



# Strawberry Gazette



\*\*\* Serving the 300,000 veterans living in greater Los Angeles \*\*\*

## FEDERAL HOMEMAKING

BY JANET OWEN DRIGGS

In health and fortune, prospect and resource, they came back poorer men than they had gone away. But it was home. And though home is a name, a word, it is a strong one; stronger than magician ever spoke, or spirit answered to in strongest conjuration.<sup>1</sup>

—Charles Dickens, *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*, 1844

When Charles Dickens wrote these words in 1843, he wasn't writing about veterans, but his thoughts have impacted veteran experience ever since. Why? Because the U.S. government's post-Civil War response to veteran care was powerfully underpinned by the Victorian doctrine of domesticity, which Dickens's prolific word-magic consistently articulated and fed.

In 1865 Abraham Lincoln's government established the National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War to shelter Union veterans. Eight years later Congress brought the name of the institution more fully in line with its intention by changing it to the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS).

For Dickens as much as for the nineteenth century North Americans who established the NHDVS, "home" was both the primary unit of society and its most highly valued locus of care. Although the National Homes were run along military lines—with residents wearing uniforms (provided), sleeping in barracks, and requiring official leave to travel away from the home—the NHDVS also sought to cater to the whole person by addressing not only physical, but also intellectual, emotional, and spiritual needs.



**No Place Like Home, Gingerbread proposal for California Home for Veterans in One Hundred Years, Lauren Bon and The Metabolic Studio, December 2010 – January 2011.**

As described by its board of managers, the National Home was neither a "hospital nor alms-house, but a home, where subsistence, quarters, clothing, religious instruction, employment when possible, and amusements are provided by the Government of the United States. The provision is not a charity, but is a reward to the brave and deserving."<sup>2</sup>

**Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.**

—Robert Frost, *The Death of the Hired Man*, 1915

Residence at the National Homes was initially limited to Union veterans who could prove a connection between an injury and their military service. By 1884, however, the door had opened for any honorably discharged soldier or sailor who had served since the War of 1812. As long as the veteran in question could not support himself due to a disability—which need not be

service related—and as long as he had not fought against the Union, he was entitled to a home with the NHDVS. By 1939 the Pacific Branch of the NHDVS, which is now known as "the Westwood VA" or the "VA-WLA," had "facilities to care for 7,700 veterans who are disabled or in need of medical care."<sup>3</sup>

For the purposes of admission to the National Home, the word "disability" encompassed both visible wounds and the less visible maladies that result from combat trauma. As a result, in addition to admitting amputees and the elderly, the National Home also accommodated seemingly vigorous but nonetheless incapacitated young men. In 1893 the youngest member of the Pacific Branch was 27, the oldest 86.<sup>4</sup>

The National Homes were intended to "assume the same domestic responsibilities for veterans... as mothers and wives assumed for their families."<sup>5</sup> As such the relationship was emphatically

intend to be for life and beyond, with the Homes providing a domestic living environment unto death, followed by a place in the Home cemetery after death.

Adjacent to the Westwood VA, the Los Angeles National Cemetery occupies 114.5 acres. It contains the remains of 85,448 bodies and is closed to new interments.<sup>6</sup> When the cemetery was dedicated in May 1889 it comprised 20 acres and one grave: that of Abner Prather, a veteran of the Fourth Indiana Infantry, who died shortly after arriving at the Pacific Branch.<sup>7</sup> He is buried in Section 1, Grave D-14.

**If you want a golden rule that will fit everything, this is it: Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.**

—William Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art*, 1883

The Pacific Branch was built on land that was "a mixture of vernal pools, Prairie Meadows, and Walnut Wood-

land, with perhaps a smattering of Coastal Sage Scrub."<sup>8</sup> In keeping with a belief that beautiful environments promoted social order and increased the quality of life, the NHDVS hired distinguished architect Stanford White to design the original Home buildings, and within two years approximately "40,000 ornamental trees... and nearly 2,000 fruit trees, including the choicest varieties of oranges"<sup>9</sup> had been planted.<sup>10</sup>

Striving perhaps for aural as well as visual beauty, birds played an important role at the Pacific Branch. In 1901 the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the newspaper's editor, General H.G. Otis, donated "a golden eagle,"<sup>11</sup> which was housed in temporary quarters pending construction of a "new zoo and aviary."<sup>12</sup> As these quarters were beside a condor with a nine-foot wingspan, it can be assumed that the Home had long nurtured a substantial avian collection. Completed in 1902, the new domed aviary measured 70 x 30 feet, with a top height of 30 feet. The "gayly adorned

Continued on page 3

### BREACH OF TRUST:

## VA VIOLATES ITS DUTY TO USE LAND AS A HOME FOR VETERANS

BY RICHARD L. FOX

*The land where the West Los Angeles Veterans Administration (VA) is now located was originally donated under an 1888 deed requiring that it be permanently dedicated as a home for veterans. Lawyer Richard L. Fox of Dilworth Paxson LLP in Philadelphia examines how this deed created a trust to benefit veterans, and why the VA is now in breach of that trust. He specializes in advising nonprofit groups and donors, and is the author of the treatise Charitable*

*Giving: Taxation, Strategies, and Planning (Thomson Reuters). The Annenberg Foundation is among Dilworth Paxson's clients.*

When John P. Jones and Arcadia B. de Baker originally donated 300 acres of land in West Los Angeles to the National Home for Disabled Veterans Soldiers, a predecessor to today's VA, they left no doubt of their intention that the land be permanently dedicated as a home for veterans. Their March 5, 1888

deed conveying the land contains no less than five separate references to the requirement that the land be used to "locate, establish, construct and permanently maintain" a branch home of the National Home. The deed specifically stipulates that the land was conveyed in return for the promise of the National Home to permanently use the land as a branch home for veterans. The deed also refers to an act of Congress on March 2, 1887, which authorized the Board of Managers of the National Home to "locate, establish, construct, and permanently maintain a branch of said National Home ... located at such place in the States west of the Rocky Mountains as ... shall appear most desirable and advantageous." Pur-

suant to this act of Congress, the National Home accepted the 300 acres of donated land in 1888 for the express purpose of creating a permanent home for veterans in West Los Angeles.

The National Home, which was incorporated by Congress on March 3, 1865, created a series of branch homes for veterans throughout the country as a result of the federal government accepting responsibility for sheltering veterans. Originally known as the "National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers and Sailors of the Civil War," after years of encouragement from the Board of Managers and with no debate, the name was officially changed by Congress on January 23, 1873, to the "Nation-

al Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers" to reflect its domestic character and its true purpose. At the time it received the donation of the 300 acres in West Los Angeles, the National Home had already been in existence for more than twenty years, and its existing branch homes were widely known for providing a domestic environment and home life for veterans, rather than being hospitals or almshouses. Consistent with the intention of the donors and the restrictions imposed under their 1888 deed, from its inception and for years following the donation of the 300 acres of land, the branch home in West Los Angeles provided a home for disabled veterans

Continued on page 2



The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.

—Maya Angelou

Peace—that was the other name for home.

—Kathleen Norris

## ANNENBERG WITHDRAWS NAME FROM VETERANS PARK CONSERVANCY SUPPORT

BY TERENCE LYONS

The Annenberg Foundation has said that it “should not be identified in any manner as a donor to the Veterans Park Conservancy,” a nonprofit group that has contracted with the West Los Angeles VA to use 16 acres at the corner of Wilshire and San Vicente Boulevards as open space “for benefit of veterans and the general public” according to a 2007 “Sharing Agreement” between the Conservancy and VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (GLAHS).

In a January 14 letter from Annenberg board member Lauren Bon to Conservancy executive director Sue Young, Bon said that the Annenberg Foundation’s \$1 million grant previously made to the Conservancy had been solicited without disclosure that the park was to be located on a portion of 300 acres donated in 1888 “subject to a deed restriction that specifically limits the use of the land as a permanent home for veterans.”

“While we certainly support the creation of public parks and the preservation of open space,” Bon wrote, “the use of the land donated under the 1888 deed for a public park does not directly contribute to the use of the land as a permanent home for veterans and, therefore, we believe that such use is contrary to the 1888 deed restriction.”

The Foundation’s letter did not ask for a return of its earlier gift, but said that it now prefers that it “be treated as an anonymous donor,” that its grant “should not be recognized with any acknowledgement of any kind” within the property or otherwise, and that it “should not be identified in any manner as a donor” to the Conservancy or to the park.

In addition, Bon’s letter said that the Annenberg Foundation “believe[s] that all future charitable solicitations by the Veterans Park Conservancy should disclose the 1888 deed restrictions” and said that “the focus of the use of the land should be providing housing to veterans, including the 20,000 homeless veterans currently living in Los Angeles.”

The Annenberg Foundation has long been a supporter of veteran-related projects, stemming from the dedication of its founder, Ambassador Walter Annenberg,

who General Colin Powell in 1994 called “one of America’s leading businessmen and greatest philanthropists.” Foundation contributions include grants to: David Geffen School of Medicine in UCLA for the Maddie Katz Memorial Fund of Operation Mend in the plastic surgery division to provide plastic surgery to veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars; New Directions Inc. for the Veterans Capacity Building Project to expand services and meet the needs of veterans in the Los Angeles area; the Buffalo Soldier Monument in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; and millions of dollars of donations to the Air Force at Colorado Springs, the Army at West Point, and the Navy at Annapolis.

The Veterans Park Conservancy, a mostly Brentwood neighborhood group founded in 1986, says on its website that its purpose is “to protect, preserve, restore and enhance the property that was deeded to the federal government in 1888 by Arcadia Bandini de Baker and Senator John Percival Jones.” In 1989, the Conservancy, then called Veterans Memorial Gardens Foundation, opposed a plan to use 80 acres of VA land for homeless housing, stating that its mission was “to serve veterans by protecting, enhancing and maintaining the open space of the West Los Angeles Veterans Grounds to honor their memory and sacrifice.”

In Bon’s January 14 letter to the Conservancy, she wrote, “As a result of our work at the VA [the *Strawberry Flag* project of Metabolic Studio, a direct charitable activity of the Foundation], we became aware of the question of the *ultra vires* use of the land that was originally donated to establish the West Los Angeles campus in 1888 and discovered that this land was subject to a deed restriction that specifically limits the use of the land as a permanent home for veterans. We also discovered,” she wrote, “that Attachment B of the ‘Sharing Agreement’ between the VA and the Veterans Park Conservancy, which was provided to the Foundation in support of your grant request, misidentified the proposed site of the National Veterans Park as being on a portion of the 235.5 acres of land that was donated pursuant to an 1899 deed. In fact, the proposed site is on a portion of the 300 acres of land donated under the 1888 deed.”

The Annenberg Foundation enclosed with its letter to the Conservancy a 31-page Metabolic Studio position paper entitled “Preserving a Home for Veterans,” explaining that the 1888 deed created a charitable or public trust under which the VA has a legally imposed duty as trustee to permanently use the donated land only in a manner that directly contributes to the provision of a home for veterans and may not divert the use of the land for another or different purpose.



“Freedom” Barber Shop is the place to go for congeniality at the VA of WLA; ask for Dreamer.

### BREACH OF TRUST CONTINUED »

on grounds that were transformed into one of the most beautifully arranged and kept branch homes in the country—including gardens, landscapes, and recreational facilities that created a domestic environment and home life for veterans.

