



Inside Ladera

Summer 2019 Ruth Lawrence, Editor 5357 W. Centinela Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90045 (424) 256-5422 www.ladera heights.org

LHCA Membership Announcement

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Page 2...Message from the President, LaCienega Pass Beautification, F. D. Parent's New Principal

Page 3... A "Good" School - What Does That Really Mean?

Page 4...Good News on the LaCienega Median Project, Summer Home Security Tips

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Inside
This Issue

Message From The President



Message from the President

by David Oliver, LHCAs President

Greetings Friends and Neighbors of Ladera Heights. As I am about to begin my 7th month as your President, and writing my second "Message from the President" for our newsletter, I can now actually "reflect" back on what has been rather than predict "what will be".

I continue to be grateful for this opportunity to be a part of a great group of Civic leaders that make up the LHCA Board of Directors. I can tell you that at times (most times) it is a thankless job, but nonetheless, a job that has to be done, and while each one has "their" reasons for being a part of the Board, at the end of the day, it is all about helping make and maintain Ladera Heights as an amazing community.

For those of you who have been to our monthly Community meetings (third Thursday of the month), you may have noticed that we have begun a tradition of having our Board Members stand up and introduce themselves at the start of each meeting. I think that it is important that you know who your representatives are, by face as well as by name. Maybe you want to ask a question, or point out something that you think might make our community a better place. . . .or, maybe you just want to say "thank you for serving our community".

Speaking of **Thank You** I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge one of our Board Members who I have gotten to know the past few years as a fellow Board Member and friend, Rick Aldridge. Anytime there is something that needs to be done, Rick's hand is always the first (often the only) to go up. He serves almost every committee in some capacity. He really does set the bar for the rest of us and I just want our community to know how fortunate we are to have him amongst us. Next time you run into Rick in the grocery store or wherever, please let him know how much he is appreciated.

While Rick definitely leads the charge, there are more than a dozen of our great Citizens who volunteer their time and talent toward one or more of our many projects, which include but are not limited to: Beautification, Traffic, Public Safety, Communications, Schools and Education, Newsletter publication, Membership, Website maintenance and development, plus special events planning and execution (which would include our monthly Community meetings on the third Thursday of each month now held at Frank D. Parent School.

There are large signs posted all around Ladera Heights the week of the meeting to help remind you. I encourage you, and hope you will attend one of our monthly meetings at the very least, and ideally get involved or join a committee. Let's continue to

build on the greatness of Ladera together!!

There are no meetings in July or August during summer break, so hope to see you on September 19th, Frank D. Parent School at 7 pm. Until then have a great Summer!

LaCienega Pass Beautification - UPDATE

by Dorothy Harris, Community Enhancement Chair

You may recall in our spring newsletter we announced that Sentinel Peak planned to remove some of the clustered over-crowded palm trees and trim others along the fence from Stocker south to Slauson.

We are very happy to report more than 40 messy, dead, overgrown palm trees aligning LaCienega pass on the east side of the LaCienega roadway have been removed or cleaned up thanks to the cooperation of Amanda Parsons and the oil field Sentinel Peak owners. The crews actually did more than we thought they would. Many new trees and plantings along and within the oil field property will not need to compete visually with the palm tree blight. It makes a significant difference and we thank them for doing this much needed work!



Meet F. D. Parent's New Principal

Marvin Lawton is an administrator who is a native of Los Angeles, CA. He has an M.Ed. in Cross-Cultural Teaching and a B.S. in Mathematics. He received all of his education in Southern California, including matriculating at schools in Inglewood in his primary years. With over 20 years experience, he is one of the few professionals who has been an instructor at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

As a fervent supporter of the arts in schools, Mr. Lawton is also an accomplished musician and singer. He recognizes the positive impact fine arts have in a child's overall cognitive development. And like the language of music, he believes that students learning multiple languages such as in the Dual Immersion Program will prepare them to be quality producers and ultimately effective leaders within their community.

