



FIG · GARDEN
HOMEOWNERS
ASSOCIATION

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2012

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Wednesday, March 21, 2012, 7pm
Fig Garden Swim & Raquet Club, 4722 N. Maroa

Meeting Agenda:

1. Call to order
2. Introductory Remarks
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Nomination of Directors & voting
5. Discussion of matters of general interest
6. Adjournment

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Dean Alexander

Dear friends and neighbors,

I am honored to be serving as the incoming president of the Fig Garden Homeowners' Association. Throughout the years many fine Fig Garden residents have served in this capacity and my goal is to continue this tradition. I hope my tenure is as worthy as the recent past presidents'—Tony Pings, Louise Yenovkian, and Phoebe Howard—who have laid the groundwork to make the neighborhood a wonderful place to live.

I have been a Fig Garden resident for over 20 years. During this time I have seen the economy prosper and recede. I have seen home values skyrocket and plummet. At present we are on the verge of recovery from a recession that rivals no other except the major depression of the 1930s. During this recession our neighborhood has endured. Actions from the past Fig Garden board members have assisted in the healthy prosperity of our neighborhood. Most notable is the recent Caltrans grant, which will assist in protecting and in planning the future of our wonderful neighborhood. This grant does require a contribution from the neighborhood. Along with the dues, which are much appreciated, if you can provide additional donation towards this grant, it would help to defer the costs.

The Fig Garden Homeowners' Association is a mighty voice which provides protection for our neighborhood. County officials often use us as a sounding board for proposed developments and

changes within our neighborhood. The Fig Garden Homeowners' Association membership is strictly voluntary. The nominal dues do assist in providing a strong voice for our community.

Longtime residents of Fig Garden are greatly aware of the benefits of living in this historically wonderful neighborhood with a park-like setting with its large estate lots and our gorgeous tree-lined streets. During the Christmas season we open our homes and streets for the historical Christmas Tree Lane event. I may have a bias, since I am the Christmas Tree Lane Coordinator, but the event is grass-roots and no other Christmas event rivals what we have created. During the Christmas season we have over 200,000 visitors travel down Van Ness Boulevard. Opening our neighborhood to visitors has created inconveniences with traffic congestion and litter. Until recently, the event has been relatively free of crime. The recent stabbing on the second walk night concerns the Fig Garden Homeowners' Association Board and the neighbors. We will continue to work with law enforcement to create a safe environment for our residents and our visitors.

Due to the economy, crime continues to rise throughout our country and it has impacted our neighborhood as well. One advantage our neighborhood has to fight crime is the Fig Garden Police Protection District, which provides supplemental services to our core area. The core is an area bounded by Palm,

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Maroa, Lansing, and Shaw. The District contracts with the Sheriff's Office to provide additional staffing within the Fig Garden area. Due to limited funds, complete 24-hour, 7-day-a-week coverage cannot be provided; however, we do have coverage 17 hours per day. The Fig Garden Homeowners' Association Board continues to encourage the Fig Garden Police Protection District commissioners to look at including areas outside the core, so we can provide this wonderful protection to all our neighbors.

The Fig Garden Police Protection District commissioners along with the Fresno County Sheriff's Office have created a neighborhood watch program, and Board member Prudence Zalewski has played a vital part in establishing it. We are looking for additional block captains to assist in this neighborhood program. Information about our neighborhood crime alerts and

Sheriff's responses to crime are provided to the block captain through emails. The block captains then disperse general information to the neighbors. Protection of our neighborhood requires vigilance by everyone. The eyes of many are far better than the eyes of one. Please report any suspicious activity to your block captain and the Sheriff's Office at 488-3111.

Let me close in saying that we live in a wonderful neighborhood. With your help, our neighborhood will continue to prosper. As everyone knows, change is inevitable but it is my desire and the Board's desire to steer these changes to the benefit of the Fig Garden community.

Fig Garden Homeowners Association Officers & Directors for 2012

President: Dean Alexander

dalex215@gmail.com

Vice President: Tony Pings

Anthony@pings.com

Treasurer: Robert Ware

robertgware@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Merilee Amos

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Magda Gilewicz

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Nick Hustedde

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Prudence Zalewski

pru@softsyn.net

Neighborhood Watch in Your Neighborhood

by Prudence Zalewski

The Program: This Neighborhood Watch Program is different. It's simple. It's easy. It is an electronic or virtual Neighborhood Watch. We don't need to meet, we just need to communicate. Email is the mechanism to connect easily and quickly. We can't knock on doors anymore. We don't have the time.