Under the law, where land is donated to a governmental entity and the deed conveying the land expresses the donor’s intention for the land to be permanently dedicated for a specified use for the benefit of an indefinite class of persons, a charitable trust is created and the governmental entity is considered to be a trustee, subject to a fiduciary duty to use the land for its intended purpose. As long as the requisite intention is expressed by the donors in the deed, it is not necessary that any particular words be used to create a charitable trust, and such a trust may be created without using the words “trust” or “trustee.” A deed conveying property to a governmental entity dedicating the property to a particular public use has also been determined to constitute a public trust, a concept similar to the charitable trust doctrine, which similarly imposes a fiduciary duty upon the governmental entity as a trustee to use

the donated property only for the purpose specified by the donor. The fiduciary duty imposed upon a governmental entity by its acceptance of a restricted donation of land subjects it to the highest standard of care and loyalty under law. A fiduciary must be faithful to the purpose of the trust and must act at all times for the sole benefit and interest of those to whom it owes the duty.

Where a deed creates a charitable or public trust for a specified purpose, the courts have uniformly held that the trustee cannot divert the use of property from the purpose to which it was dedicated. The applicable test is not whether a proposed use is consistent with the dedicated purpose, or whether it will contribute to such purpose, but whether the proposed use will directly contribute to the dedicated purpose. For example, in one case in California, *Welwood Murray Memorial Library Com. v. City Council*, land was donated to the City of Palm Springs under a deed requiring the city to “continue and forever maintain the Palm Springs Free Public Library above mentioned in and on buildings which are now or may be hereafter placed on the property hereby conveyed.” The city sought to grant an easement to a developer over the library property for purposes

benefiting an adjoining proposed commercial development. This would have included the placement of dining tables, chairs, and equipment on the library property for the use of an adjacent restaurant, providing an open area on the property for pedestrian traffic from the nearby streets to the proposed commercial development, and the razing of approximately four feet of one of the library buildings. The court stated that any proposed use of the donated library property “must *directly contribute* to the use and enjoyment of the property for library purposes: e.g., the proposed use must directly facilitate the acquisition, retention, storage and use of books, manuscripts and similar materials.” In holding that the grant of such an easement would violate the terms of the deed, the court stated that the “use proposed by the City in no way directly contributes to these purposes,” emphasizing that the proposed use by the city would effectively bar the use of the land for the construction of additional library wings or rooms.

From a policy standpoint, restrictions placed on donated land are upheld by the courts because of the interest of the public in encouraging the creation and the continuation of trusts for a chari-

Continued on page 4

—Joyce Maynard

—Phillip Moffitt



**FEDERAL HOMEMAKING CONTINUED »**

songsters” were “an unflinching source of entertainment for veterans.”<sup>13</sup>

**A house is not a home unless it contains food and fire for the mind as well as the body.**

—Benjamin Franklin

Each of the National Home branches established post funds to administer proceeds from home stores, hotels, and other sources to provide those goods and services not covered by federal appropriations. Pacific Branch post funds constructed, for example, the thousand-seat Ward Memorial Theater and its “fully equipped stage,”<sup>14</sup> paid for, among other things, bird food, “oil and carbon for a moving picture machine” (85 cents)<sup>15</sup>, and professional entertainers.

In the course of his day a veteran might browse the 5,545-volume library<sup>16</sup>, listen to the Home band’s daily performance, or take a trolley to the Home’s pavilion and beach site in Santa Monica for a spot of sea bathing.<sup>17</sup> The *Los Angeles Times* of August 29, 1913, reports that “on Monday” the veterans “enjoyed combined band concert and moving picture show. On Tuesday evening, a lecture on travels attended by stereoptican views... a band concert and moving picture exhibition...on Thursday... Col. F. W. FitzGerald will, on Friday... recite his ‘Epic on the Holy Land’ ... and on Saturday the...baseball club will contend with a nine from Orange on the Home Field.”<sup>18</sup> Uniformed

residents were admitted free of charge to all performances, but paying civilians were also welcome.

**To have something to do that has interest and meaning to him. To make something or do something for someone else not just sit and be entertained.**

—Anonymous, *Notes from A Brentwood Hospital Resident*, mid 1990s

“Everything is done to make the institution as homelike as possible and to interfere with the personal liberty of the members as little as possible. Only such discipline as is absolutely necessary to obtain order in a large body of men is enforced. Members of the Home receive pensions, when entitled to them; and as many as are able or desire it, receive employment about the Home, being paid for their services.”<sup>19</sup> Thus wrote Luther A. Ingersoll, describing the Pacific Branch in 1908.

On July 26, 1908, the *Los Angeles Times* listed the pre-retirement occupations of Home residents. “Laborers number 957, farmers 916, carpenters 462, miners 375, clerks 158. The professions are represented by 18 lawyers, 52 physicians and 16 ministers; 38 had been teachers in colleges and schools.” As long as the members of the Home were comparatively young and active, they comprised a ready-made, low-cost workforce. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1908, the Home employed 83 civilians and 433 members on extra duty, with pay, the latter, under salaries varying from eight to seventy-five dollars per month.<sup>20</sup>

**A house is a home when it shelters the body and comforts the soul.**

—Phillip Moffitt

The Barry Hospital at the Pacific Branch was built in sections between 1891 and 1909.<sup>21</sup> It was initially staffed by NHDVS doctors, male nurses, and residents.<sup>22</sup> In 1893 the Home’s annual report “speaks of...the impossibility of obtaining trained nurses...if it were possible, competent female nurses would be obtained.” It seems that the situation did indeed improve when female nurses arrived in 1900, for in 1908 a local chronicler wrote: “Here the old veterans receive every attention that can be given in the best equipped of private hospitals. A corps of nurses is employed.”<sup>23</sup>

Until 1900, when the Pacific Branch chapel was built, veterans who chose to do so worshiped in a multipurpose assembly hall. After 1901, a 7,500-square-foot bicameral building accommodated both Catholic and Protestant congregants. A double brick wall divided the two, muffling the sound of their organs. These were both purchased from his pension money by veteran resident Leonidas Hatch.<sup>24</sup>

Fellowship and fraternal support were crucial ingredients for the domestic environment of the soldiers’ home. It was not unusual for veterans who had been drawn West by the Indian Wars, by mining, or by homesteading laws that favored the Union veteran, to retire to the popular Pacific Branch to join men they had served with during the

war. Once at the Home, the veterans maintained “two Grand Army Posts... a Masonic society and various other organizations... Frequent entertainments are given... and the men entertain themselves with tales of their fighting and active days as they sit about the parks and the verandas of their barracks.”<sup>25</sup>

**Endnotes**

1. Charles Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, 1843.
2. As quoted in National Parks Service. Available at [http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/veterans\\_affairs/History.html](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/veterans_affairs/History.html). Accessed December 5, 2010.
3. Federal Writers’ Project: *Los Angeles: A Guide to the City and Its Environs*, 1939.
4. “Close To Million,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 26, 1908.
5. Patrick J. Kelly, *Creating A National Home: Building the Veterans’ Welfare State 1860-1990*, 1997, p. 94.
6. Dean W. Holt: *American Military Cemeteries*, 2009, pp 191 (viewable on Google Books).
7. “National Boulevard,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1889.
8. Robert Jan van de Hoek, *National Soldiers Home in West Los Angeles, California: Vernal Pools and Walnut Woodlands from 1890 to 2005* Available at [http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Gorge/5604/national\\_soldiers\\_home.htm](http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Gorge/5604/national_soldiers_home.htm). Accessed December 7, 2010.
9. Annual Report of the Board of Managers for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1890. Quoted in Cheryl L. Wilkinson: *Forgotten Saviors: Disabled Civil War Veterans in West Los Angeles. A History of the Pacific Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers 1888-1915*, 2008.
10. “Soldiers’ Home Pacific Branch, California,” *The Daily Outlook, Santa Monica*. Quoted in Wilkinson, *ibid*.
11. “Soldiers’ Home,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 11, 1901.
12. *ibid*.
13. “Soldiers’ Home: Birds Entertain Veterans,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 1903.
14. Luther A. Ingersoll, *Ingersoll’s Century History, Santa Monica Bay Cities*. Unknown publisher. 1908.
15. *Proceedings of the Council of Administration, Post Fund*, Pacific Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, August 1913.
16. *News Notes of California Libraries*, Volumes 1-2, California State Library, 1907, pp. 43 (viewable on Google Books).
17. On March 2, 1888, Senator John Jones and Arcadia Bandini de Baker signed three deeds: One donated 300 acres of land on which

- to build the Soldiers Home; a second gave 12-acres in the mountains to provide the Home with a reservoir site; and a third gave land in what is now Palisades Park for a veterans’ pavilion and beach site.
18. “One Thing after Another,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 29, 1913.
19. Luther A. Ingersoll: *Ingersoll’s Century History, Santa Monica Bay Cities*, Unknown publisher. 1908.
20. *Ibid*.
21. Suzanne Julin: National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers Assessment of Significance And National Historic Landmark Recommendations: [www.nps.gov/history/nhl/.../NHDVS20Draft%20Two.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/history/nhl/.../NHDVS20Draft%20Two.pdf). Accessed December 5, 2010.
22. “Soldiers Home. The Annual Report of the Governor,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 19, 1893. The Home’s Annual Report for 1893 “speaks of... the impossibility of obtaining trained nurses... if it were possible, competent female nurses would be obtained.” Female nurses did not arrive at the Home until after 1900.
23. Luther A. Ingersoll. *Ingersoll’s Century History, Santa Monica Bay Cities*. Unknown publisher. 1908.
24. “Soldier’s Home,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 20, 1900.
25. Luther A. Ingersoll: *Ingersoll’s Century History, Santa Monica Bay Cities*. Unknown publisher. 1908.

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Steve Rosemarin wraps gifts to give away over the Christmas in the Metabolic Studio installation, *No Place Like Home*.



*A house is not a home unless it contains food and fire for the mind as well as the body.*

— Benjamin Franklin

*A house is made with walls and beams / A home is made with love and dreams.*

— Author Unknown

## BREACH OF TRUST CONTINUED »

table or public purpose. If the courts were to permit public entities to accept donations of property subject to restrictions on their use, and then later jettison those restrictions on their own whim, donors would be discouraged from making such gifts in the future. Upholding such restrictions is also rooted in the maxim of equity that “he who takes the benefit must bear the burden.”

The March 5, 1888, deed leaves no doubt that John P. Jones and Arcadia B. de Baker intended for the donated land to be permanently dedicated to providing a home for disabled veterans, and that the National Home accepted the donated land subject to that very condition. The 1888 deed, then, created a charitable or public trust, under which the National Home was given the land in West Los Angeles only in the capacity as a trustee, subject to a legally imposed fiduciary duty to use the land solely for the purpose of permanently providing a home for veterans on the West Los Angeles branch home of the National Home. Consequently, as successor to the National Home, the VA now holds the donated land only in the capacity of a trustee, and is held to the highest standard of care and

loyalty to be faithful to this purpose. That means that the VA must use the donated land only in a manner that directly contributes to the provision of a home for veterans and is not permitted to divert the use of the land for another or different use, even if such other use results in rental or other income.

