

WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION



Newsletter ↪ *Winter* ↪ 2006

Letter from the President

Thanks to everyone who helped to make our Annual Meeting and Picnic such a great success. Master chefs Joe Koman, Abe Callo, and Margaret Lui grilled up some mean burgers and dogs, complemented by some tasty dishes neighbors brought to share.

We heard board members' reports on the latest neighborhood happenings, followed by comments from several guests. Folks from the San Francisco Public Library updated us on the latest news regarding the new Ingleside branch, and the kids got to check out the library's children's book mobile—and actually check out books!

Kids were also thrilled by the horses from the mounted unit of the SFPD and, not to be outdone, by the SFFD who came by with one of their huge hook and ladder fire trucks. Supervisor Sean Elsbernd also stopped by to say a few words concerning the latest goings on in the city that affect our neighborhood. All this and much, much more were topped off by glorious weather and a very fun time with other Westwood Park neighbors.

A big thank you also goes to outgoing board member, Bob Hermann. Bob has helped out as Co-Treasurer and Member-at-Large, and his efforts have been greatly appreciated. Thank you, Bob!

Finally, I want to extend a warm welcome our newest board members, Åsa and Geoff Williams. Åsa and Geoff will share a single board position as Co-Secretaries. Thanks, you guys, for sharing your time and energy to help our neighborhood.

On behalf of the board, I would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season.

Greg Clinton, President

board@westwoodpark.com

Westwood Park Association Board Members

Greg Clinton
President (term expires 2008)

Anita Theoharis
Vice President (term expires 2009)

Åsa & Geoff Williams
Co-Secretaries (terms expire 2009)

Julie Hagelshaw & Grant Edelstone
Co-Treasurers (terms expire 2007)

Anne Chen
Member at Large (term expires 2009)

Nanette Asimov
Member at Large (term expires 2007)

Members of the Westwood Park Association Board of Directors are volunteers elected to serve three-year terms.

Board meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of each month at the home of a board member, and begin at 7 p.m.

For information and the location of upcoming meetings, visit www.westwoodpark.com.

Contact us via e-mail at: *board@westwoodpark.com*,

or by voicemail at: 415-333-1125

or by mail at: P.O. Box 27901 #770 SF, CA 94127



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Meet Neighbors Art & Dorothy Adams

By Nanette Asimov

It's March, 1959. A Westwood Park resident is moving away, selling the home to a real-estate agent. After signing the papers, the seller learns that the agent has acted on behalf of an anonymous buyer. And the buyer is black.

Now the seller refuses to hand over the house keys.

So accepted was racism in that era that Westwood Park had codified the hatred into its own neighborhood rules. According to Section XIII of those CC&Rs, created when the neighborhood opened in 1920, "No person of African, Japanese, Chinese or any Mongolian descent shall be allowed to purchase, own or lease any real property in said Westwood Park."

It sounded definitive. Yet neither the Westwood Park Association nor the seller had ever met Artemus and Dorothy Adams.

Art Adams was a San Francisco police officer. Dorothy Adams was a saleswoman at Macy's. In 1959, they were the parents of 5-year-old Art III and 3-year-old Kim Michelle. Like many young families, they wanted to buy a detached home with a yard—but unlike many families, they had to do their house hunting at night.

So it was no surprise that when the Adamses and their real estate agent visited a Westwood Park home after the sun went down, Dorothy pronounced it "dreary" and "dark." Later, the agent showed them a photo of a bright, pretty home, and Dorothy said, "I like this house!"

"We laughed at that," Art recalled. He and the agent told her, "Dorothy, you just left that place!"

In March, 1959, the Adamses paid

an \$800 fee to an unnamed person to buy the Westwood Park property on their behalf. "I couldn't get a loan," Art said. "But the agent had places where he could get them."

Their offer was accepted, and the plan was to move in as soon as possible. But things began to go wrong.

"My Realtor couldn't get the key," Art said. That meant the family had to pay rent on their Waller Street flat even as they paid mortgage on the house they couldn't live in.

The seller, it appeared, had learned the buyers were black.

Six months went by. Art contacted the seller and requested plainly that the key be provided, and that the Adamses be reimbursed for the extra rent they were forced to pay. "Put yourself in my position," Art said. "Do you think this is fair?"

The seller was unmoved, and Art and Dorothy had enough. They sought legal advice and came up with a plan.

The next night in Westwood Park, three men and two women approached a darkened house. All the doors were locked. One of the men jimmied open the side door with a tire iron. And for the first time, Art and Dorothy stepped into their own home and into Westwood Park history.

The first African Americans had just moved into the neighborhood—and had to break into their own home to do it.

"It kind of hurts to think about it," said Dorothy, who celebrated that first night by cleaning the bathroom. Art, his brother and a friend carried in the furniture they had brought over in a U-Haul.

But the era of "restrictions" was over, thanks to the Adamses. And their neighbors were also more than ready for the change. On their second night in Westwood Park, the doorbell rang.

