

The magic of neighborhood activism

by *Todd Walker*

When my wife Kim and I moved to Los Angeles four and a half years ago, we'd never heard of Echo Park. I'd visited L.A., and had even driven past Echo Park Lake and marveled at the fountain and paddle boats – I remember thinking, if I ever move to L.A., this is where I want to live – but I didn't know the name of the neighborhood, or anything about it.

A few years later, I was offered a teaching job at Loyola-Marymount University. Clueless about Los Angeles geography, we took a sublet, sight-unseen, in an intriguingly named area called Angeleno Heights. When we arrived, I immediately recognized the lake I'd seen before. We had, by chance or destiny, ended up in exactly the location where, several years earlier, I'd imagined myself living.

As we settled in, Kim and I began to take walks around Echo Park lake. We were amazed by the birds, the

stunning downtown and mountain views, and by the incredible variety of people that came down to enjoy the water.

As our walks expanded, we discovered the classics that every Echo Parker knows and loves, among them the Jensen's sign, the hills and sidewalk streets of Elysian Heights, the vistas from Elysian Park, the rambling older houses and the sleek new ones, and – one of our special

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The new EPIA Website

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Eco in Echo Park

Echo Park Lake Autumn Bird Count

by *Judy Raskin*

Sunny skies and warm weather made it a perfect day for ten Echo Park Lake birders, who identified 16 species of birds on Saturday, September 25.

As the temperatures drop in the northern climes, millions of birds are beginning their migration to warmer places. This is just the beginning of the season.

The resident populations at the Lake

(Continued on page 2)



New Planning Director says Community plans will lead the way

by Darren Hubert

An opportunity to meet the new planning director, Michael LoGrande, took place at a townhall meeting hosted by CD13th at Mayberry Elementary on September 21st. Michael LoGrande, the former Chief Zoning Administrator, took over for Gale Goldberg just a few weeks ago.

He gave a brief introduction of himself and opened the floor up to questions. Council President Garcetti moderated the questions.

Mr. LoGrande discussed his goal to move the department away from “project by project planning.” He would like to see neighborhoods develop strong community plans with visions of the future that preserve a lifestyle and

continue to improve the quality of life for its residents. The planning departments role in helping these visions come to life would be to establish appropriate zoning, design guidelines and restrictions.

The planning department needs to “stay out of the way and let developers and the community determine what they want”, said Mr. LoGrande. Knowing when to step in and when to step back will be a goal that the department will focus on. He indicated this was a great time and opportunity to have a real impact on potential changes in the Los Angeles planning department.

He also spoke of the small business person and their

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Continued: Autumn Bird Count at the lake

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of birds that are considered migratory, such as Mallard ducks and American coots, are showing signs of increased numbers. So are Western gulls and double-crested cormorants. The cormorants, in particular, favor a tall leafy tree just north of the storm drain, and another a little south of the Boathouse. Large numbers of cormorants used to flock to the southern tip of the island, but a fast-growing tree at water's edge has inhibited their ability to use that location as a gathering place.

Also returning to the lake now are ruddy ducks, common yellowthroats and California gulls.

Other species seen this day were pied-billed grebes, black-crowned night herons, rock doves, Brewer's blackbirds, great-tailed grackles, brown-headed cowbirds, house sparrows, Canada geese and the continuing Ross's goose.

Over the next several months, we can expect the arrival of many other migratory birds—so far, we have identified more than 70 species at various times of the year.

The next event will be the Christmas Bird Count, the 11th annual at Echo Park Lake. The date is Sunday, January 2, 2011. More information will be available closer to that date. You can also contact Judy Raskin at judycaifornia@yahoo.com, or 323-663-6767.



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Around town: What's news in Echo Park

Lots of stuff going on in Echo Park, and we try to keep an eye out on those new, moving or closing businesses, as well as some new stuff going on.

RESTAURANTS:

Rodeo Grill is getting a full liquor license and will remain open until 1:00 am.

Construction continues on the remodel of "**Mohawk Brasserie**," the old Ramona Theater on Sunset Blvd, to open later this year or early 2011. They also applied for a full liquor license.



STORES:

Ballard's Artwork & Framing reopened at 1568 Sunset Blvd. They share the space with Raven + Lily, offering fair trade and ethical products.

