SUMMER 2019

lookout avenue





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La Mesa Historical Society
Reverend Henry A. McKinney House 1908

The NEWSLETTER of the LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SAVE THE DATE!

THE 14TH ANNUAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOME TOUR



"STONE AGE TO SPACE AGE"

FEATURING THE RURAL SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOODS OF GROSSMONT/MT. HELIX AND THEIR BREATHTAKING VIEWS, PERIOD DÉCOR AND INSPIRING ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPES



Saturday November 2nd, 2019 9am to 3pm

Tickets available now at:
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NEWSLETTER
VANESSA RODRIGUEZ

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SPRING-ING FORWARD INTO SUMMER AT LMHS

I hope that you have all had a pleasant and active Spring. The Society certainly has had one of its most active periods. Many long-term and active projects are moving forward. The most visible are the plans for the new McKinney House landscape. But others, such as long-standing maintenance repairs to the McKinney House, new exhibits inside the museum, starting up the historical property survey and a great deal of activity in the archives may not be as apparent.

Thanks to our on-going relationship with SDSU's archaeology and history programs we enjoyed our most active semester of internship activity. Not only did we partner with history professor Dr. Sarah Elkind to secure another productive archival intern, but newly arrived professor Dr. David Cline brought us five graduate students to assist in beta-testing the recordation application for the City's Historical Survey update efforts. They worked with archaeology professor Dr. Issac Ullah's graduate student Kat Davis who has helped manage the development of this essential recordation tool.

Our Archives team has been doubly productive. Existing collections are being processed, inventoried and cataloged and several new additions promise to be some of the most historically significant collections obtained. In addition our new copier/scanner machine is proving to be a major tool for making our collections better documented and available.

Thanks to a new group of dedicated docents the McKinney House is now back open each and every Saturday for visitors and members to enjoy.

We held two well-attended Roundtable lectures (including the first public outreach event for the Historic Survey update), and had a great "meet up" fund-raiser evening at The Hills pub. Learn more about our next Roundtable lecture and a preview of the November 2nd Home Tour.

We also held our Annual Meeting and Awards Presentation in June. We switched it up for a new—and recognizable--La Mesa location--Griffin Park. (Our event ended just in time to enjoy one of the annual Sunday in the Park Concert Series). We elected our 2019/20 Board of Directors as well as awarded our LMHS Volunteer of the Year, Partner of the Year, Preservationists of the Year and local "History Maker."

You are also likely reading this via email. Thanks to the efforts of our Communications Committee we now are delivering this newsletter digitally to the vast majority of our members. This is saving us money and time from mass mailing hard copies.

All of the efforts of our Board, volunteers and community partners continue to move us forward to meeting our mission.

As always, thanks for your efforts and feel free to contact me at info@lamesahistory.com with your thoughts.

