



Verdugo Woodlands West Homeowners Association

THE WOODLANDS GRAPEVINE

MISSION To preserve the low-profile, single-family character and unique aesthetics of the Verdugo Woodlands, and provide a forum for discussion of civic issues that may affect our neighborhood and its residents.

Spring-Summer 2021

Verdugo Woodlands West – a Historic District?

The Facts

- When you need to do work, permit process is similar to process for any property in the city
- Some additional exterior changes that don't require a permit are subject to review (e.g. front doors, character-defining features)
- Color not regulated (except half-timbering)
- Landscaping not regulated (unless survey says it's historically important)
- Different rules for "contributors" and "non-contributors"



On March 31, more than 25 Woodlands residents discussed the possibility of forming a historic district. Our neighborhood has a rich history as the site of the Verdugo adobe and as a desirable residential area since the early 1910s, when first the railway and later automobiles fostered suburban development along our beautiful wooded streets.

Since the first historic district in Glendale was created in 2008, six more have formed, including the Niodrara Drive Historic District in the Woodlands. Three more historic districts are in process—two in the

Rossmoyne neighborhood and one in northwest Glendale. If all three go through, over 1500 homes in Glendale will be located within a historic district.

Our presentation covered why residents decide to form a historic district in their neighborhood. The reasons include: preserving the character and quality of the neighborhood that attracted them in the first place, and giving them a voice in the future of their community by helping them to manage further change. Historic districts are not frozen in time; additions and alterations will continue to happen, but historic districts are the best way to ensure future changes respect neighborhood character and are compatible. No one in a historic district is required to do

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GOATS ARE COMING!

Very soon you may spot some amazing four-legged brush-clearance machines feasting on fire fuel above our park, **Verdugo Park**, and in the wildlands on the south side of Montrose Park.

In addition, on Friday and Saturday **June 18 and 19** ten adorable baby goats will be waiting for you to feed and play with during a couple of Meet and Greets (or shall we call them *Bleat and Greets?*) at Montrose Park. Watch for an email from us soon with the time.

The adult goats, who do the work of eating the brush, will arrive in Montrose Park on June 10 while the goat herd company **Sage Environmental** constructs fencing on the steep hills above Verdugo Park. It will take about a week and then the goats will move to

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Did you miss our Zoom discussion? If you would like a recording, email us at vwwhoa@gmail.com

From the Editor

The last time I penned this column was February 2020. Our HOA had co-hosted a robust forum for City Council candidates in January, and the March 3 election was imminent. We were looking forward to spring, but little did we know what else that season would hold.

Here we are in June 2021, after a few weeks of “safer at home” actually stretched on for months. As those days unfolded, our HOA members shared many of their learnings and losses, such as:

- Patronizing local businesses as much as possible while sadly seeing others shuttered
- Discovering curbside pick-up and home delivery
- Working safely from home or going off site to riskier essential businesses
- Walking in the neighborhood more than usual, enjoying Mother Nature in more nuanced ways
- Missing out on graduations, weddings, travel, family gatherings, etc.
- Grieving when relatives or friends became ill or passed away
- And so much more...

This indescribable time has made our Woodlands connections stronger and closer. Although in-person events such as our Wine Tasting and Antaeus Theatre outing were not possible, the virtual annual meeting last October and Historic District session on March 31 were surprisingly intimate and engaging. While organizations like ours are monitoring guidance for returning to in-person events, these virtual connections touched many people in lasting ways that may continue. Such is the joy of belonging to a neighborhood. Going with the flow, together.

In that vein, your leadership team is saddened that former board member **Kurt Weissmuller** passed away after a lengthy illness, and our condolences are sent to his family and friends.

Board member **Loretta DeLange**'s quotation a year ago in this column continues to ring true: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” Through adversity comes growth, appreciation, reflection. We know that our resilient Woodlanders are honoring the past and moving ahead into the future – cautiously.

Signing off on a positive note, I am pleased that our membership committee has added **Karen Breau** to the ranks. Welcome, Karen!

All members are invited to become involved, for a few occasional hours or drilling down on a specific task. Email us at vwwhoa@gmail.com and tell us your thoughts!

