

# Los Feliz Observer

LOS FELIZ IMPROVEMENT  
ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Organized in 1916 for the betterment and protection of the Los Feliz District

Summer 2002

## Hollywood and Valley Secession, Will it Become a Reality?

By Van Carlson

**T**he proposed vote on November 5 to separately detach the San Fernando Valley and Hollywood from the City of Los Angeles represent great examples of how a very small group of dedicated stakeholders with enough time, money, expertise, and political will can affect the future of Los Angeles.

There are legitimate concerns the secessionists have put before us – for example, the need for more localism in our civic governance. Unfortunately, the attempt to break apart the city of Los Angeles has led to confusion and has delayed and distracted attention away from the important problems in our neighborhoods.

### *What do the various secession advocates say that they want?*

Greater control over decisions that affect their quality of life.

Improved basic city services

Lower taxes and fees

A business environment that encourages new business development and retains existing businesses and creates new quality jobs

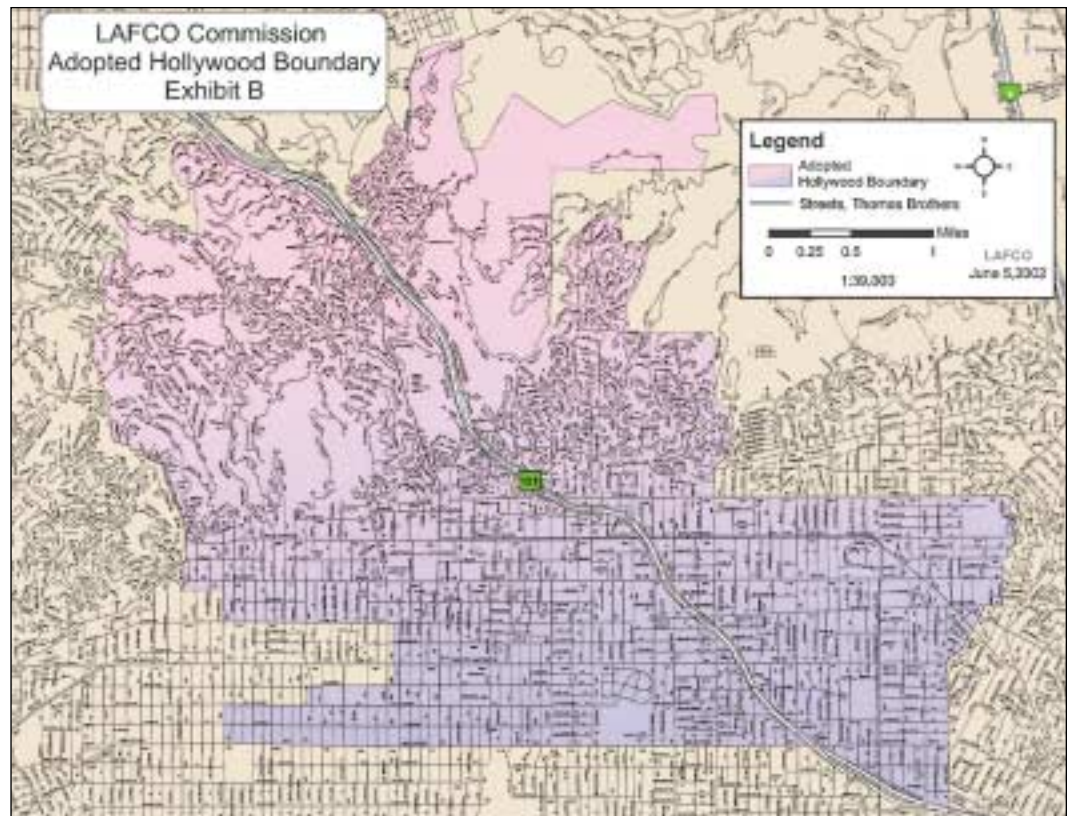
Short, medium and long term planning based on the public's priorities

Safe and clean neighborhoods

Equal opportunity and fair representation for all residents

Equity in the distribution of services and representation

Government that is accessible, accountable and responsive



*This map shows the proposed boundaries of the new City of Hollywood.*

All these ideas are fundamental, but are these goals sufficient cause to perhaps destroy Los Angeles now and forever? **The Los Feliz Improvement Association is working to keep our city together, and is opposed to secession. Why?**

LFIA has worked hard for 87 years to improve our community, including working for most of the issues mentioned above. But creating a separate city is not the answer. Los Feliz was one of the first residents association in the city and has over the years been actively involved in improving and enhancing some of the city's most precious assets: Griffith Park, the Zoo, the Greek Theatre, the Griffith Observatory, the William Mulholland Fountain, the Los Feliz Library, Franklin

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## Hollywood and Valley Secession, Will it Become a Reality?

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Ave. School, Marshall High School and Thomas Starr King Middle School. We reject having any part of our boundaries taken away and made part of another city. It appears that most of the residents living in the proposed Hollywood city boundaries, as well as the city as a whole, also disapprove.

A Los Angeles Times poll conducted between June 20 and 28 found that “voters citywide are against breaking the San Fernando Valley away from Los Angeles and are overwhelmingly against independence for Hollywood.” Only 38% of polled voters were in favor of a Valley city and 47% opposed. Both measures for the Valley and for Hollywood, must be approved by at least 50% of the voters within the proposed detached areas as well by the city of LA as a whole. The Times reported that Hollywood secession would lose 25% to 59% citywide, and with a similar margin within the Hollywood area.

Los Angeles began the millennium with a population of 3,822,955, the second largest city in the U.S., covering 465 square miles. The county numbers 9,884,200 residents and covers 4,082 square miles with assets of \$609 billion. The city/county’s population comprises over one quarter of the entire state’s populace. LA is “big.”

Size, however, brings many problems and many differing solutions to those problems. Being “big” dictates things that can be done more efficiently by the City of Los Angeles as a whole: running a port and an airport, providing water and electricity, police and fire protection, a main and branch library system, a central park and zoo, to name a few. There are other civic functions that need more local control: neighborhood zoning issues, billboards, street maintenance, crime and other city services. Neighborhood Councils that are now being formed citywide will address some of these problems. This means that for the first time in the city’s history, people will have a mechanism to influence what happens in their neighborhoods, thanks to our new City Charter.

For more than 220 years there has been a city called Los Angeles, which has earned its place as one of great world cities and should not, so casually, be dismembered and rejected. Who is responsible? The secessionist groups, Valley Vote and Hollywood Vote, are not required to disclose their donors, however, their positions can be found on their websites: [www.valleyvote.org](http://www.valleyvote.org) and [www.hollywoodvote.com](http://www.hollywoodvote.com). California State Librarian Kevin Starr said, “For their own purposes – mainly to create political opportunities for themselves — the secessionists have exploited this shift in sensibility from the general to the local, from the standard to the non-standard, from the citywide to the neighborhood-oriented, and made of it a campaign to deconstruct the very notion of Los Angeles itself.”

Valley Vote and Hollywood Vote have been aided in their attempts to secede from the City of Los Angeles by an obscure government agency, LAFCO, Local Agency Formation Commission for Los Angeles County. It is a regulatory agency with county-wide jurisdiction, established by state law

(Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000), to discourage urban sprawl and encourage orderly and efficient provision of services, such as water, sewer and fire protection. LAFCO is a state-mandated agency and is not a county department.

Valley Vote’s initial attempt to break away from the city was to use a voter petition for reorganization, and then move directly to a vote after petitions were verified, skipping other LAFCO procedural steps that evaluate the ability of a proposed new city to sustain itself without the benefit of LA city government. The special interest groups behind secession enlisted Assemblyman Hertzberg, with support from John Ferraro, to alter state law so that the cost of studies and signature verification would be borne by government, i.e., the taxpayers, and to reduce the signature requirements to 25% for incorporation or special reorganization. Valley Vote, without success, also tried to adjust the requirements so the issue on the ballot would only apply to the seceding area and not the entire city.

### On the LAFCO board are:

Yvonne Burke — Supervisor Second District

Zev Yaroslavsky — Supervisor Third District

James DiGuseppe — public member from the San Fernando Valley statistical area, not a member of the Board of Supervisors, appointed by the Board of Supervisors;

Richard Close — alternate public member appointed by the Board of Supervisors

Carol Herrera & Beatrice Proo — City of Pico Rivera, two members representing the 87 cities in the county

Cindy Miscikowski — Councilwoman, City of Los Angeles;

Henri F. Pellissier — one member from the general public appointed by the other eight Commissioners, He has been on LAFCO for 19 years

Jerry Gladbach — Castaic Lake Water Agency & William Wentworth — Walnut Valley Water District; two members appointed by the Independent Special District Selection Committee.

Robert W. Goldsworthy — Water Replenishment District of Southern California. Alternate appointed by the same.

Based on a two-year process of hearings and research at taxpayer expense, this group agreed with the secessionists’ goal to detach the Valley and Hollywood from the greater City of Los Angeles and have the issue placed on the November 5, 2002 ballot. It is important to note that there is only one elected official on LAFCO who covers the Los Feliz area, Zev Yaroslavsky. Two LAFCO participants are from the Valley and one of them, Richard Close, is an outspoken leader of the secessionist movement. In 1999, the Executive Officer, Larry Calemine, was working as a consultant for Valley Vote Executive Board member and attorney Rob Glushon. The fact that this board of predominately career bureaucrats has the power to radically alter the face of the City of Los Angeles,

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**Editor:** Robert Fouyer

**Editorial Associates:** Richard Stanley, Mary Rodriguez, Patti Ruben, Cheryl Johnson, Diane Kanner and Mark Siegel

### **LFIA Purpose**

The Los Feliz Improvement Association is engaged to further the interests of the Los Feliz District of Los Angeles, its residents and property owners and to undertake any activity that in the opinion of the Board of Directors will be beneficial to the District, its residents or property owners.

