

THE VALLEY VILLAGER

VALLEY VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



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P.O. BOX 4916, VALLEY VILLAGE, CA 91617

The Lori Dinkin Legacy

Lori Dinkin passed away at her Valley Village home on March 18th. Born on June 2, 1919 Lori was 103. Lori was one of the original founding members of the Valley Village Homeowners Association (now known as Valley Village Residents Association) and its president from 1994 to 2006. Lori helped draft the Valley Village Specific Plan, the founding document of the VVHA. She pushed the City Council to adopt the Specific Plan and officially recognize the boundaries of Valley Village in 1993.

Lori's commitment to Valley Village began soon after five-story apartment buildings were constructed on Laurel Canyon and Riverside Drive. Lori's passion was to protect the residential atmosphere of Valley Village. She worked tirelessly to keep this community thriving and desired and went door to door to get the word out and to solicit members. VVHA was mostly ignored for the first couple years, but Lori was persistent.



Lori Dinkin & Beth Fulton

Armed with a land-line telephone and a fax machine, Lori was eventually known by every elected official representing Valley Village. If she was not calling or faxing, she was meeting with our representatives. As Lori said "... meetings, meetings, meetings with our political representatives and other folk. We are working to better our [community]." Lori was always the last to leave a meeting because "the real work gets done schmoozing after the meeting."

Respected and liked, she made a point of creating relationships with elected officials, the police, the fire department and other city staffers. She was well known as being a determined member of the community who could not be pushed aside when she wanted something for Valley Village. And, they all occasionally experienced the raised voice or scolding of Mrs. Dinkin if they were not recognizing her point of view.

Some notable Lori quotes:

- "We are always trying to improve our community, and while it sometimes seems like an uphill struggle, we are succeeding."
- "Thank goodness for our Specific Plan. It restricts height, prohibits certain types of commercial enterprise and gives us an opportunity to discuss proposed projects with developers. All of which benefit our *Village*."
- "We are glad to inform you that bills AB341 and AB2828 have passed, protecting our right to speak freely without threat of harassment and litigation. ... I wish that all of you take the time and trouble to make yourselves be heard and counted! IN NUMBERS THERE IS STRENGTH."
- "Hurrah, Hurrah! The *Massage Parlor* on Riverside Drive is a thing of the past. ... It took a long time, but it is another victory of the Valley Village Specific Plan and the determination of The Association."
- "It's no fun to be sedentary! I'd rather be out in the world, or at least in our little corner, improving it!!"
- "It is urgent that everyone write letters, attend hearings and be heard. All residents must continue to be diligent and alert to protect the integrity and character of Valley Village."

Lori took on many issues: Sound wall. Playground equipment. Billboard, Utility Pole and railroad track removal from Chandler. Greening up the Orangeline. Mansionization. The median at Laurel & the 101. The car wash turned public storage on Laurel Canyon. Cars parked with for sale signs. Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance. Split lots. Dividing Valley Village in two parts. Renaming WestPark to Valley Village Park. Cell phone towers. Earthquake Rebuilding Ordinance. Illegally posted advertising signs. Licensing and rules of street food vendors and food trucks. Potted Plant distribution to businesses. And, the July 4th Parade: Lori organized the first July 4th bar-b-que which later turned into the July 4th Parade that we all love.

Lori was proud. She was a fighter. She was feisty. She wouldn't stop until she got the problem solved. Lori worked tirelessly for this community. We will miss her. Her legacy lives on in the Valley Village Residents Association.

Lori supported Ukrainian Refugees: Lori's GoFundMe: <https://gofund.me/121525a8>. Or Leo Baeck Temple Refugee Resettlement Group2: <https://lbt.shulcloud.com/form/refugeegroup2>

The VVRA Board:

President: **Beth Fulton**
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Tina Hookom
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A Letter from the President

Hello, Members,

I am saddened by the loss of two Valley Village legends – Lori Dinkin and Aaron Epstein. They represented the absolute best of what *community* means. Both were active, engaged members of their neighborhood.

Lori, 103, was the president of VVHA for 12 years. She was a firecracker who regularly took elected officials to task when warranted. She successfully brought about changes that offer a better lifestyle for all of us to this day – some of these improvements include her work on the Specific Plan, landscaping around the Orange Line, early stages of the sound wall and countless other endeavors.

