

La Mesa Historical Society

LOOKOUT AVENUE

Volume 39, Issue 3 Summer 2014

President's Address

Jim Newland

LMHS President

Hope you are enjoying another great La Mesa summer.

The Society rolled through another spring full of comings and goings.

It was an especially busy May for 2014. We started with our Annual Meeting and Rose Garden Ceremony on Saturday, May 3rd.

It was another celebration of our community's spirit as several new names were memorialized in our rose garden, including the Society's long-standing volunteer, supporter and friend, Carol Jones. Carol, beloved wife of our former president Gordon Jones, passed away in March, and she will be missed by us all—but not forgotten.

Also at the meeting, the membership elected the proposed slate of Board Members and Officers for the new 2014/15 fiscal year. Incumbents Ed Blackman, Suda House, and Kathy Tinsley all returning for new terms.

However we did have one notable change. Ruth Contino our long-serving Vice President of Membership decided to step down after 13 years of service to the Society. Ruth's work ethic, consistency, and dedication are admirable. We could always count on her to keep the membership records intact and provide regular updates at the meetings—all presented along with her wonderful smile and engaging laugh. Although we will miss her at the meetings, she promises to continue to help at Society events. If you see her, thank her again for her service.

Luckily we were able to find a worthy successor for our new Membership VP in La Mesan George Fahouris. Former President Aaron Landau, Vice President Wade Douglas and I had the pleasure of meeting and working with George during all our service on the City's Centennial Committee. George is a long-time La Mesan and runs his own marketing and communications business—skills and expertise that will only enhance the Society's activities. George also will be assisting with our public relations efforts—pulling us into the social media world so important for communicating these days.

In addition to our successful Annual Meeting, May also saw the Society participate at the Friends of the Library's Authors & Artists event (strategically placed next to keynote speaker—and verbavore—Richard Lederer) and a full day at the La Mesa Village Merchant Association's Antique Street Fair. Thanks to all who stopped by our booths at these events—and to our volunteers who helped man them. We also participated again in the City's Flag Day Parade, thanks to Ed Woodruff and Tom Ellingham for representing us with their classic cars—community members Kathleen McLaughlin and John Hutchison riding in Tom's Model A rumble seat.

Board Member Kathy Tinsley and myself also attended a recent historic event. The June 14th re-dedication of the Heartland for Decency Vietnam Veterans Memorial located at the northwest corner

of Spring and University next to the American Legion Building. Over 300 attended this wonderful event.

Our Vietnam Memorial was originally dedicated on June 14, 1970 (research has indicated that this was the first Vietnam veterans memorial built west of the Rockies—and perhaps one of the first half dozen in the country). The project was conceived and overseen in 1969 by a group of teenagers from the Heartland Area (roughly the area of today's Grossmont Union High School District boundaries) who arranged for the city to provide the property and contractors to help build the monument. Two key members of this group, Denise Evers (Rhoads) and Oresta Zalopany (Johnson) re-engaged in the last two years to bring attention to the dilapidated landmark, raising funds, completing the refurbishment and organizing this event (which was covered live by Channel 51's Dave Scott).

We are hoping to arrange for Denise, Oresta and many of the other original "Heartland for Decency" members to reunite for one of our upcoming History Roundtables. Keep an eye out to our website for specifics on date and time.

Another bit of activity was the recent refurbishment of our own Wisteria Arbor. Thanks to Vice President Wade Douglas, this iconic piece of the McKinney House landscape has been given new life. Wade first found talented carpenter Stephen



Lehtonen, who did a wonderful job of re-weaving the arbor structure back through the Wisteria with no damage. Secondly, Wade got our good friends at La Mesa Lumber, the oldest active business in town, to donate much of the materials for the job. This project is just another great example of the Society and local business community coming together.

Volunteer activities in the archives also continue to make great progress, as our group of dedicated volunteers, led by Donna Niemeier, with former SDSU intern Frances Wolven and Melody Andrews help in processing and cataloging our archival and object collections.

Here's to a safe summer whether you are traveling out of town or not.

Don't' forget to check our website to keep up with all our activities (including our upcoming Home Tour November 1st). http://lamesahistoricalsociety.com

Feel free to contact me directly to discuss any ideas you might have to help us continue our invaluable mission for preserving La Mesa's history.