Cookbook opened up by Echo Park residents in August at 1549 Echo Park Avenue. The green grocer carries fresh produce, flowers, and goodies from Heirloom LA and Dr.

Bob's ice cream, among others!

New York boutique **International Playground** opened up on August 12 in the old Mohawk Store location at 1102 Mohawk St.



Sunset Beer Co. is taking over a former ladies gym in the mini mall next door to Beauty Box. They'll stock bottled beer for sale along with a tasting room, and will focus on craft brews from around the country.

OTHER BUSINESSES:

Two groups, LA Fonderie and Keystone Art Studio, have opened up new "working studios" to rent to artists on Glendale Blvd. near Aaron Street (near the Animal Hospital).

Havana Travel moved from Sunset Blvd. to 922 North Alvarado Street

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CCAC wraps up summer with the kids

By Gloria Sohacki

Well, I decided to try something different this time. I am asking some of the kids to tell me their most memorable experiences from our Summer of Fun program.

“ When I went camping and got sick from some kind of Italian thing I ate and when I had to run to the bathroom I tripped and fell. OOPS! ”

- Arturo Espinoza

“ I guess I snored a lot the 2nd night out and the kids said I was talking to the elephants who got chased by bees in my sleep. Ok????? ” - George Aviles

“ When we were making s'mores I kept losing my chocolate in the fire and burning my marshmallows. Arturo kept me awake because he snored so loud I wanted to plug his nose. ” - Rudy Allende

“ I got a job, a real job fixing clothes. I am so happy. ” - Nancy Morales

“ I loved swimming in the Silverwood Lake and the food was great, I did not get sick but I ate a lot. ”

- Alejandro Torres

“ My most memorable was the last day when we had the bouncer/waterslide in the back of the fire station. Everyone was talking, pushing, and laughing at each other. ” - Sara Leon

“ I had fun on the last day when my mother and I ended up making a small dam in the garden as we were diverting the water from the water slide. ”

- Jennifer Morataya

“ I enjoyed the water slide and bouncer. It was a first time for me. ” - Maynor Morataya

“ Going to Hansen Dam and I could not swim so I had to stand on my tippy toes. ” - Alan Lopez

“ Going camping and being at the lake so I could swim all day. Making colored sand. ” - Itzel Tejada

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Griffith Park Adult Community Center Update



by Stephanie Vendig, President Griffith Park Adult Community Club

The Griffith Park Adult Community Club and GPACC continue to grow and thrive. The Center, operated by LA Department of Recreation and Parks, is continuing to add activities dedicated to the 50+ population in the neighborhoods of Atwater, Echo Park, Elysian Valley, Los Feliz, East Hollywood, Franklin Hills, and Silver Lake. Our newest classes include conversational Spanish, beginning piano, music appreciation and turning your stories into videos. AARP Driver Safety Class is scheduled for the fall. There will be a general meeting and program on Wednesday, October 20 at the Friendship Auditorium on Riverside Drive.

You can participate in classes led by instructors from LA Department of Recreation and Parks, from the Programs for Older Adults of LAUSD, and even in activities taught or lead by 23 of our own members. In addition, you can take advantage of the lunch program (\$1.75 for 60+ and \$3.75

under 60). Sign up for lunch starting at 11:30. Lunch is served at noon. You can learn and play bridge, scrabble, mah jongg or card games of your choice. You can just hang out and talk with friends, or take advantage of our library, and our computer lab where in the afternoon there are coaches to help you get into the internet.

For the latest schedule of events and classes, pick up our monthly newsletter at GPACC at 3203 Riverside Dr. across from the Mulholland Fountain, just south of Los Feliz Blvd.

The facility is open Monday – Friday from 8:30 – 4:30. You can meet our Facility Director, Monty Sutherlin and learn about the activities we offer. We also invite you to join the Griffith Park Adult Community Club for only \$10/year. The club works with Monty to provide quality programming, and supports the center with volunteers and fund raising. Our phone number is (323) 644-5579.

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Echo Park Now is a local source for news,
music, history and events in Echo Park.

