

FIG GARDEN HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2005 – 7:00 P.M.
POWERS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – 110 E. Swift

This agenda for the meeting will be:

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Introductory Remarks
3. Treasurer's Report
4. President's Report
5. Nomination of Directors and Voting
6. Discussion of Matters of General Interest
7. Adjournment

March 2005

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends & Neighbors:

Robert Vartan, former president of the Fig Garden Homeowners Association, wrote in 1989, "Your board, throughout the past year, continued its historic duties as set forth in its bylaws and articles of incorporation to promote, encourage and maintain the integrity, beauty and value of the neighborhood. The predecessor of the homeowners association ~ the Fig Garden Men's Club ~ was incorporated in 1947 as an informal organization established by the earliest residents in the area. This commitment to the neighborhood by its residents makes Old Fig Garden the most special residential area in the Central Valley."

The words remain true today.

Our nine member board of directors consists of smart and committed men and women. One Fresno Neighborhood Alliance activist observed that Old Fig is now the most effective homeowners group in the community because its residents get directly involved with public policy and they work to organize other established neighborhoods.

Please know ~

● Our **Annual Dinner** is scheduled for Sun., Sept. 25. Becky and Barry Barisic will host the event at their beautiful home on the northwest corner of Van Ness/Ashlan. Catering is by Cosmo Tavern and beverage is included. The fabulous "Lisa's Big Night Out" band will perform again. The event has sold out the past three years. RSVP is required. Tickets cost \$30.

● **Christmas Tree Lane** opens on Thurs., Dec. 1 and ends on Sun., Dec. 25. Opening night kicks off at 6 p.m. Walk nights will be Thurs., Dec. 1 and Wed., Dec. 7. Van Ness is closed to vehicles for walkers from 6 to 10 p.m.

● **Law Enforcement** officials have asked Old Fig residents to report suspicious activity in the area. Arrests have been made with the help of citizen observers. Please call 488-3111 if you see unusual activity. Special thanks to the families now paying \$225 annually for the enhanced law enforcement coverage provided by the Fig Garden Police Protection District.

● Email me if you want to receive time sensitive e-alerts (phoebe@phoebehoward.com). Alerts involve law enforcement issues and notice of important public hearings that impact Old Fig.

● Thank you for supporting the Fig Garden Homeowners Association. Please encourage new friends to join. [\$52/year. Mail to FGHA, PO Box 5796, Fresno, CA 93755] Unlike homeowner groups in other parts of the region and throughout the state, dues are voluntary. The dollars are spent on public policy projects designed to maintain the integrity of the neighborhood. We also monitor permit requests for commercial activity and work to prevent actions that will hurt the neighborhood. Board members attend public hearings and encourage elected officials to adopt and maintain policies that protect Old Fig and other established neighborhoods. Find information at www.oldfig.org

● The annual homeowners meeting is on Wed., April 6 at 7pm at Powers Elementary School, 110 E. Swift. Law enforcement will field questions. Three board members are up for re-election.

● Monthly board meetings are held at 7 p.m. the second Wednesday of the month at the firehouse on Wishon. Email us to put an item on the agenda.

A unified neighborhood is one that will remain strong and healthy. Get involved.

Cheers to a fabulous spring ~

Phoebe Wall Howard

225-3116/daytime or phoebe@phoebehoward.com

THUMBS UP

Thumbs Up to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors for its 5-0 vote on February 8 to finance a one-year graffiti abatement pilot program in rural and urban Fresno County. Chairwoman Judy Case spoke of her commitment to quality of life issues. Board newcomer Henry R. Perea, who sponsored the item, discussed the need to aid senior citizen homeowners burdened by graffiti. Supervisor Susan B. Anderson acknowledged the need to prepare the county for economic development outreach. Homeowners from rural and urban areas of the county testified in support of the graffiti abatement strategy.

Call 621-TAGS or 621-8247.

YOU'RE INVITED: OPERA ON VAN NESS

Tickets to "Opera on Van Ness" - a spectacular one-hour concert featuring opera's greatest hits and Broadway's most memorable melodies - are selling quickly.

The concert, performed by internationally acclaimed soprano Robin Follman and The Fresno Grand Opera ensemble artists and chorus, will be held Sunday, May 22.

The event will be hosted by The First Congregational Church of Fresno, 2131 N. Van Ness Blvd., just south of Clinton. It will raise money to refurbish the pipe organ, the only instrument of its kind between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

A 4 p.m. champagne reception will be catered by Erna's Elderberry House. The concert begins at 5 p.m. A reception and silent auction will follow in the courtyard.

