

WESTSIDE
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NEWS & VIEWS

WESTSIDE VILLAGE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
WWW.WESTSIDEVILLAGE.ORG SPRING 2022

Meet Your City Council Candidates

**You are invited to the
Westside Village Homeowners
Association 2022 Annual Meeting
Wednesday, April 27, 2022 - 7 pm**



Zoom meeting - link at www.westsidevillage.org



Acting President's Message

Christine Stemar

Hello everyone, as you may recall, last year we surveyed all Westside Village residents and more than 80 percent of respondents said they wanted the organization to represent all residents and businesses including houses of worship within our community, not just owners of single-family homes.

Progress towards that change had to wait, while the City underwent its periodic redistricting process. Westside Village was in limbo—with our neighborhood potentially being moved to CD 11 to the West, to another district further East, or remaining in CD 5. Several of our Board members actively lobbied in support of our remaining in CD 5, and we were successful! Once that was settled, we resumed our quest to become a more inclusive and representative organization. To that end, our organization will return to its original name: Westside Village Civic Association.

The draft of revised Bylaws are nearing completion and will be circulated for adoption shortly. Thereafter, we will elect new Board members to reflect our broader inclusivity, with apartment, condo, and cooperative dwellers – in addition to our residents of single family homes – as well as representatives from businesses and community organizations within our boundaries all are eligible to run.

It's time for our Annual Meeting, Wednesday, April 27, 2022 at 7pm via Zoom. Elections for our new Board and officers will be held during the Annual Meeting. Please consider running for office or join the volunteers whose efforts over the years have ensured the success of our Homeowners (soon to be Civic) Association. We welcome all volunteers, whether or not you wish to serve on the Board.

In addition to handling Association business, the Annual Meeting will feature a Townhall introducing the four candidates running to represent CD 5 on the LA City Council. This is an ideal opportunity to introduce ourselves to the candidates and will go a long way towards building a relationship with the eventual winner—all to our community's benefit. See photos and bios of the candidates in this newsletter. The primaries are on June 7th and the general election is in November.

Please bring your comments and questions to our Annual Meeting and Townhall. The link will be emailed to everyone on our mailing list and posted on our website at www.westsidevillage.org. Sign up for the mailing

list on our website to stay up to date on news in Westside Village and, if you have any questions or wish to run for office or volunteer, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Board.

Thank you!

Did you know ? Crime and Safety Tips From the LAPD.

Valerie Fontaine

Did you know that:

- **Our current Senior Lead Officer, replacing Officer Ceja while he recuperates from an injury, is Officer Navarette. His email is 34235@lapd.online.**
- **While overall thefts and burglaries are down, there has been an increase in car theft. Lock your doors and roll up your windows.**
- **Theft of catalytic converters is a continuing problem, but there are a few things you can do to make it harder on would-be thieves: engrave your VIN on the converter; install a device to “lock” the converter, available online and through some mechanics and muffler shops; and post stickers on your car warning wannabe criminals that you have taken both of those preventative steps, also available online.**
- **The favorite targets for catalytic converter thefts are Toyota Priuses, with pick-ups and other high-off-the-ground vehicles coming in second.**
- **The item most often stolen from cars is sunglasses; second most stolen is cell phone charger cords. Smash and grab thieves will steal items with even minimal monetary value, such as loose change, leaving you with expensive repairs. So don't leave ANYTHING visible in your car.**
- **If you call 911 from your cell phone rather than a landline, it goes to the Highway Patrol. Your call then is routed to your local emergency dispatcher, causing a delay. Get directly to your local dispatcher, by calling 213-928-8223. Log that number into your cell phone for quick access. You won't have time to look it up in an emergency.**
- **Once you get an emergency dispatch operator on the phone, you should give them your name and call-back number FIRST, before launching into the details of the situation, so they can call you back should you get disconnected. Second, give them your specific location. That way, they can get to you whether or not**



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you have time to explain your emergency. Only then should you go into more detail. Make sure you answer their questions and follow their directions.