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# President's Commentary

By Terry Hughes

All of you no doubt know by now, the proposed secession of Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley will both be on the ballot November 5. At our April 2002 meeting, the LFIA board of directors voted overwhelmingly to oppose Hollywood secession. While I am sure there were many factors that influenced each board member's vote, I believe the issue of paramount importance was the potential negative impact that Hollywood secession can be expected to have on our neighborhood. Our board shares the desire that residents of the Hollywood district of Los Angeles have for an improved environment and more responsive City government, but we do not believe secession is the way to accomplish these goals. Secession likely will make these goals harder to achieve.



Many LFIA members and I attended the June 5 Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO) hearing when Hollywood secession was approved for placement on the November ballot. While I and many other Los Feliz residents spoke against secession, we were unable to stop it from being put on the November ballot. We were able, however, to obtain a change of the proposed Hollywood borders. The original proposal was to have Hollywood's border include the area east of Western Avenue, north of Franklin Avenue, south of Los Feliz Boulevard and bounded on the east by Normandie north to Ambrose east to Edgemont and then north to Los Feliz Boulevard. This area of Los Feliz has now been removed from the proposed city of Hollywood by having the border moved to Western and Franklin. This change in border happened on the very day that LAFCO voted to put secession on the ballot.

For many reasons, I do not believe Hollywood secession has been carefully thought out. For example, at the June 5 meeting, County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, a member of the LAFCO board, asked the LAFCO president what would be the effect on fire department response times for Los Feliz if the station on Hillhurst south of Franklin were transferred to Hollywood, as was being proposed. The LAFCO president said that this was not an issue they had addressed. Fortunately, one of the LAFD captains was attending the meeting and was able to testify that should this happen, the corner Los Feliz and Chiselhurst would have more than a doubling of fire response times, from approximately three and one-half minutes to more than seven minutes.

As a result of that simple inquiry, Supervisor Yaroslavsky was able to get LAFCO to agree at the last minute to leave the fire stations with the LAFD and to have Hollywood contract for fire protection with the LAFD should the secession vote succeed. One can only wonder how many other potential problems lurk in the secession proposal that is on the ballot. Let us hope that there are not potential tragedies waiting to be uncovered as a result of some other service that the residents of Hollywood and the rest of Los Angeles now take for granted that may no longer be provided if Hollywood becomes its own city.

When I spoke at LAFCO, I stated that many of the pro-secession speakers who had spoken before I spoke had scoffed at Mayor Hahn because he said that the secession of the Valley and Hollywood would be a tragedy of biblical proportions. I said that I did not think it would be a tragedy of biblical proportions if secession passes. We live in a democracy and mistakes can be fixed. I said, however, that I believed it would be a shame of biblical proportions to take one of the greatest cities in the world, the second largest city in the United States, and to divide it for no good reason. I concluded my remarks to LAFCO by saying that in the coming battle over secession, I was proud to be on the side of Los Angeles, which is Spanish for "the angels," and if you are ever going to be in a fight, the side you want to be on is on the side of the angels.

I hope you all enjoy the remainder of the summer season.

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would appear to be a serious contradiction of the secessionists argument that they are advocates for local control over neighborhoods. Their decisions can affect the quality of life of all of Los Angeles.

LAFCO has filed numerous reports concerning the impact of Hollywood becoming a separate city. The Hollywood Vote petitioners made up the boundaries of their new city. If the special interests favoring secession are successful in November, part of Los Feliz would break away. The Los Feliz Business Improvement District will be split up south of Franklin on Vermont, Hillhurst and Hollywood Blvd. The Los Feliz Library, which took years of efforts by the LFIA and others to have built, will no longer belong to Los Angeles. The area south of Franklin Avenue and West of St. George to approximately Melrose and the Hollywood Freeway will be in the detached area. The area north of Franklin to Forest Lawn over the mountain and the area west of Western to Crescent Heights will be separated. **See map of the proposed area in this article.**

According to the LAFCO Findings of Fact, June 5, 2002, "The new Hollywood City could inherit existing inadequate

levels of police service." Also, "dependent on the outcome of negotiations for the continued provision of fire and emergency medical services, service impacts could be significant if certain fire or emergency medical services are not provided."

The LAFCO Findings of Fact continue, "Hollywood seniors may not have the benefits of the aging services comparable to those services currently provided by the City of Los Angeles; If cultural affairs programs were discontinued, this could be a significant impact to Hollywood and Los Angeles residents; There could be shortfalls in emergency preparedness services and equipment; and there could be a reduction of Downtown Area Short Hop (DASH) services to the Hollywood Special Reorganization area; Many City of Los Angeles departments provide specialized or proprietary services that may be expensive, technically infeasible, or otherwise problematic for the proposed Hollywood city to duplicate, either through lack of sufficient staffing or lack of expertise."

On May 3, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce announced that it opposes secession, and said that breaking up the city into two, three or four smaller cities is "not good for business." On May 29, the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce informed LAFCO that only 24% of its membership responded in favor of Hollywood cityhood. They stated "there is still uncertainty about how the business community will be impacted and serious questions remain unanswered."

**The requirements for the detachment to succeed, 50% plus 1 of voters in the election raises a question. Shouldn't a supermajority of a 2/3-voter approval be required to break up Los Angeles? In the 2001 city election only one-third of the city's registered voters cast ballots in the primary and runoff. "This sort of turnout raises concerns about declining civic participation and its potential consequences," according to the Public Policy Institute of California. "One such concern is that low turnout can lead to unrepresentative city government: If nonvoters and voters differ systematically in their political preferences and needs, local priorities and policies are less likely to represent the views of all citizens."**

Many believe that the Hollywood Vote and Valley Vote propositions will fail at the ballot box. With voter turnouts becoming so low, however, secessionism could prevail if those who are vigorously for it are the only ones who show up to vote on election day. It is vital that all of us educate ourselves about this issue and vote.

As part of the public dialogue on this process, "Secession 101" will air on Channel 36 on all cable systems in the City of Los Angeles — Sundays at 11:30 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. and Tuesdays at 8:00 p.m., every week from July 7 through the November election.

Van Carlson, the author of this article, is a member of the Los Feliz Improvement Association

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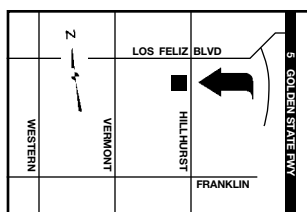


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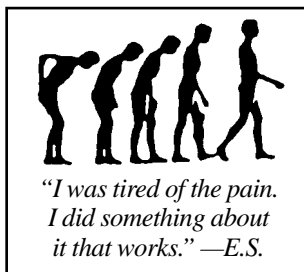
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# New LFIA Board of Directors Elected at General Meeting

By Robert Fouyer

**O**n June 3, the LFIA annual meeting of members was held in the Los Angeles Zoo's grand room, as the guest of Zoo Director Manuel Molliendo.

Directors elected for a 3-year term were Renate Demeyer, Naomi Guth, Terry Hughes, Lynne Jewell, Cheryl Johnson, Judi Laing, John Ortega, former California Senator David Roberti, Patricia Ruben, Mark Siegel, Mary Beth Sorenson and John Yeomans.

Two new directors were elected at the June 25 board meeting to fill the unexpired terms of two directors who resigned subsequent to the annual meeting. They are Mike Lyons of the Los Feliz Oaks and Virgil McDowell from Laughlin Park. Mr. McDowell is a former board member who served on our board many years in the past. Welcome back Virgil!

Presentations were given on their various activities by LFIA Committee Chairpersons Marian Dodge (history), Mark

Stong (substituting for Beautification Chair Margret Lohfeld); Bob Fouyer (editor of the Los Feliz Observer); Chair Mary Rodriguez and Mary Beth Sorenson (schools); Richard Stanley (streets and traffic); John Ortega (police); Chuck Soter (parks); Juliet Kiperman (zoning); Mark Siegel (neighborhood councils); and Donna Zenor (treasurer).

Also in attendance was Councilman Tom LaBonge, as well as members of his staff including Operations Director Rory Fitzpatrick, and Field Deputy Jeanne Chang. LaBonge spoke on various subjects—particularly Valley and Hollywood secession.

LFIA Board Member Manuel Mollinedo, was presented with an award in recognition of his many contributions to LFIA and for his accomplishments as director of the Los Angeles Zoo. He has been recently appointed as the new general manager of the Department of Recreation and Parks.



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# Get in Touch with Los Feliz

By Lynne T. Jewell, Cheryl Johnson and Diane Kanner

**O**ne needn't venture very far to discover dozens of historical landmarks and architectural gems right here in our Los Feliz community. Some have even been recognized officially as Historic Cultural Monuments (HCM) of the City of Los Angeles.

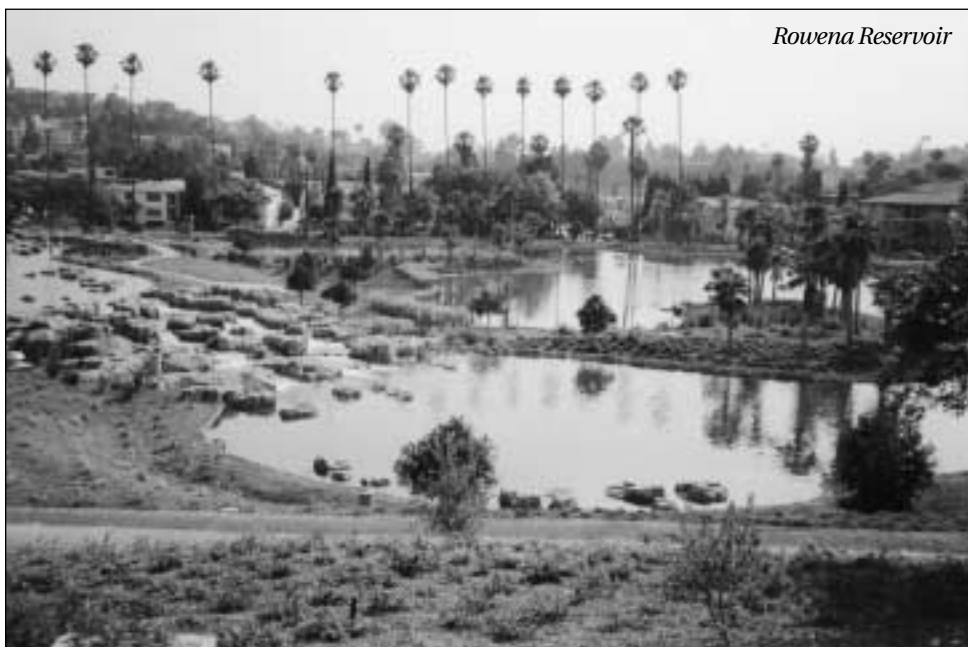
This self-guided driving/biking/walking tour showcases some of these wonderful treasures existing in our own 90027 neighborhood. This tour features famous and noteworthy buildings, structures and horticulture. Many of these icons have been preserved through the on-going efforts of the Los Feliz Improvement Association. Enjoy all or some of these points of historical interest as you sightsee through our community.

