



# STUDIO CITY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

*Your Advocate for Studio City*

**September 2012**

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## PRESERVING OPEN SPACE: MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

**O**n November 6, 2012, voters in the Santa Monica Mountains and Hollywood Hills areas between Griffith Park and the 405 Freeway (including Studio City) will be asked to vote on Measure HH for local open space, parklands, fire prevention, ranger safety patrols and clean water.

Measure HH is sponsored by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), a local park agency that is responsible for acquiring, maintaining and improving open space, parklands and wildlife corridors in the East Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills Area of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Zone. The MRCA does not receive funding from state or local sources. Much of its operations, maintenance and security budget has been funded by Los Angeles County's Proposition A, a 25-year old property assessment that is about to expire. Measure HH will allow the MRCA to continue and improve the public safety, fire prevention and open space services it currently provides in this area at a minimum cost of \$24 per year parcel.

Measure HH will:

- Maintain and protect local open space, parklands, and wildlife corridors and the Mulholland Drive scenic overlooks
- Prevent additional traffic and preserve open space in the hillsides and canyons
- Improve local fire prevention services, including crews to clear dry brush and eliminate other fire hazards
- Maintain and improve park ranger safety and security patrols to prevent crime and vandalism
- Improve local water quality by keeping pollution and trash out of local creeks and reservoirs

Every penny raised by Measure HH will stay in the described Measure HH boundary. A citizen's oversight committee will conduct annual audits to ensure the funds are spent properly and only within the East Santa Monica Mountains/Hollywood Hills Area District.



Measure HH is supported by Los Angeles City Councilmembers Paul Koretz and Tom LaBonge, Studio City Residents Association President Alan Dymond and Studio City resident and environmental advocate, Ed Begley Jr., among many others

Paul Edelman, MRCA chief of natural resources and planning, will speak at the SCRA September 11, 2012 Community Meeting about the measure. More information is available at <http://www.mrca.ca.gov/hhinfo.html>

# BEAUTIFUL STUDIO CITY: STUDIO CITY BEAUTIFICATION UPDATE



*Rio Vista - Reading Garden; trampled grass and hedges before revitalization*

## Rio Vista Elementary School - Children's Reading Garden

Five years ago, the Universal City Rotary Club installed a children's reading garden in front of the library on the Rio Vista Elementary School Campus. The garden featured an old historic mission bell standing in the middle of seven bright blue benches; however, over the years, the garden fell into disrepair and needed restoration.

Universal Studios and the principal of Rio Vista approached the Studio City Beautification Association (SCBA) to ask for help to revitalize the garden. SCBA's Francesca Corra, a landscape designer, volunteered her talents and created an attractive, child proof garden including trees that look like the ones in Dr. Seuss "Lorax" film.

The first stage of the project was the installation of the hardscape, which had to be completed between summer school and the start of the regular school season. This gave the crew one week to complete the work and clean up, in time for the students to arrive. Planting of the garden will take place in the cooler late fall months.

The costs of the work were covered by contributions from Universal Studios, the Universal City Rotary Club, the Studio City Farmers Market Grant Program, the Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council and Rio Vista PTA. Many thanks to SCBA volunteers, Francesca Corra and Connie Elliot, who worked closely with the Universal City Rotary Club, Principal Kevin McClay and Universal Studios employees, Jennifer Fitzgerald and Tracy Cohen.



*Rio Vista - Reading Garden in progress; crew cleaning up just in time for the start of school.*

## Anita's Triangle (Laurel Canyon Blvd. and Fryman Place)

Work has begun on improving the eyesore on Laurel Canyon Blvd. that has much pedestrian traffic. Site clearance will occur in early fall, and planting will begin in the cooler winter months. The water meter that feeds the drip system is in place and ready to go. Anita's Triangle will make a great addition to the beautification of Studio City. The SCBA thanks all who donated to make this project possible.



## OASIS - Not a Dumping Ground

In August, SCBA neighborhood volunteers notified the SCBA that several huge piles of cuttings were discarded on the Oasis (Ventura Blvd. west of Vineland Avenue and opposite Marshalls). Never missing a chance to cut expenses, the SCBA asked the maintenance crew to shred the dumped material and use it as mulch. There was some damage to the plants from the illegal dumping, but fortunately they will recover.

## Moorpark Parkway (Laurel Canyon Blvd. and Moorpark Avenue south of Moorpark Park)

The SCBA has received a donation to "fill in" sparse areas on this parkway. The upgrade is being planned and planting will take place once the weather is more amenable.

The Studio City Beautification Association (SCBA) has a new Facebook page. Like us!

