Remember the movie “Pay it Forward?” It was all about doing something good for someone else that resulted in something good happening to you, too.

Right here in Point Loma, we have that same opportunity every day by “PLAy it Forward!”

Your valuable membership pays for the many landscaping and clean up projects that make our Point Loma neighborhood more beautiful and enticing. The trees and landscaping planted today will be the beautiful shade spots and mini parks of tomorrow that today’s children will enjoy as adults.

Because you’re reading this in your newsletter, you’re a member, but is your neighbor a member? Please tell them why it’s so important that they join and how easy it is. Our website is www.pointlomaassociation.com. There, they can go there and learn all about who we are and what we do.

Help us increase our membership to ensure that we can continue to maintain current green areas and grow more throughout our Point Loma community.

PLAy it Forward!

Last winter during a blustery storm, a Jacaranda tree at 1370 Rosecrans (at Fenolon) toppled. Thanks to SDG&E, Drew Potoki, and some Mean Greeners, PLA was able to replace the tree.

During the late sixties and seventies, the doctor’s office at that location was owned by Dr. George Farres, an OB/GYN who delivered many Point Loma babies. A few months ago, Dr. Farres’ former associate, Dr. Bob Bregman, told the PLA Board that he wanted to place a plaque at the site in Dr. Farres’ honor. Sunrise Bank donated funds for the plaque, and Dr. Bregman handled the installation.

Dr. Bregman noted that Dr. Farres had a wide range of patients — from Point Loma “Blue Bloods” and Portuguese Fishing families to those who worked at the massage parlors that used to line Rosecrans. Dr. Bregman, a urologist, practiced with Dr. Farres in that building for over ten years. Dr. Farres retired in 1979. He passed away in 2007.

Asked why he wanted a plaque in Dr. Farres’ honor, Dr. Bregman said, “He was a pioneering medical person in the community. He was conscientious, diligent, and an excellent surgeon. Everything associated with him was very positive.”
**Chairman’s Message**

I don’t know about the rest of you, but for me, 2010 is just flying by. It’s hard to believe we are in October already. 2010 is going to go down as a year of tremendous change for many people. The recession has hit people very hard, even in Point Loma, and charitable giving is down for all organizations.

While the Point Loma Association welcomes donations, our primary source of revenue is membership. The more we grow, the more beautification projects we can take on and the more influence we carry with state and local government agencies.

Right now, we number about 600 Point Loma families as members. It would be great to have that number over 1,000 by the end of the year. We’ve made it easy to join the PLA right on our web site, www.pointlamoaassociation.com and using PayPal to offer secure credit card transactions. Basic membership is only $30 per year.

Show your friends our newsletter and ask them if they’re a member of the PLA. As always, thank you for your continued support.

—Tony Calabrese

**Beautification update**

**Memorial Donation Received**

A generous donation was received from Ann Stillman in memory of John Tarantino, Sr. Ann requested that the funds be used on a beautification project, and we plan to put the money to good use. Thank you, Ann!

**Nimitz West Tree Removal**

Mean Green removed a fallen tree on Nimitz with the help of Jim Miller and his Mower Unique tractor. Many thanks to Jim for providing his tractor and disposing the greenery at no cost!

**Silvergate School**

Celeste and Joie met with school parents regarding the condition of the Catalina Street bank. Some shrubs are overgrown, weeding and fertilizer are needed, and several sprinklers are broken. The following is from Heather Harris of the Friends of Silver Gate Beautification Team:

The Friends of Silver Gate Site Beautification Team are excited to be working under the guidance of Celeste Treple and Judy Bruner of PLA to improve the look of the Silver Gate Elementary School bank along Catalina Boulevard. Years ago, PLA generously donated thousands of dollars to renovate the bank with red apple and pine trees. We have identified at least 20 trees that need action. The tasks we have identified as urgent will take a lot of time and money, but many hands make light work.

If you are interested in volunteering, we will be working on the bank every month on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. If you want to help, but can’t donate time, you may make tax deductible donations to the FSG/AGP (be sure to request that the funds be earmarked for Site Beautification). Donations can be sent to Silver Gate Elementary Annual Giving Fund, 1499 Venice St., San Diego, CA 92107. For more information contact Julie Cegelski, FSG Site Beautification Chair, at cegelski11@gmail.com. Thank you, PLA for all that you do for us!

