

JULY 2004

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UNIVERSITY HILLS ZIP CODE CHANGE

As of July 1st, 2004, University Hills residents will have a new zip code: **92617**. Please let all your correspondents know about this change. Businesses usually automatically change zip codes, so you don't have to worry about notifying those.

JOIN THE LISTSERV SO THAT YOU TOO CAN CONTRIBUTE YOUR INPUT ON URGENT COMMUNITY MATTERS

Dear University Hills Neighbors,

In recent months, a high number of incidents of a disturbing nature have occurred in and around the Garden Park at the intersection of Los Trancos and Vista Bonita Drive. The residents whose properties back on to the park, and those residing nearby have had numerous late night interruptions of their sleep and privacy when groups of revelers utilize the park as a secluded location to drink alcohol and use drugs. In addition, small fires have been set, threatening the safety of the Biological Preserve and U Hills residential structures.

Stepped up policing of the park has resulted in 7 arrests (almost all non-residents and not local), multiple citations and many police escorts of individuals from the community. Some of the unwelcome guests appear to be trading drugs and conducting other illicit business. The increased policing has however, not stopped the illegal activities and trespass into the park at night and the subsequent disturbance of the neighbors and their right to quiet.

The increased police presence is not economically viable long-term. This is the second time in the history of this park that such activities have become established. This instance has been much more difficult to eradicate. The UCI Police Department is recommending installation of a fence with a lockable gate, keyed to the pool lock series. The HRB is supportive of a fence that will not detract from the beauty of the garden, but one well enough designed to deter non-community individuals from entering the park and preserve beyond.

The HRB is requesting community feed back on the installation of a fence. A decision will be made in early July. Please direct your correspondence to the HRB Chair at rgamby@cox.net.

---Rachel Gamby, HRB Chair

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK CONCERNING THE PROPOSED GARDEN PARK FENCE

Thank you to everyone who has provided feedback on the idea of the fence as the solution to the recent problems in the garden park. I particularly appreciate the feedback that weighed a variety of solutions.

Prior to soliciting your feedback, the HRB had considered many of the solutions suggested and had found no one solution that was perfect in every respect. We asked for feedback in the hope of finding solutions we hadn't considered and to get more input on the solution that we considered the most effective.

The HRB will discuss all the feedback received at our July 6 meeting and we hope to come to a decision as to how to proceed. We would like to invite you to take part in this discussion to attend the meeting between 5:30 and 6:30 p.m.

Feedback I have received to the proposal to fence the Garden Park (from 25 people in all) can be summarized as follows:

About a third of the respondents were supportive of the fence as a solution.

About two thirds of those who responded were opposed to installing a security fence for several reasons, including:

- That it would make U-Hills feel like a gated community
- The fence would be ineffective and create a false sense of security
- That it would be aesthetically displeasing
- That it would make the garden less accessible to ordinary residents

Several alternative solutions to the problem were also suggested, including:

- Sprinklers, either timed to go off in the evening or attached to a motion-sensor (many people suggested this, while others thought that this would discourage legitimate users more than the undesirable intruders)
- Lights to be triggered by motion-sensors (a few proposed this option)
- Video or other camera (whether real or fake)—presumably in addition to the lights (again, quite a frequent suggestion)
- Increased police presence (a few proposed this)
- A “neighborhood response committee” of volunteers who would respond when neighbors alerted them to intruders (a few people suggested this)
- Reducing the vegetation and construction at the front of the garden so as to make it less secluded (a few people suggested this, while others strongly opposed it)
- Stripping out the vegetation in the garden entirely and allowing it to revert to its natural state (two people proposed this)

Undoubtedly, there is no perfect solution to the problem we are facing. All of these suggestions (including the fence) have their advantages and their disadvantages. For those who would like to take part in the meeting, or let the HRB know their opinion before the meeting (you can email me at: rgamby@cox.net), I would like to lay out several points that should be borne in mind when evaluating these options:

