

## BRENTWOOD HILLS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

POST OFFICE BOX 49495 • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90049

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*Neighborhood News*

*September 2003*

### **Proposed Expansion of Mountaingate**

One of the ongoing challenges that faces our community in general, and your Board in particular, is preservation of our beautiful canyon, its viewshed and ambiance. That can require vigilance. From time to time these values are threatened by ill-considered development proposals that would invade natural wildlands with grading, dust, construction, and destruction of viewsheds and habitat. Many years ago BHHA endowed a Neighborhood Defense Fund to ensure that we can respond quickly and affirmatively in case of a threat. Since then we have won some battles (Boeckmann, Tucker) and lost others (Hilton/Eastridge).

The Mountaingate development was created in the 1970s atop a city landfill in the Sepulveda Pass. Bulldozing of the Kenter Ridge began around 1978 and produced the string of mansions and town-homes that adorn the ridgeline visible from parts of our community and the Westridge Fire Road as you proceed north.

There is now a plan to further expand Mountaingate, which has been in and out of the courts and City Council for some time. Mountaingate's developer, Castle & Cooke (Rupert Murdock), presently proposes to grade and construct twenty-nine new mansions. Twenty-two will lie on the east side of the ridge, out of sight of us. Seven will lie on a southerly extension of Canyonback Road where they will line the ridge and command a 180° view to the west. We believe that will entail the cutting, grading and "mansionizing" of yet another prominent ridgeline in the Santa Monica Mountains, visible to us and to recreational users of the Boeckmann parkland property. The developer has published a voluminous and turgid Draft Environmental Impact Report which takes the position (among other things) that the development will have no significant impact on anyone's views.

Your Board is concerned about this expansion of our neighbor across the canyon, and has voted unanimously to oppose that portion of it involving the seven ridgeline lots. We have hired veteran land-use attorney John Murdock to express our concerns and prepare a response to the EIR in proper legal form. We are also coordinating our efforts with the Boards of Upper Mandeville and the Mountaingate Homeowners.

There was little we could do to preserve the Santa Monicas back in 1978. Today times are different, and hopefully we can make a difference — all part of the ongoing fight to conserve the beauty and serenity of our canyon.



This view of the Canyonback Ridge of Mountaingate, taken from near the Westridge fire road, could have as many as seven large new homes if development is approved as planned. *Photo and article by Eric Edmunds*

## **LAPD Stolen Art Web Site**

The West Los Angeles Police Department's Community Relations office has passed on an announcement from LAPD's Art Theft Detail regarding the creation of a web site to help identify owners of stolen art work and collectible items that were recently catalogued after an arrest uncovered the items in a suspects home. In addition to hundreds of pieces of art, the web site mentions that stamps, coins, baseball cards, comics, rare books, jewelry, pocket watches, guns, clocks, cameras, laptop computers, and other items were recovered. Though we don't believe that any burglaries have been committed in Brentwood Hills recently, if you are interested in seeing the items, you can do so at: <http://lapdonline.org/stolenart/>. If the owners of the items are not identified, they will eventually be sold at public auction.

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## **West Los Angeles Veterans Administration CARES Commission Hearing**

*reprinted from CD 11 Councilwoman Miscikowski's E-News Extra Edition*

Many of you may be aware of the CARES process currently underway at the local Veterans Administration. The process will analyze what the long term needs of Veterans are for the next 20 years and what the existing Veterans resources are throughout the service region, including health services, land and buildings, and how these should be streamlined or reorganized to provide the most efficient and effective services for the future.

Many community members are concerned that this process may leave out the local Veterans from important decisions that impact their lives. Others are concerned that the CARES plan could result in a determination that the West LA VA site has "excess land", which could lead to it being leased to private interests or even sold off permanently, regardless of the desires of Veterans or the interests of the surrounding community. Fortunately, the Federal CARES Commission will be hosting a public hearing where anyone who wishes to learn more or provide feedback can hear statements made by invited and impacted guests, which includes local Veteran organizations representatives, patients, stakeholders and elected officials. In addition, there should be public comment forms available. If you would like to make a statement, you may request permission to do so prior to the hearing by visiting this website: [www.carescommission.va.gov](http://www.carescommission.va.gov).

Here are the details:

Monday, September 29, 2003  
10:00 a.m. to approximately 1:00 p.m.  
Held at the VA Long Beach Healthcare Center  
5901 E. 7th Street  
Pantages Theater (Bldg. 2, 2nd floor, Room 247)  
Long Beach, California

Visitors will be shuttled from the parking structure to the meeting place.  
Phone: 1-562-826-8000

Directions to Long Beach VA Medical Center:

The Long Beach VA Medical Center is located off the 405, 605 and 22 freeways on the corner of East 7th Street and Bellflower Blvd adjacent to California State University Long Beach. For more detailed directions contact the Medical Center at 562-826-8000 ext. 5498 or visit their website at [www.long-beach.med.va.gov](http://www.long-beach.med.va.gov). For additional information about the CARES Commission Hearing or to submit your comments on CARES, go to the CARES Commission Website at [www.carescommission.va.gov](http://www.carescommission.va.gov) or contact the Network 22 Office at 1-562-826-5963.