Tickets cost \$45.

The Big Red Church hosts concerts and rehearsals for the Fresno Grand Opera, Fresno Pacific University, Fresno State University, the Central California Children's Choir and the Central California American Guild of Organists.

"Opera on Van Ness" is sponsored by The Pine Inn of Carmel-By-The-Sea. [Additional support has been provided by The Fig Garden Swim & Racquet Club and Old Fig Families.]

Opera on Van Ness celebrates music and community.

Tickets may be purchased at the Fig Garden Bookstore in Fig Garden Village with cash or checks payable to FCCF.

For more information, please call 225-3116.

CHRISTMAS TREE LANE UPDATE

Dean Alexander, Lane Coordinator

The 2004 winter holiday season brought tens of thousands of visitors from throughout California and the Central Valley to Christmas Tree Lane. Our 82-year-old tradition was alive and well!

Lights turned on Wed., Dec. 1 and remained lit until Sun., Dec. 6.

We saw carloads of children and families from all walks of life. Santa greeted everybody at the end of the lane and heard squeals of joy in dozens of languages.

Our thanks to the families that made contributions to the lane fund at the end of the lane. That money is used to install and take down the massive string of lights woven through the deodars on Van Ness Boulevard. This year, the project also updated electrical systems and installed switches at the canal and railroad crossing to prevent circuits from overloading ~ as happened in the past.

The goal of the Fig Garden Homeowners Association is to continue the tradition that depends on donations for its upkeep. Christmas Tree Lane is not designed to make money for the organization. Rather, it is a community celebration also supported by the Fresno County Sheriffs Department the Fresno Police Department and the California Highway Patrol.

We are especially grateful to the families who, for decades have supported the non-profit project in its original form. It is by design that the families of Van Ness keep the lane from being ruined by commercialism. A reporter for Sunset magazine ~ when visiting Fresno for a holiday 2005 story ~ commented that the organic nature of the celebration added to its charm and attraction. We thank our families for respecting tradition and valuing our mission to remain a grass roots operation.

There are additional improvements planned for the lane. Your financial support continues to be important as running the lane costs tens of thousands of dollars.

Exciting things are planned for 2005. The lane is scheduled to open on Thurs., Dec. 1 with walks scheduled for Thurs., Dec. 1 and Wed., Dec. 7.

We are assembling a Christmas Tree Lane team to oversee walk nights. We need a dozen smart and energized men, women and children to help coordinate the effort.

Please contact me at DAlex215@aol.com or 225-9088 if you think you may have the time and passion.

FIG GARDEN POLICE PROTECTION DISTRICT EXPANSION UPDATE

By Bill Pipes,

Fig Garden Police Protection District Board Member

The Fig Garden Police Protection District provides dedicated patrol and law enforcement coverage of Fig Garden through a contract with the Fresno County Sheriff. The coverage is for those Fig Garden neighborhoods 1) east of Palm, west of Maroa, south of Shaw, and north of Griffith, and 2) bounded by Griffith, Van Ness, Dakota, and Palm. The service is paid for through a special assessment fee that's included with the covered resident's property taxes. Sections of Old Fig that fall outside this defined area do not have dedicated law enforcement service. They share sheriff's service within a beat that stretches from the San Joaquin River to south of downtown Fresno. Because of this dedicated coverage, the District historically has had a very low crime rate and it is one of the reasons that Fig Garden continues to be a desirable place to live and has property values that continue to rise.

The District is proposing to expand its coverage to include Fig Garden homes that are located in the county and west of Palm, east of Maroa, and south of Griffith and Dakota. The District soon will be applying to the Local Agency Formation Commission of Fresno County for expansion. The District currently is evaluating proposals from land use consultants to assist with the application to LAFCO. Approval by LAFCO is expected to be contingent upon the results of a vote by the residents and/or owners in the expanded areas. We are waiting on a determination by County counsel whether the vote will be by mail or at the ballot box. If by ballot box, the issue is scheduled for November 2005.

The District is looking to Fig Garden homeowners for help in raising the awareness of this issue among. If you want to help, please contact me at 264-6128 ext. 118 or wpipes@geomatrix.com.

Members of the board are Rusty VanRozeboom, Bill Pipes and Bill Greenwood.

UPCOMING FIG GARDEN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BENEFIT ASSESSMENT VOTE

By Donald R. Franson, Jr.

