



# La Mesa Historical Society LOOKOUT AVENUE



VOLUME 13, NUMBER 5

JUNE, 1991

## ICE CREAM SOCIAL SUNDAY JUNE 9th

Our annual Ice Cream Social and barbeque will be held on Sunday, June 9 from noon until 3 pm on the McKinney House grounds. The Quilters will have many of their handmade items on display, including baby quilts. Live music will be provided by the Jim Dandies Band, and the San Diego Parasol Strutters will be strutting their stuff starting at about 1 pm. Hand-scooped ice cream cones and sundaes will be available, as well as barbequed chicken and beans, salads, and beverages.

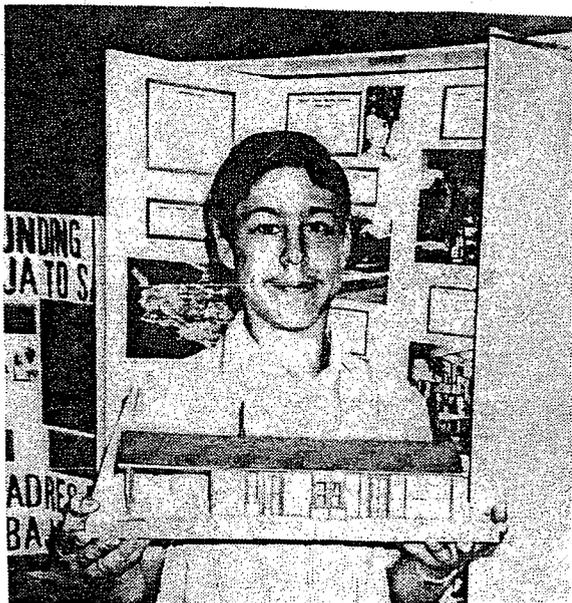
The McKinney House will be open for tours. Costumes and artifacts from World Wars I and II will be on display. We are also trying to arrange to have the video of the construction of the Mt. Helix amphitheater and cross on a continual showing in the office.

This year's drawing prizes are:

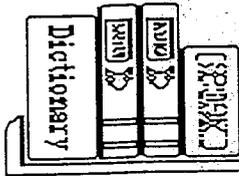
- 1st - Quilt, queen size "Double Irish Chain" hand sewn by our own LMHS Quilters
- 2nd - Dinner for Two at Jamar's in La Mesa
- 3rd - Lunch for Two at Langley's in La Mesa
- 4th - \$20 Gift Certificate from Victorian Cottage in La Mesa

Tickets for the drawing are \$1.00 each and will benefit the Society's many ongoing projects as well as the maintenance of the McKinney House and grounds. The drawing will be held at 2:30 pm at the Ice Cream Social. Please come and join us!

\* \* \* \* \*



Richard Johnson, a student at Standley Junior High School in University City, received a Special Award at the San Diego - Tijuana International History Fair. The presentation ceremony was March 17, 1991 at the Hall of Champions in Balboa Park. For his model of the La Mesa Train Depot and accompanying report he was given a cash award, plus a membership in the La Mesa Historical Society and a history of La Mesa. Betty Teague, First Vice President of LMHS, made the presentation. The model will be on display at the McKinney House during the Ice Cream Social.



# For Your Information

The Board of directors has unanimously elected to establish a Memorial Fund to honor former members of the Society and others in the community. The names of those to be honored and those making donations will be suitably recorded and displayed in the McKinney House.

The monies collected will be used to carry out projects and improvements in keeping with the purposes of the Society. Anyone wishing to make a donation may do so by writing a check to the La Mesa Historical Society and designating the Memorial Fund. Please mention any name(s) to be remembered.

\* \* \* \* \*

The educational goals of LMHS were met last month as Pat Kettler visited the following schools during May:

- Highlands Elementary - 75 3rd graders
- Murray Manor Elementary - 75 3rd graders and the 3rd grade Gate class
- Maryland Avenue Elementary - 75 3rd and 4th graders

Also visiting the McKinney House during the last week of May were 125 2nd and 3rd graders from Maryland Avenue and Highlands Elementary Schools. Brenda Neill, Donna Regan, and Betty Teague served as docents.

\* \* \* \* \*

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL** envelopes will be mailed out in June for the 1991-1992 year. Your support is very much needed, and indeed very much appreciated.

