

Strawberry Bullet



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Serving the 500,000 Veterans Living in Greater Los Angeles

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STRAWBERRY BULLET MARKS ANNIVERSARY OF 1888 DEED

The first week of March 2017 is the 129th anniversary of the Deed of 1888, by which Sen. John P. Jones and Arcadia Bandini de Baker conveyed 300 acres of their Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica to the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers “to locate, establish, construct and permanently maintain” a soldiers’ home in West Los Angeles. The soldiers’ home was expanded by later gifts.

Lauren Bon and the Metabolic Studio, who installed and maintained the *Strawberry Flag* art project at the West Los Angeles VA in 2009/2010 and more recently published the *Strawberry Bulletin* newspaper for military veterans and the arts community in 2011/2013, present this one-shot, one-sheet *Strawberry Bulletin* in celebration of that anniversary.



Metabolic Studio’s gardener and Korean War veteran Bobby Shelton (left) works with Camilo Rangel-Vargas and Tzintzuni of nonprofit North East Trees to remove invasive species and make room for more vegetables in Arcadia’s Garden behind the CalVets building on the West L.A. VA campus. Earnest Richardson of CalVets also pictured (far right).

New VA Secretary Shulkin Confirmed by U.S. Senate

President Trump’s choice for VA Secretary is Dr. David Shulkin, who has served as VA Undersecretary for Health since his appointment to that post by President Obama in the summer of 2015. Unlike several other Trump cabinet appointments, Shulkin enjoyed smooth sailing in Congress and was unanimously confirmed by the Senate on February 13.

Before joining the VA, Dr. Shulkin was president of the Morristown Medical Center in New Jersey (2010–2015) and also served as chief executive in other New Jersey health care institutions during that time. He was previously president and CEO of Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City (2005–2009). He did his internship at Yale University School of Medicine.

The 57-year-old medical doctor is the first VA Secretary not to have served in the military, but he was born on an Army base in Highland Park, Illinois, and his family has a history of military service and providing military medical care. Both his grandfathers served in World War I; his father was a psychiatrist who was an Army captain; and one grandfather was also the chief pharmacist at the VA in Madison, Wisconsin.

Dr. Shulkin supports Trump’s plans for VA reforms, including a proposal to expand veterans’ access to care outside the VA health-care system if they prefer to see a private doctor, but he is on record as opposing the more extreme measure (suggested by some) of shutting down VA medical centers and instead having vets get all care from the private sector—that “would be a terrible mistake, a terrible direction for veterans and for the country,” he said.

Dr. Shulkin’s nomination was generally greeted with applause by veterans groups, although some had urged President Trump to re-appoint VA Secretary McDonald. At the February 8 meeting of the L.A. County Military and Veterans Affairs Commission, it abandoned a pending resolution opposing privatization of VA healthcare as moot, agreeing with the statement of Commissioner Thomas O’Shaughnessy that Shulkin is “committed to the revitalization and reform of the VA [initiated] under Secretary McDonald.”

CVEB Begins New Phase Of Master Plan Oversight

The Los Angeles Region Community Veterans Engagement Board (LAR-CVEB) is a local board of veterans and others that has been authorized by Congress to provide advice and recommendations in the development and implementation of the West L.A. master plan. As such, we look forward to following its work closely. LAR-CVEB has now completed its formation, met with outgoing VA Secretary Bob McDonald, and will be getting down to business in March and April.

Last year, the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (GLAHS) began the formation of a CVEB for the Los Angeles area. CVEBs were already in place in over one hundred U.S. locations, with the primary function of sharing information and coordinating services among the VA, local government, nonprofits, veterans organizations, and community groups that provide services to vets.

Because the West L.A. master plan had so engaged the attention of both community and veteran representatives here, interest in the CVEB formation ran high, as reported in *Strawberry Bulletin* issues last July and November. A series of meetings beginning in March 2016 led to the formation of a provisional

CVEB board in June.

During the development of the West L.A. master plan in 2015 and 2016, many veterans argued for the creation of a board of vets to participate in the implementation of the plan. In that connection, the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016 adopted by Congress last September contained a provision that “the Secretary shall establish a Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board...for the Campus to coordinate locally with the Department of Veterans Affairs to... provide advice and recommendations on the implementation of the draft master plan....”

In accordance with that provision, the LAR-CVEB charter, adopted in October 2016, states that it will “provide advice and recommendations on the implementation of the draft master plan” and specifically requires the establishment of “a West LA VA Master Plan Implementation Subcommittee.”

On December 30, LAR-CVEB announced the selection of its 18-member inaugural board, chosen by the provisional board in accordance with criteria set forth in the charter to include veterans of different service eras, veterans from every corner of L.A. County,

Continued on page 2