Email us your stories/ideas/tips: info@echoparknow.com



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Echo Park Community Calendar

Event	Date	Location	Comments
EPIA Meetings	Every 1st Thursday 7:00 pm	Williams Hall at Barlow Hospital, 2000 Stadium Way	Email EPIA to get monthly reminders of meetings and to be on email list.
EPIA Steering Committee	Every 2nd Monday 7:15 pm	Email EPIAmail@yahoo.com for location	Take an active part in EPIA. Join the Steering Committee.
EPIA Neighborhood Issues Committee	Every 3rd Wednesday 7:00 pm	Williams Hall at Barlow Hospital, 2000 Stadium Way	
Community Safety Meeting (EPSA)	Every 3rd Wednesday 2:00 pm	GEPENC Community room 1572 Sunset Boulevard	Hosted by EPSA. Call (323) 860- 9914 for meeting location.
Citizens Committee to Save Elysian Park	Every 1st Wednesday 7:00 pm	Williams Hall at Barlow Hospital, 2000 Stadium Way	Call (213) 666-9651 for meeting location
Echo Park Chamber of Commerce	Every 3rd Thursday 7:00 pm	Taix Restaurant	Call (213) 630-3032 for further information.
Greater Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council Meeting	Every 4th Tuesday 7:00 pm	GEPENC Community room 1572 Sunset Boulevard	Call (213) 250-3400 for info or visit www.GEPENC.org
Edendale Library Friends Society (ELFS)	Every 2nd Wednesday 7:00 pm	Edendale Library Community room 2011 W. Sunset Blvd.	Find out how you can help your neighborhood's branch.
Positive Energy Group of Echo Park and Silver Lake Area	4th Wednesday 6:00 - 7:00 pm	Edendale Library Community room 2011 W. Sunset Blvd.	For info: www.positiveenergygroup.blogspot.com
EP Farmers Market	Every Friday 3:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Parking lot #663 - half a block south of Sunset Boulevard (323) 463-3171 x13	
Edendale Book Club	Every 3rd Monday 6:30 pm	Edendale Library Community room 2011 W. Sunset Blvd.	

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 Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-540-4000
 Police Non-Emergency 1-877-275-5273
 LAPD Air Support Division 213-485-2600

RAMPART DIVISION

Division Desk 213-484-3400 ext 1
 Vice Unit 213-485-4080
 Division Watch Commander 213-485-4062
 Senior Lead Officer Ford 213-793-0775
 Community Relations 213-484-3400 ext 2
 China Town Sub-Station 213-621-2344

NORTHEAST DIVISION

Division Desk 213-485-2563
 Northeast Report Unit 213-485-2563
 Senior Lead Officer Bobby Hill 213-793-0760
 Senior Lead Officer Al Polehonki 213-793-0763
 Detectives 213-485-2566
 Community Relations 213-485-2548
 Gang Detail 213-847-4263

CLEAN-UP

Abandoned Vehicles..... 311
 Cars Parked in Yards 1-888-524-2845
 Hazardous Waste Disposal Info 1-800-988-6942
 Storm Drains..... 213-485-5391
 Trash & Bulky Item Pick Up..... 1-800-773-2489
 LAFD Brush Clearance 818-374-1111

CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

Department Building & Safety 1-888-524-2845
 Department of Health..... 1-800-427-8700
 Department of Transportation 213-580-1177
 Department of Water & Power 1-800-342-5397
 Parking Enforcement 311
 Loose/Stray Animals/Barking Dogs 888-452-7381
 Legal Aid Client Referral..... 1-800-399-4529
 Operation Bright Lights..... 311
 Street Lighting Repairs..... 311

COMMUNITY SERVICES

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 Copies of Crime & Traffic Reports 213-485-4193
 Dodger's Neighborhood Focus 323-224-2636
 Dodger's Community Affairs 323-224-1435
 North Central Animal Shelter 213-847-1416
 Elysian Park Ranger 323-913-4688
 Health Information..... 211
 Los Angeles City Information 311
 Neighborhood Prosecutor Program 213-847-8045

POLITICAL

1st District Ed Reyes 213-485-3451
 13th District Eric Garcetti..... 323-957-4500
 Congressman Xavier Becerra 213-483-1425
 Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard. 213-628-9230
 State Senator Gil Cedillo..... 213-612-9566
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Continued: Meeting the new planning director

(Continued from page 2)

importance in the community. He acknowledged the struggles in getting a small business up and running in our city and indicated it is his goal to expedite the processes and become more business friendly so that small business can thrive.