Jim Newland

Jim Newland
President, La Mesa Historical Society

FLAG DAY PARADE

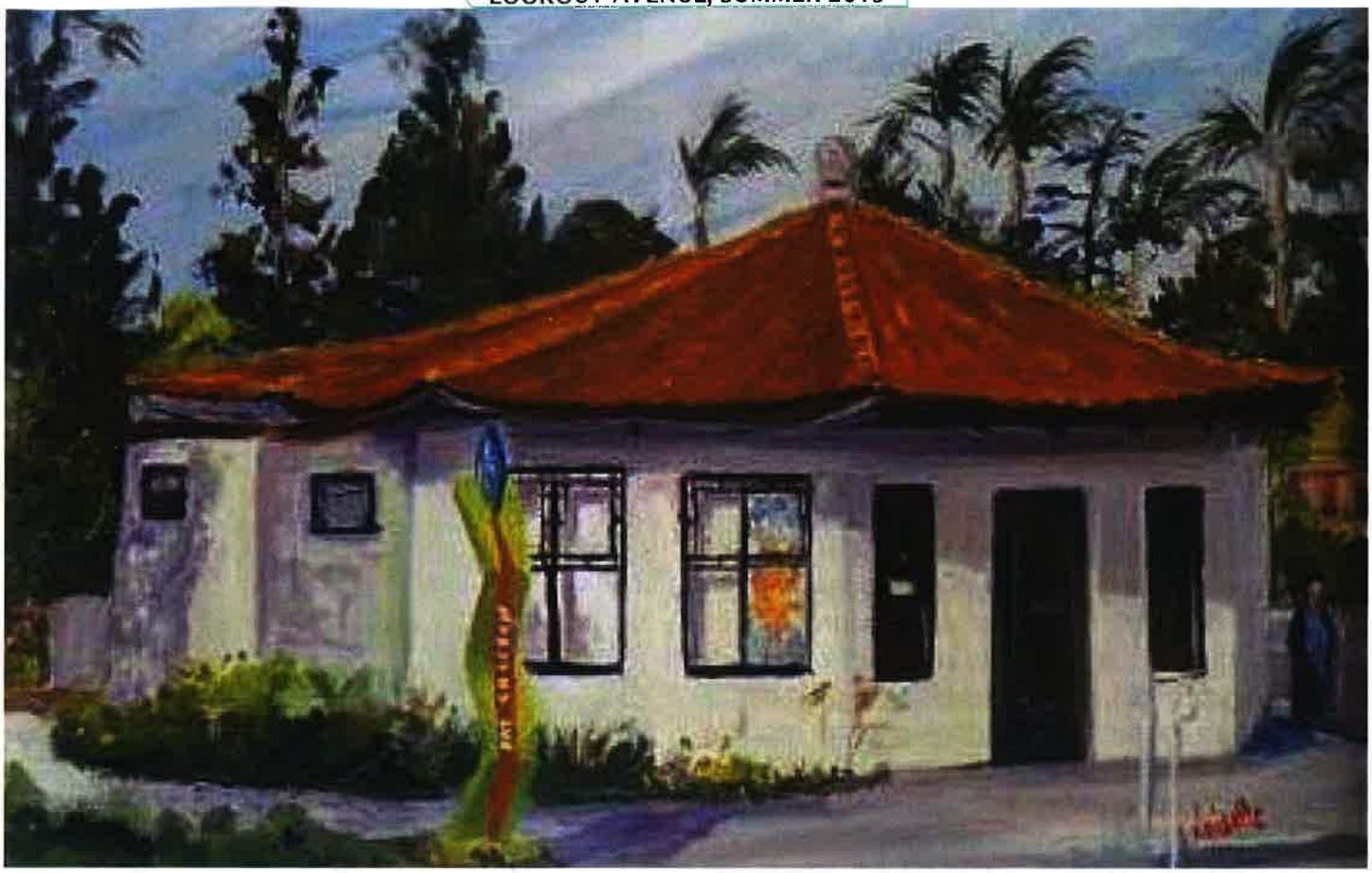
LA MESA, CA | JUNE 2ND

On June 2nd the Historical Society once again joined with our partners at the Miss La Mesa Pageant for our Flag Day Parade entry. This year we welcomed back Miss La Mesa 1999 Natalie Vandiver (Hiebing) on the 20th anniversary of her original participation in the Flag Day Parade. Natalie made over 200 public appearances during her reign as Miss La Mesa and is now hoping to move back to La Mesa with her husband Eddie, daughter Madeline and son Eddie III.

Thanks again to Natalie for representing our community's enchanting and charming history.



President Jim Newland and Vice President Tracey Stotz accompanied the vehicle driven by new Board Member Dave Kesner and his wife Sheila



CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF ART

FOOTHILLS ART ASSOCIATION

Author Linda Michael, Foothills Art Association

The Foothills Art Association has a long history of promoting art in our community. Celebrating its 70th anniversary this year, Foothills was founded in the summer of 1949 when Cora B. Payson, who was chairman of the art department of the La Mesa Women's Club, asked the club to sponsor an art guild. A survey of the La Mesa Foothills District resulted in a meeting of seventy interested, art-minded people at the Club House on October 19, 1949. The art organization that was formed was sponsored during its first year by the Women's Club which provided rent-free space for meeting, exhibits, and other activities.

In its early years, Foothills became an integral part of the La Mesa and East County community. Its activities included organizing art displays in stores throughout the east county, sponsoring a float in the Festival de las Flores Parade, donating artwork to Grossmont Hospital to brighten patient rooms, and, presenting art shows featuring members' works.