Rather than adhering to its fiduciary obligations, the VA has chosen to jettison the restrictions placed on the donated land on its own whim. In doing so, the VA has turned its back on its fiduciary duty owed to veterans that the acceptance of the restricted donation of land imposed. Today, the veteran experience on the deeded land has changed from the requirement imposed under the charitable trust established under the 1888 deed, as the status of a veteran on the West Los Angeles VA has shifted from that of “resident” of a home to that of “patient” in a hospital to be cured and moved on. The patient’s day is structured by their recovery program, and participation in unscheduled activities such as an art class requires a doctor’s referral. Community entertainment is restricted to major holidays and is often unavailable even then. This is a far cry from the purposes to which the donors both intended and required the land to be used.

Moreover, access of veterans to at least 110 acres of the land at the West Los Angeles VA is either forbidden or restricted by land-sharing agreements that the VA has entered into with commercial and other organizations. This use of the land is not in conformity with the requirement under the 1888 deed because the donated land is being put to a use under these land-sharing agreements that, no doubt, not only does not directly contribute to its use as a home for veterans, but is actually antithetical to such use. For example, the Wadsworth Theater, built in 1939 as an entertainment center for veterans, is under a sharing agreement with Wadsworth Theatre Management LLC/Richmark Entertainment, as is the Brentwood Theater and a “27-acre parcel of land.” These venues host Broadway shows, musical concerts, film premieres, and theatrical productions, for which veterans are charged full ticket price. Notably, the 42-page Wadsworth Sharing Agreement includes such requirements as special event signage dimensions, and it requires no cost reduction or hiring preference for veterans. The 2.53 acres subject to a sharing agreement with Westside Operating Partners Ltd/Breitbart Energy Company, LLC are now home to a number of active,

productive oil wells, and are consequently off limits to veterans. Building 224 is subject to a sharing agreement with Western State Design Inc., which affords space for the processing of laundry for Marriott hotels and other, non-Marriott properties, and thus excludes veteran use. Consistent with the breach of its fiduciary duty under the 1888 deed, in August 2007, a rent-free, twenty-year enhanced sharing agreement was approved with the Veterans Park Conservancy for the operation of a 16-acre public park, which renders the land unavailable for VA development of veteran-serving uses, such as providing a home for homeless veterans.

These land use issues involving the West Los Angeles VA will move forward into time well beyond the present, and, with utter certainty, the veterans of this country, including those about to return home from war and the 20,000 veterans living on the streets of Los Angeles, are entitled to have these issues addressed by the VA. Consistent with the 1888 deed and the trust that it created, this should start with a redefinition of this property by the VA as a first step back to include that which it has been and should be once again: *a home for veterans.*

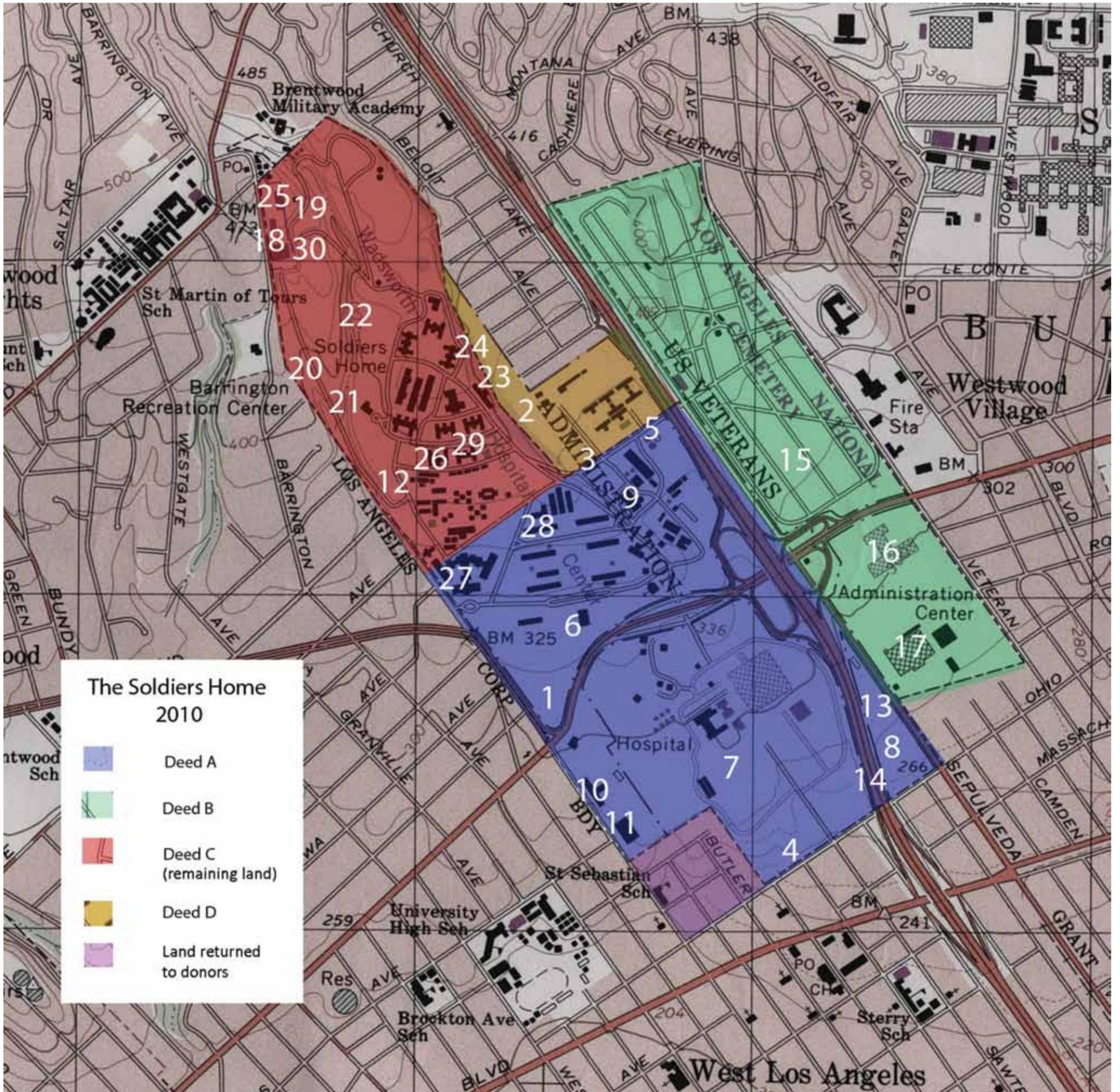
## XIN CAO, NOTES FROM ABROAD

**KERRY TAYLOR AND CHELSEA GOKCAY, FORMER MANAGER OF THE STRAWBERRY GAZETTE**

In Southeast Asia, people always ask where you are from (here it is the first step toward friendship with a local). Upon hearing that we are Americans, people graced us with cheery welcomes and treated us with kindness. Yet evidence of the destruction caused by the U.S. government during the Vietnam War (they call it the American War) is present still today on both living beings suffering from the effects of Agent Orange and on the land itself (bombed historical sites, military waste, and a demilitarized zone). It is shocking to know and actually see that my country, filled with people like me, killed 3,000,000 Vietnamese and ruined the lives of thousands more being born today with birth defects—and yet these people didn’t hate me. They had every right to, but they chose not to. They truly are people not dwelling on the past but looking openly toward the future.



Michael Venezuela regularly serendes as residents of Cal Vets open there home to visitors, 2–4 pm every Sunday.



# WEST LA VA PROPERTY TABLE

JANUARY 2011

## DEED A

1888, 300 acres: John P. Jones and Arcadia Bandini de Baker donated 300 acres of their Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica for the Soldiers Home. This deed states: "...to have and to hold the said land and promises, with appurtenances, unto the [National Home] to be thereon so located, established, constructed and permanently maintained."

## DEED B

1888, 300 acres: John Wolfskill donated 300 acres of the Rancho San Jose de Buenos Ayres for the Soldiers Home. The land is now used for the

Los Angeles National Cemetery, the West Los Angeles Federal Building, and a City of Los Angeles park. (We are informed that the original donation had been for 300 acres restricted in a similar manner to Deed A plus a promise of \$100,000. When economic reversals precluded the cash gift, Wolfskill's syndicate transferred the land with no restrictions in lieu of the original promise of land plus cash.)

## DEED C

1899, 235.5 acres: Fulfilling an NHDVS request to enlarge the facility, Santa Monica Land & Water Co. (formed in 1896 by John P. Jones &

Arcadia Bandini de Baker) donated 235.5 acres to the Soldiers Home, extending its northern reach. At about this time, 20 acres at the southwest corner of the original gift (Deed A) was returned to Santa Monica Land & Water Co. The northernmost portion of this Deed C land (perhaps a third of it) was later transferred from the National Home, perhaps in return for the land acquired by Deed D.

## DEED D

1921, 35.67 acres: Roy Jones (son of John P. Jones) and his wife Pauline transferred this land to the National Home. The land is now the UCLA

Jackie Robinson Stadium, Veterans Garden, and Getty Museum parking.

## A NOTE ABOUT USE RESTRICTIONS

Deed A clearly states restrictions on the uses to which its land can be put. While Deeds B, C, and D do not contain such language, they should be considered subject to the same restrictions as Deed A because the Soldiers Home, to which the land was donated, was established pursuant to a Congressional Act solely to "locate, establish, construct and permanently maintain" a branch home of the National Home.

In 2005 the VA described the WLA VA as occupying "approximately 390+/- acres"<sup>1</sup>. In 2010, while 280 of these acres remain subject to the use restriction of Deed A, at least 110 of them are being used for such other, non-veteran oriented purposes as: oil mining, rental car storage, University and Little League sports fields, a private athletic center, and a theater where tickets for the current show cost \$55 - \$290.

The table on the next two page represents an effort to ascertain the uses to which the original Soldiers Home land is currently being put.