**Cañon Street Sycamores**

Thanks to the Urban Corps for doing a great job clearing weeds along the entire Cañon Walk. Major concerns have been expressed regarding the felling of PLA sycamore trees to clear a lot for potential home construction. Urban Forester Darin Potocki has recommended the trees are replaced.

**Utility Box Update**

Kerr De Roser cleaned the utility boxes in front of Dewey Elementary School, the old Long’s, De Roser’s office on Emerson Street, and applied clear varnish on the latest boxes featured in the last issue. Unfortunately, one of the new boxes was tagged! The artist, Linda Churchill, quickly painted over the graffiti. So far—so good. Look for an announcement of a utility box “tour” and cleanup via an e-blast soon. Kerr hopes to map out future utility box art locations—with some help from friends!

**Another adopted project!**

The Mean Green Team decided to place Point Loma Pocket Park at Varona Street on the work rotation.

The next beautification meeting will be at 8:00 a.m. on October 5, 2010 at the San Diego Yacht Club Board Room. To place items on the agenda, e-mail Ron at brooks1@cox.net.

**Promising us a Rose Garden**

They greeted each other like old friends, even though one of them described each other as “silent partners,” having met only a few times before. That’s because they share the same passion: maintaining the Hugh Story Memorial Rose Garden at NTC Park.

Darin Hayden and Marilee Bankert answered the Beautification Committee’s call for volunteers to maintain the garden, which is located along Shoreline Channel at the foot of the 52 Boat Memorial dedicated to the 52 submarines lost during WWII.

Marilee, a Senior Field Marketing Officer for Amtrak, spends at least one or two mornings a week in the garden. Darin, a realtor for Coldwell Banker, goes out there in the late afternoons/early evenings. They each fill a garbage bag every week—with “dead heads,” (roses beyond their prime), weeds, and trimming. Karen Davis with Beautification gave them a how-to article for maintaining roses, and instructed them that they cannot use pesticides of any kind due to proximity to the water. Their weapons? Clippers, gloves, Home Depot buckets and ladybugs. “We’re trimmers, not killers,” Marilee joked. Marilee released hundreds of ladybugs there to combat the aphids chewing holes in the leaves.

Darin left behind a rose garden when she moved from Colorado to her home at Liberty Station. “I didn’t have roses anymore; now I do,” she said.

The pair started working at the garden at the beginning of summer. They enjoy the gardening, but they also enjoy all the people in the park. And their dogs. “I’ve made many dog friends,” said Marilee. They also appreciate all of the positive feedback they get from passers by.

Neither of them knew Hugh Story. “Just what I’ve read on the plaque,” said Marilee, “but I feel a connection to him.” Darin added, “He’s the spirit of the garden.” Sometimes, when Darin accidentally breaks a stem, she looks up at the sky and asks Hugh for forgiveness, then places it on the plaque.

Marilee noticed that the other rose garden across the grass surrounding the large flag pole wasn’t looking very well. McMinn granted her permission to maintain it. “I was out there four days in a row,” she said.

The community spirit of Hugh Story lives on through Darin and Marilee, and other volunteers like them.
6

Peninsula Little League rises from the ashes

In October, 2009, an arsonist struck the Peninsula Little League field at Bill Cleator Park. He struck out an entire scoring box full of valuable equipment including an outfield fence, electronic scoreboard, P.A. system, and two pitching machines. Since then, the league has learned a lot about insurance claims, the City’s building permit process, and fundraising. The league is a non-profit organization run by parent volunteers. The insurance lesson was the hardest: it turns out that Little League insurance doesn’t cover fire. It covers vandalism and stolen property—but not fire damage.

After the arson was covered by Turbo Files on KUSI, donations started rolling in. Another league donated a pitching machine. County Supervisor Greg Cox gave them $20,000 in Community Reinvestment Grant money to use for construction materials. Architect Peter Urban prepared drawings free of charge. Then came the next hardest lesson—getting a building permit for the new scoring box. It turns out that there are entirely different building codes for scoring boxes these days. The league was originally looking at $15,000 to cover building costs—and the number has jumped to $60,000, not including the $6,500 the City is charging for the building permit. The plans have been approved, but the League is still waiting for a right of entry permit—a prerequisite for getting the building permit. “Our goal is to have the new box built by opening day,” said Kevin Otsuma, president of the League. “We never thought it would take this long.”

