



*Sarah Pinkston*

# Lookout Avenue



Volume 24, Number 1 Summer 2003

## *Did you know?*



...that La Mesa retailer The Country Loft occupies an attractive bungalow at 4685 Date Ave. on property that once belonged to the Rev. Henry McKinney? (The La Mesa Historical Society is housed in a house once lived in by the McKinney family, now known as the McKinney House, landmark No. 1.) The Country Loft was built about 1921 for the manager of the La Mesa Lumber Company – D. Frank Park – who was also mayor of La Mesa from 1932-1934.

...that La Mesa's film industry used an open air stage (built for filming "outdoor" scenes) occupying a lot on which the Gidley Building now stands (8342 to 8350 La Mesa Blvd.). In 1911 and 1912, the Chicago-based American Film Manufacturing Company – Flying A Studio – with later-to-be-famous-in-Hollywood director Allan Dwan, produced more than 100 one-reel westerns. The current structure, built in the early 1920's, retains much of its original architecture, having housed barbershops, taverns, photographers, cleaners and others.

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*\* Sarah Pinkston lived in the Robertson House, La Mesa Landmark No. 16, in the early 1920's. Sarah was born in 1837 and moved to Lawrence, Kansas in 1854. She was an early settler in Kansas and was honored for helping make Kansas a free state. In 1863, Sarah survived the Quantrill Raiders – a Civil War outlaw gang that included Frank and Jessie James. She moved to La Mesa in 1912 and lived here until her death in 1926.*

# A note from the LMHS president

by Gordon Jones



The book "Historic La Mesa: a downtown made for walking" is complete and available for purchase. Now I think we'll begin work on a volume highlighting La Mesa's historical landmarks and historical sites. Take a look at the list of publications and videotapes we have in stock now on page 3. Since we are an all-volunteer organization, we try to make such things pay for themselves.

The outing to La Mesa Historical Landmark Collier Park and the Spring House on March 23 was quite successful and entertaining, especially with **Norrie West** and **France Dodson** relating their experiences when the Spring House had changing rooms for the swimming pool located adjacent. We were delighted to have several new members with

us for the gathering. Keep Flag Day, June 14 open. Try to get downtown on that Saturday at 10 a.m.

and enjoy a time-honored event: a parade. We always have an entry in the parade, notable citizens riding in older Model A's provided by the Pearson family of La Mesa. Remember the soap box derby? There will be one following the parade on Allison Avenue. A full day, we think. Also, keep open Sat., July 12. We will be having our annual summer event. Details will be coming.

There are so many things that need doing that we run the great risk of burning out those who have been so active. If

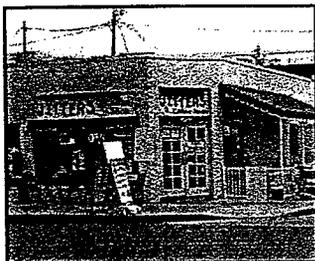
you have some skill (hammering, installing doors, fixing windows, writing, researching, archiving materials, taking pictures, organizing, working with plants, sweeping or whatever) please give us a call at (619) 466-0197. We could certainly use the help.

**La Mesa Historical Society**  
**Board of Directors**  
 July 2002-June 2003  
**President:** Gordon Jones  
**1st Vice President:** Donna Niemeier  
**2nd Vice President:** Carol Lockwood  
**3rd Vice President:** Ruth Contino  
**Secretary:** Sharon Crockett  
**Treasurer:** Donna Niemeier  
**Past President:** Kama Webster  
**Directors-at-Large:**  
 Leslie Jonkinson  
 Stephanie Glazer  
 Ed Blackman  
 Kathy Jinsley

## Our newest business partners

The next time you are in downtown La Mesa, you might drop in and acknowledge the support of the businesses pictured below. They are supporting your La Mesa Historical Society. Take a look at what they have to offer, too. A couple of them occupy historic buildings that have been around since the 1920s.

