

**Hillside Federation
Newsletter
December, 2012**



www.hillsidefederation.org

**Holiday Party Honors
Amazing Volunteers**



Steve Twining

The 2012 Holiday Party will honor several citizens who have gone above and beyond to serve their communities.

Steve Twining is being recognized as Chair Emeritus of the Hillside Federation. Steve has been a vocal advocate for his community and the surrounding Santa Monica Mountains hillsides for decades, serving for 10 of the last 20 years as president of Roscomare Valley Association, as vice president, president, and chairman of the

The January meeting will be held the
second Wednesday of the month
January 9

**Agenda
December 5, 2012
6:30 pm**

Holiday Party

I. Eat,

II. Drink,

III. Be Merry!

**Mulholland Tennis Club
2555 Crest View Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90046**

Hillside Federation mission: *To protect the property and the quality of life of the residents of the Santa Monica Mountains and other hillside areas of Los Angeles and its environs, and to encourage and promote those policies and programs which will best preserve the natural topography and wildlife of the mountains and hillsides for the benefit of all the people of Los Angeles.*

Hillside Federation, as president and president emeritus of the Bel Air/Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council, and a valued and knowledgeable member of the Bel Air/Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council Planning and Land Use Committee since its inception. Steve has over the years and continues to serve on many other organizations and committees, has testified at countless hearings, written numerous letters, and advocated effectively for the protection of the hillsides. He has been unanimously and deservedly chosen as only the eighth Chair Emeritus in the Hillside Federation's 60-year history.

Also honored will be **Ellen Scott** who founded Friends of Hastain Trail when a developer bulldozed and fenced the popular trail with stunning views in Franklin Canyon. Friends hired attorney Stephen Jones and filed a law suit to preserve public access to the trail. They located legacy hikers who had been using the trail prior to 1972. The MRCA joined the lawsuit with attorney Eric Edmunds. After they took the judge to the top of the trail, she ruled that the trail was a public easement.



Ellen Scott and the legacy hikers of Hastain Trail.

Dennis Hathaway has been quietly fighting the proliferation of billboards, especially digital billboards, for many years. Starting in the Westside where digital billboards have sprouted like weeds, he formed the Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight (CBBB). Under his leadership CBBB, now a city-wide group, has worked with city planners, council offices and billboard lobbyists to try to develop a comprehensive Sign Ordinance to regulate the sign industry and remove illegal signs. It is an incredibly daunting and frustrating task as the lobbyists far outnumber the citizens. Thanks to Dennis's perseverance, the media is starting to cover the story of the sign industry's influence over City Hall. The Hillside Federation is pleased to honor this unsung hero for his Herculean efforts on our behalf.

Bringing an Issue to the Federation

If your organization has an issue to bring to the Federation, please complete the Request for Action form (available on the website www.hillsidefederation.org) with documentation and send it to president@hillsidefederation.org no later than 7 days prior to the meeting. This will help you organize your presentation so that our meetings can flow efficiently.

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 323-663-1031
president@hillsidefederation.org
www.hillsidefederation.org

PRESIDENT
 Marian Dodge
CHAIRMAN
 Charley Mims
VICE PRESIDENTS
 Mark Stratton
 Wendy-Sue Rosen
SECRETARY
 Donna Messinger
TREASURER
 Don Andres

ORGANIZATIONS:

Beachwood Canyon
 Bel Air Knolls Property Owners
 Bel Air Ridge Association
 Bel Air Skycrest POA
 Benedict Canyon Association
 Brentwood Hills Homeowners
 Brentwood Residents Coalition
 Cahuenga Pass Property Owner
 Canyon Back Alliance
 Crests Neighborhood Assn.
 Franklin Ave./Hollywood Bl. W.
 Franklin Hills Residents Assn.
 Highlands Owners Assn.
 Hollywood Dell Civic Assn.
 Hollywood Heights Assn.
 Hollywoodland Homeowners
 Holmby Hills HOA
 Kagel Canyon Civic Assn.

