



# Discover *The* Difference

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION  
OF THE FIGUEROA CORRIDOR PARTNERSHIP  
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

**SPRING 2008**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**April 4 – August 8, 2008, Gallery I**

**In Motion: The African American Migration Experience**

This new exhibit at the California African American Museum, from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Studies in New York, presents a new interpretation of African American history, one that focuses on the self-motivated activities of peoples of African descent to remake themselves and their worlds. For more information, please call 213-738-9240 or visit [www.youngcomms.com](http://www.youngcomms.com)

**May 31st-11am to 3pm**

**10th Annual Family FunFest!**

Come help LA Child Guidance Clinic celebrate its tenth anniversary of the much-loved Family FunFest! This event, free to families in the community, will be held at the Clinic's 3787 S. Vermont Avenue site. Food, games, pony rides and family-centered entertainment will be provided to the families that attend, as well as assistance on how to access mental health services. Please contact Amanda at [aray@lacgc.org](mailto:aray@lacgc.org) for more information or to volunteer with face painting, children's crafts and games and food service. For more event information please visit [www.lacgc.org](http://www.lacgc.org)

**Saturday, June 1**

**Ilya Averbukh And The Ice Symphony Present "Ice Age"**

Renowned Ice Dance Champion Ilya Averbukh and the Ice Symphony will present "Ice Age" featuring some of the world's greatest figure skaters, at the LA Sports Arena. The event features a veritable "Who's Who" of figure skaters, including: Irina Lobacheva, Ilya Averbukh, Alexei Yagudin, Irina Slutskaya, Tatyana Navka, Roman Kostomarov, Tatyana Totmyanin and Maxim Marinin. Tickets are \$150, \$125, \$100, \$75, \$50 and \$25 and are on sale now at the Sports Arena Box Office, all Ticketmaster locations, online at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) and by charge by phone at 213/480-3232.

**June 7th and 8th**

**The 2008 Los Angeles Grand Sumo Tournament**

The 2008 Los Angeles Grand Sumo Tournament comes to the Los Angeles Sports Arena on Saturday and Sunday, June 7th and 8th. The event begins at 4pm each day. For more information, please visit [www.sumotour.com](http://www.sumotour.com)

## THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM INVITES YOU TO JOIN A "PALEO-ODYSSEY" IN THE "THOMAS" THE T REX LAB

There is a new dinosaur on the prowl at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, located in the heart of the Figueroa Corridor. On March 30, 2008, the Natural History Museum opened its Thomas the T. rex Lab; a specially designed workroom where visitors are able to watch the actual work of paleontologists as they prepare and assemble the fossils of a 66 million year old Tyrannosaurus rex nicknamed "Thomas." He will become a permanent resident of the Museum's newly renovated Dinosaur Hall when it opens in 2010.



A rendering of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County's Thomas the T. rex Lab, as seen from the outside. Image courtesy of Hodgetts + Fung Design and Architecture.

Scientists and researchers led by Dr. Luis Chiappe, director of the Museum's Dinosaur Institute, excavated Thomas in southeastern Montana during field expeditions conducted between 2003 and 2005. Thomas will provide another link in the chain of life histories shown in the Museum's remarkable T. rex growth series.

The Thomas the T. rex lab was designed by Los Angeles-based firm of Hodgetts & Fung Design and Architecture. The "paleo-odyssey" leads into two white-lacquered pods, which are forensic stations, complete with airtight apertures and gauntlet-like gloves for the careful and dusty work of stripping away earth and stone to uncover Thomas's bones. On

the side of each glass research pod will be a visitor interface area featuring an interactive workstation—to participate in cleaning or assembling a synthetic T. rex bone or cataloging it for collection. Museum visitors have the fascinating opportunity to participate in the true hands-on experience of excavating a dinosaur!