# SBI 201 TO ADVANCE THE REVITALIZATION OF THE LOS ANGELES RIVER

The Los Angeles River Expanded Public Access Bill (SB1201) has passed the California State Assembly and is soon expected to arrive at Governor Jerry Brown's desk for signature. The bill will widen public access to the river and broaden the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works' 100-year-old mission of flood and storm water management to include education and recreation for the first time.

State Senator Kevin de León convinced the City of Long Beach to drop its efforts to water down the bill. San Fernando Valley Assembly member Bob Blumenfield maneuvered the bill across the Assembly floor. Senator de León noted the proposed amendments "only codified the status quo. And the status quo is not good enough."

The bill was written by Friends of the Los Angeles River

**(Continued, Page 3)**



## (LA River, cont'd)

(FOLAR) with the help of UCLA's Environmental Law Clinic. Save Los Angeles River Open Space (SLAROS), an affiliate of the Studio City Residents Association, sees this bill as another political act that could support SLAROS' efforts to develop the Weddington Golf & Tennis property into LA River Natural Park with staging access and frontage on the Los Angeles River.

Those interested in encouraging the governor to sign the bill should log on to: [http://gov.ca.gov/m\\_contact.php](http://gov.ca.gov/m_contact.php)

## ASK THE SCRA

**Q:** Once again, there is a tremendous amount of garbage in the parking lot on the southwest corner of Ventura and Laurel Canyon Blvds. behind Urban Outfitters, Chicos, M Frederic, etc. It seems to accumulate mostly along the south wall.



**SCRA:** About a year ago, the Studio City Business Improvement District (BID), at the request of the SCRA, asked their Ventura Blvd. maintenance employees to pick up trash in this lot, and the lot was cleaned out. The SCRA has again made the request, and the BID has agreed to clean up the trash; however, since this is private property with multiple owners, and the BID's work is conducted on the public right-of-way, the area needs a more permanent solution.. The BID's executive director has left a message for the property manager to try to work out a solution. The SCRA member who contacted us about this matter also reached out to Geoff Yazzetta, field deputy to Councilmember Paul Krekorian, who has reported the problem to the City of Los Angeles Department of Building & Safety. An inspector will cite the property owner if the violation is still present when the inspector visits the site.

The SCRA will continue working with the BID for a permanent solution. In the meantime, if the trash continues to build up, please report it to Geoff Yazzetta at (818) 755-7676.

**Q:** I have contacted Mike Feuer's office about the condition of the 101 freeway on and off ramps at Coldwater Canyon Avenue. They are in deplorable condition and an embarrassment to the whole community. I know that Caltrans has budget problems, but I wonder why the ramps in certain communities, such as Calabasas and Agoura Hills, are always in pristine condition. This is the gateway to our community, and the ramps look like something from a third world nation.

The weeds are more than six feet tall, and there is litter everywhere. The pine needles are about two-three inches thick. This is a fire hazard. The last time the ramps were cleaned was in July 2011.

**SCRA:** The SCRA called Stephanie Gillette, deputy to Assembly member Mike Feuer, who shared the following Caltrans update.

The southbound 101 Coldwater Canyon off-ramp was cleaned on August 1, 2012 and the southbound 101 Coldwater on-ramp was cleaned on August 2, 2012. The northbound 101 Coldwater Canyon off-ramp and northbound 101 Coldwater Canyon on-ramps are scheduled to be cleaned on September 4-5, 2012.

A study by the American Association of State Highways and Transportation Officials finds that the operating condition of California roads ranks 49th of the 50 states, with New Jersey in last place. According to the CQ Press Fact Finder, California ranks 47th per capita in transportation funding at \$308 versus the national average of \$536. Studio City is in District 7 of Caltrans and has 42 miles of freeways and highways, which is more than any other Caltrans district. An average of 100 million vehicle-miles are traveled in this area per day, leading to heavy usage, more wear and tear, more damage from accidents and more litter throughout the system. In addition, District 7 has the most landscaped acres than any other district and spends the most resources on landscape maintenance. District 7 also removes and spends more on litter and graffiti than any other district.

In 2002, District 7 employed close to 1400 maintenance workers. Today, that number is about 800 with more reductions to occur in 2012-13. The District 7 maintenance road crew has five employees for 180 acres of right of way, who are responsible for cleaning up the north and south 101 freeway, from Barham Blvd. to Sepulveda Blvd., the east and west 134 freeway and the north and south 170 freeway.

**SCRA:** The SCRA distributed a News & Notes alert about an upswing in thefts from cars at the Fryman Canyon parking lot. Several years ago, the SCRA and the LAPD posted signs warning hikers of the car theft problem. The SCRA's alert suggested that persons parking cars in the Fryman Canyon parking lot, or on Laurel Canyon Blvd., remove any visible items from inside their car to help avoid an incident.

