



NEWS

West Pasadena Residents' Association

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

ESTABLISHED 1962

FALL 2011

City, school, neighbors wrestle with fire-station closure

Due to seismic safety concerns, the City of Pasadena earlier this year closed Fire Station 39, located at 50 Avenue 64. Subsequently, the City and Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) disclosed that negotiations were underway to use part of the lower playground at San Rafael Elementary School, 1090 Nithsdale Rd., to temporarily house a scaled-back station until the permanent replacement station can be operational. West Pasadena residents should have numerous opportunities to voice their views on this proposal and the plans for construction of a permanent station during future public hearings.

By Vince Farhat and Chuck Hudson

The news was startling to some: A February draft report on seismic stability revealed that seven of Pasadena's eight fire stations required significant repairs, upgrades or replacement to withstand a major earthquake. The City expects repair of these stations to cost \$70 million. And, although neighborhood fire stations 31, 32, 33, 36, 37 and 38 are at risk following a major earthquake, the situation for Station 39, which was built in 1949, was far worse. The report stated:

"The second floor is in danger of collapse when subjected to seismic loading. Safety of the fire crew and protection of equipment is paramount and should be addressed without delay."

Further, the study found no practical way to resolve Station 39's structural deficiencies. A second engineering firm audited the report and agreed.

On April 25, City Council appropriated \$500,000 for the replacement of Fire Station 39, and approved a motion to immediately vacate the current station and to initiate the design and entitlement process for a replacement station.

The southwest Pasadena neighborhoods formerly served by Station 39 are now served by Pasadena stations 31 (South Fair Oaks) and 38 (Linda Vista), as well as City of Los Angeles and South Pasadena stations, with

whom Pasadena has a "mutual aid" compact.

WPRA takes action

Immediately upon learning of the closure, WPRA President Michael Udell met with Chief Dennis Downs to determine what happened and discuss next steps. The WPRA also reported on the news in several issues of *Neighborhood Update Online*.

The WPRA invited Chief Downs to address its members at the May 18 annual meeting.

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WPRA: Consult with school, communicate

Following its Sept. 14 meeting at San Rafael Elementary School, the WPRA board unanimously voted to:

- Carefully monitor developments
- Recommend that the City and Pasadena Unified School District consult with San Rafael Elementary staff before finalizing any joint-use agreement
- Publicize all related meetings and public hearings
- Make a special effort to communicate with those who live near the school
- Encourage the City to open the new permanent station on time



Google Maps satellite image of San Rafael Elementary School and proposed site for temporary station (see red color block)

WPRA in motion

About us

Mission: Founded in 1962, the West Pasadena Residents' Association is dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the character of our community and the quality of life in West Pasadena. The WPRA fulfills this mission by keeping you informed of current issues, representing your interests and supporting the activities of others with whom we share interests.

Area: The WPRA focuses on the area bounded by Colorado Boulevard on the north, Fair Oaks Avenue on the east, and the city limits on the south and west.

Funding: All WPRA activities are funded through membership dues and contributions. The WPRA receives no public funding and has no paid employees. Since the WPRA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public benefit corporation, membership contributions and donations are fully deductible to the extent permitted by law.

2011 – 2012 Officers

- President: Michael Udell (udell@wpra.net)
- Vice President: Bill Urban (urban@wpra.net)
- Treasurer: Blaine Cavena (cavena@wpra.net)
- Secretary: Robert Holmes (holmes@wpra.net)

2011 – 2012 Directors

- Communications co-director: Chuck Hudson (hudson@wpra.net)
- Communications co-director: Judy Klump (klump@wpra.net)
- Land use and planning: Richard McDonald (mcdonald@wpra.net)
- Education: Marilyn Randolph (randolph@wpra.net)
- Membership, Open Space & Conservation: Linda Zinn (zinn@wpra.net)

Geoffrey Baum	Vince Farhat	Audrey O'Kelley
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WPRA website: wpra.net

Boost your business and help the WPRA

Each quarter, the *WPRA News* can deliver your business message to more than 7,000 living rooms in ZIP codes 91105 and 91103. And that means you'll also be helping the WPRA defray printing and distribution costs for this publication. To view our rates, visit wpra.net (click on "Update and Newsletter" and then "WPRA Newsletter Advertising rates.")

For more information or to reserve space, contact editor Chuck Hudson at hudson@wpra.net.

Do the "write" thing for West Pasadena

The WPRA is looking for volunteers to serve as co-editors for *Neighborhood Update Online*, the WPRA weekly email newsletter. Each co-editor serves for one month at a time, in rotation, and is responsible during that month for preparing and releasing the weekly Saturday morning e-Newsletter.

Interested? Contact Judy Klump at klump@wpra.net.

Stay informed ... with the WPRA

If you'd like to keep up with what's going down in Pasadena, you have at your fingertips many local sources of information on the web and in print. Among them are the WPRA's own publications:

- *WPRA News*: You already know about this one, of course, since you're reading this article. But just for the record, this free publication is mailed each quarter to more than 7,000 homes in the 91105 and

91103 ZIP codes. *If you have any ideas, comments or suggestions, send an email to editor Chuck Hudson: editor@wpra.net.*

- *Neighborhood Update Online*. Although every WPRA membership or donation includes a free subscription to this weekly email newsletter, here's a secret: Anyone can subscribe to it simply by sending an email to update@wpra.net. Each Saturday morning *Neighborhood Update Online*

delivers to more than 1,000 households a digest of important and relevant city meetings, articles in the media, and reminders about arts and entertainment events and venues in and around the West Pasadena area.

