

SORO ROBERTSON NEWS

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the Newsletter of the
SOUTH ROBERTSON
Neighborhoods Council

BEVERLYWOOD
CASTLE HEIGHTS
CRESTVIEW
REYNIER VILLAGE
REGENT SQUARE
SoRo MERCHANTS
& SURROUNDING AREA

SoRo is a non profit
501c3 charitable organization



president's message In December 1996, residents within the South Robertson Blvd. area were asked by 5th District City Councilman Mike Feuer if they were interested in participating in the formation of a 'livable neighborhood council' to improve the quality of life in their community

Councilman Nate Holden (10th district) joined the revitalization efforts, as South Robertson Blvd. is shared by both the 5th and 10th City Council districts, and in 1997 the South Robertson (SoRo) Neighborhood Council (SRNC) was created. Many believed that for it to be successful it was necessary to involve stakeholders from all entities within the community. Not just the residents, but the merchants, commercial-property owners, religious organizations, service agencies, schools, LAPD, and legislative deputies from both City Council districts.

There is an elected Board of Directors (23 members) that is proportional to the stakeholders represented. Action Committees address issues and identify problem-solving projects. SoRo Board meetings are held monthly and there are four community meetings yearly. All are open to the public and everyone is welcome to attend.

We came together because of neighborhood problems. In the process of addressing our problems, we came together as a community—working together, sharing ideas, and caring about what happens to each other. We created more than just a neighborhood council—we created community spirit...and we've only just begun! —Susan Bursk

city council contact

In addition to contacting your city council representatives by phone or dropping by their offices, you can now email them.

5th District

Councilman --Michael Feuer

Local District Office--
822 S. Robertson Blvd., #102
West LA, Ca 90035

Phone-- (213) 847-4467

Email --council5@c05.ci.la.ca.us

<http://www.cityofla.org/council/cd5/>

10th District

Councilman --Nate Holden

Local District Office--
5651 W. Pico Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90019

Phone-- (213) 847-1752

Email --holden@c10.ci.la.ca.us

<http://www.cityofla.org/council/cd10/>

Thanks to the efforts of SoRo's Tree Committee volunteers, Robertson Blvd. has 77 chitalpa trees lining it's streets. Help keep the trees healthy by joining this group. Call 310-559-5464 for info.



On June 11, SoRo held its 3rd annual "Sense of SoRo Festival," a block party featuring music, food, games and children's activities. Over 1000 attended this city-sponsored cultural event, held on S. Robertson Blvd.



The 1.9-mile stretch of South Robertson Blvd. (between National and Pico) is rapidly becoming the place to go for home furnishings.

This area is home to 7 antique shops, 6 upholsterers, 3 art galleries, plus vendors offering: floor coverings, stone-works and unfinished, office and acrylic furniture!

accomplishments

- 77 Trees Planted on South Robertson
- Three "Sense of SoRo" Street Festivals
- Secured funding and provide care for sidewalk planters
- Alley lighting
- Awarded several community improvement grants
- Awarded \$400,000 HUD/LANI Grant for future SoRo Improvements

TO REACH US

PHONE/FAX:

310-839-7639

WEBSITE:

www.soro.org



our Web Site

We're on-line, with our very own site. Check out this constantly improving site to find out what's going on and to communicate with our city leaders.

neighborhood events

■ Hamilton High School Academy of Music
Call: (310) 559-9468 for ticket information.

FALL MUSICAL:

■ "Bye Bye Birdie" Preview
Nov. 30 6:00 pm

■ "Bye Bye Birdie"
Dec. 1 7:30pm
Dec. 2 1:00&7:30pm
Dec. 7 7:00pm
Dec. 8 7:30pm
Dec. 9 1:00&7:30pm

■ Musical Presentation
Jan. 12 7:30 pm

■ Musical Presentation
Jan. 19 7:30 pm

■ Jazz Concert
Jan. 20 7:30 pm

■ Dance Recital
Jan. 26&27 7:30 pm

■ Workman's Circle Concert
1525 S. Robertson

■ Yale Strom & Band Klazzj
Dec. 30 7:00&9:30pm
Call 310-552-2007

SoRo meetings

The SORO Board of Directors meets the second Wednesday of each month at the Hamilton High Library, 6:30pm. You are invited to attend these open meetings which encourage public comment at the end of the meeting.

breitburn oil facility

The BreitBurn oil facility at Pico and Doheny received approval to modernize its operation by replacing the diesel machinery with an electrically powered rig, significantly reducing carcinogenic emissions. The owners also will enclose and sound-proof the machinery, improving the quality of life for neighbors.