\* \* \* \* \*

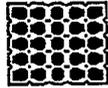
At the May General Meeting, the following slate of officers was accepted by the membership:

- President - vacant
- 1st Vice President - Betty Teague
- 2nd Vice President - Beth Blackman
- 3rd Vice President - Ed Blackman
- Secretary - Brenda Neill
- Treasurer - Beverly Dostal
- Directors, 1991-93 - Mary-Em Howard, Donna Regan

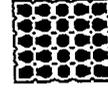
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Contributing to this issue were Beatrice Acers, Pat Kettler, Donna Regan, and Betty Teague.

With this issue of "Lookout Avenue" we will be returning to a quarterly publication schedule. Articles, photos, etc. are welcome from all members.



## QUILTER'S SPOTLIGHT



Two of the very able, talented, and loyal members of our group are Nadine Washburn and Gay Tulp.

Nadine has, for all the years of our quilting together, given a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and experience, as well as generously sharing with us bits and pieces of quilting fabrics. Gay artistically pieced, and very generously donated the Double Irish Chain quilt that our group quilted, and will be won by the lucky person holding the winning ticket at our June 9th Ice Cream Social drawing.

Nadine's "know-how" and Gay's "drive" have greatly contributed to our success as a group. We couldn't get along without them! Other members of our productive and happy group are Ethel Allen, Julia Bras, Bettie Burns, Eleanor Doerr. Judy Howard, Eleanor Meyer, Jean Ohmsteade, Marie Parkhurst, Margaret Pearson, Jerry Schatz, June Skalecky, Marie Taylor, LaVelle Vaughn, Irma Wiley, Beatrice Acers, and newcomers Libby Falter and Elaine McAlpin. The Quilter's meet every Wednesday from 9 a.m. - 12 noon in the Palermo Building on the McKinney House grounds. New members are welcome!

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### THE INCREDIBLE MAGNIFICENCE OF CREATION

In communing with nature, I often marvel at the incredible magnificence of creation and the creative energy that WAS, IS and will EVER be.

That there is ever present in the Cosmos, a supreme architectural designer, is evidenced by the very nature of our world and its infinite species.

To ponder the wonders of all the species and the perfect physical order of the Universe, leads to SELF ... and to the realization that, I AM.

A single drop of water from the ocean contains an ocean within itself and always returns to the parent body when its purpose has been fulfilled.

Therefore, I am created in the image of God, I am a part of the whole. The whole is within and all around me and like the drop of water, I too will return to my CREATOR.

Until I return then, let me be all that I was created to be, and continue to look in AWE upon that Incredible Magnificence of Creation that I call ... GOD and the Christ within!

(poem written by Lloyd Donahoo, March 15, 1990)



## Lloyd Donahoo 1918 - 1991

La Mesa lost a member of one of its pioneer families with the passing on March 16 of Lloyd Donahoo; businessman, teacher, and founding president of the La Mesa Historical Society.

The Donahoo family first came to La Mesa in 1906 with the arrival of Lloyd's grandfather, Thomas Donahoo, his wife Alice, and their five children.

Their son Roy married his wife Frances in 1912, and they had four children; Dexter, Lloyd, Lorraine, and Clara. Roy worked in the concrete business, and the "Bougher & Donahoo" imprint can still be seen in some of La Mesa's earliest sidewalks. By the 1920's, Roy had become a plastering contractor.

Lloyd Earl Donahoo was born Christmas Day, 1918, in a house on Cypress Street. In recent years, Lloyd had chronicled his experiences with his childhood friends growing up in La Mesa in the 1920's and 30's. His articles appeared in the La Mesa Courier and the La Mesa Forum, and Lloyd had gathered these stories into book form as The Adventures of the Turtle Creek Gang now planned for publication. La Mesa in the mid-1920's was a small community of about 2,000 people, surrounded by open space. Turtle Creek was the stream that ran through Alvarado Canyon north of downtown La Mesa, where Interstate 8 is today.

Lloyd attended La Mesa Grammar School, and graduated from Grossmont High School in 1938. The following year he married fellow classmate Jane Coolidge. Lloyd and Jane had two sons, Roger and Michael.

On his 21st birthday in 1939, Lloyd became a La Mesa police officer, one of six officers on the force. He served in the Navy in World War II, returning to police work at the war's end.

in 1947, Lloyd joined his father's plastering company. He later taught driver's education at Grossmont High for 16 years, retiring in 1980. He then started his own business, Seven League Tours.

