WINTER 2019

lookout avenue



SOCIETY EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

President's Message:
PUBLIC HISTORY, THE LMHS, AND ITS FUTURE

Changes At McKinney House

HISTORIC PRESERVATION NEWS
Public Outreach Program Moving Forward

FOR THE RECORD
Archives Report

MEMBER EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

13th Annual Home Tour Recap

Mt. Helix Walk-Up

The La Mesa Library And Its Friends

The NEWSLETTER *of the* LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

La Mesa Historical Society
Reverend Henry A. McKinney House 1908

OFFICERS

James Newland
President

Tracey Stotz
Vice President

Natasha Bliss
Secretary

Jeremy Martinson
Treasurer

Sheryl Castro
Vice President Of Membership

Vacant
Past President

DIRECTORS

Melody Andrews
Stephen Christiansen
Steven Churchill
Kari Dodson
Kristin Dooley
Michele Greenberg-McClung
Alex Quintero

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Melody Andrews
Collections

Steven Churchill
Communications

Kristin Dooley
2018 Home Tour

Vacant
Mckinney House

NEWSLETTER

Christina De Plata
Editor + Graphic Design



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PUBLIC HISTORY, THE LMHS, AND ITS FUTURE

Most changes aren't permanent, but change is...

— Neil Peart, 1980

Happy New Year! The La Mesa Historical Society has now bid goodbye to another successful and eventful year in 2018. The Society's traditional events such as the Home Tour, Holiday Open House, Annual Meeting and well-attended Roundtable Lectures continued. Some included updated formats and of course many new attendees and participants. The Research Archives have gained and processed several significant additions, including the digitization of our microfilm newspaper collections. Our membership continues to see steady growth to go along with a much more significant increase in followers on social media (Facebook, Instagram). All this helps us reach out and fulfill our mission to preserve and educate on the Greater La Mesa area's history.

Although it appears that much has stayed the same, the Society has also seen much change—with more to come in 2019. Perhaps the most jarring change for many is the death and removal of the beautiful and majestic Monterey Pine that sat at the McKinney House's side for over a century. It is indeed a loss—and we perhaps heard as much or more from the La Mesa community in relation to the tree's death than from some of our successful programs or activities!

This reflects how many outside of our membership see the Society and how they are unfamiliar with its role and programs. Many do not know they can come and research their homes, businesses, institutions or neighborhoods at our Archives or enjoy one of our events to learn and participate in our community's

heritage—not just in the past, but for today. Many also see the Society as some sort of institution that not only documents and educates on our collective local history and heritage—but that can somehow "hold the past." Some mistakenly believe that our mission and purpose has some roll in fighting off change in La Mesa. "Change" and the fear of change are something that most individuals, institutions, communities and societies constantly are in conflict with.

This was apparent recently in a discussion with a local community member I had who wanted to know why the Historical Society wasn't opposing all the new construction projects in La Mesa. She insisted that these projects would bring "bad" changes to La Mesa. I had to explain that the Society's mission wasn't to fight or stop change and that our non-profit corporation status did not allow us to use our funds for political lobbying. Although we are allowed to be an advocate for historic preservation the Board would be remiss in engaging in any other land use issues outside our state-sanctioned articles of incorporation and by-laws.

Perhaps it is not surprising that others would assume that those that have an interest in the past or historic preservation would be associated with fighting "changes." This is a false generalization that dates back before, and still over the 30 plus years I have been a professional historian and historic resources consultant.

I won't take the time and space here to chronicle the historiography of the discipline of history or even my field of "public or applied" history. However, I mention it to let you know that the methods, sources and approaches to practicing history (and the public history fields of historic preservation, museum studies, archiving, etc) are not constant or static either. Just in the most recent issue of the professional journal, "The Public Historian," were feature articles focused on the continuing re-definition of what "public and applied" history is and is not.