**WEST LA VA PROPERTY TABLE**  
**JANUARY 2011**

Name	Map	Deed	Location	Acres	Land Holder/ User	Agreement/ Transfer Dates	Use/s	Additional Notes
Veterans Park Conservancy	1	A	Wilshire and San Vicente Boulevards	16 <sup>2</sup>	Veterans Park Conservancy, non-profit corporation	20-year agreement w. 10 yr. option for extension signed: 8.24.07 <sup>3</sup>	Sept. 2007: "Veterans Park Conservancy is being awarded rent-free use and occupancy of the site for park purposes, in exchange for its pledge to make a substantial investment of private funds." <sup>4</sup>	11.22.10: No public use occurring as new entrance gate is locked <sup>5</sup> . <b>EXHIBIT 11</b>
Jackie Robinson Stadium	2	D		9.92 <sup>6</sup> (or 7.35 <sup>7</sup> )	University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	Opened in 1981 <sup>8</sup> Sharing Agreement expires April 2011 <sup>9</sup>	"UCLA's home baseball field" <sup>10</sup>	"...opened its 28th season...this spring after having undergone significant renovations the past two years... provides one of the most comfortable college baseball settings in the West." <sup>11</sup>  Veterans report that they are admitted free for UCLA games but pay for National College Athletic Association playoffs <sup>12</sup> .
Getty Museum Parking + Shuttle	3	D	Constitution Ave. parking lots. (On Sepulveda one block north of Wilshire Blvd)	Unknown	Unknown	Not before Dec 1997 when the Getty opened (see Additional Notes)	Free parking + shuttle. (An alternative to \$15 Getty parking + tram).	When the Getty opened in Dec 1997 the VA rented "separate sections of the same parking lot" to two rival shuttle companies. The VA said "'We knew about the problem with the Getty parking...We felt this way we could help the community and make some revenue for ourselves." <sup>13</sup> "Avoid the...parking cost: take the free shuttle, no reservations required, available from the nearby lot on Sepulveda Blvd. + Constitution Ave." <sup>14</sup>
American Red Cross Facility	4	A	11355 Ohio Ave. "SW corner of VA... btw. Ohio Ave. + Dowlen Dr." <sup>15</sup>	14.65 <sup>16</sup>	American Red Cross	4.15.1989 to 4.15.2039 <sup>17</sup>	Red Cross "district/Chapter headquarters" <sup>18</sup>	
Sawtelle Area Drill Site	5	A	"south of Constitution Avenue" <sup>19</sup>	2.53 <sup>20</sup>	Westside Operating Partners Ltd/ Breitburn Energy Company, LLC <sup>21</sup>	1.1.2003 to 1.1.2013 <sup>22</sup>	"a number of active + inactive oil wells on site." <sup>23</sup> Produces "around 185,000 barrels...12 to 14 wells are active on site, with a few idle." <sup>24</sup>	"Breitburn...local company... active...since 1988...founded by two Stanford petroleum engineering students who bought up ...existing leases...and redeveloped them using computer oil field modeling." <sup>25</sup> "The Department of Interior controls the mineral rights agreement." <sup>26</sup>
Wadsworth Theater	6	A	Bldg. 226	"on a 27-acre parcel of land" <sup>27</sup>	Wadsworth Theatre Management LLC/ Richmark Entertainment: Richard Willis + Martin Markinson <sup>28</sup>	Jan 2002 to Dec 2021 <sup>29</sup> Or: "the agreement expires December 2025" <sup>30</sup>	Approximately 250 days of use per year for Broadway shows, concerts, movie premieres, dance, symphony + symposia <sup>31</sup>  Westside Shepherd of the Hills church rents the theater for a weekly Christian Sunday service <sup>32</sup> .	Built 1939. Richmark Renovations '99-02.  Notably, the 42-page Wadsworth Sharing Agreement includes such requirements as special event signage dimensions, it requires no cost reduction or hiring preference for veterans.  Researchers did locate one instance when free tickets were distributed among VA patients, in December 2009 for a performance of the Nutcracker.  A veteran patient has reported receiving 50% discount on tickets purchased at the box office on the night of a performance <sup>33</sup> .  Tickets for the Wadsworth's December 2010 Nutcracker performance cost \$55-\$290 <sup>34</sup>  Additionally: "Wadsworth Theatre Management owns the exclusive right to book and manage all Movie Premieres, Premiere Parties, Benefits, Fundraisers + all other events on the grounds of the West LA DVA." <sup>35</sup> <b>EXHIBIT 18</b>
Rental Car/ Charter Bus storage	7	A	Parking lot S.W. of Building 500	Approx. 10	Enterprise Cars + Tumbleweed Charter buses	Unknown		
"Bad News Bears" Little League Baseball Field	8	A	NW corner Sepulveda Blvd. + Ohio Ave.	7.49	City of Los Angeles Dept. of Recreation and Parks	1978 <sup>36</sup> (but used as field since at least 1958.)	West Los Angeles Little League Baseball field	"...here in 1958...Burt Lancaster signed up his son Billy for Little League...and Bill Lancaster would later draw from those experiences for the screenplay that inspired the original movie." <sup>37</sup>
Laundry Facility	9	A	Bldg. 224	29,257 sq.ft. 3 <sup>8</sup>	Western State Design Inc. <sup>39</sup>	March 2000 to March 2010 w. five year option 4 <sup>9</sup>		Processing laundry for Marriott hotels and other, non-Marriott, properties. <b>EXHIBIT 17</b>
U.S. Army Reserve	10	A	Federal Ave. south of Wilshire Blvd	104 <sup>1</sup>		"In 1955, the VA transferred the ...parcel to the Air Force Reserve, which, in 1975, transferred it to the Army Reserve." <sup>42</sup>	Armory/Training for Army Reserve, Air Force Reserve.	"This letter is to urgently request that you reconsider your decision to transfer ownership of the Army Reserve Property on Sepulveda and Wilshire Boulevards to a private developer." <sup>43</sup> "The developer was required to build three Army Reserve centers worth about \$100 million, and in return receive the right to develop the Wilshire Boulevard parcel." <sup>44</sup> <b>EXHIBIT 10</b>
California National Guard	11	A	1300 Federal Ave. LA, CA 90025	3.8545		1955		
Veterans Home of California	12	C	11500 Nimitz Ave., LA, CA 90049	1246 or 14 <sup>47</sup>	State of California Veterans Affairs		CA State Veterans Home	"...broke ground...in July 2007" <sup>48</sup> <b>EXHIBIT 23</b>
Westwood Transitional Village and Bessie Preger-son Childcare Center	13	A	1341-1401 Sepulveda Blvd.	2.1349	Salvation Army	"...operated...on the property since 1989, and was conveyed the property for homeless use in 19965 <sup>9</sup>	Transitional housing, where homeless families may stay for up to two years.	"...provides 41 apartments, supportive services...and a child care center...fees collected from day care program... support other programs." <sup>51</sup> "Approximately 150 individuals...with families of veterans making up forty percent of the residential population." <sup>52</sup>
San Diego Freeway (I- 405)	14	A + D		Unknown	State of California	Unknown	Public highway	Eminent Domain or threat thereof

Name	Map	Deed	Location	Acres	Land Holder/ User	Agreement/ Transfer Dates	Use/s	Additional Notes
Los Angeles National Cemetery	15	B	950 South Sepulveda Blvd., LA, CA 90049	114.5 <sup>53</sup>	US Dept. of Veteran Affairs, Cemetery Division	See initial notes on Deed B	Cemetery	"...closed to new interments" except for "subsequent interments for veterans or eligible family members in an existing gravesite." <sup>54</sup>
Westwood Federal Building	16	B	11000 Wilshire Blvd., LA, CA 90024	28 <sup>55</sup>	Federal Govt. General Services Administration	Transferred to U.S. General Services Administration 1960s	Federal offices, mostly FBI	Built in late '60s on land "leased by the VA for a golfing range" <sup>56</sup> .
Westwood Park, inc. Westwood Tennis Center, + Westwood Community Center	17	B	South of Federal Bldg., between Sepulveda Blvd. + Veteran Ave.	27 <sup>57</sup>	City of Los Angeles Dept. of Recreation and Parks	Transferred 1970s	Public Park	"In 1970's, the Federal Lands to Parks Program transferred 27 acres ...from VA to...City of LA... community recreation facility with...pool, gymnasium, jogging trail, soccer field, picnic facilities, classrooms, etc." <sup>58</sup> Rec. charges: ball court: \$11-13 hr, 20 yoga classes: \$100 <sup>59</sup>  Plaque on site: "This land was acquired from the United States Federal Government for use by the general public".
Brentwood Village Post Office	18	C	200 South Barrington Ave.	3.08 <sup>60</sup>	"Status of... ownership... unknown" <sup>61</sup>	Unknown	Public post office	
Brentwood School athletic complex	19	C	North end of VA property	"approx 20 acres" <sup>62</sup>	Brentwood School	10-yr contract w. 10-yr option, signed Aug 1999 <sup>63</sup>	Athletic field, gym, etc.	<b>501(c)(3)</b> private K-12 coed day school. Area subject to scrutiny re. the possibility of buried "low level bio-medical nuclear waste" <sup>64</sup> <b>EXHIBIT 16</b>
Barrington Recreation Center, parking lot + Dog Park	20	C	333 S. Barrington Ave., LA, CA 90049	2001: <b>9.17</b> <sup>65</sup> 2003: <b>1.5</b> added for dog park, w. parking for 40 cars <sup>66</sup>	City of Los Angeles Dept. of Recreation and Parks	See 'Acres'	Public park and off-leash dog park "complete w. pet waste cans, benches and drinking fountains for pet and owner alike." <sup>67</sup>	
Brentwood Theater	21	C	Bldg. 211	11,490 sq ft <sup>68</sup>	Richmark Entertainment: (Richard Willis + Martin Markinson)		Currently hosts: plays, musicals, "many pre-Broadway", and movie screenings. <sup>69</sup>  Occasionally hosts Christian Church for Sunday morning service. <sup>70</sup>	Built in 1942 as an "entertainment center for veterans" and a disaster shelter. Over time, fell into disrepair, "almost never utilized as a theater in more than 40 years". Richmark began renovation in 2003. <sup>71</sup>  A veteran patient reports receiving 50% off tickets purchased at box office <sup>72</sup> .  <b>NOTE:</b> Ricardo Bandini Johnson reports (11.24.10) Richmark lost lease "approx. 3-weeks ago", having sued federal government for lost revenues because of restrictions on alcohol sales. <b>EXHIBIT 18</b>
MacArthur Field	22	C	Near Bldg. 205	Unknown	Westwood Breakers Soccer Club	Unknown	Practice for all-girls soccer club "renovated...July '10...now the best natural grass soccer field on the Westside ...[it] allows ... the same practice days, times + location for the entire year which makes it easy for our families to organize their schedules." <sup>73</sup>	The area was used to dump biomedical nuclear and chemical waste from 1948 to 1968 by the VA and nearby UCLA. <sup>74</sup> <b>EXHIBIT 21</b>
Farmers Market	23	D		Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Weekly market open to public	
Veterans Garden	24	D		6.74 <sup>75</sup> or 15 <sup>76</sup>	Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden (RSABG)	Initiated 2010, End date unknown	RSABG "Collaborates w. GLAHS to train veterans on the propagation, care and maintenance of CA native plants... offers nursery sales to the public and cut flowers" <sup>77</sup>	Since 1989 this has been part of a work therapy program "to assist veterans making the transition back to civilian employment." Reopened 10.25.10 under sharing agreement with RSABG. <sup>78</sup>
Brentwood Village Parking Lot (aka Veterans Parking Lot)	25	C	Barrington Place	1.39 <sup>79</sup>	Westside Services	20 yr agreement expires 2020 <sup>80</sup>	On-site signage: "2-hr free parking...merchant validation in the V.A. Parking Lot...Courtesy of Brentwood Village Chamber of Commerce and Dept. of Veterans Affairs. Parking Fees Help Assist Programs That Benefit U.S. veterans. Thank you for your support."	2001: "The public has used the 230-space parking lot on Barrington Place next to the Brentwood Post Office for three decades, with the VA receiving parking fees-which currently range from 50 cents per half-hour to \$40 for a monthly employee pass. Shopkeepers pay to validate customers' parking tickets. In announcing the fee increase, the VA disclosed it would be hiring a professional parking lot operator to replace VA job-training program workers who now run the lot." <sup>81</sup>
New Directions North	26	C	Bldg. 257, first floor	47675 sq ft <sup>82</sup>	New Directions	5-yr. agreement w. 5-yr option... expires Feb. 2012 <sup>83</sup>	45-bed treatment prog. for patients w. severe mental illness + substance abuse." <sup>84</sup>	
New Directions	27	C	Bldg. 116	60309 sq ft <sup>85</sup>	New Directions	8.29.1995 to 8.31.2045 <sup>86</sup>	"drug and alcohol treatment program" provides "food, shelter, support + rehabilitation" for homeless veterans with substance abuse + mental health issues. <sup>87</sup>	<b>EXHIBIT 13</b> <b>EXHIBIT 15</b>
The Haven: (Alpha Cntr, Naomi Hse., Victory Pl., + Snr. Housing)	28	A	Bldg. 212	62,560 sq ft <sup>88</sup>	Salvation Army of Southern California	7.20.2004 to 7.20.2014, w. 10-yr option to 2024 <sup>89</sup>	"housing + support services in addition to the medical care offered by the VAHC" <sup>90</sup>	
Exodus Lodge	29	C	207	47,015 sq ft <sup>91</sup>	Salvation Army of Southern California	"expires April 2015 <sup>92</sup>		
Various Buildings			Various		UCLA		UCLA research facilities	
Various Buildings			Various interior and exterior locations		Various media production companies		Filming locations for movie and television productions	Twenty one Sharing Agreements between the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System and, such companies as MTV, 20th Century Fox Television, and Campus Ladies Productions are in the public domain, dated 2003-07 <sup>93</sup>
Brentwood Hospital Gardens AKA The Japanese Garden	30	C		3.04 <sup>94</sup>			"aim... is to provide patients with a tranquil environment, reduce... need for psychiatric hospitalization + build vocational training skills that can be applicable to future employment." <sup>95</sup>  The Garden has been locked to veteran use since at least 2005 <sup>96</sup> but simultaneously available to rent for filming. <sup>97</sup>	From a metal plaque in the garden: "Brentwood Hospital Gardens, designed and sponsored by Landscaping Society of Southern California, waterfall and pools provided by members of Landscaping Society of Southern California, California Garden Clubs, inc., American Begonia Society and National Fuschia Society, Navy Mothers' Clubs of America 206-396-295, Grand [unreadable] Club of California, Federation of Women Telephone Workers of Southern California and many other individuals. September 1958." <b>(Photograph: EXHIBIT 20)</b>