9th Annual Historic Home Tour

Mark your calendars for La Mesa Historical Society's 9th Historic Home Tour, Saturday, November 1, 2014 from 10am to 3:30pm. This year's tour will concentrate on some wonderful homes in the Grossmont area. Again, we will provide shuttles to each home. More details will be coming your way.

Landmarked Homes of La Mesa

"The House of Seven Grables"

At 4344 Date Avenue sits the Sherman Grable House. This estate house was built by and for developer Sherman C. Grable. Grable was instrumental in the initial development of San Diego's Logan Heights area around the first few years of last century. In 1906, he moved to the unincorporated semi-rural suburb of La Mesa Springs. Together with C. C. Park through the Park-Grable Investment Company, Grable subdivided and developed a substantial portion of what is now central La Mesa from 1906-1913. He was involved in the drive to incorporate La Mesa in 1912.

Grable's "Hillcrest" estate, originally 6.76 acres, was built at the top of a commanding knoll to the south of and overseeing central La Mesa. The house is estimated to have been built around 1910-1911.The Sherman Grable House is an outstanding and unique local example of architectural design. It is a modified Tudor style with strong influences from the "Prairie" school. This structure shows uncanny similarities to the early estate work of noted architect Irving Gill. Although Gill reportedly designed the Bank of La Mesa and Park-Grable office building at the corner of Spring and Lookout, so far there is no documentation of the designer of the Grable House.



The Grable House sold again recently. Not for quite as low as the price of homes as sold by Sherman Grable and the Park-Grable Investment Co. as depicted in the ad below.

Best Bargain in Town
SEE IT TODAY

Fine, new Five-Room, Modern House with two open air sleeping bedrooms. Good lawn, shrubbery and fruit trees. Only 2 1/2 blocks from post-office on Lookout avenue. Only $1,000 cash. Why pay rent when you can own your own home with so small an investment?
We have several other bargains it will pay you to investigate.

Park-Grable Investment Co.
SAN DIEGO **LA MESA**

(Ad typed as printed in the La Mesa Scout February 24, 1917 - including "avenue" not capitalized.)

Rose Garden Celebration and Annual Meeting

On Saturday, May 3, 2014 the La Mesa Historical Society held its Rose Garden Celebration and Annual Meeting.

The McKinney House museum rose garden was started in March of 1996, it was a portion of the landscape revitalization of the McKinney House grounds. Spots for 27 roses were laid out along the east side of the house. The roses were selected based on research showing what roses would have been popular in La Mesa from the date the house was built until about 1920.

Each year, for the Rose Garden Celebration, names are submitted for recognition and a ceremony is held to commemorate these individuals. Their names are then placed on a plaque in the rose garden. Those recognized at this year's celebration were:

Woody Cronkrite - Woodrow Charles Cronkrite was born in Maryland on January 13,1947. After high school he joined the Marine Corps. At the age of 20 he was killed in action near Con Thien Vietnam. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Edith Freymiller – Edith moved from a citrus farm in El Cajon to La Mesa in the early fifties. The citrus farm later became the site of El Cajon Valley High School. She and her husband, George, owned a house on Pine Court. She was famous for making all her grandchildren a box of delicious Christmas cookies every year. The Freymillers celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

Julia Herring – In 1950, at the age of 60, Julia and her husband Orville moved to La Mesa. They took on the task of raising their two grandchildren who went to Rolando Elementary, La Mesa Jr. High and then on to Helix High School. She remained eternally young by marching in the Mother Goose Parade with her

grandson who played the trumpet in Ozzie's Band. Julia loved to work in her garden.

William Hastings - William (Bill) was born in 1934 in Arlington, VA and grew up there. After completing one year of college at George Washington University in Washington, DC, he enlisted in the Air Force and did one tour of duty during and after the Korean War. He worked with a Department of Defense Navy Laboratory based in San Diego beginning in 1970. He retired in 1989 having completed 30 years of Federal Civil Service. He was a member and a very active volunteer of the La Mesa Historical Society serving as Treasurer from 1995 - 1997.

