In April 1947 residents of Old Fig created a Corporation to promote the general welfare of our neighborhood, and for 71 years we have had the benefit of a homeowners association that has been instrumental in making Old Fig a better and safer place. Over those seven decades, many dedicated neighbors have volunteered their time and energy to work to keep Old Fig the desirable neighborhood that it is. I’d like to thank all who have served on the FGHOA board over the years and on one of the many committees that have been instrumental in making improvements to our home area. Ours is a voluntary homeowners association that represents the interests of residents not only in the Core area (between Palm and Maroa), but also the West Wing (Fruit to Palm) and East Wing (Maroa to Blackstone). Even if you have not yet chosen to become a member, we all have benefited from this organization’s many efforts over the past decades.

So what does the Fig Garden Home Owners Association do for you?
The biggest and often most impactful work we do is to coordinate with the County. We are lucky to have a close relationship with our District 2 County Supervisor Andreas Borgeas, as well as with County staff. Together with these partners, the FGHOA has been influential in the area of zoning. We frequently work to make sure zoning ordinances are such that our area maintains its historic identity and feel. Whether it be working with the County to develop new ordinances to preserve lot size or restrict scavenging, or working to make sure ordinances are followed, we are proactive.

The flow of traffic is another issue we often work on. The project that will soon begin at Ashlan and Van Ness is a prime example of the FGHOA’s efforts, and one that we’re hoping will be a model for the future. We also work to help improve the area surrounding Old Fig. The FGHOA works with other organizations to try to effect a change of the outside factors that have an impact on our neighborhood. We work to support the Better Blackstone Association, and have worked with Caltrans to procure a grant that funded a major study and plan for our area. We also coordinate with both the Fig Garden Police Protection District and the Fig Garden Fire Protection District. These two organizations are separate from the Fig Garden Home Owners Association, but coordinating is key to keeping our neighborhood safe.

This year will be another busy year for our Association. With the major road project planned for this spring, along with tree plantings, and supporting roles with the Better Blackstone Association and other public improvement groups, we will continue the Board’s track record of being proactive and successful.

Please consider joining our Association if you have not yet done so. The $70 yearly dues help fund the work that is done to benefit our neighborhood. If you are a member of our voluntary homeowners association, thank you for your commitment to Old Fig. We are always eager to help our neighbors with concerns and issues, so if you have questions go to oldfig.org and click on the Contact tab to send us an e-mail.
Dear Homeowner,

We are thrilled to provide you an update on the Ashlan and Van Ness Intersection Improvement Project. Over the past year we have undertaken plans to mitigate traffic and enhance a pedestrian crossing at Ashlan and Van Ness. After collaborating with the Fig Garden Home Owners Association (FGHOA), and with the expertise of Fresno County’s Department of Public Works, we are pleased to announce the design phase of the project has been completed and we are currently preparing plans for construction.

The enhancements at the proposed intersection are intended to improve safety for pedestrians. With a current traffic volume of approximately 20,000 vehicles per day, Ashlan does not provide safe pedestrian crossing. As a result, a number of safety enhancements have been considered to facilitate safer passage. The project includes multiple layers of safety improvements to alert drivers of the presence of crossing pedestrians. These improvements include advanced warning signs, pavement markings and signs that indicate where drivers are to stop for pedestrians, push button activated flashing LED signs at the crosswalk, and high visibility crosswalk markings. A raised concrete median is also proposed to provide a refuge area for pedestrians so only one direction of traffic needs to be negotiated at a time. The median combined with the raised curb to the right of the travel is intended to act as a traffic calming feature to slow drivers as they approach the intersection, and may over time actually reduce the speed limit on Ashlan.

Throughout the design phase an already productive partnership between Fresno County and FGHOA has become even stronger. Future events needed to make this project a reality include bidding the project, board approval for the proposed scope of work, project construction and completion. Construction is expected to begin at the end of April with anticipated project completion in July. Also, projects to be addressed by FGHOA include power line relocation and an identified power source for the potential element poles needed for Christmas Tree Lane.

We ask you to please be mindful and patient as traffic circulation may present some challenges for homeowners during the construction period. We look forward to the implementation of this project and will continue to keep you updated.