- One point that I may not have made sufficiently clear in my first post is that the bulk of the problem in the park is the result of activity by outsiders who are neither residents, nor people connected in any way with UCI (we are not dealing with high-spirited local teenagers having some fun). The activities reported by Garden Park neighbors and by UCI police to the HRB include noisy sexual liaisons, drug dealing and drug consumption, and the lighting of fires (both in the Garden and in the reserve nearby). There has been at least one attempt by police to arrest intruders who were conducting illicit business that resulted in a guns-drawn chase that ended in one of the neighboring gardens.
- The fence that the HRB is considering installing (for approximately \$3000) would be built in line with the rearmost posts of the existing pergola at the Garden Park Los Trancos entrance. It would be constructed so as to allow climbing plants (of a prickly nature) to cover it, which, while making it very uncomfortable for anyone attempting to clamber over, would also make it less aesthetically out of place than some may have imagined. This may address some people’s concern about the fence’s efficacy and aesthetic impact.
- While the sprinkler proposal is attractively low-key, it does present some problems: more than half of the garden is devoted to plants that require very little water, and they would not survive if the watering ran every night. Even with sprinklers connected to a motion-sensor, it would be difficult to monitor or control the amount of water the plants received. Sprinklers would also be a noise nuisance for the park’s neighbors, and they would be no deterrent at all to intruders who come during the park’s regular hours.
- The idea of camera surveillance also presents some problems. Live monitoring of a closed circuit security video is simply prohibitively expensive, and therefore out of the question. A (real or fake) camera might be effective at simply scaring people away, but at this point we do not know how expensive it would be to install a real or plausible-looking camera that was both visible enough to be a deterrent but inaccessible enough not to be easily vandalized. Those who feel that a security fence makes the neighborhood look less friendly and open might feel equally troubled by security cameras mounted on poles.
- Motion- or heat-sensor triggered lights might be effective, but would be likely to be a nuisance to park neighbors as well as being vulnerable to vandals. Installing lights which were adequately shielded from the

neighbors and which were less susceptible to vandalism might be very expensive, and would also be out of keeping with the park's aesthetics.

- Opening up the front of the garden and/or reducing the density of the foliage in the garden would undoubtedly reduce the appeal of the garden for many residents.
- An increased police presence is not something that can be sustained in the long-term. The UCIPD have been very responsive to the park's neighbors' requests for temporary increased surveillance but they are not U-Hills' private security firm and they would have to charge the community an hourly rate for long term surveillance.
- The "neighborhood response committee" would probably not be viewed as a safe response by the UCI police department, in view of the hostile response the police themselves have met with from some of the intruders.
- Whatever solution we settle upon, there is a good argument for acting promptly: with summer almost upon us, the risk of serious consequences from a fire in the park or the reserve will increase dramatically.

--- Rachel Gamby, HRB Chair

HRB MINUTES - Tuesday, June 1, 2004

Present: Rachel Gamby (Chair), Michele Walot, Wayne Sandholtz, Jeffrey Beckwith, Aileen Anderson, Brian Cummings (minutes), Andrew Herndon, Ron Reid

Old Business

- *Monthly Operations Report* - Due to a death in Andrew Herndon's family, there was no operational report for the month of May.

- *Architectural reviews* – Andrew

Several architectural plans were submitted; a request for a metal gate to close off a driveway of an 803 model on Frost, a patio cover on Twain was approved; flagstone landscaping in the backyard of a Phase 8 home was approved. A resident on Dickens repainted their house without prior approval of the color. However, the color was a pre-existing color from another Phase 1 home, therefore, no action was taken.

- *Update on non-resident homeowners*

Last month, the HRB and ICHA received complaints re: ownership of a home in University Hills. The HRB has looked into the definitions of principle vs. primary residence. IRS rules to establish residency require that "the majority of your time" e.g. 6 months + 1 day. California tax law requires a principal residence is an address where you live the majority of the time. MOP loans are specifically for the residence where the individual lives. We are requesting that ICHA amend the ground lease for all new sales to model the definition of a legal residence as used by the city of San Francisco: "Occupancy requires that a resident maintain a place as their primary residence and that it is the place that they return to each day." This definition would apply unless a resident was officially away on sabbatical.

- *Update on homeowners overdue with landscaping*

ICHA staff spoke with residents on both Twain and Bartok regarding long overdue landscaping. They are in the process of submitting architectural plans to the HRB.

