



FIG · GARDEN
HOMEOWNERS
ASSOCIATION

FALL NEWSLETTER 2014

www.oldfig.org

ANNUAL FIG GARDEN DINNER

SUNDAY, SEPT. 21

Fig Garden Swim and Racquet Club

4722 N. Maroa Ave

At 5:30 pm; dinner served at 6 pm

Come to celebrate the fall, hear the news, meet neighbors, ask questions of County and City officials, and show that you are a part of Old Fig.

RSVP by Sept. 12

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Dean Alexander

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We live in a wonderful neighborhood. Our neighborhood will remain desirable even if our lawns and landscaping become a little browner. As all neighbors are aware, we are going through a major drought within California, which warrants the water restrictions issued by the City of Fresno. Since we receive water from City of Fresno Public Utilities, we are required to follow restrictions that they issue.

We are currently under Stage 2 water restrictions which means we can only water two times a week between the hours of 12 midnight to 6 am and from 7 pm to 12 midnight. Residences with an odd number address are allowed to water on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and even number addresses are allowed to water on Wednesdays and Sundays.

The current drought is one of the worst droughts we have had in recent years. Droughts are not uncommon to the San Joaquin Valley. We have experienced droughts also in 1976-1977, 1987-1992 and 2007-2009. We obtain our water from groundwater wells. Due to population increase and the reduced supply of surface water for agricultural use, we are overdrafting our groundwater supply and it has been occurring over the past 50 years. Overdrafting occurs when the groundwater table drops due to pumping out more water than is being recharged. In drought years, the drop of the groundwater table is more drastic.

To summarize, I do not believe water restrictions will ever go away due to our

shrinking water aquifer and will require us to rethink how we landscape our homes. We should be looking at drought-tolerant vegetation when we redo landscaping. We live in the best neighborhood in Fresno and even with these water restrictions we will strive to keep our historical look within Fig Garden.

Modifications to Fence Ordinance

Modifications to our current fence ordinance are being reviewed by County staff. The Fig Garden Homeowners Association has provided recommended fence ordinance changes to County staff to help make the fence ordinance more suitable for our historical neighborhood. On the next page is a summary of the proposed Fresno County Fence Ordinance for Fig Garden.

Annual Fig Garden Homeowners Dinner

This year, on Sunday, Sept. 21, we will again be having our annual Homeowners Association dinner at the Fig Garden Swim and Racquet Club. We have invited County Supervisor Andreas Borgeas, Sheriff Margaret Mims, our Sheriff's deputies, our California Highway Patrol representatives, County Public Works Director Alan Weaver and other County staff to the dinner. This would be great time to ask representatives questions and to enjoy your friends and neighbors.

Christmas Tree Lane

Christmas Tree Lane will be celebrating its 92nd season this year. Our opening night will be Tuesday, Dec. 2. The Lane will be

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open through Christmas Day, Dec. 25. Our 2014 walk nights are Tuesday, Dec. 2 and Wednesday, Dec. 10. Let's mark our calendars and enjoy another magical year.

Fig Garden Homeowners Association Membership

I would like to thank all our members in the Fig Garden Homeowners Association. Your voluntary dues have assisted in providing a strong voice for our community. The directors and Association serve voluntarily; none of

your Association fees go toward paying officers. The dues go toward publishing newsletters, insurances, and providing funds that are required to assist in beautification and protection of our neighborhood. For those non-members who wish to become members, please send a check for \$60 to the Fresno Fig Garden Homeowners Association, PO Box 5796, Fresno, CA 93755.

—Dean Alexander

FIG GARDEN HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS & DIRECTORS FOR 2014

President	Dean Alexander	dalex215@gmail.com
Vice-President	Tony Pings	Anthony@pings.com
Treasurer	Robert Ware	robertgware@gmail.com
Secretary	Merilee Amos	merilee.fghoa@gmail.com

Board of Directors:

Mei Leng Cheng	mlcheng6@yahoo.com
Dan Gallagher	dan.gallagher@fresnounified.org
Magda Gilewicz	mgilewicz@gmail.com
Valerie LeMay	vlemay@hotmail.com
Prudence Zalewski	pru@softsyn.net

Fig Garden Fence Ordinance

Applicable Area, Fig Garden Neighborhood Plan

Applies to R1 and R1B, R2 and R3 zoned parcels.
Fences under this overlay require building permits.

