



T H E L E T T E R

LAFAYETTE ASSOCIATION OF HOMEOWNERS, INC. NEWSLETTER

MAY-JUNE 2003

WWW.THELAFAYETTELB.ORG

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FROM THE BOARD

The Carpet is Coming! The Carpet is Coming!

By Bill Guzik

After months of hard work, research and a final recommendation from the Architectural/Design Committee, the Lafayette Board voted to approve the installation of new carpet throughout the building's hallways with a tentative start date of September 1.

Our present "industrial" carpet, now over 20 years old, will be replaced by a beautiful high grade carpet of the type used in casinos and busy hotels. In the coming week, Lafayette residents will have an opportunity to vote for their favorite carpet sample from among the two styles and colors chosen by the Architectural/Design Committee. Of the four samples, all are representative of the Art Deco style and complement our lobby's bold carpet colors and pattern.

The cost of the carpet will range from \$27,000 to \$34,000 depending on the chosen installer, references, payment plans and other factors. As a reserve expense, the carpet purchase and installation costs will come from the Association's reserve fund.

To help offset carpet costs, the newly formed fundraising committee "Friends of the Lafayette" will hold two fundraisers prior to the carpet installation. If \$5 or \$5,000 can be raised, the effort will be well worth it. The Bingo and Bacardi Night is planned for Friday, June 13 and the Second Annual Linden Avenue Block Sale is planned for Saturday, August 9. For those unable to participate in these events or even those who want to contribute a "little extra," cash donations are being received in the front office.

Volunteer Your Time!

Volunteers are always welcome and are certainly needed! Sign-up sheets will again be available in the lobby for the following committees:

Architectural/Design—help maintain the building's Art Deco and architectural elements through paint, carpet, furniture, library, solarium and common area maintenance and commercial signage.

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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Richer and Sithea of Sithea's Salon

By Thea Robertshaw

In December, I received a Christmas present for a pedicure and a scalp treatment at Sithea's Salon. When I made my reservation and gave my name "Thea," they expected a Cambodian to arrive because Sithea's nickname is also "Thea," pronounced slightly different. They sure were surprised to see me. We had a good laugh discussing each other's heritage. They do have a sense of humor and offer a fabulous service from great haircuts to facials, manicures, pedicures and much more. It was a beautiful-sensual experience. I highly recommend the salon. I was moved listening to their stories because I too came from a war-torn country, Holland, where I spent my childhood years during W.W.II.

Richer and Sithea grew up in a devastated Cambodia. They were victims of the various regimes moving out and into their homeland. The French moved out of Cambodia only to be taken over by a vicious Cambodian Communist Party and their leader Pol Pot. On April 17th, 1975, the Cambodian Communist Party, also known as "Khmer Rouge," took over Cambodia. They evacuated people from all cities to live and work in the countryside. The entire population was to be transformed into farmers. Pol Pot put people to work like slaves from sunrise to sunset, usually more than 10 hours a day, seven days a

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PHOTOS BY SHARON HAYS

Richer and Sithea, owners of Sithea's Salon on Broadway.

FROM THE BOARD, CONTINUED

File Archive—Organization skills wanted!!! Responsible for organizing, cataloging and filing all Lafayette data from the 1920's to the present.

Financial—review all financial data and research loan sources to make recommendations to Board of Directors. Assist in presentation of yearly budget.

Friends of the Lafayette—develop creative ways to raise funds for existing and future preservation efforts. Conduct joint fundraising events with other area historical buildings.

Garden—maintain garden and barbecue areas as well as the potted plants and landscaping surrounding the Lafayette and its Linden Avenue parking lot. Research and make recommendations for improvements to newly opened rooftop decks.

Historical—assist in seeking public and private grants and obtaining national historic registry. Help collect vintage Lafayette photos and other memorabilia.

Infrastructure—investigate electrical and plumbing life expectancy and proper identification and make recommendations for internal building improvements. Address elevator and boiler maintenance and repair and assist in cleaning out and making better use of currently cluttered and disorganized basement space.

Parking—explore all possibilities of improving the Association's short- and long-term parking needs, including meeting with owner's of open lots, city officials and creative ways of using existing Lafayette unused space.

Security—review and evaluate current security system including video surveillance, locks, exits, gates and help make continued improvements.

Social/Public Relations—orchestrate social events for Lafayette residents and help facilitate better communication with East Village community.



PHOTO BY SHARON HAYS

Untitled found-object assemblage, 2003

Artist unknown

Bikes, stale air, dust, neglect

FROM THE OFFICE

It's Clean-Up Time, People!

