# HOLLYWOODLAND

## Hollywoodland Homeowners Association May 2019





#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is that time of year to check your property and clear any flammable brush and/or material. With the near 18 inches of rain we received this winter, our native chaparral is healthy and thick. By the end of May it will also be totally dried out. It has been fifty-eight years since the fire of 1961. Hollywoodland has grown in that time. Many more homes have been built, more cars are parked on our narrow streets and, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles, we now have the unregulated influx of tourists and hikers. The risk for tragedy is greater than ever. The volunteers of the HHA are working vigilantly to protect your property and well-being. We thank you for being a member.

## MAY 12, 1961 A HOLOCAUST STRIKES THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS

By Inspector OTTO FIRGENS, Los Angeles City Fire Department *LAFD Historical Archives* 

On Friday, May 12, 1961, in the Los Angeles City Fire Department's dispatcher's office at Westlake the activities had been about normal - 172 alarms of which 75 were fires, 7 of these were classed in the over \$1000 category and 2 developed into greater alarms.

It was typical summery evening in Los Angeles--bright, clear, and warm, but it was windy in the hills. Then at 7:43 p.m. the alarm board started lighting up like a Christmas tree. First one light, then two seconds later several more, and 10 minutes later the entire board was lit with calls from citizens reporting a fire in the Hollywood Hills.

First information . Later investigations disclosed it started in the rear of 3009 Beachwood Drive.

The hillsides in this area are very steep, the streets are exceptionally narrow with many of them posted with "No Parking" signs on both sides. Many locations in this area, which is dotted with homes, can only be reached by one route. Numerous new homes cantilevered over steep hillsides which are heavily covered with brush, added to the conflagration-potential of this particular district, always considered by fire fighters in the area as a possible stage for disaster.

In a trice, the Captain at Westlake evaluated these conditions plus the prolonged Southern California drought and the brisk winds blowing in the canyons. This was trouble and he knew it! He dropped his preparations for his broadcast, got up from his desk, and moved about the signal office - peering worriedly over the shoulders of his dispatchers - all of his senses tuned and alert--his ears tuned to the radio reports from the responding first alarm companies; his mind tuned to the problems and potential involved. He was worried.

By the time the first companies arrived on the scene, the fire had developed to the extent that it already involved one canyon to the northwest of Beachwood Drive and was making a wind-driven "run" to the north and east.

Captain Jack Ellison, in command of E-82, was the first officer on the scene. His size-up took into account the extreme danger because of the high wind. He immediately called for a 2nd alarm, instructing the signal office to dispatch 6 more engine companies.

Due to the heavy brush, high winds, low humidity and rugged terrain the fire developed into major proportions within 15 minutes of the original alarm. A Major Emergency was declared at 7:59 p.m. by Field Commander, Battalion Chief John Dick.

(Fire continued)

This declaration automatically caused many things to happen - most of them involving action by the signal office in making the notifications and dispatches required. What with handling the dispatching of companies to the fire and of "move-up" companies--the signal office had its hands full. This summery evening was no longer typical!

The geographic location and prevailing weather conditions added greatly to the challenge.

First--the exceptionally narrow streets with some parked cars made the accessibility by fire fighting apparatus into the area an extremely difficult problem.

Second-this limited accessibility into the area forced the units that could get in to lay lines and protect the homes, therefore they were unable to concentrate on the raging brush fire.

Third--the extremely hazardous wind conditions whipped the fire from one canyon to another faster than the apparatus could be strategically located.

More units were called to protect residential areas which were now being threatened ahead of the fire. The response of these units was additionally hampered by the Friday night revelers who normally take over downtown Hollywood on this night. Upon viewing the spectacular scene above them in the hills, these people sought to get a closer look at the holocaust developing before their eyes. This action caused the greatest traffic jam ever witnessed in this section of Hollywood--and Hollywood has seen some!

The fire continued to burn out of control toward Mt. Lee and the Griffith Park Observatory to the east. It was spreading and had already developed a 4 or 5 mile perimeter. It raced up one canyon and down the other, driven by winds which at times reached 67 miles per hour. The decision was made to establish the main line of defense somewhere near the observatory and to set up the command post at the observatory itself because of its advantageous position for deploying a quantity of fire fighters and equipment into the area. If the fire wasn't contained at this point and had the opportunity to burn over the summit of Mt. Hollywood, it would directly threaten the bird sanctuary and the Griffith Park Zoo. Although the zoo was a good half mile from the summit there would have been no way of stopping the flames until they had reached the zoo itself.