So why do I mention this here in reference to the La Mesa Historical Society? As an institution whose mission falls within the realm of public history (where professional and avocational historians and the community are involved), the ability to ensure that we can continue to meet our mission and be relevant to our constantly changing community and membership is essential. It was a focus of my previous four years as President and with President D'Angelo last year and now beyond, to ensure the Society and its Board are positioned to best meet those challenges.

Our Board now features a range of expertise, ages and perspectives that is diverse and reflective of where La Mesa is, and is heading as a community, today. The Board is thus committed to moving our organization forward while continuing our previous successes as a stable, objective and reliable community organization.

New ideas and improvements for how to best be relevant to the Greater La Mesa community and our membership will be considered. Be advised however we do have legal and mission-driven guidelines and sideboards. Subsequently I have introduced a project for an updated Strategic Plan to the Board for 2019. This planning effort will help to ensure that as we move forward, we will not be abandoning our mandated purpose as we guide our efforts and resources for being the best community organization we can. An organization reflective and open to all those that wish to support and trust in our efforts for those ends.

We will be reaching out to you the membership, and the community in general as well for input on our Strategic Planning effort this year. Your sincere thoughts are welcomed as we develop our goals and priorities for the next few years.

In the meantime, thanks for your efforts and feel free to contact me at info@lamesahistory.com with your thoughts.

Jim Newland
President, La Mesa Historical Society



13TH ANNUAL HOME TOUR PROVES ANOTHER GEM!

Society members, participants, homeowners and volunteers of our 2018 La Mesa Historical Society Home Tour...Thank you! What an event! What a success! I couldn't be more proud of the accomplishments of this past years' annual event and the team that made it happen.

It was an honor to serve as the Chair of La Mesa Historical Society's Annual Home Tour for the second year in a row. I can't help but smile as I reflect on how we've grown in only a year. Our November 3rd event not only showcased some of the most beautiful and well-appointed homes in the Mt Nebo & Eastridge neighborhoods of La Mesa, but in addition, channeled us to the theme of "Modern Mud," reflecting the adobe style homes featured on the tour built by renowned architects and builders such as Laurence Weir, James Bernard, Tomas Orendain and Ed Heacock.

In terms of growth, we not only improved in our attendance to over 400 but also in increased Sponsorships making 2018 one of our most successful years supporting our efforts to sustain not only the Society's community driven events that further develop our cultural heritage, but also the support and sustainability of our beautiful historic home and archives nestled on the corner of Pine & University.

A very special thanks to all our sponsors for everything from the shirts on our backs to the coffee that kept us hustling!

Nikki K. Real Estate

EDCO

Tracey Stotz Real Estate

RCP Block & Brick

Andrea Gognek of Gem Real Estate

Aztec & Baron Insurance Agency

Laura Lothian Real Estate

Copy-It

La Mesa Lumber

·Donna Niemeier

Bekkers Catering

Wine Works

Digi Griot

Christina De Plata

The 2018 Homeowners

The 2018 Docents

The 2018 Home Tour Committee

We once again, sincerely thank you and welcome your involvement again in this years 2019 La Mesa Historical Society Home Tour scheduled for November 2, 2019. Contact us today to plan your involvement in this year's event!

Best wishes to all!

Kristin Dooley
2018 Home Tour Chairperson

La Mesa Historical Society

SAN DIEGO HOME/GARDEN

13th ANNUAL HISTORIC HOME TOUR

Modern Mud

NOVEMBER 3, 2018 • 9 AM - 3 PM

Highlights



ARRIETA WHITE HOUSE



MOREHOUSE/SMITH HOUSE



O'NEIL HOUSE



SHAFFER HOUSE

RUJA HOUSE (Background)



KIRBY HOUSE





CHANGES IN THE LANDSCAPE

If you have walked by the McKinney House lately you would have noticed a large open space in the front yard where one of our beloved landmarks once stood – the 103-year old Monterey Pine. Unfortunately, the tree was infested with beetles and, even with additional attention, could no longer fight them off. It was a sad day when the tree was taken down. The Society Board recognizes the tree was an important part of our site and will be preserving its memory with the help of artisan Brian Pederson who will carve a section of the tree into a bench.

