

Connecting Valley Village with City Hall

# *The Bridge*

*Neighborhood Council*

# *Valley Village*

Neighborhood Council Valley Village • P.O. Box 4703 • Valley Village, California 91617 •  
[www.MyValleyVillage.com](http://www.MyValleyVillage.com)

Second Quarter – June 2009 Vol. 5 – Issue 2

***The Bridge*** is the voice of Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV). Our 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. Beginning with our next issue, we will email **THE BRIDGE** rather than use the US Postal Service. **The Bridge** will still be available by mail, but we ask that you request that in writing or by calling 818-759-8204. **To receive *The Bridge* by email, be sure to visit our website at [www.MyValleyVillage.com](http://www.MyValleyVillage.com) and sign up today so that you won't miss any future issues.**

## **A Word From Our President**

*By Tony Braswell*

There are few in our community who have not been touched by the bad economy. It seems everywhere we turn, there is more financial stress on families, businesses, city and state services, schools, and more. Two years ago as the downturn began, your NCVV Board thought through scenarios that might occur, including decreased funding for our programs and the potential for scaled back or eliminated city services. In our strategic planning, we anticipated ways that we could continue to be of benefit to our stakeholders with fewer resources to accomplish the work.

While we all hope that financial circumstances will improve in the near future, it is critical that we plan for any outcome. Your NCVV Board has done this. We've intensified our CERT training so that Valley Village can be ready for any disaster. Our Neighborhood Watch program has grown to be one of the best in the city. We are bringing together our Neighborhood Watch and CERT programs to create a network that will ensure we are among Los Angeles' safest communities. We now have a resource guide for Valley Village based businesses. Our website allows two-way communication between our city government and our stakeholders.

We've been particularly vigilant about our spending, investing in opportunities that will help us maintain a maximum amount of services for our stakeholders no matter where the economy leads us in the future. We are making added upgrades to our website to give you more information about city services. NCVV is also taking our communication with stakeholders into an electronic age and we will begin emailing our quarterly newsletter. By using our website and email to communicate with our stakeholders, we will free up over \$25,000 per year that we can use on other projects or services.

Finally, many of you responded when we asked for support during the city's budget discussion in early May. Thank you so much for that help! While our budget was restored to \$45,000 for fiscal year 2010, we know that the economic realities of funding from the city will mean tougher times ahead for NCVV. No matter what the future holds, we believe we can continue a high level of service for our stakeholders. Thank you to our Board and all who helped us plan for our future.

## Turn On Your Porch Light To Fight Crime



Join your Valley Village Neighbors for **NATIONAL NIGHT OUT**, America's Night Out Against Crime. Unite with Neighborhood Council Valley Village (NCVV) to prevent crime, violence, drugs, and graffiti in Valley Village. **National Night Out** involves citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials from over 15,000 communities from all 50 states, U.S. territories, Canadian cities, and military bases worldwide. In all, over **37 million** people participated in **National Night Out** in 2008. NCVV will be honoring our Valley Village Neighborhood Watch (NW) and Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) volunteers. Come and meet your neighbors and join us for activities, food, and a walk lit by flashlights. It's all free!

**NATIONAL NIGHT OUT**  
**TUESDAY, AUGUST 4**  
 6:30 - 8:30 PM  
**VALLEY VILLAGE PARK**  
 5000 Westpark Drive

For more information please contact Ginny Hatfield at (818) 759-8204 or visit [www.MyValleyVillage.com](http://www.MyValleyVillage.com).

## Valley Village and the Environment

*By Suzanne Lewis*

On April 25, stakeholders and businesses in Valley Village came together at the Country School to Celebrate Earth Day. Co-Sponsored by Green and Greener, Neighborhood Council Valley Village, and Council Member Wendy Greuel's office, the event featured 35 vendors that included businesses and organizations that focus on the environment, sustainable resources, and "living green". Live music, Trash for Teaching, and the tree "adoption" of 200 fruit trees from the Forestry Department were just a few highlights of the day.

Over 200 People attended the day's activities which were coordinated by Suzanne Lewis and the NCVV Projects Committee. Special thanks to Alegre Ramos, owner of Green and Greener, for her hard work and to all of our vendors and volunteers that helped to make the day possible.

NCVV recently received the Green Environment award from the Valley Regional Congress in recognition of our Earth Day event as well as our Valley Village Tree Planting held in October.