## LAST CALL FOR SCRA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The SCRA's 2012 membership drive has been a great success. However, some renewing members are still missing. Please check the address label on this newsletter; if it still says 6/12, then the SCRA has not received your renewal. To renew, visit [StudioCityResidents.org](http://StudioCityResidents.org) or call the office at 818-509-0230.

The SCRA membership committee asks you to encourage your neighbors to join by sharing this newsletter. The more members we have, the stronger we become.

# SAVE THE DATE: SECOND ANNUAL WINTER FAMILY FESTIVAL

Studio City Residents Association & Studio City Recreation Center present



You won't want to miss the Second Annual Winter Family Festival, Sunday, December 2, 2012, from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. at Studio City Recreation Center (Beeman Park). This free event offers fun for the whole family with the added element of "giving back" to community charities. The

SCRA is once again partnering with Radio Disney for an event that will include more than 50 tons of snow, music, A Taste of Studio City, crafts, photos with Santa and more! To become a sponsor, contact Ann Husvar at 818-990-0722.

## SCRA SEPTEMBER COMMUNITY MEETING TO UPDATE COMMUNITY ON HEALTH INSURANCE, MEASURE HH AND MEDICAL MARIJUANA



The September SCRA Community Meeting will feature three guest speakers on topics that have significant impact to Studio City. Assemblymember Mike Feuer will speak about recent and pending legislation, including AB52, which would allow the state's insurance commissioner to reject significant increases in health insurance.

Paul Edelman, chief of natural resources and planning for Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, will speak about the importance and impact of Measure HH, which will be on the November ballot.



And, Tamar Galatzan, prosecutor for the city attorney's office, will discuss recent court decisions and actions by the City Council on medical marijuana & billboards.

The meeting will be held at Beverly Garland's Holiday Inn Theatre Room at 7:30 p.m. Light refreshments and an opportunity to meet community members and neighbors begin at 7:00 p.m.

## REPAVING THE STREETS OF STUDIO CITY

Street repairs are a continuous issue in a community that is highly dependent on cars. Recently an SCRA member actually needed to get a wheel alignment after unavoidably hitting a pot hole; as a result, she started to research the issue of road repairs and discovered that much of the repaving in Studio City is done by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. This city department refers to this work as "road rehabilitation."

Michael Kaspar, a spokesperson for the department, said the county, which has conducted traffic volume studies of the Studio City area, actually subcontracts much of the road repair in the Studio City area. Kaspar recommended that those interested in pressing for increased repair work contact the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors at 213-974-3333 as well as the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works at 311 or 1-800-996-2489.

## OPED: AB 52

By Dave Jones, California's Insurance Commissioner

With the Supreme Court's decision to uphold the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) earlier this year, our national health insurance landscape has changed, for the better, for tens of millions of Americans. Individuals and families who previously suffered under the daunting pressure of living without health insurance will soon have security and peace of mind thanks to the ACA. Other critical reforms ushered in under this significant act include allowing individuals to keep their children on their health insurance until age 26; doing away with co-payments for preventive care and certain women's healthcare services; and reducing prescription drug costs for seniors.

However, one critical reform is still sorely needed: the authority to reject excessive health insurance rate increases. In order to truly protect consumers, we need to give the state's insurance commissioner the authority to regulate health insurance rates, an authority already successfully used by the commissioner to oversee car and homeowners insurance rates.

Most Californians are surprised - and disappointed - to learn that the insurance commissioner does not have the authority to reject excessive health insurance rate hikes. Proposition 103, which was passed by the voters in 1988, gave the commissioner the authority to reject excessive premiums for auto, property and casualty insurance. This proposition brought rate stability to the insurance delivery system, while maintaining a vibrant and competitive market, but did not address health insurance. This is one of the major missing pieces of health insurance reform.

Last year, we were successful in getting Assembly Bill 52, introduced by my colleague, Assemblymember Mike Feuer, passed by the Assembly. But because we were short a few

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**(AB 52, cont'd)**

votes in the Senate, we held the bill on the Senate floor where it is still alive. In short, AB 52 would give the insurance commissioner the authority to reject excessive premium increases proposed by health insurers, and level the playing field for consumers in California. It would go a long way toward curbing the double digit health insurance increases hard working Californians continue to endure year after year. To place things in perspective, from 1998 to 2008, group health insurance premiums increased on average by 148 percent. It's no wonder so many of us can't afford to have health insurance and why, with more than seven million Californians being uninsured, our state has the distinction of being home to the largest number of people without health insurance in the nation.