A committee is currently working on developing an updated McKinney House landscape plan that will include a new tree (not a Monterey Pine due to the beetle issue) as well as the bench. The goal of the plan will be to make the site more useable for Society events as well as for programming that will allow for more public engagement. Landscape Architect Karen Adams has been working with Board members Tracey Stotz, Jim Newland, Kristin Dooley and Alex Quintero to flush out a plan based on the Board's vision for on-site programming. Karen worked with Jim at California State Parks and has extensive experience working on historic landscape projects. The Committee's goal is to have several concepts to share at the Society's annual meeting in June.

Tracey Stotz
Vice President, La Mesa Historical Society

McKINNEY HOUSE EXPANDS OPEN DAYS

NEW DOCENTS TRAINED TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC



Rain or shine the house has been open two Saturday afternoons a month to allow visitors to enjoy a free tour of the McKinney House. The interpretive period of the house is 1908-1920. Docents like Carol Lockwood and Kitty Nicholson make the period come alive as they share anecdotes of the McKinney family while walking guests through the home that features many original furnishings. The House also has rotating exhibits that highlight a slice of La Mesa History for guests.

Starting in February, the House will be open every Saturday from 1 pm – 4 pm which corresponds to the time the Archives Building is open for research. "We often get La Mesa residents stopping by the Archives to research their historic home and they want to tour the McKinney House, "said President Jim Newland. "Some Saturdays we weren't able to offer that but now we will always be able to offer them a tour."

The additional hours will be covered by docent Susan Stowe and newly trained docents Sandy Chamberlin and Janis Schlundt. If you are interested in volunteering as a docent contact the Society at volunteers@lamesahistory.com or stop by the Archives on a Saturday.

"The Society is lucky to have committed volunteers Carol Lockwood and Kitty Nicholson who volunteer each month as docents in the McKinney House."

Tracey Stotz
Vice President, La Mesa Historical Society



MT. HELIX WALK-UP: JANUARY 5TH

On January 5th the Historical Society joined with our partners the Grossmont-Mt. Helix Improvement Association and Mt. Helix Park Foundation for their annual Mt. Helix Walk-Up event. President Jim Newland and Board member Steven Christiansen manned the booth greeting the energetic community members who made the climb to the top of Mt. Helix. Due to the hospitality of the GMIA and Mt. Helix Park those who made the journey were treated to refreshments and congratulations.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION NEWS

PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM MOVING FORWARD

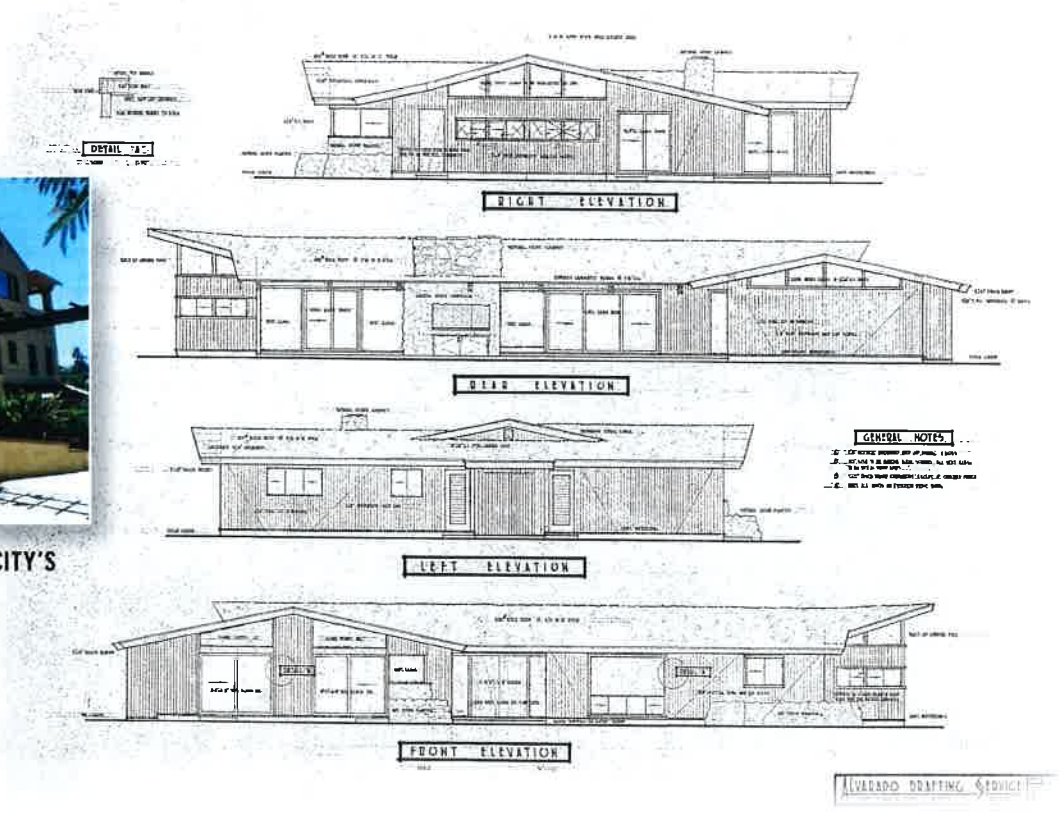
The Society's program to assist in the update of the City of La Mesa's comprehensive historic property inventory is moving forward. One of the first efforts will be a community outreach and awareness program.