## **Rowena Reservoir (corner of Hyperion and Rowena Avenues):**

Start your tour at the recently renovated Rowena Reservoir, the oldest of 10 reservoirs in the City of Los Angeles, and the first one with decorative landscaping and ponds covering the tanked water supply. It turned 100 years this year. By the way, it's a half-mile walk around the fenced-in reservoir.

**One-time Disney Studios (2719 Hyperion Ave.):** Mayfair Market now stands on the site of the Walt Disney Studios located there from 1926 to 1940. During this time Mickey Mouse was created, although the actual creation took place at Walt Disney's home a few blocks away at 2495 Lyric. You have to look hard, but if you stand on the sidewalk you'll see a plaque on a lamppost commemorating this historical point of interest.

**Storybook Cottages (2900-2912½ Griffith Park Blvd.):** The neighborhood lore is that these charming courtyard cottages, built in 1931, influenced Disney's 1937 *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* classic. One could imagine the dwarfs living inside one of the cottages with its spiral stairwell. These quaint cottages, however, weren't built for Disney's creative artists, fondly called the *Nine Old Men*.



Rowena Reservoir

**John Marshall High School (8939 Tracy St.):** This excellent example of *collegiate gothic* architecture opened in January 1931 and has stood as a major Los Feliz landmark ever since. It's been used as the location for movies such as *Rebel Without a Cause* and *Grease*. Among those who attended are Actor

Leonardo DiCaprio, NFL Hall of Famer Mike Haynes, actress Michelle Phillips, Judge Lance Ito of OJ fame and our own LA City Council-member Tom LaBonge of the 4th District. Also, 1949 Miss America Rosemary La Planche is an alumnae.



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## Get in Touch with Los Feliz

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**Shakespeare Bridge (HCM No. 126):** Early on the turreted Franklin Ave. Bridge, built in 1927, was called the Shakespeare Bridge, probably because it reminded residents of the Shakespearean era. If you peek over the bridge, you'll see the John Lautner-designed Lysee International French School, built in 1960 as a Montessori school, which has been designated HCM No. 553.



Shakespeare Bridge



Lysee Int'l French School

**Los Feliz Branch Library (1874 Hillhurst Ave.):** Los Felizian Leonardo DiCaprio of *Titanic* fame actually lived as a kid on this corner property, right where the library's DiCaprio Computer Center is located. Teenage girls were disappointed when there were no LDC sightings at the grand opening in 1999.



Los Feliz Branch Library

**KABC Television Center (4151 Prospect Ave.):** There's lots of history behind the walls of this studio lot. It started out in the 1910s as the Vitagraph Studios, then Warner Brothers and now the Disney-owned KABC. Some Warner Bros film classics shot there include *Public Enemy* and *The Gold Diggers*. ABC Network bought the studio in 1948. KABC Channel 7 moved to Glendale recently, and the studios are now used to shoot day-time TV shows.

**KCET Studios (4401 Sunset Blvd., HCM No. 198):** Built in 1912, this is the oldest continually used studio in the U.S. Many "B" movies, made by Monogram, were filmed there, including "The Cisco Kid" and "Charlie Chan" series. Monogram and Allied Artists merged in the '50s. Among AA's most famous films made there are *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* in 1957 and *Friendly Persuasion* filmed the year before. In 1970, the Spanish-style complex was purchased by KCET. Inside the historic brick buildings is a lovely renovated 1930s screening room that had been boarded up and used as a storage room for years.



The Vista Theatre

**The Vista Theatre (4473 Sunset Drive):** This Egyptian-style theater opened in 1923 during the King Tut craze and has gone through many lives. Before the Vista, it was part of a large vacant parcel where the legendary City of Babylon movie set for D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance* was built. Check out the old-fashioned single-screen theater's latest renovations and upgrades — including the distance between rows. No need to stand up to let someone by you in this theater.

**Former Intolerance Set (4477 Hollywood Boulevard):** The Hollywood property, bordering Hillhurst on the west and extending

to the present location of Thomas Starr King Middle School on the east, was an empty lot in the 1913-1919 period and used for the filming of D.W. Griffith's masterpieces, *Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*. The *Intolerance* set, which featured scenes from Babylon (and now the motif for the new commercial complex at Hollywood & Highland in Hollywood) was 150-feet high and obscured the Los Feliz landscape for years before the fire department forced its removal.

**Former D.W. Griffith Studio (4500 Sunset Boulevard):**

The present site of the Von's parking lot was the site of the Reliance-Majestic Studio, also known as the Fine Arts Studio, the D.W. Griffith Studio, where David Wark (D.W.) Griffith, between 1913 and 1920, produced his epochal blockbuster, *Birth of a Nation*, along with other famous films. The studio at this location featured and developed many of the famous directors and actors of their time, including Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Robert Harron, Mae Marsh, the Talmadge sisters, Lionel Barrymore, Raoul Walsh and Wallace Reid.

**Barnsdall Park (4808 Hollywood Boulevard near Vermont Avenue, HCM No. 12):** On Olive Hill (because of all the olive trees) is where Frank Lloyd Wright designed his first house in Los Angeles in 1920. Hollyhock House was completed in 1920 for oil heiress Aline Barnsdall, whose favorite flower was the hollyhock. She donated 11-acres of her city block to the city in 1927. Barnsdall Park is currently closed for massive renovation, and scheduled to reopen in 2003.

**Griffith Park:**

One can't tour Los Feliz without visiting Griffith Park. With over 4,100 acres it's the largest city park in the nation. The land was donated as a gift to the city by Col. Griffith J. Griffith (no relation to D.W.). There are 53 miles of hiking trails and lots to see and do. Start at the east entrance of the park on Riverside Drive. Here are just some of the landmarks in the park.



Griffith Park

**William Mulholland Memorial Fountain, southwest corner of Los Feliz Boulevard and Riverside Drive, across from the park's east entrance (HCM. 162):**

This local Los Feliz fixture was dedicated in 1940 in memory of the mastermind behind the 233-mile engineering feat, the Los Angeles Aqueduct. The engineer once lived in a shack not far from where the fountain now stands while working as a *zanja* (ditch) tender for the city's water department. The more recent nickname "Kool Aid" Fountain comes from bright colored lights turned on at night. The LFIA was successful in getting the fountain restored to its former splendor in 1996.



William Mulholland Memorial Fountain

**Merry-Go-Round (enter on Riverside Drive):** Take a spin on the famous carousel built in 1935. Beautiful hand-carved horses with real horsehair have undergone refurbishing over the past decade. The band organ music is a welcoming and familiar sound in the park, and was frequently visited by Walt Disney entertaining his young daughters in the 1930s. It was reputed to be the inspiration for Disneyland, which he envi-

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## Get in Touch with Los Feliz

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sioned initially being located along the LA River between the Disney Studios and Griffith Park.

**Greater Los Angeles Zoo:** Begun in 1912 in another city park, the animals were used for silent movies. The parking lot was once the airfield for the Griffith Aviation Park and National Guard. The modern-day zoo is currently undergoing extensive expansion and an entrance redesign.

**Autry Museum for Western Heritage:** A newer addition to the park, the museum specializing in Western American culture and lore opened its doors in 1988. Interpreting myths and legends is a major focus of the “cowboy museum.”

**Greek Theatre (Enter on Vermont Avenue):** The man behind an amphitheater in the park was Col. Griffith Jenkins Griffith. The first performance was held in 1930. Today, the Greek hosts all types of musical groups from classical to rock.

**Griffith Observatory and Planetarium (HCM No. 168):** Seen from all over the city, the doors of this *Art Deco* Los Angeles landmark opened May 14, 1935. It is certainly one of the best spots to see city lights (when it's clear), but unfortunately the Observatory is closed for renovation and restoration. Hollywood put the Observatory on the map with the filming of *Rebel Without a Cause* starring James Dean. Don't miss the hike to Mount Hollywood, from the Charlie Turner Trailhead in the parking lot.

**Los Feliz Heights Steps (HCM No. 657):** These steps are easy to miss, but well worth the search. The first of the stairways start near the intersection of Cromwell Avenue and Berendo Street. At the top of the first set of stairs, walk to the right along Bonvue Avenue until you reach the next staircase. There are great views of Los Feliz residential architecture, including Frank Lloyd Wright's Ennis-Brown House. You'll see a mosaic tile mural of local landmarks and flora and fauna made possible through the efforts of LFIA and Los Feliz neighbors, who came to the stairs' rescue. LFIA members support regular clean-up campaigns on the stairwell. When you reach Glendower Avenue at the conclusion of the stairways, you feel as if you're on top of the world.



Greek Theatre



Los Feliz Heights Steps

**Deodar Trees on Los Feliz Boulevard (HCM No. 67):** These cedar trees have become the boulevard's signature. According to the documentation presented by the Cultural Heritage Commission, the LFIA planted the trees in the city-owned parkway in the mid-1930s, with the Los Feliz Women's Club later supplementing the efforts. Native to the Himalayas, the *Cedrus Atlantica* and *Cedrus Deodara* varieties continue to be replaced by LFIA when uprooting or damage leaves a vacancy. A half dozen young trees were planted in February 2002.