Lloyd was always interested in his community and its past. In 1975, he was one of a small group of people who met to form the La Mesa Historical Society and to arrange for the purchase of the McKinney House as the new organization's headquarters and museum. He served two terms as the Society's first president, stayed on the Board as a director for six years, and continued to be active active as a member of LMHS.



**Mabel Perrapato 1915 - 1991**

Mabel was born in San Diego in 1915 and moved to La Mesa with her parents, Charles and Bertha Rapp, in 1921. The Rapps, including sister Marion and brother "Pete", lived for many years in a house on the North side of La Mesa Boulevard, east of Palm Avenue, where several shops now stand.

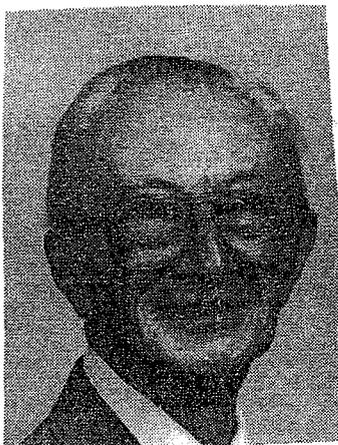
Mabel attended Grossmont High School, where she graduated in 1932. While in high school, she worked for a person familiar to most every La Mesan from the 1910's through the 1940's - Dan McNulty, the candy man. Dan had his candy store across the street from where Mabel and her family lived on the boulevard. His sweets were famous all over San Diego County.

Mabel's father was La Mesa's Postmaster from 1924 to 1934 and he served two terms on the La Mesa City Council from 1934 to 1937.

In 1975, when the La Mesa Historical Society was formed, Mabel was a part of its beginnings. She served in later years as its 2nd Vice President and 3rd Vice President, as well as Membership Chair, the position she held at the time of her death.

Over the years she was the chief gingerbread maker for our annual Christmas Open House, even bringing her own homemade German cookies to share with all. Mabel's warm and generous presence will be very much missed by everyone who knew her. She was one of a kind.

\* \* \* \* \*



**Vince Odom 1912 - 1991**

Vince was born August 30, 1912 in Cherryvale, Kansas. He received degrees from Baker University in 1933 and the Boston School of Theology in 1938. In 1939, he married Helen Rohrbacher.

After serving five years as a minister in Florida Methodist churches, Vince served as a Navy chaplain during World War II, from 1943 to 1946.

In 1945, Vince and Helen settled in Lemon Grove, moving to La Mesa in 1956. Vince entered the real estate business in 1958 as a member of the La Mesa Board of Realtors. Since 1966 he and Helen operated Odom Realty.

Vince was active in both the East County Board of Realtors and the California Association of Realtors. His community involvement included service on the boards of the East County United Way, Esat County Red Cross, the Davis YMCA, and the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce.

Vince and Helen joined the newly formed La Mesa Historical Society in 1975. Both served on its Board of Directors - Helen as 3rd Vice President from 1981 to 1983, and Vince as a director from 1986 to 1990.

## THE GREAT LA MESA BANK ROBBERY

Marybelle S. Bigelow  
Professor of Art Emeritus  
San Diego State University



It was August 9 of 1934 and Daddy was on vacation (we stayed home that year). He, Julius C. Schmidt, and Mama took Lois Jean Floto and me to see Kate Hepburn in "Little Women", playing at the elegant Fox Theater in San Diego. It was a matinee performance and as we left the theater we heard, "EXTRA, EXTRA ... READ ALL ABOUT IT". Dad rushed to buy a paper. The headline screamed "LA MESA BRANCH OF BANK OF AMERICA ROBBED". As my father was one of the officers at this bank, the four of us dashed to the "Flying A" parking lot, scrambled into the car and roared down Sixth Street as fast as our 1928 Studebaker could manage, thence to El Cajon Boulevard.

Now El Cajon Boulevard was quite new but whoever the contractor had been wasn't one who believed in smooth roadbeds. In any case, at our maximum speed the Studie just hit the highest spots ... making for a smooth ride, for once.