- **Ornamental fencing definitions:**
Solid fencing: plaster solid fencing, Clay masonry fencing and wrought iron or steel fencing with an open area less than 70%.
Open fencing: 1) Wrought iron or steel fencing with an open area of 70% or greater. 2) Pilaster fences with an open wrought iron, steel or wood slat fencing with 60% open area.
- **Fencing not allowed under this variance:**
Concrete block, chain link or fabric, welded wire, plywood fencing
- **Side yards – all parcel types:**
Required distance can be reduced 50% for solid ornamental fencing and to 25% for open ornamental fencing.
On side yard of existing or property line fence variance, fence returns shall conform to above side yard standards.

Additional R1B parcel standards:

- Front yard: 5' setback for 4' open ornamental fence, 10' setback for 6' open ornamental fence, 15' setback for solid ornamental fence.
- Side yard, reduce as follows: 50% solid ornamental fence to 25% if open ornamental fencing.
- **Ashlan and Palm Avenues' fence height can be increased to 7 feet from 6.**
- **Fences abutting a canal: 6' above top of canal bank or 6' above average grade within 10' of fence.**
- **Heights of fence at grade differential:**
Height is measured from highest consistent grade within 10 feet of fence.
Retaining walls of up to 30" are allowed when existing conditions require.
- **Historical Fences**
Fences can remain if:
Legally constructed prior to 1960.
Certified by civil engineer with survey documents.
Can be reconstructed as required to maintain or repair.
Must conform with current safety standards.

Fig Garden Annual Dinner

Once again, this ever-popular neighborhood event will be held at the Fig Garden Swim & Racquet Club on Sunday, September 21, starting at 5:30 pm. Sarah Sigg-Hewitt, Special Events Director, along with Debra Petersen, Catering Director, help make this a delightful event with delicious food. Beginning with hearty appetizers and no-host cocktails for our social hour, barbecue-grilled chicken-vegetable skewers will be the main entrée along with Italian Green Beans, pilaf, salad and rolls. Assorted desserts end the meal. We will once again be serving our own David Carlson's Old Fig Garden wine:

both Rototiller Red and Rototiller White at the tables. Invited guests include Supervisor Borgeas and staff, Sheriff Mims and staff, Dr. and Mrs. Castro, as well as CHP, Police Protection District deputies, and others who help our neighborhood during the year. There will be informal presentations from our elected officials and opportunities to ask questions on topics of neighborhood concerns. The cost is \$40 each for members, and \$50 for non-members. Reservations with your check are needed by Monday, Sept. 12.

Fall and Winter Gardens are a Natural in Fresno

By Tom Bohigian, Fig Garden resident

Living in a Mediterranean climate, we are blessed with the ability to grow just about anything, including lots of vegetables in the fall and winter. After you have identified a part of your yard that receives at least a few hours of direct sunlight per day, prepare the soil by adding composted steer manure and compost to improve the tilth of the soil.

I avoid commercial fertilizers. If I am planting a flowering or fruiting plant, I also work in some bone meal. It has a lot of phosphorus and that makes these plants really happy. Over time the soil structure will improve, providing a solid foundation for plant growth. Every time a crop cycle is completed, repeat the process. Good plant nutrition and soil structure are critical!

Starting in September through October, you can plant lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, peas, onions, beets, carrots and other cooler season crops. Starting from seed or buying plants in six-packs from a nursery are options. Don't be afraid to try! If you are starting seeds when it is still warm during the day, place some white shade cloth on the seed beds when they are just getting established. Many nurseries carry this material and it can be reused for years. This will help in the germination of seeds and protect them from our hungry avian (birds) friends.

Whatever you do, just try. I have been gardening since I was a kid. I assure you it isn't that hard, and when you get the hang of it, you will be richly rewarded! If you have a question, feel free to contact me at:

tbohigian@sbcglobal.net

Introducing Fig Garden's New Area Commander

Fig Garden has a new Area Commander for the Sheriff's Office: Lieutenant Frances Devins.

