

WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION



Newsletter → *Spring* → 2011

Ocean Avenue Becomes a Community Benefit District

By Kate Favetti

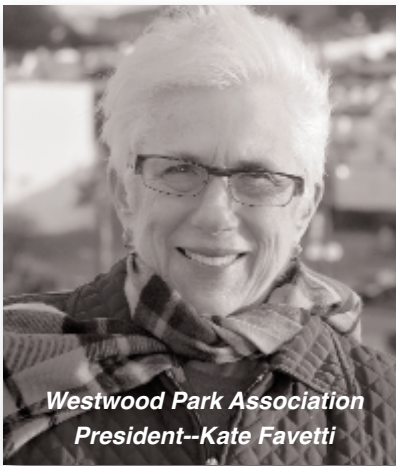
More than five years in the making, Ocean Avenue became a "community benefits district" on Dec. 14, when the Board of Supervisors approved the plan on an 8-to-3 vote.

What's a community benefits district? Businesses – or sometimes residents -- decide that their neighborhood needs improvement, so they vote to tax themselves and use the money for anything from graffiti removal to recruiting new businesses.

San Francisco approved its first such district in 1999, in Union Square. The district uses its assessments, about \$3 million a year, to pay for extra street sweeping, trash removal and security, as well as decorative flowers. Uniformed "ambassadors" also rove the area answering questions.

Today, the city has 12 community benefit districts – including Ocean Avenue. The Supervisors' action authorizes the Ocean Avenue community benefits district to raise funds to pay for services that enhance – but not replace -- municipal services on Ocean. Assessments are tax deductible by property owners. The community benefits district will be a non-profit public benefit corporation.

The money will be locally controlled by the district's board of directors: 50% property owners, 25% merchants and 25% community members. Until the size and selection process for a perma-



*Westwood Park Association
President--Kate Favetti*

nent board is adopted, an interim board has been selected: Howard Chung, Rick England, Walee Gon, Matt Patel, Roger Seto and Dan Weaver.

Services being considered for Ocean Avenue include extra cleaning and maintenance, security, business recruitment and promotion, establishing an identity for the district, and advocating with the city. The assessment will help property owners comply with city ordinances requiring them to maintain the area in front of their buildings and clear trash, gum and graffiti.

The Ocean Avenue assessment is expected to raise \$240,000 a year for the area, which includes 150 parcels from Manor to I-280. Some property owners own more than one parcel. Larger property owners pay more than smaller ones, and their vote carried greater weight when the businesses decided to seek community benefit district status. Eighteen of the 150 parcels voted for the ben-

efit district, enough for approval.

Some property owners voting against the district were concerned about the effect of additional costs on struggling businesses. Other opponents saw no need to change Ocean Avenue.

After Ocean Avenue businesses approved the plan, the vote went to city Supervisors. The three who opposed it were Michela Alioto-Pier, Carmen Chu and Sean Elsbernd, who said he disagreed with the weighted voting.

Nevertheless, many local residents are hopeful that the Ocean Avenue community benefits district will be a positive force to bring about needed improvements and enhanced business opportunities that will benefit everyone – and put Ocean Avenue on the map in a positive way.

Information about the district may be found at www.oceanave-oarc.org.

Ocean Avenue Arts Walk & Sidewalk Sale on May 12th!

Save the Date!

From noon to 6 pm you'll find a sidewalk sale between Plymouth and Manor. And from 5 to 8 pm enjoy an art show! You'll see performances, exhibits, arts and crafts, food and more! Come join us!

Futuristic Touch at Historic Home on Westwood Drive

By Kathleen Beitiks

Nearly 90 years after it was featured prominently in the October 1923 issue of "The Home Designer," the Dutch Colonial Revival home at 185 Westwood Dr. still sits majestically on a gentle slope perched above the curved streets of Westwood Park.

Neighborhood residents know the 1920 home as the Henning House, but Jeff and Annette Rocca are in the midst of giving it a new personality – respectful of its early 20th century design and character, while bringing it into the 21st century.

The Roccas lived down the street from the Henning House and were making plans to expand their home when the Henning residence sprouted a "For Sale" sign on its front lawn. By November 2009, the house was theirs.