A few other topics included:

- A goal of wider sidewalks, rather than wider streets, to encourage pedestrian friendly neighborhoods and commercial corridors. Road widening often just moves a bottle neck further down the line and is not constructive.
- More greenery and tree planting
- Clean up of signage both on the streets as well as illegal signs in businesses.
- Parking – “one size does not fit all” said LoGrade. Parking overlay zones should be adjusted to increase parking in restricted areas and possibly reduce in strong public transit areas.
- Scorched earth expansion to include a bond to mitigate abandoned construction projects. Though

it will not solve the current issues it will help prevent future ones.

Los Angeles was planned around the use of automobiles but expectations of its future use were highly underestimated. As Los Angeles grew horizontally, into suburbia, no real plan was ever executed to tie it all together. We are now in a stage of vertical growth and infill projects that will benefit greatly from a comprehensive plan.

LoGrandes’ goal is to add more protection (restrictions determined by each community – through the community plan) for communities and more incentives for responsible development with the goal of growing in a direction that will encourage development that community’s desire.

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Elysian Heights Elementary School update

Elysian Heights and our music conservatory is looking for volunteers to work with students in grades 3-6. We are looking for volunteers that are willing to commit to working with students for one to two hours a week after either afterschool or during school. If you are interested please call Veronica Herrera Lynch at Elysian Heights Elementary 323.665.6315.

The school is also hosting a Halloween Harvest Celebration on Friday, October 29 beginning at 2:15 PM. There will be food, fun and games!



EPIA is accepting contributions from schools, churches, and other Echo Park organizations for this newsletter. If you'd like to share with us what you're up to, email us at epiamail@yahoo.com.

10 YEARS AGO... in the 2000 issue of EPIAn Ways

A whole ten years ago, on Wednesday, October 11, 2000 the Central City Action Committee opened its doors at the former Los Angeles Fire Station No. 6 at 543 East Edgware.

There was a ribbon cutting ceremony with Councilman Mike Hernandez from District 1 and an open house. They also had an exhibit of historical fire department pictures organized by AHCO, an Angelino Heights preservationist group.

Go to our website and click on Newsletter Archives to read more!



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EPIA presents LAPD officers with certificates of appreciation

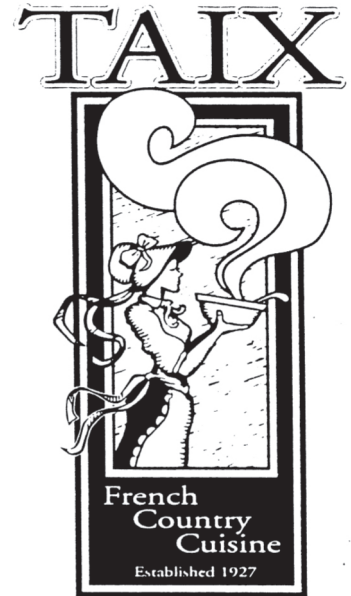
At the Town Hall meeting on September 2, 2010 the EPIA presented officers with certificates for their efforts in shutting down the vending activities at Echo Park Lake.

Sgt. Joel Miller, Captain Steven Ruiz, and SLO John Wolfe were all recognized for these efforts, along with a few other officers present at the meeting. Sgt. Miller said it best, pointing to the additional officers at the back of the room: "These guys gave up a lot of weekends with their families to address the issue. They are the ones you need to thank."

The certificates read: "On behalf of the community of Echo Park, we would like to express our appreciation for your role in giving us back our park for its intended purpose of serving the entire community for recreational use."



photo by Echo Park resident



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Eco in Echo Park: Green living, Echo Park Style

Get your tickets now for the fall 2010 Echo Park Historical Society home tours, coming up on Sunday, November 14, 2010.

After a two year hiatus, the self-guided tour (titled "Eco Echo Park: Urban Sustainable Living") is focused on 10 homes and gardens in the neighborhood that "feature lifestyles of the ecologically minded."

You'll get to see properties that utilize "gray water systems, solar power, natural light and circulation as ways to reduce dependency on public utilities." They will also be showcasing properties that use native and drought-tolerant plants, no-dig gardens and urban farmers that raise livestock and/or crops for personal consumption.

"The tour showcases how older structures can integrate energy-saving ideas, such as, a home that uses repurposed wood and energy-efficient appliances, an environmentally friendly renovation of a 1918 bungalow, and a remodel/expansion maintaining the existing house, integrating the old and the new."

