



The Bridge

Neighborhood Council
Valley Village

Neighborhood Council Valley Village • P.O. Box 4703 • Valley Village, California 91617 • www.myvalleyvillage.com

Second Quarter- April 2008 Vol. 4 – Issue 2

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The Bridge is the voice of Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV). Its mission is to inform stakeholders about issues and activities, to report on the news that may affect Valley Village, and to provide information about opportunities for stakeholders to volunteer.

The name *The Bridge* was chosen to illustrate the relationship between City Hall and Valley Village. Our goal is to know what is happening at City Hall and to be sure our representatives in City Hall know what is happening in Valley Village.

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

by *Tony Braswell*

Neighborhood Councils were established as a means of providing all stakeholders with a voice in how our city government operates. The complexity and wide range of issues facing our community and the entire south San Fernando Valley are greater than ever before, and I am proud to say your Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV) Board is working hard to represent you on a wide range of issues.

Our Board set clear goals for this year, goals that are focused on making our community safer and better informed. Our major initiative for 2008 will be a re-energized Neighborhood Watch program. Under the leadership of Ginny Hatfield, Dorothy Apple and Mona Riss, we intend to have every street and block of Valley Village represented in this important community-based effort. We will also focus on making myvalleyvillage.com your best resource for information about your community.

Zoning issues and development in Valley Village continue to be a concern to all of us. Along with other Neighborhood Councils, NCVV co-sponsored the Valley Vision Town Hall meeting on February 28, 2008. This provided an opportunity for discussing the 6 million square feet of development proposed for Universal City/NBC, NoHo Arts District and Valley Plaza, current site of Macy's on Laurel Canyon. We have heard your concerns loud and clear and have joined with our fellow NC's to demand that the city study the cumulative impact of these projects on traffic, infrastructure and quality of life.

We continue to be focused on protecting the integrity of our own "backyard". Our entire Board agrees that one of the gravest threats to Valley Village is Senate Bill 1818 (SB 1818). Along with Valley Village Homeowners Association and other NC's, we are working hard to find ways to limit and even stop the damage of this misguided statewide mandate. See article on page three.

If you've been to a recent meeting, you also know there are many important issues on our plate including Department of Water and Power rate increases, street maintenance, the city budget, gang activity, graffiti abatement, and protecting our Valley Village Park, among others. Your Board is working hard to represent you on all of these issues. Our Board, your *Voice in Valley Village*, is determined to face each of those challenges head-on, and work with you to keep this the best neighborhood in the city of Los Angeles.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

by *Dorothy Apple*

Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV) will use the regular May Board meeting to host a community-based Town Hall meeting on Valley Village's Neighborhood Watch Program.

The meeting will be held on May 28, 7-9 pm at Colfax Elementary School. Speakers will include representatives from the offices of Councilmembers Wendy Greuel and Jack Weiss. Representatives from our North Hollywood Police Department will be there, with special comments from our Senior Lead Officer, Manny Arreygue. Information will also be provided about the CERT Program (Community Emergency Response Team), Valley Village Park, 311 - One Call to City Hall and more.

One of the goals for this year's NCVV Board is a strong, productive Neighborhood Watch Program. Join us as we kick off registration for Neighborhood Watch and work with all our stakeholders to keep Valley Village a safe community for everyone.

GRANT PROGRAM

by *Ginny Hatfield*

It's taken us nine months, but Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV) has rolled out our Valley Village Community Grant program and you can find it on our web site at myvalleyvillage.com. The purpose of the grants is to assist groups in enhancing the community. NCVV has allocated up to \$2500 per quarter to fund qualified projects, so be sure to visit our website to learn how to obtain funding.

WEBSITE PHASE II

by *Steven Stokes*

The Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV) website update, phase II, is scheduled to be completed by May 1. On the new enhancement of the website, users will find a live, real-time Neighborhood Watch map, a more useful calendar of NCVV Board and other Valley Village events, and a Valley Village scrapbook of pictures that show the rich history of our community.

If you have questions about the website or ideas of how we can do more to serve you through myvalleyvillage.com email us at info@myvalleyvillage.com

MANSIONIZATION SURVEY

Neighborhood Council Valley Village partnered with Vital Research in the summer of 2007 to survey the residential homeowners on their opinions about mansionization and residential development. The survey was mailed to over 2000 R-1 zoned homes. Almost 40% of the recipients responded. Courtney Malloy, project coordinator for Vital Research, complimented Valley Village on the outstanding participation in the survey. She said, "I believe this is one of the most comprehensive efforts to poll a community on this important issue." The survey results can be viewed on myvalleyvillage.com.

In response to the statement "Preserving the character of homes in Valley Village is important to me," 84.7% of residents answered, "I agree."

MEET THE BOARD – GREG O'CONNOR

by *Beth Fulton*

Greg O'Connor was elected to the Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV) board in 2004. He has served as Chairman of the NCVV Planning and Land Use Committee for the past two years.

Born and raised in Pasadena, California, Greg entered the commercial construction field shortly after graduation from high school. His ten years of experience with project management and superintendent roles gave him the experience necessary to launch his own construction company in partnership with his brother, Sean O' Connor, in 1997. O'Connor & Company specializes in all phases of project management.