Marcia Hanford

Board Member

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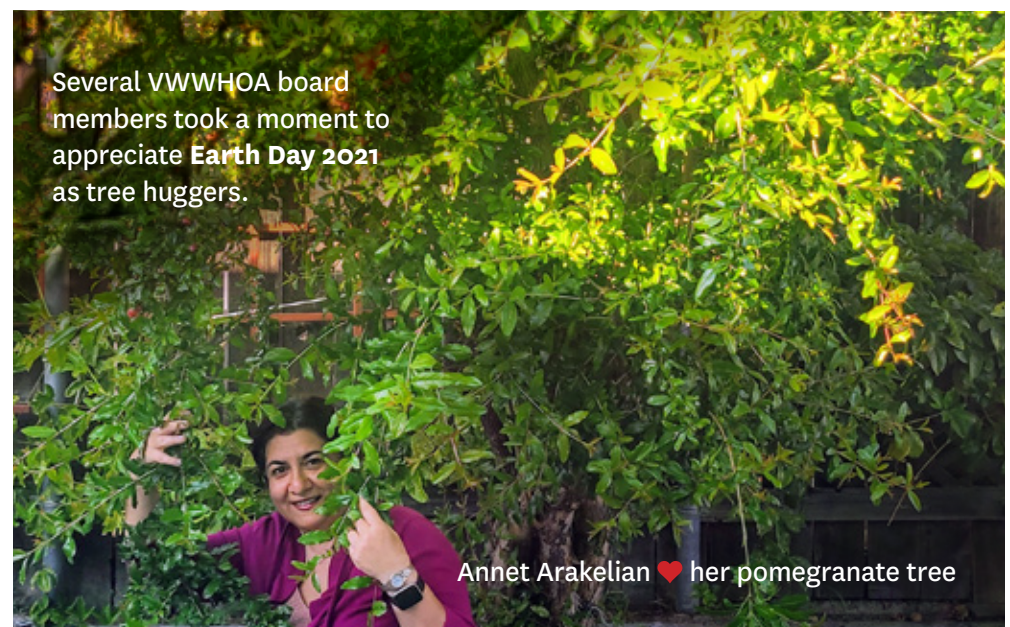
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Senate Bills that May Affect Your Home

State bills to eliminate single-family neighborhoods like Verdugo Woodlands keep coming.

This year it is **SB 9, the misnamed “duplex” bill**. This bill would require cities to allow single-family lots over 2400 square feet to be divided in two and then allow two units, which could be sold separately, to be built on each of the new lots. Cities could also allow ADUs and Junior ADUs. The result? Anywhere between four and eight units where one older single-family house used to be.

There are exceptions for properties that were recently rentals or are within historic districts. There is no exception for high fire severity zones. As with previous bills, the parking requirements range from minimal to non-existent. And Assembly Bill 1401, authored by Glendale’s own Laura Friedman, would reduce parking requirements to nothing at all if a development (single-family or multi-family—the sky is the limit) is within one-half mile of “a high-quality transit corridor.” “High quality” is a bus line with service at least every 15 minutes during peak commute hours. And that bus line doesn’t even have to exist; it just needs to be hoped for in a regional transportation plan. This is not a joke.

Under Senate Bill 9, there would be no design review—which means no public notice or public hearing for these projects. The developments would also be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act.



As with previous incarnations of SB 9, it is largely a give-away to hedge funds and investment companies. Who is going to win the bidding war for a single-family house if it can be converted into four or eight units? The young family, or the Blackstone Group?

SB 10 is also a bad one. It would authorize, but not require, cities to upzone any residential parcel to allow for ten units provided the parcel is within one-half mile of a bus line with the same, minimal service requirements all these proposals have, or it is within a “high-opportunity” area, which includes the Woodlands. The rezoning could not be overturned by voter initiative. Again, no public notice or public hearing, no environmental review, for 10-unit projects built under this law.

There is a housing bill you can support!

SB 15, introduced by **Senator Portantino**, would allow cities to adaptively reuse vacant, underused, large-scale commercially-zoned properties (like big box stores) as affordable housing. Unlike the other bills, it is not an unfunded mandate from the State. Approved projects are eligible for state grants. And projects are not exempt from design or environmental review. We are grateful to Senator Portantino for his efforts to make sure density increases are connected to affordable units and to provide money, and not just decrees from on high, to help produce them.



Loretta, Pam and Jim, Rick, Marcia, Joanna, Christine ❤️ the “Hand” sycamore tree in Verdugo Park!

Historic District - Continued from page 1

any work on their house, and review for historic compatibility of alterations and additions applies only to the exterior that is visible from the street.