Dr. Luis Chiappe carefully uncovers Thomas' teeth. Photo courtesy of the Dinosaur Institute, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

Dr. Jane Pisano, president and director of the Museum, notes that "The unique design of the Thomas the T. rex Lab will engage our visitors by showing what paleontologists do. This very public, fully functioning paleontological workspace will allow us to prepare Thomas in time and on schedule for final installation in the new Dinosaur Hall."

Thomas died 66 million years ago in a sand bar of a meandering river, on what is now federal land in southeastern Montana. Dr. Chiappe, leading a team from the Museum's Dinosaur Institute, conducted three summer field expeditions at the site. The Institute began preparing Thomas immediately after the initial field season—a time-consuming task led by the Institute's lab manager, Doug Goodreau. Half of the collected fossils have been prepared and documented, while Thomas' larger elements will be prepared in the public viewing lab.

## FROM THE CHAIR



Darryl Holter, Chair

I found this year's Annual Meeting of the Figueroa Corridor Partnership BID to be especially rewarding because it marked the 10th anniversary of the founding of our BID. The meeting was held on the huge stage of the historic Shrine Auditorium. I told the members when I opened the meeting that they could go home and tell their friends and relatives that they had occupied the same stage as all the famous movie stars of our past.

Our staff had produced a wonderful and very informative 10 year anniversary booklet which was distributed to everyone. Andy Stamatina from the Shrine said a few words about the history of the beautiful auditorium and the many renovations that have been underway for the past few years. I spoke a bit about the history of the BID and how we began to organize it in 1997. We asked all founding members of the original Board of Directors to stand. We also presented Margaret Farnum, one of our founding members from the LA Coliseum Commission, with an award for her outstanding service since she is retiring from the Commission. Margaret will, however, remain as a board member of our BID. We also offered special recognition for the Clean Team and Safety Ambassadors, all of whom were in attendance.

We were joined by Councilmember Jan Perry, who congratulated us on the work that had been done in the past decade and spoke enthusiastically about the future of the Figueroa Corridor. Dave Roberts, representing Councilmember Bernard Parks, also said a few words.

Several members spoke about what their organizations were doing in the way of new building and expansion. We heard from the USC Credit Union, the Omar Foundation, Orthopaedic Hospital, the Automobile Club of America, Chano's, and Texere Plaza.

On a personal note, it's hard to believe that ten years have passed, but the progress is clear and evident and the future is bright!

**Darryl Holter**

Chair, Board of Directors  
Figueroa Corridor Partnership

## NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE 145 STUDENT APARTMENTS

More student housing is in the works for the Figueroa Corridor. Red Oak Investments, an Orange County-based real estate development firm, is planning to build 145-unit luxury student housing units at 2455 South Figueroa Street. The 1.7 acre site near the intersection of Figueroa Street and West Adams Blvd is currently the parking lot for the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church. Red Oak purchased the parking lot in 2007 and proposes to build a four story residential building over three levels of parking. Parking for St. Vincent's would be replaced at grade. The project would include recreation rooms, a fitness center, spa, management offices, study rooms, and up to 28,433 sq. ft. of open space.



Rendering of new student housing.

Joe Flanagan, Principle at Red Oak Investment and Figueroa Corridor Board member, points out that one of the project's most important objectives is to appropriately integrate with the surrounding context of the neighborhood. The project proposes a complimentary architectural style that will respect the surrounding historic amenities. "Understated elegance" is how Flanagan describes the architectural style, the goal of which, he says, is to "complement, not compete with our neighbors".

Other project objectives include concentrating uses on the Figueroa Corridor away from the residential neighborhoods to protect the University Park area's residential nature, activating the pedestrian streetscape, encouraging walkability and sustainability, and invigorating the Figueroa Corridor between LA Live and USC by infusing residents and new investment dollars into the area.

Flanagan states that, "Our philosophy is to design the project that works best for the community, within the constraints imposed by the economic environment. In purchasing this site," he continues, "we saw a chance to serve the needs of the community, the church, our neighbors, and our future residents."