-contributed by Councilman Mike Feuer's office



Mayor Riordan and Councilman Feuer, honor artist Rosenthal on the Blvd.

PHOTO: DENNIS WISSNER

5th District Candidates Forum

SoRo has partnered with the League of Women Voters to present a candidate's forum for the Fifth District Council Seat that will be vacated by Mike Feuer next year. The forum will take place on March 20, 2001 at Hamilton High School, Pattiz Auditorium at 7 pm.

▲ Rachel Rosenthal honored on South Robertson

On Wednesday, September 6, 2000, Rachel Rosenthal, artistic director and performer, was designated as the fourth "Living Cultural Treasure of Los Angeles" by Mayor Richard J. Riordan, City Councilman Mike Feuer and Cultural Affairs General Manager, Adolfo Nodal. A permanent sign was dedicated and unveiled at the corner of South Robertson Blvd and Hargis Street.

72-year old Rosenthal is considered to be one of the creators of perform-

ance art and has lived and worked on South Robertson Blvd for many years. She appeared in June at the L A Theatre Center in her final solo work "UR-BOOR", a multimedia theatrical extravaganza that explores the effects of selfishness and isolation in 21st-century society. In the last 20 plus years, she has presented more than 35 solo pieces nationally and internationally and has won many awards, including an OBIE for "Rachel's Brain".

—by Terry Delvoe



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Walgreens Comes to SoRo

The first Westside Walgreens will be located at the southwest corner of Pico and Robertson (formerly Miller's Outpost) at the Gateway to SoRo! Walgreens, founded in 1901, is a national retail pharmacy chain and considered the leader in innovative drugstore retailing.

The much anticipated arrival of this nationally recognized drug store chain is generating excitement throughout the local community. Already in evidence are the major improvements underway for this high identity retail location.

The Charles Company purchased the property from Miller's Outpost. The Charles Company initially purchased the building on speculation, with intentions for a major office supply company as Tenant. Walgreens garnered this premier corner location when the new owner began negotiating with Rite Aid for the site. (Rite Aid left the area several years ago.) When negotiations failed with Rite Aid, Walgreens stepped in and executed a lease.

This prominent location will have approxi-

mately 16,000 square feet of ground floor selling space with the basement being used for storage.

Although 99% of the Walgreens Drug Stores have drive throughs in their locations, this site did not receive city approval for drive-through access due to the proximity of the adjacent alley. Even without the drive-through, Walgreens was determined to proceed with this site, showing the leap of faith in the strength of this trade area. The much anticipated grand opening is the second week of January, 2001.

The Pico/Robertson Walgreens will not have any liquor sales and expects the hours of business to be 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., 7 days a week. Walgreens is the #1 drug chain in the country with annual sales exceeding \$21 billion dollars. Walgreens anticipates having 200 drug stores open in the Los Angeles Metro area by 2004. Currently there are 16 Walgreens in Southern California.

Walgreens' corporate encourages all local district management to support local community activities and SoRo will be actively supported by Walgreens!

Walgreens looks forward with tremendous enthusiasm to serving the local community and encourages the motto, "Let the People See for Themselves."—Contributed by Suzanne Laff-Beitler Commercial Realty

Committees

Want to be an important part of SoRo's revitalization efforts? Help out by joining a committee. Contact group leaders listed below for information

SORO Merchant Assoc:
Work to stimulate and improve local business climate
Chair: Malcolm Brown
mbrown4988@aol.com

SORO Festival Committee:
Plan and Host Annual Festival held on Robertson Blvd.
Chair: Susan Bursk
hbursk@mediaone.net

Newsletter Committee:
Plan, write, illustrate, distribute quarterly communicate
Chair: Tony Fox
fox0034@earthlink.net

Safety Committee:
Work with city departments and residents to improve safety in SORO area
Chair: Allan Graf
aggreat@aol.com

Website Committee:
Update, maintain, contribute to SORO's cyber link
Chair: Herb Groelinger
herbgro@aol.com

Tree Committee:
Help care for and plant trees in SORO area
Chair: Julia Maher
juliamaher@aol.com

Land Use & Traffic:
Work with city departments on zoning and traffic flow issues
Chair: Carole Segal
kc6dxq@hotmail.com

Business Outreach Committee:
Help in efforts to bring new vital businesses into area
Chair: Claire Bowin
bowincline@earthlink.net

For information regarding these committees you can also call (310) 839-7639

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Tel. 310-836 2345
Fax. 310-836 2347



Malcolm Brown
Insurance Services
Notary Public

2861 S. Robertson Blvd.,
Los Angeles, CA 90034

Toll Free: 800-475 1717
email: mbrown4988@aol.com
CA Lic # 0706331

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SORO NEWS

pico construction

The DWP has been replacing the old water main down Cashio over the last few months. It will next turn up Edris Dr to Pico during December and then after the holidays move West on Pico to Century City. Beverwil and Roxbury are scheduled to remain open and most of the work will be done on the North side of Pico, in three parts. This will result in no parking on Pico with only two traffic lanes, one in each direction being available to motorists. Plan ahead!--
information contributed by the Department of Water and Power.