Within three hours the fire had burned to within a few feet of the Civil Defense Headquarters high atop Mt. Lee. Although 2 small shacks were destroyed at this point, the Fire Department managed to protect and save the main buildings. It was just to the east of the Civil Defense Headquarters that the fire spilled over the top and started to burn down the mountainside towards the San Fernando Valley.

The "last ditch" line of defense near the observatory held and by 12:00 midnight this flank of the fire was contained. In the meantime, units had been dispatched to the Mt. Hollywood Drive area on the Valley side of Mt. Lee and with the help of a well planned back fire this flank of the fire was contained by 1:30 a.m. At this hour the entire fire was considered contained and by this time it had consumed 800 acres of watershed.

Preliminary reports indicated that 24 homes were destroyed or damaged, but amazingly, no one was seriously injured.

Many people were evacuated from their homes and a disaster shelter was set up at the Chermoya Street School, although there was no general order issued to evacuate the area.

The Hollywood Stables in the Beachwood area was evacuated and approximately 60 horses were saved. A Girl Scout camp at the end of Canyon Drive was occupied by 146 girls. However, the Fire Department had the camp surrounded with adequate equipment and hose lines to prevent a major evacuation of the camp.

Final tabulation showed that there were 8 homes totally destroyed, 9 homes damaged, and an estimated property loss of \$500,000. All of the damaged homes were located in the area where the fire started and made its first fast run on Beachwood Drive, Deronda Drive, Rodgerton Drive, and Hollyridge Drive.

The fire finally covered a 10 mile perimeter and burned 814 acres. It took almost 500 men to bring this fire under control. 105 units were on the scene. This included 55 engine companies (14 of these were from the County), 38 city tankers of various capacities, and, in addition, there were 12 Misc. Units.

Approximately 200 police and police reserves were needed to handle the huge traffic jam which spread a distance of almost 3 miles along the foothills involving every side street for the entire distance.

The last company to leave the scene returned to their quarters at approximately 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, May 14th, almost 36 hours after the start of the fire.

The final count of homes lost was nominal in respect to the almost 500 which were immediately and directly endangered by this fire over a period of more than 5 hours. Much credit for this success must be given to the Chief Officers who handled this extensive and dangerous fire. The dispatching office must also be recognized for the outstanding job done under such trying conditions.

#### JIM VAN DUSEN REELECTED TO HUNC

We are pleased to report that Jim Van Dusen has been re-elected as the Hollywood United Neighborhood Council's Geographical Area 2 (Beachwood Canyon) Representative by a wide margin. We wish him well as he starts his new term of office and thank all who came out to vote.

#### SB 50 SHOT DOWN BY CITY COUNCIL

Much to our relief on Tuesday, April 16, the Los Angeles City Council voted to oppose SB50, a State housing measure that would have basically gutted the R1 zoning code. If passed it would have allowed structures 75 high in Hollywoodland's commercial area, Specific Plan be damned. It would allow the City to transform our DASH bus stop into a "High-Frequency Bus Stop". High-frequency means buses that stop every 15 minutes in morning/evening, and every 30 minutes on weekends. Transit agencies can add buses to reach that "frequency", and this, in turn, would have handed developers blanket powers under SB 50 to overrun our area with tall apartments. SB 50 will create wars against bus service statewide. San Diego has upgraded some bus lines to 15-minute service but its residents didn't realize SB 50 developers will now overrun these streets. All people wanted was

#### **PRIVILEGED SMOKERS**

Always on the look-out to protect the neighborhood, the HHA's intrepid president was driving past the illegal vista on Canyon Lake Drive and asked a guy standing in front of the huge digital sign that says "No Smoking" to put out his joint. He told her to F\*\*k off.

The next day at 9:15 in the morning, she spotted a man at the construction site at 3217 Ledgewood Dr. who was smoking. She stopped to tell him that he needed to put out his cigarette and that we are in a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. A "No Smoking" sign happened to be in place right around the corner that he would pass every day to get to work. He said he didn't see a sign and that he can smoke anywhere he wants to.