If you have any ideas, comments or suggestions or simply to subscribe, send an email to co-editors Judy Klump, Joseph Cook or Chuck Hudson: update@wpra.net. ■

City, school, neighbors wrestle with fire-station closure *Continued from page 1*

At that meeting, Chief Downs assured residents that response times will continue to meet all national and regional standards. He also said that the City was developing an interim solution he hoped to announce by late July.

As spring turned into summer, the WPRA grew concerned that the City had not yet announced the interim solution. During its July meeting, the WPRA board voted to request that:

- Chief Downs share a written plan to accomplish the short- and long-term objectives and provide the community with regular updates
- The City convene a neighborhood meeting to discuss project status and answer residents' questions

City hosts August meeting

On August 3, the City held that neighborhood meeting at the American Red Cross headquarters on Orange Grove Boulevard. More than 40 area residents heard Chief Downs unveil a proposal to rebuild Station 39 on a residential lot near San Rafael Elementary School. The lot, at 1065 Nithsdale Rd., had originally been considered for a temporary site, but mold and structural problems in the home on the property ruled that out.

Chief Downs estimated that retrofitting Station 39 would cost about \$3 million, which is why, he reasoned, it made more sense to move the station to a more central location. This would also improve response time, he said. Several San Rafael residents, however, challenged the idea, pointing out the area's narrow streets, speed bumps and traffic congestion — particularly during drop-off and pick-up times at San Rafael Elementary.

Chief Downs also disclosed that the City was negotiating with the PUSD to use a portion of the lower playground at San Rafael Elementary to temporarily house firefighters and paramedics. He noted that the lack of open space and the hillside terrain in the area limited the City's options.

WPRA hosts September meeting

On September 14, the WPRA board, Chief Downs, PUSD representatives and area residents met in the San Rafael Elementary School auditorium to discuss the proposal for a temporary station.

Chief Downs acknowledged that the proposal for a permanent station on Nithsdale was now off the table. He reported that in the absence of a better permanent station site, the City was now considering the original location, although it had previously been considered too small for a modern station. Chief Downs said the City would attempt to purchase one or two adjacent parcels of land or add additional floors to provide additional space.

Related to the temporary site, PUSD Chief Facilities Officer

David Azcárraga confirmed that the school district was negotiating with the City on a three-year lease to use the lower playground at San Rafael Elementary. Few details about the lease were provided, except that the rent would be "above market value" and that the excess would fund additional improvements at the school.

The PUSD board must approve the final agreement, as must City Council following public hearings on a proposed Conditional Use Permit. Chief Downs said he hoped to open the temporary facility by January 1, 2012.

Chief Downs estimated the cost at \$500,000 to set up the temporary facility, including two small trailers (the firefighters' residence), three parking spaces and a 25' x 35' structure to house a mini-fire truck and light equipment. The facility would be staffed 24/7 by two-person teams, one of whom would always be a paramedic. The City would need to bring power and water utilities to the site and build a pad. Chief Downs added that sirens, lights and bells would be activated only if traffic impeded truck movement when responding to a call.

Both Chief Downs and Azcárraga said that students wouldn't be endangered because the temporary station would be fenced-off from the school. They also noted that school operations will be disrupted anyway when a 16-month Measure TT school-bond construction begins in June 2012. The company chosen to perform that work would share the southwest corner of the school yard with the temporary station.

Some residents, however, contended this was not an adequate temporary solution. Chief



Chief Downs points out proposed temporary station site during September 14 meeting at San Rafael Elementary School. Photo by Chuck Hudson

Downs acknowledged that it was "not ideal," but that it was the best alternative to provide at least some additional paramedic response capacity.

According to the fire department, the temporary facility would be able to handle nearly 80% of the calls it receives, based on the 2010 call records. More than 69% of the 415 total calls to Station 39 in 2010 were for medical services, and 8% were for other services, such as odors or appliance malfunctions. Only 22% of the calls to Station 39 were for fires, and only four of those calls involved actual property damage. The temporary facility will also continue to get support from Eagle Rock and South Pasadena fire stations.

City Council receives petition, acts

On September 19, a group of West Pasadena residents presented City Council with a petition containing more than 500 signatures demanding transparency for the process to determine both the interim and long-term solution.

During the meeting, City Council approved a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the design of the new fire station. Council also authorized the City Manager to enter into a contract with WLC Architects, Inc., for professional services to design the new Fire Station 39 in an amount not to exceed \$400,200. To read the September 19 staff report, visit the City's website.

Stay informed

The WPRA is closely monitoring developments concerning this issue. *To receive free weekly neighborhood updates regarding City issues, please send your name and email address to update@wptra.net.* ■

Pasadena City Hall Digest & Update

By Vince Farhat
WPRA Director



Vince Farhat is a partner in the law firm Holland & Knight and is a former federal prosecutor. He is a past president of WPRA and serves on the board of directors of the Pasadena Center Operating Company. Vince can be reached at farhat@wpra.net.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Update: Ambassador West

Full will be a busy time for the Ambassador West project, as City Ventures prepares to pull off-site construction permits and again extend the project's entitlements. Since the last update in this publication, City Ventures has been working with Pasadena's Planning, Building & Safety, Public Works and Water & Power departments to get permits for on-site and off-site improvements, which are required by the project's Conditions of Approval. City Ventures will notify the WPRA and property owners around the campus before beginning this work, which might be as early as October. Design Review on the third of three phases was delayed through the summer, but will resume again in October. The third phase includes 39 attached homes at the northwest corner of the property. As with the first and second phases, the design of the final phase is consistent with the designs that were presented when the project was approved in 2007, with additional details added and upgraded through the Design Review process. City Ventures, which continues to lead the process to complete and record the Final Subdivision Map on behalf of all of the property owners covered under the CUP, will return to City Council in October or November to request extension of entitlements.