The Society will be holding a special History Roundtable in April to discuss the values of Historic Preservation, both economically and socially for communities. We will also discuss the legal and environmental compliance issues along with how the Society and its volunteers and partners will complete the survey—including how members and the public can assist. We are also working to schedule a presentation with the La Mesa Conversations group to broaden the understanding and support for the survey and historic preservation in general.

The Society has also partnered with the Archaeology and History Programs at San Diego State to engage interns to assist with inventory, mapping, research, and context development. Initial efforts will focus on testing out methods and techniques for completing the initial Reconnaissance level survey work.

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.





RECENT PROPERTIES ADDED TO THE CITY'S HISTORICAL LANDMARKS REGISTER:

(BACKGROUND)
ADAMS RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX, 9415-25 LEMON AVENUE

(INSET)
CHRISTOPHER AND MARIE HINCK HOUSE, 9397 LEMON AVENUE

FOR THE RECORD
ARCHIVES REPORT

The Archives continue to be a busy 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 also expect to have another SDSU Intern this Semester to assist in processing and cataloging our extensive and growing collections. There are many jobs and tasks from complex to repetitive activities that all are helpful in caring for and making available the 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

- La Mesa Fact Books and Directories (1980s-90s); donated by Steven Gillespie
- American Association of University Women, Grossmont Branch Records (1960s-1990s); donated by Cindy Rittershofer
- Bob Battenfield Public Relations Collection, donated by Patsy Battenfield
- Various Subdivision Maps of La Mesa and Mt. Helix Area and photographs of the La Mesa Realtors Board (1956-72): donated by David Smith



LA MESA REALTORS BOARD MEETING 1967, LEONARD SMITH COLLECTION

We welcome a contribution from one of our local partner organizations, The Friends of The La Mesa Library, on the eve of their 50th Anniversary Celebration on March 9th, at the La Mesa Branch Library, Bonnie Baranoff, board member of the friends researched and wrote this history.

THE LA MESA LIBRARY AND ITS FRIENDS

PROVIDING INFORMATION, PROMOTING AWARENESS, RAISING FUNDS, AND ADVOCATING FOR OVER 100 YEARS

The Friends of the La Mesa Library are a nonprofit organization of citizens like you who believe that a modern, effective library is an essential service for our community. The Friends promote local awareness and appreciation of the library as a valuable center of learning, education, and pleasure, a community benefit offering key information, services and programs in addition to book dispersal. 2019 marks the 50th Anniversary of the Friends of the La Mesa Library.