In addition, properties within historic districts benefit from higher property values (during good economic times) and more stable property values (during economic downturns) than comparable properties outside their boundaries. And the City has a financial incentive; it sets aside a small number of Mills Act Property Tax Reduction contracts for owners of historic properties within the district.

A final reason to support historic districts is the recent State housing bills that set out to destroy single-family neighborhoods (see Senate Bills article on page 3) do exempt locally designated historic districts from their mandates. This is an important new reason to create historic districts, but scarcely the only reason.

The presentation also included information about the community-driven process for creating a historic district, which begins with an application from residents, followed by two community meetings and public hearings before the Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council. More than fifty percent of property owners must sign a petition to request creation of a historic district for it to happen.

At present, members are exploring what a historic district within the Woodlands would look like and what areas would be appropriate to include. Obviously this is just the beginning of a long and exciting conversation, and we will keep you posted!

Goats - Continued from page 1

Verdugo Park to clear fire fuel from above the park. The entire job for both parks is expected to take about four weeks.

This exciting pilot project, conceived and spearheaded by VWWHOA Board member **Rick Stern**, will explore using goats for wildfire prevention for our city and is funded by the Glendale Fire Department with support from the Parks Department. Clearing brush with goats offers several advantages over machinery and herbicides, including preventing unwanted reseeding because the goats consume most of the seeds along with the weeds. If all goes well, next year goats could be the ones to create a 100-foot protective buffer in the Verdugo Mountains to save your home from a wildfire.

Please come to the Bleat and Greet, have a good time, and show your support for using goats to protect our homes.



Amy Yazzetta ❤️ a tree in her VWW backyard oak forest because oaks are home to the most biodiversity



On May 31, Memorial Day, Americans across the country remembered the brave men and women who gave their lives for our country. Each year the Verdugo Woodlands West HOA, in commemoration of this day, sends a wreath to the Glendale Memorial Day Ceremony held outside City Hall beside the city's war memorial. Again this year, the city hosted a virtual ceremony. We thought you would appreciate a look at the wreath the HOA sent this year.

Board members:
Rick Stern, Loretta DeLange and Marcia Hanford

Welcome New Members!

Welcome to the following new and returning Woodlanders, representing Andenes, Blanchard, Capistrano, Colina, Del Valle, Don Carlos, El Rito, Hillside, Mira Vista, Opechee, Ramona, San Luis Rey, Woodland

Mary Arevalo • Nataline and Vahe Akopian • Adriana Galvan and Irubiel Barbosa
 Linda and John Bidasio • Mila and Walter Calmette • Joanne and Greg Doyle • Esther and Ken Geller Talin
 Kargodorian • Annie Quigley and Adam Leicher • Jenik and Hovsep Movssesian • Elaine Snodgress
 Steve Vilarino • Therese Gogue and Stephen Weaver • Christine and Patrick Zohrabians

Eco Info

Hello Truly Clean Gardening

Good Bye Gas Blower Menace

Yay! Our own **Verdugo Catalina Adobe** is among the first eight city properties to be Certified Green Zones. That means the Glendale Department of Public Works now uses only electric and people-powered gardening methods at the park — no more gas-guzzling leaf blowers that spew toxins that foul the air and settle on children’s play equipment.

A report published by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) back in 2000 detailed the health hazards to gardeners using gas-powered leaf blowers: Particulate matter that is deeply inhaled into and remains in the lung; carbon monoxide that damages red blood cells; cancer-causing compounds that leak from the gas tanks or fail to fully burn off in the engine.

To give you an idea of the levels of danger here, the study explains that landscape workers running a leaf blower are exposed to ten times more ultra-fine, inhalable particles than someone standing next to a busy road. This brings a very high risk of lung cancer, heart disease, strokes, asthma and other respiratory ailments. Masks don’t help. And then there’s a risk of permanent hearing loss unless they use the proper protection. Ear plugs aren’t enough.

Many gardeners employed by us in the Woodlands use ear-splitting gas blowers for hour after hour, often six or even seven days a week. The threat to their health carries over to the public’s health as well.

This year, emissions from small engines like those on blowers will surpass the amount of pollution from cars, according to Assemblyman Marc Berman of Menlo Park, who is sponsoring a bill that would ban the sale of gas-powered tools beginning in January 2024.

