

MAKING WAVES

The Newsletter Of The Committee To Save Silver Lake's Reservoirs

Spring 1997

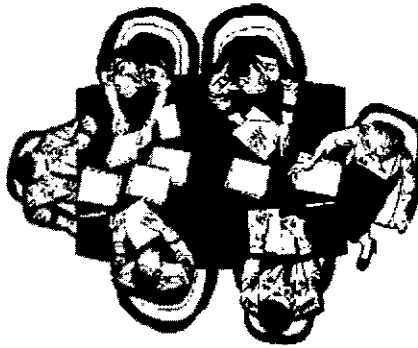
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MASTER PLAN FOR SILVER LAKE RESERVOIRS UNDERWAY

By Jim Potepan

Our community organization (CSSLR) is currently focusing its efforts to develop a blueprint, or "Master Plan" to use city government lexicon, for the future use of the Silver Lake reservoirs. We have joined with the Silver Lake Residents Association (SLRA) in meeting with representatives of the Department of Water and Power (DWP), the primary city agency charged with overseeing the reservoirs. To place the creation of the Master Plan in context, it's useful to briefly review the history of our efforts to persuade DWP to consider community-sensitive alternatives to covering the Silver Lake.

When DWP originally proposed to cover a number of small open reservoirs in Los Angeles and to build lakeside



filtration plants at the large open reservoirs, community groups throughout the city banded together to form the Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs ("CPOR"). As an

alternative to litigation, both DWP and CPOR agreed to mediate their differences. The community groups which represent Silver Lake on the CPOR are the CSSLR, a single-issue community action committee formed in 1988 in response to DWP's threatened action, and SLRA, a 25-year-old membership organization of local area residents.

This mediation, which has taken place over the past five years, has resulted in three outcomes which affect the Silver Lake and Ivanhoe Reservoirs. (The Ivanhoe Reservoir is technically a separate reservoir located adjacent to and north of the Silver Lake reservoir, but is commonly thought of as part of the latter. Together, these two reservoirs are referred to by the city as "The Silver Lake Reservoir Complex.")

First, it has been decided the Silver Lake Reservoir Complex will not be covered. Next, under existing Surface Water Treatment Rules issued by the Federal Government, it has been determined that an on-site filtration plant will not be required at the Silver Lake reservoirs in the foreseeable future. Finally, DWP has agreed to work with CSSLR and SLRA to develop a Master Plan for the Silver Lake reservoirs.

Instead of "declaring victory" and going home, the Boards of CSSLR and SLRA decided that working toward creation of a Master Plan would be important to maximize the community's involvement in the future use and development of the Silver Lake reservoirs. For more than a year, representatives of CSSLR and SLRA have met with DWP representatives to discuss the development of the Master Plan. Instead of traditional "confrontational" bargaining, we have jointly adopted what is commonly known as a "win-win" or "mutual gains" bargaining method. Under this approach, the concept of "sides" is

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THE COMMITTEE MARKS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Committee to Save Silver Lake's Reservoirs (CSSLR). Formed in late 1988 and incorporated as a nonprofit public benefit corporation in 1989, the Committee is a single issue citizen's group established to preserve the historical, aesthetic and ecological and recreational benefits of Silver Lake's open water reservoirs.

The Committee is dedicated to informing the community about reservoir-related events through this newsletter. As well, it provides a forum for residents to become involved in decision-making affecting the reservoirs through community meeting held on an as-needed basis.

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News Around The Lake...

NEUTRA HOUSE NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

One of Silverlake's most distinctive landmarks is the Neutra Design House on Silverlake Boulevard. The home, a distinctive classic of modern architecture, was designed by landmark architect Richard Neutra. Son Dion Neutra invites interested parties who could volunteer time, funds or expertise to join a citizens' group called Friends of the Neutra House. Funding is needed to establish an endowment to help with preservation. Other needs include docent services, public relations and casual clean up such as gardening. Interested persons should contact the dean's office at Cal Poly's School of Environmental Design, 3801 W. Temple Ave., Pomona CA 91768; phone (909) 869-2666. - *Marilyn Oliver*

CALLING ALL GARDENS FOR '98 TOUR

The bi-annual Secret Gardens of Silver Lake garden tour, sponsored by the Committee to Save Silver Lake's Reservoirs, is accepting candidates for the spring '98 tour. Do you know of an especially interesting garden in the Silver Lake area whose owner might like to participate? The 1996 tour was successful in raising more than \$12,000 to help fund community activities sponsored by the Committee (including this newsletter!). Call us with your suggestions (213) 612-5271 or e-mail us at gptacek@earthlink.net.

HELP FOR ALEPPO PINES

The large Aleppo Pine trees on the north west side of the Reservoir are receiving a much needed improvement program. The watering, feeding and trimming is a joint effort being coordinated by the Coalition to Preserve Open Reservoirs/Silver Lake Sub-Committee, the Department of Water & Power and arborist Cy Carlberg. Before this concerted effort, the trees were in danger of being toppled by strong winds. - *Maryann Kuk*

SILVER LAKE WIRED

The Committee is constantly looking for new ways to expand our community outreach. Currently under consideration is a Silver Lake website that could be used to supplement and expand upon this newsletter as well as include other topics of interest. If you have website design expertise and have a desire to help our community, then we want to hear from you. E-mail us at gptacek@earthlink.net.