John and Betty Henning had been the second owners of the home, filling its four bedrooms with their seven children. A well-known labor leader, John "Jack" Henning served as Undersecretary of Labor under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. In 1967, he was named Ambassador to New Zealand. Betty died in 1994, and Jack in 2009.

Jeff Rocca, a fifth-generation San Franciscan and a general contractor, and Annette Rocca, a third-generation San Franciscan, set about to ready their new home to raise their two children.

"It was clear to us that it was a tear-down," said Jeff, noting that the Henning House needed re-wiring, re-plumbing, insulation and a new concrete foundation – among a list of many other things.

But when the Roccas discovered that the lapped siding was redwood, Jeff said he knew it would be more efficient and resourceful to leave it alone. "It's old-growth redwood," he said, "and there was very little dry rot."

It was a state-of-the-art home in 1920 – with all the latest appliances and time-saving features to make family life comfortable in the post-World War I era. Today, nine decades later, the Roccas are



185 Westwood Back in the Day: A 20th century neighborhood icon built in 1920



185 Westwood Today: A state-of-the-art home has solar panels and wireless controls

continuing that state-of-the-art tradition by gracefully updating their historic home to the 21st century.

They have installed solar panels on the roof and made the entire home wireless

– lights, security and heating can be controlled and managed remotely. In addition to adding a basement level with several rooms, the Roccas did extensive

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interior remodeling. "But we tried to pay attention to the age of the place," said Jeff. Even so, he said, one of Hennings' sons stopped by and said he almost didn't recognize his old home with all the updates.

The Rocca's traded the lawn for terraces of brick planters. Keeping the exterior intact – along with its wide, welcoming, front porch--was a decision that made many neighbors sigh in relief. The Roccas were surprised by the neighborhood's attachment to the elegant home, which Jeff said resulted in many calls to the city Planning Department and supervisor's office to make sure all permits were in order.

Although a few other homes in Westwood Park sport a colonial design, the size and elevated location of 185 Westwood Dr. give it a special prominence. Designed by San Francisco architect Charles Strothoff and built by Hans Nelson, the house has been mentioned in several publications and described as an "anomaly" in a neighborhood of Spanish and English revival bungalows.

The big, white, columned home attracted attention in the beginning of the 20th century and it appears destined to continue on that path of architectural longevity with its successful move to meet the needs of a 21st century family - a true sign of classic.

2nd Annual Ocean Ave. Film Festival a Success

By Maria Picar

Movie lovers packed the second annual Ocean Avenue Film Festival in January, thrilling to nine original films from nine local filmmakers shown on the big screen at Caffe de Melanio.

Though each film ran no longer than 15 minutes, the scope of the cinematic offerings was vast, ranging from mystery and science fiction, to romantic comedy and documentary.

Dozens of local residents, business owners, and film aficionados, including City Supervisor John Avalos, filled the seats at Melanio's on Saturday evening, January 22.

The event gave neighbors a chance to see great films – and gave filmmakers a great chance to showcase their work. Here was the line-up:

- Jo Nemoyn and Ian Carruthers ("Telepoo" and "Anatomy of a Street Corner") of Foolish Tree Films
- Jane Anfinson ("Thailand 4"), Tad Veltrap ("Living Roofs"), Todd Donahue ("Darkness and Light") and Sanelle Sinbanda ("The Baby Sitter") of The Culture Productions
- Joanna Zhang ("Sweet Kiss"), Derek Sanchez ("Stalker") and Maria Fe Picar ("To Act or Not to Act") of Asian Mainstream Productions.

A lively question-and-answer session with the filmmakers followed the show, as well as Ocean Avenue's own version of the Academy Awards.

The audience awarded "Best Film" to Joanna Zhang for "Sweet Kiss," about a woman who falls for another woman at a concert.

But the real winners of the evening were the OMI International Family Festival and the Ingleside Library. Although the film festival was free, it was also a fundraiser. Many patrons had drinks or dinner at Melanio's, an Italian / Argentinean restaurant, and owner Melanio Duarte donated 10% of the proceeds to the library and festival, which is held each September.

The first Ocean Avenue Film Festival was held last year in the old Ingleside library space at Faxon and Ocean avenues.

The success of the second one establishes the festival as a firm tradition, thanks to a thriving film community in our area.