**Ferndell Park, west entrance of park off Los Feliz Boulevard (HCM No. 112):** This area was a Gabrielino Indian site. A plaque near the entrance of the park recalls the finding of archaeological evidence. It has been said

that this is one of the prettiest parks in the city, and it may be true. Where else in Los Angeles can you listen to cascading waterfalls in a cool peaceful dell? If you keep hiking on the main trail, you will reach the Observatory. Or, make this the perfect place for a respite from your Los Feliz sightseeing excursion, and have a picnic and relax “in the dell.”

**American Film Institute (2021 N.**

**Western Ave.):** Keep going west on Los Feliz Blvd. and you'll see AFI. This preeminent arts organization for film and moving images and a conservatory for advanced film studies, occupies the campus of the former Immaculate Heart College, which was chartered in 1916 and started its classes in the Immaculate Heart High School buildings at Franklin and Western. In 1927, the college built a bungalow (since removed) and then A.C. Martin, a prominent architectural firm, designed two major college buildings for this site. A third college building, consisting of a Bel Air residence chopped in half and trucked to the campus in 1971, is now the site of AFI's Sony Education Center. The college folded its doors and was purchased by AFI in 1979.

**See Los Feliz!**

## *It's Time Again...Get out Your Pens!*

**L**ast year, the Meliora Awards for the finest renovations, restorations and gardens, were a fine success. As important...*it was fun*. Not surprisingly, we can't help but notice that the past winners have attentively continued to maintain or further improve their properties. Their natural pride is simply a marvel. Let me repeat it, *again*; we are so blessed with beauty and munificent neighbors on this corner of earth, Los Feliz. It is the LFIA's delight to honor our devoted homeowners with the help of your nominations.

So put pen to the paper provided below and nominate your favorites in the categories listed. Our judges are geared up for the challenge of once again, carefully reviewing your nominations and awarding a glorious engraved glass plaque at a fun and joyous ceremony at the Autry Museum. Come on, isn't it time to celebrate what's *good* in our neighborhood? I look forward to your response!

**Best Single-family Renovation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Best Single-family Restoration** \_\_\_\_\_

**Best Commercial Property Renovation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Best Multi-family Renovation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Best Front Garden** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please mail this form to: LFIA c/o Patricia Rubin, 3734 Prestwick Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90027*



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# *Hollywood Secession Fact Sheet*

By Cheryl Johnson

## ***How Did Hollywood City Vote Get on Ballot?***

**H**ollywood Vote collected a total of 45,294 signatures on petitions they circulated of which only 19,867 were found by the County Clerk's office to be valid and sufficient. Since there are only 79,393 registered voters in the area designated to become Hollywood City, the 19,867 signatures represents only eighteen votes over the 25% of the registered voters necessary to put Hollywood Cityhood on the ballot. The petitions stated the following:

“This petition proposes to request LAFCO to study and determine the feasibility of Hollywood Cityhood and allow the people of Hollywood and Los Angeles the opportunity to vote on the question of forming a new independent City of Hollywood.”

We have heard many complaints that those who signed the petition were told and/or believed that they were simply authorizing a study, and did not realize they were, in effect, authorizing LAFCO to put the matter of a Hollywood City to a vote if it so decided.

## ***Who is Behind the Hollywood Vote Group, the Organization that Put the Hollywood City Proposal on the Ballot?***

Gene La Pietra, owner of the Circus Disco and Arena Café nightclubs, is its Founder and President. Based on the information on the Hollywood Vote website ([www.hollywoodvote.org](http://www.hollywoodvote.org)), other board members are John La Pietra, a hypnotist/hypotherapy owner; John Jay, a freelance writer; Ferris Wehbe, financial director of the Hollywood Schoolhouse, a school founded by his mother-in-law; Robert Burton, owner of Audio Rents; Paul Ramsey, architect, and four persons from the real estate industry, including two real estate developers (Jerry Schneiderman, chairman of a property development corporation and Jeff Zarrinam, founder of a hotel development company) and two realtor brokers, Jeff Luster and Richard Stanley. Additional board members are Jim Meinel, no information provided, Leo Sorzano, a local nightclub manager and Don Selten, retired from the food supply business. Two women are on the board, one being Rosa Martinez, a teacher at the Hollywood Schoolhouse and Kathleen Langan, an attorney.

## ***What Residential Parts of Los Feliz Would Become Part of Hollywood if the Vote Passes?***

Our neighborhood would be seriously fragmented, with Laughlin Park in Los Angeles, Los Feliz Oaks in Hollywood, Los Feliz Estates in Los Angeles, and other areas north of Franklin in Los Angeles and those south of Franklin in Hollywood. The map showing the proposed boundaries on page 1 says it best.

## ***What Parts of the Los Feliz Business Community Would Become Part of Hollywood?***

The proposed secession wielded a veritable cleaver throughout our business community on Vermont and Hillhurst, slicing it at Franklin Avenue, putting those businesses south of Franklin into Hollywood and leaving those north of Franklin in Los Angeles. The House of Pies, Los Feliz Theatre, the Vista, Palermos and other establishments would be in Hollywood. The Los Feliz Cafe, the Derby and La Belle Epoque would be Los Angeles, but Los Feliz Lock & Key and the Los Feliz library would be in Hollywood.

## ***What About Our Los Feliz Parks and Libraries?***

The Los Feliz library would be given to Hollywood though much of the fundraising for the library and patronage is from residents who are left in Los Angeles. It is presumably to be made a part of the Hollywood library system, together with five other libraries that would be “detached” from the Los Angeles library, and run by the new Hollywood City. One can assume those Los Feliz residents in the Los Angeles part of Los Feliz could use it just as one is free to use the Glendale library. Note, however, it is the Los Angeles library system that has extended internet and interlibrary access.

Barnsdall Art Park, which was donated to Los Angeles by Aline Barnsdall to be maintained as an arts park, would be transferred to Hollywood. Whether this transfer is legal or might violate deed restrictions is not discussed in any of the official reports. No one really knows what this means either in the short term or long term to the art programs run by the Barnsdall Park through the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department. Los Angeles had run the arts programs in Barnsdall with city-imposed fee limits on its art programs. Hollywood would not be subject to these limitations.

## ***Does the Hollywood Secession Mean Our Schools Would be Better?***

The Hollywood City proposal would not impact the Los Angeles Unified School District, which is a separate governmental agency. All schools, whether in Los Angeles or a new Hollywood would continue to be run by LAUSD.

## ***Would a Hollywood Detachment Increase Our Taxes?***

The one certain thing is there is no certain answer. The California Controller's Office recently issued a report disputing the viability of Hollywood secession, due to a \$9.2 million deficit, expected to grow to \$26 million in 3 years. It said LAFCO incorrectly factored in its study a \$10 million loan to the city and \$10 million cut in services. Your guess as to the

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true cost of Hollywood City may be as accurate as that of LAFCO or the City because of the monumental difficulty of measuring the impact of secession.

### ***How Will Traffic on Los Feliz Boulevard and in the New Hollywood be Impacted?***

Hollywood would control traffic on Western/Los Feliz Boulevard approximately to the point of the American Film Institute's driveway, with Los Angeles controlling it east of that point. Hollywood would also control traffic in numerous streets south of Franklin. Traffic in our area would thus have to be coordinated by two different governmental agencies.

One of the stated objectives of the Hollywood City proposal is to "encourage new business" and "create new quality jobs." It is assumed that approximately 1,800 employees would be hired for the administration of the new Hollywood City, and it can be assumed they would add to the increasing traffic congestion in the Hollywood area. The new Hollywood City would be responsible for bus placement and transit services within the Hollywood area. Their report states Hollywood

would "likely contract" with the Los Angeles City Department, which has an automated traffic surveillance and control system or have to construct its own system but, of course, no such contract has been executed, nor is the price known. Presumably Hollywood would eventually have to construct its own traffic management centers and communication links to the traffic signals.

### ***Where Can I Get Detailed Information About Secession?***

Click onto [www.thecivicforum.org](http://www.thecivicforum.org) to get neutral as well as detailed information of all slants about secession. This website contains links with the major opponents and proponents of secession, most of the LAFCO and City Council reports, as well as academic critiques. In addition, the Civic Forum sponsors basic debates and lectures on its cable show, "Secession 101" on Channel 36 every Sunday and Tuesday. See its website for times. It also contains links for an excellent analysis of the issues by the League of Women Voters.

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## ***Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council Gets Certified***

By Mark Siegel

**C**ulminating over two years of work, the City's Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) certified the Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council. This means that the GGPNC will be the "official advisory" committee for our area.

The GGPNC is comprised of three communities, Los Feliz, Franklin Hills and Griffith Park. It will receive early notification on city ordinances and actions that impact our neighborhood. The City will ask GGPNC to provide input on annual budget priorities. There are approximately 40 certified neighborhood councils in the City and another 60 are waiting to be certified. The neighborhood council movement resulted from the passage of the new City Charter in 1999. Mayor James Hahn has embraced them and has fast-tracked their development.

In our neighborhood, the LFIA, Franklin Hills Residents Association and Griffith Park support groups came together to form the GGPNC. Several LFIA board members played important leadership roles in creating the council, including Charlotte De Armond, Dennis Chew, Mary Rodriguez, Patti Ruben, Mark Siegel, and many others. LFIA and the other organizations viewed the development of the Council as a positive addition to our community's organizational life, attracting new activists and encouraging more engagement in our civic life.

At the Certification Hearing, the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners complimented our community on "one of the best applications" they had seen. Of particular note, they recognized our outreach efforts and multiple languages used

for our brochure. Like the birth of a child, we can celebrate the end of the pregnancy, while realizing it is only the beginning of (hopefully) a long life.

The interim Board of Directors consists of eight activists. Their primary job is to administer and supervise the election of the Council's nineteen member Governing Board. The board will consist of 10 members elected from five geographic districts (two per district) and nine selected to represent the diversity of our community, including educators, businesses, and religious groups.

Anyone may run for the board of governors and everyone is encouraged to run. **WATCH FOR YOUR GGPNC ELECTION FORM IN THE MAIL.** The election will be conducted at two town hall meetings in October. There is a provision to vote absentee if you are homebound or out of town. More information can be obtained at the Police Community Center in the California Federal Bldg. located at 1965 Hillhurst.