In 1957, when the City of La Mesa built the Ben Polak Memorial Fine Arts Center at 8053 University Avenue, the Foothills Art Association held its meetings and special events at the center and displayed its artwork on the walls in the center's Lamplighter's Theatre. By 1980, Foothills had raised the funds to construct the Foothills Fine Art Gallery which was built adjacent to the Ben Polak Center. Foothills continued to hold its meetings in the Lamplighter's Theatre until September 2006 and showed monthly exhibits in the adjacent gallery until December 31, 2006.

Celebrating 70 Years of Art Continued on Page 6

Celebrating 70 Years of Art Continued from Page 5

FOOTHILLS ART ASSOCIATION

Foothills was forced to relocate its gallery when the City of La Mesa demolished the Ben Polak Center and redeveloped the property for a new civic center. Foothills found a new home in September 2007 when it opened its new gallery in La Mesa's historic Porter Hall at 4910 Memorial Drive. Then, just a few months after the opening, a catastrophic accident occurred. Two cars plowed into Porter Hall causing major damage to the building. It took several months to repair the structure. The gallery in Porter Hall reopened on May 1, 2008 and has been, since then, the location for the Foothills Art Association's monthly art exhibits, meetings, classes, art demonstrations, and artists' receptions.

Over the years, the Foothills Art Association has promoted fine arts in a variety of ways. Its membership has grown to over 150 artists whose work is displayed in changing monthly shows at the gallery. Both the annual juried "Membership Show" in April and a judged "Small Image Show" in October have grown in size and quality over the years. The "Old Masters" show is an annual favorite in February. The "Wildlife in Art Show" is a juried competition which is open to all artists and attracts artists throughout southern California. Proceeds from the "Wildlife in Art Show" fund an annual donation by Foothills to the Helix High School art department. Foothills supports other civic projects including exhibits in local businesses and special gifts to local charities during the holidays. This year, Foothills will be collaborating with La Mesa Beautiful (a horticultural organization dedicated to making La Mesa a more beautiful place to live) when, this spring, the two organizations present an Art & Garden Show/Sale at La Mesa's MacArthur Park.

The Foothills Art Association welcomes the public to its gallery to view the monthly exhibits. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday (11:00 am to 4:00 pm). For more information, visit its website at www.foothillsartassociation.com and find it on Facebook.



The Foothills Art Association float in the 1953 Fiesta de las Flores Parade in La Mesa.


IT'S NATIONAL ART WEEK—Mrs. E. Crowningshield, well known La Mesa artist and member of the La Mesa Foothills Art Association, is shown finishing "Autumn," just before it went on display Monday along with 80 other Art Association members' paintings in stores throughout La Mesa, Lemon Grove and El Cajon. The display is being held in conjunction with National Art Week. "Autumn" is taken from a scene in El Monte Park, Lakeside.—Staff photo.

Mrs. E. Crowningshield is shown finishing "Autumn" which was displayed with 80 other paintings by members of the Foothills Art Association in stores in La Mesa, Lemon Grove and El Cajon in conjunction with National Art Week.

Celebrating 70 Years of Art **Continued on Page 7**

Celebrating 70 Years of Art Continued from Page 6



A painting of the Foothills Art Association Gallery at La Mesa's historic Porter Hall by Betty Johnsen

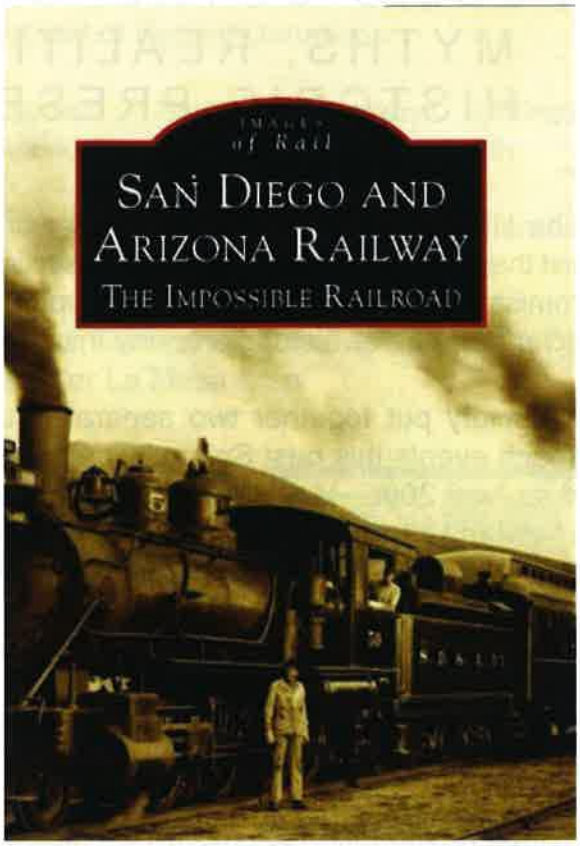
FOOTHILLS FINE ART GALLERY
at La Mesa's Historic Porter Hall
4910 Memorial Drive
La Mesa, CA 91942
(619) 464-7167
Gallery Hours: Tues -Sat (11am - 4 pm)