Fig Garden Fire Protection District Board President

This message is for the residents of the Fig Garden Fire Protection District, which is the area of Old Fig Garden bounded by Shaw to the north, Palm to the west, Maroa to the east, and the canal to the south, with a few variations toward the south end. This district was formed approximately 63 years ago and the

firehouse sits on Wishon, between Gettysburg and Indianapolis. Our local fire protection services are provided by contract with the California Department of Forestry (CDF) and includes medical emergencies. These services were initially funded by property taxes, but those revenues were capped in 1978 with the passage Proposition 13. With an increase in costs over the years, additional revenue was necessary. In 1992, the first 5-year Benefit Assessment adopted by residents of the District. This Assessment was continued for another 7 years, which expires on July 1, 2005. Both Benefit Assessments passed overwhelmingly.

The current Assessment is approximately \$230 per household and provides approximately \$168,000 per year, or 20% of the total needed. Current property taxes provide another 50% of the total needed, or approximately \$414,000. In order to meet our current year needs, 25% of our current budget is from reserves built up in the past.

Our station is currently staffed by 6 paid CDF firefighters, two for each 48-hour shift. When we began our initial study last Spring to renew the Benefit Assessment, we looked at the possibility of increasing our staffing levels. Unfortunately, given the fiscal realities facing every facet of local government, your three person Board of Directors concluded that the best option was to continue the current level of service. We reached this consensus after our recent Town Hall meeting at the fire station. The initial cost of the new Benefit Assessment will be approximately \$530 per household, or approximately \$45 per month. This is an increase of approximately \$25 per month from the current assessment.

Formal notice of the Benefit Assessment and ballots will be mailed to each District residence in approximately the third week of March, and will be followed by a community informational meeting to respond to any questions, shortly thereafter.

The fire protection board is committed to keeping the local station open with proper and efficient staffing levels.

For more information, contact board member Jim Reid at 222-0839 or jreid@sbcglobal.net

ACADEMIC ALTERNATIVES: THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE AT FRESNO HIGH

*By Laura Sponberg,
Fresno High IB Coordinator*

Baccalaureate has taken on a different meaning in the U.S., but in French it means High School Diploma. So the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma is actually an International High School Diploma, accepted at more than 100 countries around the world. The Class of 2006 at Fresno High is making FHS history. They are the first class to be able to try for this honor. It is so well respected by U.S. Colleges that students who gain the IB Diploma can start most universities, including the UCs, as sophomores! For students who take just a few IB classes, it works the same as AP with college credit given for those who score well on the tests. This is a rigorous program, where students do summer homework and support each other with study groups.

The IB isn't just about tests. It is a program designed to produce well-rounded, educated young men and women who will be extremely successful at college. Colleges tell us that the best-prepared students they have are IB Diploma students. IB students who love English and History also learn scientific enquiry and statistics. Those who prefer Math and Science end up literate and able to understand historic consequences. Diploma students do an

independent senior research paper, which is great preparation for college. They get out into the neighborhood to do *Creativity, Action, and Service* hours. This volunteer service aspect is built into the entire program.

We currently have 27 juniors, 42 sophomores, and 62 freshmen in the IB program, with others taking just a few classes. Next year we'll have all four grades and hope to have many more students taking at least 1 or 2 IB classes. These terrific students work hard and participate in every club and sport we offer.

Fresno High already has a great Marketing Academy, a wonderful Performing Arts department, and an award-winning JROTC program. Now we have IB, and we're planning to add an Environmental Science program. We want every student to find a program in which he or she can be interested.

We've held a registration night already but parents can still call and register students. Also, a student can visit on any Tuesday and shadow a freshman going to classes. [Note: Parents should tell their school of the absence after scheduling the visit with us.]

The shadow program is a nice way for students to find out if the program is a good fit.

For more information, contact me at Lspong@juno.com or 485-7620 at home.

THOUGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM FROM A FAMILY ON VAN NESS BOULEVARD

By Kelly Pipes

Before enrolling at Fresno High, we considered transferring our son to another high school. Then we learned about the International Baccalaureate program. We told our son that, on the upside, he would graduate with a year of college credit; and that, on the downside, he would have to put in the extra work needed to graduate with a year of college credit.

There are even more benefits to the Fresno High program: Challenging academics, energetic and involved teachers, increasing involvement from Old Fig families and a diverse group of interested and interesting students. We are proud to be parents of a member of the Class of 2008.