Since CD4 and Recreation and Parks do not seem to care about careless smokers, she reported these incidents to our hard working Senior Lead Officer, Brian White. Here is Brian's reply: "The next time I see someone at the construction site, I will make sure to educate them on the no smoking law and see if I can get an attitude adjustment from the workers. I always keep an eye out for smokers whenever I am in the area, and will continue to do so." Thank you, Officer White!

#### IN MEMORIUM: LORAINE SUCH

By Longtime Friend and Neighbor Michael Morrow



Loraine Arena, borne June 14, 1928, (which became Flag Day) was one of three children of James and Lucille Arena. Loraine grew up in Detroit and was especially close to her sister Rita Csontos who passed away in 2016. Loraine had been working in a car dealership in Detroit where she met Mike Such when he came in to buy a car. Mike was a talented advertising art director who shared Loraine's sense of humor and fun, so soon after meeting they were married. In the early fifties they moved to Los Angeles, first residing in Burbank, then in 1958 with Judy, their black cocker spaniel, they moved to their new abode on Deronda Drive, a "contemporary, artistic" Ronald L.

Buck home. Loraine loved to travel and she and Mike with friends took many ski trips. Mike, after several bouts of pneumonia passed away in 2005 at the age of 81. They had celebrated 56 years of marriage. Loraine always said they were best friends and never argued. Loraine lived an active life. She was a great cook and loved to spend time talking with her many friends. After some heart and breathing difficulty, she passed away January 17th at home in bed at the age of 90. Loraine A. Such is survived by her brother-in-law, Roy and his son Scott Csontos and her beautiful home with a balcony which displayed "Old Glory" both day and night .

#### Tis the Sssseason

By Dr. Steven J. Smith, DVM, HomePetDoctor.com Hollywoodland's Local Veterinarian

It's springtime in Los Angeles, so rattlesnakes are back in season and back in the news. It was hard to miss the video reports of a snake attack on two dogs in Runyon Canyon in early April. One of the dogs died within minutes, on the way to the hospital. It was a terrible event, but it will serve as a reminder for years to come: rattlesnakes are hazardous! They may not be at the top of the food chain, but they deserve our respect and avoidance.

When you're walking or hiking with your dog in snake country, keep them close. If they don't come to you immediately when called, they should always be on a short leash. If you see rattlesnakes in your yard, there's probably something of interest there, like food or shelter. Get rid of your woodpile, trim tall grass, and pick up fruit that's fallen from your trees, as these things attract rodents. If you still see snakes, consider a snake proof fence. It



The Southern Pacific rattlesnake, the most common type in Los Angeles

should either be solid or with mesh no larger than one-quarter inch, at least three feet high with the bottom buried a few inches in the ground.

Dogs usually get bitten by rattlesnakes because they're curious and they often explore outdoor spaces with their noses to the ground. But, dogs have heightened senses of smell and hearing and they can be trained to avoid the situation altogether. The internet is awash with web sites offering rattlesnake avoidance training classes throughout Southern California.

#### **Facts about Rattlesnake Bites**

Not all rattlesnakes are alike, nor is their venom or their delivery. 25% of bites are dry, meaning the snake released no venom when they struck; 30% of bites are classified as mild, meaning they cause local pain and swelling, but are easily treatable; the remaining 45% are extremely serious. Bites from young snakes, and bites from all snakes early in the season will deliver higher amounts venom, and are therefore much more dangerous. Venom components vary greatly from one species to another, but there are two basic types: neurotoxic and hemotoxic.

The venom from our local Southern Pacific Rattlesnake is hemotoxic. After the bite, proteins and enzymes in the venom damage blood vessels and other tissues, and trigger clotting throughout the body. The body's clotting factors are used up quickly and uncontrollable bleeding follows, allowing up to one-third of the body's circulatory volume to ooze into the surrounding tissue. If a rattlesnake bites your dog, you should seek veterinary care immediately, preferably at a 24 hour hospital. Treatment for shock and toxicity will increase their chance for survival. Intravenous fluids are given to replace the lost volume, and antivenin is injected to neutralize the venom before it does any more harm.