Lake Hollywood HOA
 Laurel Canyon Assn.
 Lookout Mountain Assn.
 Los Feliz Improvement Assn.
 Mt. Olympus Property Owners
 Mt. Washington Homeowners
 Nichols Canyon Assn.
 N. Beverly Dr/Franklin Canyon
 Oak Forest Canyon Assn.
 Oaks Homeowners Assn.
 Outpost Estates Homeowners
 Pacific Palisades Residents
 Residents of Beverly Glen
 Roscomare Valley Assn.
 Shadow Hills Property Owners
 Sherman Oaks HOA
 Studio City Residents Assn.
 Sunset Hills HOA

Tarzana Property Owners Assn.
 Torreyson Flynn Assn.
 Upper Mandeville Canyon
 Whitley Heights Civic Assn.

CHAIRPERSONS
EMERITUS
 Shirley Cohen
 Jerome C. Daniel
 Patricia Bell Hearst
 Alan Kishbaugh
 Gordon Murley
 Steve Twining
 Polly Ward
CHAIRMAN IN MEMORIUM
 Brian Moore

**Got a smartphone?
See a problem?
Report it!**

How many times have you noticed that ugly graffiti on the wall, but by the time you got home to report it, you forgot about it? Now you don't have to wait until you get home. There is a new, free app for smartphones that allows you to instantly report problems such as graffiti, potholes, and abandoned vehicles directly to the City. It's easy to use. You can take a photograph of the problem, and the app will automatically include the location of the problem with the report when you submit it. The report goes directly to the City for appropriate action. The app also maintains a history of your reports. The company is called CITYSOURCED.COM. The link is below. If you have a smartphone, I encourage you to give it a try.

<http://www.citysourced.com/default.aspx>

**Save these dates for Hillside
Federation meetings**

January 9
February 6
March 6
April 3
May 1
June 5

**Commission Reviews
Fire Code Waivers**

Discussion of the issuance of waivers to the Fire Code was on the agenda of the City Board of Fire Commissioners on November 20. Several residents of Benedict Canyon, including BCA President Nickie Miner and Past President Michael Chasteen, and Hillside Federation President Marian Dodge attended the meeting. to express concern over the several waivers granted to the developer of the Tower Lane property. The president of the Commission announced that they were not going to discuss that item—although it was on the posted agenda; however she decided to allow us to speak since so many of us had submitted speaker cards for the item. Nickie stressed the priority for public safety, the history of fires in the Benedict Canyon area, and difficult access. Michael spoke of the need to follow process as the waivers were granted without public notification or hearing. Marian cited the more than 8-minute response time in the hillsides and the February death of a firefighter when a roof collapsed because a house did not meet code. Another resident read an excellent letter from Councilmember Paul Koretz.

To their credit, the commissioners and Fire Chief Brian Cummings appeared to be paying attention to the speakers and taking the matter seriously. We do not know when the Fire Commission might make a decision on the granting of waivers to the fire code.

**Mulholland Scenic Parkway Design
Review Board**

Meets 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month,
6:30 pm
Marvin Braude Constituents Service Center
6262 Van Nuys Blvd. Van Nuys, CA
1st floor conference room

Laurel Canyon sits for it's annual portrait

Jim Nelson



Photo Day – Sunday, October 21, 2012. The community holiday was started in 1987 by Jim Nelson and Tommy Bina who continue to produce the event every year. A collection of the yearly photos covers the walls of the Laurel Canyon Store. The initial “crowd photo” was about a dozen residents with then Councilman Michael Woo and a pony! Sunday’s crowd was in the hundreds. Prints of the historic photos are on sale at the store (They deliver! (323) 654-8091)

Does your association have a special community event? Why don't you share it with the Federation?

Benedict Canyon Mega-Compound

Nickie Miner

For nearly two years, the Benedict Canyon Association has been working hard to ensure that a mega-compound proposed for a sensitive hillside area in Benedict Canyon is required to undergo full environmental review. The Benedict Canyon community has serious concerns about the scale of the development, and believes that its vast impacts should be aired in the light of day. If this Hearst Castle-sized compound on an inaccessible five acres of delicate terrain and steep hillsides does not require environmental review, what does?

BCA is not alone calling for environmental review. City Councilman Paul Koretz and

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky have done the same. The Hillside Federation and the Bel-Air/Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council have also added their voices to the chorus, and more than 1,000 residents signed a petition demanding environmental review. City Attorney, Carmen Trutanich, has stood by our side, supported our position, and has been in the forefront of helping us.

