

WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION

Newsletter → *Winter* → 2007



Letter from the President

WESTWOOD PARK CRIME

As many of you know, our neighborhood has experienced a recent increase in crime. Homes have been broken into during the middle of the day, and cars have been either vandalized or broken into during both night and day. Those of you who subscribe to the Westwood Park e-mail list have seen the tremendous flurry of emails from residents alerting each other of crimes and suspicious activities in the area. The Association is currently in dialogue with the SFPD about these break-ins. We are planning a meeting so that neighbors can talk directly with police about what can be done to address the problem. However, with their limited resources, we cannot rely solely on the police to stop this criminal activity.

If we want to stop the crimes happening in our neighborhood, people need to get involved. One way to do this is to set up neighborhood watch groups. San Francisco S.A.F.E. is an organization that administers the Neighborhood Watch Program (you can check it out at www.sfsafe.org). Neighborhood Watch helps residents coordinate with each other and with the police to work together to keep homes and streets safe. They also provide free crime-prevention information and materials, and bring in officials from city departments to address residents' concerns. The Association will help set up a meeting for interested residents to meet with representatives from San Francisco S.A.F.E. to start forming individual neighborhood watch groups.

We will keep you informed about the upcoming meetings with police and San Francisco S.A.F.E. In the meantime:

- Report ANY suspicious activity currently happening by calling 911.
- DO NOT confront suspicious characters, as this can create an unsafe situation. Call the police instead.
- File a police report for any crime by calling 553-0123. The police rely on these reports to determine which areas get the limited police resources.
- Do not leave any valuables visible in your car.
- Sign up for the neighborhood email at www.westwoodpark.com to keep informed and to help alert other neighbors.

By joining together and getting involved, we can all help make our neighborhood a safer place.

Greg Clinton, President

board@westwoodpark.com

Westwood Park Association Board Members

Greg Clinton
President (term expires 2008)

Anita Theoharis
Vice President (term expires 2009)

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

Julie Hagelshaw & Grant Edelstone
Co-Treasurers (terms expire 2010)

Anne Chen
Member at Large (term expires 2009)

Nanette Asimov
Member at Large (term expires 2010)

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

Halloween Contest Winners—and, Remembering Dan Gutierrez

by Nanette Asimov

Before announcing this year's winners, let's take a moment to honor a neighborhood legend whose love of the ghoulish and ghostly inspired Westwood Park's appreciation of the same.

Each Halloween for at least a decade, dragons belched smoke across Dan Gutierrez's lawn on Valdez Street. And if passers-by had the urge to use the out-house he had set up on the property, they'd have had to find a way past the deathly ghoul guarding the door of the loo.

Mr. Gutierrez was the king of the remote-controlled fright gag, and his unique skills inspired many neighbors to put the spirit back into Halloween.

"Anything good the rest of us had came from him," said David Melamed, of Valdez Street.

Dan Gutierrez died last year.

Neighbor Carolyn Haderle said she and several neighbors refrained

from decorating this year out of respect for his memory.

"We are in mourning for Dan," she said. "He was the pioneer. He was a sweet, sweet man who had so much fun in him."

Westwood Park is establishing a "Halloween Hall of Fame" in honor of Dan Gutierrez, who is the first inductee this year. Halloween contest winners will also be considered for entry into this special club in years to come.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

3rd Prize: 55 Valdez

This extraordinary production featured a life-sized Grim Reaper atop a Harley, belching (simulated) exhaust from a fog machine beneath the hellish bike. Bravo! A DVD of Westwood Park's early years has been delivered.

2nd Prize: 40 Valdez


Imagine trick-or-treaters having to run this gruesome gauntlet: In the driveway, a man run over by a red

Honda is still twitching his legs long after hazard cones have been placed around the accident site.

Innocent children are forced to watch as a foot-long black widow spider devours an anguished mummy. Overseeing the horror from inside the home, a ghostly presence floats in mid-air, visible through the picture window (how DID they do that?), its eyes electric blue.

Finally, survivors who reach the landing are greeted by a skeleton with flashing eyes. What a welcome! A Westwood Park t-shirt has been delivered.

1st Prize: 728 Faxon

From harmless habitation to Fortress of Doom aglow with lilac lighting, this creepy castle was utterly transformed. Even a Harry Potter-esque Death Eater stood guard at the door, flanked by a pair of life-sized skeletons bearing torches. Abandon hope, all ye who enter here! A t-shirt and DVD have been delivered. 

Ingleside Library Update

by Nanette Asimov

Ground-breaking for the new Ingleside Library at Plymouth and Ocean avenues is expected soon, "maybe in January," says Mindy Linetzky of the city's Branch Library Improvement Program.