Carol Jones – Carol was an active and long time member of the La Mesa Historical Society. She died quietly Saturday, March 22, 2014. To people whose paths crossed with Carol, she may be best remembered for her tremendous generosity of spirit. She seemed to always be offering something of herself to others through her volunteer efforts with countless children's organizations and to seniors at the La Mesa Adult Enrichment Center.

After the Rose Garden Celebration the annual meeting was held. A brief summary of the 2013-2014 activities was given by President Jim Newland and the election of 2014-2015 La Mesa Historical Society officers was held.

The day was concluded with a raffle and an ice cream social. Participants were also invited to visit the museum and view the newly opened La Mesa Post Office display which highlights a detailed history of La Mesa's postal system prepared by Thomas Cox.

A Summertime Tradition!



This photo of La Mesa lads enjoying the local fruits of our agricultural heritage is reportedly from one of the La Mesa community's notable July 4th celebrations circa 1910.

A Special Welcome for the Society's New Members

Gabriel & Lee Carini
Melody Andrews
Linda Oftedahl
John & Eileen Schmitz
George Fleischmann Brand

La Mesa Through the Years

100 Plus Years Ago

La Mesa Scout

From June 26, 1914; typed as written

LA MESANS BELIEVE IN CITY BEAUTIFUL

Parks Have Been Set Aside to Make This the Beauty Spot Of the Pacific

Into the scheme of making the city beautiful the citizens of La Mesa have looked well. Moved by the argument of low values in property at the present as against inevitably higher values later, small tracts, especially desirable as parks, have been set aside and are being improved as occasion seems to demand.

Five years ago a five-acre tract of land was given to the town by Col. D.C. Collier, who, with his company, formerly owned considerable property in the vicinity, with the understanding that it should be improved as a park by local people. The tract is admirably located for a park, less than a quarter of a mile from the center of the city and bordering the well-known Collier springs. A stock company was formed with a capital of $2,000 for the purpose of improving the tract. In a few months the entire issue of stock had been taken and work was commenced toward improvement. Desiring an independent water supply for the park, a well was sunk on the portion of the property bordering the Collier springs and a plant installed.

Upcoming Events

Historic Home Tour – November 1st

Archives – Open Saturday 1 – 4pm

McKinney House – Open 2nd & 4th Saturday 1 – 4pm

Check our website www.lamesahistory.com for the latest on Society events.

Arti**FACTS!**

"Victor" Vacuum Cleaner



This vacuum is hidden away in a small closet in the kitchen of our historical house. It is a Hugro Manufacturing Company "Victor" vacuum cleaner and was patented in 1911 by Charles Boyer.

To use the vacuum, you hold the handle on the side while pumping the top plunger handle to create suction – all while pushing and pulling the vacuum across a rug.

The suction tubing has deteriorated, but this vacuum once was fully functioning – which was evident when it was recently opened and discovered to be full of dirt. The directions printed on the vacuum tell you to "Oil me occasionally thru top holes and clean dust bag."





To see this artifact in person and discover more about it through our wonderful docents, stop by the McKinney house: open 1-4pm every second and fourth Saturday.



Collection Connection

We thank all of these donors individually and collectively.

Donor	Donated Items
Megan Render	-Log Journal of Mrs. Christina Macquarie, dam keeper at Cuyamaca and La Mesa dams -Photo of La Mesa Dam spillway -Flash drive of Macquarie's journals
Marcy Cox	Photo of Thomas Cox, La Mesa mail carrier for Post Office Display
Patricia Barnes	La Mesa – Spring Valley AEOP Cookbook
Bob Sever	Promotional Card Table c1950s with La Mesa business names covering top
Nina Babiarz	Small can of powdered pumice used for cleaning metal utensils
Foothills Art Association	Photograph of Henry Porter
Maureen Decker	Set of eight plates and one bread bowl
Linda Rankin	Set of dishes – Newport Pottery Co.
C. Froelicher	First National Bank booklet showing early pictures of S.D. County cites
Ed Blackman	Smudge pot and old tin watering can

In the Spotlight

Chief Ed Aceves and the La Mesa Police Department: Good Cop, Good Cops

The city of La Mesa is fortunate in many ways. One is the fact that we have and always have had our own police department. The La Mesa Police Department has been a well-run, corruption-free, and scandal-free department. This proud tradition continues with our current police chief, Ed Aceves.