## Calling all Students

By Ginny Hatfield

If you are between 16 and 18 years of age, are interested in what's happening in your local community and want to play an active part in making Valley Village the best it can be, then we have role for you. NCVV appoints a Student Representative to serve on our board in conjunction with its fifteen elected board members. Any interested candidate must live in Valley Village (not necessarily attend school in Valley Village); be at least 16 years old but not yet reached 18; and submit an essay no longer than 500 words why he/she would like to serve on the board. A successful candidate can be expected to commit to one board meeting per month, (6:30 PM to 9:00 PM); one committee assignment (with possible monthly meetings); attendance at NCVV sponsored events throughout the year; and any special assignments that may arise. If you are interested or know of someone who is, please submit an application based on the above criteria to P.O. Box 4703 or to our email address at [info@MyValleyVillage.com](mailto:info@MyValleyVillage.com). Applications should be submitted by July 17<sup>th</sup>. For more information call Ginny Hatfield at (818) 759-8204.



*NCVV Treasurer Paul Hatfield accepts Valley Regional Congress awards for 2009 on behalf of NCVV from Assemblyman Felipe Fuentes, Councilman Richard Alarcon, and DONE General Manager BH Kim*

## All A Board

By Ginny Hatfield

NCVV received the Best Voter Turnout award at the Valley Regional Congress held at Panorama City High School on May 30<sup>th</sup>. The Voter Turnout Award was credited to the fall 2007 elections when over a thousand Valley Village stakeholders voted for eight board seats. Not only was this the largest turnout among San Fernando Valley Neighborhood Councils, it was also among the highest per capita turnouts in the entire city,

including races for City Council seats. Special thanks go to the Election Committee for their promotion and planning efforts.

This year has seen some changes to our NCVV Board of Directors and we're now pleased to say that we have a full contingent of members on the board serving the community in their respective capacities.

First of all we need to say thank you and farewell to **Richard Gauthier**, one of our Business Representatives, who recently resigned to devote more time to his wife and family. Richard was elected to the board in 2007 and was the Chair of our City Services Committee as well as our representative to the DWP Oversight Committee. A long-time resident of Valley Village and a local businessman for over two decades, Richard and his wife Barbara work tirelessly to give back to their community. Richard has officially left the board but promises to continue his involvement in all things Valley Village.

His replacement on the board is **Jeff Walker**, a local attorney specializing in business litigation, who was recently installed as our new Business Representative. Jeff and his wife are 17-year residents of Valley Village, and the proud parents of two children who attend Colfax Charter School. He first became active with NCVV over a year ago when he and his neighbors were challenging a development project in their neighborhood. He was smitten by the council's involvement, joined the NCVV City Services Committee, and didn't hesitate to apply for the open seat. Welcome to the Board; we look forward to benefiting from your talents and energy.

Our newest Renter Representative on the board is really no newcomer at all. It is **Tom Patterson**, who held that seat at the inception of NCVV back in 2003. Tom has served Valley Village admirably over the years as one of the founders of the Valley Village Homeowners Association and one of the authors of the Valley Village Specific Plan. He is the expert when it comes to Planning and Land Use issues, and his advice is sought by many in the LA area. He's been a Valley Village resident since the 60's and NCVV benefits greatly by having him once again on our board.

If all of this talk about board members is stirring an interest, and more importantly a commitment on your part, then think about running for a seat next year. In 2010 the City Clerk will be conducting all of the 90 neighborhood council elections throughout the city. NCVV will be holding its elections on **May 27, 2010**. Be sure to check out [www.MyValleyVillage.com](http://www.MyValleyVillage.com) for the latest information.



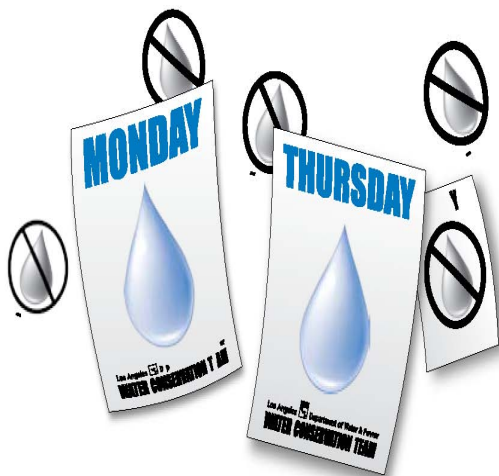
## DWP Pays You to Conserve

By Steven Stokes

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) recently initiated a program that will pay homeowners \$1 per square foot to replant their yard with drought resistant plants. Changing from traditional grass, bushes, and flowers to drought resistant plants and landscaping can save you hundreds of dollars per year in water use, and save you time that you are now spending on yard work. Most importantly DWP will pay you to make the change! For more information on this program, or many other opportunities for rebates you can earn by conserving water and power in your home, visit the DWP website at [www.ladwp.com](http://www.ladwp.com) and search Rebates & Programs.

