



WESTWOOD HILLS

# NEWS

WESTWOOD HILLS PROPERTY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2003

P R E S I D E N T ' S L E T T E R

**T**his newsletter brings good news in the form of a letter (reprinted on page 4) indicating that Caltrans has abandoned the destructive and inappropriate "Loop" off-ramp that it proposed as a possible alternative to closure of the 405 northbound off-ramp at Montana Avenue. This concession by Caltrans is the direct result of the outpouring of protest from hundreds of Westwood Hills property owners who let their elected representatives and Caltrans know that this proposal, which would destroy homes and diminish property values throughout our neighborhood, is totally unacceptable

Thank you to everyone who helped. To Ken Fields and Lori Fontanes, who put together the effective "Stop the Off-Ramp" group that gathered more than 400 signatures on a petition protesting the off-ramp, representing 80 percent of the homes in our neighborhood. To the many neighbors who helped to circulate the petitions. To those who called our elected officials: State Senator Sheila Kuehl, Assemblyman Herb Wesson and Councilman Jack Weiss. Senator Kuehl came out early against the off-ramp. Councilman Weiss weighed in helpfully shortly thereafter. We are confident that support from our Assemblyman, Speaker Herb Wesson, will be forthcoming soon.

UCLA's position is problematic. After meeting with its traffic consultants, the University said that before it could support closure of the off-ramp, it needed more data from Caltrans about how it would mitigate increased traffic at Wilshire and Sunset. This position falls sadly short of the hoped-for UCLA statement in behalf of an alternative to off-ramp closure that would not destroy our homes. Decision-makers should bear in mind that this is the same UCLA that this spring asked the Regents to approve its revised Long Range Development Plan *despite the fact that it could not mitigate plan-related impacts from UCLA traffic* at key Wilshire and Sunset Boulevard intersections. We make a modest proposal: if UCLA is concerned about added trips on Wilshire and Sunset, let it generate less traffic.

According to Caltrans, the draft environmental impact report on the northbound 405 project, including its plan for dealing with the 405 Montana Avenue off-ramp, will be released no earlier than Summer, 2004. In the interim, information about the progress of the planning is supposed to be available on the Caltrans website: [www.move405.info](http://www.move405.info). It appears that the schedule for implementing the project will be slowed because of the State's financial situation, but keep in mind that this is a project with major Federal funding. Our goal is to make certain that any project approved is a good project, funded or not funded, since times change and funding has a way of becoming available. Stay active.

Carole Magnuson

## Geffen Theater to Grow

UCLA will ask the Regents to approve a \$26-million, 12, 900 square-foot addition to its **Geffen Playhouse**, located in Westwood Village. The project includes a new 120-seat theater and improvements to the existing 590-seat facility. Geffen productions will be relocated to the Brentwood Theater on the Veterans Administration property during construction, which is set to begin in May, 2004.

UCLA also wants to convert the former Hamburger Hamlet space on Weyburn to offices, a use not allowed under current zoning.

## Community Business Join Forces

Fast-food uses continue to proliferate and retail uses continue to be converted to food uses (without required parking) in Westwood Village despite provisions in the Westwood Village Specific Plan that would prevent both. The Westwood Village Specific Plan is aimed at improving the climate for business. Concern about the City's failure to enforce the Plan has grown since the dissolution of the Business Improvement District. Funding for street cleaning and tree maintenance districts (assessments that preceded the BID) have not been available to continue those services, so the Village has grown increasingly unkempt.

Prompted by the deteriorating situation, a coalition of homeowner presidents (including WHPOA) and business representatives has been formed to see what can be done to

bring City services and attention to Westwood Village.

## New in the Village

After years of languishing supermarketless, Westwood Hills is now served by two full-scale supermarkets. **Ralphs** on Weyburn Avenue and the newly opened **Whole Foods Market**, on Gayley Avenue. We hear nothing but praise for both of these markets. In addition to great shopping, they provide a great social center for the neighborhood—a place to shop, eat, and meet your neighbors

**Other new businesses** include two restaurants on Westwood Boulevard—**Chili's** and **Corner Bakery**. And check out **Bombay Bites**, an attractive space serving Indian cuisine, that has opening on Gayley Avenue opposite Whole Foods.

