

Meet Marian

I am excited that I will be taking office as your president at the May meeting.

I have lived in Los Angeles for 43 years. My husband deliberately chose a hillside location to remind me of the hills in the San Francisco Bay area where I grew up. I am a retired English teacher from John Marshall High School. I serve as the Co-chair of the Los Feliz Improvement Association History Committee.

I am the immediate past president of the Los Feliz Improvement Association (LFIA) which was founded in 1916 and represents about 1,000 households. The association enjoys a long history of activism. LFIA has fought to keep billboards off of Los Feliz Blvd. since the 1920s. It was a bold move because it meant opposing the widow of the association's founder who was advertising her lots in Los Feliz. As you all know, battles rarely disappear; they keep resurfacing and must be fought again and again. LFIA successfully sued to keep the Children's Museum from being built at one of the busiest intersections in the city without benefit of an EIR.

Under my leadership as President, LFIA stopped Wolfgang Puck from getting a full liquor license at the Griffith Observatory which would have turned the beloved institution into a private party rental site. In that case we took on the big boys at Armbruster & Goldsmith and caught them omitting a required EIR. Working closely with the Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council (GGPNC) we pressured the DWP into making its annual Light Festival in Griffith Park more eco-friendly by having some nights reserved for walking. It's a lot of fun to enjoy the lights and sing along with the music without inhaling exhaust fumes from idling cars.

Perhaps LFIA's most significant victory was getting Griffith Park designated a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. Such an obvious designation would seem a no brainer; however, we found much opposition came from the big land use firms such as Latham & Watkins and Armbruster, Goldsmith & Delvac who saw Griffith Park as a lot of free land to be used by their clients. Again LFIA partnered with the GGPNC and the Griffith Charitable Trust, who paid for the 500-page application. We reached out to community groups across the city to build such massive public support for the park's designation that the politicians could not ignore our wishes. On January 27, 2009, Griffith Park became Historic-Cultural Monument #942, the largest landmark in the United States.

I attended the City Planning Commission hearing on April 22 to speak on behalf of the Federation in support of the Baseline Hillside Ordinance. While not perfect – what is? – it is a huge step in the right direction to protect the character of our neighborhoods.

In recent years private citizens in Los Angeles have taken advantage of the power of the internet and e-mail to organize and express their opinions. I don't think any of us could have imagined

the success that broad-based coalitions of resident groups, neighborhood councils, and individuals achieved. The city's interpretation of SB 1818 was successfully challenged. Measure B was defeated. Griffith Park became a landmark. And a politically unknown attorney defeated a well-funded, well-connected, entrenched politician for the City Attorney position. Those are impressive accomplishments.

The Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations is already a collaboration of 35 associations. Using the same strategies to organize and support positions, we can accomplish much. My goal is to make the Federation an even broader coalition with even more associations involved. There is strength in numbers that politicians cannot ignore.

I look forward to serving as your president and getting to know you all.