Our elected officials are watching closely. At the first meeting of the newly certified council, representatives of Assembly members Kevin Murray, Dario Frommer, State Senator Jack Scott and Councilman Tom La Bonge came by to offer assistance.

The interim board took one major policy action: **to oppose the secession ballot measures.** The Hollywood cityhood initiative would cut our Neighborhood into two cities and destroy our Council. Among the many strong reasons for taking this position was the fact that we worked so hard to create the Neighborhood Council. Let's give it a chance to work!

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## Retrospective

by Richard Stanley

# Descendents of Pioneer Los Feliz Family Re-Discover Ancestral Estate

A few months ago, the owners of one of our vintage Spanish villas received a knock at their door. It was a group of descendants of the Drum family. For years the Drums had searched the streets of Los Feliz for the house their grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Drum, built in the 1920s. A chance encounter with a sharp-eyed letter carrier who recognized the now-altered façade of a local house led them to their grandparents' former home.

They did not arrive empty-handed. They brought along a unique collection of sepia-toned 8 X 10 inch photos of the house from the 1920s. The present owners were thrilled to see the house in its original states (it was enlarged several times before World War II, at least once by architect Lloyd Wright). However, their excitement was tinged with a bit of remorse. They owned the house for 15 years and maintained it well, but a good deal of restoration work that was performed over the years might have been done differently had they used the original photos as guides.

The Drums lived in the house until 1928, when they sold it to Raymond Griffith, the buyer of their previous new house at 5191 Franklin Avenue. The Drums moved to another new house, this time on Glendower, and then to a house on Commonwealth, where they lived for many years.

Raymond Griffith, no relation to silent movie director D.W. Griffith (who was rumored to have lived in the Drum house) or Col. Griffith of Griffith Park fame, was a silent era star. Known as the "Silk Hat Comedian", Griffith came from a family of actors and started acting early. Allegedly he ruined his voice in adolescence while screaming in a play. Thereafter, he spoke in a whisper—a



*From top:  
The shot that  
the letter carrier  
recognized.  
House was built  
around existing tree.  
The Drum's Boston  
Terrier, the most  
popular canine breed  
of the 1920s.  
Raymond Griffith,  
"The Silk Hat  
Comedian".  
The Drum House  
under construction,  
1923.*



problem that would cause the end of his on-camera movie career shortly after buying the Drum house. Griffith's final screen appearance was in 1931's "All Quiet on the Western Front" as a dying soldier who cannot speak above a whisper. In the talkie era, he concentrated on screenwriting and producing some of Shirley Temple's films. He sold the house about 1938.

As with many pre-war Spanish houses, the Drum house suffered from inappropriate remodeling in the post-war era. Details were deleted in the interest of "modernizing" or "cleaning up" the then old-hat Spanish idiom. Removed were the Churrigueresque entry door pediment and interior details such as dining room beams and the arches between the living room and the entry stairs—details seen in the vintage photos. The arches no doubt allowed the music from the grand piano and the organ to rise through the house in an era before amplified sound.

Will a future owner liberate the arches from their present plaster infill? Could more deletion or even demolition occur? Nothing today protects our Los Feliz architectural heritage from such desecration. Historic Preservation Overlay Zones would be a major step toward protecting homes from inappropriate façade changes or even demolition, but that's another *Observer* story...

It is worth noting that people lived in these pre-WW II homes differently than we do today. The "public" rooms, such as the living room and formal dining room, were the centers of daily home life then. People came together to entertain each other—with music, readings, and, above all, with conversation. In California, the garden was used as a public room throughout most of the year, too. The Drum house still has one of the finest gardens in Los Angeles—enhanced by the maturation of decades of growth.

Then, bedrooms were for dressing and sleeping, and the kitchen was a service area segregated from the formal dining room. The oaken library of yore with its ember-laden hearth is now the ubiquitous "computer room" with the monitor's cold glow. Nowadays, home life revolves around "eat-in" kitchens and living-room-sized master suites—which says volumes about our present culture!

In the meantime, enjoy these mementos of a Los Feliz Golden Age.



*From top:* Rear elevations show possible Lloyd Wright zig-zag relief decorative elements. Wright did some later alterations, but original architect is not recorded. Garden path leads to rare Batchelder fountain.



**From top:**

*Patios, shaded by mature pepper trees, punctuate the garden. Note striped awnings with crenulated valences, now back in vogue. Living room accommodates grand piano (with silk shawl) and organ; arcade stairway was filled in and hooded fireplace was removed by post-war owner. Note classic '20s décor: beaded lampshade; mohair upholstery; velvet swag draperies. Dining room ceiling originally had heavy, stencilled beams with brackets. Later owner removed them, too! Cozy den was equipped with now-illegal gas heater. Note darker faux finish on thickly trowelled plaster throughout home.*



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**Reuben Aaronson Phyllis Koenig**

Dear Los Feliz Homeowner,  
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## Kids Shopping for Kids in Los Feliz: Kids' Advice

By Morgan Marmaro, The Gift Doctor

**W**hy do you poor parents feel the need to go to Toys-R-Us or the Glendale Galleria to buy a birthday present for your kids, or their friends, or even your grandchildren? Well we have a better solution for you. You can buy it right here in Los Feliz. Its faster, easier, and it helps our neighborhood stores stay open. We think that is important, how about you? The presents you can buy here are a lot more useful and last a lot longer than some boring toys from Toys-R-Us — like some dumb old Barbie doll, a fake Nail Salon where the polish comes off after two seconds, or a silly PlayDough McDonalds set. Believe us—we should know...we are kids!! Here are some ideas:

**Zoey and Sage:** Here you can buy just about anything for girls from ages 10 – 40; actually even older. We sometimes buy things here for our mom, even though she has been saying that she is only 40 (not true!!). They have cool purses, fuzzy phones, funky lights and sunglasses, not to mention very in-style clothes. There are always lots of little items like necklaces, slap bracelets, and so forth. Prices are right for kids, and a big plus is they do free gift-wrapping and gift certificates. From Tuesday through Sunday they're open from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Unfortunately they are closed on Mondays.

**Rite-Aid:** We know it doesn't sound fancy, but they have a great assortment of gel pens, fuzzy pens, glittery pencils, school boxes, notebooks, dividers, pencil holders, erasers, compasses,

staplers, calculators, supplies, etc. You can also buy lunch boxes, backpacks, even toy-like cards, games...the list goes on! There are lots of hair things, lotions and bath gels, and if you take off the Rite-Aid labels, they look like they might have even come from some fancy store — instead of our local drug store. Besides, it has lots of gift bags you can stuff your goodies into and voila, in one stop your gift shopping is done! Their hours are 8:00 a.m. to midnight Monday through Sunday.

**Uncle Jer's:** You can get neat things for boys and girls such as t-shirts, pill boxes, notebooks, pens, sunglasses, musical things, journals, cards, glow in the dark pencil toppers, glow in the dark stars for your ceiling, growing mermaids, kits to make your own soap, chocolate, etc, great sorry cards, inflatable boom boxes, Paul Frank bags and socks, jell pens, beaded jewelry sets and picture frames, and other little doodads. They even have harmonicas and knitted coin purses, but we had trouble focusing because we all just wanted to play with the Music Maker. It looks like a harp, but it really isn't one. Open 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday. It also has the best free gift wrapping in town, and each gift is a work of art.

**Sally's Beauty Supply:** Hair supplies and accessories. What girl can't use some more doodads for her hair? Even for short hair there are still things you can buy...like streaks! Sally's has temporary tattoos, nail polish, lip gloss, cosmetics, and cool little brushes that fold up. Why not make a traveling kit with a neat bag and put inside a toothbrush and toothbrush container, polish, nail clips, etc.

**Blockbuster:** Buy some CDs, or Videos or DVDs. Or buy a gift certificate. Need we say more? Every kid loves movies and music, or at least most normal kids.

**Los Feliz or the Vista Theater:** Did I hear somebody say gift certificates? Every kid loves to go to the movies.

**Skylight Books:** Books are better for learning. Skylight Books is a really friendly place with a big variety of books from A to Z for every single gender. Comic books, cook books, books on things to do in LA for kids, Lemony Snicket, science books, mystery books, books on hiking, stars, nature (all that good stuff!!), etc.

**Y-Que:** This store has really cute keychains with Spongebob, candles that look like Chihuahuas, electronic flatulence machines with a remote (never know when it might come in handy), lots of Elvis Presley things, like magnets, and miniature Elvis hanging figurines, shirts, different colored light bulbs, funky baseball shirts, old lunch boxes with pictures like Sesame Street and the Bionic Woman on them, not to mention tons of assorted Pez machines (with Princess Leah, Batman, Lisa Simpson, Darth Vader, Yoda, Flintstone and others), mini disco balls (since we are too young for a real disco, let's bring the disco to us), beaded curtains, gobs of patches for your backpacks (like Simpsons, K Mart, Astro Kitty and Shag art). You can get gift cards and other things too. They say hours are random, but mostly 12:00 noon through 8:00 p.m., Friday through Thursday and 12:00 noon to 12:00 midnight, Friday through Sunday. They wrap items in things like pizza boxes, Chinese food containers and other things.