No Place Like Home, California Veterans Home, December 2010 – 2011, Lauren Bon and The Metabolic Studio





Home sweet home. This is the place to find happiness. If one doesn't find it here, one doesn't find it anywhere.

—M. K. Soni

A home without books is a body without soul.

—Marcus Tullius Cicero

## Notes from A Resident

My schizophrenic self is a lot different from my old self before everything made sense events

were orderly there was no need to question what was real and what is fantasy after I became schizo

phrenic all of this had become severely shaken on my good days I realize this and can appreciate This

During my bad days I can only wonder if what I

see and hear is true it is as though my mind is in a state of anarchy it seems as if I'm looking but I

Cannot see hearing but not knowing what I'm listening for a whole litany of unrelated thoughts go thru

my mind some kind of narration for an audience I don't know about oftentimes I can only tell time as

the difference of night and day calendars watches as something which is merely symbolic sometimes I feel like

I am an observer taking notice of things which are irrelevant to most people I know that discipline and motivation are very particularly when I am experiencing symptoms sticking to a set schedule is particularly

helpful working providing a service for others can distract me from my problems make me feel more productive

and keep me in contact with the real world and other people

services offered by a residential care home

It is designed to care for those who do not wish or are unable to live alone but who do need a place to live in a homelike atmosphere

to do as much as he can by himself even though he may be slow or handicapped

to be cared for when he is unable to manage without help

To have something to do that has interest and meaning to him

to make something or do something

for someone else not just sit and be entertained

to keep in touch with relatives and friends with life outside with church lodges and clubs to find new interests especially if old ones are lost

to be part of a family atmosphere 24 hour supervision regular meals

assistance with dressing bathing shaving personal hygiene and

grooming care of clothing including Laundry service

Help with personal shopping

Provision for social religious and recreational activities

“...what was going on here on a daily basis. I mean, everyday, it was some other little wonderful something that was happening, whether it was the gingerbread, or whether it was the tea, or the photograph you guys did, or the music, There was always wonderful smells coming from the lobby and happy faces and happy people. The veterans coming from all over the campus. I think they were coming from off campus and it was a wonderland. Santa Claus could not have built a better Santa's workshop.”

— Jeanne Bonfilio, CalVets Public Information Officer, on Metabolic Studio's *No Place Like Home* installation during the Christmas holidays at the State Home.

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If you want a golden rule that will fit everything, this is it: Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful.

—William Morris

A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business, and is the countersign of friendship.

—Author Unknown, *The Value of a Smile*



Hundreds of gifts were wrapped and given away over the holidays at the VA of WLA as part of The Metabolic Studio's Metabolic Gift program.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

There is no question in my mind that the thirteen empty buildings located on well-irrigated lawns on the north side of the campus of the Veteran Affairs of West Los Angeles (VA of WLA) will one day, in the not too distant future, once again be a home for veterans. It is only a matter of time before the veterans coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan have the need of time and space to mend. And, as the post-war experiences of the Vietnam-era veterans show, that need will only become more acute over time.

The Metabolic Studio has been on-site on the campus of the VA of WLA since July 2009. We have had the privilege of working with veterans and clinicians here. I have never before worked with such committed and able people. The focus of the work has been the *Strawberry Flag*: an artwork made of salvaged strawberries and reclaimed water that was fully powered off the VA grid. The daily practice associated with tending to living things helped to de-alienate one of the well-irrigated but under-purposed quads. Not one but two Memorandum of Understanding Agreements issued by the executive leadership of the VA of WLA under its director Donna Beiter authorized us to do this work.

This position paper is meant to open up a discussion on how we can better serve the numbers of people who are the human cost of war. Currently, the hospital at the VA of WLA is responding to the ever-growing need of the large community of veterans in this county of 250,000 veterans. But it is not enough. The total number of beds at the VA of WLA itself, inclusive of all residential treatment programs, is fewer than 1,400—this in a county where there are 20,000 homeless veterans on the streets each night.

I believe that we were initially given our leave to create and sustain our *Strawberry Flag* project as part of

the Planetree Initiative. Planetree puts holistic, patient-centered care on hospital properties. Because the Metabolic Studio operates as a site-based probe of the Annenberg Foundation, *Strawberry Flag* came fully funded, insured, and staffed. Furthermore, the Annenberg Foundation, where I serve as a director, has been in the forefront of American communications and civics, with a proven commitment to veterans, for more than half a century. Our main offices are in Los Angeles. I believe this offered the VA of WLA a certain amount of confidence in engaging with us.

The large-scale *Strawberry Flag* was a deployable experimental aquaponic strawberry farm operated by a team of veterans who worked for the Metabolic Studio as part of the VA of WLA's Compensated Work Therapy program (CWT). Made of salvaged and reclaimed strawberries, and tended to by a team of CWT veterans, the sculpture grew not only strawberries but also a culture around itself. A veterans' print studio was created, an active kitchen was established that among other things served tea daily, and the *Strawberry Gazette* newsletter emerged. These innovations were the result of the optimism created by the artwork and the ingenuity of the veterans and the clinicians who saw opportunity there. Why then has all this been put to an abrupt end by the leadership of the VA of WLA?

The answer is in the hornet's nest of issues that buzz around land use here. This property is valuable. And the private residences surrounding the VA of WLA are very valuable. The growing problem of veteran homelessness, plus the public perception of veterans as unstable, has made them "undesirables" on the very property that is held in trust for their very benefit. This position paper seeks to readdress this. It is a position that warrants and needs defending. Wading through historical

deeds, enabling legislation, historical accounts, contracts, and other relevant documents and materials is cumbersome and labor-intensive work. The Metabolic Studio believes it is worth it. Clearly, we ought not fight wars if we cannot support the people who risk their lives to fight. The original deed of 1888, which gave this land for veteran use, secures it in trust for these people in perpetuity. The VA is the contemporary custodian of that trust.

The Metabolic Studio works at the intersection of art practice and philanthropy. Since 2005, I have focused on physical and social brownfields—places incapable of supporting life. The sites where I have worked have given me a unique opportunity to engage with bureaucracies that hold land in trust for the people of California. So as to better assist them in making progress in the often-daunting tasks associated with remediating these brownfields, I have learned to wade through the complexities of working with such bureaucracies as the California State Park System (*Not a Cornfield*, 2005–2006), the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (*Silver and Water*, 2006–ongoing), and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (*Strawberry Flag*, 2009–2010).

Among the brownfields I have worked on, the property at the VA of WLA is something of a paradox. It is beautiful, an earthly paradise. It has been a healing place for a millennium—known by the Tongva as a place of three streams with curative properties. It will be again. President Obama has made a commitment to end homelessness for veterans in his first term. That promise is still possible. It involves a redefinition of this property as a first step back to include that which it has been and will be once again: *a home for recuperating soldiers*.

Lauren Bon  
The Metabolic Studio

## RESIDENTS SETTLING IN AT STATE VETERANS HOME

BY TERENCE LYONS

Residents began moving in at the Veterans Home of California - West Los Angeles last October, and there were twenty-one vets calling the building home as of the second week of January 2011, with more expected each week, said Louis Koff, administrator of the new Home.

For the holidays in December, the building lobby was made over by Lauren Bon and the Metabolic Studio into a very Christmasy refuge with a gift-wrapping workshop, hot tea served with ginger cookies, carols on the record player, and a display of art prints that had been made by veterans in the Strawberry Flag print studio in 2009 and 2010.

The lobby installation included the construction and decoration of a whimsical gingerbread model of the Home, a piano for impromptu sing-alongs, a faux fireplace that *looked* very warm, and a large aerial photograph of the entire VA property with pins marking the locations to which gifts had been delivered from the workshop. Residents of the new Home and vets from throughout the VA grounds came to wrap and receive gifts, hang out and share in the holiday

Compass Group, which calls itself "the nation's only food service company dedicated exclusively to providing food, nutrition, and dining services to healthcare and senior living communities."

Home administrator Koff says that while the switch from the VA to Morrison was occasioned by the administrative inconsistencies in state and federal billing systems, the change will benefit CalVets through a forty percent cost savings and greater menu flexibility. The Morrison arrangement will be reevaluated as time goes by and the resident population increases.

Ultimately, the Home will provide three levels of care. An 84-bed Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (age 62, or younger if disabled) is now in operation and is continuing to accept residents. Later this year or next, a 252-bed Skilled Nursing Facility and a 60-bed Alzheimer's/dementia, or "memory care," unit will open.

In the meantime, the resident veterans are settling in, the administration is ironing out its systems, and the building lobby has returned to normal from its Christmas workshop mode. CalVets

***"We're just as happy here as employees as the residents are living here. It is a home-like environment, it's not an institution, and we're still new here. This is all new to us too."***

cheer, and join in Strawberry Sunday programs of music, poetry, and stories that were held in the lobby during the holidays.

The 396-bed facility, dedicated with all appropriate pageantry in June of last year, is operated by the State of California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVets) on 13.38 acres of VA campus land that was deeded to the State of California for that purpose in 2006. The plan was for the VA to provide the veteran residents with medical care, medical supplies, laundry and food services, and prescription medications.

At least in the case of food services, those plans have been amended as residents have begun arriving and actual operation of the Home gets underway. Because of administrative mismatch between state and federal systems (state CalVets policy is to pay only after goods and services are received, while federal VA policy is to provide goods and services only upon receipt of payment), the new Home will no longer be serving VA food to its residents. Food services have been contracted to Morrison Management Specialists, a member of the

Public Information Officer Jeanne Bonfilio, speaking at a Strawberry Sunday in the lobby, described that workshop mode: "Every day, it was some other little wonderful something that was happening, whether it was the gingerbread, or whether it was the tea, or the photograph you guys did, or the music. There were always the wonderful smells coming from the lobby and happy faces and happy people. The veterans coming from all over the campus. I think they were coming from off campus and it was a wonderland. Santa Claus could not have built a better Santa's workshop."