Update: General Plan

In June and July 2011, a General Plan community survey sought feedback from more than 70,000 Pasadena households and businesses about which alternative or



Pasadena City Hall, by Joseph Stoddard (used by permission)

combination of alternatives were preferred for six major planning areas. To date, the City has received nearly 3,000 completed surveys.

The results demonstrate strong support for the General Plan's existing seven guiding principles and reflect a diversity of opinions about each planning area. No alternative received more than one-third of the responses for any of the planning areas. Alternative C (focus future growth around Gold Line Stations and major intersections) was the most preferred option, followed by Alternative B (focus on improving the local economy). Preferences for the Central District were particularly diverse; three of the four land-use alternatives received between 30% and 20% support. Alternative A (redirect growth away from the Central District and into other areas of the City) had the lowest level of support in all planning areas.

Survey results will be presented to City Council for further review during a series of meetings in September and October. The City will then prepare a land-use concept for the public, advisory commissions and City Council to review.

Huntington Hospital master plan EIR

The Huntington Memorial Hospital's proposal to amend its Master Plan includes the reconfiguration of the plan's boundary area and rehabilitation and development in phases over the next 20 years. The proposal calls for construction of approximately 185,000 square feet of new space and demolition of 239,539 square feet of existing space. Although the total area within the Master Plan would be reduced from 29 to 27 acres, the total square footage of buildings within it would increase because of the addition of 10 Congress Street and square footage not presently included within the Master Plan. In other words, the proposed amendment would create a smaller, but denser area.

On September 14, the WPRA submitted written comments to the Planning Commission regarding the scope of the environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed amendment. As proposed, the hospital would complete construction before any demolition would occur. A smaller, denser site could have a beneficial impact on traffic circulation. Accordingly, WPRA has requested that:

- The EIR analyze at least three alternative phasing scenarios to study their varying impacts on traffic circulation
- The EIR study specific measures to reduce (not just mitigate) net new traffic expected to be generated by the project.
- The underlying traffic study use actual traffic counts from new projects such as Sares-Regis
- The City use the Master Plan EIR to create a comprehensive traffic management plan for the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan corridor

The WPRA is closely following this project and will inform West Pasadena residents when the draft EIR is released.

New development in Old Pasadena

The *Pasadena Star-News* reported that City Hall recently approved the concept for development of one of the last open parcels in Old Pasadena — the parking lot at the northeast corner of West Green Street and South Fair Oaks Avenue. One Green Street, in association with Green Street-based Gonzalez Goodale Architects, would replace the surface lot with a three-story, 45,000 square foot development, to include restaurant, retail and office space, plus two levels of underground parking. Over the past six or seven years, several efforts have been made to develop the lot. The project will be reviewed by the Planning and Design commissions, with the developers hoping to break ground as early as January 2012.

FEDERAL AND STATE ISSUES

2010 census results for Pasadena

City Hall has released Pasadena's numbers from the 2010 federal Census. Pasadena now has a population of approximately 137,122, about a 2.5% increase from 133,936 over the past decade. The census showed a 24% decline in African-American residents, a 46% increase in Asians, a 3.2% growth in Latinos, a 1.4% growth in Caucasians. The increases occurred mostly in the 60-and-up age groups. The City has prepared a report, "Evolving Demographics in Pasadena," which is available on the City's website.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND POLITICS

City hires redistricting consultant

As we reported in the last issue of WPRA News, City of Pasadena voting districts must be reviewed every 10 years, when the U.S. Census is conducted. These district boundaries define the geographic representation of the Pasadena City Council. During that review, City Council must determine whether adjustments to the boundaries of any or all districts are necessary. On June 20, City Council appointed nine Pasadena residents to serve on the task force. West Pasadena residents Bill Crowfoot and Richard McDonald will serve as chair and vice-chair, respectively.

Subsequently, the City circulated a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a professional redistricting consultant to work under the supervision and direction of the task force and to guide it and the public through the redistricting process. After interviewing the respondents, the task force unanimously recommended that National Demographics Corporation (NDC) serve as the redistricting consultant, which City Council approved on September 12, at a cost not to exceed \$85,000. The proposal submitted by NDC also includes a community outreach component intended to ensure community participation and input. WPRA is following the redistricting process and will inform West Pasadena residents of upcoming task force meetings.

PUSD hires new superintendent

In July, the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) board unanimously approved a three-year contract for new PUSD superintendent Jon Gundry. Mr. Gundry's base salary is \$240,000. He comes to PUSD after service as the deputy superintendent of the Los Angeles County Office of Education from 2008 to 2010 and interim superintendent for the 2010-11 school year. He began his career in the public schools in Houston. The WPRA welcomes Mr. Gundry to Pasadena and looks forward to working with him in the months and years to come.

City manager gets indefinite contract extension

City Council on September 12 extended City Manager Michael Beck's contract indefinitely after unanimously voting to remove the four-year term limits placed in his original agreement. "The extension of the city manager's contract recognizes the City Council's high level of confidence in the city manager," said Vice Mayor and Councilmember Margaret McAustin, according to *Pasadena Weekly*.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Update: Open Space and Conservation Element moves forward

Pasadena is updating the Open Space and Conservation Element of the City's General Plan. A citizens' committee, along with City staff, has revised and updated the blueprint to open-space management. The draft plan is scheduled to go to the Planning Commission on October 24. Following that, the Open Space Element will go to the City Council sometime in November. For more information, please contact WPRA board members Joan Hearst at hearst@wptra.net or Linda Zinn at zinn@wptra.net.