## Palazzo Westwood ???

One very big mystery is when the next shoe will drop on the property opposite **Expo**, where developer Alan Casden is proposing to build a mammoth apartment and retail complex. As yet the re-

quired public hearings on the project have not been scheduled.

One issue awaiting hearing is the fate of Glendon Manor. Despite repeated requests from cultural and historical lobbies and homeowner groups, Casden insists that the historical **Glendon Manor**, the last remaining original housing structure in the Village, must be destroyed to provide a loading dock for his oversized project.

Community complaints about the deficiencies in Casden's draft EIR, and the shortcomings of his project, forced him to revise it. But the new draft EIR is no improvement over the old and the project is still too big to fit within the envelope provided by the Westwood Village Specific Plan (which is intended to insure that new development is compatible with old and to protect the Village streets from excess traffic.)

Casden's DEIR acknowledges that a project built to the requirements of the Specific Plan would be environmentally superior to the one that he wants to build. WHPOA supports enforcement of the existing plan.

**Warning**  
City voters have been misled in recent years by the City's sure to...  
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## Traffic Report

### More traffic tickets

While there may be few ways to reduce traffic in our neighborhood, there is an effective way to slow that traffic down. According to Captain Chambers of the West L.A. police department, the LAPD will be stepping up the issuance of traffic tickets. All types of traffic accidents have increased in the Westside, where there have been six fatalities and 1,000 accidents this year. Deputy Chief Carter believes that writing citations is the best way to improve traffic safety.

In our Westwood Hills neighborhood, the biggest threat to safety comes from drivers speeding down our narrow and winding streets in route to or from the 405 Freeway. Think how much easier it would be to make a left turn onto Montana Avenue or simply cross the street on foot if drivers were to observe the 30-miles-per-hour speed limit.

Deputy Chief Carter also warns drivers to be careful answering a cell phone while driving. A California Highway Patrol study found that

answering a cell phone is the number one reason for cell-phone related accidents.

A traffic topic that generates differing opinions is the efficacy of the "No Right Turn (3 to 7 p.m.)" and "No Left Turn (7 to 9 a.m.)" signs posted at various corners in our neighborhood. They were intended to stop commuter cut-through traffic, which they do, but they also prevent homeowners from using those routes to get home during those hours. What's the best solution? The traffic advisory meetings with the LAPD provide a forum for discussing this and other traffic-related subjects.

—Debbie Nussbaum  
Traffic Committee Chair

## Crime Report

### Vandalism and Thefts

Several incidents of vandalism and theft have recently occurred throughout the Westwood Hills area

In late April, residents reported heavy flowerpots were stolen from their doorsteps on **Cashmere Terrace, Ophir Drive and Bronwood Avenue**. A homeowner on **Cashmere Terrace** reported that her lawn sprinklers

were broken off and that trash was strewn in a driveway of an empty house nearby. A construction-site portapotty was overturned and trash strewn on **Denslow Avenue**. On **Bentley Avenue**, a stereo was stolen from an unlocked car parked in a driveway and, next door, a television and bicycle were stolen from a garage.

LAPD Senior Lead Officer Mike Wang stresses the importance of reporting such crimes to the police. Reporting them to our WHPOA alerts other residents but it is critical that all crime be reported to the police as soon as possible.

Officer Wang advises doing this early in the morning, when the desks are less busy than later in the day. The number to call is 575-8401. Officer Wang's number is 575-8423.

