

Highland Park Sycamore Grove Area Walking Tour

We are seeking folks who have always wondered when someone would ask them to be a docent for a walking tour.

The Saturday, December 20 tour will be the last of those hosted by the Los Angeles Conservancy. Highland Park Heritage Trust will now be in charge of conducting our own tours, so your first assignment is to sign up for the December 20 tour and plan on being part of the team of excited and dedicated individuals who will be learning together and pitching in to conduct the February 28 tour. Contact Carmela Gomes at 323-257-1900 or hphtpres@gmail.com to sign up to be a docent. The schedule for training and study materials will be handed out at the end of the December 20 tour when we meet at the Avenue 50 Studio for refreshments.

Remember to Clean and Green Your Parkway!



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OUR CORNERSTONE

VOLUME XIII · ISSUE 4

FALL 2008

In Memoriam

By Ann Walnum

While preparing this memoriam, I was asked, "How do you know Grayson Cook?" My thought was, "How can I not know Grayson?"—the Mount Washington Association, Highland Park Heritage Trust, Los Angeles Conservancy, Heritage Square—and that's only the beginning. Grayson of song, books, historic lore; yard sale/thrift shop connoisseur and treasure-finder whose art, music, and book-filled home was always open to hospitality.

The Heritage Trust was welcomed for board meetings and our 2005 Christmas Party was in Grayson's home. Grayson served on the committee for the 2005 Arroyo Seco and Innovation tour and designed and even built the stands to display our 3 × 7 foot Pearl Beach-designed street banners. The Los Angeles Conservancy's bi-monthly Highland Park tours were popularized by Grayson's guidance at the Casa de Adobe, the Hiner House and Sousa Nook, and Professors' Row (Sycamore Terrace).

Last December, Grayson was a true Spirit of Christmas. Wearing his custom-made Santa Claus suit, he distributed books to all students at Aldama School and read "The Night Before Christmas" at the Heritage Square Candlelight Tours. The Aldama School also had additional reason to be grateful to Grayson. Each week he visited all the third grade classes and enthralled the children by telling stories, sharing travel experiences and tutoring slow readers. He explained his devotion as being based upon his many years as a probation officer, telling the children that most of the young people in trouble with the law were either poor readers or non-readers. The Aldama teachers nominated him for "Volunteer of the Year" in 2005. And, he won this prestigious award from Associated Administrators of Los Angeles over all entries, district wide.

Last September 6th, Grayson hosted a party at Casa de Adobe to celebrate his seventieth birthday. Invited friends, both personal and organizational,

neighbors and former colleagues from the Probation Department were treated to an amazing and very special afternoon. In addition to fine food and music, he provided a sampling of everything he did best—he told stories, sang old favorites, told the story of his life and proudly introduced out-of-town relatives, lost during a childhood family separation and happily reunited in adulthood.

None of us could have possibly imagined that this wonderful Birthday Celebration would also be Grayson's farewell. We feel lucky to have been there.

Footage of this event and personal remembrances of Grayson were shared at the Mount Washington Association meeting, November 17, 2008, at 7 p.m., at the Mount Washington School, 4444 San Rafael Avenue. Memories of this very special and generous man were shared by many friends.



Grayson Cook leads a tour of Highland Park. (Photo: Annie Laskey)

Greetings from Cambridge!

It's hard to believe that four months have passed since I left Highland Park to pursue my Masters in City Planning at MIT. Time sure flies by but even with my demanding course load, I still find time to reminisce about our dear Arroyo Seco and its special heritage.



As I wrap up my first semester at MIT, I feel very fortunate to have this opportunity to expand my knowledge, meet amazing people from around the world, and experience my first official fall (now winter, that's another story!). This semester I've learned about urban economics, Geographic Information Systems, theories behind civic engagement, models of city form, and graphic urban design skills. It's been quite a busy, but rewarding, semester to say the least.

