

Castellammare Mesa Home Owners

PO Box 742

Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

<http://castellammaremesa.com>

NEWSLETTER July, 2009

Dear Neighbor: Greetings. We hope you and your family are having a relaxing and fun summer. This newsletter will bring you up-to-date on some of the news of your community.

- **HOME TOUR:** On behalf of the Association, the Board would like to offer our sincere thanks to Ms. Susan Morse for making her home available to the community for fund-raising purposes, and for making the tour a truly memorable experience for all of us who were able to attend. We are deeply grateful to Ms. Morse for her gracious hospitality, and to all our neighbors and friends who contributed to CMHO by taking part in the tour. We also owe a big thanks to Judy Orsini, who conceived the home tour idea, and her committee, for planning and organizing the entire event.
- **MOVIES IN THE PARK:** CMHO is delighted this year to be listed among the sponsors of Movies in the Park Pacific Palisades. We have provided financial support for the August 29 showing of the delightful movie Cars and hope to see our neighbors there.
- **CRIME AND SAFETY:** Crime continues to be down overall in the area. Until just recently, the Board had not heard of any recent car burglaries, unwanted solicitors or crimes of any type in our community. However, last week there was an incident on Bellino where someone knocked in a door, apparently in an attempt to burglarize the home. Luckily they were stopped by the tenant's large dog and left the premises.

You are cautioned to be proactive - always lock your car, do not leave any valuables in it, lock your home and windows, and do not open your door for anyone you do not know. And, please report any crimes or suspicious activity to the police and your CMHO Board. (Contact information on the last page.)

- **TREASURER'S REPORT:** As of July 20 the CMHO is in good financial shape. The CMHO maintains three bank accounts. The first is our normal business checking account. This is the account that we use to conduct the day-to-day business of the Association and out of which we also pay yearly one-time expenses such as our homeowner's insurance policy and the cost of the annual picnic. This account presently stands at \$12,382.

Our second account is a money market account. We use this account to store a cash reserve on a long-term basis because it earns a modest rate of interest. This account presently stands at \$14,188.

The third account is a Legal Defense Fund (LDF). This account was created approximately three years ago in connection with the lawsuit over the vacant lot at the corner of Tramonto and Bellino. The initial fund-raising for that account yielded over \$20,000 but the on-going costs of the lawsuit have steadily depleted that account. Indeed, by the beginning of this year, the balance in the LDF had fallen to levels that gave rise to discussions about the possible necessity of a new fund-raising appeal.

Today, however, the LDF stands at \$9724, which is adequate to forestall the immediate need for a major fund-raising appeal. For this, we are deeply grateful to Ms. Susan Morse, who made her lovely home available to us last spring for a home tour on behalf of the LDF. The tour raised nearly \$2,300 for this important fund.

At the present time, then, **CMHO has total cash reserves of approximately \$36,294.** As always, we pledge to use these monies in a prudent and fair manner to insure the legality and enforceability of the CC&R's, which are the key to the marvelous lifestyle we enjoy here in Castellammare Mesa.

CMHO DUES: We are thrilled to report that the paid membership of CMHO is now 153 households, which we take to be an expression of broad community support for the efforts of the Board and the Architectural Committee. We hope that any of our neighbors who have yet to remit their annual dues of \$85, payable to CMHO, do so in a timely manner. You receive a Getty Villa card when you become a CMHO member, which allows walk-in access to the Villa.

Respectfully,
Mike Lofchie, Treasurer

- **THE LAWSUIT, 17462 Tramonto:** Please refer to "CC&R and ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE UPDATES", page 4.
- **THE GETTY VILLA AND THE GETTY VILLA COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE (GVCRC):** As reported in the last newsletter, the Getty Villa's compliance with its Conditional Use Permit (CUP), will be reviewed by the City this year. The Getty is asking for some modifications to their CUP after working extensively with the surrounding homeowners associations on these modifications. The proposed changes include adding limited amplification (65 decibels) of spoken word and music, extending the complaint line procedure with modifications, and discontinuing the Outdoor Classical Theater shuttle service from the Getty to the Getty Villa. On April 27, the Getty submitted the required report to the City Planning Department for review. A public hearing will be scheduled, after which the City will accept or reject the requested modifications. The hearing will likely take place in the fall.