- **It's important to report all crimes, even minor ones, to the LAPD. It helps them "connect the dots" to determine patterns and make arrests.**
- **You can avoid long telephone wait times and report non-emergency minor incidents online at www.lapdonline.org/file-a-police-report/**

Planning the Future of Westside Village

Tyler Laferriere,

Mar Vista Community Council Zone One Representative

2⁰²¹ was a frenetic year for planning and land use, and **2**⁰²² promises to be the same.

Due to active community input and lobbying, the Village community remained in City Council District 5, thereby assuring it remains connected to the broader UCLA community, which employs many Village residents both

as faculty and graduate students. Westside Village's attachment to the greater UCLA community was further reinforced by our integration into Los Angeles County Supervisor District 3, currently represented by Sheila Kuehl. Further, Westside Village remains a strong community of interest to UCLA with the many children enrolled in local schools in the community whose parents work or study at UCLA, proximity to UCLA healthcare amenities, and many former Bruins who reside in the area.

Westside Villagers were also assertive in their response to the Housing Element process, which left the historic Fritz Burns-designed village community largely with the same zoning framework which it experienced during the previous RHNA (regional housing needs assessment) cycle. Unfortunately, the California Housing and Community Development (HCD) Department, which regulates municipal compliance with state law concerning planning and land use, declined on February 24th, 2022, to certify the housing element. HCD praised the City's efforts to substantively expanding zoned capacity and facilitate various housing choices, affordability, and supply. However, HCD concluded the Element as proposed insufficiently fulfilled state law concerning affirmative fair housing across the spectrum of protected demographic



statuses and guidelines and metrics for fair housing programs. The City currently has until October 2022 to provide a compliant Housing Element, which would need to include over 250,000 new units of zoned capacity. It is unclear at this time what public input process will be included in their revision process.

Rest assured, community advocates in Westside Village will continue to devote the utmost energy to ensuring the Village's single-family streets remain untouched for current and future residents to enjoy while also providing essential space for multi-family along the major thoroughfares that form the community's borders. This advocacy will continue to stress the Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) developments that have populated the Village's eastern boundary, and the expected major projects that will be coming along the future Sepulveda Transit Corridor, as a demonstration that this community has been proactive in its contribution to state-mandated housing goals.

On the planning and land use front, the Association joined the United Neighbors coalition in their opposition to SB 9 and 10, both of which were signed by Governor Newsom last fall. The Association is currently awaiting further

guidance from the Council office and the Department of Planning regarding the Major Project planned for Sepulveda and Palms Boulevards (which the Association at this time opposes). Plans for the development of the Vons Center, which has involved the Association in the initial planning stages, has been stalled due to the Covid pandemic.

The Association also has been an active participant in the Coalition of homeowners associations (HOA's) of Council District 5, including involvement in many candidate forums for those who are running for City Office including Mayor, CD 5 Councilmember, City Controller, and City Attorney.

In the last several weeks, a new development has been proposed incorporating the three parcels between 10713 and 10725 Palms Boulevard. The proposed development would be a five-story, 28-unit Tier 2 Transit-Oriented Communities project with 17 parking spaces and three units covenanted for extremely low-income families (those who earn 15 to 30 percent of area median income). All 28 apartments would be one-bedroom units. This developer's representatives have been encouraged to present to the WVHA in April or May 2022. It should be noted that this

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development will require discretionary approval from the City Planning Commission (CPC) before being granted its permits, meaning there will be more opportunities for public input than would be the case for a by-right development.

Westside Villagers should also be aware that many developments are being proposed or constructed just beyond the Village's boundaries in the Palms Neighborhood Council area. One recent example is a new four-story, 13-unit apartment building at 10714 Charnock. This development is slated to include three affordable (that is, beneath market rate) units. This development has 11 subterranean parking spaces. The parcel currently hosts a one-story triplex but is zoned R3-1 and is Tier 2 Transit Oriented Communities (TOC). It should be noted that no other parcels on that side of street have been identified for further development potential in this 2021-29 Housing Element as currently written.