Warm regards,
Supervisor Andreas Borgeas

President       Dan Gallagher  dan.gallagher@fresnounified.org
Vice-President    Tony Pings        Anthony@pings.com
Treasurer         Valerie Lemay   vlemay@hotmail.com
Secretary    Merilee Amos    merilee.fghoa@gmail.com

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Prudence Zalewski pru@softsyn.net

FIG GARDEN HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS & DIRECTORS FOR 2018

Slate of Directors
The Board of Directors nominates the following people for three-year terms on the Board:
(all are incumbents):
Dean Alexander, Dan Gallagher, Jack Jensen
At last November’s FGHOA board meeting, a group of neighbors came to voice their concerns about the new Community Facilities District (CFD) that was passed in 2015 by voters who live in the Fire Protection District. Those in attendance decided there was a need to inform folks living in the District of the changes to the funding mechanism used by the Fire Protection District.

The Fig Garden Home Owners Association works to coordinate with both the Fig Garden Police Protection District and The Fig Garden Fire Protection District. The Association is not part of these districts. Both are districts supported by a Special Assessments Tax that funds Sheriff’s and Fire protection. The boundaries of both districts are roughly the same and include the Core area bounded by Maroa to Palm, and Shaw roughly to the canal. Residents of this area pay an extra assessment to fund these districts. I want to make sure that those residents who do not live in the Protection Districts understand this does not apply to them.

In June 2013, when the effort to continue the enhanced fire protection service was begun, the Fire Protection District intended to update and renew the existing assessment district. After consultation and an interpretation of Proposition 218, the decision was made that for legal reasons the existing assessment needed to change to something called a Community Facilities District, or CFD. This is what voters in Fig Garden Core area passed in 2015.

This new mechanism is also known as a Mello-Roos and has some residents upset. There are two issues they are worried about. First, the Mello-Roos showed up as a tax lien when a resident went to refinance a mortgage. Secondly, the Mello-Roos has a clause allowing the Fire Protection District to foreclose if the tax is in arrears.

A group of FGHOA board members, along with some concerned residents, met with the Fire Protection Board in September 2015 to voice our concerns about the new CFD. The Fire Board instructed their attorney to remove or revise the Goals and Policy of the accelerated foreclosure by vote of the board. After further investigation it was not possible to remove the foreclosure language, but the Fire Board did find that the CFD was coded incorrectly with the County Assessor-Recorder’s office. The County Assessor-Recorder fixed how the assessment showed up on a title search, so the lien would no longer show up incorrectly. The Fire Protection District sent out a letter in October 2015 explaining the changes. If you would like to read the full letter, go to Oldfig.org, click on the Police and Fire tab, then on the CFD heading.

Here are excerpts from the letter that touch on the key points:

***The Fire District looked into how the lien was filed, coded, and represented internally within the County’s document system, and the County eventually processed a small change. In October 2015, an Old Fig resident had a title report run to see whether a negative tax lien would appear on their home. It did not, so the District concluded the County’s correction fixed the problem. The Fresno County Assistant Assessor /Recorder verified that the notice of special tax lien is to secure future tax payments and should be distinguished from a document recorded due to delinquent tax payments.

The Fire District participates in a program with Fresno County called the Teeter plan. This means that regardless of whether a resident fails to pay their property taxes and assessments, the District receives 100% of the allocated tax revenue, allowing the fire station and its staffing to continue to deliver services to the district. Fresno County is the entity that can recover any late fees and penalties from delinquent taxes. In the event the District board ever attempt to reverse or invalidate this special clause related to accelerated foreclosure, the Fire Protection board shall, through reasonable means and at a reasonable cost, provide notice of this action to every district resident.***

In 2016 the Fig Garden Home Owners Association board engaged an attorney to look into how the Community Facilities District vote was conducted, and found that it was done legally, and that there are other districts in the county that use CFDs. If you have any concerns about this issue, please contact the Fire Protection District directly. Their website is figgardenfire.org.
Many of us have been startled by the appearance of foxes in our neighborhood. I have one in my yard and see it walking around the property frequently. Here are some facts about these creatures who share our neighborhood.

Are foxes smart?
People use the phrase “wily like a fox” or “sly as a fox” for a reason. Foxes are very smart in ways that matter:
- finding food
- surviving in weather extremes
- outwitting predators
- protecting their young
They’re smarter than most, but not all, dog breeds. Here’s an example of their cleverness: There’s a fox rescue organization that sometimes scatters slices of bread in a nearby field. They report that the foxes retrieve each slice of bread, stack them one atop another and then take the entire stack away, just as we might do.

Encountering a fox
Enjoy the experience! The fox’s size is deceptive because of its thick coat. But these squirrel-sized hunters barely weigh 10 pounds. Contrary to popular belief, a fox will not usually attack a human, be it an adult or a child, nor will it attack another dog. Most cats will also prove too much of a threat to a fox. The number of fox bites is statistically insignificant and we’re at a greater risk of being bitten by dogs or cats. Though humans have little to fear, foxes will defend themselves if necessary.

