

Linda Pruett
Vice President's Report
March 1, 2006

Emergency Preparedness – Within the last month I have attended several meetings related to E.P. within our fair City, including one with the Taskforce made up of other Neighborhood Council E.P. Chairs, along with graduates of the Neighborhood Preparedness Ambassador Program. The Taskforce is putting together an impressive list of goals, by which we hope to eventually get the entire City of Los Angeles as prepared as possible for what we all believe are “inevitably.”

Not wanting to have to reinvent the wheel, we have been trying to obtain a copy of the City's Master Plan for Emergency Operations, but were told that it was being reprinted with the new Mayor's name, and that a copy would be forthcoming. I took it upon myself to do a bit of research on the web and found it – the “City of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Master Plan and Procedures Manual.” And yes, it definitely has the former mayor's name on it – Mayor Richard Riordin, that is!!!

The date on the plan – are you ready for this – is March 1996. The PLAN is ten years old this month! “Emergency Preparedness – it's an L.A. Thing!” I DON'T THINK SO! And when you hear City Officials say that Los Angeles is one of the best prepared cities in the nation, all I can say is, then Lord help the rest of 'em!

Some pages in the plan are as old as 1994, and a few as new as 1996! None encompass anything after 9/11! I decided to print out as much of it as I could bear to look at, and you'll find it on the back table. Before you leave tonight, please take a peek at how well prepared your City Government is to handle Emergencies! Mind you, this all comes from a website listed in the “City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Emergency Planning Guide” (that is, “Neighbors Saving Neighborhoods Through Emergency Preparedness” as prepared by the City of Los Angeles Emergency Preparedness Department!!! It would appear that we may well have to reinvent the wheel after all!!!

Yesterday, at the invitation of Sergeant Ron Carter and Mayor Villarigosa, I attended a meeting presented by the Los Angeles Police Dept. in conjunction with the San Fernando Valley Faith Community on “Terrorism Awareness Training.” There we listened to an array of excellent speakers on such topics as “Visible Targets in the L.A. Area”, the “Likelihood of Attack,” “Deployment of Resources,” “Characteristics of a Terrorist”, their “Weapons of Choice”, and one of my ‘personal favorites’, how “Once a Target, Always a Target”, e.g., Los Angeles Airport.

There were also excellent talks given by representatives of the local Muslim Community and their plight in all this, and a delicious continental breakfast and very impressive lunch, together which made the presentation from the Bomb Squad on how explosive devices can be made from such innocuous items as dry ice or fertilizer almost bearable! But I assure you that hearing how several terrorists have passed through, and even lived in Los Angeles (Reseda, actually) didn't help me to fall asleep any quicker last night.

The Solution – All the above is not meant to unduly alarm anyone. However, it IS meant to get us all off our duffs and DOING something to prepare ourselves, our families, and our neighborhoods for the “inevitables” I spoke of earlier. One of the ways the Taskforce and our Committee has elected to go about this is by working through Neighborhood Watch Groups and getting people prepared on a block-by-block basis. And our Council has already started doing this by addressing a Densmore Group a couple weeks ago, and with another coming up soon on Blewitt Street. Our E.P. Committee is putting together the plans for this, and if you're a member of a Neighborhood Watch, please call us and let us come out and talk with you on this vitally important subject! In the meantime, get yourself and your families ready by making a plan, and building kits for your car, your home, and to have at your job!

Sign up for the Neighborhood Preparedness Ambassador Program, which is FREE Emergency Preparedness Training sponsored by the City of Los Angeles E.P. Dept. and the Dept. of Neighborhood Empowerment. Learn what it takes to be prepared, to develop a plan, and to help your community be aware, informed and prepared. The program runs three consecutive Saturdays, March 18th, 25th and April 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. There are flyers on the back table telling about it.

And finally, join us this Saturday morning, March 4th at 8:00 a.m. at the FlyAway Terminal at the corner of Woodley and Saticoy in the 2nd Floor Community Meeting Room. See the pink flyers on the back table! Please – come help us plan how to make West Van Nuys/Lake Balboa the best prepared Council area in the City! We're going to have a great speaker, Frank Estrada, who is a Corporate Manager of Disaster Planning and an Emergency Preparedness Instructor. You'll learn a lot, and you'll come away with a good feeling about Emergency Preparedness, because you're finally DOING something about it!

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Pruet
Vice President