



Our
CORNERSTONE

HPHT's House and Walking Tour - Sat. May 18th

The Highland Park Heritage Trust Twelfth Annual House and Walking Tour will be held on Saturday, May 18th. Tours will start in the 4400 block of Griffin Avenue every half hour beginning at 10:00 am with the last tour leaving at 3:00 pm. Donation is \$7.50 for adults; \$5.00 for senior and students; and, children under 12 are free with an accompanying adult.

The docent guided tours will include a history of the area and a look at the interiors of several homes. Two

past HPHT Award Winners are on the tour route. The owners of a 1910 Craftsman style house earned a 1995 award for a revitalizing paint job using a total of nine colors, including three shades of green, bayberry, yellow and sierra. A 1990 HPHT award was given to recognize the sustained maintenance and overall care which had preserved the traditional stained shingles and architectural details of another 1910 Craftsman residence. The one and one-half hour tour will conclude with free

refreshments and a photo display.

Membership involvement is vital to the Tour's success. Publicity is essential - so tell your friends and neighbors about the event. Invite some out-of-towners to drop by and discover a different section of our community. And help HPHT spread the word. Please let us hear your creative new ideas and/or promotion suggestions that have worked for other groups to make this event the best yet for HPHT.

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The President's "Corner"

Food for Thought: The Historic Relevance of our Community

I had to go all the way to Asheville, North Carolina to be reminded about the importance of Highland Park, California. As part of the "Arroyo Culture" during the early part of the 1900s, Highland Park was a community which influenced and contributed to the growth of Los Angeles. Charles F. Lummis lived right here. George Wharton James

founded the Arroyo Guild of Craftsman right here at what is now Judson Studios in Garvanza. Many important artists and craftsmen, the Wachtels and Batchelder for example, worked and/or lived right here along our portion of the Arroyo Seco. The mammoth addition of *real* California bungalows -- the modest 1 or 1 1/2 story affordable home, combining

See THOUGHT, Page 5

"Focus on People"

Julio Verdugo, The Don of San Rafael

By Charles J. Fisher

The community that we know today as Highland Park was once a part of a 36,403-acre Spanish land grant made to Don Jose Maria Verdugo, Corporal of the Guard at the Mission San Gabriel, on October 20, 1784. This was one of the three original land grants made in the Los Angeles area by the Spanish governor of Alta California, Pedro Fages.

Verdugo originally referred to his
See VERDUGO, Page 4

Update on the Issues Affecting our Communities

HPOZ Association Makes a Positive Impact

HPHT would like to acknowledge the dedicated work of the Highland Park Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) Association and the success the Association has had in preserving the historic character of Highland Park.

Through dedicated work at the Association board meetings, many homeowners have been able to rehabilitate their properties, through proper historic guidelines, and thus, preserving the historic integrity of the neighborhood.

The HPOZ, approved in 1994 and administered by this association, is beginning to have a positive effect on

our community. The house at 5249 Aldama is an excellent example. This earthquake-damaged structure was repaired to meet historic standards by the retention and replacement of the wood clapboard siding, the retention of the wood-framed windows, and the replacement of the unreinforced chimney with one seismically approved. The result is an attractive, sensitively-repaired structure rather than the originally-proposed stucco-overed box. The homeowners are to be congratulated. Learn more about your HPOZ by attending a meeting. For details, call Ralph Avila at City Planning, 485-2113. - B. Ebinger

Garvanza Project

HPHT and residents of the Garvanza community have begun to gather signatures in support of reintroducing the historic name of "Garvanza," eventually erecting signage for this historic area. If you live in Garvanza, please call Bob Brehler (255-2150), to sign a petition or to volunteer time. - Editor



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Nicole Possert (255-3408)

Vice President: Anne Marie Wozniak (255-2849)

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Mills Act Ordinance:

Useful Tool for the Historic Home Owner

The Mills Act Ordinance, authorizing real estate tax reductions for owners of qualified historic properties within the City who enter into binding agreements to preserve and maintain their properties, passed the Housing and Community Redevelopment Committee of the City Council on February 14th. This ordinance is very important to Highland Park, for the tax relief would be available to any property located within the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) which is on the certified list. This list catalogs over 1,500 historic or con-

tributing historic structures! The Mills Act is one of the few tax reliefs for owners of historic structures. It is this kind of incentive that directly encourages property owners to restore or rehabilitate their properties. This reinvestment in the community will help strengthen our historic neighborhood. The Mills Act Ordinance goes before the full City Council next month. It's important that the residents of Highland Park let our elected representatives know we support this. CALL Councilman Mike Hernandez (485-3451) and Councilman Richard Alatorre (485-3335).