#### Should your Dog Get the Rattlesnake Vaccine?

I've been researching the Rattlesnake vaccine (*Crotalus atrox* toxoid) these days. Some people say that it's effective, others say that it's a waste of money and may provide dog owners with a false sense of security. It may make them less cautious with their pets around snakes, and it may lead them think that their dog won't need emergency treatment after a bite.

The one and only manufacturer, Red Rock Biologics, does not offer much in the way of clinical studies or statistics. So, I found 3 recent studies online. Each one shows that the vaccine can be helpful, but not as much as we'd like:

1) A retrospective study in 2014 of dogs at Animal Specialty and Emergency Center in West Los Angeles. 82 dogs had been exposed to venom from unidentified rattlesnakes and they were all treated with antivenin. 14 dogs in this group had also received with the vaccine, but the study does not say how many vaccines were given, or when they were given relative to venom exposure. The good news: after adjusting for some variables between patients, the authors found that vaccinated dogs were 2.7 times more likely to have lower morbidity scores: less swelling, less tissue damage, less pain, etc. The bad news: this finding was dismissed as "not statistically significant," so in the end the authors were forced to conclude that vaccination made no difference in morbidity or mortality. Darn statistics!

(Rattlesnakes continued)

This study has some flaws. First, this was not a big group. The authors estimated that a group of 400 dogs would be needed, with 200 similarly vaccinated and 200 unvaccinated dogs, to truly evaluate the vaccine. Second, to be included in this study, all of the dogs had to have shown moderate to severe symptoms and they had to have received antivenin. The study does not account for dogs that had mild symptoms, or dogs that did not receive antivenin. There could very well have been a subset of dogs that were vaccinated, but excluded from the study because they had mild symptoms.

- 2) A retrospective study in 2015 of dogs at 5 veterinary hospitals in Maricopa County, AZ. 272 dogs had been exposed to venom from unidentified rattlesnakes, and all of them were treated with antivenin. Eight dogs died. The abstract says that vaccination made no difference morbidity or mortality. Interestingly, in dogs older than 10 years, there was a greater likelihood of death associated with a longer delay between the bite and treatment.
- 3) A laboratory study in 2015 of 90 mice, separated into 3 groups of 30. 15 mice in each group were vaccinated, 15 got a placebo. Each group was exposed to the venom from a different rattlesnake: Western Diamondback (*C atrox*), Northern Pacific (*C oreganus oreganus*) and Southern Pacific (*C oreganus helleri*). All of the unvaccinated mice died within 21 hours. The average survival times of the vaccinated mice were better across the board, but there was a big difference when it came to the type of snake (1,311 vs 368 minutes for WD, 842 vs 284 minutes for NP, and 697 vs 585 minutes for SP). The best 48 hour survival rates were enjoyed by the WD group 6 out of 15 lived 48 hours, when I presume the study ended. The NP group had 3 out of 15 survivors, and the SP group had 0 out of 15. This makes sense, because the vaccine was developed to produce antibodies to the WD venom, with hopes of some cross-protection from the venom of closely-related rattlers.

If you're going to stumble across a rattlesnake in Los Angeles County, it's likely to be the Southern Pacific variety, whose victims seem to be helped least by the vaccine. So if you live here, should you vaccinate your dog or not? If they are in a high risk group because of their activities, or because of the wilderness outside your back door, I say yes. It's a safe vaccine overall, with adverse reactions being minor and infrequent. The studies that have been done so far are limited and disappointing, but only if you focus on the abstracts and conclusions. If you read between the lines, there is some hope.

#### HOLLYWOODLAND ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEW WITH SHEILA GOODE CONDUCTED BY LAURA DAVIS, July 11, 2018

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about your beautiful modernist home.