Here's how the program works. Block Captains collect email addresses and other contact information for their block. The names are compiled into a list and neighbors on the block share this list. Important safety information is then sent to Block Captains as it comes in. Block Captains, in turn, relay the information to neighbors. All of this is done through email.

Here is a sample of what gets sent out: monthly crime statistics for Old Fig, special crime alerts from Sheriff Margaret Mims, hot prowler alerts from our deputies,

e-alerts from neighbors, crime prevention tips, and other information to keep you safe. The December crime report is displayed at the end of this newsletter. It will open your eyes to what is happening in Old Fig.

Please consider being a Block Captain or joining in to receive electronic alerts. Contact Prudence Zalewski: Pru@SoftSyn.net, tel. 559-349-3603

Community Clean-up Program Service

A reminder to Fig Garden residents that the County offers once a year a \$40 voucher toward on-call bulky item pick-up service with Allied Waste. To receive the voucher and more information, call the County's Resources Division at 600-4259; to schedule a pick up after receiving the voucher call Allied Waste at 275-1551. The size of the items that can be disposed of in total is 3x3x6ft for \$40. If you have more than this volume of material, the \$40 will be applied as a credit towards the total. Take advantage of this service.

Know Your Neighbor: Philip Levine— United States Poet Laureate

By Prudence Zalewski and Magda Gilewicz

Our neighbor Philip Levine was appointed Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress on October 17, 2011. Phil said he was “totally astonished” and unprepared for it and all of the attention that came his way. He admitted that he “has never sold so many books.” One of the exciting benefits for him is “meeting people he would not normally meet,” and, judging from his schedule as Poet Laureate, he is meeting a lot of people in a lot of places, including an opening reading at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., for a group of 700, which included his extended family, a reading for the AFL-CIO, introduced by its president, an informal class with 11-year-old aspiring writers in Harlem who grilled him for almost two hours, and a reading in Chicago with Polish and American Nobel Prize winners, among others. He is the author of 20 books of poetry and a recipient of the Pulitzer Prize, two National Book Awards, and two National Book Critic Circle Awards. What inspires his writing is the plight of the working classes, the mystery of childhood and how we relate to others, the Sierras, and poetry itself. He is constantly reading and recharging himself and his ideas.

Phil and his family moved to Fig Garden in 1973; here’s how he describes it in *The Bread of Time*: “...since my wife happened across exactly the house she wanted—a small California farmhouse on an enormous lot dotted with orange trees and with room for a large garden—and, since walking through this place on a blazing July afternoon, the thought came so clearly to me I declaimed it—‘I can write here’—and the price was reasonable, we bought.” And so they stayed and raised their family in Fig Garden, in their charming house with a big yard, Phil writing in his small book-lined study, Franny gardening and painting, bringing in their many friends for dinners and conversation. Even though Phil’s teaching took him to many parts of the country, especially New York, and even though they put their roots in Brooklyn too, they keep coming back to their Fig Garden house because, as Phil still firmly believes, that’s where he can write.

As for the future, Phil is debating about taking a second year as poet laureate, which, he said, he would if “they would leave me alone.” The Library of Congress is “they” and Phil said that they “do not like me being too political.” He has, however, ignored their request to date and continues to be himself.

Our Valley

By Philip Levine

We don’t see the ocean, not ever, but in July and August when the worst heat seems to rise from the hard clay of this valley, you could be walking through a fig orchard when suddenly the wind cools and for a moment you get a whiff of salt, and in that moment you can almost believe something is waiting beyond the Pacheco Pass, something massive, irrational, and so powerful even the mountains that rise east of here have no word for it.

You probably think I’m nuts saying the mountains have no word for ocean, but if you live here you begin to believe they know everything. They maintain that huge silence we think of as divine, a silence that grows in autumn when snow falls slowly between the pines and the wind dies to less than a whisper and you can barely catch your breath because you’re thrilled and terrified.

You have to remember this isn’t your land. It belongs to no one, like the sea you once lived beside and thought was yours. Remember the small boats that bobbed out as the waves rode in, and the men who carved a living from it only to find themselves carved down to nothing. Now you say this is home, so go ahead, worship the mountains as they dissolve in dust, wait on the wind, catch a scent of salt, call it our life.