- B. Ebinger

CPAC Scrutinizes Draft Northeast Community Plan

The Northeast Community Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) is meeting every other Saturday morning at Occidental College on a less formal but more intensive approach. Each line of the most-recent Draft Community Plan, done by LA City Planning, is being scrutinized and discussed, with CPAC recommendations that were omitted being brought back and addressed. HPHT is well represented and involved in this process.

Planning has acted on several concerns and specific sites addressed at last year's public hearings. They are conducting a community by community review, and submitting proposed changes to

the CPAC. Atwater was the first community to be reviewed, followed by Glassell Park. The trend of these proposed changes is a reduction in density, at specific sites, from the current draft plan. (This is welcome news).

Councilmembers Mike Hernandez, Jackie Goldberg and Richard Alatorre (representing the Northeast) have requested that Planning conduct more community meetings sometime this year, with the expectation that meetings will be held in each specific community. It's expected that Council Offices will take an active role, also. Send thanks to each Council-member for their leadership and support of CPAC. - R. MacTavish

Video of Museum Heritage in Production - A Must See

"Museums Along the Arroyo", a thirty-minute video (with an accompanying book by Jane Apostol), is currently in production and will premiere on May 19th during Museums of the Arroyo Day. The project is both an historical and contemporary view of five cultural monuments along the Arroyo Seco in Northeast Los Angeles and Pasadena: Heritage Square, El Alisal (The Lummis Home), Southwest Museum/Casa de Adobe, Fenyes Mansion and the Gamble House. Through the use of historic photos, documents, artifacts and contemporary activities, the importance (past and present) of these five museums will be explored. This video will be a valuable addition to the printed literature on the Arroyo Culture. Producer/Director Jon Wilkman of Wilkman Productions, and our own HPHT board member and Cinematographer Bob Ebinger are working on the video. - B. Ebinger

Award Received from Highland Park Chamber of Commerce

HPHT received a "Certificate of Achievement" award from the Highland Park Chamber of Commerce on February 9th. Our organi-

zation was recognized by past-president Heinrich Keifer for our extraordinary and continued contribution to the community. - Editor

BLUELINE ACTION TAKEN!

A new milestone for the BlueLine Light Rail project occurred on Feb. 28th. The MTA board voted to move this project forward by establishing a budget (\$803.9 million), a completion date of 2001 and a 90-day period to finalize the design/scope of the entire project with direct input from Council and the community.

The MTA withdrew a proposed "at grade" separation at Figueroa/Marmion Way after a tremendous effort was made by community organizations, including HPHT, and the Council offices to keep this intersection "below grade." This was a significant victory! Coupled with the achievement of keeping the Southwest Museum station, the community voice and participation is undoubtedly shaping a better rail project to serve the needs of OUR community.

The MTA, especially Joe Drew, should be commended for taking a fresh approach of **valuing** this community voice. We look forward to working with MTA staff on the remaining issues, which are still of great concern. There are many and should not be thought of as insignificant in the least.

The next 90 days will be a critical time for the resolution of **all** the issues surrounding this project. Be assured HPHT will take an active role!

- Editor

JULIO VERDUGO

(con't from Page 1)

land as "La Zanja," in reference to the "Zanja Madre" or "Mother (irrigation) Ditch" that supplied the early Pueblo of Los Angeles. This ditch began at the southern tip of his land, where the Rio de Porciuncula (Los Angeles River) and the Arroyo Seco come together. Soon afterwards he was to rename his grant the "Rancho San Rafael."

Jose Verdugo's son, Julio, was born at Mission San Gabriel and came to the Rancho as a small child along with his parents and two sisters. As he grew up, he developed an aptitude and love for ranching and in 1932 inherited Rancho San Rafael along with his sister, Catalina. By this time he had married Maria de Jesus Romero.

