

La Mesa Historical Society

LOOKOUT AVENUE

Volume 38, Issue 2 Spring 2013

Presidential "Dedress"

Aaron Landau, LMHS President

This is my final installment as LMHS president. My two year tenure sunsets as of July first. I will leave it to others, most notably the board, to assess my accomplishments and shortcomings in this role.

So what is left to say? The life of an organization is seen through its mission, its impact, and in its relevancy. At times, an organization needs to go through a reappraisal and evaluation of its "life up unto that point in time". The society is now over 36 years old. It now finds itself at a crossroads. Business as usual should not be allowed to become business unusual.

Consequently, the board of the society is evaluating its mission, impact, and relevancy. Is a new direction in our mission now required? What impact do we have in the community? In what ways are we still relevant?

This leads us to a series of practical questions that follow from the above. What events should we continue to host/sponsor? How do we best serve our membership? How do we improve our finances given the expense of maintaining our infrastructure and other organizational costs? How do we enlist "new blood" for the organization? What should our role in the community be?

The baton will be passed in a few months. The next president and the board will concern themselves with these issues.

Centennial Photo Exhibit of La Mesa

You are all invited to stop by the McKinney House to enjoy an exhibit of La Mesa's History through photos of the past. The photo boards have been rotating to various downtown sites in celebration of our past 100 years of history. If you missed seeing the photo boards, the entire collection is now being displayed in the McKinney House for the next few weeks.

Stop by and enjoy a snap shot view of La Mesa's past, featuring our baseball teams, downtown parades, civic events and servants, schools and ladies of La Mesa's history. Perhaps you will recognize a friend, family member, or yourself in one of the photos.

The McKinney House is open the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 1-4 pm.

In The Spotlight

Dr. Bill Pogue

Interview with a Clown

Bill Pogue, now also known as Pokonose, the Clown, was once a doctor of radiology. He worked as a doctor for 34 years. He started at Grossmont hospital in 1968 when Highway 8 was only two lanes and Mission Valley was mostly dairy farms. Not an original Californian, Dr. Pogue grew up back east and went to medical school at George Washington Medical School. He interned at UCLA, did stints at a couple Naval hospitals during the Vietnam war, and eventually ended up at the Balboa

Naval Hospital. Later La Mesa called to Dr. Pogue and he moved out here when he started at Grossmont Hospital.

How does one go from doctor to clown-hood? According to Dr. Pogue, the idea started while he was still working at Grossmont Hospital. He was working long days, often 13 hours per day and hadn't developed any hobbies. He often saw patients during his practice who didn't get a lot of visitors and were all around depressed about being in the hospital. He took a course in clown therapy, not realizing part of the course was to volunteer to dress up as a clown. But once he did and saw the help it gave patients to be able to laugh, there was no looking back. He says, "Humor will go a long way." Dr. Pogue saw how much laughter was a part of the treatment and just how much it helped patients.



Pokonose, the Clown travels to hospitals at Grossmont and Chula Vista once a month to bring laughter to their patients. He is accompanied by his small dog, Reyo, who takes part in the act. He carries with him a "Beware of the Dog" sign. The patients quite often can only hear the small pitter-patter of tiny dog paws and then have to look down to find the small, and not at all scary, dog. Pokonose has many tricks up his sleeve, including an extending fork, which he tells patients they should use to eat their roommates leftovers without leaving their bed. Without giving too much of his act away, he also has a stethoscope with a plunger and a long nose with a magnet. It's a wonderful thing that he's doing for these patients, but Bill says that it really does more for him than for the patients. He's learned not do take things so seriously.

Dr. Pogue is extremely active in his retired life and doesn't know how he found the time to go to work when he was working. Besides his clown act, he volunteers at schools working with students at after school tutoring and participating in the Peace Patrol. Dr. Pogue is becoming a docent at the Maritime Museum and used to be a docent at the Mission Trials Park. He is part of a group called W.I.T. (Wisemen in Training), who get together every two weeks to discuss major issues. And he participates in a group called RODEO (Retired Old Doctors Eat Out).



Bill Pogue – a retired doctor, a clown, and all-around character. Sometimes trying to get a straight answer out of Dr. Pogue was like trying to fit 20 clowns in a clown car. In response to my question, where did you grow up? he answered, "never did" without skipping a beat. When I asked, what brought you to the San Diego area, his response? A car. This gives you just a teaser of the happy, carefree attitude of Dr. Bill Pogue.

Question: If you could talk to any famous person, dead or alive, who would you choose?
Answer: Teddy Roosevelt. He overcame an illness and did a lot for nature. He put in place the first national part, Yosemite.

Favorite Book? Histories, books by author Nathaniel Philbrick.
Favorite Movie? No time to watch TV, there are so many books to read.

Ice cream or frozen yogurt? Ice cream, pistachio ice cream.
Forest or Desert? Both equally interesting.
Car ride or Plane ride? Car ride, if there are friends in the car to talk to.
Ocean or Lake? Ocean.
Pie or Cake? Pecan Pie.
Attend a play or Watch a movie? Attend a play. Bonus: there are no previews.
Dogs or Cats? Dogs.