**Jitters Coffee Shop**  
8201 La Mesa Blvd.  
(619) 460-4800  
Janet and Greg Roach



**The Carpet People, Inc.**  
8318 La Mesa Blvd.  
(619) 697-6134  
Julie and Emidio Melim



**Homeland Florist**  
8324 La Mesa Blvd.  
(619) 462-4242  
Tracey Ferguson



**Videotapes and publications available for sale by LMHS**

**"The Ranchman's Nerve"**

Flying A silent film produced in 1911; B/W; 15 minutes; videotape.  
Members: \$10\*      Non-members: \$13\*

**"Three Million Dollars"**

Flying A silent film produced in 1911; B/W; 10 minutes; videotape.  
Members: \$ 10\*      Non-members: \$13\*

**"The Construction and Dedication of Mt. Helix Amphitheater & Cross, 1924-25"**

Actual footage and narration of construction and dedication; B/W; 20 minutes; videotape.  
Members: \$15      Non-members: \$ 20

**"Historic La Mesa"**

City of La Mesa videotape newsletter produced in 2001, written by La Mesa Assistant City Planner Allyson Carico and narrated by her and Fire Chief Doug Matter; color; 7 1/2 minutes.  
Members: \$ 10\*      Non-members: \$13\*

**"Historic La Mesa – Then and now: a downtown made for walking!"**

A 2003 publication with old and new pictures – side by side – and written narrative of historic sites, buildings, people and events in the city's downtown district.  
Members: \$ 9      Non-members: \$11

**"La Mesa through the Years"**

A 2001 book filled with pictures, stories and articles chronicling La Mesa's historical evolution over 100 years. The first edition sold out in three months!  
Members: \$12      Non-members: \$15

La Mesa – Yesterday & Today	booklet	\$4
Discover Historic La Mesa	pamphlet	\$2
1990 La Mesa Historic	calendar	\$2
La Mesa Brochure	pamphlet	\$4
Postcards (photo reproductions)	75¢ each;	2 for \$1

\*Three tapes (excluding Mt. Helix tape ) can be purchased for \$25 (members), \$30 (non-members). Purchases of five or more of any books and/or videotapes can be made at member's price. For mail orders, add postage and handling of \$4 per tape, or for either of the two books. All other publications, please include \$2 for postage and handling.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Item #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Postage/Handling \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Item #2 \_\_\_\_\_ Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Postage/Handling \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Item #3 \_\_\_\_\_ Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Postage/Handling \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Item #4 \_\_\_\_\_ Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Postage/Handling \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check for total plus total postage/handling, payable to La Mesa Historical Society, and mail to P. O. Box 1882, La Mesa, CA 91944. If there is any overpayment we will refund it, or, if there is underpayment, we will bill you.

## La Mesa's newest landmark No. 17 – The James C. and Ellen Robertson House



James C. and Ellen Robertson purchased this house – now the James C. and Ellen Robertson House, landmark No. 17 – from Harry (the son) and Vada Robertson who owned property on either side. This house is built on land that was taken from land on either side.

Harry and Vada Robertson are namesakes of the Robertson House (landmark No. 16 next door). James C. and Ellen Robertson moved to La Mesa with their eight children. Between 1909 and 1917, while sons Harry and John built houses and J. Frank cut hair, James C. worked in his shoe repair business in downtown La Mesa. Other owners of the house included a cement finisher, a manager of La Mesa Meat Market, a salesman, an airplane mechanic and now teachers. The house is owned by David Kievit and Dorothy Harrop.

## *Easter egg hunt round up- thank you, Easter Bunny!*



Thank you to all the volunteers who helped out in our annual Easter egg hunt. They are Kathy Tinsley, Ruth Contino, Leslie Tonkinson, Karna Webster, Donna Niemeier, Sharon Crockett, Gordon and Carol Jones, Darby Michaels, Grace Fradenburg, Maegan and Coree Rossitto, Danny (the Bunny) and Susan Cancino, Luis Porto, Stephanie Glazer and Art Wilson and his 1912 Ford convertible.