Greg is committed to Colfax Elementary School where his children, Hillary and Mason, attend. His involvement led him to take on the role of PTA president for two years 2004 – 2006. He also coordinated the "track and field" project that enabled Colfax School to build a large track and grass field area where the kids can play and perform physical education activities.

Greg maintains an active life, supporting his daughter's soccer team, playing ice hockey and golfing regularly. He has lived with his wife, Peri, and their two children in Valley Village for over 10 years.

SB1818 THREATENS VALLEY VILLAGE

by *Tony Braswell*

In this first article from your newly elected Board, your Neighborhood Council Valley Village leadership calls your attention to an issue that requires immediate action from all stakeholders. Your help is urgently needed. Senate Bill 1818 (SB1818) amends a state law to allow developers to build much bigger buildings, they need only state that as few as 10% of the new units will be "low income". Five story buildings now can replace the two story apartment complexes in our neighborhood. Los Angeles City Council adopted SB1818 last month, without providing any neighborhood protections. Due to the City Council action, Valley Village no longer has a voice on this issue.

In Valley Village, we have a Specific Plan. It has been in force for more than 15 years and is considered by people across the city as a model for development that respects the character of the neighborhood. Under our Specific Plan, developers cannot build multiple dwellings higher than three stories. Go to NCVV website myvalleyvillage.com and read this document.

The City Council's action implementing SB1818 in February effectively gutted and invalidated our Valley Village Specific Plan. You should know that within two weeks after the Council's vote, two five story buildings were proposed to be built in Valley Village. More are scheduled for presentation in April.

The impact on traffic, our schools, and visual beauty and character of Valley Village will be permanently and irrevocably changed. We believe for the worse. Your Neighborhood Council has discussed SB1818 in committee and at meetings since 2006, and to my knowledge we've not had one stakeholder speak in support of SB1818. All have spoken against it. SB1818 is here. New projects in Valley Village under SB1818 are being submitted to the city at a frightening pace. These are projects that violate our Specific Plan, projects that will forever change our community. The City Council's February action on SB1818 completely removes our stakeholders from the approval process. Because of the vote in the City Council, the Specific Plan will be useless unless there is an overwhelming outcry for relief from Valley Village stakeholders.

NOW is the time to do something. Everyone who cares about this issue must get on the phone. Call both Wendy Greuel and Jack Weiss and express your opinion. Call Mike Feuer (state Representative) and Jack Scott (state Senator) as well. Read well-published positions from Zev Yaroslavsky and others on how this, and other proposed development in North Hollywood and Studio City, will harm Valley Village and the south San Fernando Valley.

- **Wendy Greuel** 818-755-7676
Email: councilmember.greuel@lacity.org
- **Jack Weiss** 818-971-3088
Email: councilmember.weiss@lacity.org
- **Mike Feuer** 818-902-0521
<http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a42/>
- **Jack Scott** 818-558-7940
<http://dist21.casen.govoffice.com/>

We believe there must be some local say in how our community is developed; 20 years of work on the part of our Valley Village leaders should be respected. If we don't act now, in ten years we won't recognize our wonderful community. This is a time when our representatives should speak for us. Our City Council members did not. While we appreciate their hard work on other issues, on this important issue they have failed our stakeholders. If we don't act now, we won't get another chance.

County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky says:

> "The draft SB 1818 implementation ordinance now being finalized by the Planning Department places greater emphasis on new, more intense development than the law requires, and less emphasis on neighborhood preservation and protection than it should. In fact, this draft invites developers to decimate current zoning protections under the guise of providing affordable housing."

> "Furthermore, the allowable height of buildings could be increased by up to 35% throughout the City. Buildings currently limited to 45 feet in height could, therefore, be as tall as 61 feet. These are allowances that would not otherwise have been permitted by the City's zoning, specific plan, historical overlay or adopted height limit ordinances."

> "Moreover, there is a fatally flawed assumption in SB 1818: That the incentives and zoning breaks that are promulgated by this state law will have a net positive impact on the affordable housing stock of a local jurisdiction. Just the opposite may be the case. In certain SB 1818 projects where an existing apartment building would be demolished, more affordable units may be eliminated than would actually be built."

Website: <http://zev.lacounty.gov>

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COLFAX BRAVO AWARD

*By Susana Gomez
Assistant Principal Colfax Elementary School*

Colfax Elementary was awarded the prestigious Bravo Award. The Los Angeles Music Center recognizes schools and teachers in Los Angeles County that demonstrate exemplary achievement in arts education. The Bravo Award honors educators who use the arts to revitalize teaching, enhance student achievement and foster self-esteem. This was the second time Colfax was nominated, and the first win. Colfax will receive a \$5000.00 grant and a BRAVO sculpture.

**Board Meetings are held the fourth
Wednesday of the Month
6:30pm to 9:00pm
Colfax School Auditorium
11724 Addison Street**



Connecting Valley Village with City Hall

Neighborhood Council Valley Village
P.O. Box 4703
Valley Village, CA 91617
818-759-8204
myvalleyvillage.com

New Valley Village Banners on
Riverside Drive and Laurel Canyon Boulevard