(from *News of the World*)

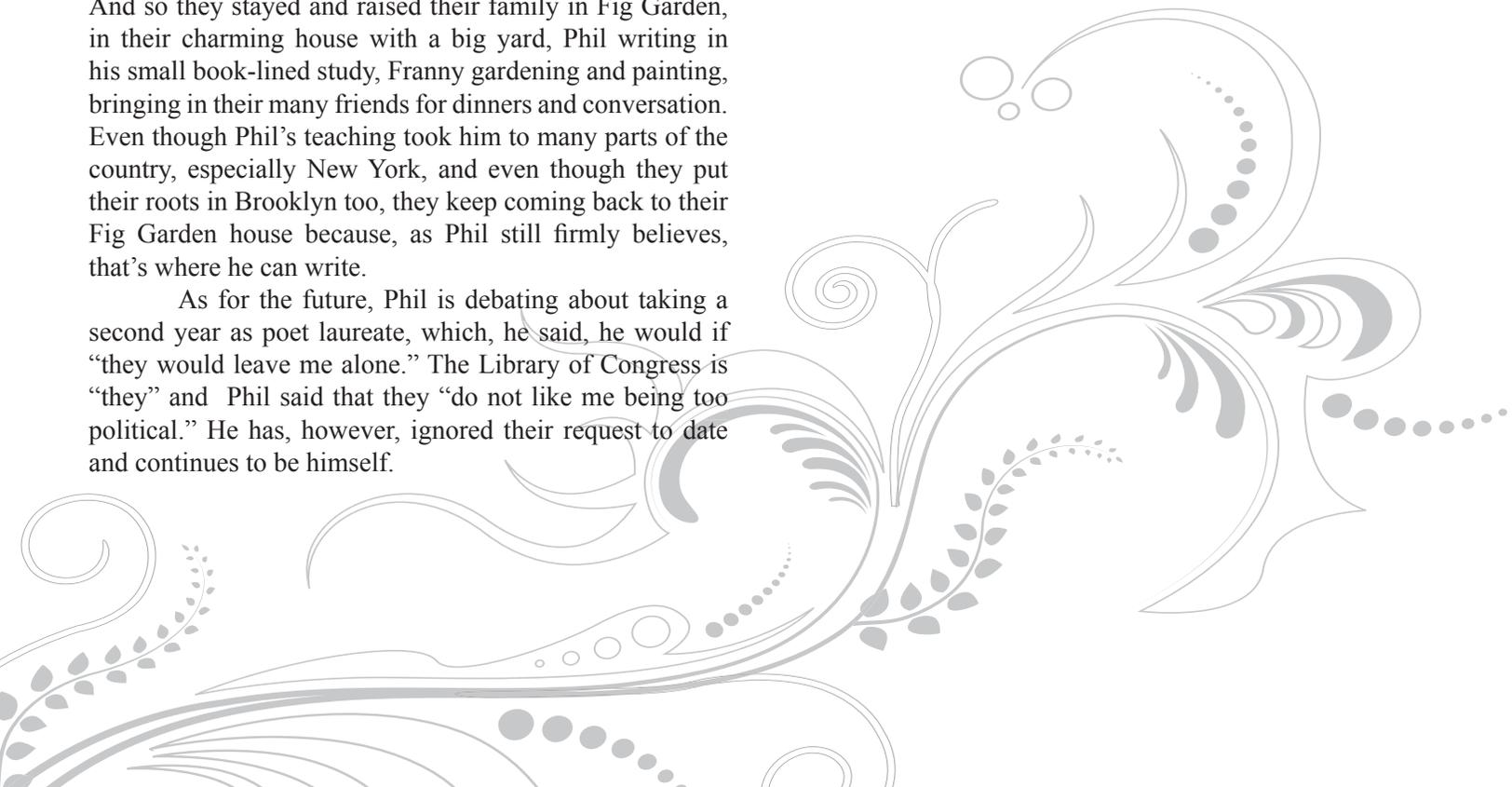


Fig Garden/Caltrans Grant Progress Update

By Louise Yenovkian

As you know we were awarded a \$297,000 Caltrans Transportation Planning Grant. We have been working actively on this project since 2010, and 2011 proved to be exciting and busy.