Finally, The Los Angeles Department of City Planning has created a Case Reports and Mapping tool that residents may access online to track new permit submissions. Permitting submissions include regulatory items such as conditional use permits for the sale of alcoholic beverages. The Mar Vista Community Council has released a similar tool tracking new developments and notices of demolition. This tool can be accessed on www.marvista.org by going to the PLUM committee page.

As always, I am at your service as your elected representative on the Board of Directors for the Mar Vista Community Council. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, comments, or concerns at **tyler.laferriere@marvista.org**.

Homelessness

During the previous year, the Association proactively engaged with St. John's Presbyterian Church – a focal point of the neighborhood – as the church considered participating in the Safe Parking Program to provide a secure location for unhoused neighbors to park and rest during the evenings. After extensive community consultation and feedback, the Association and St. John's decided that the Safe Parking Program would not be an appropriate endeavor within the community. Further consultations were held with the owners of the retail spaces on Sepulveda and National – centered on the Vons Commercial Center – but the proprietors also elected to pass on the opportunity due to liability concerns. Efforts continue to engage with commercial property owners to obtain a space that may accommodate the Safe Parking

Program. In addition, the Association supported the local Girl Scout troop in their stewardship of a pop-up food pantry on Clover Avenue just West of Military, to provide emergency supplies to neighbors, both housed and unhoused, during this time of extraordinary need.

Unfortunately, a small encampment has arisen on the sidewalk adjacent to the westbound and eastbound entrances to Interstate 10 at Overland and National. This is commensurate with growing unhoused populations at Palms Park and the Palms Recreation Center, which unfortunately witnessed the death of one unhoused man in the past several weeks.

The Mar Vista Community Council (MVCC) Board of Directors voted in July 2021 to support City Council File (CF) 20-1376-S1, which amended Section 41.18 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) to make it illegal to sit, lie, sleep in or on any street, sidewalk, or other public right of way. This section also prohibits blocking building entrances, driveways, loading docks, or fire hydrants. Finally, the revised code allows City Council members to designate by resolution sensitive areas such as underpasses, schools, and libraries, among other sites, to the effect that camping, or shortage of personal property, is prohibited within 500 feet of these locations. No such areas have been designated in or adjacent to Westside Village.

The MVCC Board also voted in October 2021 to support CF 21-1115, which would pass an ordinance aimed at limiting so-called bicycle “chop-shops” on public property. This proposed ordinance echoes a similar law passed in the City of Long Beach. This motion is currently before the City Public Safety and Public Works committees. It should be noted that Councilmember Paul Koretz supported both of the Council Files.

Finally, Westside Village residents should be aware that overlarge (oversized) vehicles and RVs are still prohibited from parking overnight and for extended time on residential streets. If problems arise residents should call both the Council Office and 311 to report such violations. Moreover, if the oversized vehicles are immediately adjacent to a school or a house of worship, that should be noted when they call.

The Westside Village Homeowners Association will continue to proactively engage all residents regarding any community initiatives regarding homelessness as they arise.



Jimmy Biblarz

Born and raised in West LA, Jimmy is an educator, policy expert, and housing advocate. Shaped by his own experience with housing insecurity and eviction, Jimmy centers empathy and compassion in his approach to the homelessness and housing crisis. He is running for Los Angeles City Council District Five to get to the heart of these issues – no more short term fixes for lasting problems. His top priorities when elected are working to build a more inclusive and rational housing system, methodically tackling our homelessness crisis with investments in housing, long-term mental health care, and substance use services, and reimagining several Westside streets to make them more walkable, environmentally sustainable, and safe and enjoyable to live and work on.

Jimmy was at Harvard for college, graduate school, and law school. There, he was a National Science Foundation Fellow and an inaugural Stone Fellow, a set of social science graduate students and professors dedicated to studying the rise of income and wealth inequality. While at Harvard, Jimmy worked at the LA Public Defender's Office, Protect Democracy, and on the Biden voter protection team. Inspired by the progressive wins in Los Angeles in 2020, Jimmy decided to take on the fight himself.