Renew your annual membership to the Echo Park Historical Society for a discounted price of \$15 for admission to the home tour. They are also accepting \$25 donations to help re-light the sign on top of Jensen's Recreation Center in Echo Park. Individual subscriptions are \$15, \$25 for households, \$40 for businesses, and \$250 for a lifetime membership.

Go to www.historicechopark.org to buy your tickets in advance. Save \$5 if you buy your tickets by November 1! If you are interested in volunteering as a docent email edendaleprojects@yahoo.com.

**Eco Echo Park: Urban Sustainable Living
Home and Garden Tour
Sunday, November 14 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Start at Williams Hall in Barlow Hospital**

Continued: CCAC summer

(Continued from page 4)

“The s'mores we ate at camp. I ate so many I had a hard time falling asleep. - Brandon Garcia”

“I love when we are working together and helping each other at rummage sales to make money for our trips. I like when everyone gets along with each other and we work as a team. - Patricia Espinoza”

The above are only a few of the kids who participated in the Summer of Fun. I have to catch them on the run. Summer has seen a growth in our kids also—I mean height growth. Several years ago I secretly put small dots on the wall measuring the height for a few of the boys. They have surpassed their original marks and probably grown a good 6 inches this summer. These little boys are a changing into big boys.

All of our kids are dedicated to the center and eagerly participate in the rummage sales we have throughout the year. Just when we think we are running out of items to sell someone calls us and needs items to be picked up. It looks like we will be having sales about every 2 weeks now. We have to keep the merchandise moving. Since we have lost some of our funding, the money from the rummage sales will assist us in providing after school services.

I know some of the kids were saddened on the last day of summer because our summer worker, Amin with the beautiful eyes, would not be with us in the fall. Perhaps he will come back and assist us with our rummage sales. I heard he was good at making a booby trap for the squirrels at camp. Oh guess he made a good gondolier on the lake at the campsite. We will still miss him.

As always we will continue to provide the youth who attend CCAC a safe place to hang out after school. Many of our kids started their 1st year of high school. Each one of them is excited about starting a new school.

Before I forget, Captain Rollo is making the rounds again and the runaway Furbie has been found.

As always, stop by and see us when you have time.

Continued: Getting involved in the community

(Continued from page 1)

favorites – the horse-corral at the top of “Red Hill.” We frequented the local restaurants and watering-holes, discovered Echo Park’s rich history, and savored the fantastic cultural mix along Sunset Blvd.

In short, we fell head over heels in love. I moved around a lot as a kid – from Texas to the Midwest, the West Coast to the East and then back again – and I’d never had a neighborhood to call my own. Echo Park changed that.

Naturally, once you find a home you love, you want to take care of it. I’d always known, vaguely, that someone was making the decisions that shaped the various neighborhoods where I’d lived, but I didn’t have much invested in those places, so I didn’t get involved. Echo Park was different, though. I felt I had a stake. I wanted to do what I could to be a part of the neighborhood, to understand it, engage with it, promote it, and protect it.

I’d heard that there was an organization called the Echo Improvement Association. I’d never been a booster

type, but I went to a meeting. I don’t remember what was discussed, but I do remember the spirited, even ferocious debates that erupted regarding the various issues facing the neighborhood. I was taken aback, but also impressed. These people really did give a damn about where they lived, and they were doing something about it.

I joined the EPIA, and have been getting increasingly involved ever since. Sometimes the debates can seem like a proverbial storm in a teacup, but the fact is – this neighborhood is my teacup, and I want it to be the best cup of tea around. We’re lucky. Echo Park is one of the great neighborhoods on the planet. It has an indefinable magic to it. But magic alone isn’t sufficient. The fabric of a community is an accumulation of small decisions, and someone is making those decisions. If not us, then someone else who may not have the best interests of Echo Park at heart. Neighborhood activism is a way to do my part, and to connect to my new home. Que viva Echo Parque!

We need your help

This year we had donations from printers, other community groups and residents that has allowed us to continue to produce our newsletter. Due to the cost of printing we run a deficit with each newsletter produced. This is not something that the EPIA can sustain for a long period of time if donations stop coming in. Therefore we are attempting to raise funds for continued support of the newsletter.

Thank you in advance for your Support.

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