If found in a shed or cornered elsewhere, a fox, like many other frightened animals, may try to bite in self-defense. You should not corner or attempt to capture a trapped fox. Allow it an escape route and it can leave as soon as it knows it’s safe to do so. If you inadvertently corner one, turn and walk away.

Rules for Peaceful Co-existence with Foxes
- Don’t approach or pet a fox. Enjoy the sighting of a fox, and other wildlife, from a respectful distance.
- Don’t feed foxes or any wild animals, or they will lose their fear of people. Feeding a fox rewards it for coming near people. Once a fox becomes habituated to people, it may become bold and aggressive.
- Secure garbage in containers with tight-fitting lids. Take them out in the morning of pick up, not the night before. Wildlife will scavenge trash.
- Feed pets indoors or remove food when your pet is finished eating outside. Foxes and other wildlife are attracted to pet food left outdoors.
- Keep bird-feeder areas clean and use bird feeders that keep seed off the ground.
- Close off crawl spaces under sheds, porches, decks and homes. Foxes may use these spaces to rest or to build their dens. Spread cayenne pepper around to also discourage them.
- Secure pets or keep them indoors. Dogs and cats can disturb dens, prompting aggressive behavior from foxes.
- Install fox-proof fencing around your home, chicken coop or rabbit pen to protect unsupervised domestic pets.
- Yell, bang pots and pans to discourage foxes and other wildlife from setting up residence in your yard. This will also maintain their wariness of people.
- Clear fallen fruit around trees.

If you have questions regarding wildlife around your yard, you can contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife by calling them at: 243-4005, ext. 133. You can leave voicemail if you do not get an answer and they should respond within 24 hours. You can also check their website: www.wildlife.ca.gov

Fig Garden resident Frances Morrison and Kathy Wakefield took photos of these Gray Foxes in their neighborhood. Frances noted that a family with a litter had a den next to a house undergoing major renovation, and the mother and father foxes took turns carrying their young to a quieter location away from the loud jackhammers. Frances did some research on foxes and found that they mate for life and that the male will remain with the young and help with the feeding. Frances noted, “the animals were here before us.”
If there is a patch of ground available, we should grow on it. Fresh produce would solve a lot of our problems.” With this motto for living, Tom Bohigian has turned most of his half-acre property into a garden and an orchard. As soon as he purchased the corner house on Santa Ana and Harrison in 1996, he started tilling, planting and growing. An area along the garage driveway outside the kitchen window became a raised bed that produces vegetables year round. Now it’s sugar snap peas, lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, leeks, parsley, celery, arugula, fennel, Swiss chard … (I’m sure I’m missing some), with recently buried potato seedlings that will be ready in late April. Three-inch tall tomato plants started indoors soak in the sun on the kitchen window sill, getting ready to produce a summer crop of canning tomatoes. A more recently constructed raised bed is filled with blooming strawberry plants that eventually will be replaced with corn. That’s how one part of the original front lawn was transformed into a vegetable factory that tirelessly and reliably supplies the family and friends with its bounty.

Along the porch that stretches the length of the front of the house, Tom replaced the grass with a bed of flowers that create a spectacular display of color throughout the seasons. A non-descript area by the mailbox became a rose garden and, since there was still space in-between the roses, also accommodated a row of boysenberries and asparagus. “The boysenberries produce like crazy,” says Tom, and remind him of his grandmother, who instilled in him the love of gardening. To enjoy this front yard bounty as well as the company of passers-by, Tom placed a seating area under a huge sycamore tree, where he can be seen often reading or sipping wine with his wife, Sheri—because cultivating neighborly connections is as important as being a steward of the plot one owns. “I sit here all the time,” he says.

All this just in the front. Citrus, stone fruit, figs and grapes grow in the back. In an additional area beyond the backyard, an empty easement strip became an orchard. An array of peaches, plums, pluots, apriums, figs and grapes, some venerable looking (like O’Henry and Elberta peaches and Santa Rosa plum, planted right after the Bohigians moved here), create a colonnade of ambrosial treats to pick as the fruit ripen throughout the summer. Tom delights in naming them and describing their “amazing” flavors as much, I suspect, as he delights in tasting them. Not only that, he can tell you exactly the chronology of their ripening, their pedigree and taste complexity. Some start as early as late April, like Early Treat peach, others ripen in late September, like Fair Time, and in-between come Gold Dust peach, Violette and Panache Tiger figs, Sweet Treat pluerry, Flavor Grenade pluot, and let’s not forget Suncrest peach, celebrated by author and farmer Mas Masumoto (“no peach more perfect”), and Gold Dust (“the parent of Suncrest”), Late Le Grand nectarine (“the intensity of aroma is incredible; it’s a narcotic”), and a plum from Italy Sorriso di Primavera (“Smile of Spring,” Tom translates—with a smile).