Yet, despite all of these calls, the owner is still trying doggedly to build his compound without environmental review and without providing any mitigation measures to alleviate the enormous impacts this multi-year project would create. This is troublesome not just for Benedict Canyon, but for hillside communities throughout the city.

The landowner has embarked on a series of ploys to skirt and avoid not only environmental review, but as well, quite a list of code requirements that he apparently believes do not apply to him and his approximately 80,000 sq.ft. mega-compound. He is even proposing to cut down a forest of over 100 trees on the property including protected California Live Oaks and Sycamore trees. The City has notified him that he needs to comply with the Protected Tree Ordinance, yet to date he has refused to file a true, complete tree survey for the property.

As we all know, to allow a landowner in the hillsides, in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, to waiver any fire code is an unacceptable risk to our community. To the contrary, additional, stricter codes and ordinances should be in place for all development in our hills and all existing codes should be enforced as well, especially for a development of commercial magnitude.

Obviously we are all concerned about the recent revelations about the emergency response times in hillside areas. Now, the landowner's team refuses to comply with two aspects of the Fire Code! Marian Dodge and I testified at the Fire Commission against the Fire Department sign-off granted to the landowner which defied clear requirements in the fire code. Even though the code explicitly states that variances from the fire code must be approved by the Mayoral-appointed members of the Fire Commission, the waivers were granted without oversight by the Fire Commission. How and why would this happen?

Shockingly, the owner's representative's claim at the Fire Commissioner hearing was to the effect that the codes exempted for his client were justified because they were old and no longer applicable. Tell that to an inaccessible brush fire.

The Benedict Canyon Association will continue to fight this or any landowner's attempt to bypass required municipal regulations. We appreciate the partnership of the Hillside Federation, and look forward to continuing to work with you to protect our hillsides from outrageous developments.

Hillside Federation Draft Minutes November 7, 2012

Note: The minutes will be approved at the January meeting.

I. Call to Order

President Marian Dodge called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm. Members and guests introduced themselves.

Guest Speakers:

A. Kim Lamorie – Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation

The Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation is similar to the Hillside Federation except that it is located in LA County in the western end of the Santa Monica Mountains. They have 11 member associations. They are active on the state level fighting for CEQA. Wendy-Sue Rosen visited one of their meetings. Las Virgenes is proposing joint committees on such mutual interests as: Wildlife Corridor Committee, Defend CEQA Committee, Streams Stewards Committee, and Oak Tree Committee. Carol Sidlow recommended adding a Ridgeline Ordinance Committee.

MOTION: Wendy-Sue Rosen moved that the Hillside Federation form an alliance with the Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation by supporting joint committees, sharing newsletters, and sharing information. The motion passed.

V. Old Business (taken out of order)

D. Billboard update - Dennis Hathaway, Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight (CBBB)

This is a watershed moment in the ongoing battle to rid our City from the blight of digital billboards. In 2006, the City Council entered into a backroom deal with two billboard companies, CBS and Clear Channel, authorizing them to install hundreds of digital billboards throughout the City. The City Council euphemistically referred to the digitalization of billboards as “modernization.” Another billboard company, Summit Media, sued the City, contending that the deal was illegal. In 2009, a Superior Court Judge agreed, calling the deal “poison.” That decision is now on appeal. City Councilmembers Krekorian and Reyes introduced a motion to the Council for the legalization of the digital billboards installed before the court’s decision. The Krekorian/Reyes motion, which bypassed PLUM and Finance Committees, would legalize the already-installed digital billboards. If this effort succeeds, other billboard companies will no doubt be permitted to install digital billboards as well. After receiving

negative publicity and press inquiries, Reyes's staff revealed that the motion was drafted by billboard lobbyists. The timing of this motion comes right before the Court of Appeal is scheduled to make its final determination in the Summit Case. The appellate court's tentative decision was to affirm the lower court's ruling against the digital billboards. But the Krekorian/Reyes motion would render the court's decision moot. It is essential that community members contact their council offices and ask them to oppose this motion and abide by the court's decision. For more information go to: [the Digital Billboard Preservation Act: A Brief History](http://banbillboardblight.org/?p=7446) at <http://banbillboardblight.org/?p=7446>.