The lessons have been hard, but the experience has also been positive. “It went from a tragedy to a feel-good community project,” said Otsuma.

The league is still accepting donations. If you’re interested, send a check payable to Peninsula Little League to: Kevin Otsuma 4261 Santa Cruz Ave., San Diego, CA 92107.

Like Clockwork, the Point Loma Rotary Club raised the “Rotary Clock” at NTC Park, north of the Cushing Road and Womble Road parking lot. The clock commemorates Rotary’s service to the community, and will be dedicated later this month in memory of Rotarian Jim Davis. Donations for the clock, which cost more than $20,000 to build, ship, and erect, were given by the Davis family, the Point Loma Rotary Club, individual Rotarians, and The Harvey Fund at the San Diego Foundation. The clock was built by the Fancy Street Clock and Light Company of Rock Island, Illinois and is one of the first solar powered models on the West Coast.

Another example of the Mean Green Team’s (MGT) cleanup efforts. Here, Karen Davis stands near debris from a homeless encampment along Nimitz, an increasingly prevalent sight. MGT member Bob Sherman volunteered to help reduce the waste problem by working closely with our local Solid Waste Enforcement Officer when homeless move into the area. Thanks, Bob!

10th PL Concerts Season was a great success!

By Martha Phillips, Chair, Point Loma Summer Concerts

2010 was our tenth season of concerts in Point Loma Park. The bands were some of the best we’ve had, not just musically, but true entertainers—and the audience averaged 3,000 smiling faces each week. Visit our web site for photos compliments of Paul Grimes at www.plconcerts.org to see what you missed or to remember the good times.

Growing our audience means having to expand the services we provide. This year, we added more sound equipment, an ambulance on site (luckily, there was nothing more than a Band-Aid or two), increased our restroom facilities, and additional parking at All Soul’s Episcopal Church with shuttle service to and from the park.

Also new this year were opening acts. Groups from Recreational Music Center, First Friday Club, Point Loma Nazarene University, and the Monarch School entertained our early birds. It was wonderful to see more young talent in the opening acts and traditional singers of the Patriotic Song. We plan to continue this again next year.

Next year, we added more sound equipment, an ambulance on site (luckily, there was nothing more than a Band-Aid or two), additional lighting at exits (to accommodate the lack of moonshine), additional restroom facilities, and additional parking at All Soul’s Episcopal Church with shuttle service to and from the park.

All these extras make the concerts more accessible for all—but come at a price. We couldn’t hold these concerts without the generosity of our sponsors and donors:

Willis Allen Real Estate—our Presenting Sponsor for the 10th year!

Pictured above, left to right: Kathy O’Brien, Dave Brown, Ed Streicher, Ron Brooks, Carolyn Williams, Cecilia Carrick, Karen Davis, Jodie Bruhn, and Burch Erfe.

You can watch the video yourself by going to:

www.youtube.com/coun-tysandiego/p/a/u/1/0FFEF-A9Ulc

The flowers at the Nimitz/West Paint Loma “park shop” are in full bloom thanks to the efforts of the Mean Green Team.
Brian’s Farmer’s Market moves to The Village

After a brief stay at Liberty Station, Brian’s Farmer’s Market has moved to Cañon Street on Sundays from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

“Brian” is Brian Beevers, who manages the Point Loma market in addition to markets in Mission Valley and University Town Center. He calls the new location “perfect.”

“Most of the businesses on Cañon are closed on Sundays—but now some are opening BECAUSE of the new Farmer’s Market,” he said.

Beevers talked to all of the business owners in the area and got letters of support that he brought to the Point Loma Association’s August meeting. He got plenty of support from the community at the grand opening. “It was incredible.”

Beevers added one more produce vendor for the first week—and hopes to add more—but cautioned that he needs to grow slowly. Currently, the produce there represents everything that is in season,” said Beevers. Other new items include flash frozen salmon, Papu’s Fresh Fish, gourmet cheeses, breads from Charlie’s Best Breads, and scones, muffins and coffee beans from Red’s. Last week, there was pizza, Ethiopian food, fish tacos, and other items that could be part of your weekly Sunday lunch rotation.