By Sharon Hays

Recently, Jean-Louis and I went to the Bike Room and noticed that only FOUR bikes have any air in the tires—all of the other bikes have flat tires. Everyone who currently has a bike in the Bike Room needs to let me know, so I can trash some of the junk up there.

Dumpster Diving

Trash, boxes, refrigerators, mattresses, anything that you put down in the dumpster area must be *inside* the dumpster in order for it to be picked up by Waste Management. Anything left outside the dumpster will not be taken away. Put your trash in the dumpster, please. Cut it up if you have to, just get it in there! Is that too much to ask?

There's That Butt Again

Please refrain from dumping your ashtrays out of the window onto the roof. Enough said.

Not Trash

Look for an information packet describing the Mills Act and owner agreement in your mail soon. See the related article in this issue.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Who's Who at the Lafayette

2003 Board of Directors

President: Bill Guzik

First Vice-President: Jean-Louis de Bien

Second Vice-President: Lou Schor

Treasurer: Derrick Lloyd

Secretary: Andy Blinn

Office Manager

Sharon Hays

Contact the President

E-mail: billguzik@aol.com

Phone: 495-6264

(Weekdays 8am-9pm, Weekends 9am-9pm)

Contact the Board

In writing: Each board member has a mailbox in the office. All written comments will be addressed in a timely manner. Or go to "Feedback" on the Lafayette's Website at www.thelafayettelb.org.

In person: Come to the board meetings every first Wednesday of the month at 7pm in the Solarium. Also come to the open planning meetings every fourth (last) Wednesday, 7pm.

Contact the Office

Phone: 436-5391 9:30am to 6pm weekdays

THE LAFAYETTE LETTER IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY FROM THE OFFICE OF THE LAFAYETTE ASSOCIATION OF HOMEOWNERS.

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ANDY BLINN

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THEA ROBERTSHAW

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS THE 21ST OF THE MONTH. AD SPACE AVAILABLE. CONTACT THE OFFICE FOR RATES.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

LBC Expands Mills Act Historic Preservation Contracts

By Dan Baker, Vice Mayor, City of Long Beach

I proposed, and the City Council voted, to expand the use of Mills Act Historic Property contracts to encourage the maintenance and preservation of historic multi-unit residential properties with multiple owners. It is a victory to all of us who are concerned about finding ways in which our city can help owners of landmark buildings come together and work to repair and maintain their properties.

The Mills Act was enacted by the State of California in 1976 to permit a contract to be entered into between a local government and an owner of an historic property which will effectively reduce the assessed valuation in return for the owner's efforts to preserve, maintain, restore, or rehabilitate the historic building. To qualify, property must be officially designated as an historic building by the City or State, or be on the Federal Register of Historic Places.

Mills Act Contracts provide that:

- the property be preserved and, where necessary, restored to comply with historic preservation architectural standards;
- periodic inspections will be made to determine compliance, and failure to comply will result in a fee of 12.5% of the full value of the property;
- the contract runs with the title of the property, and is binding on all successors in interest; and
- the term of a contract shall be for a maximum of ten years, with the contract being automatically renewed each year unless either party elects not to do so.

Though our city will bear a burden in reduced property taxes, actual experience with these contracts shows that owners benefit by approximately a 50% reduction in property taxes with the majority of the reduction being absorbed by the county.

The Mills Act is not an entitlement program. It is a voluntary contract, executed at the discretion of the local governing body. An appropriate fee schedule to recoup the associated costs of administering the program will be required to make the program activity self-supporting. Those who benefit most directly will be responsible for the costs.

There are many properties that potentially qualify for Mills Act property tax reductions under the terms of the state legislation. For a Mills Act contract application to be approved,

there must be a high level of architectural significance involved with the building, for which the preservation and restoration will enhance the architectural heritage of the entire community. Extending the Mills Act contracts to individual owners of units (i.e., own-your-owns) in multi-unit residential buildings will allow for some of our most famous landmark buildings such as the Villa Riviera, the Willmore, the Cooper Arms, and others, to be restored.

Though there are some contract complications created by having multiple owners in multi-unit residential buildings, Mills Act contracts represent such a great opportunity that it is my sincere hope they will be used to restore some of our city's buildings to their former glory. *Excerpted from Long Beach Heritage's website at www.lbheritage.org/millsact.htm.*



JOIN YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS
THIS FRIDAY NIGHT, JUNE 13
 FOR A NIGHT OF
"BINGO AND BACARDI"

HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR NEW CARPET AND
 OTHER LAFAYETTE IMPROVEMENTS.

BRING NEW FACES— THE MORE THE MERRIER—
 WE'RE TRYING TO RAISE \$\$\$!!