While working to navigate AB 52 through the legislative process has been a challenge, we have still seen widespread support from such groups as the Small Business Majority, the California Black Chamber of Commerce, the California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Asian Business Association. The reason for this support is simple: the members of these organizations know this change in the law would prevent excessive health insurance rate increases from continuing to burden Californians on a seemingly never-

ending basis. After repeated attempts to pass similar legislation during my time in the Assembly, it is my hope that AB 52 will finally succeed and eventually be signed by Governor Brown.

AB 52 will give the insurance commissioner the same authority to reject excessive health insurance rate hikes that has been successfully used with auto and homeowner's insurance. It will protect hard-working Californians from what has become an unrelenting barrage of premium increases and inject some much-needed controls into the health care delivery system. That is why we must continue to urge all state senators to vote for this essential reform.

And if they don't, then the voters should be given the opportunity to vote for this reform through a ballot measure. Consumer Watchdog, a non-profit consumer advocacy organization, turned in nearly 800,000 signatures to put this reform on the ballot. While just missing the higher threshold needed to qualify for the ballot this year, there are enough signatures to make sure it is on the ballot in 2014.

Now that we have made health insurance mandatory, we must take the next logical step to ensure it is affordable. If we don't, the requirement that people purchase health insurance by 2014 may lead to even greater problems than those that have already plagued the uninsured in our state.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** by Alan Dymond

*When there is pending legislation and other political issues that impact the lives and wellbeing of our members, the SCRA should comment. This is in line with the SCRA Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws as approved by the IRS and the State of California. In contrast, the SCRA may not support or otherwise engage in promoting candidates for political office.*

*Case in point is Assembly Bill 52, which, if passed by the State Senate and signed by the governor, will bring medical insurers under the purview of California's insurance commissioner. The op-ed piece by Insurance Commissioner Jones in this month's issue will be the start of comments on this pending legislation. The author of the bill, Assemblymember Mike Feuer, is slated to speak at our September Community Meeting.*

*There is news on the City Council redistricting front. You'll recall that with redistricting, Studio City became part of a contiguous district and is no longer tacked onto other disconnected areas of the valley. However, a lawsuit has been filed by the Korean community against the City of Los Angeles and the Redistricting Commission in federal court. The suit alleges that, among other things, the City Council and the Redistricting Commission ignored public testimony: the boundaries were redrawn to the exclusion of the rights of the inhabitants of Korea town but were re-drawn for political reasons. (Korea town is being represented by two law firms at no charge to the client.) The relief being sought is that the courts prevent the new boundaries from going into effect on any election and that a special master be appointed to redraw the boundaries. If the boundaries are redrawn, there may be a "spill over" effect that may adjust the adjacent boundaries and then could adjust other council districts further out.*

*The Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the proposed development at Universal Studios, known as the Evolution Plan, has been issued, and public comment hearings are scheduled. There is one concern (among many) that is being investigated: the project is split into three phases, and, as a result, the proposed traffic mitigation measures may not be in place by the completion of phase one. It is not acceptable that the mitigation measures will be installed as part of phase two.*

*On the mitigation measures proposed in the FEIR, there is a lot to be desired: here is the pertinent language in part of "Request #1" of the application to adopt the EIR: final sentence. "...Adoption of a statement of overriding consideration setting forth the reasons and benefits of adopting the EIR with full knowledge that significant impacts may remain." The Planning Commission can recommend the request be adopted. Then it ends up before City's Planning and Land Use Committee. If this committee also recommends adoption, then it goes to the full council for vote. In plain English, if the city approves Request #1, the "significant impacts" that cannot be mitigated will remain: we will just have to learn to live with these "significant impacts."*

*This comment is part of the public record and was the basis of the objection that the SCRA formally made at the public comment hearing.*

*We will continue to monitor developments and will report back to our members from time to time.*



P.O. Box 1374, Studio City, CA 91614

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**SCRA  
COMMUNITY  
MEETING**  
**Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2012**

**AGENDA**

- 7:00 p.m.** Refreshments  
**7:30 p.m.** Assemblymember Mike Feuer; Paul Edelman, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority; Tamar Galatzan, prosecutor, Los Angeles City Attorney's Office

**Meeting Location**

**Beverly Garland's Holiday Inn Theatre  
4222 Vineland Avenue, Studio City**

*When entering the hotel driveway, turn left and go through the parking turnstile. Drive to the end and turn right. Go to the large back lot. The handicap entrance is from this lot. Walk to the southwest corner of the lot, and signs will direct you to the Beverly Garland Theatre. **PARKING WILL BE VALIDATED** at the sign-in-table.*

*The SCRA thanks Beverly Garland's Holiday Inn for continued support of the monthly SCRA Community Meetings*



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