On June 1 a new ordinance became effective governing water use in Los Angeles. ***Under the new rules, residents may only water their lawns on Mondays and Thursdays, and no watering is allowed between 9 am and 4 pm.*** There are other new restrictions on water use, and violations carry significant fines. All homeowners and residents who have an irrigation system are encouraged to check to be certain they only operate on approved days. The NCVV City Services committee also encourages our stakeholders to take advantage of other opportunities to help conserve water during this summer, including shorter showers, fixing leaky faucets, and running only full loads in your clothes and dish washers. For more information on all the restrictions in the ordinance, visit [www.ladwp.com](http://www.ladwp.com).

### Effective June 1<sup>st</sup> Sprinkler Use is Restricted to Mondays and Thursdays



## Election Roundup

By Paul Hatfield

Grassroots activism played an important role in the elections held on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Carmen Trutanich defeated two-term Councilman Jack Weiss in the race for City Attorney by a 55% to 45% margin. Mr. Weiss was supported by the Mayor, the local Democratic Party, almost all of the City Council, Chief Bratton and most of the municipal unions. Mr. Trutanich was backed by County DA Steve Cooley, Sheriff Lee Baca and the Police Protective League.

Trutanich began his campaign with a significant fundraising disadvantage, but narrowed the gap after the March primary. That enabled him to launch an effective television campaign and capitalize on grassroots activism, enabling the runoff and setting the table for the broader support he received in May. Many Neighborhood Council members throughout the City signed on as supporters and assisted with his campaign's logistics and outreach.

In the race for the 5<sup>th</sup> Council District seat vacated by Jack Weiss, Paul Koretz has edged out Neighborhood Council activist David Vehedi. Mr. Koretz is an established figure in Los Angeles politics and had widespread support from the political establishment. That advantage did not deter Mr. Vehedi, who was popular among many Neighborhood Council members on both sides of the hill in CD5. Leading up to the March primary, the two squared off at the Valley Village candidates' forum sponsored by Neighborhood Council Valley Village and the Valley Village Homeowners Association.

Both races are examples of the difference local activism can make. In the past, established tenure in city politics, and the endorsement of key officials, has been enough to decrease or eliminate competition altogether in these important elections. This was clearly not the case on May 19<sup>th</sup>. The financial crisis at both the state and local levels elevated the frustration felt by many voters with City Hall and Sacramento. That came on the heels of Measure B, a controversial proposal that caused many to question the leadership of our local officials.

Residents of Council District 2 will have a chance to make activism work for them in the fall as September 22<sup>nd</sup> has been declared as the voting date to fill the CD2 seat vacated by Wendy Greuel. There are several people who have expressed interest, and as I told an audience at the Valley Congress of Neighborhood Councils on May 30<sup>th</sup>, "activism is always preferable to acquiescence." So, please, get involved!

## NCVV Board Motions

**Motion:** NCVV Board recommends to the City Council, the Planning Commission, the Planning Department, The Valley Alliance of NC's and the Citywide Congress of NC's that the existing citywide ordinance banning new billboards in LA and accompanying ordinances be retained, revised and repealed as presented. Motion was approved 13-0-0. **January 2009**

**Motion:** NCVV Board supports the Save LA River – Studio City Open Space concept design as presented by the Studio City Residents Association. This motion carried forward from a presentation in December. Motion was approved 13-0-0. **January 2009**

**Motion:** Move that NCVV Board recommend to City Council that the fine for any violation to the ICO or any permanent billboard sign ordinance that they approve be increased significantly to create an economic disincentive to violating the ordinance. Motion was approved 13-0-0. **January 2009**

**Motion:** NCVV unabashedly supports green power and sustainable energy, but NCVV does not support the insufficiently vetted Measure B. Motion was approved 13-0-0. **January 2009**

**Motion:** NCVV requests City of Los Angeles to increase the number of hazardous waste collection events at Los Angeles Valley College so that they are available semi-annually (two times per year). Motion was approved 9-0-0. **March 2009**

**Motion:** The Board of the Neighborhood Council Valley Village supports AB 109 which would establish a moratorium on the construction of, or conversion to, new digital advertising displays until January 1, 2012, and would also disallow the conversion of existing static billboards which would include eight hundred seventy-eight (878) signs approved for the conversion in the City as part of the World Wide Rush v City of Los Angeles settlement. Motion was approved 9-0-0. **March 2009**

