States. This year's tour will feature the Blacker House, Wentworth House, "Idyllwild," the Ledyard House, The Bixby House, Rancho La Loma, and Il Villino Rosa.

Tickets may be pre-ordered through the Garden Conservancy at info@gardenconservancy.org, or at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on the day of the tour from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information, please contact martynbelmont@aol.com. ■



La Loma Bridge—continued from page 15

A construction alert

Area residents should take note that during the approximately 18 months of construction:

- The bridge will be closed to all vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- The trail at the southwest corner of the bridge (at the intersection of Rockwood and La Loma roads) will be closed. Since this is the only access point into the Arroyo from the west side, Arroyo access at the bridge will only be possible from the east side, from Arroyo Boulevard.
- All paths beneath the bridge (on both sides of the flood-control channel) will be closed for several weeks while the bridge deck is being removed.
- Following the deck removal, all paths beneath the bridge will be temporarily closed at various times.
- Since exit from the Arroyo at La Loma Road, to the west, will be closed during the construction, area residents should note that there will be limited opportunities to cross the flood-control channel.

All paths and trails will be reopened at the project's conclusion.

Editor's Note: Chuck Hudson is co-editor of the weekly WPRA Neighborhood Update. He can be reached at chuck.hudson@yahoo.com. ■



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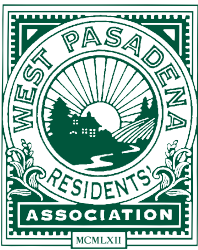
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