A third film festival is already being planned, possibly for the fall. Organizers -- the OMI Cultural Participation Project, Foolish Tree Films and Caffe de Melanio -- hope to expand the next festival to two days, and showcase the films in several locations. Hope to see you there!

Neighborhood Emergency Response Team

Learn valuable rescue skills and disaster preparation by joining Westwood Park's Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT). The NERT team meets regularly at the Ingleside Library, 1298 Ocean Avenue at Plymouth. Meetings are led by trained volunteers from the neighborhood. The Fire Department also offers disaster response training to NERT volunteers.

The planned meeting schedule for the remainder of 2011 is as follows: April 6, June 1, Aug. 3, Sept. 7, Oct. 5, Dec. 7. All meetings are 6:30 – 7:30 pm. We also hope to have one outdoor mini-drill during the year, in addition to the Fire Department's semi-annual citywide drills (April 16 and October TBD).

In the event of disaster, neighbors should go to the NERT staging area at the upper Plymouth Green at Montecito Avenue. NERT volunteers will provide first aid, search and rescue, and the latest emergency services information.

NERT is an important element of Westwood Park's community tradition.

For more information and to confirm meeting dates, contact volunteers:

Greg Morris
gmmorris133@msn.com;

Melanie Johnson
mdrjohnson@comcast.net;

Ximena Cordova
ximena_cordova94112@yahoo.com



Jamming in the 'Hood

By Ray Favetti

What do a medical doctor, engineer, software contractor and yoga instructor have in common? Great music – and Westwood Park. The four professionals leave their day jobs behind and transform by night into the Westwood Jamberries, treating listeners to an eclectic mix of jazz, blues and Latin music at Westwood Park's own Caffè D'Melanio on Ocean Avenue.

What better way to spend a pleasant couple of hours than to listen to good



music and have a fine dinner? This is what my wife and I often do when we want to go on our Saturday night date. Three members of the talented quartet live in Westwood Park. Keyboard player Ken Chou, an engineering manager at a bank, lives on Faxon.

Guitarist and bass player Dave Melamed develops software for main-frame computer systems and lives on Valdez. He also plays harmonica.

Percussionist Chad Balch, also on Faxon, not only teaches Iyengar yoga, he runs a children's book-lending program with his wife called Book Tree.

Dr. Corey Weinstein, who specializes in homeopathy, lives on Plymouth within spitting distance of Westwood Park. He is the band's clarinetist. "We're as much about neighborhood, friendship and community as about music," Chad said. And that's what gave birth to the Jamberries in 2008.

Chad and Ken live across the street from each other, and often found themselves chatting about the usual neighborly things. But the conversation eventually turned to music, and keyboardist and percussionist sat down to play.

Then Chad discovered that a fellow member of the musical ensemble at his synagogue, Or Shalom, lived in Westwood Park. Chad invited Dave to play bass with him and Ken.

One night about a year ago, the trio were jamming at the Java on Ocean Café when another guy from the synagogue spotted them. That was Corey, who grabbed his clarinet and sat in. "It was so much fun for all of us that we made it a quartet," said Chad, who

said their whimsical name, like the band itself, "mixes sweetness with musical improv and has a home/hearth feeling about it."

The Westwood Jamberries enjoy a loyal following in Westwood Park and OMI, and their music has been picked up on jazz station KCSM, 91.1 FM. Which isn't surprising, as the artists' solos demonstrate their virtuosity, and, as a group, the Jamberries seamlessly transition between genres.



"I love their music," said neighbor Laurie Martin, who has heard the Jamberries several times at Melanio's. "The daughter of one of the musicians (Chad) has also sung with the band, and it's that mix of neighborhood, family, great food and people that make for an incredible evening right in Westwood Park. The Jamberries are jammin'!"



Dear Neighbors,

Thank you for allowing me to update you on the Westwood Park neighborhood and Ingleside Police District.

From October 1, 2011 to February 1, 2011 there were two robberies, two auto thefts and six car break-ins in your neighborhood.

One robbery included two college exchange students on Wildwood Way who were strong-armed after they came off the light rail on Ocean Avenue. The second was on Faxon near Ocean in the evening hours, when the victim was robbed while walking from Ocean Avenue. We believe this robbery was part of a series and with a car involved.