“Today, operating the best-selling gas-powered commercial leaf blower for one hour emits air pollutants comparable to driving a 2017 Toyota Camry from Los Angeles to Denver,” said Berman, whose bill faces stiff opposition from gas equipment manufacturers.

The good news is that battery-powered tools now perform as well as or better than gas-powered ones at a lower cost. As several of our members attest, they’ve come a long way in the past 10 years.

And more good news! The SCAQMD has rebate programs for homeowners and gardeners who switch

from gas- to battery-driven tools. Turn in your gas-powered lawnmower and receive up to \$250 towards the purchase of a cordless, battery-powered replacement. Gardeners can get 75% off the price of cordless electric equipment, which also delivers big savings in the expense of gas. The SCAQMD website has flyers on the program in several languages that you can print out for folks who may be interested:

www.aqmd.gov/home/programs/community/community-detail?title=lawn-equipment

Judging by inquiries from our members who are eager to get away from gas-powered tools, gardeners who go electric should see a leap in demand for their services!



	Gas Powered
Fuel / hr*	.46 gal gas + 1.2 oz oil
Fuel Cost \$ / Hour:	\$2.22
Total 2 Yr Fuel Cost**	
Ⓢ 1 Hr / Day:	\$1,090
Ⓢ 2 Hr / Day:	\$2,180
Ⓢ 5 Hr / Day:	\$5,445



	Battery Powered
	0.550 kWh
	\$0.07 30X less
\$550	Cost of battery that runs for 1 hr + charger
	<i>Prices are dropping by 6.5% per year</i>
\$585	- includes \$550 for batteries/charger
\$1,170	- includes \$1,100 for batteries/chargers
\$2,925	- includes \$2,750 for batteries/chargers

#1 🌳 Huggers of Glendale

Test Your Woodlands Tree IQ



Painting by Loretta DeLange, Board Secretary, of a home on Hermosita.

We are called the Woodlands, obviously, because of the abundance of trees that beautify our neighborhood and make it healthier for a multitude of reasons. But what do we really know about these amazing historic residents that are all around us?

How many trees do you think grow in our area including Verdugo Park?

According to Glendale's arborist technician, **Katherine Williams**, there are about **3,368!** They are primarily the coast live oak (734), Western sycamore (359), Canary Island pine (210), jacaranda (186), crape myrtle (178) and sweet gum (127).

How old are they?

The oldest (especially the oak and sycamore) are between 100 and 150 years depending on the date of the surrounding development.

Are they in danger?

Can we protect them? These are important questions we can ask. Here are a few answers:

Watering: It is recommended that in preparation for the impending drought year we begin a routine of deep soaking now. Let the water slowly percolate into the soil under the tree canopy for about 4 to 12 hours per week or per month depending on the species. You can let your garden hose run on low over a weekend and move from tree to tree.

Invasive shot hole borer: You may not have heard his name, but this is the exotic beetle which attacks dozens of tree species in Southern California and unfortunately has been discovered in the Glendale area. Host trees may experience branch dieback, canopy loss and, in some cases, death. The Western sycamore is especially vulnerable. What we can do is identify and monitor active entry holes and remove infested branches, even trees, to reduce the active spread of the population. The pictures illustrate what to look for. If you notice any of these signs we recommend you call our arborist technician at 818-550-3402 or email her at kwilliams@GlendaleCa.gov



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**Verdugo Woodlands West
Are we ready to be designated
a Historic District?**

See page 1



Woodlands in the Movies

Did you know that the Disney legend and the original *Fantasia* story director **Joe Grant** lived right here — on Opechee?

That was one of the fascinating facts that the current owners of Joe's home, **Jorgen and Katrine Klubien**, divulged at our Zoom discussion about maybe having Verdugo Woodlands West designated as a historic district (see page 1). Jorgen is a Disney animator and so was particularly thrilled to discover that Grant was the first owner of their home.



“The trees in my yard had a Gothic form, which gave me the idea for the cathedral look.”

And that yard was in the Verdugo Woodlands!

Grant guided design aspects of *Fantasia* alongside Walt Disney. For the “Ave Maria” segment, he suggested the forest resemble stained glass windows, a visual concept Joe found in his own beautiful backyard.

Incredibly, this beloved artist was also a vital contributor to *Fantasia/2000*, the original's long-awaited follow-up: Joe conceived the flamingo with a yo-yo storyline for the “Carnival of the Animals” sequence.

Source: <https://d23.com/15-fascinating-facts-about-fantasia/>