Once the vandalism and crimes are reported, the LAPD can evaluate them and take appropriate action. Officer Wang is a fan of Neighborhood Watch, and encourages us to organize a program. Anyone who is interested in organizing a block-by-block Neighborhood Watch for Westwood Hills should email [whpoa@msn.com](mailto:whpoa@msn.com)

## Abandoned Cars

It's illegal—and unneighborly—to use the streets in our community to store motor vehicles. Los Angeles Municipal Code 80.73.2 provides that any vehicle left on the street for 72-hours is subject to removal. The City has set up a program to impound such vehicles. In our neighborhood, this problem is most common where there is no permit parking, and/or the streets are not posted for cleaning. The number to call for abandoned vehicles on your street call (800) 222-6366.

**Are you missing from our email network? If so, you're missing out on all the news happening in the Westwood Hills community! From Updates on crime to helpful recommendations of trustworthy and super-competent tradespeople, our E-Mail Network brings your homeowner association into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century! Just ask the 200-plus members of the network who've already added their e-mail addresses to the list. There's only so much we can cram into our quarterly newsletter. That's why our cyberspace community – with its infinite space – is such a valuable resource. To join, just e-mail your name, street address, telephone number and e-mail address to [westwoodhills-owner@yahoogroups.com](mailto:westwoodhills-owner@yahoogroups.com).**

## Party planners sought

Arthur Greenberg (Levering) is putting together a group to plan a neighborhood party. The party would take place in September and would be patterned after the successful block party that Arthur and his neighbors staged several years ago.

If you would like to help with the planning or want to know about the plans please send him an e-mail at [arthur@greenberg.org](mailto:arthur@greenberg.org) and he will add you to a party e-mail list.

## Welcome New Members

WHPOA works for Westwood Hills. If you have a new neighbor, please let us know by calling (310) 472-8914 or by e-mail at [whpoa@msn.com](mailto:whpoa@msn.com). Please welcome these new members who have joined since January:

Erwin and Caren Sokol, Barbara and Morton Skolnick (Bronwood); Lewis and Vicki Solomon, Susan Pekarovics and Attila Beres (Bentley); Penny, Travis, Grayson and Peyton Hansen, Diana Ingham, Jennifer Cohen and Michael Joe, David, Leigh and Eli Nickoll (Cashmere); Larry and Frances Lauerhauss, Russell and Deborah Fine (Dalkeith), Dan Osterweil, Paul Yamaouchi, Rami and Najla Ghandour, David and Penny Tellem (Denslow); Aida Takla-O'Reilly, Elizabeth Arlen, Annie and Tony Ranger (Glenroy); Archie and Tamar Wilson (Homedale); Christine Woo, Ron and Marnie Eshel (Montana); Shawn, Barry and Casey Abrahams (Ophir); Barry and Marcia Maiten, Steven Hiter (Sunset); Stacey and Marc Siegel, Saul and Candice Brerly (Tavistock); Kathleen Head, Anthony Balbona, Kim, Dominic and Jack Sandifer (Turston).

### Westwood Hills Property Owners Association

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Fax 310.472.8914

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Flex your power!  
Be energy efficient!

March 24, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is evaluating various alternative plans for improving the safe flow of traffic in the Route 405 Corridor between Route 10 and Route 101. Some of these plans would require the closure of the existing northbound off-ramp at Montana Avenue. While Caltrans preference at this initial study stage is to close this isolated off-ramp, a final decision is several years away.

In response to some members of the community who opposed the closure of the off-ramp at Montana Avenue, Caltrans developed a Loop ramp design that would replace the existing ramp with a new ramp, engineered to meet current State and Federal freeway design standards. This replacement loop ramp (which is enclosed) was shown at the public meetings held in west Los Angeles on February 18 & 19, 2003.

The public reaction to this replacement Loop ramp concept has been overwhelmingly negative because of its adverse impacts. Because of these adverse impacts, Caltrans has decided to abandon this Loop ramp concept.

For continuing updates on the status of the Route 405 Corridor Study proposals please call (866) MOVE-405 or contact the Caltrans website at [www.move405.info](http://www.move405.info).

We appreciate your continued involvement in this important transportation improvement process.

Sincerely,

Ronald Kosinski  
Deputy District Director of Environmental Planning