Is there a possibility of oversaturation of Farmer’s Markets in San Diego? Beevers doesn’t think so. “10% of the San Diego population shops at Farmer’s Markets,” he said. He thinks there will be more because people won’t drive long distances to go to one. “You need a community of about 3000-4000 people to support a Farmer’s Market.”

For more information, go to sdmarketmanager.com/wb/.

And...look for the PLA booth at the Farmer’s Market! We’ll be there once a month recruiting new members and handing out goodies.

New sponsors this year included: Council President Pro Tem Kevin Faulconer, Point Loma Rotary Club, Point Loma Foundation, Ryan Family Charitable Foundation, Cathleen Silliman, D.D.S., Point Loma Credit Union, Acacia Travel & Collette Vacations, Jersey Mike’s Subs and The Wine Pub.

We also thank these returning sponsors: Sunrise Bank, City of San Diego Arts & Culture, County of San Diego Supervisor Greg Cox, Dick & Dorothya Laub, Pacific View Foundation, Cymer Inc., Point Loma Nazarene University, David De Risiere, D.D.S., Stamp’s Family Marketplace, Wear Fund with the Ryan Peninsula YMCA, and Recreational Music Center.

There are many others who generously donate every year as part of their planned giving and the folks who buy raffle tickets every week. We depend on every dollar raised to produce the quality of entertainment and services our audience has come to expect.

Our volunteers also make the concerts possible. This project brings more people and organizations together to volunteer on one project than most any other. Why? Because it’s fun! If you would like to find out more about how you can support the concerts with a sponsorship, donation, or through volunteering, please visit our web site at www.pconcerts.org or contact Martha Phillips, Chair, at (619) 523-3787.

In your community...

It’s helpful to know if your street is going to be ripped up or fixed up. Here’s a summary of a few infrastructure projects happening in Point Loma.

Water/Sewer Pipeline projects

To meet federal EPA mandates to replace aging and deteriorating sewer mains and water mains, the City of San Diego is embarking on multiple projects in Point Loma.

Construction crews will work in different areas throughout Point Loma, but not all at the same time to minimize traffic impacts.

For more information, go to: www.sandiego.gov/engineering-cip/projectsprograms/poinlomaprojects.shtml.

Street repaving

In April, Mayor Sanders announced the beginning of a massive project to resurface 134 miles of the city’s most damaged streets with asphalt overlay. Asphalt overlay is generally used on streets in very bad condition. With this project, the city will perform asphalt resurfacing on nearly as many miles of streets as it did in the previous eight fiscal years combined. In addition to the 134 miles of asphalt overlay, the city will be performing slurry-seal resurfacing of an additional 147 miles of roads.

On September 22, 2010, KPBS reported that San Diego roads were ranked the eighth worst among the nation’s regions with populations greater than 500,000, according to a report by TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit group (source: KPBS.org).

Which streets in Point Loma will begin to reverse this trend? Turn the map horizontally, then get out your magnifying glass:

red=asphalt overlay; blue = slurry seal

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The community spirit of Hugh Story lives on through Darin and Marilee, and other volunteers like them.
Thanks to our Point Loma Association Members

Every member at every level is important to us and valued by us. It is a special pleasure to recognize our members who are able to support the PLA at a higher level. They are:

**Honorable Douglas Woodworth ($10,000!)**

**Platinum Members ($1,000)**
- Pat and Hugh Carter
- Connie Golden

Tony Calabrese, President, Sunrise Bank

**Gold Members ($500)**
- Joann & Glenn Detloff
- Sempra Energy
- Marcia Lo Vecchio
- Ryan Family Charitable Trust
- Sandy & Edward Silverman

**Silver Members ($250)**
- Stacey & Peter Benjamin
- Diane & Hugh Bennett
- Bob Brower
- Jodie & Dr. John Bruhn
- Roberta & Malin Burnham
- Margaret & Lawrence Coleman
- Helen Coukoulis
- Mrs. Diane W. Cramer
- Kerri & Dr. David De Rosier
- Julie Dillon & Jim Roberts
- Gillian Robinson
- Margaret Roulette