SORO residents review Lani Project concepts

SoRo Village (\$400,000 Grant) LANI Project

Last spring SoRo Village became the 13th community selected to participate in Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative's (LANI) catalytic neighborhood revitalization program. Like other LANI areas, SoRo Village has some of the physical characteristics of a neighborhood "Main Street" and a community that has demonstrated an ability to work together to coordinate their efforts and leverage their resources.

Utilizing a \$400,000 federal economic development "seed" grant obtained by Congressman Julian Dixon, an eleven member steering committee called a Recognized Community Organization (RCO) composed of local residents, business and property owners, began meeting in June to plan

streetscape and pedestrian improvements designed to increase safety and attract new businesses.

On October 10th the SoRo Village RCO hosted a community workshop at Hamilton High School led by Santa Monica design consultant Doug Campbell, of Campbell & Campbell, where over 50 community members stated their preferences for improvement projects such as crosswalks and lights. Using this feedback and a survey conducted last summer, the RCO will release a Community Work Plan of prioritized projects scheduled to begin design and construction the first of the year.

—by Joyce Perkins, LANI Executive Director

South Robertson tree plantings— an exercise in community involvement

Planting trees on South Robertson! That's a great concept to provide some respite from the barren sidewalks along a major thoroughfare between Culver City and Beverly Hills. Trees on South Robertson would provide a 'greenway' for pedestrians and cars alike. The idea for a tree planting was presented at one of the early meetings of the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council, and a tree committee was organized in September 1997. After much research by the committee, the Chitalpa was chosen for the planting, because it had the most positive characteristics for a curbside planting.

Chitalpa tashkentensis is a deciduous hybrid, a cross between a Catalpa and a Desert Willow. The variety selected is 'Pink Dawn', which begins flowering with light pink blossoms in May continuing all summer until losing its leaves in the fall. After about five years the trees become established and more drought tolerant. They are eventually able to live off water from winter rains and occasional summer watering.

Next step was finding the funding. Private donations came from Karl L. Sternbaum, a local developer; the Sony Green Fund; and individual residents and businesses, which together brought in \$6500. The L.A. City Department of Housing contributed approximately \$6000. The tree committee placed donation containers on counters in local businesses to raise money for continuing maintenance. These donations from the community have exceeded more than \$500.

There were three tree plantings in the winter of 1998 with 48 trees planted along South Robertson. The following year another planting called "Trees Around the Corner" took place, with another 29 trees planted along side-streets from Cadillac to Cattaraugus. Each tree planting was a community effort with residents, business owners, representatives from TreePeople, and staff from Councilmen Nate Holden's and Mike Feuer's offices pitching in to get the trees in the ground. Ed Brody, a South Robertson businessman, funded and cooked for two barbecues for the volunteers.

Planting trees pulled the community together to achieve a common goal, improving the South Robertson neighborhood. For more information or to lend a hand, call Julia Maher, committee chairperson at (310) 559-5464.
—by Vern Hallgren, SoRo Tree Committee

rediscovering the neighborhood

The sun was shining on SoRo today and I needed a break. So, I drove up to Pico and walked down S. Robertson Blvd. WOW! A new soybean candle shop; a giant newsstand; an eye doctor; a quaint Café, Coffee & Flower spot featuring homemade meals & service; fix-it shops for everything electronic; several computer stores; a tailor; an engraver; a yoga center; the Library (free video rentals); a new health food store; a CPA; architects; a spectacular assortment of antique shops; a dentist; a Philly Cheese Steak eatery; a hardware store; pet groomers; several bakeries; a swim school; auto shops; psychics; legions of upholstery shops; and so much more. Every store I walked into met me with a smile. I never realized the diversity of the stores on Robertson—they are true gems and real "Mom & Pop" stores that deserve your attention. Take a stroll today and rediscover your neighborhood!
—a Local Resident

SoRo expansion

SoRo is studying the possible expansion of our boundaries to include a few small areas "left out". This is motivated by the new LA City Charter, which mandates empowering communities to have a voice in local government. Current discussions include going North to the Beverly Hills boundary, East to La Cienega, South to the Culver City boundary and West to the California Country Club Estates & the Hillcrest Country Club boundaries.