Community Design & Architecture, a firm from Oakland was awarded the project from a candidate pool in 2011. They were chosen for their outstanding creative work on traffic calming measures and implementation throughout California and the U.S.. They bring a team of transportation and outreach specialists and arborists. They will be holding public engagement meetings and workshops, conducting neighbor/stakeholder interviews, data collection, conducting tree/vegetation surveys, and handling media relations throughout 2012. Each homeowner within the project area will be notified of these endeavors so that you may have input and may be involved in the planning process. Three community workshops will take place during this year. A website will also be set up to reflect the study development and public engagement process.

Through your generosity, Fig Garden homeowners have so far donated 50% of what was needed as our share of the funding. We are therefore asking Fig Garden neighbors to support our fundraising efforts again this year to meet our cash goal.

We need your support!!! Please help us with your tax deductible donation. Any amount will help towards achieving this exciting goal for Old Fig. We have added a special line item for such donations on our annual FGHA dues form, or you can also donate through the secure PayPal link on our website. Remember—this project is for you and the future of preserving Old Fig. By 2035 Old Fig Garden will be surrounded by high density along the Blackstone/Shaw/West/Shields corridor.

A Note from Supervisor Susan B. Anderson

As I begin my 12th and last year on the County Board of Supervisors and reflect on what will be more than 24 years working in County government (10 years as County Clerk and almost three years as a Deputy District Attorney), I have to admit that there will be some things that I will miss less than others about my work with the County.

I do love working with the people in the County and helping them to understand how County government works and sometimes does not work. I have a lot of work to do this year as I wind down and I look forward to working with my Fig Garden constituents.

This will be a busy year for Fig Garden, one that I

expect will lead to long-term benefits for your neighborhood. That is why it is important for you to become informed and to take an active role, as many of you have in the past, in participating in these plans. One of these projects involves the Caltrans Community-Based Planning Grant, which provides funds for Fig Garden residents, the County and the City to work together to find the best ways to deal with the main transportation issues in your neighborhood.

I encourage you to join with us and with the Fig Garden Homeowners Association in contributing to the discussion of these and other Fig Garden issues so that you can maintain and improve the quality of life in your neighborhood.

I would like to take the opportunity to introduce my new assistant, Marty Murphy, who is looking forward to helping the people of Fig Garden. She replaces Christy Bourbon, who had worked in my office the last 10 years and recently accepted the opportunity to work for Congressman Jim Costa. Marty is also a District 2 resident and joins us after having been an assistant for Supervisor Debbie Poochigian. She will be working with my other assistant, Mike Chen, on Fig Garden issues. Mike and his wife, Magda Gilewicz, have lived in Fig Garden for over 20 years. You can see them walking, biking and swimming in Fig Garden with their daughter, Lucienne.

Mike, Marty and I look forward to hearing from you and we are always available to help out with your concerns. Please contact us at 600-2000, 600-2002, or email us at district2@co.fresno.ca.us

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree

by Dean Alexander

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree, much pleasure you give to us. Christmas Tree Lane has completed its 89th year. The event was a success although we had one major rocky point. Let's get this unfortunate event out of the way first. As many of you are aware, a stabbing occurred on the second walk night. The stabbing that occurred appeared to be gang-related. The victim survived and is recovering. This is the first major incident that has occurred during Christmas Tree Lane's long 89-year history. In addition, walk-only nights have been in existence over 20 years. The Christmas Tree Lane committee and the Fig Garden Homeowners' Association will continue to meet with law enforcement to explore ways to make our event safe for neighbors and visitors.

Vendors continue to be a nuisance to the commercial-free atmosphere that we try to create for our neighbors and guests. We will continue to work with law enforcement, the City and the County to resolve issues associated with these vendors.

On the bright side, this was a fantastic year! The Christmas displays were bigger than ever. Year after year, our local high schools produce works of art that are

displayed on the Lane. Southern California Edison donated five large Christmas displays. The Christmas Tree Lane committee refurbished the Southern California Edison displays adding LED bulbs to reduce energy demand. The displays consisted of a fire truck, train, space ship, a large elf with presents, and a large jack-in-the-box. They are a great addition to our Lane.