In short order, we reached our house at 7811 Lookout Avenue (now La Mesa Boulevard). Mama and Lois Jean tumbled out of the car and off Dad and I went to the Bank of America, located at the northeast corner of Lookout Avenue and Spring Street (now the La Mesa Furniture Store). The bank was in semi-darkness and only one light burned in the Chief Clerk's cage ... Paul VanDoren's spot.

Out of the back of the bank rumbled Mr. Riley, the janitor, and in a shakey voice asked who was there. "What happened here?", Dad asked. "Well, said Mr. Riley, these three men came in with guns. Two went into the vault with a pillowcase. They filled up the case with all the coins they could get into it. However, as they rounded one of the desks, the pillowcase struck the desk's sharp corner and the case split open, spilling the rolls of coins. The third fellow, acting as lookout in front of the bank, fled in his car. One of the two robbers in the bank fled with the pillowcase still in hand; the other, still in the bank, circled around H.A. Hall's and my father's desks. Paul VanDoren was usind Dad's desk while he was on vacation, and with Dad's gun in hand, he hit the would-be robber overthe head with the butt-end. The robber didn't even stumble, but kept running and fled out the door. He must have had a head that was all bone and no brain. (Why would they choose coins over paper money?) The butt-end of the gun was cracked, proof that it was no gentle blow that Paul administered to the thief's head.

I can tell you, the more Mr. Riley went into detail the spookier it got to me as it was now nearly dark, the interior of the bank was in semi-darkness, and I had to stay until my Dad counted all the money in order to find out the financial losses, if any. Don't ask me if there were any! That was almost 60 years ago! But to me it was the GREAT BANK ROBBERY of the decade.

\*Two of the robbers were apprehended by La Mesa townspeople as they tried to escape down Lookout Avenue (La Mesa Boulevard). The third man, who fled from the front of the bank in "the get-away car" was later apprehended in San Diego. La Mesa Scout, August 10, 1934, pg. 1.

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### RECENT ACQUISITIONS

- Grossmont High School Annuals - 1921, 1922, 1923  
Panorama of the 1921 Riverview High School Student Body (Lakeside)  
Donated by Mrs. Angelyn Wright, presented to LMHS by Janean Young
- Photographs - 2 postcard photos of the Culbertson House in La Mesa and one of the Culbertsons in front of the house  
Donated by Janean Young - collection of Zola (Martin) Crocker Amrose
- Infant's Dress, cotton print, c. 1890  
Donated by Dorothy Nelson
- Pint Milk Bottle from Hartzel T. Anderson's Dairy, La Mesa, c. 1927-1930  
Donated by Chris Hagan (found buried in a yard on La Mesa Blvd.)
- Recital Program, 1926, autographed by Mme. Schumann-Heink; La Mesa City Election Brochures, 1946; Proposed Landscape Plan for Collier Park, 1936  
Donated by Gilbert Judy, with other materials
- Carrie Jacobs Bond Sheet Music, "A Perfect Day Waltz", 1916 and "The Hand of You", 1920  
Donated by Carol Lockwood
- Brass Trophy Cup engraved "Festival de las Flores, La Mesa"  
Donated by Eileen Smith

**LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OFFICERS and DIRECTORS**

**PRESIDENT** . . . . . Pat Kettler (463-0197)  
**FIRST VICE PRESIDENT** . . . . . Betty Teague  
**SECOND VICE PRESIDENT** . . . . .  
**THIRD VICE PRESIDENT** . . . . . Beth Blackman - Publicity  
**SECRETARY** . . . . . Brenda Neill  
**TREASURER** . . . . . Beverly Dostal  
**PAST PRESIDENT** . . . . . Donna Regan  
**DIRECTORS** . . . . . Ed Blackman  
Beverly Decker - Hospitality  
Mary-Em Howard  
Doug Neill - Newsletter  
Greg Truesdale  
**QUILTER'S REPRESENTATIVE** . . . . . Beatrice Acers

**REV. MCKINNEY HOUSE MUSEUM**  
**(619) 466-0197**

*LOOKOUT AVENUE* is the official publication of the La Mesa Historical Society.  
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Articles, photos, and letters are welcome from all members, and must be received by the  
editor by the third Monday of the month prior to publication. Submissions may be edited  
due to space limitations. Contact Doug Neill at 697-7765 or 463-2230 for details.



P. O. Box 882, La Mesa, California 92044  
**La Mesa Historical Society**

Museum: Rev. Henry A. McKinney House (1908)  
8369 University Avenue

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