Update: Pasadena Roving Archers

The City is now reviewing its operating agreement in the lower Arroyo Seco with the Pasadena Roving Archers (PRA). Earlier this year, the City formed a special subcommittee of commissioners and neighbors, alongside staff and the PRA, to develop a new agreement. The WPRA has two representatives on the subcommittee, which has met twice and finalized its recommendation. However, the subcommittee has not come to any conclusion about the issue of safety, relative to the target range being open to the public when the PRA does not have an event scheduled. As this newsletter goes to press, it appears the subcommittee will meet at least one more time before the Recreation and Parks Commission adopts final recommendations and sends them to City Council. ■

Is NFL knocking at the Rose Bowl door again?

By Bill Urban
WPRA Vice President

As prospects for a new National Football League team and stadium in Los Angeles grow, so, too, has speculation about where the relocating team will ultimately play — most likely Anschutz Entertainment Group's \$1 billion 68,000-seat stadium near Los Angeles Convention Center or Majestic Realty's \$800 million 75,000-seat facility in the City of Industry.

What's this have to do with the Rose Bowl? It's generally assumed that before construction of a new stadium will begin, a team will have to commit publicly to relocating to Los Angeles. And as soon as a team announces it's leaving its current city, it will likely decide to start the next season in an interim stadium in the LA area. Although many speculate that the interim stadium

could be either the Rose Bowl or Los Angeles Coliseum, Rose Bowl General Manager Darryl Dunn told WPRA "...there are currently no negotiations between the Rose Bowl, the City, or any group concerning interim use of the Rose Bowl by the NFL."

Some Pasadena officials, however, say they are willing, if approached, to talk with the NFL. "The idea of accommodating the NFL for two or three years while the transition takes place," said Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard in the August 17 edition of *Pasadena Weekly*, "is not something we should ignore. We think the lease payments from the NFL would be substantial." City officials quickly add, however, that any agreement would have to accommodate residents living in the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as current main Rose Bowl tenants, UCLA and the Tournament of Roses Association.

The board of the Linda Vista-Annandale Association recently voted unanimously to oppose the idea. The WPRA will monitor the situation and voice any concerns that arise through monthly meetings with Rose Bowl management. These meetings, which have been going on for the past three years and are attended by representatives of the WPRA and other area neighborhood associations, including the LVAA and the East Arroyo Residents Association, have proven effective at addressing a wide range of issues concerning the Rose Bowl, as well as the Arroyo Seco.

The WPRA will continue to monitor the situation and share any new information.

What do you think? Tell us in an email to urban@wptra.net or in a letter to WPRA, P.O. Box 50252, Pasadena, CA 91115. ■

Pasadena Community Service Area 1 crime statistics

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total Vehicle burglaries													
2009	14	22	27	23	21	10	16	22	24	13	15	22	229
2010	28	25	31	18	24	12	19	12	16	18	20	22	245
2011	12	20	18	8	14	4	8	5					89
Residential burglaries													
2009	8	6	9	21	8	9	10	16	12	8	7	13	127
2010	11	13	7	5	6	17	8	9	9	11	13	21	130
2011	14	4	7	12	15	15	10	12					89
Commercial burglaries													
2009	3	2	3	7	5	3	7	5	3	7	6	2	53
2010	5	1	6	4	2	5	3	2	3	3	6	3	43
2011	3	4	2	9	2	5	14						39
Armed robbery													
2009	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	4
2010	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	4
2011	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	1					6
Strong-arm robbery													
2009	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4
2010	4	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	11
2011	0	1	1	9	1	1	1	0					14
Grand theft auto													
2009	3	7	12	7	4	2	0	4	6	3	4	4	56
2010	7	1	5	5	8	3	4	12	0	6	0	8	59
2011	6	5	0	3	3	2	3	4					26
Recovered stolen vehicles													
2009	4	1	1	2	0	2	2	4	1	0	4	2	23
2010	4	0	3	1	0	3	2	2	0	1	0	1	17
2011	1	3	0	0	0	1	2						7

This table provides crime statistics for Pasadena Community Service Area (CSA) 1, which includes Council District 6 and small portions of districts 1 and 7, between January 2010 and through August 2011. Find continually updated statistics on the WPRA website.

Valley Hunt Club revises 20-year master plan

The Valley Hunt Club's 20-year master plan was unanimously approved by City Council earlier this year. This culminated eight years of work by club members, area neighbors, the WPRA, Pasadena Heritage and elected officials.

The key new element is an underground parking structure that will be constructed under the north parking lot of the club.

The plan includes several other smaller proposed projects within the campus boundaries, including expansion of the existing snack bar and construction of an office on the pool deck for the swim-coach, a building on the south parking lot and a building on the existing employee parking lot. ■

The changing (water-wise) landscape of Pasadena

By Nancy Long,
Water Conservation Manager
Pasadena Water & Power

About 35% of Pasadena's water comes from groundwater wells. The rest comes from the Metropolitan Water District, which draws from Northern California and the Colorado River.

In recent drought years, groundwater and MWD reservoir levels plummeted. MWD threatened financial penalties for cities that used more than their allotments, and Pasadena was forced to enact strict water-waste prohibitions. Also, due to declining fish populations, pumping is still restricted in the San Joaquin-Sacramento Delta, from which MWD had drawn about a third of Southern California's supply. And while we recently enjoyed a wet winter, future droughts are inevitable. With Southern California's water supply uncertain, we can't afford to waste it. "The improved short-term conditions do not signal an end to the region's long-term water challenges," says MWD General Manager Jeffrey Kightlinger. "Conservation and wise water use must continue to be a permanent way of life," he adds.

One square foot saves 45 gallons

One of the most effective ways to conserve water can be found outside. MWD estimates that for every square foot of lawn (turf) removed, a household can save 45 gallons of water each year. For a typical Pasadena home with 1,400 square feet of lawn, this equates to 63,000 gallons annually – enough to fill three backyard swimming pools.