Mary Durham Garfield

1881 -1966

Artist, poet, and loving mother of seven, Mary Garfield was one of the colorful La Mesa pioneer women who influenced our early history. Mary Durham was born in Rock Island, Illinois in 1881, the daughter of a river boat captain. After graduating from the Chicago Art Institute, she married Wade Garfield in 1905, a young attorney from Glen Ellen, Illinois. In 1907, the Garfields, with their one-year-old daughter, Ada, moved to San Diego where Wade opened a law office.

On Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, eleven years after they arrived in California, the Garfields with five children (Charles, Fenton, Harriet, Harry, and Mary Alice) moved to La Mesa. Their youngest child, James, was born after their move. The landmarked Garfield House at 4725 Hillcrest Avenue became the home of the Garfield family in 1921.



The Garfield Family

Mary Garfield enjoyed art and poetry. She belonged to a group of artists called the California Plein Air School. Through this group, Mary became a student of the well-known San Diego artist, Charles Fries, and learned to paint landscapes in his popular style with soft pastel colors. She was also a gifted poet and was credited with coining the La Mesa title, "Jewel of the Hills," in her poem *Lines to La Mesa.* The poem was written in the early 1920s, printed on postcards, and sold by the La Mesa Women's Club to help pay off their clubhouse mortgage.

Mary's first love was her family. She never tired of telling her children stories, especially of her cherished memories of a trip down the Mississippi River to New Orleans that she took with her father on his riverboat. She continued painting in her little art studio on the Hillcrest home property until failing eyesight forced her to stop. Her love for children continued on with her twelve grandchildren, upon whom she lavished stories and poems and encouragement whenever they visited her. Mary died in April of 1966 at the age of 85.

The La Mesa Historical Society is proud to own 6 of Mary Garfield's paintings. Starting in May, a display of these paintings, family memorabilia, and more history of the Garfield family will be available for viewing at the McKinney House museum.

This display will be opened at our Annual Meeting and Rose Garden Celebration on Saturday, May 4, 2013 at 2:00 P.M. Please join us for this event.

Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting & Garfield Exhibit - Saturday, May 4, 2 pm

LM Downtown Antique Street Fair – Sunday, May 19

Flag Day Parade – Saturday, June 1

Home Tour – Saturday, Nov. 2

Archives – Open Saturday 1 pm - 4 pm

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

Do you know where this photo was taken?

(Answer on page 7)



Collection Connection

We thank all of these donors individually and collectively.

Donor	Donated Items
Randy Swanson	Roll-A-Tune 1940s Toy
Charlene Craig	1935-36 Grossmont High School memorabilia from her Father William Emmons
Donna Fostveit	13 Real Picture Postcards
Gregg Eighny	Miss Universe official program
Dennis Twiss	La Mesa Historical Society Membership Directory (1978-79) and May 1993 Lookout Avenue Newsletter
April Hart	1938 Satin Wedding Dress belonging to Hazel Velman

About Town

Small Town La Mesa of the 1940s and 1950s

Gordon W. Hoard

My maternal grandparents, Michael and Barbara Presser, bought a small chicken farm in the 1920s at 4444 Upland Street at the corner of Mariposa. My father was Henry ("Casey") Hoard. He moved to Hollywood in 1928 from Kansas. He met my mother, Elsie, there. She was a 1929 graduate of Grossmont High School. They got married in Los Angeles. In 1933 my parents moved to La Mesa. My father was the manager of the Shell Station at Fourth and Lookout Avenue. The station was right next to the Ford dealership owned by Elmer Drew. The Drews were friends of my parents.

In 1935 my father joined the La Mesa Police Department, one of three officers. He stayed a year and then joined the California Highway Patrol. I was born on November 8, 1939 at Mercy Hospital in San Diego.

Our house on Upland was next door to my German grandparents. Our property was big enough for a chicken house, orchard, and vegetable garden. During WWII we raised rabbits, which provided pelts for bomber jacket collars and meat for our table.

For first grade I attended the school on Orange Avenue followed the next year by attending the new Lemon Avenue School in 1946. In 1948 my father was promoted to CHP Sergeant which required us to move to Barstow to open a sub-station there. Also, this meant that he would no longer be riding a motorcycle on which he had been severely injured. Now he would be driving a car. My parents opted for the move.

My father would be transferred back to San Diego three years later. Unfortunately, we had sold the lovely house on Upland. No houses were available in La Mesa. We found one in Lemon Grove.

I attended Helix High School after 8th grade in Lemon Grove. It was a new school. Benton Hart was the principal, a classmate of my mother at GHS. I was a clarinetist in the Helix Marching Band, which received the Sweepstakes Trophy at Long Beach in 1955. I took a curriculum heavy in math and science. This was inspired by the space race with the Russians.

In 1956 I was hired as a deliveryman for La Mesa Drug Company. I worked there until 1962 when I graduated San Diego State with a degree in Industrial Arts. I made deliveries, swept the sidewalk, checked in stock orders, and worked behind the pharmacy counter.