Lt. Devins was hired as a Sheriff's Deputy in 1994 and has worked a variety of assignments which have included: Patrol Deputy, OSS (Operation Safe Streets) Deputy, Property Detective and Ag Task Force Detective. In 2001, she was promoted to Sergeant and has served as a Youth & Community Services Sergeant, the Ag Task Force Sergeant, a Court Services Sergeant and as a Patrol Sergeant. Lt. Devins has also held the collateral assignments of a Companion Officer Program member, Dive

Team member, Companion Officer Coordinator, and most recently Crisis Negotiations Team Leader.

She was promoted to Sheriff's Lieutenant in March 2014 and is currently the Area 2 and Area 4 Commander.

Frances has both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Criminology from Fresno State. She is active in the community supporting the March of Dimes, Children's Hospital of Central California and the Marjaree Mason Centers well as serving as the President of Soroptimist International of Clovis.

Merci, La Boulangerie!

Patrick Bourrel of La Boulangerie, a.k.a. The Village Baker, again generously provided his delicious and decadent goodies for our Annual Meeting in March. We always appreciate his big-hearted gift to our community.

Deputy Henson's Torch Run

By Merilee Amos

We all know our Fig Garden Police Protection Deputies from a professional standpoint but here are some insights into their private passions. Deputy Freddie Henson has been in Old Fig Garden about four years. He started his career in law enforcement in 1999 as a volunteer Explorer for the California Highway Patrol and has been with the Fresno County Sheriff's Office since 2003. On June 17th, he ran in the Special Olympics Torch Run.

His involvement in this very special event began in 2000 as he found himself immediately drawn to the athletes of Special Olympics. Nine years later he assumed command of the Run for the Sheriff's Office. Their first Run was in 2010 and raised \$500. Now an annual tradition, this year's Run netted over \$15,000!

Here's how he describes the experience in his own words: "If I had to describe the Run in one word, I would say it is *glorifying*. It is *glorifying* to see how excited the athletes are, *glorifying* to see the public come out to support them, volunteering their time and donating their money, *glorifying* to see the impact of our professional athletes on the Run and *glorifying* to see those who were running fight through the pain they were feeling to complete the Run as a group." He is quick to say that this is not a race but a team effort—first, to raise awareness, and, second, to raise funds so the athletes can thrive.

Impressive work, Deputy Henson!

Wildlife in Fig Garden

By Dan Gallagher

One of the great things about living in Old Fig is that our neighborhood has a rural feel. With the mature trees and large lots, though, there often comes unwanted interaction with wildlife. A number of our neighbors have had some close encounters with raccoons and opossums lately. These animals can sometimes pose a threat to our pets as they aggressively search for food.

Jenny Huebert, with the Fish and Wildlife Department, says that the best way to control raccoons and opossums is to limit their food supply. "They'll eat just

about anything—especially dog and cat food. They'll eat garbage, and fruit from your trees." Her advice is to always keep pet food indoors, pick up fallen tree fruit, and keep garbage in covered containers. "There are also some companies that trap these animals. These can be found in the Yellow Pages or by Google search, but, ultimately, the best way to keep their population down is to limit the access to food." Because they're nocturnal, you may not see them in your yard, but, chances are they've been there, or will be, so please help by feeding pets indoors.

Fig Garden Electronic Neighborhood Watch

If you would like to receive email notifications about crime events in this area, send your email address to **FigGardenWatch@gmail.com** to be included in the mailings in order to receive: time sensitive neighborhood crime alerts, and monthly crime statistics compiled by the deputies on duty through the Fig Garden Police Protection District.

Thank you for sponsoring Old Fig! Please join the Fig Garden Homeowners Association. We work to protect and strengthen our unique neighborhood. Our finances are fragile. The modest dues are \$60/year. Please mail your check payable to:

FGHA
PO BOX 5796
Fresno CA 93755

or pay on our website: www.oldfig.org

Unlike most homeowners groups, our dues are voluntary and we depend on the generosity of our fellow neighbors. Dues money goes to pay fees associated with filing documents that protect the quality of life and integrity of the neighborhood, printing and mailing newsletters to keep you informed, and running the www.oldfig.org web site.