WINGS OVER SILVER LAKE

For nearly 30 years the Audubon Society (Los Angeles Chapter) has included the Silver Lake Reservoir Complex (SLRC) in its annual Bird Count. This nationwide bird count has been invaluable in determining the overall health of the bird population and was one of the first indicators of the dangers of DDT to wildlife. The Reservoir attracts both migrating birds and water fowl and year round residents, including Great Blue Herons, which average nearly 4 feet in length with a 6 foot wingspan. To participate in the upcoming 1997 bird count or to join the Audubon Society, phone 213/876-0202. - *Maryann Kuk*

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF IT

Recent repairs of the reservoir's sloped sides will prevent the need for maintenance for at least five years, according to the DWP. Earlier this year, a deteriorating 1,800-foot-long segment of interior slope that runs from the northwest side of the reservoir and extends along the north perimeter through to the northeast side, was replaced by a 3-inch deep layer of asphaltic concrete. The remainder of the reservoir's slope is in much better condition, and will only require cleaning and patching (mainly crack filling). In related DWP news, the Silver Lake Reservoir's underwater mixer will remain in place at least through the summer, as the DWP continues to evaluate

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its performance. The mixer was installed to increase water circulation and improve dispersion of chlorine, thus enhancing water quality and reducing chlorine use. - *Winston Bowen*

If you have news concerning the Silver Lake reservoirs and surrounding environs, please let us know. Send news items to CSSLR Newsletter, 2230 Kenilworth, Los Angeles, CA 90039 or e-mail to gptacek@earthlink.net.

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The current focus of the Committee is the development of a reservoir "master plan" in conjunction with the Department of Water and Power and other concerned city agencies. The master plan will address expanding the recreational benefits of the area surrounding the Silver Lake reservoirs, renovation of existing facilities (including the fence), upgrading security and public safety and other issues relevant to the community. (See President's Message for further details.)

Master Plan continued from page 1

down-played and everyone agrees to work toward a common goal as a team.

Through the process, we have defined alternative options to deal with issues. For example, community representatives have identified as issues, "increased safety for pedestrians," "improved landscaping," and possible enhanced "recreation uses." As options to address these concerns, we have discussed the construction of exercise stations and pedestrian paths on the reservoir property. Likewise, DWP has raised issues regarding its desire to operate the facility on a cost-effective basis. One identified option which addresses both the landscaping and cost-effective operation issues is the potential use of community volunteers to assist with maintenance of the landscaping. Also, options to improve community acceptance of DWP's operational activities at the reservoir include building information kiosks and holding periodic tours of the reservoirs.

In the next phase of the development of the Master Plan, we will hold community meetings to discuss in detail the issues and options. The community meetings will be conducted by a professional planner so as to maximize community involvement in identifying priorities for the Master Plan. We will announce the community meetings in a future edition of this newsletter. Please look for the announcement (probably early fall). We hope to see you at one of the meetings.

One final note: Our retiring president, Doug Hill, whose term of office expired on December 31, 1996, richly deserves our deepest appreciation for his guidance and leadership. During Doug's term of office, the foundation for the Master Plan negotiations with DWP was formulated. I am pleased to say that Doug remains a Board member and will continue to play an important role as one of the community's representatives in the development of the Master Plan.

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THE CSSLR NEWSLETTER

Editor - Greg Ptacek

The Committee To Save Silver Lake's Reservoirs

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THE INS AND OUTS OF MASTER PLANNING

Editor's Note: CSSLR Board Member Winston Bowen is the former president of Friends of the Observatory (FOTO), a non-profit organization supporting Griffith Observatory. The organization, composed of community volunteers like CSSLR, succeeded in creating a Master Plan for the renovation of the historic L.A. landmark. We asked him to share his thoughts on the process of developing a Master Plan, the focus of CSSLR's current efforts.

by Winston Bowen

Built in 1935, The Griffith Observatory is in serious need of a major renovation. Years of increasing visitor traffic have taken their toll on the physical plant, and exhibits in the Hall of Science are old and often in poor repair. How ironic that Los Angeles — a preeminent city in the fields of astronomy and space exploration — should allow Griffith Observatory to fall so far behind. Yet, we as a community had never articulated exactly what the Observatory should be.

After a lot of discussion, FOTO decided to undertake a “master plan.”

Since the actual drafting of the master plan would be done by an architectural firm, our first task was to begin the selection process. We drafted a *scope of work*, which laid out what we expected the architectural firm to accomplish.

Using the City's Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process, we advertised for firms interested in bidding on the project. One of the most important decisions we would make would be the choice of architects, and we put considerable time and effort into the selection. Our RFQ contained considerable guidance, so the firm we eventually selected had a pretty good idea from the start as to what we wanted.

The *design phase* came next. After weighing what they had learned, the selected architectural firm began investigating several design alternatives which would

best match the Observatory's needs with the reality presented by this much-loved historic landmark. They knew we wanted more space at the Observatory for science exhibits, meeting rooms, restaurant, restrooms, administrative and program space facilities, but where?

We could not add on to the Observatory without destroying its famous appearance.

A satellite facility would, we concluded, greatly impair the visitor experience. The firm's ingenious solution was to expand below ground, in the space beneath the front lawn.

The Master Plan was the key to Griffith Observatory's inclusion in the first Los Angeles County Proposition A tax override issue in the amount of \$18 million. It was also included in the recent City Proposition K for an additional \$10 million. Further, FOTO has used it extensively with foundations and corporations to raise additional funds for the renovation.

So what can a master plan do for the Silver Lake community? For starters, it can get all the issues in front of us. Some needs will conflict with others, and not everyone will agree which should prevail. It will come as a shock to many, but some goals which appear to be irreconcilable are not that at all. Creative solutions are often found that don't just compromise conflicts but fully satisfy both. Master planning can help do that.