- *Town home light fixture trial*

ICHA will be sending a letter to residents of Newton, Alcott, Blake, and Schubert asking for approval of an exterior lighting maintenance contract and to check out 2, 4, 6, 8 on Blake to review the prototypes.

- *Twain Back Gate*

A resident on Twain cut a hole in a brick wall and installed a gate in their backyard into a public landscaped area without prior ICHA or HRB approval. The HRB is concerned that the unplanned pathway between this house and the pool will create a liability for the community and that the considerable cost to the community to establish/maintain a new paseo cannot be justified. The HRB will ask the residents to lock this gate and has asked ICHA staff to send a letter to the residents outlining possible options regarding mitigations/repairs.

- *Fencing between Schubert Condos and East Peltason* – update

Despite numerous request for residents not to cut through the slope from Peltason up to Schubert court and the resulting damage to landscape and privacy concerns of the residents. ICHA is looking into putting in additional fencing to prevent such cut-through foot-traffic.

- *Landscaping plan for area along southern Radial* – Andrew/ Ron

ICHA is meeting with a professional landscape architect to plan additional plantings along the perimeter of phase 8.

- ***Fencing at the lower pool***

New fencing will be installed at the lower pool to replace the existing fence that is rusting out. ICHA staff presented the HRB with several possible styles and colors. The new fence will be 6 feet, with straight square bars, and painted green.

- ***Committee Reports***

- *Subcommittee meeting/correspondence with CEPC – Aileen and Jeff*

- EH&S Engineering Gateway noise tests*

Testing is currently underway to measure the level of noise coming from the Engineering Gateway at three sites in University Hills. Each site will be tested for 7 days straight. Average readings will be reported and compared to set times when equipment within the Gateway is turned on/off.

- *Dog Park Committee and Parks Committee meeting*

There will be a new sign placed at Gabrielino field stipulating that the field is for the use of University Hills residents and their guests. Residents who make a reservation for the field are reminded to not only post a copy of the reservation at the field, but to also keep a copy to bring with them at the time of play. The HRB also supported a request by the Park's committee to add a swing to the plans at Gabrielino field.

- ***May 5, 2004 Meeting re: Gabrielino Park*** - This meeting was a joint meeting of representatives from the Uni Hills Park Planning and Use Committee, the Dog Park Committee, and some HRB members to discuss a coordinated approach to the development/redevelopment of the Gabrielino park. Attendees: Liz Phillips, Simon Cole, Carol Ulhaner, Alice McWilliams, Michele Walot, Rachel Gamby

Existing features:

- Children's Soccer/Baseball field
- Basketball Court and a half
- Volleyball Court
- Handball Wall - this wall was accidentally destroyed by a contractor but ICHA has received funds to replace it (so the costs will not be part of the park redevelopment budget being drafted below). The wall will be repositioned when it is rebuilt to provide a retaining wall/drainage solution to a problem that affects the basketball half court. The half court will then be used for either handball or basketball.

Planned additional features:

- Playground Equipment
- Dog Park
- Unisex Restroom
- Picnic Facilities – Gas Barbecues, Moveable Long Tables

Modification of features:

- The existing volleyball court will be converted to accommodate both a two-swing little child swing set and a two-swing older child swing set.
This is a cost effective use of the existing sand area.
- The Community Center Committee will advocate for creating two full basketball courts in on the parking lot of the Community Center.

Playground Equipment

The Uni Hills Park Planning and Use Committee had identified the desirability of the following playground features in the redeveloped park:

- Benches in shade nearby for adults
- 4 swings
- 2 slides (one for little kids, one for older kids)
- a teeter-totter
- a small club-house/kid sized table arrangement
- dinosaur, or other animal/plant forms for climbing on/hiding behind, etc.
- several climbing structures (both wall and net styles)

- Liz Phillips will submit a list of commercially, readymade items that meet these criteria for ICHA Management to cost and seek installation estimates for.
- The preferred option is to develop a community built adventure playground through Leather Associates. This business uses community (children's) involvement to design the features of the playground and provide materials that are then assembled by community volunteers in working parties over a few days (for more details, see: www.leathersassociates.com/index.htm). Liz will be submitting an outline of this process for inclusion in the June newsletter and seeking pledges from residents to contribute their time to construct it.