Who: You and any of your friends wanting to play and donate to a good cause.

What: Bingo, Bacardi and Bongo Drums

What to Wear: Your favorite Hawaiian shirt or mu-mu.

Where: Lafayette Solarium, 11th Floor Campbell Building.

When: Friday, June 13. 6:30-9:00 pm. First game starts at 7:00.

Why: To help offset costs for new hallway carpeting! Plus it'll be groovy, baby!

How Much: \$2 per card per game is requested. \$1 donations for Bacardi punch, sodas and snacks. And if you can't come, donations will gladly be received at the office.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR, CONTINUED

week, with small rations of food. Richer says people who refused to follow the new laws of the Communist regime were taken away for either rehabilitation or execution. As a result, there were at least 2 million Cambodians who lost their lives.

Pol Pot and his tyrannical group closed schools, hospitals, temples, churches and Mosques. Sithea's and Richer's families were classified as "newcomers or the April 17th people." Anyone who didn't join Pol Pot's Communist Party before the fall of Phnom Penh on April 17th, 1975, were automatically classified as "newcomers" or "April 17th people." Newcomers had no rights to express any opinion and/or any voice in running their daily lives. They could not own anything—not even their cooking utensils. If they were found in possession of these basic household items, they were severely punished.

Children of newcomers were constantly harassed and poorly treated by their group leaders (also Party Members). Sithea says, "We were given one set of clothing for the year and had to dye them black ourselves with natural substances. When it rained we had to stay wet until our clothes dried." Richer adds, "In the early months of 1979, we were told to dig a huge pond on the hill, intended to become our mass grave." Richer's father was an army officer with the Cambodian Republican Government and his mother was a businesswoman. His family was twice on death row because of his parent's past status. "Every Cambodian prayed every single day for an outside liberator, particularly the Americans, to come free us from Pol Pot's tyrannical regime like what America has now done for the Iraqi people."

In 1987 Sithea and Richer met at one of the Student Organization's activities at CSULB. Sithea was asked to teach the coconut dance, "one of the Cambodian Folk Dances" to a group of Cambodian students for their first Cambodian Cultural Show. Richer recalled that she was a tough teacher because she expected all her students to be very disciplined. The show was a success and it has become a tradition for the Cambodian students. In 1989 they transferred to CSU Dominguez Hills and graduated in 1991. They married later in the same year.

Richer loves to talk about the mythology and the art of his homeland. Cambodia has a rich culture and heritage. Cambodia has so much to offer to the world, the Angkor Watt—the seventh wonder of the world. One of Richer's highlights in Cambodia was his journey, by pre-arrangement of his staff, to visit Angkor Watt in the evening after all the tourists were gone. He says it was the most magical experience to see the

magnificent temple under the full moon. He felt like he was back in time a thousand years ago standing among workers building the great temples of Angkor Watt. Also he talks about the great river that crosses Cambodia—the Mekong River. Cambodians refer to the Mekong River as the Naga, the mythology of the seven-headed snake that brought life to all living things inhabiting the riverbank. He mentions a stone carving at the Angkor Watt depicting the giant Naga being pulled apart to squeeze out the "magical water" which would give you "immortality" if you drank it.

Richer says, "Sithea had a dream of owning her own business." After they had done some research, they decided to get into the beauty industry. In 2001 they returned to the U.S. Sithea came earlier to attend cosmetology classes. "From the airline business to a salon in the East Village is quite a switch." Richer joined New York Life but later resigned to accept a consultant's job at the Business Development Center, Long Beach, to help market loan programs to the minority communities. In addition to his consulting work, he also helps Sithea with their salon.

Currently on view at Sithea's Salon are Jim Mizerski's photographs of Angkor Watt, the great mystical city of temples and sculptures over 1,000 years old. Some are ruins overgrown by large trees well over a hundred years old. One of his titles is "Man Builds—Nature Recycles." Besides the monumental architecture, the temples have giant stone entryways and thousands of feet of bas-reliefs in the galleries of Angkor Watt.

It is a pleasure to visit Sithea's Salon. The treatments are fabulous and the environment is beautiful. Come and see the photo exhibition by Jim Mizerski and take the opportunity to "Treat Yourself" with their royal services. Sithea and Richer are always there to greet you. They are glad to be part of the East Village. We welcome them and wish them much success.



**THE LETTER WANTS
YOU!**

**WRITERS,
PHOTOGRAPHERS &
ILLUSTRATORS NEEDED.**

CALL ANDY
AT 435-8023 OR E-MAIL
INFO@THELAFAYETTELB.ORG
FOR YOUR ASSIGNMENT.