Guest Speaker

B. Sheila Irani, CD 4 - Smokey Bear campaign

Hollywood United Neighborhood Council has funded six No Smoking Smokey Bear signs for heavy tourist traffic areas in the Dell and on Canyon Drive. The 6 ½ ft. X 30 in. signs from a licensed vendor cost \$12,009.53 for four signs.

Andrew Morales of CD 4 drives around the area on weekends asking people not to smoke. Organizations may contact Sheila for more information about the Smokey Bear signs. (sheila.irani@lacity.org)

Hollywoodland prefers to design their own large no smoking signs with the international symbol, but were told by HUNC they had to have Smokey Bear signs.

C. Ron Galperin – Quality and Productivity Commission

The Commission looks at what the city is doing right to see how the city can replicate those practices to better use its resources. The city owns two asphalt companies while our pot holes go unfilled. The city could be selling that asphalt to other districts to generate the revenue we need to repair roads. Construction costs are out of control. For example, one police station was 760% over budget. Only a small percentage of purchasing contracts are with businesses in LA; the city should be supporting local businesses instead of paying sales taxes to other jurisdictions. In December the Commission will be giving awards for efficiency. A seemingly mundane change in the oil change schedule for General Services vehicles saves the city \$300,000 a year. A reduction in the number of internal mail stops will save \$100,000 a year.

D. Ray Verches - SoCalGas Advanced Meters

SoCalGas is doing public outreach to HOAs and Neighborhood Councils on its Advanced

Meter program to update 6 million meters to an electronic version in 12 counties from the Central Valley to Orange County. The California Public Utilities Commission has approved the project, and they have briefed individual council offices. They will add a small box to your existing meter. The battery powered device is only on for two minutes per year. They are working with the Bureau of Street Services to attach the 4,000 networking devices to existing street light poles wherever possible although they will not mount the device to historic street lights. The automatic system will replace 1,000 meter readers and truck, reducing labor costs and pollution from the trucks. They have worked with the unions to reduce the job loss. Most will be covered by retraining or attrition as the project will not be completed until 2017. They are working on an opt-out program.

II. Approval of minutes

The minutes of October 3 were approved as corrected with the addition of Kim Lamorie.

III. Officers' Reports

A. President's Report - Marian Dodge

Measures HH and MM to keep funding the MRCA both passed. HH passed by 76% and MM by 68%. Paul Edelman of the MRCA thanked the Federation for its support.

The Federation sent a letter to City Council opposing the October 16 motion regarding legalizing illegal billboards; however the motion passed.

The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is celebrating its 34th birthday with a tree planting on Sat. Nov. 10.

MOTION: Charley Mims proposed the nomination of Steve Twining for Chair Emeritus upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee. Charley listed some of the highlights of Steve's career which meet the five criteria to become Chair Emeritus: President of the Federation for 2 years, Chairman for 4, President of Bel Air/Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council for 3 years plus member of Land Use Committee, President of Roscomare Valley Association for 10 years, on the Western Region Alliance of Councils, and the West Los Angeles Community Police Advisory Board. The motion passed. Congratulations, Steve!

B. Treasurer's Report - Don Andres

Federation finances are about the same as last month.

The Executive Committee discussed the policy and process of giving financial support to an organization. The policy is in agreement with IRS rules for 501(c)(3)s. The federation does not routinely give money. The issue must be one of broad impact. The application must be submitted at least 7 days prior to the monthly meeting.

Congressman Adam Schiff is supporting the Rim of the Valley which would add more park area and services to a large circle around the city that includes the Santa Monica Mountains and Griffith Park. Informational public hearings are being held throughout the area in December.

Don was advised that the LA Dept. of Transportation may be changing the policy on preferential parking districts so watch for announcements.

Don urged everyone to attend the Holiday Party on December 5.