SHEILA: My husband and I were teaching. That was in the late sixties. And my sister was working for an architect. She was working for Welton Becket at the time. (Interviewer's note: Becket was a distinguished architect who designed the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, Parker Center, Capitol Records Building, Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, Cinerama Dome, the master plan for Century City, Los Angeles Music Center and the Los Angeles Federal Building, among many public buildings here and elsewhere.) And her husband was a designer for Welton Becket. She was a free spirit, so she said, "Why don't you build a house, you know, get an architect and build a house!" And here we were, two teachers in the mid-sixties who didn't make a lot of money. We said, "Oh, why not?" So, we looked around for a lot and my sister had a friend who was an architect besides the people she worked with, Lorenzo Tedesco, who was the son of the classical guitarist. (Interviewer's note: Tedesco Sr. was also a prolific composer and scored movies for MGM.) So, Lorenzo took us all around and he showed us nice areas. And at the time, we lived off of Adams, between Adams and Pico. It was a nice neighborhood, a black neighborhood. So, we looked around and I didn't think anything of it because I'd grown up in San Gabriel, a diverse city in the thirties and forties. And when we found this lot, we said, "Oh, we like it there, you know, the Hollywood Sign, that seems like fun." This was just a hillside, just a hill. And he said, "Oh, that would be easy." And it was inexpensive, you know. He looked up the price and it was \$5,000 and we could even buy two lots. And, luckily, with people building so close, I'm glad we did that. So, we investigated and the owner of the lot owned lots all over the Hollywood Hills because he was an assessor. And every time he'd see something that was inexpensive, he'd buy it and sell it, turn it over. When we attempted to buy, he said, "No, I'm sorry." He apologized, "The neighbors wouldn't like a black neighbor." So, we said, "Oh, okay, we'll fix that." So we asked my cousin, who was light-

INTERVIEWER: Wasn't that (housing discrimination) illegal even then?

SHEILA: No. Those covenants were into the sixties. They had those racial covenants. When we went to get apartments when

(Sheila Goode continued)

We first got married, it would say "White Only." You'd look through all the want ads, at that time you looked at newspaper want ads, and it was very clear: White Only.

INTERVIEWER: What year was this that you looked up here?

SHEILA: Maybe the late sixties. And think about civil rights.

INTERVIEWER: The Civil Rights Act was '64.

SHEILA: A lot of good that did. I mean, it helped because you could go and protest, march on some place ... Selma, Martin Luther King. But up close, you just did whatever the owner said. And it was still written into laws.

INTERVIEWER: And do you think there was an actual Hollywoodland covenant?

SHEILA: Yeah, definitely. I wish I had ... I could've shown you.

INTERVIEWER: So, even after that, "Gee, I'm sorry, I'd like to, but ...," you were still interested in moving here. Why?

SHEILA: Because it was a lovely area of the city. The owner wasn't going to live next to us. I don't know where he lived. And it wasn't his business. And the architect said, "Do whatever you can if you can buy the lot." And so that's what we did. We had my cousin get it. She and a friend of my husband, who was also light-skinned – they looked like a white couple – so they go to him and say they'd like to buy this lot. So they bought it, then they quit-claimed it – is that the term? -- to us. And it was easy.

INTERVIEWER: So now you've got a double wooded lot.

SHEILA: Yes, and we decided to interview some architects. And I think I talked to Kennard (African-American architect and Hollywoodland resident) and to Neutra. We were really naïve! We thought, he's over in Silverlake, let's go. So, we set up an interview and I remember going to his house and actually one of his associates, a German man interviewed us.

INTERVIEWER: Schindler?

SHEILA: I don't think it was Schindler. Who knows? Duh! I was just this naïve school teacher.

INTERVIEWER: Not that naïve if you were seeking out Richard Neutra!

SHEILA: [LAUGHS] Well, I like to read stuff and I had traveled some and we weren't completely unsophisticated. But we go to Neutra and I remember going for the interview right there in Silverlake. Do you know where his office is? So we go to the office and we sit down to have our interview and we brought our plans. Neutra's assistant gave us an idea about what they would do. He sketched what he thought would be nice. Neutra likes fountains. The way he saw it, he would've done the house almost one story, and I think back and that would've been nice, to extend it so it would be one level. Maybe with a gazebo, which would've been so nice. You know, a different look and with a fountain because he likes water. And we said, that sounds great, so he sent his plan later and it seemed a little pricey. You know, it would've been \$10,000 down to start. And at that time, \$10,000, you know ... So then, Lorenzo said that he would do it.

INTERVIEWER: Was some of this furniture built in by the architect?

SHEILA: Yes, this was all in the plans [gestures] and the fireplace.