I continually have visitors from other parts of California, from the greater United States and even from abroad who comment on how wonderful our event is and how they have not seen any other event like this. This event is a grass-roots event. Fig Garden residents, Terry & Kristi Cole, Russ & Becky Linquist, Lauri Leone-Stine and I donate a significant amount of time to make it a reality. Storage for Christmas display items would be a major issue if not for Gary Catron, who provides complimentary storage for us during the year. A special thanks to Shawn Caglia and Jordon Hayden for doing a fantastic job on the tree decorations—every Deodar cedar tree was lit on the Lane. I finally would like to thank Jan Booth for her administrative skills and support that she has provided for over 20 years.

Christmas Tree Lane will always have a special spot in my heart. This sentiment is also felt by many other Fig Garden residents and visitors. I will continue to try to make Christmas Tree Lane a very special event. Let's keep the trees lit and let's always enjoy the Christmas season.

Fig Garden Crime Statistics - December 1-31, 2011

by Deputy Alan Kelzer

December 2011 had a total of 51 incidents. Of those incidents, there were 44 arrests (86% Arrest rate). There were 9 field interviews conducted near the Old Fig Garden area. There were 5 gang contacts in the area, excluding the contacts related to the stabbing on Christmas Tree Lane. The residential burglaries were very low this month, with a total of 6. Auto theft has increased, with 5.

If you see suspicious subjects or vehicles in your area, whether or not you are in a hurry, take a good minute, look at these guys and ask yourself if they really belong here. Then call the Sheriff at 488-3111. Complacency is one of our worst enemies. Your call could result in us contacting these guys, searching them and maybe arresting them. The Deputies can't be everywhere at once, but with the help of residents calling in more often, we can keep criminals out of our neighborhood.

Just remember, your husbands, wives, parents, grandparents, siblings and children are out and about in Old Fig. One call is all it takes to create that gap between them and the evil that lurks and lingers. Be safe.

Fig Garden Police Protection District
(Shaw to Lansing/ Palm to Maroa)

1. Intoxicated subject/ Lansing & Van Ness (1 Arrest made)
2. Residential burglary/ Arcade & Palm (No arrests)
Unlocked and open sliding glass door. Property taken were computers
Occurred between Sunday at 2:30pm and Monday at 5:45am
3. Vehicle burglary/ Shaw & Wishon (No arrests)
4. DUI arrest/ Maroa & Sierra Madre (1 Arrest made)
5. Narcotics arrest/ Lansing & Maroa (1 Arrest made)
6. Narcotics arrest/ Swift & Maroa (1 Arrest made)
7. DUI arrest/ Gettysburg & Van Ness (1 Arrest made)
8. DUI arrest/ Maroa & Sussex (1 Arrest made)
9. Misdemeanor arrest/ Palm & Swift (1 Arrest made)
10. Mail theft/ Maroa & Santa Ana (1 Arrest made)
11. Residential burglary/ Wishon & Santa Ana (No arrests)
Forced entry through the detached guest house. Property taken was home electronics
Note, this is the second occurrence at this same location
Occurred over a four day span
12. Assault with a deadly weapon/ Van Ness & Griffith (2 arrests)
(Christmas Tree Lane Stabbing)
13. Narcotics arrest/ Holland & Palm (1 Arrest made)
14. Auto theft/ Fairmont & Maroa (No arrests)
The spare key was visible and left inside the vehicle
Occurred between Wednesday at 11am and Thursday at 9am
15. Identity theft/ Maroa & Saginaw (1 Arrest made)
16. Warrant arrest/ Van Ness & Holland (1 Arrest made)
17. Narcotics arrest/ Lansing & Van Ness (1 Arrest made)
18. Narcotics arrest/ Dakota & Palm (1 Arrest made)
19. Warrant arrest/ Lansing & Wilson (1 Arrest made)
20. Residential burglary/ Wilson & Pontiac (No arrests)
Forced entry through converted garage. Property taken was musical equipment
Occurred on a Sunday between 6pm and 9pm
21. Auto theft/ Van Ness & Griffith (No arrests made)
Vehicle had key in the ignition and was running unattended
***Occurred at 7:40am ***
22. Misdemeanor arrest/ Holland & Palm (1 Arrest made)
23. Misdemeanor arrest/ Dakota & Maroa (1 Arrest made)
24. Narcotics arrest/ Pontiac & Van Ness (1 Arrest made)
25. Narcotics arrest/ Hampton & Van Ness (1 Arrest made)