My head swirls as we get back to the front yard and the honey smell of the flowering cherry in the glory of its pink bloom that Tom planted as soon as he moved here to bring back the perfume he remembers from his grandmother’s garden. As the garden connects him to the tastes and smells of his childhood, the house itself roots him in this very place in the middle of the city. Its adobe brick walls were fired from clay dug up on the site and fired in the backyard. When in awe I ask, “Really?” Tom replies, “So goes the legend at least.” Parallel with the always new yard and garden projects go the house projects preserving the rustic style of its 1945 adobe structure, while improving energy efficiency. Solar panels cover the west side of the roof, drip irrigation replaced 40 sprinkler heads, a newly constructed gazebo acts as an outdoor room for dinners, not to mention the touches of Mexican tiles that he installs to accentuate angles and edges. No rest for Tom! In the two years since he retired from serving as State Director for U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer, he’s...
been as busy as before, now adding travels, hiking and working for the San Joaquin River Conservancy to the constant labor of gardening—not to mention regular voluntary picking up and hauling away of trash from the river bottom area. And have I mentioned that he also cooks and bakes and preserves what he grows? Passing by his two lemon trees laden with fruit, he injects, “I’ll be making limoncello soon.”

As we sit in the front yard by the vegetable garden joined by Shri and their dog Buddy, Tom enumerates his neighbors—who they are, what they do. “If you don’t know your neighbors, get to know them,” he advises. “People have to be there for other people.” Affirming the value of this simple wisdom, Sheri recounts what one of their neighbors told them, “Ever since you had moved here, people started talking to one another.” With deep roots in Fresno (his family has been here for over 100 years), Tom tells me he’s lived all his life within 15 minutes of where he lives now. “This has always been my home. It’s a damn good location to live.” And looking around his yard and his old house, he adds, “The best place on earth. Except, perhaps, in August.”

Over 250 years ago, Voltaire’s Candide instructed us, “You must cultivate your garden,” as the most worthwhile thing to do. That, as Tom’s effort confirms, is what roots us to the land and to the people, what builds our compassion for the earth and one another, connects us to those around us and to those we remember in the smells and flavors we grow on our plots of land.

CHRISTMAS TREE LANE—
A HISTORIC ICON

By Dean Alexander

Last year was Christmas Tree Lane’s 95th year of operation. The event has run longer than The Macy’s Thanksgiving Parade, and its magic provides pleasure to over 200,000 visitors, not just from Fresno but from various parts of the world.

As you are aware, Christmas Tree Lane’s traffic flow is one-way along Van Ness Boulevard from south to north. Every single night when I open the Lane and the traffic is still light, we have several vehicles traveling in the wrong direction, predominantly due to poor information on GPS devices. When I stop them at the donation booth and indicate that they are going in the wrong direction, they explain that they are from out of town and not familiar with Fresno, and drove here specially to go down Christmas Tree Lane. I provide them with directions to the start of the Lane. This is just a glimpse on the many visitors not from the Fresno area who come to enjoy Christmas Tree Lane, an event to share with families and bring about the spirit of Christmas.

As many of you know, Christmas Tree Lane is put on by the Fig Garden Home Owners Association and receives no public funds from City or County agencies. The operating revenue comes from visitor donations, and traffic control is provided by the California Highway Patrol, the Fresno County Sheriff Department and the City of Fresno Police Department. The event would not be a success without their assistance. Again, a special ‘thank you’ to our law enforcement agencies.

We decorate approximately 300 Deodar cedar trees and 140 Van Ness residents decorate their yards along the nearly two-mile length of the Lane with traditional as well as new, more elaborate displays. In addition, we place displays created by high schools and the large yard displays provided by Southern California Edison. All these decorations make Christmas Tree Lane a one of a kind experience. The Fig Garden Police Protection District radio station broadcast of Christmas music within vehicles, along with music from speakers set in the trees, adds a great touch to the festive atmosphere. The Christmas Tree Lane committee, led by Erin Cook, provides several locations where live music is played during the walk-only nights. I have received several compliments regarding the live music during the walk nights. Erin has done a great job in coordinating and directing this musical event.