CalVets Supervising Rehabilitation Therapist Patrick Keleher added that he "just thought it was really a fantastic thing to have here." Bonfilio summed up, "We're just as happy here as employees as the residents are living here. It is a home-like environment, it's not an institution, and we're still new here. This is all new to us too."



The more one does and sees and feels, the more one is able to do, and the more genuine may be one's appreciation of fundamental things like home, and love, and understanding companionship.

—Amelia Earhart

There's no place like home.

—Dorothy (Judy Garland)

## ARCADIA BANDINI, SANTA MONICA SHAPER

BY SUSAN CLOKE

Originally published in the *Santa Monica Mirror* on November 25, 2010

As noted in this article, Arcadia Bandini was one of the original donors of the West Los Angeles Veterans Administration (VA) land to the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.

I wish I could time travel, sit with Arcadia Bandini on the porch of her home on Ocean Avenue, and talk about her life. I would tell her that her gifts to the city have given shape and meaning to Santa Monica.

I can only study the accumulated facts and imagine what it might have been like to be the daughter of a prominent rancho family in Alta California, to witness the change to statehood, and to see the transformation of California.

Arcadia's aesthetic and social vision set a standard for Santa Monica. Palisades Park, originally named Linda Vista, was her vision, and she donated the land from Colorado

to Montana avenues for the park. Then, the company she co-owned with Nevada U.S. Senator John Percival Jones donated the land from Montana Avenue to the northern end of the city to complete the park.

Arcadia was born in 1827, the daughter of Juan Bandini and Dolores Estudillo, a prominent and powerful family who owned ranchos in San Diego. In a decision not unusual for their time and the standing of their family, Arcadia was married, at age 14, to a business acquaintance of her father's, Abel Stearns.

Stearns, born in Massachusetts in 1799, had come to Alta California to make his fortune. He became a Mexican citizen, which required converting to Catholicism and speaking Spanish. As a Mexican citizen he could then hope to achieve both social and political standing.

Dona Arcadia Bandini de Stearns and Don Abel Stearns lived in "El Palacio" on the corner of Main and Arcadia streets, near Olvera Street in Los Angeles. The 1860 census lists

their household as having nineteen members living in the more-than-20,000-square-foot residence—Abel Stearns, Arcadia Bandini, Refugio Bandini, Arcadia's sisters, nieces, nephews, distinguished guests, secretaries, servants, painters, and laborers.

According to Arcadia's grandnephew, Ricardo Bandini Johnson, "Arcadia was known to be generous and likeable and very close to her family. Stearns was often away—both for business and for health reasons—and did not pay a lot of attention to Arcadia."

Stearns died in 1871 at the Grand Hotel in San Francisco. Arcadia continued running the businesses. Four years after the death of Stearns on April 25, 1875, she married Colonel Robert Symington Baker, a wealthy sheep rancher and a prominent landowner.

That same year, Baker started construction on the namesake Baker Block. Baker wanted a grand home and replaced El Palacio with a three-story, 64,428-square-foot building. The first two floors were rented for commercial businesses and offices, and the top floor was the residence.

An ornate building, it expressed the aesthetics of the "Gilded Age"



Arcadia owned Rancho San Vicente, bought from the Sepulveda family for \$55,000. The rancho included all of Santa Monica, and its borders were Pico, Sepulveda, Topanga, and the Pacific Ocean.

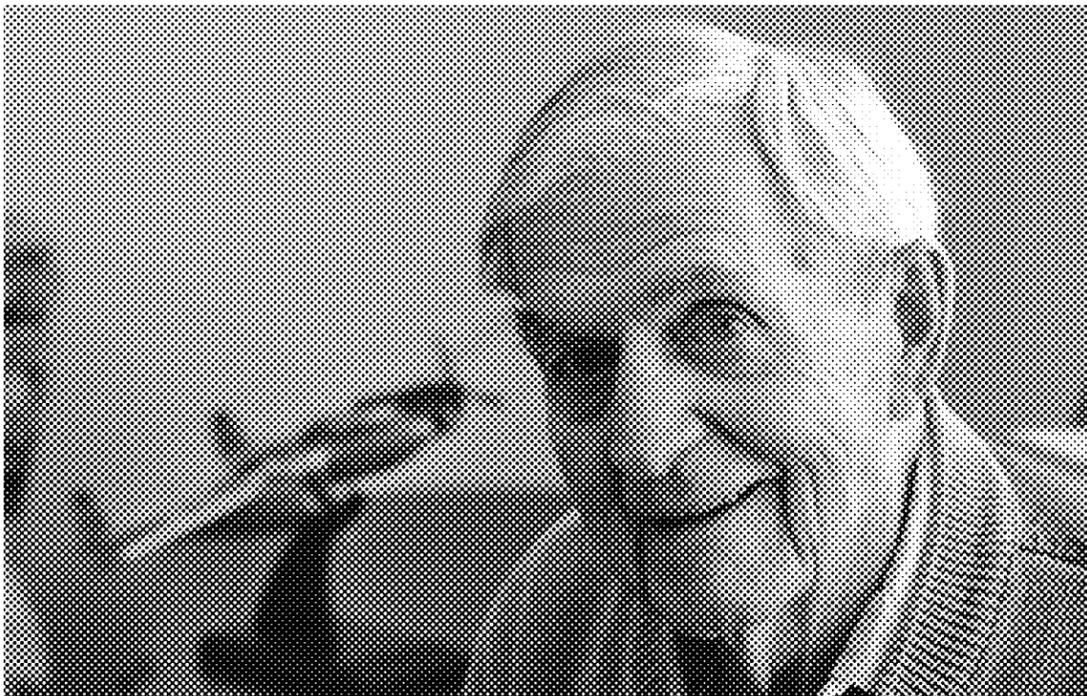
in which they lived. The large, land-grant families—Sepulveda, Reyes, Lugo, Machado, Wolfskill (who donated the land for the VA cemetery), Carrillo, Pico, Figueroa, Kinney, and Rindge—were frequent guests at their famous dances and parties.

Stearns and Baker both spoke excellent Spanish as well as English. Arcadia spoke only Spanish; at least she spoke only Spanish in public. It's easy to imagine that she understood a great deal and probably could speak at least some English. It is also easy to imagine that it was to her ad-

vantage in business and in society to speak only Spanish.

Baker owned Rancho San Vicente, bought from the Sepulveda family for \$55,000. The rancho included all of Santa Monica, and its borders were Pico, Sepulveda, Topanga, and the Pacific Ocean. Two years later Baker sold a portion of the rancho to Senator Jones for \$162,500. Jones described Rancho San Vicente as the "most beautiful place I have ever seen."

Continued on page 14



Fred Hargesheimer pose with a model of a P-38, the aircraft he was flying when he was shot down. He raised money to build schools, a clinic and a library on New Britain, Papua New Guinea, to thank the islanders for rescuing him. (Rich Pedroncelli / Associated Press / March 2, 2008)

Fred Hargesheimer, 1916–2010

## WWII PILOT GAVE BACK TO HIS RESCUERS

Flier was saved by native people on a remote Pacific island and later raised money so they could build a school, clinic, and library.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. veterans of World War II are dying at the rate of more than 1,000 a day, according to a Department of Veterans Affairs estimate in 2008. The Associated Press quoted

Martin Morgan, historian for the World War II Museum in New Orleans as "predicting they will all be gone by 2020." Just before Christmas, one of those veterans with a remarkable story passed on — a tribute to what Tom Brokaw called The Greatest Generation. — Editor

Fred Hargesheimer, a World War II Army pilot whose rescue by Pacific islanders led to a life of giving back as a builder of schools and teacher of children, died December 23, 2010 in Lincoln, Nebraska, after a period of declining health, his family said. He was 94.

On June 5, 1943, Hargesheimer, a

P-38 pilot with the 8th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron, was shot down by a Japanese fighter while on a mission over the Japanese-held island of New Britain in the southwest Pacific. He parachuted into the jungle, where he barely survived for 31 days until he was found by local hunters.

They took him to their coastal village and for seven months hid him from Japanese patrols, fed him, and nursed him back to health from two illnesses. In February 1944, with the help of Australian commandos working behind Japanese lines, he was picked up by a U.S. submarine off a New Britain beach.

Returning to the U.S. after the war, Hargesheimer, a native of Rochester, Minnesota, got married and began a sales career with a Minnesota forerunner of computer maker Sperry Rand, his lifelong employer. But he said he couldn't forget the Nakanai people, whom he considered his saviors.

The more he thought about it, he later said, "the more I realized what a debt I had to try to repay."

After revisiting the village of Ea Ea in 1960, he came home, raised \$15,000 over three years, "most of it \$5 and \$10 gifts," and then returned with his 17-year-old son Richard in 1963 to contract for the building of the villagers' first school.

In the decades to come, Hargesheimer's U.S. fundraising and determination built a clinic, another school, and libraries in Ea Ea, renamed Nantabu, and surrounding villages.

In 1970, their three children grown, Hargesheimer and his late wife, Dorothy, moved to New Britain, today an out-island of the nation of Papua New Guinea, and taught the village children for four years. The Nantabu school's experimental plot of oil palm even helped create a local economy, a large plantation with jobs for impoverished villagers.

On his last visit, in 2006, Hargesheimer was helicoptered into the jungle and carried in a chair

by Nakanai men to view the newly found wreckage of his World War II plane. Six years earlier, on another visit, he was proclaimed "Sura Auru," "Chief Warrior" of the Nakanai.

"The people were very happy. They'll always remember what Mr. Fred Hargesheimer has done for our people," said Ismael Saua, 69, a former teacher at the Nantabu school.

"These people were responsible for saving my life," Hargesheimer told the Associated Press in a 2008 interview. "How could I ever repay it?"

Hargesheimer is survived by his sons Richard, of Lincoln, and Eric, of White Bear Lake, Minn.; a daughter, Carol, of Woodbury, Minn.; as well as a sister, eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

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Home is a place not only of strong affections, but of entire unreserve; it is life's undress rehearsal, its back-room, its dressing room.

—Harriet Beecher Stowe

Where we love is home, home that our feet may leave, but not our hearts.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., *Homesick in Heaven*



The many amenities that provided evidence of home at the historic Veterans Home included a church, two theatres, a park, a pool, and daily teas at three pm. This church has fallen into disrepair but is a landmark for many Los Angeles citizens who pass it regularly on Wilshire Blvd, the oldest boulevard in the city.

## Apolitical Greens: Korean War Veteran Bobby Shelton Makes Strawberry Flag's Gardens Grow Part 2 of 2

BY LAURA SANDERSON HEALY

"It's so grown up you can't see anything. Hmmph," Bobby snorted, shaking his head. "I had a half-acre garden here growing beans and a quarter-acre of corn." He pointed to unused growers' utensils ("this roller-tiller is what I used to till and break up the soil"), growing more disgusted by the minute that the once-prosperous fertile ground had fallen into disuse because of VA policy. He identified flora as we walked ("this purple flower is Mexican sage.... this is our curly willow tree"), noting stands of cactus and numerous palm and eucalyptus trees on one side of the unpaved road, across from orchards of fruit trees.