**Motion:** That the NCVV Board recommend to the City Council, the Planning Commission, the Planning Department, the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils and the Citywide Congress of Neighborhood Councils that the exceptions contained in the proposed Citywide Sign and Billboard Ordinance be removed from the ordinance as follows: 1, Remove the supplemental sign district enabling ordinance; 2, Remove the Comprehensive Sign Program provision; 3, Remove the sign Modifications provision. The motion was approved 9-0-0. **March 2009**

**Motion:** That the NCVV Board recommend to the City Council, the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils and the Citywide Congress of Neighborhood Councils that the proposed Citywide Sign and Billboard Ordinance recommended by the City Planning Commission on March 26 be revised and approved as follows: 1. Retain the citywide ban on new billboards in Los Angeles approved in 2002, including the ban of billboards along the freeways approved in the early 1950s. 2. Remove the exception provisions contained in the proposed ordinance approved by the Planning Commission that would permit new billboards in supplemental sign districts and permit larger and taller on-premise identification signs in comprehensive sign programs for large projects and through the sign modification procedure. 3. Prohibit further conversions of billboards to digital billboards and new digital billboards. 4. Prohibit super graphic signs on the sides of buildings. 5. Increase the fines for violations of the sign and billboard ordinance so that they create a significant economic disincentive to violating the ordinance. In addition, that the City Council: 1. Adopt a policy that the City Council not settle any future billboard industry lawsuits that are one-sided in favor of the companies, i.e. no retroactive legalizing of illegal billboards put up without permits, no allowing signs to be converted to digital billboards and no more reductions in sign inspection fees. 2. Renegotiate, if possible, the settlement agreements, which allow four (4) companies to convert eight hundred seventy-eight (878) existing signs to digital billboards. Motion passed 11-0-0. **April 2009**

**Motion:** NCVV endorses Instant Run-off Voting (IRV), and urges the Mayor and City Council to put IRV on the ballot for the voters to decide. Motion passed by a vote of 10-1-0. **April 2009**

**Motion:** to approve the NCVV DONE elections procedures **Stipulation** document. Motion was approved 11-0-0. **April 2009**

### The BRIDGE Editorial Staff:

Editor – Steven Stokes

Proofreader – Stuart Simen

Technical Support – Cate Walla

### NCVV Communications Committee:

Steven Stokes, Chair

Ginny Hatfield

Suzanne Lewis

Philip Schaffer

Thank you to Breice Reiner and Peter Sanchez for 5 years of excellent leadership as Editor and Publisher of the *The Bridge*. We have very big shoes to fill!



# Valley Village July 4<sup>th</sup> PARADE

All ages welcome!

*Refreshments and Fun!*

To join the parade be at Colfax Elementary School - Addison Street parking lot. 9:30am line up and a 10:00am Parade Start

Parade Route will head west on Addison to Ben, north to Otsego, across Colfax to Irvine, south on Irvine to Hesby and then east to Valley Village Park

*Sponsored by:*

*Valley Village*

*Homeowners Association*



## NCVV Budget Threat

*By Tony Braswell*

In May the City Council budget committee discussed cutting Neighborhood Council budgets by close to 80%, dropping annual support to just \$11,200. NCVV President Tony Braswell and five other San Fernando Valley Neighborhood Council Presidents met with DONE General Manager BH Kim to strategize a prompt, effective response to the proposal. Within days, area stakeholders including hundreds from Valley Village expressed their concern for the draconian cuts. With support from Council District 2, the budget was restored to \$45,000; a 10% cut that allows NC's to shoulder a more proportional share of the city's budget deficit. Much thanks to all those who wrote letters, made phone calls, and sent e-mails in support of NC funding.

## Look Before You Cross

*By Tony Braswell*

The crosswalk on Riverside at Laurel Grove has been preserved, thanks to hard work by local residents, Temple Beth Hillel, NCVV's Board, Los Angeles Department of Transportation, and support from Councilwoman Wendy Greuel and her staff. The crosswalk had been slated to be removed after an initial traffic study claimed a low level of use by pedestrians. At the request of stakeholders, members of the temple and the NCVV Board, the survey was repeated and clearly showed higher use by area stakeholders. Thank you to everyone who voiced their support for this very important crosswalk.

The state Department of Transportation has proposed raising the speed limit on Riverside to 40 mph and on Chandler to 45 mph. This is as a result of a state law requiring that all speed limits must be reviewed, evaluated, and re-approved at periodic intervals. The recommendation for increased speed limits on both streets has caused great concern for the Board and area stakeholders. The NCVV Board unanimously passed a motion opposing any change to the Chandler or Riverside speed limits. Stakeholders are encouraged to express their thoughts on the issue before the process is complete. Comments can be sent to the LA Department of Transportation or offices of City Council District 2 and/or District 5.