Principal Lawton is a husband, father, and clergyman who believes in the value of family and the notion that "it takes a village." One of his favorite quotes by Frederick Douglas says, "It's better to build strong children than to repair broken men." He is committed to the success of all students, and his goal as principal of Parent K-8 is to create a learning environment that provides rigorous and culturally responsive instruction, high standards, and an institution that is emotionally, academically, and physically safe for all students to learn.

A “Good” School – What Does That Really Mean?

by *Miriam Morris*

It’s summertime and the topic du jour at playgrounds around LA is centered on where recent preschool graduates are going to Kindergarten in the fall.

Decisions are made by parents seeking a “good” school for their child. But what does that even mean? How do our values play into where we ultimately decide to enroll them? Of course parents want what’s best for their children. Navigating school choices warrants deeper examination and reflection on what “best” can mean for our kids, for our democracy, and our community as a whole. Oftentimes, a “good” school is really code for one serving a white/privileged community. Websites like GreatSchools.org stack schools against one another with their ratings systems, and while data can be useful, without context it has the potential to inadvertently promote school segregation.

July 22nd marks fifty years from when Inglewood Unified was forced by court-order to desegregate its schools. 1970 is recent history and yet our schools are more segregated today than they were at that time. Following decades of white flight after racist housing covenants barring nonwhite homeowners were struck down by the Supreme Court, Ladera’s recent demographic trends show that more white families are moving back into the neighborhood and comprise nearly twenty percent according to the most recent community survey data from the Census Bureau. This trend is not yet reflected in our neighborhood school.

Diverse schools benefit white students and students of color in ways that have been enumerated in many studies which also draw the conclusion that a white privileged student will essentially do just fine anywhere you enroll him or her. Yet fear and unconscious bias creep into our decision-making process with some families opting out of our neighborhood school without even stepping foot across its entry. Award-winning investigative journalist and champion for school integration, Nikole Hannah-Jones states, “One family, or even a few families cannot transform a segregated school, but if none of us were willing to go into them, nothing would change.”

In addition to the racial segregation, the hyper-concentration of wealth in our public schools is troubling. With a single vote eight years after that 1970 mandate, Proposition 13 began the steady decline of investment in California’s public education system relative to its history, GDP, and other states and industrialized countries.

This climate has led to a vast influx of private money entering into public schools. Organizations like booster clubs, PTA/PTO, and education foundations have stepped in as a stopgap. Much like at private schools it’s virtually impos-

sible to send your student to public school today without being bombarded by fundraisers. While well-intentioned, this funding is highly problematic. I recently heard a story from a neighboring elementary school whose fundraising organization offered a silent auction item of “Principal for a Day.” The young boy whose parents shelled out over a thousand dollars to win this item caused a stir when he called out a young girl for a dress code violation with his newfound power. While this male/female power dynamic and the messages we give our children through conversations and policy around dress are worthy of examination, I found it profoundly more troubling that the school was quite literally instilling the lesson that one can buy power and therefore rich families are entitled to more of it than poor families. This story highlights the resource gap that is created when white/privileged families self-segregate and concentrate their efforts at particular schools.

Another neighboring school less than 3 miles away as the crow flies has consistently fundraised over a half million dollars for the past several years. Their booster club funds staff, programs, technology, field trips and more. Parent school’s PTA raises less than \$20,000 currently. There are countless books and websites out there that give parents tools for fundraising for their school, but it begs the question- should we be spending our time working on becoming successful development managers or, harnessing a rallying cry in Sacramento? If we woke up tomorrow and private funding was prohibited in public schools, I’m willing to wager there would be an uprising of parents demanding adequate school funding from our legislators.

Our neighborhood school is in a transition that extends beyond just another school year. With blossoming language immersion programs, a new Principal at the helm, and stronger investment in staff development and supports, I know Frank D. Parent is on the cusp of growing into its potential. So rather than sit back and lament the inequities that are embedded into our current system of education, I ask, “What will you do to make things more equitable?” Here are some ideas:

- Pledge to tour our home school and place it on your consideration list
- Support the efforts of Parent PTA
- Support classroom teacher DonorsChoose campaigns
- Sign up for Ralph’s and Amazon e-scripts that raise money for our school
- Volunteer to read with a student weekly
- Attend our October LHCA meeting (schools-focused)
- Contact me at mirmorris@gmail.com with your ideas of how you can contribute

Enjoy the rest of your summer, Ladera, and see you next fall!