Aaron, 93, was a long-time resident of Valley Village who, in 2021, took out a \$10,000 full-page ad in *The Wall Street Journal* calling out AT&T for their terrible service. Aaron did this not just for himself but for his entire community.

I can't help but stop and think about what community really means to me... I wonder what it means to you?

Beth

Antonio Vazquez, our Live April Speaker



Antonio Vazquez is an Angeleno born and bred, with a varied career in many areas of LA County – political, socially relevant and geographic – from schoolteacher and teacher trainer through working with United Way to secure funding for community programs in the Valley to working with others on the transformation of the General Motors plant and revitalizing the neglected area surrounding it in the

northeast section of our Valley. Mr. Vazquez and his family now live in Santa Monica where he worked on strategic planning on his way to his present position as Chair of the California Board of Equalization. We welcome him as our speaker at the Membership Meeting on April 19 (see back page).

Help Wanted: Editor for *The Valley Villager*

We are seeking an editor for *The Valley Villager*, and are reaching out to any one or two wordsmiths who might enjoy sleuthing for local news and photos, soliciting and editing the articles that come in, and working with the publisher (another dedicated volunteer) for the newsletter which goes out four times a year.

If you would like to join us for the next edition with an interest in taking over as editor, or would just like to meet and discuss what's involved, please reach out to me with a few details about your experience in this area of journalism. Send an email to mail@valleyvillagera.com with Editor on the subject line. Thank you. Gil Shorr, Editor

Board Notes

At its meeting held on February 6, the Board made the following decisions: Voted to give \$150 to the LAPD's PALS (Police Activity League Supporters) program in recognition of our good relations with our local police department and lead officer, Rob Benavidez. ~~ Voted to give \$350 for a VVRA banner to be placed on the fence at Burbank Boulevard Elementary School, and \$2,500 to the school's PTA to revitalize the school garden. The decision was made following a request by the former board for a detailed plan and breakdown of expenses for the project, which has now been received. The donation, a major one for VVRA, is conditioned upon the school finding matching funds for the project. ~~The officer positions on the VVRA Board were voted upon (see above). ~~ Several board members and VVRA members attended a meeting at Colfax Charter Elementary School regarding traffic problems and the desired opening of the interior drop-off area. [Editor's note: The drop-off area off Colfax is now open.]

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Watching The Bills

Once again there have been a lot of land-use bills introduced this year both in the Assembly and in the Senate. June 2, 2023 is the deadline for the house of origin (Assembly or Senate) to pass their own bills. September 14, 2023 is the deadline for each house to pass the other's bills - sometimes requiring a concurrence vote if significant amendments are made. October 14, 2023 is the last day for the Governor to sign or veto.

We are watching S.B. 4, which if passed would allow higher education and religious institutions to develop 100% lower-income housing projects (with some exceptions for middle-income and manager units) on properties they own in the surrounding residential area.

To see some of the other bills that VVRA are watching, review the land-use bill summaries at this link, VVRA mostly has similar positions:

<https://www.livablecalifornia.org/portfolio-items/2023-bills-lc-tracked/>

Update on Our Schools

Colfax Charter Elementary: Exciting events are constantly happening at Colfax! On March 25, student bands rocked out on stage, performing top hits they've been practicing with Burbank Music Academy. It was a fun day, with music, food, and even a surprise teacher performance!

Colfax also hosts many events for the entire community. And the neighborhood favorite, the Colfax World Fair, is back this year! On Saturday, May 20 from 11am to 6pm, the school will treat the community to a fun-filled day – food from around the world, popcorn by VVRA, inflatables, a water park, carnival games, sweets, a low entrance fee, and a silent auction. As in the past, it will be enjoyable for all ages, and all proceeds from the Fair go directly to the school's Art, Music, PE, Farm, Garden, Science & Computer Lab programs, as well as to supporting the aides who help out throughout the school.