To date, the City's Department of Transportation indicates that the Getty has been in compliance with transportation-related review conditions and that the proposed CUP changes will not lead to increased impacts to traffic and parking. The City's Environmental agency within the Planning Department proposes that a negative declaration be adopted for these changes, as the initial study indicates that no significant impacts are apparent.

The GVCRC, representing four homeowner's groups, has created, with the Getty, an agreement regarding the CUP revisions. The agreement between the Getty and the GVCRC insures that should the modifications be approved, the community may revert back to the original CUP after a year if, in the opinion of the community, the changes are detrimental. This agreement will, of course, be dependent upon the City first approving the requested changes. If you would like more information on this issue, please visit our website.

The Outdoor Classical Theatre's production this year is *Peace*, by Aristophanes. The imaginative group, Culture Clash, will be adapting this extremely bawdy comedy. The public performances will start September 3 and continue through October 4. Tickets are currently on sale.

Many of you have inquired about the site at the corner of Los Liones and Sunset, where the Outdoor Room previously was located. The Getty reports that they had to regretfully remove the trees at the site. Last year, limbs had fallen on a car and a previous branch fall landed on the building. An arborist concluded that several of the trees presented a serious hazard. The trees were subsequently removed after the current tenant left. The Getty has no plans for that site, beyond planting native trees and shrubs in the fall when conditions are better for new plantings.

- **TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT SUNSET AND LOS LIONES:** As reported in the last newsletter, Westside Waldorf School had asked the City for relief from installing the light at Sunset and Los Liones. The City found that the school was not in compliance with some of their conditions of approval and scheduled a new plan approval, due in August of this year. As per the City's notice, "At that time the conditions may be modified further to reduce the impact of the school on the community." We will keep you updated on the outcome of the City's actions.
- **STRAY CATS:** The trapping of the abandoned cats who were multiplying at an alarming rate in our neighborhood has been successful. The adults were trapped, neutered and returned to the neighborhood where they continue to be fed by a resident. Most of the kittens were rescued, cared for and given to good homes when they were ready. (However, three kittens remain "at large" and the neighbors are hoping to catch them before they get old enough to reproduce.) It was a tremendous effort (emotionally, financially and time-wise) by several of our neighbors and we thank them. Also, thanks to the many of you who donated to the "kitty fund" - it helped defray much of the costs incurred by them. Your generosity is much appreciated!
- **COYOTES:** A neighbor recently reported seeing a pack of five coyotes strolling along the fence line at Bellino (up from Los Liones) at 10:30 am on a weekday. We have also had sightings of skunk families, raccoons, possums and deer in neighbor's yards. Please make sure your pets are kept safe.
- **CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AT 17335 TRAMONTO,** across from the Ocean Woods Condos. This is the lot which looks like a construction storage yard (and is not in our tract). The developer has plans to build a 6580 sq. ft. two story home but he has been unable to obtain funding. The owner reported in October '08 that he planned to clean up the lot and landscape the perimeter of the property in order to make it more presentable to the community. Obviously, this has not yet occurred. He was recently contacted again and stated that he may wait until the winter to landscape and he is hopeful to get funding this year to start construction. The owner was asked to clean up the property, clear away the brush for fire protection and remove the tangle of rusted rebar lying close to the street. He agreed to do so, and, in fact, some of the work has been completed.
- **CLOSED CHEVRON STATION AT PCH AND SUNSET:** Good news - United Oil has bought the property and has extensive plans to beautify the station before reopening it. They are a family-owned business and take pride in building great looking stations. They have graciously met with community leaders in order to keep them abreast of their remodeling plans.
- **FREE MULCH FROM THE CITY:** The city has a program to give away free mulch, made from yard trimmings, available at various locations around the City. The location closest to us is at 6000 W. Jefferson Blvd., L.A. 90016. They operate from 7 am to 5 pm seven days a week. You bring your own shovel and bag, load up your containers and take as much as you need. As we all need to cut back on watering our landscapes, covering the ground with mulch helps to conserve water, prevents weeds and adds nutrients and organic matter to the soil. For more information, you may contact James Kurz (818) 834-5128, City of L.A., Bureau of Sanitation, or our neighbor, Ros Cross at (310) 459-5881.