(continued on page 28)



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# 1924: Eye on Los Feliz

By Cheryl Lee Johnson

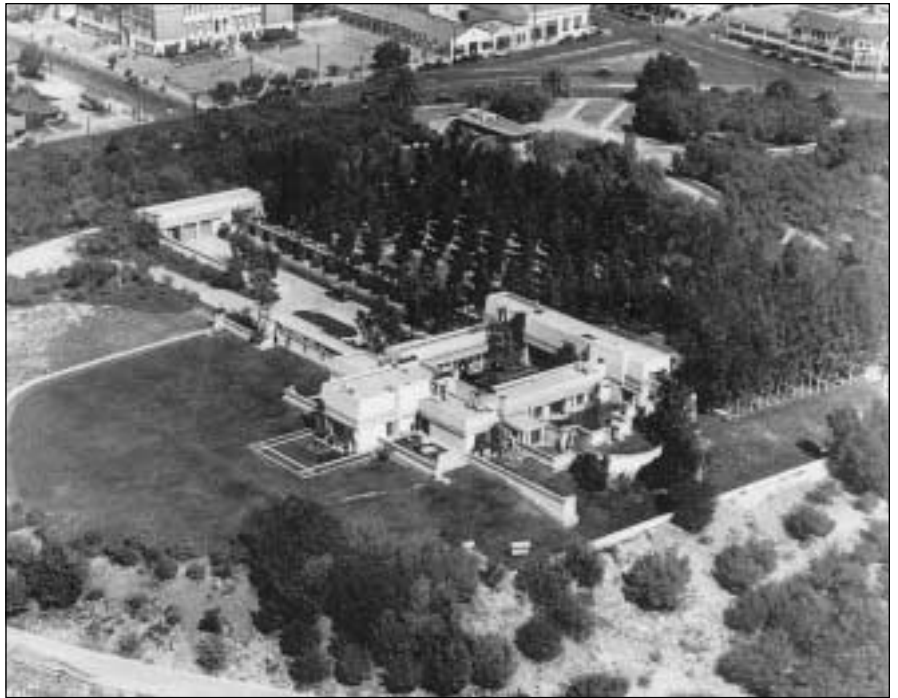
**T**he Roaring Twenties entered Los Feliz on the backs of thousands of cranes amidst the din of round-the-clock construction. During the Twenties, Los Feliz evolved from a bucolic Beverly Hills-in-the-making with isolated, palatial estates to one of a boomtown, with frenetic subdivisions and newly paved streets, clogged with an unhappy mix of automobiles, pedestrians and trolleys. With all the new building and influx of residents came streets, parks, hospitals, and even more vehicles of every kind. This article focuses on Los Feliz in a single year in that decade — the year of 1924. No one referred to our area as “Los Feliz” in 1924. We were known as East Hollywood, the Hollywood-Vermont area, the Hollywood Junction area, greater Hollywood, or just Hollywood.

Why focus on 1924? It was a year in which many of our permanent fixtures and landmarks were founded. Frank Lloyd Wright constructed the Ennis-Brown house while his son did the Taggart House; the Hollywood Hospital (now Queen of Angels/Hollywood Presbyterian) was completed; the Los Feliz steps were built as part of the Los Feliz Heights development; the second golf course in Griffith Park opened, the Breakfast Club was formed, Aline Barnsdall sought to donate her not-yet-complete Olive Hill property to the City; the Griffith Park prison farm was closed; the Griffith Park airport (present area of the Zoo parking lot) was rented to the National Guard; etc., etc. The more important reason was that, in 1924, several Los Feliz businessmen launched a short-tenured newspaper which provided an invaluable glimpse of the neighborhood in that year.

## **Real Estate Development Goes into First Gear**

While local Los Feliz realtors’ ads stating “real estate values doubling overnight” was a bit hyperbolic, they were not too far off the mark. Values skyrocketed driven by droves of migrants seduced by promises, or illusions of gold in the streets, or at least in the studios of Hollywood. As values went up so, too, went the building at a breakneck pace. In February 1924, a local bank’s statistician reported that there were 100 percent more building permits issued in Hollywood than in the same month a year earlier.

By 1924, there were two posh enclaves in Los Feliz, one along Vermont and Hillhurst where titans like Harry Chandler, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, John Luckenbach, jeweler and businessman, and others had their palatial mansions. A half-mile away, between Edgemont and Laughlin Park (just south of Los Feliz), almost 100 acres of



*Aerial View of the Hollyhock House, circa 1923-1924. (Photo courtesy of Security Pacific photograph collection/Los Angeles Public Library.)*

resplendent gardens surrounded the home of Arthur Letts, founder of the Broadway and Bullocks department stores.

Others possessed of vast dollars and reputations in 1924 took up residence in Laughlin Park, at that time a hallowed enclave of elegantly designed villas on expansive grounds (many say it still is). Laughlin Park was intended to contain only forty villas. Ursula Vils, a *Los Angeles Times* writer, reported it was the “budding movie industry’s Beverly Hills before Beverly Hills came to be and perhaps before the movie industry even could be called an industry.” In 1924, Laughlin Park, or the “Park,” as it was sometimes known, looked more like a large field dotted with a few isolated villas.

Laughlin Park’s most prominent resident was Cecil B. DeMille, whose legendary standing in 1924 had even other notable residents in awe. DeMille was nationally famous for his movie spectacles with their casts of thousands, and had already produced such classics as “The Squaw Man,” “For Better or Worse,” “Adam’s Rib,” and the “Ten Commandments. DeMille was never attracted to other areas, and continued to live in his fifty-room Laughlin Park home until his death in 1958.)

Frank Wood, one of the wealthiest men in the city, had his Laughlin Park home at 2015 DeMille Drive, built in 1919 by architect William Clarke (later the home of W. C. Fields and then Lily Tomlin). Another Park resident was William Dodd, one of the city’s most distinguished architects whose credits

included the Robinson's Department Store building and the Examiner building (done in collaboration with Julia Morgan). He lived at 5 Laughlin Park, and built several other Park homes, including one in 1920 at 5226 Lynnwood Drive (later occupied by the actress, Deanna Durbin) and one in 1922 at 7 Laughlin Park for Kenneth Preuss, a local businessman with a string of insurance, automobile, real estate companies, and the Vice President of Halbriters, Inc, a men's clothing store.

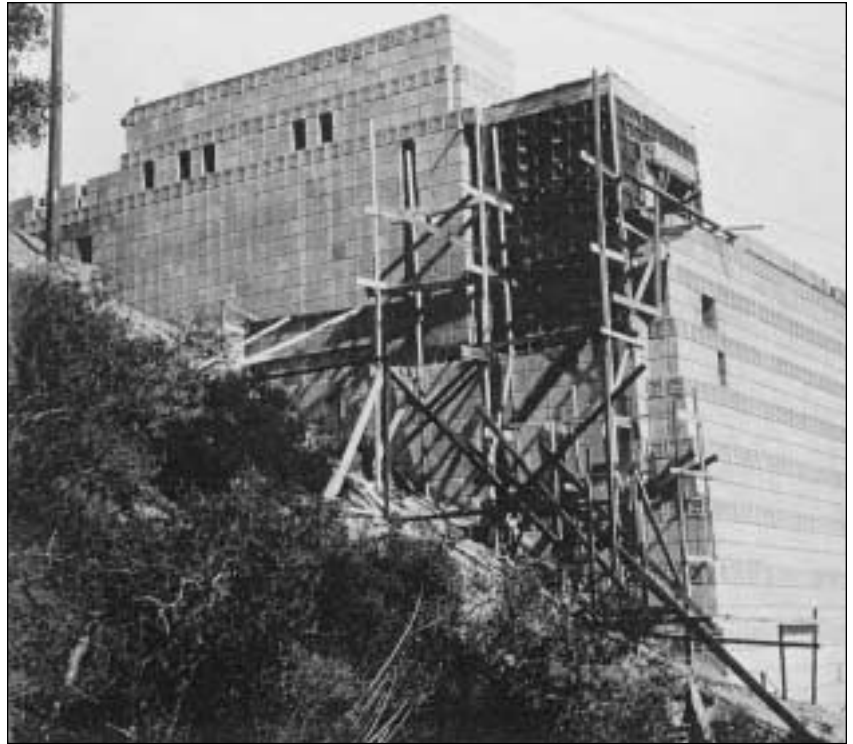
The largest landowner in Los Feliz in 1924 was William Mead, who owned much of the land north of Los Feliz Boulevard. Mead built a magnificent home for himself on Cockerham in 1911, which he sold six years later to a steel company baron. In 1924 he had moved not too far away to a rather modest home at 1761 Canyon Road, but his Mead Real Estate Company, located at 5125 Los Feliz Boulevard, continued to advertise his holdings widely. Indeed, the Harue and Kiyo Kuromi family were taking a dip in the ocean at San Pedro in 1917 when they saw a Mead sign promoting Los Feliz. Their inquiries to Mead that year resulted in their long-term rental of the acreage (now Los Feliz Estates), which they used to cultivate flowers.

The year 1924 also saw the completion of the Los Feliz steps, recently declared cultural monuments. Those steps (with their four segments bridging Cromwell to Bonvue; Glencairn to Bonvue; Bonvue to Bryn Mawr and Bryn Mawr to Glendower) were constructed by William Mead as part of his development of the subdivision known as Los Feliz Heights (an area extending from Los Feliz Blvd. to Griffith Park and from Catalina to Vermont. Mead designed the steps to give homebuyers a shortcut to markets and shops on Vermont Avenue.

At the more eastern end of Los Feliz, land owned by the Griffith family was being subdivided. Octavius T. Griffith, half brother of Colonel Griffith, donor of Griffith Park as well as funding Griffith Observatory, owned a vast parcel known as Griffith Heights that occupied the northern half of the hill west of Hyperion, including the Holly Knolls and Moreno Heights areas. After Octavius died in 1922 (but not before he hosted the "Great Barbecue" for 2000 persons for the pure fun of it), the land passed into the hands of developer John Van Pelt, who in 1924 was constructing a colony of homes. In 1924, Childs Avenue was renamed Griffith Park Boulevard, and was also paved as part of Van Pelt's development of the Moreno Heights parcel.

### ***Hospitals, Churches and Theaters are in at least Second Gear***

With all the building came the need to educate, heal and entertain the new residents. The Hollywood Hospital was completed in 1924, at 1322 Vermont Avenue, just south of the Children's Hospital that was completed four years earlier. The new Hollywood Hospital was built at the urging of the Hollywood Hotel proprietress after one of her guests fell ill and could find no care except in a local insane asylum.



*Ennis house on Glendower under construction in 1924. (Photo courtesy of Eric Lloyd Wright.)*

Four local churches actively served the Los Feliz community in 1924. The Christian Science Church, at 1750 Edgemont Street (today the site of the Full Gospel LA Church). One could attend a series of studies on Japan, or Campfire Girls' meetings, at the Hollywood Congregational Church located at Prospect and Rodney, in addition to the usual church services and Sunday "community sings." (The church is still there.) Catholics found many daily offerings and services at St. Mary of the Angels, "The Little Church Around the Corner," at 1743 North New Hampshire (now site of the Hollywood Lutheran Church). A fourth church, Mt. Olive Methodist Episcopal Church, on Normandie between Sunset and Hollywood (now the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints), offered several services on Sunday.