Update: More Good News on the LaCienega Median Project

by Dorothy Harris, General Chair

After literally decades of delays and occasional interim clean-ups, the LaCienega/LaTijera/Centinela cluster of blighted medians is going to get fixed! And so started my last article... I hope you weren't holding your breath! Government projects are often slow to come to fruition. Although the weeds and trees and blight are back as we enter July 2019, there is better news on the horizon as we go to print.

First, the short term update is that Matt Teele, Mike Bonin's deputy for our area of LA City, has assured us that the blight will be whacked and cleaned very soon. As oft stated before this requires an act of the City Council (if not an Act of Congress!) to fund such an activity.

The really exciting news, however, is Matt's announcement at our LHCA in June that the City, under the sponsorship of Councilman Bonin, has been able to forge partnerships with multiple jurisdictions to design and build a really good Demonstration Project which will use public money to a large extent. This includes funds from the recently voter-passed Measure W bonds for construction of recyclable water run-off projects. In fact, our Project will likely be the first to utilize Measure W funding in this way!

Timing is everything, and it's probably been at least 15 year. We had long suggested that a LaCienega median project with its visibility to the City as a whole, not only our community, be a Demonstration Project of public/private cooperation. Now the stars are aligned and it will happen. The hope is that it will break ground in 2020.

City engineers are working on a Project for the 4 medians, 3 of which will include plantings and water reclamation elements. The planning, engineering, and actual construction represents the bulk of the re-imagined Project cost and will be borne by the public sector. This decision significantly lightens the financial burden on us, the LHCA and community/business part of the partnership.

We will be involved in the planning as well as a much lightened financial responsibility. Our part of the Project will be the on-going maintenance costs of the medians. This means that our Project Planning Committee and the Development Committee (fund raising) will play a key role in ensuring that the elements installed are able to be nurtured, cleaned, and maintained over the long term by monies raised by the Ladera Heights Community Enhancement Corporation, our non-profit arm.

As stated in the previous article, our piece of the Demonstration Project will operate under the City's Adopt a Me-

dian Program, which is designed to encourage non-governmental groups to help the City with needed median improvements. This effort, aided by good planning and a good response from our Community and business sector, is absolutely affordable and doable. It will result in a LaCienega befitting the revitalizing area surrounding it and the beautiful neighborhoods we live in.

For additional information about the Median Project, please refer to the web site archives at LaderaHeights.org.



Summer Home Security Tips

- Don't post your vacation pictures to social media while you are AWAY making it obvious your home might be empty. Post them after you return and caution your children to do the same.

- Ask a neighbor to watch your home. If you're going to travel this summer, ask a trusted friend or neighbor to keep an eye on your home. Burglars look for telltale signs that your home is vacant, including flyers and mail left near the front door, overflowing mailboxes and garbage cans left at the curb.

- Don't unintentionally invite crime. Summertime means kids are riding bikes and scooters, and they have a habit of leaving them lying on the driveway or lawn. But when they do, they're extending an invitation to criminals. A thief will not only take the goodies they find outside, they'll wonder what treats you have hiding in your home. Even if your child is just running in the house for a snack, caution them to put valuables in a secure place.

- If you're looking forward to the vacation of a lifetime, use discretion when discussing your upcoming plans. That sales clerk or repairman really don't need to know you'll be gone.

- Watch out for scams. If a stranger approaches your front door, beware. Summer is the time that professional thieves travel through residential areas offering to repave your driveway or re-shingle the roof of your home. While one person is distracting you with a sales pitch, another person is entering your home through the back door.

- Keep your garage secure. Your garages offer easy access to the rest of your home. Keep the garage door locked, and be sure to secure the door that leads from your garage into your home.

Most importantly – if you see something say something! If you see someone acting suspiciously or their behavior concerns you, there's probably a good reason why. Don't hesitate to call your local law enforcement.