Like much of his district, Jimmy is a renter, union-member (UC-AFT), and proud member of the LGBTQ+ community. He lives with his partner Harry, in Beverly Grove. He works as a faculty member at UCLA Law School and is a K-12 LAUSD alum, all schools in the district. If elected, he would be the youngest member of the LA City Council, and the first LGBTQ+ member to represent District 5.



Scott Epstein

Scott is a public policy professional and seasoned community leader who served as the Chair of the Mid City West Neighborhood Council from 2014 to 2021. Under Scott's leadership, the council brought millions of dollars into the community for traffic calming, revitalized public spaces, and recruited hundreds of volunteers to assist in efforts related to homelessness, transportation, urban greening, and racial justice.

Scott is also the Founder of the Midtown LA Homeless Coalition, a nonprofit that connects people experiencing homelessness, with basic needs, services, and housing.

Scott serves as an elected delegate to the California Democratic Party and a board member of the Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance. He previously served as a board member of the Miracle Mile Democratic Club.

Scott is running for city council to make LA work for all of us, and will bring leadership to city hall that is grounded in community, guided by compassion, and focused on results.

Scott's top priorities are addressing homelessness, building an affordable city, supporting small businesses, reimagining public safety, reforming city hall to root out corruption, and tackling our climate crisis by investing in fast, efficient, and free public transit.

Scott is running to take bold action on these issues and has the skills in policy analysis, community engagement, and coalition-building to get the job done.

Scott lives in Carthay Square with his wife, Elizabeth Yarwood, a filmmaker and Woodbury University professor, and their 4-year old daughter, Rose.

Council Candidates



Katy Young Yaroslavsky

Katy is an experienced environmental attorney and policy maker. She's running to make our neighborhoods healthier and safer.

Katy was born and raised in LA, attended entirely public schools, including UC Berkeley and UCLA Law School. She served as the general counsel of a climate change non-profit, and most recently, she's enacted policies and created programs as a senior policy advisor to LA County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl.

Katy created LA County's first sustainability office, and led the development, negotiation, and adoption by voters of Measure W, which is a national model for how to build equitable green infrastructure. She also served as the interim Public Health Deputy for Supervisor Kuehl during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Katy understands that the biggest challenges we're facing –homelessness, quality of life, economic recovery as we emerge from COVID, and building a climate resilient city – are intersectional and regional and require collaboration across levels of government and jurisdictions.

Endorsers include Congresswoman Bass; State Senators Allen and Kamlager; the Los Angeles League of Conservation Voters; LA County Federation of Labor; and hundreds of community, environmental, business, and non-profit leaders.



Sam Yebri

Sam Yebri is a longtime community and non-profit leader, attorney, small business owner, immigrant, and husband and father of four young children who will fight tirelessly for the residents of the 5th District of the City of Los Angeles by tackling our homelessness crisis with urgency and compassion, prioritizing public safety, and ensuring we have the world-class city services we deserve.

His journey towards public service began when he was a year old, when he and his parents arrived in Los Angeles as refugees from Iran. After growing up in Westwood and attending public schools in the 5th District, Sam went on to earn degrees from Yale and USC Law School and returned home to build a successful law firm in Century City, where he has used his expertise to advise startups and small businesses and litigate on behalf of workers.

Committed to public service and championing the promise of Los Angeles, Sam formerly served as a Commissioner on the Los Angeles Civil Service Commission and as a member of the City Attorney's Gun Violence Prevention Task Force and currently serves as a board member of the Friends of Westwood Library.

He has also served on numerous non-profit boards, including Bet Tzedek Legal Services, the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Community Foundation, and ETTA, which provides services and housing for developmentally disabled adults, and engaged thousands of immigrants and first-generation Americans in civic life by co-founding 30 Years After in 2007.