THE IMPOSSIBLE RAILROAD: A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

HISTORY ROUNDTABLE LECTURE SERIES

Reena Deutsch: author of "The Impossible Railroad" will present the history of the San Diego & Arizona Railway on the centennial of its completion in 1919. John Spreckel's San Diego & Arizona Railway being the only line of the transcontinental railroad system to travel through Mexico before descending through the rugged Carrizo Gorge. An amazing engineering and construction challenge that earned its distinctive moniker.

Reena, also a long-standing member of the San Diego Railroad Museum, will take questions after her presentation. Her book will be available for purchase and signing.



Thursday August 8, 2019 (6:30 to 8:00 pm)

Grossmont Healthcare District Conference Center

9001 Wakarusa Street, La Mesa, CA 91942

SD&A
SAN DIEGO & ARIZONA RAILWAY
100th Anniversary
1919-2019



HISTORIC PRESERVATION NEWS

PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAMS ADDRESS MYTHS, REALITIES AND BENEFITS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN LA MESA

The Historical Society continued its work to assist the City of La Mesa's Historic Preservation Commission and City Planners on an update of our comprehensive historic property inventory.

The Society put together two separate public outreach events this past Spring. The first was held on April 20th. Historical Society president Jim Newland, historic property appraiser and real estate agent Nikki Kreibich and several historic landmark property owners held a workshop at the Grossmont Healthcare District Auditorium.

The workshop, titled Myths, Realities and Benefits of Historic Preservation spoke to a large crowd of interested guests. Jim Newland led with a presentation on the history of Historic Preservation in the U.S., California and La Mesa. Ms. Kreibich presented on the financial benefits associated with historic property appraisals and the Mills Act. Senior City Planner Allyson Kinnard and several historic landmark property owners including Don and Nancy Cary, Joe Hofmann and Steven Castro answered questions on the process and experience in living in a historic landmark.

The Program was repeated at the La Mesa Conversations group on the evening of June 6th at the La Mesa Masonic Hall. Another interested audience asked questions and learned the realities of how the nomination, listing and Mills Act procedures are implemented.

The Society will continue to work with our partners at SDSU and the City to begin to undertake the comprehensive survey.

Key an eye out for update activities and contact us at volunteer@lamesahistory.com and let us know if you are interested in working on the survey.

FOR THE RECORD
ARCHIVE'S REPORT

The Archives is a happening place. Each Saturday the Research Room is visited by local homeowners, residents, authors, businessmen and current or former La Mesans or their family members.

We had another successful SDSU Intern this Semester helping out. Miss Loyda Palacios did a great job in processing the Little Theatre Collection. The Collection included two scrapbooks dating from the origins of the community theatre in 1938 to 1949. This theatre company later morphing into the long-standing Lamplighters Theater. Thanks to Loyda for her efforts. We were very pleased to hear that the experience that Loyda gained working in the archives led to her obtaining her first job after graduation this May.