Originally, construction was to have begun this year, with the new \$6.8 million library opening in late 2008.

But the new Ingleside site has been slower to move than a library patron with a bestseller and a past-due notice.

The earliest that book-lovers can expect to walk through the new library's doors is now the summer of 2009.

Maybe.

Contributing to the many delays was a snafu with the first round of bidding by contractors in August, which led the process to be scrapped. CDX Builders, the lowest bidder, had looked like a winner—until another contractor protested. The City Attorney upheld the protest because CDX hadn't named a subcontractor. So the bid was tossed

out, Linetzky said.

A new round of bidding in November drew six bids. This time, the lowest came from a contractor with a different three-letter name: CLW. But that contractor came in slightly above budget.

So on November 15, the library commission increased the budget for the Ingleside project by \$53,000 at the request of City Librarian Luis Herrera.

Linetzky hopes that the ground-breaking will be next month. "We will

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Original Details Add Value to Your Home

by Geoff Williams

Ever been tempted to replace your home's 85-year-old fireplace tiles with, say, a sleek marble surface? Or brighten your dining room by painting over the dark wood with creamy white?

Please don't.

Before I make my case on sheer aesthetic grounds for preserving your home's original details—the molding, those built-in cabinets, the woodwork and other design elements—let me appeal to a higher authority: your pocketbook.

Westwood Park homes with original details are, to put it bluntly, worth a lot of money.

As a Westwood Park resident and real-estate professional, I can tell you that evidence for the added value that original details bring is not hard to find. People looking for homes in Westwood Park don't just like original details, they pay handsomely for them.

Whole cottage industries, and very profitable ones, have grown out of the demand to replace all the crown molding, baseboards, china hutchers, etc. that have been pulled out of older homes over the years. And putting the woodwork back is no cheap proposition; it can cost many thousands of dollars.

However, even though it's possible to re-introduce those architectural details, they will never be original. Buyers simply pay more for authenticity than for


reproductions. That's true for antiques, and it's true for older homes in good condition.

Now, about those aesthetics. People's tastes vary widely, and that's a wonderful thing. But you would not paint over a Ming vase or a Wedgwood teacup just because you prefer it in a different color.

Similarly, Westwood Park homes are works of architectural art from an important design era in American history: the early 20th-century Craftsman movement. So painting over or removing your home's original details is like altering a work of art.

You may say, well, I'll just change the outside of the home. Or just the inside. But part of the home's charm, and sales value, is good balance between the exterior and interior style.

But let's say you've got the itch to remodel, and you've got it bad. There are many ways to satisfy that in your bungalow home, while preserving the original details. You can hire a professional to clean the tiles, restore the wood, and repair any cracks. Perhaps most beneficial to the value of your home is to modernize the kitchen and bath. There are several books that can show how to do this without destroying the original details and charm.

In short, Westwood Park's beautiful houses have been around for nearly a century, and we should respect their simple, elegant design. That counts as well. 

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let everyone know about it," she said.

Meanwhile, the plan for a commissioned work of art for the library has also been evolving slowly.

Eric Powell, the artist chosen in 2004 by the community selection panel [which included this writer], was originally expected to integrate an artistic metal gate into the library's design. But concerns about cost, vandalism, gate-climbers and accessibility for the disabled sent the metal gate concept to the smelting plant.


Those concerns also squelched the

possibility of integrating any other work of art into the design, said Judy Moran of the San Francisco Arts Commission.

"The only remaining option is for the artist to create a free-standing sculpture in the courtyard," Moran said in an email earlier this year.

So Powell will create a small sculpture that will be visible from inside the library and by people passing to the east of the building, Moran wrote. She added that Powell "is more than capable of creating an aesthetically pleasing and appropriate sculpture

for the courtyard."

For information on contributing to the library—from attending a Valentine's Day dinner dance and fundraiser, to establishing a permanent acknowledgment of your donation on library grounds—please contact Christine Leishman of Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, at 626-7512 (ext. 101), or at chritine.leishman@friendssfpl.org. 

by: Nanette Asimov, Editor
Erica Langdon, Design
Anita Theoharis, Production


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NERT Team Needs You

In the market for a New Year's resolution? Here's a good one: Resolve to participate in a free Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT) training program in 2008.

Sponsored by the San Francisco Fire Department, NERT training prepares you to help out during a disaster: from earthquakes to terrorist attacks. With basic training, you can make a difference in the lives of your families and neighbors when disaster strikes.

Training dates for 2008, including evening and weekend dates, will be posted soon at www.sfgov.org/site/sfnert_index.asp.

For more information about Westwood Park's NERT team, please contact Greg Morris at: gmorris133@msn.com. 



Scenes from the Westwood Park Annual Picnic in September

**WESTWOOD PARK
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