Art and Dorothy opened the door to find a smiling woman who said, "I'm here to welcome you to the neighborhood. I live next door."

Art served three terms on the Westwood Park Association board. And Dorothy inaugurated a five-family dinner party that took place every two months in the neighborhood for more than four decades.

"It was so much fun," Dorothy said.

As for the original seller, a sheriff knocked on that person's door shortly after the Adamses moved into their new home. The sheriff handed the former homeowner a subpoena, and within three days the Adamses had a check in hand for six months of rent on their old flat.

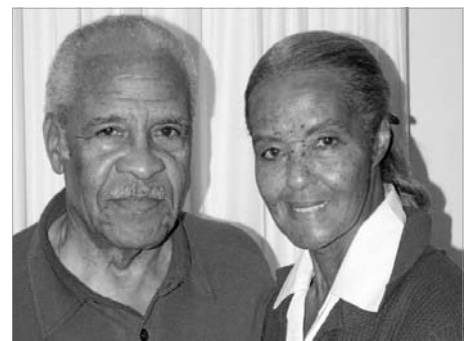


Photo credit: Hugh Byrne

Postscript from Art: "We found what we wanted. Wonderful neighbors, a detached home with grass, blooming cherry blossom trees, a neighborhood filled with children, and all of the conveniences: church, schools, transportation, shopping, and peace and quiet. We were home." 🐾

The Infamous Article XIII

By Anita Theoharis

The story of Westwood Park's infamous Article XIII shows us that we can try to repair history—but we cannot change it.

In 1920, Westwood Park adopted its first "Declaration of Easements, Restrictions, Conditions, Covenants, Charges and Agreements." These are less formally known as the *CC&Rs*, the set of regulations intended for the common good of the neighborhood. But the common good was not served by Article XIII in the original *CC&Rs*, which barred Westwood Park to persons of African and Asian descent who wished to live here.

This offensive section remained in

Westwood Park's *CC&Rs* for 72 years—long after the California Civil Code made Article XIII and similar neighborhood racial and ethnic restrictions null and void. In 1992, several residents asked that the Westwood Park Association delete the section, which it did. The new *CC&Rs* were re-filed with the city—but the law prohibits the original version from being removed from County records.

And that means errors are sometimes made. Not long ago, new homeowners informed the Westwood Park Association that when they moved in, the *CC&Rs* they received from the title company were written before 1992—and

therefore contained Article XIII.

The Association has been active in its efforts to distribute the latest filing of the *CC&Rs*. Realtors listing properties in Westwood Park are given a disclosure letter that includes a copy of the most recent *CC&Rs*. Copies are also available online at our web site: www.westwoodpark.com.

We thank residents Stephen Theoharis and Norman Yee for their time and effort in researching the *CC&Rs* and for working through the painstaking process of having them re-filed, so that the illegal language so offensive to our residents was removed.

Annual Halloween Contest Winners

By Greg Clinton

Our quiet, peaceful neighborhood once again hosted all types of scary and bewitching trick-or-treaters this year. Many homes added ghoulish charm with elaborate and creative decorations. Top honors this year go to:



1st Prize (Westwood Park T-Shirt & DVD): 555 Miramar. A delightful cornucopia of frightening lights, sounds, and movement, featuring a moaning ghost bobbing up and down, and a spotlight projecting flying creatures of the night.

2nd Prize (Westwood Park T-Shirt): 728 Faxon. A creepy skull




and crossbones entry gate welcomes you into this cemetery filled with tongues of lighted flames and frightening skeletons.

3rd Prize (Westwood Park DVD): 549 Miramar. A scary scene covered with sticky spider webs and filled with monsters of various persuasions, tombstones, skeletons, carved pumpkins, and caged witches hanging from the roof.



Honorable Mentions

799 Faxon: Perennial favorite of the neighborhood complete with lighted skulls, wayward witches, menacing crows, and every form of bat, spider and ghost imaginable.

530 Staples: Creative collection of lights, witches, spiders and scary pumpkins behind a prominent and spooky pirate skeleton. 

Neighbors: Please add your name to our growing e-mail list so that your Westwood Park Association can keep you informed with neighborhood announcements. You may do so with confidence, as this list is never shared with any outside group.

To sign up, send an e-mail to neighbors-subscribe@westwoodpark.com. Also: Comments and suggestions about the newsletter may be sent to newsletter@westwoodpark.com.

Photos: Westwood Park Annual Meeting



Mindy Linetzky of the San Francisco Public Library shows plans for the new Ingleside Branch.



A police horse joins the picnic.



Supervisor Sean Elsbernd updates neighbors on plans for Monterey Boulevard.



Westwood Park's youngest firefighter.



Limerick Contest winner Alex Davis.



Hugh Byrne relaxes with pal Cogswell.

Photo credits: Greg Morris

**WESTWOOD PARK
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