Dog Park

The dog park will occupy the strip of mainly sloping land that will run along California and a short way around the corner along Twain. It will be completely enclosed by a fence and the entrance gate will be at the corner of Twain and California (so that children using the nearby playground will not be encountering constant dog traffic). The fence and landscaping will separate the

- Fence, gate
- Potable water supply
- Benches in shade
- Landscaping
- Lighting from the same poles as those supporting lights for the basketball courts

Unisex Restroom

Features:

- No urinal because of tendency of small children to touch
- Both interior and exterior hand basin
- Exterior drinking fountain
- Exterior foot washing faucet

Barbecues

- 2 minimum, 4 preferred
- Long moveable picnic tables (at least one per barbecue plus one for the dog park)
- Second full Basketball Court
- Picnic Facilities – Gas Barbecues, Moveable Long Tables

Signage

- The need for signs at the park stating that it is for residents' use only need to be installed. Only then can UCIPD assist to eject the more aggressive non-residents that takeover the facilities from time to time.
- Fully functional and secure notice boards need to be placed at the park with reservation schedules on display.

Rachel to follow up with ICHA Management re both these items.

Community Center Committee update – Michele

The CCC met with Rich Haier and Jane Laning regarding the scope of work description for the Community Center. The CCC reviewed the scope of work but it has not yet been approved by ICHA. Once an architectural design is available, the HRB will meet with the community to gather comments. We have also requested plans for the community center to outline the specific usage of each room.

New Business

- *Dolphin Swim Team Movie Night at Lower Pool* - The HRB has turned down a request by the Dolphin Swim Team to hold a movie night in the lower park. The community simply cannot accommodate over 100 possible attendees and amplified music past 10PM.
- *“Gunshots” incident* - In response to resident concerns about gunshots heard (the source was never located), a resident suggested that ICHA make a refrigerator magnet with important UCIPD emergency and non-emergency numbers for residents. In the meantime, you can post the following numbers by your phone: ICHA office 824-2424, UCI police 911 - if not from your cell phone, after hours emergency maintenance 824-7044.
- *Noise problems* - Noise nuisance from basketball backboards placed at various sites in UH/ Recreational

fixtures in public areas continue to be received by the HRB. The HRB has requested that ICHA staff send letters to residents with such backboards instructing them that leaving an unattended basketball hoop in the street is illegal.

- *Tennis Court complaint*

The HRB recently received a letter from a visiting faculty member who experienced bullying by a resident over use of the tennis courts. The HRB recommended posting a sign beside the meters outside the courts to make it clear to users how the timers are to be used.

---Respectfully submitted, Brian Cummings, HRB

VANDALISM - A YEAR AT A GLANCE

At the request of the Homeowners Representative Board (HRB) ICHA has attempted to compile a breakdown of costs associated with vandalism within the University Hills community over the last year. This is being done in an effort to shed some light on the extent of the damage as well as the financial impact it has on the University Hills Community budget, and the dues you as residents pay. Please keep in mind that a considerable savings is realized because the in house staff services (ICHA) repair much of what would typically be given to out-sourced independent contractor to correct. The following breakdown is representative of the June 2003 – 2004 fiscal year.

Irrigation Repairs - Damage to irrigation heads is the most common vandalism related repair made within the community. This damage is both intentional and unintentional and is typically caused when people walk, drive or ride their bicycles in areas not specifically designed for pedestrian access (slopes, decorative planters, etc) or when children intentionally target heads for destruction. Total estimated annual cost \$3,200.

Pool Vandalism – Vandalism in the pool areas is very common and mostly intentional. This past year we have repaired broken shower heads, broken shower stalls, replaced bathroom fixtures, completed drywall and tile repairs, retrieved large potted plants from the pool, removed chairs and tables from the pool, repaired broken lane lines, drained and replaced water in the spas due to soaping as well as cleaned up after and replaced several stolen fire extinguishers. These costs also include special service or after hours calls if the pool maintenance provider has been called out. Total estimated annual cost \$2,850.