CC&R and ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE UPDATES:

The CMHO's primary responsibility, through its Architectural Committee (AC), is to uphold the CC&R's. Homeowners are required, per Article III, Section 2 of the CC&R's, to bring their construction projects to the AC early in the process. Please be aware that ALL construction to the exterior of the property is subject to review by the AC. Failure to consult with the AC BEFORE construction begins will almost always result in unnecessary delays and/or added expenses and can damage neighbor-to-neighbor relations. In addition, failure to comply with the CC&R's may require the homeowner to remove illegal construction at their own expense.

It is important to note that our CC&R's require the AC to focus on specific issues such as unreasonable view impairments, height limitations (one story) and set-backs from property lines. The CC&R's also require that submitted plans shall be approved contingent on compliance with city or other building codes. While the AC recognizes that neighbors may object to new construction for various reasons, such as privacy considerations, variances from city building codes, landscaping or construction style, the AC is not authorized to address many of these issues and cannot reject a construction project for these reasons. Where such issues may adversely impact a neighbor, the AC encourages the homeowner to be considerate of his or her neighbors for the benefit of the neighbors and the entire community.

Compliance with the CC&R's and the rules of the Architectural Committee preserve a community that we all cherish. Please show respect for your neighbors and this community by contacting the AC when you are contemplating construction.

Projects in which the AC is currently involved:

- 333 Bellino - The owner is building an unpermitted fire-pit and pergola in his backyard. The AC was unaware of the project until construction began and has asked the owner to supply the AC with plans. To date, the owner has not responded to the AC's repeated requests.
- 266 Quadro Vecchio - The owner will raze the current house and was given approval, after revising his plans twice at the request of the AC, to build an under story and first floor on the site.
- 17537 Tramonto - The owners plan on replacing the existing house. Story poles have recently been installed and the AC is going through its plan review process with neighbors.
- 17642 Tramonto. This is the vacant lot on the cliff at Tramonto and Bellino where the owners are suing the CMHO. This suit is going into its fourth year. As reported in the last newsletter, we thought mediation was successful and that new story poles would be installed per the Architectural Committee's (AC's) recommendations. However, the plans the owners presented to the AC to install the story poles were inaccurate and failed to comply with the mediation agreement. Although the AC tried to work with the owners in coming up with a solution using the submitted plans, the AC finally had to request revised plans per the mediation settlement. The owners' response was to take the CMHO to court to compel us to set up the story poles. We argued that poles could not be set up without accurate plans and, on July 2, the court rejected the owners' demand. So, the owners still have to give the AC accurate plans per the settlement agreement, as they were to have done last January. If they fail to do so, we may once again have to prepare for a trial.
- 17869 Tramonto - The owner installed a deck near the roof of his house without AC prior knowledge or approval. The owner has agreed to supply the AC with the City approved plans for the deck.
- 17876 Vicino - The AC recently approved a rear deck extension. The deck will extend out three feet beyond the original house and is not a view impairment.

CMHO CONTACT LIST

Board Members

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Architectural Committee Members

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| Reuel Sutton | 239 Tranquillo | 459-1286 | reuel.sutton@yahoo.com |

Other Important Numbers:

LAPD: Senior Lead Officer Michael Moore: 1-310-444-0737; 27995@lapd.lacity.org

For non-emergency immediate service: (877) 275-5273

Fire Dept. 911 Brush Clearance: (818) 374-1111

City Services and Building & Safety: 311 or <http://www.lacity.org/boss/request.htm>

Film Permit Office: (213) 977-8600

City Council Office:

Bill Rosendahl: LA Office: 200 N. Spring Street, Rm 415, LA, CA 90012; 213-473-7011

West LA: 1645 Corinth, Room 201, West LA, CA 90025; 310-575-8461

councilman.rosendahl@lacity.org

Jessyca Avalos: Field Deputy for Pacific Palisades: jessyca.avalos@lacity.org

Getty Villa Community Relations Committee:

Kelly Comras: 1-310-459-5661; k_comras@hotmail.com

Getty Villa Complaint Hotline: 1-877-625-4282

Remember to conserve water!!

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