Until the 1830s, Spanish California had enjoyed a period of relative peace and prosperity. But with the independence of Mexico came a time of intrigue and frustration for Don Julio. One requirement of Mexican land law was that if a grant was awarded it must be put to use, or it could be given to another. In 1843, the northeasterly portion of Rancho San Rafael was granted to Ignacio Coronel, who named it "La Cañada." Verdugo was highly incensed at this grant of his land and swore he would someday recover that land. He made good on that promise years later when he traded his "Providencia Tract" for La Cañada with the current land owner, Jonathan R. Scott.

A smaller grant of 1,200 acres, consisting of Glassell Park and a portion of Mt. Washington, was made to Jose Maria Aguilar in 1844. This portion of the Verdugo land was known as "Cañada de los Nogales" or "Valley of the Walnut Trees." This rancho was never recorded in L.A. County after it was patented by the United States in 1882 and has been nearly forgotten, even by historians.

Rancheros' wealth was told by how much head of cattle they owned and Julio Verdugo owned

thousands. This asset was to make these rancho Dons very wealthy during the early phases of the California gold rush, as cattle driven to Northern California brought record high prices. Many Rancheros used these profits to enrich themselves with material comforts that they had never enjoyed before.

This was also a period of time that land owners were having to prove to the United States government that they were entitled to their Spanish/Mexican land grants. This meant hiring lawyers and preparing cases, presented to the land commission, to review and confirm (or deny) these land titles.

Verdugo hired the very capable Joseph Lancaster Brent, who presented the case and won the Verdugos confirmation of title to the Rancho San Rafael in 1857. As payment for his services, Verdugo deeded to Brent a tract of land that Brent named "Santa Eulalia," today known as Atwater Village. All of these land cases were automatically appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court and if upheld, a patent was issued by the President. This frequently took years, and in most cases even longer due to the disruptions caused by the Civil War and the following period of Reconstruction. Brent left Los Angeles in 1861 to take up the Southern cause; survived the war but he never returned to California. This loss of his trusted lawyer friend was a bad blow to Julio.

By the late 1850s, the cattle boom had ended and many landowners, in order to keep their land and pay bills, had to take out mortgages, often at interest rates as high as 3 to 5 percent per month. As property taxes rose and cattle priced dropped, instead of taking a mortgage, Verdugo sold the Southern portion of Rancho San Rafael to Jesse D. Hunter, who had already acquired Cañada de los Nogales. However the great rains of 1860-61 took their toll and on January 2, 1961, Verdugo entered into a \$3,500 mortgage with busi-

nessman Jacob Elias.

Verdugo was feeling particularly good at this time and had planned to use this money to build new adobes and corrals and to rebuild his once profitable cattle business. The cruel hand of fate soon intervened and Southern California spend the next several years in a horrific draught, which completely destroyed the entire cattle industry. As cattle died by the hundreds, Verdugo soon defaulted on his loan payments, which at the high rate of 3 percent per month, he soon began to accumulate an irreversible debt. In desperation, Verdugo deeded land to friends and relatives in order to slow down the foreclosure process. Some of the land even went to a distant relative, Los Angeles County Sheriff Tomas Sanchez. With a debt of \$59,565.80, Verdugo's time was running out. And, without the capable hand of his friend Brent to guide him through the morass of legal filings, he was eventually forced by the Courts into a February 4, 1869 Sheriff's land sale. The Rancho San Rafael and La Cañada were acquired by two Los Angeles attorneys, Alfred Beck Chapman and Andrew Glassell excluding only the portions of land Verdugo had previously deeded to Scott, Brent and Hunter. Glassell and Chapman then deeded back to the Verdugos the 200 acres surrounding Julio's home and the immediate land surrounding Catalina Verdugo's adobe home (in what is now Glendale).

Julio Verdugo died at his home in 1878 at the age of 89. Ironically four years later, on January 28, 1882, a patent was finally issued for the Rancho San Rafael by President Arthur. Julio Verdugo was a man of his times and as such leaves us a legacy of a period of California history that is celebrated with romance and awe. His legacy of love for his land has left an indelible stamp upon each of the communities that have grown and flourished in what was once the Rancho San Rafael.