The best way to prevent robberies is to be aware of your surroundings and not use your iPhone, iPods or other electronics in public, especially on MUNI. In the last month, 42% of our robberies had these items taken. If you must use your phone in public, keep your back to a wall, so no one can approach from behind and snatch it out of your hand.

Burglaries haven't affected your area, but neighbors must be ever vigilant to report suspicious persons and activity to the police. Most burglaries occur during the day when residents are at work or school. If a stranger knocks on your door and asks an awkward question, such as, "Does Tom live here?" or "Do you know where Ocean Avenue is?" he may be casing the block. Your neighbors are the



Captain Louis Cassanego suggests Westwood Park residents have a look at the Ingleside Station website: www.inglesidepolicestation.com. The website includes safety tips, announcements and a multitude of resources.

best preventative measure to stop most criminals in their tracks by calling the police.

As for stolen autos, if you have a Honda, Nissan or Toyota that is 10 years old or more, I would suggest a steering wheel locking device. The door locks and the ignitions are worn, and thieves are using "shaved keys" to steal these cars.

Car break-ins are the most frustrating crime. The criminals use the stealth of night to commit their thievery. Don't leave anything in your car, not even an

old sweatshirt. Auto boosters will take the chance that other items are also left behind.

The officers at Ingleside Station are working with the community to prevent crime before it happens. For example, officers distribute "Don't Be a Target" flyers at MUNI bus stops. The flyer explains safety tips for MUNI riders. The flyer is in English, Spanish and Chinese.

On two weekends in January, residents, officers and police cadets handed out hundreds of car break-in prevention tips in Glen Park and Bernal Heights.

Ingleside Station's Community Advisory Board created a poster to educate business patrons and pedestrians on the issue of robberies of electronic devices. The poster was a success, so it will be printed in various languages.

Ingleside Station has its own website: www.inglesidepolicestation.com. The website includes safety tips, announcements and a multitude of resources. It has an RSS reader function, so the daily incidents are voluntarily "bounced back" to the subscriber. I suggest you take a quick look at it. The editors and I are quite proud of it.

I mentioned the police cadets. These young men and women work side-by-side with officers at Ingleside Station, acquiring an understanding of what a police career looks like. They have

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Westwood Park Association Board Members

Kate Favetti, President
(term expires 2012)

Anita Theoharis, Vice President
(term expires 2012)

Tina Johns, Secretary
(term expires 2013)

Julie Hagelshaw, Co-Treasurer
(term expires 2013)

Greg Clinton, Co-Treasurer
(term expires 2011)

Anne Chen, Member at Large
(term expires 2012)

Nanette Asimov, Member at Large
(term expires 2013)

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

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Visit www.westwoodpark.com to view an online version of this Spring 2011 newsletter



Free Wellness Center Passes

Ever pass by the beautiful City College gymnasium and pool along Ocean Ave. and imagine working out there? Imagine no more.

Each semester, the Westwood Park Association receives 30 free passes to the City College Wellness Center – that's the gym and pool – and distributes them to neighbors 18 or older on a first-come, first-served basis. Passes are limited to two per household, and are valid for one semester.

Westwood Park Association board member Tina John administered the passes and maintained the waiting list for the last year. Now she's handing the reins to neighbor Steve Miller.

Thanks, Tina, and welcome Steve!

To sign up for a pass, send Steve an email at wellnesspass@westwoodpark.com.

Please indicate whether you want one pass or two. Neighbors without email may call the Association at 333-1125.

For reviews of the City College Wellness Center, visit <http://tinyurl.com/4sg2x3f>

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started ride-alongs with officers in the field. Hopefully, they will fulfill their dreams of becoming a San Francisco Police officer and join the force in a few years. Although the Department has had cadets for many years, these cadets were the first to have completed a comprehensive course at the Police Academy last summer. The course is a shortened version of what police recruits must complete to become a police officer. The recruit cadets must pass classroom and physical training requirements to graduate as a San Francisco Police Cadet.

If you believe this challenging program would be of interest to a teenager or young adult, please contact SF PAL Executive Director Lorraine Woodruff-Long at 401-4669 or visit the website at www.SFPAL.org.

Thanks again,
Captain Louis Cassanego
Ingleside Station

WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION

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