Burbank Boulevard Elementary: A K-5th grade school with a Gifted Global Learning Magnet program beginning in 2nd grade is a hidden gem in our Village. This school year, the PTA has successfully raised funds – thanks in part to grants from VVRA (see Board Notes) and NCVV – to provide the school with an extreme garden makeover and outdoor learning space, along with a garden ranger program that will directly support the school's curriculum and maximize hands-on learning for all grades. "This garden will be beneficial to every age group and will be an extraordinary addition to our Title 1 School," says PTA President Stephanie Lopez. The PTA will partner with the local non-profit EnrichLA.org, which will build the new space and provide the ranger program.

The PTA has also recently worked with the local non-profit Muralism.org to design and paint a second mural that has brightened up the schoolyard. Their most recent big event was the PTA's first-ever Spring Carnival on March 24. The proceeds from the carnival will support the ranger program, campus beautification, and school-wide activities during the next school year.

North Hollywood High: Congratulations to the students in Teams A and B at North Hollywood High who won 1st and 2nd Place, respectively, in the LADWP Science Bowl XXXI Regional Competition, demonstrating once again the breadth and depth of learning in our local schools. Team A will now head to Washington DC this month to represent the City of Los Angeles in the National Science Bowl, pitting their considerable talents against 64 other high school teams.

Rob's Beat

Hello again, Valley Village!

Spring is here and hopefully we can dry out a little. Valley Village is off to a great start so far this year, 5% down year-to-date in every crime category except burglary/theft from motor vehicles. *Car break-ins are up more than 20%*. This includes theft of catalytic converters which is a nationwide epidemic. If you're able to, garage your vehicle – there are covers and shields you can purchase for your specific vehicle model that can add extra protection against catalytic converter theft. They can easily be found online or at your local auto parts store. Also, please remember to always remove valuables from your vehicle. Also there's been a 14% reduction in home burglaries, 33% in stolen vehicles and 24% in personal theft.

Some of you already have private security patrols for your homes and many of you have recently added the service. The visibility of these security patrol vehicles has undoubtedly had an impact on the reduction in the number of residential burglaries – I see them when I'm out there and so do any potential thieves – and the rain has helped too. But so have the efforts of the community to report crimes in progress and suspicious activity. Valley Village has seen very good crime reduction in the last three months and continues to be one of the safest places to live in the City of LA.

Stay safe and be well.
Rob Benavidez, LAPD Senior Lead Officer, Valley Village

Watching Our Village Grow – Update on Construction Projects

Proposed Development Projects:

- 1. Valley Torah High School Master Plan:** Valley Torah is located on the northwest side of the intersection of Chandler Boulevard and Whitsett Avenue. Several new two-story buildings are proposed, with steps and a lawn next to one of the buildings. Forty-three additional parking spaces are proposed under the lawn area. Cars will enter the parking structure from Whitsett and exit on Chandler. The height of the buildings is 45 feet with 5-foot setbacks. There will be a small increase in the number of students attending the school.
- 2. 5319-5321 Ben Avenue:** There will be two three-story duplexes and an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) built here. A similar project was built at 5309 Ben Avenue. More information on this project should be available for the next *Villager*.
- 3. 5119 Colfax Avenue:** This is a 14-unit building with an attached accessory dwelling unit, a height of 36 feet and 17 subterranean parking spaces. The 14,000 sq. ft. project site is zoned RD1.5. The 14 dwelling units comprise 3 one-bedroom units, 3 two-bedroom units and 9 three-bedroom units. The top two stories are painted a light color and the first floor is light brown. The architectural style is modernist. There will be a good number of trees around the building. The six renters in the two existing buildings to be demolished for this project may be allowed to move back into the new units.
- 4. 5416 Vantage Avenue:** This is a redevelopment of a single-family home with a duplex and an ADU. The ADU will take up the four parking spaces which will be relocated to the driveway as tandem spaces.
- 5. 5309 Ben Avenue, at Weddington Street:** This redevelopment of a single-family home will have four duplexes and an ADU. The site is zoned RD1.5 which allows low-medium density, multi-family residential development. There are no trees on the property but some along the street right-of-way.
- 6. 12107-12111 Riverside Drive:** There is a proposal to add a car wash at this Mobil gas station on the north-west corner of Riverside and Laurel Canyon Boulevard.
- 7. 5246-5250 Hermitage Avenue:** This nine-unit apartment building on the east side of Hermitage will be five stories/58 feet high and each unit will have 2 or 3 bedrooms. Two of the units will be reserved for renters with very-low incomes. Because the project site was recently re-designated as a Transit Oriented Community, it became eligible for height and density incentives, hence the greater height and floor area ratio allowances. Existing trees will be removed and replaced with 14 Japanese maples and two palm trees at a 2:1 ratio. This project exceeds the height limit specified in the Specific Plan (30 feet) and recently was opposed by the Neighborhood Council Valley Village.
- 8. 11710-11712 Hartsook Street:** A two-lot, small-lot subdivision will replace an existing duplex with no increase in the number of dwelling units. The property, immediately west of Colfax Avenue, is zoned RD1.5 for lower density, multi-family residential development. It will be 3 stories/30 feet high, have side-by-side parking, as well as access from both the street and the alley to the rear.
- 9. 11829 Chandler Boulevard, at Carpenter:** This is an S.B. 1818 density bonus project with 12 units, two of which are low-income, on a site zoned R3. The building is four stories/47 feet high. This exceeds the 30 feet permitted by the Specific Plan due to its S.B. 1818 status. However, the Council office will try to have the height stepped back.
- 10. 5229-5235 Vantage Avenue:** This apartment project has 18 mostly 3-bedroom units, is four stories/45 feet high and has 35 parking spaces. The building surrounds an interior courtyard. Because it is an S.B. 1818 project, a 10% reduction in the number of parking spaces has been allowed in exchange for an allocation for parking bicycles.