Many Pasadena residents are taking our city back to its natural roots. Inspired by the lush Arroyo Seco, local green thumbs are replacing their lawns with colorful water-wise native gardens, firmly planting their commitment to conservation.

Lawns are foreign to Pasadena. Forced into our semi-arid climate, grasses like St. Augustine, Marathon and Fescue require a heroic amount of mowing, edging, fertilizing, aerating and weed killing to keep them green. Studies show that lawns need 50% more water than most other plants.

A sign of sophistication

"The native plant and drought-tolerant palette is a sign of sophistication," says



landscape architect Marco Barrantes MLA/MCP of La Loma Development Company, Inc. "There is a growing awareness that the responsible, ecological and beautiful thing to do is to have a low-water, low-maintenance native garden."

Garden transformations also affect home values. "As more people become aware and informed, and as we use less water," says Michael Kirchmann of Anigo Garden Design, "I think buyers will start looking for homes that are environmentally conscious."

Turf-removal rebate program

With PWP's turf-removal rebate program, Pasadena residents can qualify for a rebate of \$1 per square foot (up to \$2,500) for replacing at least 250 square feet of grass with a mix of water-wise shrubs, vines, ground cover, flowers, trees, mulch, decomposed granite, gravel and decorative rocks.

The process is simple. To qualify, submit an application, a sketch of your plans and photos of your existing grass, and schedule pre- and post-inspections from PWP.

Many residents bring in a landscape architect, designer or contractor to bring their visions to life. "A landscaper needs to be

sensitive to a client's needs, and be willing to find harmony between principle and the client's ideal landscape," Barrantes says.

Once you've made your choice, call the Contractor's State License Board at (800) 321-2752 or visit cslb.ca.gov to verify that a contractor's license is current and in good standing, and that he/she is bonded and insured.

Turf replacement timing

"Any time is a good time to replace turf," Barrantes notes, "however, the best time is after the first few rains in November. The ground is softer and native plants and seeds are most successful if planted and sowed in the early part of the wet season."

Long-time Pasadena resident Colleen Schwab is thrilled with the dry streambed of native flowers and succulents she created last year. "When I walk outside, there's this feeling of calm, because I don't have that much work to do," she says. "All in all, it's a feeling like we've done something good for ourselves and for the community." ■

Find complete guidelines, rebate applications, how-to videos and hundreds of water conservation ideas at PasadenaSavesWater.com

Arlington Garden: A miracle of vision, hard work & persistence

By Charles “Kicker” & Betty McKenney
The Constant Gardeners

Thousands drive by Arlington Garden each day on busy South Pasadena Avenue and see a pleasant landscape. And while those who stop for a moment see much more, those who stay a little longer discover natural surprises around every corner. The garden is home to 350 trees and thousands of plants that thrive in our Mediterranean climate...but it wasn't always so.

Beauty to blight

From 1904 to 1964, the 10-acre site was home to the renowned Durand estate. The 17,000 square foot, 50-room mansion was surrounded by stunning gardens and a perimeter of Cherokee roses. Then, in 1964, after the mansion had fallen into disrepair and the gardens gone fallow, Caltrans purchased the lot to store heavy equipment during construction of the planned 710 freeway expansion.

For years, the only attention the lot got was when Caltrans mowed it twice a year. And the only hint of its former glory could be found in two coast live oaks, a California pepper, a jacaranda and seven palms. A temporary use had become a permanent eyesore.



Kicker and Betty McKenney, Arlington Garden's "constant gardeners," pose in front of the solar-powered fountain donated by the WPRA.

Worse, the blight extended to Arlington Drive, which bore just two barely surviving magnolia street trees, empty motor-oil cans and fast-food wrappers.

Blight to beauty

District 6 Councilmember Steve Madison in 2002 decided something had to be done.

He asked neighbors what they'd like the site to become if the City were to lease it from Caltrans. The response was anything with low community impact: no playing fields or on-site parking or lights or public restrooms. Now that he knew what *not* to do, all that was left was to figure out what to do.

This was also a time of changing attitudes regarding land use and landscaping. *Water-wise* and *drought tolerant* were new concepts. Land was expensive, the City's water supply limited and its resources already stretched thin. It soon became clear it would not be a traditional city park. The old way of doing things faced a new reality.

Steve turned to us for suggestions. We had just moved next door to the site and were dismayed at what an eyesore it was. One Sunday morning in 2003, Betty looked out our window and announced that the site should become a garden.

How we did it

There was no clear model for how to get here from there. Location, events, personalities, levels of interest and finances made it difficult to follow a straight path. We knew, however, that we needed a champion. Fortunately, we had one in Steve. We also needed a City administrator with the willingness to see beyond the status quo. We had



An aerial shot of the abandoned lot before Arlington Garden.



Arlington Garden today — a natural surprise around every corner. Photo by Chuck Hudson

one in former City Manager Cynthia Kurtz. Last, but certainly not least, we needed the City Council's willingness and commitment to sign a lease with Caltrans for the lot. They did, and suddenly the pieces had come together; we were on our way.

The first garden committee included both of us; Cathy Woods, director of the City's Parks and Natural Resources Division; Steve's Field Representative Taka Suzuki; and Pasadena Water & Power's water conservation manager Nancy Long. We told City landscape architect Todd Holmes, who had just redesigned Singer Park at the corner of St. John Avenue and California Boulevard, that we saw this as a garden, not a park. He pointed us toward Cal-Poly Pomona's landscape-design students, who developed the first marvelous concept designs for our garden.

We found our garden designer at a book signing at Vroman's. Author Jan Smithen, who had just published "Sun Drenched Gardens, the Mediterranean Style," recommended we contact Mayita Dinos, one of her former students.

It took a village, literally

The concept designs enabled the City and neighbors to visualize what we proposed. Fortunately, from the very start, the City and our friends and neighbors generously contributed to the garden.