Cars were an important part of my life in high school. I drove a 1938 Chevy coupe with a Chevy truck engine. I raced at the old Paradise Mesa Drag Strip in Spring Valley. I once bragged to a classmate that my Chevy would lay rubber clear across the Helix parking lot. A $5 bet rode on it. I won. However, the resulting worn out rear tire cost a lot more than $5 to replace. Sometimes winning money comes with a higher price!

La Mesa was a wonderful place to grow up in the 1940s and 1950s. It was a small town still in many ways even with the rapid post-WWII growth. Everyone knew one another. Life was slowly paced. Now it is laced with fond memories.

A Special Welcome for the Society's New Members

Roger Feyen
Susan Prise
Audrey Whitelock
Dita Whitelock
Killian Whitelock
Bill Pogue
Jack Dickens
Leslie & Charlie Witherspoon

On Board

Donna Neimeier

Donna is a San Diego area native with a love of history. Not only is she involved in our La Mesa Historical Society, she's also involved in the Fallbrook Historical Society where she grew up. She is a volunteer for the Historic Preservation Commission for the city of La Mesa. Donna loves research and working in the archives. One of her passions in the historical society is helping with the landmarking of houses and looking into the house's history. She has been instrumental in the Home Tours put on by the society and loves to see the pride that the homeowners take in their living histories.



Her love of historic homes is evident when she talks about the McKinney House. Hopes for the society include a revamping of the McKinney House. Donna would love to see a deep cleaning of the house organized and getting some of the much needed maintenance and repair work completed. She would love to have more events that involve getting people in to see the house and changing displays so that people come back time and again.

Donna has been on the board in one role or another since 1999. Her first year on the board, she served as the Treasurer. The only positions she never filled were Secretary or Membership. Currently, Donna is serving on the board as the immediate Past President. At one time, Donna was in charge of the Annual Tea that was put on

by the Historical Society in the past. The number of people attending the sit-down tea rose to almost 60 people. Donna would get all the china out of her cupboards at home on which to have the tea and traipse it all back home again to wash.

Donna's love of history is paralleled by her love of people. She has served on the board for so long because of the people she serves with; they are a great group of diverse people. The Historical Society events that Donna loves most are the activities that involve meeting people. The Christmas Open House is at the top of Donna's list since it brings in people to the house. This event is one that has continued since the society started.

When Donna is not out volunteering at one of her historic interests, she is planning travels with a friend or craft shopping for local arts and crafts. When the two can be combined and she can travel and shop for local crafts at her destinations, that's all the better. Sometimes Donna's husband comes along on her travels, but if he doesn't want to go Donna will head out with one of her friends. Her husband enjoys fishing and going on camping trips. Donna likes to tag along and spend time out on the lake. She enjoys being out in the open and the quiet of camping.

In Donna's previous life, she spent 35 years in the school district. She was a teacher for many years, teaching Kindergarten through 5th grade. She then went on to be an elementary school principal for nine years.

Favorite Book/book genre? Murder mysteries
Favorite Movie? *A Fish Called Wanda* – "Every time it comes on TV, I watch it."

Italian or Mexican food? Mexican
Country or Rock music? Country
Rain or Sunshine? Sunshine
Mountains or Beach? It's a tie!
Coffee or Tea? Tea
City or Country? Country
Cake or Pie? Pie
Read the book or Watch the movie? Read the book
Chocolate or Vanilla? Actually, strawberry.

The Raising of the Flag



Behold Board Member, Wade Douglas, as he hoists our new flag that will fly outside the McKinney House on the two Saturdays per month that it is open for tours and at LMHS house-oriented events. Wade procured the flag and secured the new flag holder. This flag boasts 46 stars. That was the status of Old Glory in 1908 when the McKinney House was built. Arizona and New Mexico entered the union in 1912. Alaska and Hawaii in 1959.



ArtiFACTS!

Kestner Doll



This 20" Kestner German doll can be found in one of the upstairs room in the McKinney House. Although not originally owned by one of the McKinney family members, Suzanne McHenry donated the doll to the Historical Society and it makes a wonderful new edition to the children's room in the house.

Adolf Kestner took over his grandfather's doll business in Germany in 1820. He started making bisque dolls in 1860 and the company continued making dolls until 1938.

Stop by the McKinney house to view this doll in person!



Although not visible in this black and white photo, the doll has rosy pink cheeks, blue eyes, and strawberry blonde hair.

Do you know what this photo depicts?

(Answer on bottom of this page)



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

Board of Directors

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1st Vice Pres.	Jim Newland
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	Pat Stromberg
	Kathy Tinsley
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Board meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 7:00 PM.

Photo on page 4: Mt. Helix Theatre Easter Sunrise Service 1926

Photo on page 7: Bliss Army Marching Through La Mesa Springs April 4, 1911

La Mesa Historical Society
McKinney House 1908

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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 91942

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.

- ☐ $250 Patron
- ☐ $100 Sponsor/Organization
- ☐ $50 Sustaining
- ☐ $20 Family
- ☐ $15 Individual
- ☐ $5 Student

Name: _____

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City: _____

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

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