With regard to the Figueroa Corridor, Flanagan says, "The Fig Corridor's inevitable and continuing improvement is one of the most exciting things about this location. It is what enabled us to attract investment capital to a project like this on this site. As development occurs, businesses strengthen and the entire area improves. We were delighted to find a vibrant and thriving business improvement district in place here when we arrived, and we are excited to be a part of it."

The project application is in to the City of Los Angeles, and is currently in the environmental review phase. Flanagan expects the project's Environmental Impact Report to be completed this year and construction to begin in 2009, with units ready for move-in by the beginning of the school year 2011.

## USC LAUNCHES NEW ONLINE RESOURCE FOR MUSLIM AND JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

USC's Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement (CMJE) proudly announces the launch of its website, [www.usc.edu/cmje](http://www.usc.edu/cmje). This new website provides important resources for scholars, groups, community leaders and individuals working to develop interfaith partnerships between Muslim and Jewish communities in the United States and internationally.

The CMJE is a partnership between three institutions: the Omar Ibn Al Khattab Foundation, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and USC's Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences. It is housed and administered at the University of Southern California's Center for Religion & Civic Culture.

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The collaboration of a Muslim Foundation, a Jewish seminary, and a secular university is itself an example of the types of partnerships that CMJE envisions and hopes to promote locally and internationally. CMJE seeks to enhance the understanding of Muslims about Jews and Judaism, enhance the understanding of Jews about Muslims and Islam, and increase the ability of Jews and Muslims to engage with each on issues of mutual importance. Hebah Farrag, who works for the Center for Religion and Civic Culture as a Project Specialist Managing CMJE states, "we use the word engagement, rather than dialogue, because we hope to go much further than simply dialogue. We hope for these two faith-based communities to connect, discuss, debate, but more important, to stand with one another and act together in helping the community at large."

The CMJE is a community resource for training in inter-religious outreach, an online resource center for materials on Jewish-Muslim relations, and an academic resource for journalists, scholars and community leaders. CMJE's mission is to promote dialogue, understanding and grassroots, congregational and academic partnerships among the oldest and the newest of the Abrahamic faiths, while generating a contemporary understanding in this understudied area and creating new tools for interfaith communities locally, nationally and beyond. Dr. Muzamil Siddiqi, Chairman of the Shura Council of Southern California applauded the Omar Ibn Al-Khattab Foundation saying that the CMJE, "is historic, most meaningful and a need of the day."

The CMJE website includes a variety of resources, including, but not limited to; scholarly and community-based resources to address critical issues in Muslim-Jewish engagement, best practices to foster and enhance community partnerships, articles, videos, and links to interviews with world-renowned scholars on important topics such as, Abraham and his sons, women in Islam and Judaism, and dietary laws, Links to dialogue groups and organizations that facilitate interactions and scholarship and a Calendar of national and international events. For more information on the Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement, please contact Hebah Farrag, 213-740-6900 or visit [www.usc.edu/cmje](http://www.usc.edu/cmje).

## 8TH ANNUAL BLOOMING OF THE ROSES LUNCHEON WITH SPECIAL GUEST, HUELL HOWSER

On April 24th the Figueroa Corridor Partnership held its 8th Annual Blooming of the Roses Luncheon in the Expo Park Rose Garden. Leaders of the Figueroa Corridor community gather in the Exposition Park Rose Garden every April during the 'Blooming of the Roses' – when the thousands of roses in the seven-and-a-half-acre garden are at their peak bloom.

This year, there were over 125 people in attendance; including community leaders, state and local dignitaries, City Council members, Figueroa Corridor Board of Directors and many people who live, work and play in the Figueroa Corridor.

The luncheon celebrates the arrival of spring and the accomplishments of the Figueroa Corridor Partnership over the last year. In his speech, the luncheon's Keynote Speaker, Huell

Howser from KCET's *California Gold*, touched on the many treasures and "gold" that are found along the Figueroa Corridor, including the Rose Garden and Expo Park. He noted that springtime in the Rose Garden is a blend of old and new, a historic part of our city along the Figueroa Corridor. Mr. Howser added "Sometimes you look so hard for that perfect place and then we realize, we've got it right here...in our own backyard." Councilmember Jan Perry spoke to the beauty of the rose garden and noted how every year the Annual Blooming of the Roses Luncheon is a treasured event held along the Figueroa Corridor. Ann Dorr, Figueroa Corridor Board member, presented on the history of agriculture in Exposition Park.