The Fig Garden Neighborhood is an historical and prestigious area to live. We have a unique bond with our neighbors and we take pride in the neighborhood. Christmas Tree Lane contributes to this historic nature of the neighborhood and is one of its jewels. I am proud to be a Fig Garden resident and look forward to another magical Christmas Tree Lane event for 2018.
OLD FIG GARDEN 2017
HOME VALUES AND SALE
By Angie Hyatt

Our neighborhood remains a vibrant and wonderful place to live. There are many reasons but to name a few are our beautiful trees and the proximity to Fig Garden Village. But the main reason people continue to want to live here are the homes; the character, charm, quality, lot sizes and so on…but all of you know that! Many of the renovations that have been in progress are looking like they are coming to completion, with others beginning.

Our neighborhood consists of these three areas:
WEST WING: Palm to Fruit and Shaw to Ashlan
CORE: Palm to Maroa (minus a small area of homes south of Griffith and east of Wishon to Maroa, which is in the City of Fresno, but again considered to be a part of expanded Old Fig) and Shaw to Lansing (South of Lansing is the City of Fresno, although Circle Drive is included in our map)
EAST WING: Maroa to Blackstone and Shaw to Ashlan

During 2017, there were 74 home sales in the expanded Old Fig Garden Area. It was a good real estate year for Fresno as a whole. Inventory has been low and interest rates have also remained low, which makes for increasing sales prices. Below is a breakdown of sales in the three areas I identified above.

As always, in marketing a home the things that help in selling it quickly and for the most money are the condition of the home and, of course, the pricing. A fresh coat of paint and sprucing up the landscaping are a plus. New bathrooms and kitchens play a huge role in pricing, as those two rooms are the most expensive to renovate and a buyer will usually pay more if those are updated.

This year may bring increased interest rates, which may have a positive effect in the short term on our market as buyers will want to buy before the rates increase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th># OF SALES</th>
<th>MEDIAN SALES PRICE</th>
<th>AVERAGE SQ. FT. COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palm to Maroa and Shaw to Lansing / Circle Dr.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>$491,750</td>
<td>$191.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palm to Fruit and Shaw to Ashlan</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$251,000</td>
<td>$145.74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maroa to Blackstone and Shaw to Ashlan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$287,500</td>
<td>$142.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest price home sold: $850,000
The lowest home price: $135,000
The highest s.f. cost: $277.87
The lowest s.f. cost: $96.02
Homes sold for an average of 98.35% of their asking prices.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

FGHOA Fall Dinner
Sunday, September 30
Fig Garden Swim and Raquet Club
5:30pm

More details will be posted in our Fall Newsletter and on the www.oldfig.org website
Fig Garden residents can take advantage of water-saving rebate programs to save hundreds of dollars to retrofit their homes and yards with water-saving measures. Lowering water usage will reduce monthly water bills and show how you’re doing your part as a good citizen by reducing the effects of any future drought.

The state of California and the City of Fresno (which provides water to Fig Garden residents) offer rebates to homeowners and property managers who take advantage of these water-saving measures.

For example, the state offers up to $2 per square foot, up to $2000, to replace water-thirsty turf with landscaping requiring little water. The City of Fresno has rebates for 50 cents per square foot to convert your grass lawn to a garden, up to $4 for each qualified high-efficiency sprinkler installed, 25 cents per square foot to replace overhead sprinklers to micro (drip) irrigation. There are also rebates from $50-$100 to install water-saving equipment to reduce water waste and usage.

This is a link to information about the programs: www.fresno.gov/publicutilities/water-quality-delivery-testing/rebates-coupons/
or use this short URL link: goo.gl/uDHMbN

Read carefully the requirements of the rebate programs as some will require approval of your project and a reservation to make sure it meets the requirements. For help with your landscape irrigation the City of Fresno offers free consultation as well as tips for water-saving plant material, and help in setting the irrigation controller.

You can schedule an appointment by phone at: 621-5480, or by e-mail: waterconservation@fresno.gov

Fresno 2018 Watering schedule
No watering between 9am and 6pm
Residents can water based on their addresses on these days:

- **January, February, March; also November and December (one day per week)**
  - Even addresses: Sunday
  - Odd addresses: Saturday

- **April and May; also September and October (two days per week)**
  - Even addresses: Sunday, Wednesday
  - Odd addresses: Saturday, Tuesday

- **June, July, August (three days per week):**
  - Even addresses: Sunday, Wednesday, Friday
  - Odd addresses: Saturday, Tuesday, Thursday

If you see a leak in the street or other public area, please call: 621-5300. If you see a violation of the watering rules, you can call: 621-5480

If you have been notified by the City of a water waste violation, there is no fine for the first notice. After that the fines for successive violations are $50 for a second, $100 for a third, and $200 for each incident after the fourth through the calendar year.

If you detect water discoloration or other quality issues, call: 621-8626, or e-mail: RequestWaterTest@fresno.gov