1996 Home and Walking Tour - May 18th

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Volunteer to help the day of the tour. HPHT members are urged to participate, and others interested are also welcome. Docents are asked to work 3-4 hours either in the morning or afternoon. This scheduling leaves

enough time for each docent to enjoy a free box lunch and a tour. HPHT can use help in every aspect -- if you prefer a specific job or time, please let us know right away so your choices can be scheduled. Don't wait for the dreaded

phone call... and there will be one. Everyone's help is needed, appreciated and besides, IT REALLY IS FUN!

Please call co-chairs Pat Samson (223-4895) or Robert MacTavish (258-4782) with ideas, suggestions, and especially to volunteer your help.

Food for Thought (Con't from page 1)

simplicity with artistic style – fostered the fabric of Highland Park's built landscape. All of these people and activities, when combined, made our community vital to the growth of greater Los Angeles and had a pertinent role to play within the national Arts and Crafts Movement.

At the 1996 national Grove Park Inn Arts and Crafts Conference, I was surprisingly reminded of the latter role when two different speakers mentioned two of our own – Lummis (for his home and natural garden) and James (for his connection to Gustav Stickley and The Craftsman magazine). Yes, these people were important locally. They were also important nationally.

We need to step back and look at the "big picture" once in a while. It's easy to be consumed with the present, with local issues directly affecting our lives. But when we focus *only* on the present and forget the past, our heritage and history begin to fade. Today, it seems everyone wants our community reinvigorated. As one who wants to make this an historically-sensitive reality, I ask, "How can we begin to make real connections back to the historic importance of our community; not only on a local scale, but on a regional, national and international scale as well?" I welcome your thoughts.

Nicole

Our **CORNERSTONE**, is the newsletter for the Highland Park Heritage Trust, a non-profit community organization.

Editor: Nicole Possert

The deadline for all editorial submissions for the May/June 1996 issue is April 5, 1996.

Please mail to our P.O. address (below).

Advertising Policy:

Advertisements will be accepted for this publication by advertisers who are in keeping with the intention and goals of this organization. Contact Nicole Possert (255-3408) for ad submission and rates.

1996 Membership Cards Have Been Mailed to all Paid Members!

If you haven't received yours, please pay your dues or call Anne Marie to discuss.

HELP STRENGTHEN THE PRESERVATION OF OUR COMMUNITY - BECOME A MEMBER OF HPHT:

- \$15 (Individual) \$25 (Family) \$35 (Sponsor) \$50-149 (Benefactor) \$150+ (Corporate)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ I am interested in volunteering.

Please make check payable to **Highland Park Heritage Trust** and mail to: P.O. Box 42894, Los Angeles, CA 90050-0894.

ADVERTISING:

FOR LEASE:

Historic home in Highland Park. The La Paloma residence is available on April 1st. A City Cultural Monument, this 4-bedroom, 3-level home has over 5,000 sq. ft., with spacious yards and gardens. Call 257-0060. Asking \$1,700/month.

FOR SALE:

A historic home located at 724-726 North Avenue 65, in the Garvanza area. 1,800 sq.ft. duplex with new plumbing and exterior paint. This home was featured on a HPHT Walk Tour. Asking \$144,000. Please call Bonnye Sirk with Rossmoyne Realty at (818) 242-6825.



P.O. Box 42894
Los Angeles, CA
90050-0894

Calendar of Upcoming Events

MARCH

- 9 Northeast Trees at Figi Hill. Call 221-1778.
- 15 Art proposals for Oneonta/Olancha public stairway project due. Sponsored by Arroyo Arts Collective. Call 259-8786.
- 26 VOTE. Calif. Primary
- 28 Community Council Mtg. sponsored by Councilman Hernandez, 7pm
Call 485-3451 for details.

APRIL

- 8 HPHT Business Meeting, Arroyo Books, 7pm
- 14 10th Annual Lummis Garden Fair, 11-5 at 200 E. Avenue 43. Call 222-0546 for details.

- 19 "Without Alarm" exhibit opens at Old LA City Jail (401 N. Avenue 19) 2-5 pm. Through May 5.
- 20 Arroyo Seco Earth Walk and Festival, 8-5 at Brookside Park. (818) 577-6000 for details.

MAY

- 12-18 National Preservation Week

18 HPHT Walking Tour. Docents/volunteers needed, call Pat at 223-4895.

- 19 Museums of the Arroyo Day ("Museums Along the Arroyo" video debuts)