**Linda & Bill Fox**
- Jeanne L. Frost
- Susan & William Gable, DDS
- Wendy Gillespie
- Karan & Bennett Greenwald
- Mary Lou & Frederick Harris
- Elizabeth & Donald Haynsworth
- Bonnie & Fred Howe
- Joy & Bob Jones
- Rebecca & Allen Jones
- Helen & Webster Kinnaird
- Linda & Dwayne Little

**Nancy & Tony McCune**
- Dr. and Mrs. Lee Monroe
- Bonita Macvaugh-Howe
- Rebecca & D. Nielsen Pollock
- Jean and Honorable Gordon Thompson
- Celeste & Gene Trepte
- Ann & Jess Walker
- Dee & Joseph Wambaugh
- Joseph Watkins
- Barbara & Carl Yamashiro
- Bebe & Marvin Zigman

**Corporate Members ($250)**
- Betty and George Harbaugh
- Don Lang, Lang & Associates, Inc.
- Lincoln Military Housing
- The Bay Club Hotel and Marina

Raymond Simas, San Diego Trust Bank
- United Portuguese SES, Inc.
- Windemere Real Estate

**Bronze Members ($100)**
- Betty & Steve Allman
- Jean Anderson
- Marge & Art Aylott
- Susan & Larry Baumann
- Joseph Benoit
- Myrna & Robert Bossler
- Ann & Ron Brooks
- Kathy & Ed Brown
- Esther Burnham
- Bonnie & Daddy W. Butler
- Elaine & Douglas Butz
- Cecilia Carrick & Stan Nadel
- Sandra & Harry Carter
- Nancy Coleman
- Cathy Dellenbach
- Donna & Jack Damson
- Joyce & Charles Ellison
- Doris & Peter Elsworth
- Thalia & Bill Evenson
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- Dr. and Mrs. Bruce Kimball
- Michelle Kitchin
- Dorothy & Albert J. Kohanowich
- Klondie Kunzel
- Kathy & Tim Lacey
- Vicki & Dick Lareau
- Mrs. Joy Ledford
- Lee & Geoff Lipsey
- Phil Lobred
- Donis and Honorable Mack Lovett
- Charles MacVean
- Robin Mansfield
- Heidi & Kirk Mather
- Susan & David McColl
- Betsy McCullough & James Hare
- Audrey & Douglas McGinty
- Connie Melhorn
- Shelley & Stan Miller
- Rita Moller
- Barbara & Terry Moore
- Barbara & Michael Morton
- Melanie Nickel
- Cheryl J. Nogle
- Kay G. North
- Mrs. Betty Peabody
- Nancy Peckham
- Louise Phillips
- Jacqueline & Craig Plummer
- Brenda & John Rebelo
- Mr. and Mrs. William Pollock
- Mrs. David Pritchard
- Robert Randall
- Frances MacKenzie
- & Joshua Rees
- Mary & Harold Sadler
- Carol & John Sands
- Nina Sharp
- Mary Louise & John F. Shoemaker
- Manuel Silva
- Arlene Simpson
- Susan & Alfred Smith
- Allette & Gregory Smith
- Mary Snell
- Mrs. Wallace Springstead
- Nancy Warwick & Jon Stone
- Elise Streicher
- Diane Sullivan
- Maureen Summers
- Patricia & Frederick Tellam
- Gary Tillinghast
- Marlene and Honorable Howard Trentine
- Alissa & Tim Tuter
- Patti & Rand Wasser
- Mary Jane & Jim Wiesler
- Lois Wittern
- Carol & Craig Witwer
- Pat & Bob Woodward
Meet your new PLA Board members!
The PLA installed FIVE new board members at the Annual Dinner in June. Let’s meet them!

**John Pederson** wasn’t among the five originally installed. He took over for Carol Norman, who wasn’t able to serve – and we’re glad he did! John is a retired Navy Captain who served in the Reserves and retired as a Reserve Officer. After leaving the Reserves, John worked as a Sales Manager for Tropicana, a division of the Coca Cola Company.

John got on the community radar when he got involved in the methane gas issue a few months back. He went door to door to tell neighbors about the proposal to truck methane gas on the streets of Point Loma. Thanks to his and other neighbor’s efforts – that plan was taken off the table.

John jumped right in to the PLA Board and is serving on the membership committee. He has fresh ideas for making the community more aware of the PLA, and has been calling new members to thank them for their membership and collect e-mail addresses.

The Mean Green Team will be happy to know that John enjoys gardening!