Preparedness Update

Valerie Fontaine

While the COVID threat recedes, the danger of earthquakes and other disasters always lurks. In such a situation, professional first responders such as police, fire, and EMTs will be overwhelmed. Thus, we must be ready to take care of ourselves. This is why we all need basic disaster response skills.

Online training at your convenience

You can start by watching preparedness training videos at your convenience and for free, at <https://www.youtube.com/c/LAFDCERTCoordinators/videos>. Included there are the six Neighborhood Team Program sessions presented via Zoom last year by WVHA. That series of approximately one-hour online programs covered basic disaster preparedness; disaster first aid; light search and rescue; disaster radio communications; mapping the risks and resources in our neighborhood; and situational awareness and security after a disaster.

In-Person CERT training is back!

The FIRST post-COVID in-person CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Basic Training Class now is in session at the Iman Center in Palms. The sold-out (free) series of seven 2-1/2 hour sessions, taught by the LA Fire Department, began on April 7 and continues every Thursday night, concluding on May 19, 2022. Please note that the following weekend, on Sunday, May 22, a mapping/radio training exercise is planned here in Westside Village which will allow our new graduates as well as community members to get some experience applying their new skills. (See below.) Now that our LAFD CERT instructors have been released from their COVID-related duties, and in-person events are possible again, watch the WVHA website for announcements and take advantage of future CERT training.

Hands-on practice

With the world opening up, we are planning our first in-person preparedness event for Sunday morning, May 22, to practice our skills. This radio training and Westside Village disaster-mapping exercise is open to anyone – whether or not you have taken any preparedness training. Details and a link to sign up through Eventbrite will be emailed to those on the WVHA and CERT local mailing lists, as well as being posted on the WVHA website: www.westsidevillage.org. Please join us!

Opt-in notification

Do you want to receive notifications of upcoming in-person and online disaster preparedness trainings offered in our neighborhood? If so, sign up on the CERT mailing list at <https://join.ntp-la.org>. This resource is open to everyone, not just those who have taken the CERT training. And you don't need to join or commit to volunteering for anything; you can take these classes solely for your own personal preparedness. If you haven't taken any training, you're especially encouraged to sign up so you can get started at your own pace.

NOTE: When filling out the form, click the selection stating that you live in the Battalion 18 area, type in your neighborhood as Westside Village, and designate Fire Station 43 as your local LAFD station. That way, you'll receive only those notifications appropriate to this area. We take your privacy very seriously and do not share your information with anyone outside of CERT administrative leadership.

Westside Village Radio Net

Westside Village also has a radio network for residents to communicate with each other and contact outside help in a disaster or when, for any reason, other modes of communication are down.

On the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:45 pm we run a Westside Village Radio Net check-in. Using hand-held FRS (Family Radio Service) radios, we tune to channel 6 to practice and check our radios and connectivity around Westside Village and neighboring locales. These inexpensive, simple-to-use radios (much like walkie-talkies) are available at retailers such as Target, Home Depot, and other general merchandise or hardware stores, as well as online.

Anyone with a hand-held radio within earshot is welcome to participate whether or not you live Westside Village. Just tune your radio channel 6, listen, and our coordinator will call out to see who's there. If the coordinator can't hear you, someone else may. In that case, we practice relaying the messages to get better at connecting around the neighborhood. If you have questions about what kind of radio to buy, where to buy it, or how to use it, contact Westside Village resident Philip Jamtaas at pj310@ca.rr.com for assistance.

Web resource

Check out this cool Emergency Preparedness Resource Guide. Download this interactive resource guide created by the Federal Executive Board of Greater Los Angeles to



help you prepare for an emergency. Each logo is linked to its corresponding website. It also provides links to useful apps for your mobile device. tinyurl.com/62wu6rmv

Remember, in a disaster situation, we will need to rely on ourselves and our neighbors for a period of up to several weeks. So, let's all work together to get prepared.