If you have questions and want to talk to another Old Fig parent, call me at 248-0770 or email me at billkellypipes@comcast.net

REPORT UNSAFE DRIVERS

CHP Captain Gary Fief, Fresno Area Commander

We welcome your input and feedback to make traffic in unincorporated Fresno County safe and efficient. Contact us at 441-5441 if you observe a vehicle being operated in an unsafe manner. Note the time of day, location and provide a brief description of the driver and vehicle (including license plate). We will provide patrol in the area and send a letter to the registered owners advising them that a concerned community member has notified us. You can help us improve the overall traffic environment in unincorporated Fresno County.

NEW LAW

CHP Captain Gary Fief, Fresno Area Commander

Children MUST be secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint (safety seat or booster seat) **IN THE BACK SEAT OF A VEHICLE** until they are at least 6 years old or weigh **at least** 60 pounds.

The Fresno Area CHP would like to be aware of your concerns involving traffic in the Fig Garden Area. Feel free to contact at us (559) 441-5441 or, in the case of an emergency, call 911. Calling on your cell phone will connect you directly to a Fresno Area CHP Dispatcher.

Tree DoctoRx

John K. Pape, Certified Arborist

Trees are the backbone of your landscape. The mature landscape in the Fig Garden area is your refuge from the hard edges of life and connects you to nature. It adds value to your home, business and community both monetarily and in your quality of life. Sometimes the trees and plants in your landscape get sick or have problems. Springtime is the beginning of such problems in the forms of insect, bacteria, and fungi. With today's technology and awareness, there are many solutions to keep your landscapes healthy.

In addition, tree trimming can be performed at this time of year. It is recommended some trees such as Japanese Maple, Flowering Pear, and many more trees are trimmed after they leaf out. However, you would want to make sure a certified arborist is overseeing the work performed on your trees at any time of the year.

Instead of removing a 50+ year old tree, there might be a solution to save a major asset to your landscape. Tree DoctoRx believes in educating our local community. Make our trees and landscapes healthy.

For more information contact me at 322-4095.

OLD FIG GARDEN TREES

As we all know a big part of the charm of Old Fig Garden is the trees. Old Fig Garden was planted with particular trees assigned to certain streets. This added continuity to the street. The streets that have the majority of their original planting are the most beautiful and the most inviting. Over the years, some trees have died or have been removed for one reason or another.

We encourage residents of Old Fig Garden to help re-establish the street tree planting as it was originally instituted.

Below is a partial list of the trees and the streets they occupy.

<u>Deador Cedar</u>	<u>Camphor Tree</u>	<u>Manna Gum</u>
Van Ness	Swift	Rialto
Wishon	Saginaw	
<u>Modesto Ash</u>	<u>California Pepper</u>	<u>Cork Oak</u>
Vagedes	Indianapolis	Gettysburg
Safford		Buckingham
Harrison		
Santa Ana		
Lansing		
Griffith		

<u>Arizona Cypress</u>	<u>Calif. Sycamore</u>	<u>Silk Oak</u>
Arthur	Wilson	Holland
Sussex	Santa Ana	
<u>Chinese Hackberry</u>		
Thorne		

A REQUEST FROM KARA ENOS

*Community Projects Manager,
Volunteer Center of Fresno County*

The Volunteer Center of Fresno County is seeking volunteers for its Adult Crossing Guard Program.

There are more than 30 elementary schools throughout Fresno Unified. The school district counts on volunteers to help keep the children safe. I am seeking volunteers to participate in the crossing guard program. I need 2 volunteers per shift per school for a morning shift (7 to 8 a.m.) and an afternoon shift (2 to 3 p.m. or 1 to 2 p.m. on early dismissal day.)

All volunteers must attend training. We also offer a stipend of \$2.50 per shift to cover the cost of transportation for our volunteers, if needed. Any support your family or business could offer would be greatly appreciated.

Please contact Kara Enos at 237-3101 or kenos@pacbell.net



MEMBERSHIP DUES

It is time again to support the Fig Garden Homeowners Association. Because of your support, this organization is able work maintain our unique neighborhood and its values.

A return envelope and statement is enclosed for your convenience. Thank you again for your continued support.

**FIG GARDEN HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
OFFICERS & DIRECTORS FOR 2005**

President:	Phoebe Wall Howard	225-3116
Vice President	Tony Pings	222-1073
Treasurer	David Boyd	229-9430

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chris Campbell	248-0423
David Carlson	243-9165
Sue Downey	226-1991
Magda Gilewicz	228-1153
Dan Kevorkian	226-4432
Merilee Amos	432-3105
Secretary	
Jan Booth	Day 276-2923 Evening 439-8175

SLATE OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors nominates the following people for three year terms on the Board (all are incumbents):
Magda Gilewicz, Phoebe Wall Howard and Dan Kevorkian