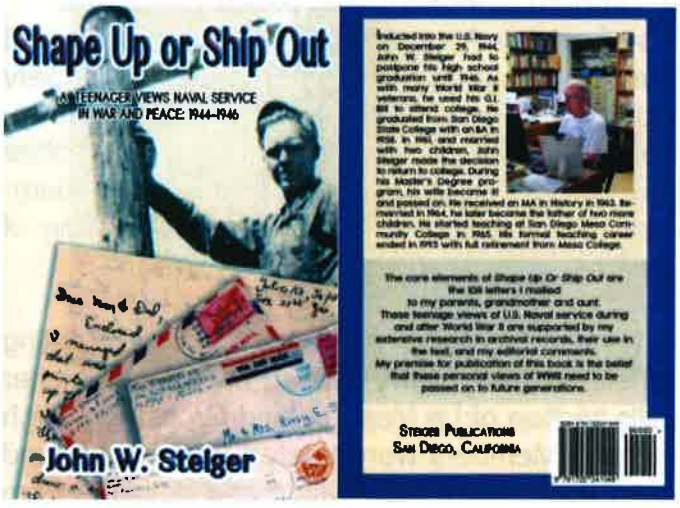
Other donations include some personal reminiscences such as Phillip Hutchens recollections of growing up here in the 1940s and 1950s; Esther Drew Long's donations of family and company records of the Drew Family (Drew Ford); and long-supportive member and fellow historian John Steiger's recent book, "Shape Up or Ship Out: A Teenager Views Naval Service in War and Peace 1944-1946." John, a SDSC grad, long-time history professor at Mesa College and Spring Valley resident self-published this auto-biographic work from his own personal correspondence.
The Archives team has added this to our reference library that features published secondary works on the Greater La Mesa area. Other titles in our collections feature San Diego, Historic Preservation, and material culture of the last two centuries.

We also hope to soon have the La Mesa Women's Club Collection. The Club is in the process of inventorying their amazing collection of this pioneering community organization. The records date back to the Club's origins in 1902.

There are many jobs and tasks from complex to repetitive activities that all are helpful in caring for and making available the archival or museum collections. If you are interested in helping in the Archives, please contact us at volunteer@lamesahistory.com or drop by the Archives Saturday afternoons.

Select List of Recent Donations:

- Leonard Smith Company Collection (listing files); donated by David Smith
- Ernestine Schumann-Heink memorabilia; donated by Katherine Hinck Linkous
- Digital Files of all Subdivision Maps of the Greater La Mesa Area



Local historian and Society member John Steiger's new book on his experiences in World War II.

LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY CELEBRATES 2019 AWARD WINNERS AT ANNUAL MEETING EVENT

LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY HELD ITS ANNUAL MEETING AND AWARDS CEREMONY SUNDAY JUNE 23RD AT HARRY GRIFFIN PARK



President Jim Newland and Board Member Alexander Quintero discussing new landscape plan at the Annual Meeting.

Annual Meeting Takes to the Outdoors. The Society's Annual Meeting is a required event that functions to ratify the incoming Society Board Officers and Directors of our non-profit, all-volunteer organization. Thanks to our committee chairs Sheryl Castro and Michele Greenburg-McClung it also is a fun and tasty gathering of members, guest and community partners.

In addition this year, the Society moved its meeting off-site to lovely Harry Griffin Park in the Fletcher Hills section of La Mesa behind Grossmont High School. Members were treated to delicious food from Casanova's Fish Tacos and desserts from Surfrider Pizza.

Thanks to all who attended and made the Annual Meeting another successful event.

Beyond the Society business of ratifying a new slate of Board members we presented our third Annual Awards program. This is a relatively new tradition for honoring Society members, volunteers and partners as well as La Mesans that are making a difference in our Greater La Mesa community today.

Nominations were made for each Award from the Annual Awards Committee and winners ratified by the Society's Board of Directors for recognition at the Annual Meeting.

Annual Meeting Event Continued on Page 11

Annual Meeting Event Continued from Page 10

This year's winners:

Tom Hart



LMHS Volunteer of the Year:

Awarded to an active long-term volunteer/member of the La Mesa Historical Society. The annual award is given to an individual who has shown outstanding service to the Society through consistent long-term or continuous commitment to the programs, activities and purpose of the organization.

Claude "Tom" Hart has been a dedicated member and supporter of the Society for many years. Tom originally served four two-year terms on the Board of Directors as well as representing the Society as one of our nominees to the City of La Mesa's Historic Preservation Commission. Tom served on the Commission for three 4-year terms, including several years as Chair before stepping down last summer. He is a civil engineer by profession and his knowledge and expertise were valuable additions to the Commission as it assisted property owners with the review, nomination and listing processes for La Mesa historic properties.

The Society wishes to thank Tom for his long-standing service to the Society and the City. Tom and his wife Germaine live in a 1909 home on Mt. Nebo here in La Mesa.