Chief Aceves, or Ed as he likes to be called, is a small town kid who came up through the ranks. La Mesa Elementary, Murray Manor, Parkway Junior High, Helix High School. La Mesa was a quieter place growing up. He walked to Murray Manor and rode his bike all over.

Originally, Ed wanted to attend the Air Force Academy to be a pilot. His eyesight was 20/70 so that "knocked him out" of that dream. (It was corrected to 20/20). By chance he went as a ride along with the LMPD. That "hooked him" on becoming a peace officer.

He was hired by Chief Don Fach as a full time officer in 1986 and served under four other police chiefs before assuming the "job" of police chief himself in October 2011.

What you most need to know about Ed is his personality and style of leadership. I have come to know Chief Aceves over the years even prior to his selection as police chief. (Not because I was arrested and booked by the LMPD.)

I have found Ed to be self-effacing, not taking center stage by choice, and constantly praising his 68 sworn officers, 3 motorcycle officers, 31 non-sworn police department personnel, and the 50 volunteers (R.S.V.P. and interns). Also, the collateral team of 17 SWAT officers. He constantly reiterates that it is because of the members of his department that "things work" and the residents of La Mesa can feel safe because of what "his team" does on a daily basis, not because he is police chief.

Other things you might want to know about Ed in addition to 29 years in law enforcement (including as a reserve officer):

Married 24 years to his lovely wife, Cindy. Two wonderful daughters. Alexis age 22 lives in Wisconsin and is an elementary school teacher. Carly age 20 is in college in New York State and plays field hockey.

His great uncle, Julius Aceves, was a former mayor of La Mesa. Julius lived to a benchmark year of 100 and passed away in 2008.



What does Ed see as his role as police chief?

Continually raising the bar in keeping La Mesa safe and providing outstanding service to the community. "Treat people in the community as you would want a family member treated".

How does Chief Aceves actualize and implement his role?

Dave Witt, City Manager, sets the tone which Ed then carries forth.

This manifests itself in Ed's promoting a positive impact and fostering a good working environment so his officers and can do their job effectively. By working on community concerns and issues because community input is a key element in running a respected and effective department.

This dovetails with Ed's Words of Wisdom: Having an open and positive attitude leads to mutually acceptable solutions. One must take personal responsibility and not blame others.

Ed's Top Ten:
Book: Anything by David Baldacci
Movie: "Raiders of the Lost Ark"
Food: Mexican
Hobby: Golf
Place to travel to: Cancun
Type of music: Rock
Famous person loved to have met: John Fitzgerald Kennedy
Color: Blue
TV show: "Justified" on FX
Automobile: Honda

La Mesa's Flag Day Parade



Photo of La Mesa Historical Society vehicles at this year's Flag Day Parade.

Share story ideas, comments and suggestions with Editor Erin Ben-Judah at erin.benjudah@hotmail.com

Board of Directors

President	Jim Newland
1st Vice Pres.	Wade Douglas
2nd Vice Pres.	George Fahouris
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	Kathy Tinsley
	Donna Niemeier
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Board meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 7:00 PM.



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(619) 466-0197
www.lamesahistory.com

Change Service Requested

Cut along line and mail the section below with your check.

AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Membership Application

The Society depends on membership dues, bequests and fund-raising activities to support the restoration and preservation of local history.

The La Mesa Historical Society operates the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House, a 1908 house/museum located at 8369 University Avenue (at the corner of Pine Street) in La Mesa. Open 1-4pm every second and fourth Saturday of the month or by appointment. Group tours are available. Call (619) 466-0197 for further information. Lookout Avenue is the official quarterly publication of the La Mesa Historical Society. Our address is:

La Mesa Historical Society
P.O. Box 882
La Mesa, CA 91944

Lookout Avenue was the original name of La Mesa Boulevard from the 1890s until the city council voted to change the name in 1940. Lookout Avenue was La Mesa's main street.

- ☐ $500 Benefactor
- ☐ $250 Patron
- ☐ $100 Sponsor/Organization
- ☐ $50 Sustaining
- ☐ $25 Family
- ☐ $20 Individual
- ☐ $10 Student

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

I would like to be a volunteer in the following areas:

- ☐ Docent/Education
- ☐ Events
- ☐ Grounds Building
- ☐ Archives/House