- The City and Pasadena Water & Power — startup and continuing funding
- Neighbors and friends — donations, rocks, plants, trees, benches, pots, bird baths and more

- The West Pasadena Residents' Association — a solar-powered water fountain
- Ken Colburn — handmade Adirondack furniture, raised herb beds and umbrella stand/planters
- An eighth grader, his dad and granddad — a split-rail fence
- Three Eagle Scout projects — our water-retaining berms and swales
- Marco Barrantes, of La Loma Development Company — graceful urbanite walls, entrances and the amphitheater
- Rob Miller and friends of lifelong Pasadenan Sabra Clark — funding
- Ray Cirino — the amphitheater cap
- Janet and Rafael Calvo — the beautiful stained glass pomegranate that adorns the cap
- Thomas Juhasz — horticultural advice
- Finch Tree — fine mulch every season
- Albino Alarcon and his family — great gardening skills and hours of back-breaking weeding, mulching and planting
- Armstrong, Bellefontaine and Lincoln Avenue nurseries — support for our effort to plant climate-appropriate plants

A mix of emotions

The development of Arlington Garden was nothing short of a miraculous confluence of vision, hard work, persistence and time. Over the years, the garden has given us much pleasure and only a little disappointment. We recall moving our first public meeting to

a neighbor's garage in a driving rainstorm, and planting street trees one Saturday, with Pasadena Beautiful's generous help, in a similar deluge. We recall the stunning brilliance of the garden's first growth of California poppies, and we still marvel at our now mature volunteer oaks, sycamores and olive trees that sprung from the ground.

On the other hand, we lost the beautiful mature olive tree Westridge School donated to the garden, and we've occasionally had to remove trees we'd grown fond of because they were "competing" with neighboring trees. The garden has also been victim of a very occasional theft of equipment, materials and some special plants.

But most of all, we are proud that we have done what we said we would do: create a sustainable, water-conserving public garden in harmony with our Mediterranean climate. Each day we enjoy seeing returning and first time visitors at the garden, and exchanging waves from people passing by. We are grateful and humbled by how neighbors, friends and professionals have embraced and adopted Arlington Garden.

A garden for the generations

We hope that the City and our friends and neighbors will come by often and continue to help us ensure that Arlington Garden remains a lasting part of Pasadena's landscape.

PS: You can help the cause by purchasing the sweet orange marmalade we make from our own orange trees. To order some, visit our website at arlingtongardeninpasadena.org or call (626)441-4478. ■

Gone, but not forgotten

Country Living in Pasadena: The Arroyo Vista

By Kirk Myers

Assistant Archivist

Pasadena Museum of History

Editor's note: The Pasadena Museum of History graciously provides WPRA News readers with historical vignettes that reveal our city's past and, we hope, inform our future.

In 1880, Mrs. Emma C. Bangs moved to Pasadena from New York for reasons of health—her daughter's consumption (tuberculosis). In 1882, she built the Arroyo Vista Guest House on several acres of land south of Colorado Street, overlooking the Arroyo.

Historian J.W. Wood wrote that it was “a rather pretentious building, for the time, in which she conducted a semi-public boarding house and hotel. Its reputation brought to it winter tourists and travelers who sought a

retirement home, and year-by-year its reputation grew.” The *Pasadena Evening Star* noted that she was the first to open within Pasadena city limits “a winter resort for travelers and fugitives from the frigid east.”

In an article on “Tourists' Homes” on February 1, 1890, the *Pasadena Evening Star* detailed some of the features that made the Arroyo Vista so popular:

“Every suite at the Arroyo Vista is lit by electricity, heated, elegantly furnished and fitted – with all modern conveniences. Guests are supplied without extra charge with hot and cold baths, private table service, trained attendance, telephone communication and the use of piano. It is the earnest, untiring aim of Mrs. Bangs to confer the utmost comfort upon each member of her family, for as such she regards her guests. A stage coach, direct from all incoming and out going

trains, passes the grounds on Orange Grove avenue, which adds greatly to the facilities of locomotion in that locality. The Arroyo Vista is famed for its far reaching and felicitous views, its foliage, fruits and flowers.”

When she died in March 1905, the *Pasadena Evening Star* observed that Mrs. Bangs was one of the “most respected residents of Pasadena.” The Arroyo Vista was later transformed into the Vista del Arroyo hotel, and later into what it is today: the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The address, however, is the same as it was more than a century ago — 125 South Grand Ave.

The Pasadena Museum of History is located at 470 W. Walnut Ave. The research library and archives are open to the public free of charge Thursday-Sunday, 1-4 pm. For additional information, visit pasadenahistory.org or call (626)577-1660, ext. 10. ■



Described as “rather pretentious” when it opened in 1882, the Arroyo Vista Guest House acquired an excellent reputation and became so popular that reservations were necessary.

For Pasadena Beautiful, it's always tree time

By **Bette Cooper**
Pasadena Beautiful Foundation

The Pasadena Beautiful Foundation was founded by residents of Pasadena in 1960 with an interest in Pasadena's trees. They were concerned that the city didn't have enough funding to continue planting trees in public areas, which was, and is, one of the main reasons that Pasadena is beautiful and what attracted people to establish roots here.

Tree planting throughout the city continues to be our most important focus. To celebrate our 50th anniversary, we celebrated by planting 50 trees in the Linda Vista area.

During the past 50 years, the Foundation Board has broadened its focus to include Pasadena Beautiful Day. We find a project, in collaboration with the City Department of Public Works Parks & Natural Resources, that needs trees planted and help with beautification. For example, we re-landscaped the Jackie Robinson Center in Northwest Pasadena.