**Mary R. Montanus** is on-staff at a CPA firm in Mission Valley and also has her own Accounting and Bookkeeping Practice in Point Loma. Her specialty niche is the small business owner. Mary organizes and manages the financial aspect so that her busy business owners can do what they do best – run their business. “Every day is different and I get to help people, which is gratifying,” Mary said.

Early in her career, Mary worked in her family-owned business, so she knows first-hand what it’s like to be in the trenches.

As Treasurer of the PLA, Mary’s responsibility is to keep an eye on the finances and the budgets – monthly inflows and outflows – and to keep the Board apprised of the current financial situation.

Mary has called Point Loma home for the last eight years and is activity involved in the sailing community.

**Tommy Cardosa** is a native Point Loman who attended St. Charles Borromeo Academy, the University of San Diego High School and is a graduate of San Diego State University. He is a local Realtor specializing in the Peninsula area. “I love my job! I enjoy helping the people in my community obtain their goals because their objectives are my number one priority” said Tommy.

Tommy was recently awarded the Peninsula Beacon’s Reader's Choice Silver Award for Realtor in the Point Loma & Ocean Beach area.

Tommy is also very involved with other non-profits including the Portuguese Historical Center here in Point Loma and Mama's Kitchen. “My family stressed the importance of giving back to my community. I am very excited to be a part of the PLA, which is such a crucial organization in the community I call home.”

**Malinda Dickenson** “There is a reason the first San Diegans chose Point Loma: it's fantastic!”

Having grown up San Diego, Malinda has lived in several local areas, and Point Loma is her favorite. “It is a pleasure being able to give back to this beautiful community through the Point Loma Association,” she said.

Malinda brings a background in land use, environmental, real estate, and public agency law to her PLA service, and very much looks forward to acting as a conduit between her friends, neighbors, colleagues, the PLA, and the community at large. “It is incredible to be a part of a group of people so dedicated to quality, and the whole,” said Malinda.

**David Crawford** is a Business Real Estate attorney who has lived in Point Loma for 25 years. He has been active with the YMCA and Point Loma High School Foundation, and is ready to “get out there and start pitching in” for the PLA. “I’m getting a jist of what’s going on,” he said.

David is pictured on the far right with fellow new board members Tommy Cardosa, Mary Montanus, and Malinda Dickenson.
Remember the movie “Pay it Forward?” It was all about doing something good for someone else that resulted in something good happening to you, too.

Right here in Point Loma, we have that same opportunity every day by “PLAy it Forward!”

Your valuable membership pays for the many landscaping and clean up projects that make our Point Loma neighborhood more beautiful and enticing. The trees and landscaping planted today will be the beautiful shade spots and mini parks of tomorrow that today’s children will enjoy as adults.

Because you’re reading this in your newsletter, you’re a member, but is your neighbor a member? Please tell them why it’s so important that they join and how easy it is. Our website is www.pointlomaassociation.com. There, they can go there and learn all about who we are and what we do.

Help us increase our membership to ensure that we can continue to maintain current green areas and grow more throughout our Point Loma community.

PLAy it Forward!

Garden Award

Last winter during a blustery storm, a Jacaranda tree at 1370 Rosecrans (at Fenolon) toppled. Thanks to SDG&E, Drew Potoki, and some Mean Greeners, PLA was able to replace the tree.

During the late sixties and seventies, the doctor’s office at that location was owned by Dr. George Farres, an OB/GYN who delivered many Point Loma babies. A few months ago, Dr. Farres’ former associate, Dr. Bob Bregman, told the PLA Board that he wanted to place a plaque at the site in Dr. Farres’ honor. Sunrise Bank donated funds for the plaque, and Dr. Bregman handled the installation.

Dr. Bregman noted that Dr. Farres had a wide range of patients — from Point Loma “Blue Bloods” and Portuguese Fishing families to those who worked at the massage parlors that used to line Rosecrans. Dr. Bregman, a urologist, practiced with Dr. Farres in that building for over ten years. Dr. Farres retired in 1979. He passed away in 2007.

Asked why he wanted a plaque in Dr. Farres’ honor, Dr. Bregman said, “He was a pioneering medical person in the community. He was conscientious, diligent, and an excellent surgeon. Everything associated with him was very positive.”