About 40 kids, military dependents and LMHS member's children, took part in the 2nd annual egg hunt. Many thanks to local merchants for their donations – La Mesa Welfare Association, Baskin-Robbins, Coldstone Creameries, Memories in the Making, Postal Annex and Masterpieces.



## **Longtime La Mesa resident passes away at age 104**

by Pat Kettler

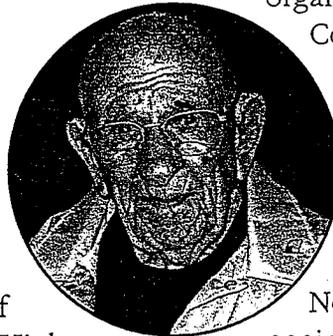
Gilbert Judy, a 75-year resident of La Mesa, former Grossmont High School teacher and LMHS stalwart passed away in March 2003 at the age of 104.

Gilbert earned a B.A in 1926 from San Diego Teacher's College (now SDSU) and began his career at San Diego High School. In 1927, he taught business courses at Grossmont High School, becoming principal of Grossmont's evening school in 1934.

In 1938, Gilbert became principal of the adult evening program at Hoover High School from which he retired in 1959.

In 1934, Gilbert purchased a home on Date Avenue and lived there until 1990 when he moved to Grossmont Gardens.

In addition to serving the community as a



teacher, Gilbert was elected to the La Mesa City Council in 1936. He was a member of the La Mesa City Planning Commission and helped organize the La Mesa City Parks and Recreation Committee and the La Mesa City Parking Commission.

In 1926, Gilbert wed Irene Finn. They had two children – a son Harold and a daughter Dorothy. Irene and Gilbert were married for 58 years, until Irene's death in 1984. In 1985, Gilbert married NovaLee Dickenson and was widowed again in 1995.

Gilbert was a member of the American Legion, La Mesa's Masonic Lodge, Southeast San Diego Exchange Club and helped organize the La Mesa Toastmasters Club.

In 2002, Gilbert moved to Sunnyvale to live with his son. He will be missed.

### **Volunteer orientation to be scheduled**

We are planning an interesting session that will inform new volunteers of how we came to be, what we are doing and where we are going. We will be covering the work of docents, as well. It will be on a Saturday, beginning later in the morning and including a light working lunch. If you have any sort of interest, please call (619) 466-0197 and leave your name and telephone number so we can get back to you when plans firm up.

### **LMHS newest members**

We would like to welcome the newest members to the LMHS family. They are Linda Dyson Hill; Barry and Ann Tarvin; Ernie and Nancy Ewin; Julie and Emidio Melim, The Carpet People, Inc.; Janet and Greg Roach, Jitters Coffee Shop; Tracy Ferguson; Homeland Florist; Ralph and Ruth Hopkins; Lou Hopkins and D. L. Michaels.

**This newsletter is created by LMHS  
Newsletter Editor, Stephanie Glazer.  
For information or suggestion,  
contact her at (619) 466-0197.**

### **LMHS and the LMVMA**

The La Mesa Village Merchants Association (LMVMA) is initiating a new monthly newsletter as part of its campaign to better market the downtown area.

We (LMHS) are submitting a "Did You Know ..." short article for each issue that deals with historical buildings, events and people in the village. This sort of cooperation furthers enhances the special spirit of place that is the Village of La Mesa.



**La Mesa Historical Society**

Museum: Rev. Henry A. McKinney House (1908)  
8369 University Ave., La Mesa, CA 91941  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 882, La Mesa, CA. 91944

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
La Mesa, CA 91941  
Permit No. 208

**Change service requested**

**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 Ave. (at the corner of Pine Street) in La Mesa. Open noon to 3 p.m. on Saturday 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**  
**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.

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Ph ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

*Memberships and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*