We also have other vital programs

- The annual Golden Arrow Awards are given to private gardens that enhance their neighborhoods throughout the city. An awards ceremony is held every May, during which the 36 annual recipients share a story about their gardens and leave with a Golden Arrow.
- Commercial Design Awards, which are given every two or three years, are awarded to public buildings throughout the city, to celebrate the landscaping that has been chosen to enhance the public's visual enjoyment.
- Wednesday Work Days begin every October and continue through May. We meet every Wednesday from 9 – 10 a.m. in a public garden or park to help beautify that area in collaboration with the city. This one-hour endeavor includes weeding, dead-heading, raking and any other gardening needs necessary. Guests welcome any and all Wednesdays!

In the past three years, Pasadena Beautiful has applied to the Pasadena Community



If you see a spot that could use a tree in any part of the city (not on private property). Call (626) 795-9704 or email Pasadena Beautiful at pasadenabeautiful.org.

Foundation for a grant to re-landscape two city properties. The first, in 2009, was the garden at the Santa Catalina Library, at 999 East Washington Blvd. We were awarded

a grant for this project, and thanks to an inspired landscape plan, the City crew, with whom we collaborated, and many volunteers, we created a more user-friendly garden and meeting place for the library visitors.

This year, we were awarded a grant to re-landscape the Pasadena Senior Center garden. As with the Santa Catalina Library garden designer, we asked this landscape designer to create a water-wise garden. Again, collaborating with the City, the garden has been replaced and more benches installed to make this a more attractive area for the public to enjoy.

All this exists due to many hours given by an enthusiastic board of the Pasadena Beautiful Foundation and the generosity of the many members who continue to support this admirable Foundation, which helps keep Pasadena beautiful. ■

PASADENA HERITAGE'S CRAFTSMAN WEEKEND IS COMING UP

A tribute to Pasadena's unique contributions to the American Arts & Crafts Movement, Pasadena Heritage's Craftsman Weekend is the largest and most comprehensive celebration of the Craftsman Movement in the Western United States. Here's what's on tap for the 2011 weekend:

Thursday, October 13

Preserving the Past:
Old Pasadena luncheon and walking tour

Friday, October 14

Exclusive art tour and brunch
South Pasadena house tour
Woodworker's dream, drive-yourself tour
Governor Markham Landmark District, walking tour
Greene & Greene bus tour
Opening reception at the Pitcairn House

Saturday, October 15

Craftsman exposition show & sale, silent auction, presentations and demonstrations
Your bungalow inside-and-out, workshop
California light: A century of landscapes, lecture

Intelligently rebuilding, lecture
Developing a California architecture, lecture
Craftsman kitchens bus tour
Great architects bus tour
Prospect Park walking tour
Reception at the Manor Del Mar

Sunday, October 16

Craftsman drive-yourself house tour: The house tour will revisit three superior homes that were on the first Craftsman Weekend house tour in 1992: the DeForest, Batchelder and Caunt (aka the Wisteria) houses. The weekend will also showcase three homes that have never before been open for tour: the Ker/Mahan, Leggat and the Grassie House.
Craftsman exposition show & sale, silent auction, presentations and demonstrations

For more information, schedules, ticket prices or to purchase tickets, contact:
Pasadena Heritage, 651 S. St. John Ave., Pasadena, CA 91105, call (626)441-6333,
or visit us at pasadenaheritage.org.

At San Rafael Branch Library, it's new and all about you

By Kathleen Hamilton
San Rafael Library Associates

The San Rafael Branch Library reopened on June 27 to rave reviews. A planned closure of two months allowed time for the much needed construction of a new handicapped-accessible restroom, replacement of carpeting and refinishing of corkwood floors. The upgrade to an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant restroom was made possible by reallocating some of the staff office space and check-out desk. By meeting this important accessibility requirement, a final hurdle to the renovation of the back patio has been overcome.

The San Rafael Library Associates (SRLA) comprises dedicated citizens focused on ensuring that your visit to the San Rafael branch library will be a pleasant experience in a quiet and beautiful space. The group has focused on improving the gardens and facility, hoping that these features will encourage readers of all ages to come to the library on Nithsdale Road.

SRLA accomplishments

Since its inception in 2002, the SRLA has steadily checked off numerous items on its list of beautification and renovation efforts.

- In 2006, the gardens were revamped with a new irrigation system and replanting of trees that included cherry trees from Pasadena's sister city in Japan. New flowers and plants were added along with benches made of recycled materials.
- In 2009, in partnership with the City of Pasadena, the SRLA completed its refurbishment of the library's Community Room with new state-of-the-art audio visual equipment, fresh paint, new carpet and new furniture. In recognition of its work, the WPRA bestowed the Community Service Award upon the SRLA in May, 2010.

The finishing touch to the branch library's Community Room was the purchase of a Joseph Stoddard painting by the SRLA, depicting the Colorado Street Bridge and the plant life of the Arroyo Seco below it. At the room's dedication ceremony in January 8, 2011, the SRLA donated this painting in honor of the late Dorothy Lindsey,



Wendy Schorr and Alfredo Hernandez are among the dedicated library staff and volunteers who serve the area in the San Rafael Branch Library at 1240 Nithsdale Road. (Photo by Chuck Hudson)

an SRLA Board Member and a former WPRA president, who was very dear to the associates and to the Pasadena community. Dorothy is remembered for her lifelong dedicated service to our community and for her commitment to excellence in the Pasadena Public Libraries.

What's next

The long anticipated renovation of the exterior back patio of the San Rafael Library by SRLA has been made possible with the construction of the new handicapped-accessible restroom. SRLA is now ready to concentrate on remodeling the back patio and gardens to create an inviting and restful outdoor space. With appreciation and respect for the architect's Mid-Century-Modern design style of the library, a site plan, including landscape and hardscape, is currently being assessed.