Development Projects Under Construction:

- 11. 5409 Morella Avenue:** A four-unit small-lot subdivision on an 8,000 sq. ft. lot zoned R2. It is three stories/30 feet high with two parking spaces per unit. Each unit will have three bedrooms. Four trees will screen the project from the single-family homes to the north. Eight trees will be removed and replaced by eight new trees.

Completed Projects:

- 12. Former Galaxy Car Wash site at Chandler Boulevard and Whitsett Avenue:** Construction is nearing completion on this mixed-use, S.B. 1818 density bonus project. There are 70 apartments (9 set aside for renters with low and moderate incomes), 1,750 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 80 parking spaces. As a density bonus project, its height of 5 stories/56 feet was allowed to exceed the limit of 45 feet established by the commercial zoning for the site.
- 13. 5303 Hermitage Avenue:** This is a 26-unit small-lot subdivision along both sides of a short section of Weddington Street, west of Hermitage. An open area with two mature camphor trees on the corner of the two streets has been preserved as open space.
- 14. 11700 Magnolia Boulevard:** This project is a redevelopment of the former auto repair shop at the southwest corner of Magnolia and Colfax Avenue. It has 19 residential units and 1,510 sq. ft. of retail space.

Still A Seller's Market in Valley Village

Despite what we hear nationally about the dramatic decline in home values, that's not the case for homeowners in Valley Village. Our declines have been much smaller, and it is still a seller's market in our wonderful community. After double-digit home price increases over the last couple of years, things began to cool off in the latter half of 2022. Single-family home prices peaked in March of 2022 with an average selling price of \$1,978,927, then gradually declined until December when the price spiked to an average \$2,093,250, driven primarily by larger, new-construction homes. Prices dipped again at the beginning of 2023 but are picking up steam as we move into spring. March's average selling price landed at \$1,696,450.

We see similar trends with condos. The average selling price in 2022 was \$695,925 and has ticked down slightly to \$651,400 so far in 2023. And while many homes are selling near the asking price, we still see great homes, priced right, selling above it.

Though higher interest rates have sidelined some buyers, the lack of available homes for sale is helping to bolster prices and keep us in seller's advantage territory. There are still more buyers than homes available for sale and that's not likely to change anytime soon. Most current homeowners have very low interest rates and aren't willing to trade their current 3% loan for a 6.5% loan, so are staying put.

Homes are also taking longer to sell, though Valley Village is faring better than other areas. The average "Days on Market" is currently at 28; it was 17 in 2022.

What's next? Well, barring a major recession, most experts predict rates will start to fall toward the end of this year and continue to drop in 2024 – not likely back to 3%, but low enough for more buyers to enter the market and sellers to decide to sell. And what will that do? Start to drive home prices upward again.