## Director Elections

It is time once again to hold elections for our board of directors. If you are interested in running for one of five seats with a three year term, please contact us no later than Monday, October 6. If we have more than five candidates, an election will be held by mail during mid-October. Results will be announced at our annual meeting on October 26 (there should be a one page flyer enclosed with this newsletter).

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website: [www.brentwood-hills.org](http://www.brentwood-hills.org)  
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phone: 310-471-8485 (John Given)

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## Gabrielino/Tongva Indians Celebrate Before Columbus Day

The "Before Columbus Day" event is given once a year by the Gabrielino/Tongva Springs Foundation whose main purpose is to preserve the archeology and historical site at University High School. Remember the high school was built upon the village of Kuruvunga and has a Sacred Spring that flows 22,000 gallons a day into a large lagoon. This 2-acre site on the campus is the site of the event. The Tongva Indians are California Indians and lived here before being conquered by the Spanish.

Sunday, October 12, 2003 from 11 AM to 3 PM  
1439 South Barrington Avenue  
one block south of Wilshire Blvd.  
Musicians, dancers, food, hands on exhibits for children  
Admission is free

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## Brentwood Green Weeding Socials

We recently received an e-mail regarding the ongoing volunteer maintenance of Brentwood Green. By the time you read this the first social will have occurred, but the weeds will continue indefinitely, so please contact Barbara Goldenberg and Karen Whitman if you would like to volunteer in the future.

September 12, 2003

Dear Brentwood Neighbor,

Are your days stressed out? Tired of sitting at the computer? Brentwood Green @ Brentwood Science Magnet School, located on Gretna Green between San Vicente & Montana, has the answer. Become a volunteer gardener. Help us weed, water, plant and prune.

When school is not in session this beautiful campus is now a community park and playground, open for all of us to enjoy.

Step behind the chain link fence to see how seven acres in the heart of Brentwood have been transformed from ugly asphalt to a green oasis. See the soccer field, all the new play equipment, the Safran Family Primary Playground and the amphitheater. There is a Butterfly & Wildlife Garden, a California Mission Garden, a Farm Garden, a Meditation Garden, an Indian Council, a Redwood Forest, a Deciduous Forest, an Isaac Newton Garden and a Quad.

Our first "Weeding Social" will take place Saturday, September 20th from 10:00AM to noon. Bring friends, kids, your favorite trowel, weeder & clippers, gloves, a hat, water and sunscreen. We promise to provide the weeds.

We look forward to seeing you on the 20th of September as we kick-off this excellent neighborhood project. If the 20th doesn't work out for you, we will be meeting regularly on the 3rd Saturday of every subsequent month to perform light maintenance on our many new gardens.

Please call Barbara Goldenberg at 310-393-7774 ([Paloma129@aol.com](mailto:Paloma129@aol.com)) or Karen Whitman at 310-471-4157 ([Stanwhit@earthlink.net](mailto:Stanwhit@earthlink.net)) for more information.

## Crime Alert and Update

Although reports of serious crime seem to have dropped somewhat since our last newsletter, it is still important to remain vigilant in your personal awareness and security. Below is the most recent crime alert from the West LA Police Station.

### BURGLARY FROM VEHICLES. VEHICLE SECURITY INFORMATION.

Last month (July 2003), 152 reported property stolen from their vehicles in West Los Angeles. In the majority of these cases, the vehicle owners left their property in plain view.

One third of these crimes occurred because the victim left his or her vehicle doors unlocked or the windows down. In such cases, the victims report the loss of purses, laptop computers, clothes, backpacks, briefcases, sunglasses, luggage, and ashtray change.

West Los Angeles is a great area inhabited with good hard working people. That is why criminals historically travel here from areas outside our division. If someone wants to break into your car, they will, but you can harden the target by following these suggestions:

- Don't tempt criminals and opportunists by leaving valuable property in plain sight. Thieves usually target vehicles in carports and subterranean garages during late night and early morning hours. They look for property in unattended vehicles with flashlights while you sleep.
- If you go to a fitness center or on a hike, the criminals know that you put your purse or wallet under the car seat, in the trunk, or under a coat inside the car. They also know that you won't be back for a while. Travel light. Put your driver's license, a credit card and some money in your pocket.
- Don't leave your car keys unattended at the park or on the side of the basketball court. Thieves will take your keys while you're distracted and find your car in the parking lot by pressing your remote.
- When you go to the gas station, lock your car and take your purse before going to the pay window.
- Criminals will break into your car to look for your cell phone if you leave your phone headset and/or charging cord in plain view.
- If your vehicle has high dollar factory (bmw, mbz, escalade, etc.) or aftermarket wheels, use wheel locks. Thieves will find another victim rather than make the noise necessary to remove the wheels. Hide the key to the wheel lock. Don't leave it in your console or glove box because that's where the thieves will look.
- If you tandem park, criminals know you leave the other vehicle's keys in the car parked in front. Car burglars will not only steal your stuff but they will take your car if you leave the valet key in the console.

Unfortunately, times have changed and we have to constantly be aware and protective of our possessions. Please help us reduce your crime.