Rotary Club of La Mesa



LMHS Sponsor/Business of the Year

Awarded to an active business/sponsor/institution within the Greater La Mesa area whose work and efforts clearly supports the La Mesa Historical Society in preserving and educating the community to its heritage.

Rotary Club of La Mesa is the third oldest service club in the La Mesa community dating back to 1925. The Club was founded by some of the most prominent business and civic leaders of La Mesa. It continues to be a place where community-minded "do-ers" make and support important community projects. The Club's numerous service projects have included prestigious community-wide events including the many decades the Rotary sponsored the Mt. Helix Easter Sunrise Services.

The Society wishes to provide long-overdue honor and thanks to the Rotary Club for being the partner of our downtown Historic Photo Plaque project. The Rotary Club raising the funds to both fabricate and install 11 new historic photo plaques on prominent La Mesa Village buildings and sites—but also to develop and fund a guide/ brochure. Key to this effort was former Club President Keith Dindinger. Although many Club members supported this unique educational community service project, we must call out Mr. Dindinger for his dogged support in getting the project completed. In conclusion we wish to recognize the top-notch efforts of Rotary Club of La Mesa in supporting us, the community and our mission.

Annual Meeting Event Continued on Page 12

Annual Meeting Event Continued from Page 11

Mark and Loretta Chavez



La Mesa Historic Preservationist of the Year

Awarded to an individual or property owner whose efforts are exemplary in the preservation of historical properties within the Greater La Mesa area.

Considering the amazing efforts of historic property owners in both the City of La Mesa and the surrounding neighborhoods of property owners preserving their homes, this award continues to be a challenge—since there are so many wonderfully restored and preserved homes. This year the Committee wished to acknowledge Mark and Loretta Chavez for their efforts in identifying, restoring and preserving a Modern residential gem—the Ullman House. Noted San Diego modernist architect John Mock designed the 1964 home for dentist Dr. Milton Ullman and his wife Jane. As such it is exquisite example of Mock's mastery of the Mid-Century Modern style. When the Chavez' purchased the house, it was in a state of major disrepair. Luckily, the Chavez' recognized the gem they had discovered and went on a major restoration effort. They connected with John Mock as well as local historical landscape architect Todd Pittman to assist. The Chavez' great efforts to preserve the home's distinctive elements and furnish and landscape it to reflect that significance are renown in the region's preservation efforts.

Their efforts were rewarded with the Ullman House's designation as a County of San Diego Historical Landmark.

For those efforts we honor Mark & Loretta Chavez as LM Historic Preservationists of the Year.

Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association



La Mesa History-Maker of the Year

Awarded to an individual/family or business/institution that is currently making a positive influence in the Greater La Mesa community in social, civic, business or educational activities.

This award allows the Society to look to those doing good things for La Mesa – today.

This year's "History-Maker" is a group that has been making a difference for over 80 years—the Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association (GMIA). Originally organized in 1938 as the Grossmont Improvement Association, they expanded to include the Mt. Helix area in 1947. GMIA provided these growing unincorporated neighborhoods a voice in addressing community-wide issues such as roads, water, public safety and land use planning. Over the years the organization has been the go-to institution for residents of the communities of Grossmont and Mt. Helix. Today the GMIA is a non-profit 501(c)(4) corporation working on preserving and enhancing their community.

In addition to their decades of community support, in the last year the GMIA received additional attention for its defensive planning efforts to re-direct away from the Grossmont community a proposed location for a State of California Adult Parole Operations facility. Their rapid and well-thought out efforts to inform the community and provide input to City, County and State officials were key to opposing this ill-advised land use proposal. This example of providing a long-standing and well-respected voice for the community is not just a deserved recognition of the current leadership of President Susan Nichols and the Board of Directors, but a confirmation of the GMIA's long-standing commitment to its members.

As such the Society has honored the Grossmont-Mt Helix Improvement Association as our 2019 La Mesa History Maker of the Year.

Annual Meeting Event Continued on Page 13

Annual Meeting Event Continued from Page 12

New Board Officers and Directors

The Society Membership in attendance also ratified the following members to serve for fiscal year 2019-20.