If you have any questions about how to fill out the mailing list form or other disaster preparedness issues, contact westsidevillagntp@gmail.com.

Transportation Update: Can We Get There From Here Anymore?

Ken Alpern

Whether it's sticker shock at the pump, fuming against Putin, or anxiety about the future (or even the present), it appears that the cost of oil and gas (and just about everything in general) is going UP.

So while it's great that the COVID-19 pandemic has (for now) subsided, the surge in traffic is about as gigantic in magnitude as the cost of gasoline. It's not unusual for motorist commuters to discover the cost of filling up their tank is in the triple digits. Furthermore, utility and grocery bills also are rising meteorically.

Some believe this is a good thing, in that alternative forms of transportation (i.e., mass transit on electric buses and rail lines) will be utilized more, both with the effects of easing traffic and improving our environment. Some believe that car commuters have no other option, and that this new development will serve only to lighten the wallets of those who need to recover financially from the pandemic.

With respect to our growing Metro Rail transit system in L.A. County, the Crenshaw/LAX Line to connect the Expo Line to LAX and the Downtown Light Rail Connector Line to tie all four downtown-bound light rails together will be completed later this year or early in 2023. Also to be completed in 2023 is the LAX People Mover, which is a monorail to connect Metro Rail to the LAX terminals. After testing and operations commence for these rail lines, travel to both Downtown and to LAX will be possible without an automobile.

Uber/Lyft services and buses also provide options to ditch the car at home. However, we are seeing new developments with respect to commuting:

1) The rise of telecommuting: This was already under way before the pandemic, and this option is exploding to accommodate both worker convenience and our more aggressive 24/7 and worldwide work schedule.

2) Concerns of homelessness and crime on mass transit: Metro increased local law enforcement to address the concerns of commuters who want to enjoy a safe and convenient option in their transit experience. The effectiveness of those efforts is uncertain, however, as both crime and police efforts are up as Metro riders return.

3) Uber/Lyft: As gas prices increase, so will Uber/Lyft prices. Furthermore, some people either choose not to use this app-accessed service or commute too far to reasonably use this service on a regular basis.

Certainly, the need for carpools and vanpools will be as great as it's ever been in the history of city, state, and nation, but for some that just isn't possible.

One way or another, though, the truth will be unavoidable for all save those who are wealthy enough not to be impacted by the meteoric rise in gas prices: our commuting, errands, dining, grocery shopping, and just about all of our routine, daily activities we take for granted might need to be re-evaluated in order to make ends meet.

COVID-19 Update: The Most Unsettling Reality is That the Virus and Our Lives Will Constantly Change

Ken Alpern, M.D.

One of the most unsettling realities of the COVID-19 pandemic is that we are contending with a virus that is forever mutating—and our knowledge and approach to the virus is as prone to mutating as the virus itself. Uncertainty and second-guessing appears to be the norm in confronting this virus, and the arrival of each new variant raises a new chaos of debate, confrontation, and second-guessing that began with its mysterious arrival in China.

If there was ever one word to describe the COVID-19 virus, it's "erratic." The virus itself causes infections as unpredictable as the new mutations that develop in one part of the world and invariably come to our shores and neighborhood in our global economy. An infection is a "Russian Roulette" in that one can have no symptoms, mild symptoms, major symptoms, long-lasting if not



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8 Things I Keep Getting Phone Calls About



1. Where do you see the market in a year from now?
Will interest rate increases will cause a price decline?
2. How much value would an ADU add and is it worth the build an ADU, or maybe just a garage conversion if that makes sense?
3. How easy is it to get a reverse mortgage and do you know someone I can talk with?
4. We would like to add another bedroom and remodel but we don't have a lot of cash... do you have any thoughts?
5. Do you know a good mortgage broker who can get us a cash out loan even though we're retired and on a fixed income?
6. We need a one-story home with less land and that doesn't need fixing - Do you have any affordable listings coming up?
7. We want to move into a good rental that is close to things. Do you have any suggestions?
8. We own a rental property that's becoming a pain to deal with but we also don't want to be stuck with paying a huge capital gains tax. What are our alternatives?