ORIGINAL LA MESA WOMEN'S CLUB HOUSE ON THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF 3RD AND LEMON AVENUE, C1915. THE CLUB HOUSED AN EARLY LIBRARY COLLECTION.

It All Started With The Women Of La Mesa

You can't have a history of the Friends of the La Mesa Library without first having a library they can support.

Over 100 years ago, the visionary leaders of the La Mesa Women's Club established La Mesa's first formal library, a community owned and supported collection housed right inside their Club House on the southwest corner of 3rd and Lemon. When their club ran out of space in 1915, the popular library moved to La Mesa's City Hall, where eventually and once again, inadequate space became an issue. In 1932, the library found its first permanent home at Porter Hall, in the building's first location on University, across the street from where it stands today. But there were even more libraries in the La Mesa area at this time. San Diego City Directories from 1936 include listings for satellite branches found in businesses around town—including Emmons Mercantile Store on El Cajon Boulevard in today's College Area—suggesting a need for more space or at least more access points.

Resident demands for library materials and services continued to grow but following the Great Depression and leading into and following World War II, there just wasn't enough city revenue to support building a new library, let alone anything else. Thankfully for the citizens of La Mesa, Ben Polak—La Mesa's Mayor from 1936-48—was a man full of determination and imagination, helping develop a unique fundraising plan to build a new library as well as a number of other projects. His idea? The "Tacky Wacky Carnival," an annual event that amassed

The La Mesa Library And Its Friends
Continued on page 9

The La Mesa Library And Its Friends
..... *Continued from page 8*

the required funds and an occasion that residents enjoyed for many years. $50,000 raised at the carnival helped fund construction of the Polak Fine Arts and Library Complex, housing the Foothills Art Gallery, Lamplighters Theater, and San Diego County Library Branch. The Library complex opened in 1957 as part of the new Civic Center, of which only City Hall remains.

Here Come the Friends

In April 1964, the Friends of California Libraries was established, later incorporated in October 1966. Encouraged by fellow library enthusiasts in El Cajon, an organizational meeting for forming a local Friends group was called to order on February 4, 1969. It comes as no surprise that the La Mesa Women's Club was the Friends' original sponsor; they organized the first meeting. The Friends Purpose, from the original Constitution and By-Laws:

"The purpose of this organization shall be to foster closer relations between the La Mesa Branch Library and the citizens of La Mesa and environs; to lead in the development of a program for the extension and improvement of the Library services and resources; to promote knowledge of the functions, resources, services and needs of the Library; and to aid in the provision of adequate housing and other facilities for the library."

Early supporters of the library and its Friends included County Supervisor Henry Boney (of Boney's and later Henry's and Sprouts grocery store fame). *"He felt that there is no question of the need of expanded facilities...and he felt that the Friends organization could be of valuable help in planning specifics as well as urging the Board of Supervisors to go ahead with the building since the need is urgent and costs are rapidly rising."* A committee was formed and library expansion was realized in 1974, with an Open House ceremony taking place on November 6.



PORTER HALL AT ITS ORIGINAL SITE ON THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF LA MESA BLVD AND TODAY'S UNIVERSITY AVENUE, 1930S. FIRST DEDICATED LIBRARY BUILDING FOR LA MESA.

In 2006, that library was demolished to make room for a new police station and on July 19, 2008, the Friends hosted a Grand Opening Celebration for the La Mesa Community Library in its current location, where the Friends were provided space for their bookstore. Fun fact: the bookstore's shelves are from the old library.

The Future Of The Library And Its Friends

The Friends continue their mission by addressing the ongoing need for additional space and funding; county and city budgets simply don't provide enough tax dollars to cover each library community's needs. Look around town and you will find Friends groups in most, if not all, city and county libraries.