Why libraries matter

Libraries provide one of our most vital city resources. The SRLA wholeheartedly supports their collective mission:

The freedom to know is the foundation of our democracy. The mission of the Pasadena Public Library, a basic municipal service, is to be an information center for the Pasadena community to preserve and encourage the free expression of ideas essential to an informed citizenry.

SRLA is working to create an environment that provides a respite from the pace of daily distractions and encourages the appreciation of life-long learning. The libraries' retention of high-quality staff is key to this effort, sustaining the excellent level of service and managing the collection of written, visual and digital resources. The library also offers critical space for group meetings, presentations and city gatherings, and encourages reading by all ages.

The SRLA is grateful to the WPRA for its sustaining support for the library, and looks forward to finding new opportunities to maintain and improve community support for the San Rafael Branch Library. ■

A letter from San Rafael Elementary

Editor's note: The WPRA has "adopted" San Rafael Elementary School, 1090 Nithsdale Rd., which is the last public elementary school in our service area. Through the Student Enrichment Program, WPRA education co-chairs Marilyn Randolph and Catherine Stringer work closely with the school staff on behalf of the students.

Dear West Pasadena friends:

When I lived in the Northeast, the start of school seemed to signal cooler temperatures, leaves on trees changing color and a shift in daily routines. I have come to learn that in Southern California, Mother Nature teases us with warmer weather, but with our first day of school just days behind us, our routines have changed just the same.

And this fall at San Rafael Elementary, there are big changes to talk about and celebrate. We have continued to increase our student enrollment, this year by more than 20% — from 312 Kindergarten through fifth-grade students last year to 382 this September. Our Dual Language Immersion Program in Spanish/English has increased from four classes to seven; this year we have the largest group of Kindergartners and first-graders that I have ever seen at the school. When I think back a year ago, to the District's school consolidation debates, I am gratified that we continue to deliver on our promise of growth and progress.

The rapid increase in student enrollment over the last three years — including the arrival this fall of 100 new students — and with it a greater number of children coming to school by car rather than bus, brings some new concerns to what we know is already a challenging traffic flow situation during

morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up.

In August, the administration of the school and members of the WPRA Board worked with officials from the City of Pasadena to implement changes that we hope will mitigate concerns about traffic congestion around the school. As a result of our meeting, city officials recommended that the

Rafael Elementary — the only public school in ZIP code 91105. Rest assured that our team of stakeholders will continue to monitor traffic patterns and pedestrian safety, and make additional adjustments, if needed.

Over the past several years, the WPRA has found numerous ways to partner and support what is happening at San Rafael. We

are so grateful for this partnership, and this year we are seeking ways to concentrate our efforts around a few specific events such as building on last spring's Career Day and involving more of the community in our annual events, such as our wildly successful Spring Musical (this year, look forward to *Annie, Jr.!*).

Every year, we have shared with WPRA newsletter readers our need for volunteers. As a result, we have amazing volunteer support at the school, including long-time WPRA members who are returning to their roles as volunteers for the third or fourth school year. I hope to spotlight some of their work in future issues of this newsletter.



*Excited about the first day of the 2011-2012 school year at San Rafael Elementary.
Photo by Catherine Stringer*

school frontage along Nithsdale and San Miguel roads be designated loading- and unloading- only zones during school hours and established no-stopping zones immediately across the street for the same period.

It appears that the traffic flow has significantly improved, especially on San Miguel and Hermosa roads. We recognize that these changes may result in some other traffic and parking concerns, and we ask for your continued patience and understanding. We want to be good neighbors and know the community shares in the success of San

For more information about volunteering, please call the school office at (626)396-5790. Also, please check out our school website for the latest information: sanrafael.pasadenausd.org. And, if you are a Facebook user, please "like" us at facebook.com/sanrafaelelementary. ■

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alyson Beecher'.

Alyson Beecher
Principal

A thank-you to our donor-members

WPRM appreciates our donor-members. The membership donations listed below include all of \$100 and above that have been received from September 1, 2010 through August 31, 2011. If your name is not listed correctly, please contact me. We thank you for your support.

Linda Zinn, Membership chair, zinn@wpram.net

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Make your own motion!

There is much going on in our 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 and make your own motion.

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bbogaard@cityofpasadena.net

Chris Holden, District 3

cholden@cityofpasadena.net

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ttornek@cityofpasadena.net

Pasadena: city on call

Police Department

Emergency 9-1-1
Pasadena Crime Stoppers (800) 222-8477
Non-Emergency (626) 744-4501

Services

Bulky items (626) 744-4158
Missed trash pickup (626) 744-4087
Missed residential recycling pickup (626) 744-4087
New trash container (626) 744-4087
New street light (626) 744-4191
Pothole (626) 744-4158
Recycling (626) 744-4087
Sewer problem (626) 744-4158
Shopping cart pickup (626) 744-8227
Street light not working (626) 744-4158
Storm drain blockage (626) 744-4158
Traffic signal malfunction (626) 744-4158
Traffic signal timing problems (626) 744-4191

Frequently called numbers

City information operator (626) 744-4000
Abandoned vehicles (626) 744-7627
Alarm permits (626) 744-4166
Animal control (626) 792-7151
ARTS bus (626) 744-4055
Code enforcement (626) 744-4633
Dog licenses (626) 744-4501
Graffiti (626) 744-7622
Historic preservation (626) 744-4009
Neighborhood Watch (626) 744-4550
Park/picnic reservations (626) 744-7275
Parking permits/exemptions (626) 744-6440
Parking tickets (626) 744-4360
Street tree maintenance (626) 744-4321
Trash pick-up (626) 744-4087
Water/power billing inquiries (626) 744-4005
Yard sale permits (626) 744-4200