Parks, Fields, Street, Signs and Court – Repairs this year include cleaning up broken bottles, repairing vehicular damage to turf areas, we replaced the garden park fountain, several community bulletin boards, painting due to graffiti, repaired or replaced light fixtures, replaced tennis court nets, repaired the tennis windscreen, repaired damage to stucco common walls and replaced vehicle damaged streetlights. Approximate cost is \$6000

A proactive perspective may help to reduce and even thwart many of these vandalism problems, helping to minimize increases to the community dues. Taking ownership and responsibility, challenging unruly individuals abusing properties and rules, and even calling the UCI PD for assistance will avert many of these losses. Resident participation is absolutely necessary. The HRB and ICHA Management extends its appreciation to all who lend a hand.

---Andrew Herndon, ICHA

COYOTE BULLETIN - from the City of Irvine Animal Control Department

Many residents of Irvine are expressing concerns about coyote sightings and the consequences of predator animals within the urban setting. Some animal owners have lost their pets to these skilled hunters because many are not aware of recent coyote activity in the area.

Coyotes are found in ALL areas of Orange County. Contrary to popular belief, these animals do not require open space or wild areas to survive. In fact, most coyotes within the urban setting are the offspring of generations of coyotes who lived and flourished in the urban areas of Orange County. Though these animals are far from domesticated, they are very comfortable living in close proximity to human beings. They have little fear of man and have been seen trotting along within a few feet of joggers, bikers, and horseback riders.

While not normally a danger to human beings, coyotes will display defensive behaviors if threatened or cornered. Thus, it is important to leave a comfortable distance between you and a coyote.

Small pets can easily become prey for coyotes. We recommend that cats and small dogs should not be allowed outside alone during evening hours, even if in a fenced yard. It is highly recommended that owners always accompany their small pets. Though coyotes generally hunt between sunset and sunrise, they can be observed at all hours of the day. There are many steps that can be taken to protect you and your property from nuisance wildlife to include coyotes:

1. Do not feed coyotes.
2. Fence off animal enclosures (fully enclose if possible).
3. Keep cats and small dogs indoors or in the close presence of an adult.
4. Feed pets indoors.
5. Store trash in covered heavy-duty containers with secure lids.
6. Keep yards free from potential shelter such as thick brush, weeds, wood piles, or excess debris.
7. Enclose the bottoms of porches and decks.
8. Eliminate potential food and water sources, such as fallen fruit and standing water.
9. Keep your property well lit at night.
10. Put your trash out the morning of pick up.
11. Motion sensitive sprinklers may be effective in areas of high concern.
12. Keep small children under close adult supervision at all times.

If you do encounter a coyote that behaves aggressively, you have probably gotten too close to its prey or its family. Increase the comfort zone between you and the coyote. A coyote behaves in a similar way as domestic dogs who are defending their territory and family. All children should be taught from a very early age that they should avoid strange animals, whether domestic or non-domestic. They should never attempt to feed a wild animal. When older children are hiking or playing in parks, greenbelts, or open space areas they should be instructed on coyote safety such as is discussed above. Small children should be under close supervision of a responsible adult at all times.

Eradication and/or relocation of the urban coyote is not typically effective. These control measures actually provide a natural vacuum in nature that can cause these animals to have even larger litters and ultimately increases the coyote population. Being well informed on outdoor safety and practicing the steps above is often the best way to discourage unwanted visits from nuisance coyotes. Everyone's goal should be to peacefully coexist with our wild neighbors. For further information, contact Irvine Animal Services - Field Patrol at (949) 724-7092.

REFUSE OR TO REFUSE, THAT IS THE QUESTION

It is interesting how some folks seem to have difficulty with disposing oversized articles of either trash or objects they are just tired of. Nine out of ten times they appear as dropped items near the apartment or condo trash bin areas, resulting in an expensive and an unsightly problem. To guide owners in the right direction, we have listed below several options available.

The University Hills Residential Hauler is currently Waste Management - (949) 551-8580. Call them with any questions pertaining to your account, recycling or special bulky item pickups. Waste Management. Offers curb-side bulky item pickup two times a year at no cost – four items per pick up. Bulky items from Bin service locations (called commercial service) cost \$30 to \$40 additional per item. As condo and apartment tenants, please be responsible and call to schedule and cover the extra cost associated with a bulky item disposal. Dropping item in the trash area unfairly penalizes the entire condo community.