Please know I am always here for you and will always do my best to answer to your concerns. I am not a CPA or Lawyer and cannot answer tax and legal questions but I do have the appropriate people I can refer you to. As for other referrals, I've got painters and plumbers and most other trades and great real estate agent referrals for specific neighborhoods in most of the states.

Also, in the case of a co-owner passing or when a home value is required for divorce, call me for a documented Letter of Value. This can be used at the time of sale to establish a step up in basis.

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permanent symptoms and disability, or even die.

Those old enough to remember the uncertainty of polio know this is not the first time where some are lucky, and others are entirely unlucky. But polio has three non-changing subtypes, while COVID-19 (like Hepatitis C and HIV) keeps changing and therefore confounds our ability to create vaccines as we could with polio.

We have two main vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) in the United States that have been proven to either prevent infection or—at the very least—reduce the severity of infection from the COVID-19 virus. Those not immunized are at risk of suffering severe and even fatal courses of infection from this virus. A booster shot using either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine is common, and the FDA now is discussing when and for whom to give yet a fourth (second booster) shot.

It's without question that humanity has suffered, and many have died, from this novel virus, but it's also without question that our lockdowns and virus containment efforts also caused suffering and even death. Many lost jobs and businesses will never come back, and those avoiding their doctor for 1-2 years harmed their health or even died as

a result. The mental and psychological impacts on both children and adults by a way of life that counters the tendency of our species to socialize and interact with others is as real as the sickness encountered by those infected by the virus.

The young are least likely to catch severe forms of the virus, therefore, many are infuriated that our K-12 schools are the last part of our Los Angeles society to remove mask requirements and relax social distancing standards. Children and young adults suffer from mental disease, including record numbers of suicides, as well as experience inhibited social growth and development because of the response to this virus. Others—including many teachers, teachers' unions, and large subgroups of parents—are terrified of clustering students forming "Petri dishes" to bring home the virus to older and more fragile family members (and, by extension, to the teachers).

The Delta variant of COVID-19 caused untold misery for a society ready to get over the first waves of the virus, and was more virulent and deadly than those first few waves.

But the milder Omicron variant of the COVID-19 helped create a "herd immunity" to help the general population, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, gain a widespread



natural immunization to the virus. Yet another form of the milder Omicron variant (BA).2 is on its way from Europe and New York inevitably to arrive in Los Angeles. Thus, the risk of catching COVID-19 again is very, very real.

Salivary swabs instead of nasal swabs, and improved and more rapid tests for COVID-19, are being evaluated and distributed for public use. New drugs are increasingly available to treat COVID-19 once the infection starts, and a “Test To Treat” program of the Biden Administration can both detect and immediately treat infected individuals before short- and long-term symptoms or even hospitalization can occur. But the effects are and will continue to be unavoidably permanent for too many of us. Cardiovascular, pulmonary, neuromuscular, and even increased numbers of patients suffering from dementia will remain a permanent effect for those who suffer from “long COVID.”

Los Angeles County is pursuing a Post-Surge Preparedness Plan to encourage more vaccinations, more immediate treatments, more masking and social distancing in large groupings of people (including our K-12 schools), and more awareness to help all of us get through this pandemic.

It’s indeed possible, if not downright inevitable, that you and I will catch this virus in one form or another. To have only a small infection instead of a major infection, it’s critical to get vaccinated and encounter only small amounts of the virus (called an “inoculum”). While it’s up to us to relax and live our lives again, we also must not let our guard down and “tempt the fates” to risk something major when it need only be minor.

Being kind and tolerant to others is needed now more than ever. We need to show understanding and respect to those still terrified of the virus as well as to those increasingly infuriated and exhausted from the never-ending heightened precautions

and sacrifices from one COVID-19 variant after another.