Los Feliz residents did not need to leave the neighborhood in 1924 for theater. A year earlier the resplendent Bard Theater (now the Vista Theater) was built. It featured a series of films that changed every few days and, in 1924, included Mary Pickford in "Rosita," Ernst Lubitsch's "The Marriage Circle," Zane Grey's "Call of the Canyon," as well as vaudeville acts.

Social events were a bit different from today's throbbing, pulsating entertainment. Instead, a quiet luncheon party of seven in a local home, at a table with a pink centerpiece, with an eleven-year-old reciting a verse from the Bible, or a visit from a cousin from Montana, provided fodder for the social news of Los Feliz in 1924. "Community sings" were popular, drawing standing-room-only crowds to the University auditorium on Vermont, just south of Santa Monica Boulevard.

*(continued on page 22)*

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## 1924: Eye on Los Feliz

(continued from page 21)

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### Frank Lloyd Wright and Son Leave their Imprints

Barnsdall Art Park was the creation and gift of Aline Barnsdall, a wealthy oil heiress. In a drama deserving of its own article, Aline Barnsdall enticed Frank Lloyd Wright, who was a little down on his luck, to come to California to design an entire artist's colony for her Olive Hill site. Her parcel was 35 acres bounded by Hollywood and Sunset Blvd. and Edgemont and Vermont. Frank Lloyd Wright first used his Mayan concrete-block style for Barnsdall's home, called the Hollyhock House. Since Wright was at the same time supervising construction of the Tokyo Imperial Hotel, he enticed Rudolph Shindler to supervise construction at Barnsdall. Shindler, in turn, persuaded Richard Nuetra to join him and they each contributed their genius to the construction on Olive Hill. Hence, the Barnsdall project, which brought these three architectural giants together, is often credited as the birthplace of Modern architecture in California.

Barnsdall returned in 1923 from one of her many long European trips to find her almost completed Hollyhock House badly damaged by rain. Recriminations about Wright's shoddy construction as well as his epic disregard for budgets were a problem as well. His response in 1924 was two fold. First, a series of lawsuits between Wright and Barnsdall were launched, seeking payments and assessments of blame. Second, Barnsdall concluded Olive Hill was not her hoped-for Arcadia and, in 1924, sought to donate the entire Hill (with its cache of architectural gems) to the City in 1924. The City, in its infinite lack of wisdom, refused the gift, as it required the City to devote some \$20,000 per year for maintenance. Barnsdall spent the balance of 1924 seeking alternate dispositions of the Hill, including a possible sale for \$1,800,000, but couldn't bear "to think of selling her home to the hotel syndicate and have it turned into a jazz parlor where smokers could congregate."

But 1924 was not just a year of lawsuits and acrimony for Frank Lloyd Wright. A godsend arrived in the unlikely form of two relatively obscure residents, Charles and Mabel Ennis, owners of a men's clothing store in Los Angeles. What drew these two to the unconventional Frank Lloyd Wright has never been determined, but he was engaged by Ennis to design a house of remarkable scale on their half-acre site on Glendower. But Wright's legendary inability to meet budgets and schedules drove the Ennis' to wit's end, and they took over supervision of some of the construction themselves.

### Transportation Shifts in Reverse

Transportation concerns occupied the agendas of local Los Feliz organizations. The area was serviced by two electric streetcar lines: the Pacific Electric red cars and the Los Angeles Railway yellow cars. They competed — not always successfully — on the roadways with the large car population and pedestrians. Indeed, traffic had become such a nightmare that the local newspaper, the *Hollywood Sun*, reported it was "likely if left to itself, to become intolerable." As a result of community "agitation" of the Public Utilities Commission, a traffic engineer from Chicago, Major Kalker, was retained to study the local traffic and formulate a plan for some relief, which was to include consideration of subway systems and elevated rails.

In 1922, a proposal to extend the Yellow Car line on Vermont up to Griffith Park drew howls of protest from the Los Feliz Improvement Association ("LFIA"), with director John Luckenbach (who lived along the proposed extension), vowing to fight it to the bitter end. Buses had become the new darling of public transportation as they were less intrusive



*The 1920s Griffith Park Zoo was pretty basic: a pedestrian beltway, pens in the middle and a few cages built into the south wall of the canyon. (Photo courtesy of Michael Ebert, Griffith Park.)*

and did not require tracks down the streets. The bus versus electric car debate that had torn apart the neighborhood for some years had all but resolved itself by 1924.

### Los Feliz Schools, or More Accurately, School

While matters of blight, zoning and billboards along Los Feliz Boulevard often dominated the agenda of LFIA (and still do), schools were the association's primary concern in 1924. The sole school in the Los Feliz area in 1924 was the Los Feliz School, located at its present site at Hollywood and New Hampshire (although it has been rebuilt several times).

In 1924, the community successfully secured commitments from the Board of Education to construct badly

needed secondary educational facilities. Many organizations, including LFIA and the Hollywood Junction Business Men's Association, promoted the purchase of the Vitagraph Property (current home of ABC Studios) as the site of a high school. This effort soon came to naught. These organizations then broadened the proposed location of school sites, imploring the Board of Education to locate the school anywhere in the area bounded by Sunset, Los Feliz, Vermont and Hyperion. To drum up support, LFIA rallied the neighborhood and held a mass meeting at the Los Feliz School on July 5, 1924. A month later the LFIA minutes reported that "this most important matter that we have worked so diligently on has come to the point where we are assured of a grammar school, a junior high and a senior high school." Victory must not have been complete however, because later that year, when the City proposed erecting the Franklin Avenue Bridge (the Shakespeare Bridge) with a special assessment to ease students' travel to school, the LFIA opposed it as unjustified since the Board had not acquired the school sites.

### ***The Los Feliz Business Community Launches a Short-Lived Newspaper***

Los Feliz enjoyed a fairly well developed business community in 1924, clustered largely on Vermont from Franklin south past Hollywood, and also on adjacent portions of Hollywood Boulevard. The studios located at the junction of Hollywood and Sunset were the epicenter or anchor of this community. Hillhurst, in contrast, was largely undeveloped and/or residential in character.

The real estate and insurance firm of Wright & Hogan, located at 1666 North Vermont Avenue, galvanized the business community to launch its own newspaper. On February 6, 1924, Wright & Hogan, at a cost of \$500 per issue, started a local newspaper named the *Hollywood Sun* as an advertising medium for the greater Hollywood business community

The *Hollywood Sun* featured an eclectic group of articles on Griffith Park, Los Feliz churches and social events. It also dispensed advice on everything from shoes to be worn in "the city" to gloves to be worn with a tailored suit ("wear gloves of chamois, yellow or beige, or of suede in gray or brown") and warned that purchasing a "large wardrobe of cheap frocks spells failure."

The *Hollywood Sun* started with a distribution of 4,000 copies that were apparently distributed free to every home in the Los Feliz area. The editors quickly discovered that 10,000 or more were needed to reach the entire Hollywood community. But Wright and Hogan's pleas with the community to support the paper if it were to survive were apparently unheeded. A few issues of the *Sun* were found by local historian Diane Kanner, in the Van Griffith papers in UCLA's Special Collections; it is not apparent how long the paper survived, but from the plaintive tone of the early editorials, I suspect it was only for a few months in 1924.

### ***The Greening of Griffith Park***

Griffith Park remained the heart of the Los Feliz community in 1924 as it does today. In 1924, the Park sported a fully operational airport overseen by Colonel Griffith's son, Van



*(l to r) Hitoshi and Aiko Kuromi, their cousin, Mikio Kawakami, and their brother, Isamu Kuromi on Los Feliz Blvd. in the 1920s. The Kuromi and Kawakami families leased land in what is now the Los Feliz Estates. Homes on Nottingham are in the background. (Photo from Cole, Shades of L.A.)*

Griffith, on the site of the present zoo and the Gene Autry Museum parking lots. That year the airport was leased for five years to a newly organized division of the California National Guard.

Near the airport, Los Angeles had set aside 120 acres in the northern part of Griffith Park for a municipal prison farm. Needless to say, the neighbors, while understanding the need to creatively deal with the growing crime problem, were squeamish with a bunch of prisoners literally farming the Park. However, this social experiment failed due to the bad economics of the farming as much as from the less than stellar attitude of the prisoners themselves. The coup de grace came in 1924 when the Los Angeles City Council refused to appropriate the \$6,000 needed to run the prison for an additional year.

Meanwhile, the Griffith Park Zoo faced threats of closure. It was a pathetic spectacle of mangy, shabby animals, the badly neglected successor to the private Selig Zoo that was moved to Griffith Park in 1913. A series of other zoological crises lead to predictions by the *Times* that it would or should be closed, particularly after the LFIA opposed the zoo's relocation to Vermont Canyon.

The golfing set obviously swung more clout in Griffith Park than the zoo set. In 1923, the Woodrow Wilson Golf Course was opened, with modest annual green fees of \$35. The next year, the unmet demand for greens lead to the opening of the Warren Harding Golf Course on July 4, 1924. This course sprang up from the green-less dirt course with

*(continued on page 24)*

# 1924: Eye on Los Feliz

(continued from page 23)

sand and pipe traps and hazards that was the original Riverside Course, whose free use made it popular and attracted a rather ruffian following. However, a statewide outbreak of anthrax in 1924 required postponement of the dedication of a new clubhouse for the two Griffith Park golf courses.

