

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*By Dean Alexander*

Dear friends and neighbors,

I am honored to be serving as the incoming president of the Fig Garden Homeowners' Association. Throughout the years many fine Fig Garden residents have served in this capacity and my goal is to continue this tradition. I hope my tenure is as worthy as the recent past presidents'—Tony Pings, Louise Yenovkian, and Phoebe Howard—who have laid the groundwork to make the neighborhood a wonderful place to live.

I have been a Fig Garden resident for over 20 years. During this time I have seen the economy prosper and recede. I have seen home values skyrocket and plummet. At present we are on the verge of recovery from a recession that rivals no other except the major depression of the 1930s. During this recession our neighborhood has endured. Actions from the past Fig Garden board members have assisted in the healthy prosperity of our neighborhood. Most notable is the recent Caltrans grant, which will assist in protecting and in planning the future of our wonderful neighborhood. This grant does require a contribution from the neighborhood. Along with the dues, which are much appreciated, if you can provide additional donation towards this grant, it would help to defer the costs.

The Fig Garden Homeowners' Association is a mighty voice which provides protection for our neighborhood. County officials often use us as a sounding board for proposed developments and

changes within our neighborhood. The Fig Garden Homeowners' Association membership is strictly voluntary. The nominal dues do assist in providing a strong voice for our community.

Longtime residents of Fig Garden are greatly aware of the benefits of living in this historically wonderful neighborhood with a park-like setting with its large estate lots and our gorgeous tree-lined streets. During the Christmas season we open our homes and streets for the historical Christmas Tree Lane event. I may have a bias, since I am the Christmas Tree Lane Coordinator, but the event is grass-roots and no other Christmas event rivals what we have created. During the Christmas season we have over 200,000 visitors travel down Van Ness Boulevard. Opening our neighborhood to visitors has created inconveniences with traffic congestion and litter. Until recently, the event has been relatively free of crime. The recent stabbing on the second walk night concerns the Fig Garden Homeowners' Association Board and the neighbors. We will continue to work with law enforcement to create a safe environment for our residents and our visitors.

Due to the economy, crime continues to rise throughout our country and it has impacted our neighborhood as well. One advantage our neighborhood has to fight crime is the Fig Garden Police Protection District, which provides supplemental services to our core area. The core is an area bounded by Palm,

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Maroa, Lansing, and Shaw. The District contracts with the Sheriff's Office to provide additional staffing within the Fig Garden area. Due to limited funds, complete 24-hour, 7-day-a-week coverage cannot be provided; however, we do have coverage 17 hours per day. The Fig Garden Homeowners' Association Board continues to encourage the Fig Garden Police Protection District commissioners to look at including areas outside the core, so we can provide this wonderful protection to all our neighbors.

The Fig Garden Police Protection District commissioners along with the Fresno County Sheriff's Office have created a neighborhood watch program, and Board member Prudence Zalewski has played a vital part in establishing it. We are looking for additional block captains to assist in this neighborhood program. Information about our neighborhood crime alerts and

Sheriff's responses to crime are provided to the block captain through emails. The block captains then disperse general information to the neighbors. Protection of our neighborhood requires vigilance by everyone. The eyes of many are far better than the eyes of one. Please report any suspicious activity to your block captain and the Sheriff's Office at 488-3111.

Let me close in saying that we live in a wonderful neighborhood. With your help, our neighborhood will continue to prosper. As everyone knows, change is inevitable but it is my desire and the Board's desire to steer these changes to the benefit of the Fig Garden community.