Area north of Shaw

26. DUI arrest/ Shaw & Maroa (1 Arrest made)
27. Narcotics arrest/ Shaw & Maroa (1 Arrest made)
28. Vehicle burglary/ Shaw & Wishon (1 Arrest made)
29. Vehicle burglary/ Shaw & Maroa (1 Arrest made)
30. Vehicle burglary/ Shaw & Maroa (1 Arrest made)
31. Trespassing/ Maroa & San Jose (1 Arrest made)

Area south of Lansing

No incidents

Area west of Palm

32. Wanted felon/ Ashlan & Palm (1 Arrest made)
33. Wanted felon/ Palm & Santa Ana (1 Arrest made)
34. Narcotics arrest/ Buckingham & Thorne (1 Arrest made)
35. Misdemeanor arrest/ Ashlan & Harrison (1 Arrest made)
36. Narcotics arrest/ Ashlan & Harrison (1 Arrest made)
37. Misdemeanor arrest/ Ashlan & Palm (1 Arrest made)

38. Vehicle burglary/ Harrison & Rialto (No arrests)
 39. Wanted felon/ Lansing & Palm (1 Arrest made)
 40. Auto theft/ Santa Fe & Palm (No arrests)
 Trailer was taken from open field
 Occurred on Thursday between 11pm and 11:26pm
 41. Auto theft/ Santa Fe & Palm (No arrests)
 Unknown how the vehicle was taken
 Occurred on Wednesday at 4:30pm and Thursday at 7am
 42. Narcotics arrest/ Ashlan & Thorne (1 Arrest made)
 43. Misdemeanor arrest/ Thorne & Rialto (1 Arrest made)
 40. Residential burglary/ Gettysburg & Arthur (No arrests)
 Method of entry was kicked front door. Property taken was cameras and jewelry.
 Occurred on a Tuesday between 12:30pm & 4:30pm
 44. Intoxicated subject/ Hampton & Safford (1 Arrest made)
 45. Wanted felon/ Thorne & Hampton (1 Arrest made)
 46. Vehicle burglary/ Thorne & Indianapolis (No arrests)
 47. Armed subject/ Ashlan & Palm (1 Arrest made)
 48. Wanted felon/ Ashlan & Palm (1 Arrest made)

- Area east of Maroa**
 41. Residential burglary/ Maroa & Ashcroft (No arrests)
 Method of entry was forced through an unlocked garage door.
 Property loss was power tools.
 Occurred at between five day span
 42. Narcotics arrest/ Holland & Del Mar (1 Arrest made))
 43. Petty theft San Pablo & Rialto (No arrests)
 44. Misdemeanor arrest/ College & Pontiac (1 Arrest made)
 45. Auto theft/ Glenn & Santa Ana (No arrests)
 Unknown how the vehicle was taken
 Occurred on Sunday at 9pm and Monday at 10:30am
 46.) Petty theft Gettysburg & Del Mar (No arrests)
 47.) Residential burglary/ Del Mar & Holland (No arrests)
 Method of entry was forced through a glass door. Property loss was coins, a fur coat and purses.
 Occurred on a Sunday between 1pm and 1:30pm
 48. Misdemeanor arrest/ College & Pico (1 Arrest made)
 49. Narcotics arrest/ College & Sussex (1 Arrest made)
 50. Misdemeanor arrest/ Del Mar & Gettysburg (No arrests)
 51. Misdemeanor arrest/ College & Dakota (1 Arrest made)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Fig Garden Woman's Club Antique Show

The Fig Garden Woman's Club will have its annual Antique Show on **March 16-18**.

The hours are: **Friday 10 am- 6 pm; Saturday 10 am-8 pm; Sunday 11 am- 3 pm**

A \$5 admission is good for the three days. Appraisals will be available on Saturday from 10 am-2 pm.

For more information call Marilyn Schutt at 559-285-6040.

The Fig Garden Annual Dinner

The annual Fig Garden dinner is scheduled for Sunday, **September 30**. This dinner is a great way to meet your neighbors, see old friends, and speak with our County officials. Details to come on our website and in the Fall Newsletter.

Thank you for supporting Old Fig. Please join the Fig Garden Homeowners Association. We work to protect and strengthen our unique neighborhood. Our finances are fragile. The dues are \$60/year. Mail a check payable to FGHA, PO Box 5796, Fresno, CA 93755, or pay on our website. Unlike most homeowner groups, our dues are voluntary. Money goes to pay fees associated with filing documents that protect the integrity of the neighborhood, producing and mailing newsletters, and running the website.