Yarn Talk – The Altered Stitch



The Altered Stitch is nestled in that group of intriguing stores across from the post office on Magnolia Boulevard at Whitsett Avenue. Dawn and Sherry, friends for over 35 years and now business partners, have one of the most delightful yarn establishments in the Valley.

The Altered Stitch opened in early 2019, and Dawn and Sherry have been able to maintain the store right through the pandemic to its successful operation today. Their yarns come from as far away as Iceland and as close as here in California – and many places in between. There's Marino wool, alpaca, cotton, bamboo and many others, all hand-dyed, and to see them displayed is a welcome delight. The Altered Stitch offers these marvelous yarns, as well as a wonderful collection of hooks, needles and anything you might need when you work with yarn. They also offer classes, workshops and free events, and are happy to help you when you get stuck. Whether you shop in person or online (hi@thealteredstitch.com), you will be thrilled with your discovery.

Dawn and Sherry are also the organizers of the Los Angeles County Yarn Crawl (**April 20-23**) this year. This collective 4-day event, attracting 15 participating yarn shop retailers serving the fiber arts community all over LA County, provides a unique road map shopping experience and is not to be missed.

"Bestitched" is The Altered Stitch's designation for its store during this weekend and you can go to layarncrawl.com for all the information on this bewitching event at the Valley Village store and all the others around the county.

The Altered Stitch is at 12443 Magnolia Boulevard and is open Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 2:00 to 7:00pm and Sunday, 12 Noon to 5:00pm.

**Have a business in Valley Village? Email us at mail@ValleyVillageRA.com*

Pantry Turns 40

Forty years ago, two neighborhood women – Florence Adler and Marj Luke – hatched an idea to help meet the needs of those living with food insecurity in our community. This became the North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry, a 98% volunteer-based coalition of neighboring churches and synagogues working together toward a future where no one is hungry.

The Pantry has consistently increased its distribution over the years to meet the dramatic increase in need by local families and individuals. Over 350 non-perishable food bags are currently distributed weekly without interruption from the new Distribution Center at 11634 Moorpark Street in Studio City, every Monday and Friday 7:30am-11:00am. All people in need of food are welcome and may return to the Pantry as often as necessary. Food donations may also be made during those days and hours. Additionally the Pantry networks with other organizations that provide other forms of assistance, including information regarding housing, health care and services for those experiencing homelessness.

To celebrate this monumental 40th Anniversary, there will be a Benefit Fundraiser Gala and tour of the new NHIFP Distribution Center on **Sunday June 4th from 3pm-5pm** at The First Christian Church, 4390 Colfax Avenue. Save the Date, so you can join the festivities and support this extraordinary local organization.

Volunteers and community support are paramount to the continued success of the Pantry. Packing or distributing food bags, holding food drives, sourcing food donations, fundraising and attending the 40th Anniversary Gala are among the many ways to offer support and volunteer (including community service opportunities). For more information on how you can become involved and to receive an invitation to the Gala, visit www.nhifp.org.

Residents Association Membership Meeting

***** LIVE & IN-PERSON! *****

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19 – 6:45pm for refreshments – 7:00pm meeting

Faith Presbyterian Church, 5000 Colfax Avenue

The meeting will be held in-person in Caldwell Hall - enter on Hesby Street

OUR GUEST SPEAKER: ANTONIO VAZQUEZ

Chairperson, California State Board of Equalization

He will speak and take questions related to Proposition 19,

a ballot measure that, if passed, would

change the rules for property tax transfers and inheritance.

(See Article on Page 2)

Senior Lead Officer Rob Benavidez will give a short update from the Police Department

Light refreshments will be available before the meeting

**Mark Your
Calendar:**

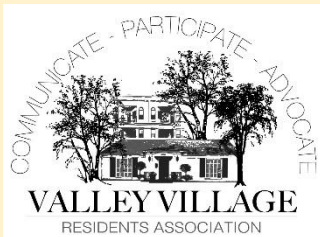
2023 Membership Meetings will be on Wednesdays

April 19 * July 19 * October 18

2023 Board of Directors Meetings will be on Mondays

April 10 * June 5 * September 11 * November 6

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