INTERVIEWER: Once you hired Tedesco, how long did it take to build?

SHEILA: Let's see. It was supposed to be six months. We had a contractor, it was a friend of ours. He sort of dragged his feet so it ended up that my husband fired him and did the contracting himself. But it ended up taking 13 months. We had a geologist and they put the steel beams down to bedrock and he said, "You're really lucky. Here in these hills, bedrock is four feet under. It's really close to the surface." That's why we have that rocky soil here.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember what the final cost was?

SHEILA: About forty thousand.

INTERVIEWER: On a school teacher's salary, that's still a lot. Fifty years ago.

SHEILA: I was embarrassed to tell my mother. At that time, teacher salaries were five hundred a month. Here I had a degree from UCLA. My husband, too. He eventually went into business for himself.

INTERVIEWER: What subjects did you teach?

(Sheila Goode continued)

SHEILA: I taught elementary and he taught sixth grade for a while. Then he went to adult school and he became a VP.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you teach?

SHEILA: Even though I'd gone to UCLA and all my friends were going in West LA to teach, they said, "Oh, because you're living east of La Brea, you can – this is what the board told me – you can only teach in schools ...." What they were really telling me was that you can only teach at black schools, so they sent me to a huge school, Main Street School, and the principal, she was really nice, so I stayed there seven years. Then I went to a school near Westlake Park. I was there a few years, then I took a sabbatical and had a baby, another baby, so I had two girls. And I ended up at Ivanhoe, which is in Silverlake, and I stayed there for years and years. It's a school that's a hundred years old. It's a public school and people buy in the area just to send their kids. It seems like a private school.

INTERVIEWER: Do you bump into former students?

SHEILA: Yes! All the time. I went for my eye exam, "Mrs. Goode, you were my first grade teacher!" Oh, dear. And I go to the Y for exercise classes. [LAUGHS] "Don't you remember?"

INTERVIEWER: And they often instantly recognize you.

SHEILA: But I often don't recognize them because the six year-old I remember is now 30 or 40 years old, with facial hair, children of their own, unrecognizable!

INTERVIEWER: So, once you moved up here, did you suffer any racism?

SHEILA: Not even a little bit. The neighbors across the street – it was like a mother, a grandmother and a husband, but then the husband died, and they had two sons. And the sons were adult, basically, you know? They were in college at the time. But they liked us and we got along.

INTERVIEWER: The neighborhood was so quiet back then.

SHEILA: It was really quiet. And I remember a group, not the Beatles, American. [CAN'T REMEMBER THE NAME.] He had a little sheep. And he would feed his sheep down here. And I remember going one day and saying, "Oh, how sweet!" They weren't here long. It was a group of maybe four.

INTERVIEWER: A rock & roll band with a sheep!

SHEILA: That was his pet. His little lamb. Even for up here, it made you look. [LAUGHTER]

INTERVIEWER: I remember a scrawny peacock who used to live on Ledgewood. I assume it escaped from Sunset Ranch. What about wildlife?

SHEILA: Lots of it. A month ago, there was a pregnant deer standing right over there and on her back was a blue jay, bright blue, spectacular, and I wanted to get a picture of it on my phone, and I was afraid to make a noise. But they stood there for a long time, ten minutes, standing still with her pregnant self. And then, when my grandson who is now fifteen, when he was maybe four or five, we drove into the garage and in the corner was a newborn deer with the umbilical cord still attached. Dylan said, "What is that, nana? Over in the corner?" And I said, "My God, it's a deer," and I called Animal [Services] and they came with a little bassinet. Can you believe it? And by the time they got here, he had got up on his wiggly legs and was sort of in the street.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think happened to his mother?

SHEILA: She dropped the baby in a safe place, in the corner of the garage. I guess she had no choice. It was just like it is now, this big open garage. I remember one time I looked out and there was this coyote sleeping right on my patio chair. And when we first moved here, a lot of raccoons would come in the backyard and we would give them an egg, put a raw egg out. But now we hardly ever see them.

INTERVIEWER: They're all at our place eating the pond fish.

Interviewer's note: If you know any longtime residents who might be interested in contributing to an oral history of Hollywoodland, please email <a href="mailto:info@hollywoodland.org">info@hollywoodland.org</a>.