Many of the businessmen not found on the links could be found on horseback on the Park's many trails. In fact, equestrian activities were extremely popular among the city's most luminary businessmen. In 1924, a group of them formed the famous Los Angeles Breakfast Club, institutionalizing their tradition of having breakfast from a chuck wagon in the park and then riding back to the Griffith Park Riding Academy. Charter members included Maurice DeMond (the Los Angeles National Horse Show director and a LFIA director), Los Feliz resident Earle C. Anthony (Packard dealer and radio station owner), oilman Edward Doheny, and many entertainment celebrities including Cecil DeMille, Darryl Zanuck, Jesse Lasky, Tom Mix, Harry Warner and Edgar Rice Burroughs. This Breakfast club was famous for its radio broadcasts and rampant silliness. The Club, which counted the most famous of the city's denizens among its members, soon had its own building and permanent headquarters on Riverside Dr. near Los Feliz Blvd.

## The Studio Set

While the birthplace of Hollywood is often pinned to the Sunset and Gower area, others understand the greater importance of the cluster of Los Feliz studios that sprouted up around the Hollywood/ Sunset and Hillhurst junctions. By

1924, Walt Disney was still getting his feet wet, having just landed in California the year before at the doorsteps of his realtor uncle, who worked from his home at 4406 Kingswell. By February 1924, Walt and his brother Roy, however, had had enough success selling their cartoons that they were able to move their "studio" to a three-room space at 4649 Kingswell that rented for \$35 per month.

Though Walt Disney was not in his prime, others had hit their prime and already departed Los Feliz. David Ward (D.W.) Griffith, probably the most famous director of his time, by 1920 had abandoned the studio at Hollywood and Hillhurst where his most famous blockbusters were shot. The present site of KCET was idle, after a succession of studios including the Lubin Group, Essanay Company, Kalem, Willis & Inglis, and J.D. Hampton had come and gone. Charles Ray had taken over but had gambled — unwisely it turns out — on a mega-production of the Courtship of Miles Standish in 1923. It led to financial ruin for him and resulted in the studio being fallow for the next few years. Yet another area studio, the Hart studio was in such disrepair in 1924 that the LFIA called for its demolition.

Two area studios' success made up for the failings of all others. At the present site of the ABC Center at Prospect and Talmadge was the busy and successful Vitagraph Company. Vitagraph, first established its studio in Santa Monica, where it churned out westerns at a fast clip. In 1917, it purchased the twenty-five acres at Prospect and Talmadge and erected a large studio, which spun out the longer serial films featuring such actors as Norma Talmadge, Anita Stewart and Larry Semon. By 1924, as many as 500 people swarmed about the Vitagraph Studio making these films, but its profligate ways resulted in its purchase in February 1925 by Warner Brothers.

And so ends a bursting glimpse of Los Feliz in 1924.

The image shows a grid of approximately 15-20 small advertisements. Key ads include:
 

- Exide Batteries:** "Let's have a look... Exide batteries are the standard in the world..."
- Harwood's:** "BIG SPECIAL! NATIONAL PRESSURE COOKERS... HARWOOD'S... Ideal Electric Cookery..."
- Sassy Jane:** "Sassy Jane... de Souchet & Co. dresses..."
- First Mortgages for Sale:** "FIRST MORTGAGES FOR SALE... WHICH WILL NET YOU BETTER THAN 10 PER CENT INTEREST PER ANNUM..."
- Vermont Cafe:** "VERMONT CAFE... 1200 North Prospect Ave..."
- The Hollywood Sun:** "THE HOLLYWOOD SUN CONGRATULATES de Souchet & Co. AND Goyette & Co..."
- Vanderveen's:** "VANDERVEEN'S... Picture Framing and Ketch Service..."
- Community Bank:** "A Community Bank or a Bank in the Community?..."
- Mr. John Lockenbach:** "Mr. John Lockenbach... SHOP IN YOUR OWN DISTRICT..."

Some of ads that appeared in newspapers circa 1924.

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Knowing the signs and symptoms of a heart attack is key to survival and can minimize the damage that occurs to your heart.



At the Glendale Memorial Heart Center, we want to help you recognize the warning signs of a heart attack and know what to do in the event of one.

## Signs and Symptoms

The "typical" warning signs of a heart attack may include:

- Uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back.
- Pain that spreads to the shoulders, neck or arms.
- Chest discomfort with light-headedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath.

*In addition, women may also feel:*

- Atypical chest pain, stomach or abdominal pain or lower back pain (in some cases, there is no pain).
- Unexplained anxiety, dizziness, weakness or fatigue.
- Palpitations, cold sweats or paleness.

## Dial 911 Fast!

If you experience any of these symptoms, call 911, or go to the nearest Emergency Room *immediately.* The first hour of a heart attack is the most critical. Immediate treatment can make the difference between life and death and will also minimize the amount of damage to the heart muscle, making recovery faster and more complete.

Call today for a Second Opinion and make an appointment with one of our outstanding cardiologists. Call 1-800-NEW-HEALTH (1-800-639-4325) or visit our Web site at [glendalememorial.com](http://glendalememorial.com).



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for prevention. *for treatment.* FOR LIFE.

## “Los Feliz” Gets a Sign

**O**n July 18, the City of Los Angeles erected a “Los Feliz” sign at the intersection of Riverside Drive and Los Feliz Blvd., the eastern boundary of our community. Two other signs were also posted, one on our western boundary on the corner of Los Feliz Blvd. and Western Ave., and another on our southern boundary at corner of Hyperion and Rowena.

Many community residents were on hand for the official commemoration, including Councilman Tom LaBonge and members of his staff.



*Pictured are Councilman Tom LaBonge at left and LFIA President Terry Hughes.*

## Are You an Active Senior?

**A** senior who is interested in the arts, fitness, current events, literature, myths of aging, the mysteries of science or other topics? Would you be interested in seeing a *mini senior university* in the Los Feliz area? We don't have one now, but if you would like to help organize one for enhanced and cultural enrichment, please call Bob Friedman at (323) 662-9686.

## LITTLE LEAGUE ANYONE?

Jeffrey Lane, a Los Feliz resident, is putting together a Little League for the neighborhood. The first step is finding out who is interested — both children and parents. For more information, please e-mail him at [Jeff@lanedomain.com](mailto:Jeff@lanedomain.com).

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# Local Historian Receives Recognition

By Diane Kanner

**H**e has studied Hubert Eaton of Forest Lawn, who made the disposal of human remains a most profitable enterprise. He can point out the first, second and third homes built in Red Oak canyon. If a person lived in the Los Feliz Oaks before World War II, Dr. Howard Cremin has made a study of their lives and the impact it had on the area.

Cremin's stories enlivened "The Oaks" neighborhood newsletter and when he stopped writing, the organization had to act. They decided to publish his stories and make them available to a larger audience — the growing numbers of people who buy books about the history of Los Angeles.

The first copy was presented to City Councilman Tom LaBonge, who came to Cremin's house May 30 to present a proclamation from the City of Los Angeles. Cremin's son Dennis was also in attendance. "History rescued him from a mundane retirement, Cremin said. It got him out of his chair and onto the streets where he walked every day looking for another site he may have missed." It also strengthened his ties to his wife Eleanor, who fed his many subjects that came for the taped interviews he conducted.

After the official greetings and presentations were over, the Cremins sat down and enjoyed lunch in their backyard with family, including their five children, friends and another historian of note, Dr. Gloria Ricci Lothrop, Cremin's teacher when he returned to school to achieve his Master's Degree in history from the University of Southern California.



*Pictured l to r are Councilman Tom LaBonge, Howard Cremin and Dennis Cremin*

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hours are tuesday through saturday, 9 a.m.–6 p.m.

## Kids Shopping for Kids in Los Feliz

(continued from page 18)

**Wacko:** Hours: 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m. Sunday. They have great key-chains, boxes, henna tattoos, lunchboxes, bead curtains, many kinds of books and other random things in this store. Did I mention that Wacko is the kingdom of boxes? Well they have every single kind of box with every characters known to man kind...so, maybe I'm exaggerating some, but not too much!

**Funky Revolution:** Here they have clothes that are for teenagers, but the small sizes might fit a pre-teen. They have very cute bags, backpacks, wallets, and the good thing is that they have cool clothes for boys too— particularly if they are the surfer dude kinda guys. You can buy gift certificates. The only downfall is the fact that they don't have gift-wrapping.

**Vinyl Fetish**—Definitely not a mom-approved store. They have hair dye, sassy clothes, clothes for girls with a LOT of attitude, Hello Kitty clothes and accessories, purses, and CDs (but don't go looking for Britney Spears). If you like tee shirts that say Pre-School drop-out, Freak and Psycho, then this is your store, but some of the shirts are too nasty for our age. They have gift certificates as well. But, alas! They don't do gift-wrapping. They are open 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m., seven days a week.

**Baller Hardware:** This store has a variety of art supplies, tool kits, keychains, pumps, lights, flashlights, rechargeable

battery kits, ropes that you could make jump ropes out of, and so on. They have things for fishing and art boxes that you could use at school.

I want to thank Hayley Huizenga for her help. Next issue, I will be writing on Kids Having Fun in Los Feliz.

### Addresses in Order of Appearance

**Zoey and Sage**

2134 Hillhurst Blvd.  
Phone: (323) 906-1874  
Fax: (323) 904-1875  
Website: www.zoeyandsage.com

**Rite-Aid**

1637 Vermont Ave.  
Phone: (323) 664-9854

**Uncle Jer's**

4459 Sunset Blvd.  
Phone: (323) 662-6710

**Sally's Beauty Supply**

1623 N. Vermont

**Los Feliz Theater**

1822 N. Vermont

**Vista Theater**

4473 Sunset

**Skylight Books**

1818 N. Vermont

**Y-Que**

1770 N. Vermont Ave  
Phone: (323) 644-0021

**Wacko**

4633 Hollywood Blvd  
Phone: (323) 663-0122  
Fax: (323) 663-0243

**Funky Revolution**

1761 N. Vermont Ave  
Phone: (323) 644-0691  
Fax: (323) 644-0692

**Vinyl Fetish**

1750 Vermont Ave  
Phone: (323) 660-4500  
Fax: (323) 660-2357  
Website: www.vinylfetishrecords.com

# RETURN TO US

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*Day Camps:* June 17-Aug. 19 • Grades 1-5

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# Los Feliz Observer

LOS FELIZ IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER  
P.O. Box 29395, Los Angeles, CA 90029-0395

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