The only certain thing about COVID-19 virus is its uncertainty. Adapting to the changing virus is best dealt with by our ability to accept the fact that change is something we will contend with for unforeseen months and years to come.

Our Iconic Tree

Valerie Fontaine.

Did you know that the giant fig tree on the corner of National Boulevard and Military Avenue is an official Historic-Cultural Monument? Yes, the Cultural Heritage Board of Los Angeles officially designated that huge Moreton Bay fig tree as HCM #19 in 1963, the first tree to receive that status. Since then, it has become a local landmark and the symbol of St. John’s Presbyterian Church, whose grounds it graces.

Other such designated trees in the Los Angeles area include the cedars along Los Feliz Boulevard in Los Feliz (HCM #67), the pepper trees along Canoga Avenue in Woodland Hills (HCM #93), the Mexican fan palms along Avalon Boulevard in Wilmington (HCM #914), and the Canary Island pines along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Degan Boulevard, Leimert Boulevard, and Crenshaw Boulevard.





Westside Village’s Moreton Bay fig tree was brought to Los Angeles from Australia and, according to my research, was planted in 1875 by the original property owner in honor of his first-born son. The tree’s arrival followed a wave of other tree importations from Australia, including the plume albizia, several species of acacia, and – most pervasively – the eucalyptus.

Early gardeners might have favored the Moreton Bay fig, named after Moreton Bay near Brisbane in East Australia where they are native, for its leafy appearance and reputation for fast growth. Since it was new to Southern California’s climate, however, the first local planters might not have guessed that it would attain such mammoth proportions here. The Moreton Bay fig is one of the largest cultivated fig trees and can grow 36 inches a year, sending down aerial roots that harden into buttresses. The trees can reach a height of 180 feet with branches spreading more than 100 feet. The precise dimensions of our Westside Village Moreton Bay fig tree, with its multiple trunks, are unknown.

As you no doubt noticed when visiting our beautiful tree, it has evergreen foliage and doesn’t drop its leaves in winter. It does drop prolific fruit in autumn, however, which is edible, but not very palatable. It has fairly inconspicuous flowers in summer with separate male and female reproductive parts on the same tree (it’s monoecious), so it doesn’t need a nearby companion tree in order to bear fruit.

Moreton Bay fig trees have lifespans exceeding 150 years. Our monumental tree is 156 years old already. Let’s hope that it lives many more years, bringing beauty and shade to the Westside Village community.

Please let us know what you think.

If you wish to contribute to News and Views, please email us at board@westsidevillage.org Visit us at www.westsidevillage.org

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Design and Production, *Donald Elliott Jr.*

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If you are interested in submitting an article please reply to board@westsidevillage.org

All articles are subject to acceptance and editing.

Protect Your Bike

Christine Stemar

When a bike gets stolen, it can feel like a real kick in the gut. Unfortunately, whether it lives locked to a rack outdoors, in a secure lockup, or in your garage, there are no completely fool-proof ways to prevent bike theft. Despite your best efforts, bikes get stolen, both the variety that lives outside and your more prized rides that live indoors.

Here is your best bet to keep your bike safe and what to do if that doesn’t work:

How can you protect your bike?

Right now (literally right now), take photos of your bike - side-on, plus any unique components. Don’t forget to record the serial number which usually is located on the underside of the bottom bracket.

Most importantly, register your bike. It’s free. Follow the steps on the attached flyer (use the QR code to open this invaluable document) compiled and brought to you by the Pacific LAPD Community Police Advisory Board (CPAB) and West LA Neighborhood Bike Ambassadors of www.la-bike.org/ambassador/west



In this flyer you’ll also find more great information for you and your trusty bike.

What to do if your bike is stolen?

Contact the police to report the theft.

How can you retrieve a stolen bike?

Ultimately, this is a job for the police. If you find your stolen bike for sale online, or you spot someone riding it in the street, don’t approach them. Your bike might mean a lot to you, but your life is certainly worth more, and there’s no predicting how the other person might react if confronted.

Follow the above steps and keep on rollin’.