Libraries provide several basic products and services vital to any community: access to books, journals, newspapers, periodicals, and computers. Essentially, access to information. Libraries offer unique

The La Mesa Library And Its Friends
..... *Continued on page 10*

The La Mesa Library And Its Friends

Continued from page 9

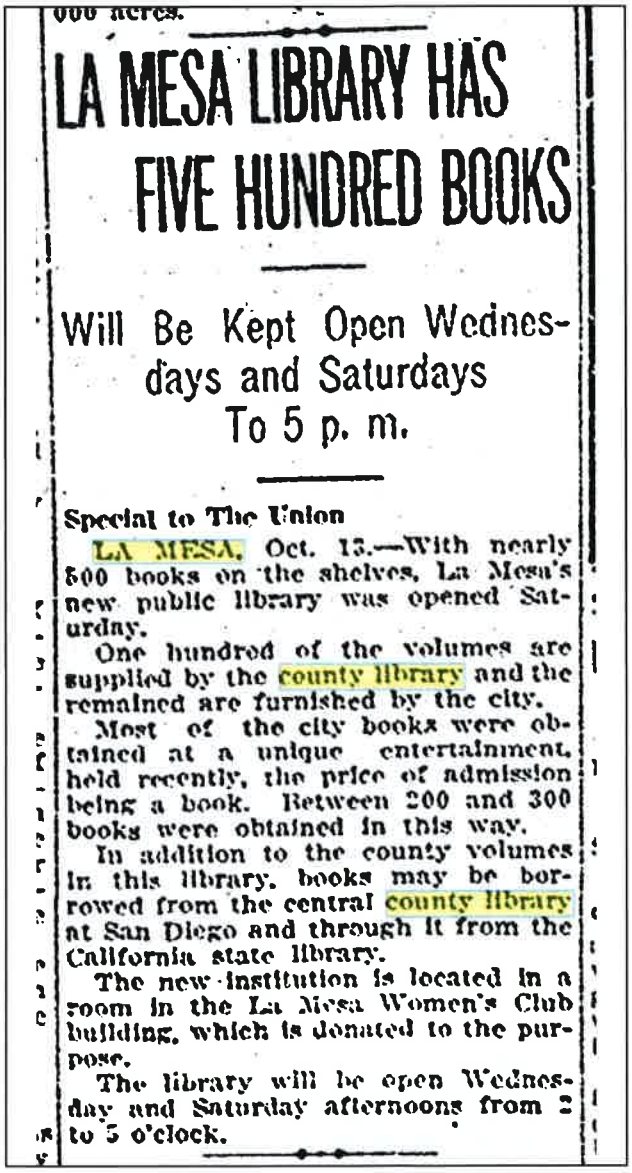
programs tailored for children, teens and adults in their community. Most also have community meeting rooms as well as theaters, patios, and separate space for children. Visit the library's website (sdcl.org) to check out the many free programs the library offers and make time to attend some of these events.



BEN POLAK THEATER AND LIBRARY BUILDING, C1980S.

One of the most popular programs is the Second Saturday Concert Series, and on March 9, they'll be celebrating the Friends 50th Anniversary with live music and children's activities. For more information, visit www.lamesalibrary.org.

The Friends of the La Mesa Library wish to thank the La Mesa Historical Society for their support with research for this article, and suggest folks visit the archives to learn more about the history of La Mesa.



000 acres.

LA MESA LIBRARY HAS FIVE HUNDRED BOOKS

Will Be Kept Open Wednesdays and Saturdays To 5 p. m.

Special to The Union

LA MESA, Oct. 13.—With nearly 500 books on the shelves, La Mesa's new public library was opened Saturday.

One hundred of the volumes are supplied by the county library and the remained are furnished by the city.

Most of the city books were obtained at a unique entertainment, held recently, the price of admission being a book. Between 200 and 300 books were obtained in this way.

In addition to the county volumes in this library, books may be borrowed from the central county library at San Diego and through it from the California state library.

The new institution is located in a room in the La Mesa Women's Club building, which is donated to the purpose.

The library will be open Wednesday and Saturday afternoons from 2 to 5 o'clock.

ARTICLE ANNOUNCING OPENING OF COUNTY LIBRARY BRANCH IN NEW WOMEN'S CLUB BUILDING, SAN DIEGO UNION OCTOBER 14, 1913. IN 1915 THE LIBRARY WAS MOVED INTO THE REYNOLD'S BUILDING, THEN TO CITY HALL ON SPRING STREET BEFORE MOVING INTO PORTER HALL.