Attendees enjoying lunch in the Expo Park Rose Garden.



Winners of the Art Contest and their teachers, Board Chair Darryl Holter, Mark Mariscal, Superintendent of Recreation and Parks and Keynote Speaker Huell Howser.

As part of the Roses Celebration, an art contest is held in the local elementary schools. Third through fifth grade students are asked to draw a picture reflecting on the newly named roses for the year. This year the new roses were named "Mardis Gras" and "Dream Come True." Four students were chosen as winners; Zaharah Kybett of Alexander Science Center School, Esmerelda Gonzalez of 32nd Street/USC Magnet and Daisy Hernandez of Norwood Elementary. Nicole Colettii, a 3rd grader at Alexander Science Center School was the Grand Prize winner. Darryl Holter, Chair of the Figueroa Corridor Board of Directors and Mark Mariscal, Superintendent Recreation and Parks, City of Los Angeles, presented certificates and cash prizes totaling \$1400 to the winning students' classrooms. The Expo Park staff and Rose garden gardeners were also honored at the luncheon. There are seven full time gardeners who work tirelessly to maintain the beauty of the Rose Garden. The Gardeners honored at the luncheon include: Anicia Villero, Arnel Duenas, Ignacio Castillo, Jose De La Torre, Alejandro Castro, Peter Hass and Carlos Rubio.



Rose Garden full time Gardeners

The event is co-sponsored by the Figueroa Corridor Partnership BID, the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks and the EXPO Center.

### THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM INVITES YOU TO JOIN A "PALEO-ODYSSEY" IN THE "THOMAS" THE T REX LAB

The future home for the T. rex growth series and for "Thomas" himself will be in the Museum's historic 1913 Building, the first museum building in Los Angeles, which is currently un-

dergoing a complete renovation. Development of the new Dinosaur Hall is part of the Museum's current \$84 million project to restore and seismically strengthen its original 1913 Beaux-Arts inspired building. The newly designed galleries will open beginning 2010.

This new exhibit and Thomas himself is a welcome addition to the Figueroa Corridor, adding excitement to the corridor. For more information about this astonishing exhibit and a Fact Sheet on Thomas the T. rex, please visit [www.nhm.org](http://www.nhm.org) or call 213-763-DINO.

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### Team Members of the Quarter

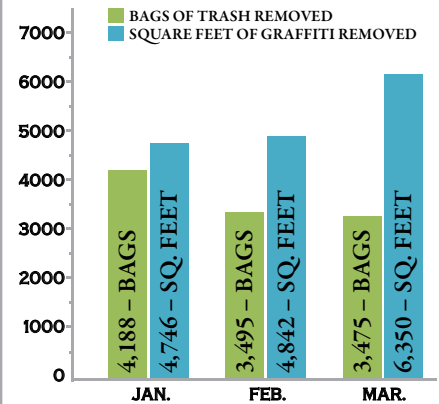


**Vicki Sanchez**  
 Ambassador Team



**Jeffrey Shelton**  
 Clean Team

### TRASH & GRAFFITI REMOVAL



## SUBMIT NEWS

News submissions are encouraged!

Please email story ideas for the summer issue by June 15 to [info@figueroacorridor.org](mailto:info@figueroacorridor.org).



**FIGUEROA CORRIDOR PARTNERSHIP**  
 3982 S. FIGUEROA ST., SUITE 207  
 LOS ANGELES, CA 90037  
 TEL: 213.746.9577  
 FAX: 213.746.7876  
 INFO@FIGUEROACORRIDOR.ORG  
 WWW.FIGUEROACORRIDOR.ORG  
 SERVICE HOTLINE: 213.746.3444

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