A brand-new tractor sat in the overgrown grass beside a meadow. "We bought that brand-new and I drove it," he said. "Now it's just going to waste." The apricot, fig, and peach trees looked okay, he thought ("they're in good shape and starting to bloom now") but the general neglect depressed him. "It's been abandoned, and I hate to come by

and look at it like this because we kept it manicured. Summertime, all the trees were full of fruit—black and red plums, peaches, apples, it was a beautiful sight. We planted those fig trees about nine years ago and the last couple of years I was here they were beginning to bear big beautiful green figs."

Harvesting everything that the vets grew on the Veterans Gardens land could take all morning. "At one time I had this whole space planted with nothing but tomatoes, eight rows of tomatoes," Bobby said. "We used to have this whole field planted with squash, and would pick up to 200 or 300 pounds of squash a day." Employees could tend their own little "special garden" as well to grow their own vegetables. "Every year they'd sign up for a plot," he said. "Mine was the little corner over there."

"The vets who worked in Veterans Gardens used to have a yearly five-day camping trip. We'd close down, pack up, get in the trucks and take

off," Bobby said. "We would go up into the mountains and we used to have a beautiful time—we'd go camping, fishing, hiking. We'd put the tents up and camp out—sleep on the ground."

A hilly area across from the meadow had been planted with different trees. "This was a memorial area," Bobby said. "If someone passed away or retired we would plant a tree in his honor, and all of these trees represent someone who is deceased or retired from the organization."

"I've got a lot of fond memories of this place back here," he continued, "and I just had peace of mind. You could just let your mind wander and forget anything that upset you; with the birds singing, it reminded me of the country." The state of the land today was completely disheartening, "unbelievable" in Bobby's words. "It shouldn't be like this... I spent too many happy days back here to come back and see it like this. Working these grounds was one of the highlights of my career here at the VA. I just hate to see it in this condition."

It was, after all, a garden for veterans, hence the name. "That's what it's all about," he said. "This is the Veterans Gardens. A lot of different people from different walks of life would come work here after going through the rehabilitation pro-

grams and get their start. We would exchange different stories, war stories, sit down and have a session about which eras of war they were in. People from the Vietnam era, Korea, different types of veterans came through here. We'd just get together sometimes and talk and have a good time." At times, saying nothing was also therapeutic and understood by Bobby's fellow veterans. "It's just my opinion, I could be wrong, but there are some things I feel you shouldn't talk about," he said. "There are a lot of things I don't talk about; I don't think I should talk about them, and I don't see any point in talking about them."

Although workers moved on from the garden to work at the National Cemetery or on the VA grounds or in housekeeping, Bobby said he liked it there and stayed. "I was pretty well content down here. Let's get it back like it's supposed to be," he said, changing the subject. "We've got the equipment to do it with." Shaking his head, he said, "I'd volunteer to work down here to get it back the way it used to be."

"Anybody need anything?" someone asked the troops outside the Airstream trailer at Strawberry Flag one day a few weeks later. "Cotton gloves," Bobby requested, telling me, "They hide the human scent from gophers." Artist Lauren Bon

visited her artwork one day to see a raven swoop down for a gopher snack. "Bobby's vegetables fed that gopher, which is now feeding the raven," she said.

"I'm planning to go back to Arkansas one day," Bobby told me. "I've got a lot of wheels turning up here. I'd love to go back there and start me a little catfish farm." His vegetables, meanwhile, give him joy. "It gives me a real feeling of accomplishment. I like to reap what I've planted." His hard work has made this little corner of government land yield something not political, only delicious.

*Bobby Shelton went into the armed services and trained as a gunner in Fort Campbell. He was in Okinawa and Korea at the close of the Korean War with the 663rd Field Artillery and Tanks.*

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Home is a name, a word, it is a strong one; stronger than magician ever spoke, or spirit ever answered to, in the strongest conjuration.

—Charles Dickens

Home is a place you grow up wanting to leave, and grow old wanting to get back to.

—John Ed Pearce



Beverly Van der Wall of Lone Pine, California held a ribbon tying workshop as part of the *No Place like Home* installation at Cal Vets.

### ARCADIA BANDINI CONTINUED »

Baker and Jones filed a plat map for the first subdivision of Santa Monica. The 50 x 150-foot lots, located between Ocean Avenue, 26th Street, Montana Avenue, and Colorado Avenue, sold at land auction for \$150 to \$300.

Arcadia Bandini's vision for the city, as well as her business acumen, is demonstrated in the layout of the plat map. Lots were designated for housing, schools, parks, churches, and businesses. Parks and school sites were deeded to the new city.

Ricardo Bandini Johnson says, "Arcadia and Jones were the main force behind the donations. Jones, however, was mostly in Washington D.C., and Arcadia Bandini and Georgina Jones became close friends and partners in the family business."

Baker had many health problems. In 1879, with Jones's encouragement, Arcadia bought Baker's interest in Rancho San Vicente. Arcadia Bandini and Jones then formed the Santa Monica Land and Water Company. They decide to sell large tracts of land north of Montana Avenue—another very successful business move.

In the 1880s Arcadia built her home on the 1200 block of Ocean Avenue in Santa Monica, overlooking Linda Vista Park and the Pacific Ocean. She kept the Baker Block in Los Angeles, but mostly lived in Santa Monica. Many members of the Bandini family continued to live in the Baker Block.

At that time, Arcadia's life was one of business, grand entertaining, and family. She spent time at her working sheep ranch where there were extensive gardens and opportunities for guests to hunt. She frequently went to the beach.

In 1892 Arcadia's brother Juan Bandini traveled from San Diego to work with Arcadia, and stayed, becoming her most trusted advisor until his death in 1906. He was her closest friend and she deeply mourned his death.

From the diary of Juan Bandini, Vol. 5, May 26, 1894: "After 3:30 had a message from Gaffey [a relative] in Los Angeles that Mr. Baker had died at 2:30 and I went on the 5:45 [train to Los Angeles]."

Arcadia continued to live and work in Santa Monica until her death in her home on Ocean Avenue, September 15, 1912. Senator Jones,

her long-time business partner and the husband of her close friend, Georgina Jones, died the same year.

Dona Arcadia Bandini de Stearns de Baker is buried in the Bandini family plot at Cavalry Cemetery on Whittier Boulevard in Boyle Heights, alongside her father, Juan Bandini, and her husbands, Abel Stearns and Robert Baker.

Arcadia Bandini made donations of land all over the Los Angeles region to be used for parks, schools, orphanages, and other projects that were of public benefit. As there was no facility for veterans of the Civil War west of the Mississippi, she donated the land for the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers and Sailors (now the VA).

Arcadia Bandini's thoughtful and generous gifts to Santa Monica were instrumental in determining the character of the city. We are the beneficiaries of Arcadia Bandini, of her generosity and her aesthetic and social vision.

*Ms. Cloke notes: Ricardo Bandini Johnson, the grandnephew of Arcadia Bandini, shared his family's history. I couldn't have told Arcadia's story without his generosity.*

## SOLDIERS' HOME HAS THRIVING APIARY

*Los Angeles Times* (1886–1922); Dec 4, 1921;  
ProQuest Historical Newspapers *Los Angeles Times* (1881–1987) pg. X7

SAWTELLE – Owing to the efforts of Capt. M. S. Murray, Quartermaster of the Soldiers' Home at Sawtelle, that institution now has a thriving apiary of 230 colonies, the outgrowth of a collection of seventeen wild swarms gathered barely three years ago. This apiary, probably the only one of its kind at any of the Soldiers' Homes in the United States, is on a paying basis, showing a satisfactory production now while bee men generally are complaining of a lack of honey.

Capt. Murray is always upon the watch for some additional dainty for his mess halls and makes use of all food products that come his way. When there is an overproduction of vegetables or fruits he cans them, and it is said to be due largely to this fact that the mortality in his Home is lower than at others. This is ascribed to the fact that in other Homes, due to the chill of winter with its frosts and snows, it is difficult to secure any but winter vegetables and but few of these, the result being that the veterans receive a steady diet, according to their menus, of salt pork or cured meats and only potatoes or onions. Members become nervous and emaciated and the hospitals fill, the death rate increases and hundreds pass on to the "eternal camping grounds."

When Capt. Murray came to the Soldiers' Home at Sawtelle for the first time, the gardens and orchards were turned over to him with a sigh of relief for they had not been made to pay and had never produced enough to supply the tables. His first act was to plant nearly all kinds of fruit known to



the Southland as well as acres of garden truck. This year the Home purchased a section of Senator Jones's walnut orchard lying to the north of Pepper grove and the Quartermaster has had a corps of men busily engaged in harvesting the nut crop, from which the veterans will derive the benefit. It is not

yet known what the yield will be, but it is certain that enough will be gathered to insure the veterans all they care to consume.

The honey this year will be abundant enough for all the forthcoming year's supply. Located just above the million-gallon reservoir

back of the Home, the bees have plenty of manzanita, wild alfalfa, wild buckwheat, mustard and eucalyptus blooms and pollen from the orchards.

Capt. Murray, who came here from Roswell, New Mexico, is a man of wide bee experience and has made

some very interesting experiments. He is an officer who has made a study of food values. To him is given the credit of instituting schools for baking and cooking in the United States Army at Fort Riley, Kansas, where he also established the first fireless cooking process in this country. He has also been an or-

chardist, having made a close study of horticulture. It was while taking a stroll in the mountains back of the Soldiers' Home that it occurred to him that bees were very essential for pollinization of the orchards, with the result that the bees were captured and at once entered upon their duties for the Home.

Capt. Murray expects to increase to 300 colonies next year and to introduce a superior strain. The 100 acres of Home orchards will contribute their share to the honey gatherers.

The bees are free from that dread disease of the apiarists, foul brood, the situation at the Home being comparable with that of the Calabasas mountains, where there are said to be 10,000 colonies clean and free of the trouble.

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## The Death of the Hired Man

by Robert Frost

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table  
Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,  
She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage  
To meet him in the doorway with the news  
And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."  
She pushed him outward with her through the door  
And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.  
She took the market things from Warren's arms  
And set them on the porch, then drew him down  
To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

"When was I ever anything but kind to him?  
But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.  
"I told him so last haying, didn't I?  
'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'  
What good is he? Who else will harbour him  
At his age for the little he can do?  
What help he is there's no depending on.  
Off he goes always when I need him most.  
'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,  
Enough at least to buy tobacco with,  
So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'  
'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay  
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'  
'Someone else can.' "Then someone else will have to."  
I shouldn't mind his bettering himself  
If that was what it was. You can be certain,  
When he begins like that, there's someone at him  
Trying to coax him off with pocket-money,—  
In haying time, when any help is scarce.  
In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to: he'll have to soon or late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.  
When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,  
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,  
A miserable sight, and frightening, too—  
You needn't smile—I didn't recognise him—  
I wasn't looking for him—and he's changed.  
Wait till you see."

"Where did you say he'd been?"

"He didn't say. I dragged him to the house,  
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.  
I tried to make him talk about his travels.  
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off."

"What did he say? Did he say anything?"

"But little."

"Anything? Mary, confess  
He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for me."

"Warren!"

"But did he? I just want to know."

"Of course he did. What would you have him say?  
Surely you wouldn't grudge the poor old man  
Some humble way to save his self-respect.  
He added, if you really care to know,  
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.  
That sounds like something you have heard before?  
Warren, I wish you could have heard the way  
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look  
Two or three times—he made me feel so queer—  
To see if he was talking in his sleep.  
He ran on Harold Wilson—you remember—  
The boy you had in haying four years since.  
He's finished school, and teaching in his college.  
Silas declares you'll have to get him back.  
He says they two will make a team for work:  
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!  
The way he mixed that in with other things.  
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft

On education—you know how they fought  
All through July under the blazing sun,  
Silas up on the cart to build the load,  
Harold along beside to pitch it on."

"Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot."

"Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.  
You wouldn't think they would. How some things linger!  
Harold's young college boy's assurance piqued him.  
After so many years he still keeps finding  
Good arguments he sees he might have used.  
I sympathise. I know just how it feels  
To think of the right thing to say too late.  
Harold's associated in his mind with Latin.  
He asked me what I thought of Harold's saying  
He studied Latin like the violin  
Because he liked it—that an argument!  
He said he couldn't make the boy believe  
He could find water with a hazel prong—  
Which showed how much good school had ever done him.  
He wanted to go over that. But most of all  
He thinks if he could have another chance  
To teach him how to build a load of hay—"

"I know, that's Silas' one accomplishment.  
He bundles every forkful in its place,  
And tags and numbers it for future reference,  
So he can find and easily dislodge it  
In the unloading. Silas does that well.  
He takes it out in bunches like big birds' nests.  
You never see him standing on the hay  
He's trying to lift, straining to lift himself."

"He thinks if he could teach him that, he'd be  
Some good perhaps to someone in the world.  
He hates to see a boy the fool of books.  
Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,  
And nothing to look backward to with pride,  
And nothing to look forward to with hope,  
So now and never any different."

Part of a moon was falling down the west,  
Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.  
Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw  
And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand  
Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,  
Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,  
As if she played unheard the tenderness  
That wrought on him beside her in the night.  
"Warren," she said, "he has come home to die:  
You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time."

"Home," he mocked gently.

"Yes, what else but home?  
It all depends on what you mean by home.  
Of course he's nothing to us, any more  
Than was the hound that came a stranger to us  
Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail."

"Home is the place where, when you have to go there,  
They have to take you in."

"I should have called it  
Something you somehow haven't to deserve."

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,  
Picked up a little stick, and brought it back  
And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.  
"Silas has better claim on us you think  
Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles  
As the road winds would bring him to his door.  
Silas has walked that far no doubt to-day.  
Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich,  
A somebody—director in the bank."

"He never told us that."

"We know it though."

"I think his brother ought to help, of course.  
I'll see to that if there is need. He ought of right  
To take him in, and might be willing to—  
He may be better than appearances.

But have some pity on Silas. Do you think  
If he'd had any pride in claiming kin  
Or anything he looked for from his brother,  
He'd keep so still about him all this time?"

"I wonder what's between them."

"I can tell you.  
Silas is what he is—we wouldn't mind him—  
But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.  
He never did a thing so very bad.  
He don't know why he isn't quite as good  
As anyone. He won't be made ashamed  
To please his brother, worthless though he is."

"I can't think Si ever hurt anyone."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay  
And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back.  
He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge.  
You must go in and see what you can do.  
I made the bed up for him there to-night.  
You'll be surprised at him—how much he's broken.  
His working days are done; I'm sure of it."

"I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself.  
But, Warren, please remember how it is:  
He's come to help you ditch the meadow.  
He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.  
He may not speak of it, and then he may.  
I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud  
Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.

Then there were three there, making a dim row,  
The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.

Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her,  
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

"Warren," she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

***“Home is the  
place where,  
when you have to  
go there,  
They have to take  
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“I should have  
called it  
Something you  
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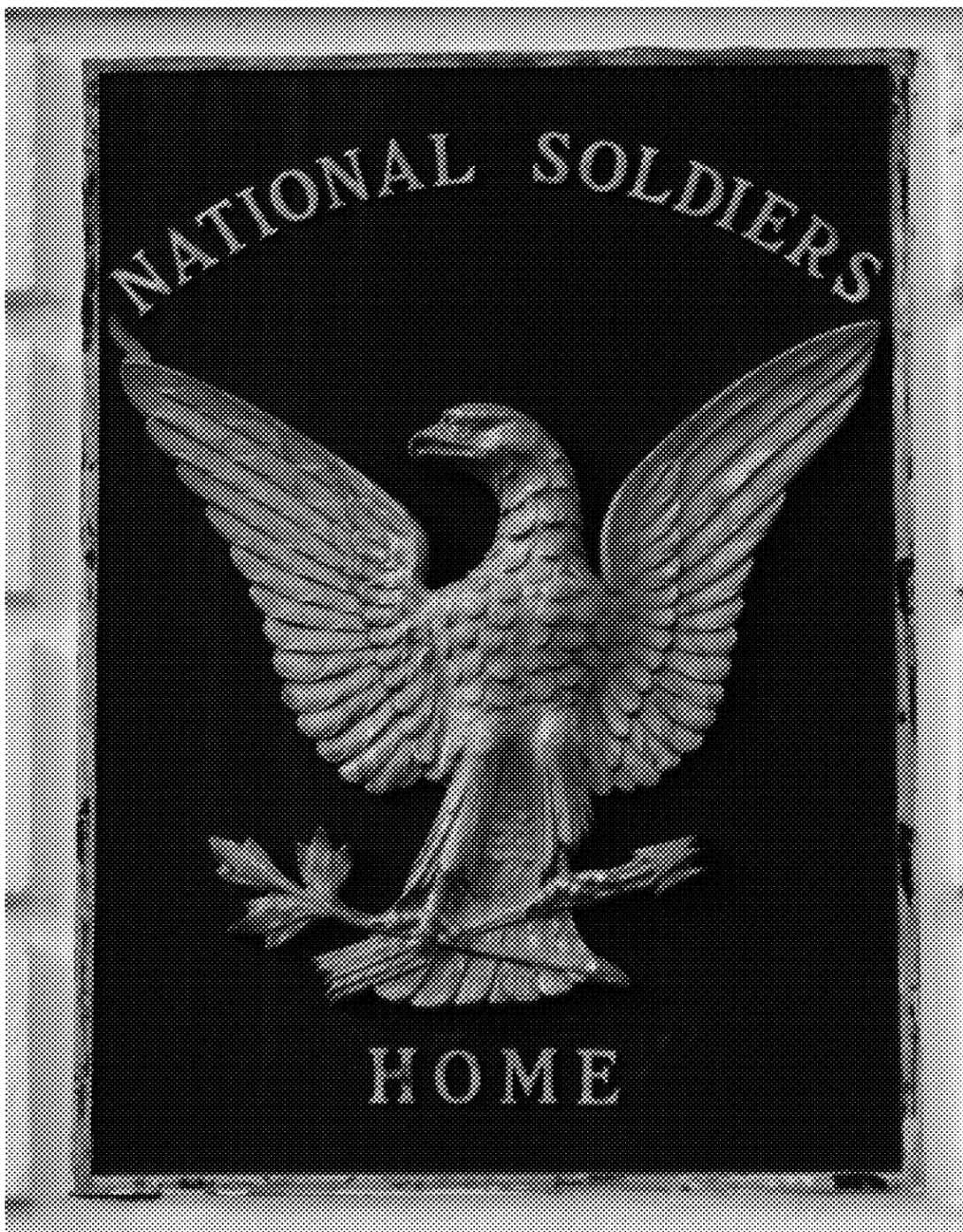


Love begins by taking care of the closest ones—the ones at home.

—Mother Teresa

The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home.

—Confucius



Jasper Newton, 1961–2011

## LOCAL VETERAN IS CANCER VICTIM

Army veteran and recent Domiciliary graduate Jasper Newton, age 49, passed away on Sunday, January 9. He had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer only about three weeks before his death.

Jasper and his wife, Cynthia Moore

Newton, attended print studio workshops at the *Strawberry Flag* installation beginning in July 2010, when he was a resident of the Domiciliary on the West Los Angeles VA campus. They had been estranged until “they rekindled their romance over a t-shirt,” said print studio manager Larry Flaherty. At the studio, the Newtons produced shirts for their grandchildren and for the choir at the Atherton Baptist Church in Hawthorne, where they worshiped.

Those who knew him described Jasper as an upbeat, positive person. “He was a prime example of how the workshops that we offer can change lives for the better,” said Flaherty. “Jasper will be greatly missed by the Veterans’ Print Studio, myself included.” Studio participant John Moge spoke for many when he added, “He went too quick.”

## JOHN SHARER WRITES ABOUT WAR AND TALKS TO VETS

BY TERENCE LYONS

The true meaning of “honor”—and how to recognize it—was under discussion as a dozen veterans sat around a conference table in Building 258 on a Thursday morning a week before Thanksgiving. The center of attention was John Sharer, a Korean War veteran who had just published his first novel, *Honor Knows No Borders*, and who had come to discuss and sign the book at the invitation of Roy Brown of the Vet to Vet organization.

Sharer’s book, set in North Africa and London during World War II, tells the separate stories of a father and son who each discover that in war, as in life generally, things are not always as they appear, and people cannot always be judged by the uniforms they wear. It is a tale of loyalty and intrigue, danger and death, on both the front lines and the home front.

Sharer himself grew up in London during “the blitz” of 1941, and his father was a British army officer who served as commander of a POW camp in North Africa (among other assignments). Mr. Sharer came to the United States after the war and was then drafted as a resident alien during the Korean conflict. (“You can either go in the army or go home,” he was told.) He now enjoys dual citizenship and is a semi-retired partner in one of the most prestigious law firms in Los Angeles.

*Honor Knows No Borders* explores themes that are both appealing and worthy. The writing is engaging and at the same time clear, and this reader found the characters to be true-to-life credible and at the same time so distinctive and

dramatic as to be most interesting. That tension between credibility and drama is a true test for any work of fiction: if one wrote a book or made a film about real people in their ordinary lives, it would be credible but boring; if one wrote about superheroes, it might be interesting but not believable—hence the great stories about ordinary people put to the test by extraordinary circumstances. Sharer has told just such a story, and told it quite well.

Much of the story, Sharer says, is based on his own memories of the London blitz and the stories his father told of his North Africa war experience. The structure of the book is balanced and intriguing, alternating between the front lines and the home front, the father’s relationship with a German colonel held prisoner in a POW camp, and the son’s interaction with a downed German bomber pilot holed up in the London wreckage. Sharer skillfully ties the stories together at the end with some twists that I could see coming and others that I could not.

The pacing of the book—always a challenge, especially for a first-time novelist—is well handled. At only one juncture in the book did this reader’s interest or patience begin to flag, and then a plot development quickly picked the story up. Apart from that, I was enthusiastically on board for the whole trip. And the picture Sharer paints of London during the blitz was palpable—the city was like a character in the story.

The book ends with an epilogue that balances the modest success achieved from the characters’ efforts when viewed in the grand scheme of things (it does not make it out as though they were personally responsible for winning the war) against the very important personal rewards to the characters—ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances once again.

This reviewer certainly enjoyed reading *Honor Knows No Borders* and, at least as important, felt enriched by the experience. Published by iUniverse, 2010.

### HOURS OF OPERATION

#### Print Studio Workshop

In the Occupational Therapy Room (Room123) of Building 208.  
Thursdays, 5:30–7:30PM

#### Farmer’s Market Thursdays

Thurs, 12–6PM

#### Parrot Sanctuary

Thurs, 7AM–dusk

#### Canteen/ Restaurant

Mon–Fri, 7AM–2PM

#### Barber of Dreamers

Open daily, 9AM–7PM

### THE STRAWBERRY GAZETTE

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