"A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert."

– Andrew Carnegie

Bonnie Baranoff

Board Member, The Friends Of The La Mesa Library

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

THE ANNUAL McKINNEY CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

Each December, the historic McKinney house museum is transformed into a picturesque, living Christmas card by Courier and Ives, to welcome the holiday season. Volunteers made their lists and checked them twice, as the La Mesa Historical Society hosted the annual Holiday Open House on Sunday, December 9th, 2018.

In preparation, the living room was filled with the fragrance of a beautifully decorated fir Christmas tree, provided by LMHS President Jim Newland and installed by General Director Alex Quintero. Vice President Tracy Stotz joined volunteers in hanging ornaments, greenery and garlands, while General Director, Melody Andrews, placed a collection of vintage toys under the tree.

On a chilly winter day, the Society welcomed its members, neighbors, friends and guests to celebrate not only the remarkable history of this community landmark, but make new memories, as guests - young and old - filled the two-story home with laughter and good cheer once again. One can only imagine the McKinney family may have held similar parties throughout the home's history... We appreciate all this site has to offer, and to see it thriving and relevant to the next generation of stewards interested in historic preservation and conservation does not go unnoticed.





Live music performed by acoustic guitarist, Ian Lawrence, filled the rooms and halls with traditional carols, Chanukah melodies, and classical favorites.

A highlight guests always look forward is the variety of freshly baked cookies and desserts provided by Donna Neimeier. A special thank you goes to our La Mesa Historical Society General Director Michele Greenberg-McClung for decorating the dinning room fit for a feast.

Don't miss this annual event in 2019! Stay tuned for more information and watch us as we grow! Please give us your comments and feedback, as we look to improve LMHS member experiences, and provide quality events and gatherings you enjoy.

Kari Dodson
La Mesa Historical Society

2019 LMHS CALENDAR of EVENTS

HISTORY ROUNDTABLE LECTURES

Around Mt. Helix Celebrating a Natural and Cultural Icon

By James Newland
La Mesa Historical Society

Saturday, March 23, 2019
10am to 12 noon

Grossmont Healthcare District Auditorium,
9005 Wakarusa Drive,
La Mesa

Historic Survey Update and the Benefits of Historic Preservation

James Newland, Nikki Kreibich,
And Other Distinguished Speakers

Saturday
April 20, 2019

LMHS Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony – Save the Date

Friday
June 21, 2019

The Impossible Railroad: A Centennial History

By Reena Deutsch,
San Diego Railroad Museum

Thursday, August 8, 2019
6:30pm-8:00pm

Grossmont Healthcare District Auditorium,
9005 Wakarusa Drive,
La Mesa

2019 Home Tour – Save the Date

Saturday
November 2, 2019
9am-3pm

McKINNEY HOUSE MUSEUM
AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ARCHIVES RESEARCH FACILITY
8369 University Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91942

MAILED FROM ZIP CODE 92020

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EL CAJON, CA 92020
PERMIT NO. 178

LMHS MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box 882
La Mesa, CA 91944

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

WEBSITE
https://lamesahistory.com/

FACEBOOK
LaMesaHistoricalSociety

INSTAGRAM
@lamesahistoricalsociety

HOURS OF OPERATION
McKinney House Museum and Archives Research Facility
Saturdays 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Group tours are available.
Call (619 466-0197 for information.

The La Mesa Historical Society is an all-volunteer non-profit 501(c) 3 corporation charged with preserving the history of all the greater La Mesa areas. 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.
The submission deadline for editorials and other content contributions are on the 1st of every March, June, September, and December.
Acceptable TEXT file formats: .docx / .rtf / .pdf
Acceptable PHOTO or IMAGE formats: .jpg or .tif with resolution of at least 266 dots per inch (dpi), or, 120 pixels (px)

Submit contributions via mail, or e-mail **info@lamesahistory.com**