## Stakeholders Want to Know

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Periodically NCVV publishes questions and answers from stakeholders that we receive at monthly Board meetings, on our NCVV phone line, or by email. Here are two questions from Valley Village stakeholders:

### Where can I dispose old paint and batteries?

Hazardous Household Waste should never be placed in your usual trash container. There are strict fines for placing these items in your trash, starting at a minimum \$5000. These items include paint, solvents, used motor oil and filters, cleaning products, aerosol cans, all medicine, batteries, and E-waste that includes computers, monitors, printers, telephones, televisions and other electronic equipment.

The closest disposal facility for Valley Village is in Los Angeles-Glendale, 4600 Colorado Boulevard, 90039. It is open Saturday and Sunday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. For more information on disposal of hazardous waste, other drop off locations and what items they accept, call 1-800-988-6942 or visit [www.lacity.org](http://www.lacity.org) and search for Department of Public Works Bureau of Sanitation. There you will find all the information under the Special Materials section of the Solid Resources Program link.

### Recently my family and my dog were harassed at Valley Village Park by the Park police. The park is a great place for dogs to run, why can't dogs be allowed off leash?

The leash law that is in effect in Valley Village Park is a city ordinance. Our park is not an "off-leash" park and all dogs must be maintained on a leash when in the park. NCVV's Board has appointed an ad hoc subcommittee that will work with the Valley Village Homeowners Association and the City to determine the feasibility of a dog park close to Valley Village. If you bring your dog to Valley Village Park, your pet should be on a leash or you are in violation of the city ordinance.

#### Volunteers Needed:

The Project Committee is looking for volunteers to help with National Night Out. Please contact Suzanne Lewis at 818-759-8204 or by email at [brillantevents@earthlink.net](mailto:brillantevents@earthlink.net).

## Billboard Blight

By Marc Woerschling

On May 26, the City Council postponed, until September, action on the new Citywide Sign and Billboard Ordinance. The postponement is to allow City Attorney-Elect Carmen Trutanich time to review the proposed ordinance.

### PROPOSED ORDINANCE

The new ordinance is the result of a breakdown in efforts to control billboards and other types of signs. A modified version of this ordinance was approved by the Planning Commission in April. It retains the ban on off-site billboards, bans digital billboards and super graphic signs on the sides of buildings, and proposes much greater fines for violators yet it continues to allow exceptions which could put the new ordinance in legal jeopardy.

### NCVV ACTION

While much of the overall motion is positive, the exceptions cause concern for Neighborhood Council Valley Village. A motion approved by the NCVV Board recommends that the City Council take a cautious approach and not include *any* exception provisions in the proposed sign ordinance. Councilpersons Tom LaBonge and Bill Rosendahl have introduced a motion to limit the approval of additional supplemental sign districts to downtown only and not allow them anywhere else in the city. The motion approved by the NCVV Board also recommends that the City Council reject any settlements that permit conversions to digital billboards, and any effort to legalize existing illegal billboards. NCVV's Planning and Land Use Committee and the full Board will continue to monitor the ordinance as it moves through the approval process. For more information on the ordinance, visit the city Planning department website at [www.lacity.org](http://www.lacity.org).

## Neighborhood Watch Needs You

By Dorothy Apple

Valley Village boasts one of the best Neighborhood Watch programs in Los Angeles. Does your street have a block captain? Do you know who your block captain is? You can find out by visiting our website, [www.MyValleyVillage.com](http://www.MyValleyVillage.com). If you would like to be a block captain or just sign up to be a part of our Neighborhood Watch program, you can do that by emailing us at [info@MyValleyVillage.com](mailto:info@MyValleyVillage.com). You can help protect our community and your neighbors by joining Neighborhood Watch today!

## NCVV Board of Directors

**At Large:** Dave Bate  
Paul Hatfield (Treasurer)

**Business:** Andrew Sacher  
Jeff Walker

**Community Org.:** Marc Woersching

**Education:** Beth Fulton

**Faith Based:** Joshua Levy

**Homeowners:** Dorothy Apple (Secretary)  
Ginny Hatfield (Vice. Pres.)  
Greg O'Connor  
Lory Oberg

**Renters:** Tony Braswell (President)  
Suzanne Lewis  
Tom Paterson  
Steven Stokes

**Student:** Phillip Schaffer

## The BRIDGE Goes Electronic

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



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