IV. New Business

A. 3200 Durand Drive - Crosby Doe

Hollywoodland has historic stone walls that have been designated as Historic-Cultural Monument #535. According to the Hollywoodland Specific Plan no fence can be built within 3 feet of the front lot line in order to preserve the character of the community. The six-foot fence at 3200 Durand Drive violates 5 city ordinances. The city issued an Order to Comply to remove the unpermitted, over-height fence in 2003, but it has not been enforced. The Hillside Federation supported Hollywoodland in 2010 on this issue. The owner appealed to City Council which approved his appeal. Hollywoodland sued the city for violating CEQA. They appealed to the Supreme Court who would not hear the case. Allowing the illegal fence to remain would set a dangerous precedent that would destroy the character of the neighborhood. They have not received any support from the Office of Historic Resources.

MOTION: Sarajane Schwartz moved that the Hillside Federation support Hollywoodland's request for an EIR for the fence at 3200 Durand Drive and that Order to Comply #108303 be enforced. The motion passed.

V. Old Business

A. Hastain Trail victory - Ellen Scott and Eric Edmunds

Ellen sat down in front of a bulldozer on the Hastain Trail 1 ½ years ago. The property owner put a gate across the trail in Franklin Canyon

Park, which is one of the jewels of our hillside. About half of the trail is on private property. Ellen formed Friends of Hastain Trail and hired land use attorney Stephen Jones to sue the property owner. The MRCA joined the suit with Eric Edmunds representing them. They had to locate hikers who had hiked the trail since before 1972. They had MRCA Rangers take the judge and court reporter up the trail to see what was a stake. After a two-week trial, the judge ruled that the trail is a public easement. The property owner will have to remove the fences. He is suing the city for discrimination. The trail runs through the middle of three of his lots so it will be difficult for him to build.

Friends of Hastain Trail is having a celebratory picnic this Sunday at 12:30 at the meadow by the Doheny Ranch. Although Steve Jones took the case at a discounted rate, they still owe him about \$20,000 and are accepting donations.

Ellen, Eric, and Steve Jones will be honored at the Holiday Party.

B. Crescent Drive victory - Carol Sidlow and Steven Poster

Lookout Mountain won their appeal denying all the variances including a waiver on a substandard roadway. Forty community members attended the hearing. They thanked everyone who came to support them and wrote letters, especially Don Keller. The Planning Commission voted unanimously to support their appeal. The property owner will probably continue.

Announcements:

Marian Dodge announced that there is a new Facebook page (a beta version) for the Federation and encouraged all to visit it.

George Abrahams distributed invitations to a fundraiser for SaveHollywood.org.

Sarajane Schwarz – Next year is the 90th anniversary of Hollywoodland.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 pm.

Donna Messinger, Recording Secretary

Members Present:

Beachwood Canyon	George Abrahams
Bel Air Skycrest	Mark Stratton
	Lois Becker
Benedict Canyon	Nickie Miner
Brentwood Hills	Eric Edmunds
Brentwood Residents	Don Keller
	Tom Freeman
Canyon Back All.	Wendy-Sue Rosen
Crests Neighborhood	Ron Galperin
Franklin Av/Hlwd Bl	Don Andres
Franklin Hills Resid.	Charley Mims
Hollywood Heights	Donna Messinger
Hollywoodland HOA	Sarajane Schwartz
	Crosby Doe
Kagel Canyon	Kit Paull
Laurel Canyon Assn.	Tony Tucci
Lookout Mt. All.	Carol Sidlow
	Steven Poster
Los Feliz Impvmt.	Marian Dodge
Nichols Canyon	Madeline O'Donnell
Oaks Homeowners	Gerry Hans
Roscomare Valley	Steve Twining
Studio City Resid.	Claudia Freedle
Upper Mandeville	James Provenzano
	Elodie Lorenz

Guests Present:

CD 4	Sheila Irani
Ban Billboard Blight	Dennis Hathaway
Las Virgenes HO Fed.	Kim Lamorie
Friends of Hastain Tr.	Ellen Scott
SoCalGas	Ray Verches
	Lizette Verduzco
	Juan Gonzalez

Web Site

The Hillside Federation has a new web site, www.hillsidefederation.org. One of the things we want to do is have live links to the web sites of all our member organizations. Please send us the link to your association's web site. In return, we ask that you post a link to the Hillside Federation web site on your web site.

You may also visit the web site for letters on positions taken by the Federation and past newsletters and minutes.