President – Jim Newland
Vice President – Tracey Stotz
Membership VP – Sheryl Castro
Secretary – Sharon Smith
Treasurer – Diane Finch-Payne

Board of Directors (thru 2021)

David Cline
Kari Dodson
Kristin Dooley
Dave Kesler
Veronica Martzahl

Board of Directors (thru 2020)

Melody Andrews
Steven Christiansen
Steven Churchill
Michelle Greenburg-McClung
Alexander Quintero

HOME GROUNDS

MCKINNEY HOUSE LANDSCAPE TO GET AN UPDATE

Drum roll please! The Society's Landscape Committee presented an initial landscape plan for the Society's McKinney House property at the recent Annual Meeting (see graphic included here). After months of work, the committee, comprised of Board members Tracey Stotz, Jim Newland, Kristin Dooley and Alex Quintero, with input from Landscape Architect Karen Adams, developed a schematic for the site. A comprehensive plan was last implemented in 1995 and with the recent loss of the 103-year-old Monterey Pine last year it was time to update the design and use plan for our historic property.

"The goal of the plan is to make the site more useable for Society events as well as for programming that will allow for more public engagement," said Committee Chair Tracey Stotz. As an historic site, it is also important to retain the character of the historic landscape. To that end, Newland and Adams have been spent hours reviewing photos of the McKinney House that were taken during our interpretive period (1908-1920) to pin down plants and landscape elements that could be used in the current landscape.

Home Grounds Continued on Page 14

Home Grounds Continued from Page 13



McKinney House Proposed Landscape Plan

For example, the enormous pine tree was an important part of the site so we will be planting another tree as well preserving the original pine with the help of artisan Brian Pederson who will carve a section of the tree into a bench. We also will be adding period and locally significant Cherokee roses and other plantings and hardscape elements, such as a trellis, that were present in the interpretive period.

"It isn't just about recreating the past," Stotz added, "It is about honoring the past while making the site more engaging in the present." To that end the plan allows for a flex-use area in the backyard which can be used for educational programs and events. It also incorporates a large display case near the Archives Building which will provide the Society with a place to permanently display large objects that don't have a place in the McKinney House such as a printing press from The Scout and historic signage from local businesses. Other interpretive elements are also included along with a new location of the memorial Rose Garden, a new "Society" sign as well as the retention of our four very popular lemon trees and historic "outhouse" structure.

If you have comments on the plan or would like to help with its implementation please email info@lamesahistory.com or call (619) 466-0197.

The next steps will be to finalize the plan with specific details and create construction plans. Then we will bid out elements of the project as funding is available as well as round up volunteers and donors to help take on other tasks. The Board sees this as a multi-year effort and welcome community support. If you could assist with demolition or construction activities please let us know.

LMHS Landscape Committee.

MT HELIX PARK FOUNDATION BENEFIT

THE HEART OF MT. HELIX
SATURDAY EVENING | AUGUST 10, 2019
5:00 TO 11:00 PM @ MT. HELIX PARK



Join the Society in support of our partner non-profit community-based organization the Mt. Helix Park Foundation. The Park's 12th annual fund raiser gala, heART of Mt. Helix will be held on Saturday August 10, 2019 at the park.

The annual celebration event features local artists, delectable food/drink, live art demos, a juried art show, two stages of music (featuring the Good Mojo Band), raffle drawings, fabulous auction items and a great time for all. The Society will once again join in with its own booth.

Tickets available at www.mthelixpark.org

La Mesa Historical Society
Reverend Henry A. McKinney House 1908

McKINNEY HOUSE MUSEUM
AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ARCHIVES RESEARCH FACILITY

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HOURS OF OPERATION:
SATURDAYS 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Group tours are available.
Call (619)466-0197 for information.

https://lamesahistory.com/

LaMesaHistoricalSociety

@lamesahistoricalsociety

The La Mesa Historical Society is an all-volunteer non-profit 501c3 corporation changed with preserving the history of the greater La Mesa area. The La Mesa Historical Society operates the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House, a 1908 House Museum and the Historical Society Archives Research Facility located at 8369 University Avenue in La Mesa, California.

The ***Lookout Avenue*** is the official quarterly publication of the La Mesa Historical Society. Closing dates for submitting contributions are the 1st of every March, June, September, and December. Word document and jpeg image files preferred.

Submit contributions via email, or email the Editor at info@lamesahistory.com