Dumping - In addition to the services provided by Waste Management homeowners may take their trash to privately owned transfer stations for a fee. The closest is: Sunset Environmental, 16122 Construction Circle West, Irvine, (949) 552-8784; Monday-Friday 6:00 AM - 7:00 PM; Saturday 6:00AM - 5:00 PM

Hazardous Waste - OC Residents may drop off 15 gallons or 155 pounds to the hazardous waste center located in Irvine. Their address is 6411 Oak Canyon, Irvine. The center is open Tuesdays – Saturday 9:00 AM -1:00 PM and closed on rainy days and major holidays.

Salvation Army - The Salvation Army's truck will pickup specific donated items. These items include clothing, living room/bedroom furniture, kitchen/dining room items, area/throw rugs, pictures, accessories (knick-knacks) and kitchen utensils/dishes. When calling for a pickup: (800) 958-7825, the Customer Service Representative will ask about the

condition of the items to be picked up.

The Salvation Army will *not* pick up built-ins, broken furniture, office desks, king-size mattresses or box springs, waterbeds, dishwashers, garbage disposals, hospital beds or equipment, inoperable TVs & radios, electric organs, carpeting, copy machines, window treatments (drapes, blinds etc.), technical/medical textbooks, magazines, wall / water heaters and water softeners.

Goodwill – Irvine Attended Donation Center; *Shepherd of Peace Lutheran Church*, 18182 Culver Drive 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. - (714) 547-6301

Ticktockers – 540 East 19th Street, Costa Mesa (949) 646-4024

Please note that the Las Lomas Apartments, Gabrielino Apartments and the Schubert Court Condominium communities have large private trash bins that exclusively serve these apartment and condominium communities only. These bins are for household trash only. Arrangement must be made with Waste Management for pickup of any large or oversized items. ***Lastly, If you do not live in these communities do not dispose of your trash there.***

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU FIND A DEAD BIRD

[From the California Department of Health Services, **California Surveillance and Facts About West Nile Virus**]

Wild birds are the animals from which the mosquito vector primarily acquires West Nile Virus. Infection has been reported in more than 100 bird species. Although many birds that are infected with WNV will not appear ill, WNV infection can cause serious illness and death in some birds. The most severe illnesses are seen among the corvid birds, which include crows, jays, ravens, and magpies. American crows constitute the majority of birds reported dead due to WNV. American crows are found throughout most of California. They have entirely black plumage, beak, and feet. Adult size is 17 to 21 inches from tip of tail to tip of beak.

In order to properly test a bird for WNV it must be processed **within 24 hours** of death. We must be very strict about dead bird tissue handling protocol. If the bird has been damaged in any way by water, other animals, vehicles, etc., we will not be able to test the bird. In these situations, please call your local Animal Control to have the body removed or dispose of it on your own by placing your hand in an inverted plastic bag, grabbing the bird and pulling the bag over the bird, then placing the bird in a garbage can. If you find a dead bird, particularly one of the species mentioned above, which is within the above parameters, please call (714) 971-2421, Ext. 146, or visit <http://www.ocvcd.org>. Please be prepared to provide your name, address, phone number, species of bird (if known), and exact location of bird.

NEWS FROM IRWD

Fight the Bite! Help Prevent West Nile virus

West Nile virus is commonly found in Africa, West Asia and the Middle East. Although primarily a virus found in birds and other mammals, it can be transmitted to humans via a bite from an infected mosquito. West Nile virus had not been found in the U.S. prior to 1999 but has steadily made its way across the U.S. since that time.

Irvine Ranch Water District takes many steps to prevent mosquitoes at its San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine. These steps include maintaining a constant flow of water to prevent stagnation, using mosquito fish in the ponds and maintaining good access for Orange County Vector Control crews to do their work.

The Vector Control District of Southern California has launched a campaign called "Fight the Bite" to remind all local residents that simple steps can be taken to help prevent West Nile virus in Southern California:

- Eliminate standing water in your yard. Empty water from cans, buckets, flowerpots, pet bowls, old tires and gutters.
- Guard against mosquito bites by minimizing time spent outdoors at dawn and dusk when insects are most active. When outdoors, wear long pants and long sleeves and apply mosquito repellent containing DEET.
- To report a dead bird, call (877) WNV-BIRD or visit www.wipeoutwestnile.com for more information.