Furthermore, I'm glad to represent the Highland Park Heritage Trust on a national level. Last September I was awarded two distinguished awards. The first was a National Graduate Scholarship awarded by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. The second was the Mildred Colodny National Diversity Fellowship awarded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Every year the National Trust selects a graduate student studying diversity issues related to historic preservation and I'm honored to be the represent the National Trust in 2008/09. As part of my fellowship, I will be attending the national Main Streets conference in Chicago next March. Additionally, I will spend next summer working with the National Trust's Community Revitalization Program in Washington, DC.

Next semester I will be taking an MIT practicum based on the National Trust's Four Point "Main Street" Approach for community revitalization through historic preservation—Design, Economic Restructuring, Promotion, and Organization. I'll be working with a New Orleans-based non-profit organization to develop a plan for a regional food center in New Orleans' historic St. Claude neighborhood. I also plan to take a course in urban design policy, affordable housing, urban statistics, and finance or management at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

These are all wonderful things I could not have achieved without the support of the Highland Park Heritage Trust. Please continue your great work and dedicated support of the Arroyo Seco's wonderful heritage. I look forward to returning in a few years, but in the meantime, it's back to studying.

Sincerely,

John Arroyo, Cambridge, MA



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Our Cornerstone is the official bi-monthly newsletter of the Highland Park Heritage Trust, a non-profit community organization.

Editor: Diana Barnwell

Layout: Future Studio

Distribution: Anne Marie Wozniak

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HPHT Kiosk

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- *The House That Moved Twice* (\$14.95)
- *The Lure & Legacy of the Lower Arroyo Seco* (\$19.95)



Books

- *The Five Friendly Valleys: The Story of Greater Highland Park* (\$5.95)
- *Los Angeles County Route 66 Guide* by Scott Piotrowski (\$18.95)



Street Banners that hung on Figueroa St. (\$50.00 each)

All proceeds benefit HPHT. Orders may be picked up at the monthly meetings or shipping for an additional \$4.00 donation.



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Coveted Governor's Award

The Mt. Washington Homeowners Alliance won the 2008 Governor's Award in the oral history category for the "Mt. Washington Voices" project. It was nominated, in May, by HPHT Board Member Justine Leong, for their exemplary project in recording the residents and their on-going fight for open space in the hill town community of Mt. Washington. Dan Wright, former president of MWhA accepted the award on Friday, November 21st, at the Historic Leland Stanford Mansion in Sacramento. Kudos for a job well done!

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Hermon Car Wall Designation

By Charles J. Fisher

The Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission has voted to designate the Hermon Car Wall, located at the edge of Debs Park, a Historic Cultural Monument. The unanimous vote was on October 30, 2008, the same day that the Commission had voted 3 to 1 to designate Griffith Park a monument as well.

Both items will be now referred to the Los Angeles City Council for approval.

Built between 1933 and World War II by Albert Emmanuel Sederquist, using parts of several 1920s vintage cars in the concrete for decoration, the Hermon Car Wall is only the third Folk Art monument to be

designated by the Commission. One of them, the Tower of Wooden Pallets, in Van Nuys, has since been lost. The other one is the world famous Watts Towers.

The wall is owned by the City of Los Angeles as it is located in the right of way of Pullman Street, in Hermon. It was nominated by the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council and will be only the third Historic Cultural Monument within the historic Hermon Community. The nomination was prepared by HPHT board member, Charles J. Fisher.



Hermon Car Wall photographed March 21, 2006. (Photo: Charles J. Fisher)

Calendar of Upcoming HPHT & Community Events

The following events are also listed at www.hpht.org

Sunday, December 7, 2008 • 64th Annual Northeast Los Angeles Holiday Parade and Winterfest, "The Spirit and Colors of the Holidays," 1-5 p.m., North Figueroa Street, Avenue 60 South to Avenue 50 and Sycamore Grove Park

Monday, December 8, 2008 • Annual HPHT Christmas Party—La Boheme House, home of Hillary Danner and Jason Renfro—at the top of the Glenmarry Stairs, 7-10 p.m., invitations to be mailed, potluck and Kris Kringle gift exchange

Thursday, December 11, 2008 • LA Community Development Department—Free Fundraising Strategies Training—9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. make reservations at 213-744-9307

Saturday, December 13, 2008 • Community Outreach at Home Depot, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. HPHT booth needs volunteers for 1 hour shifts

Sunday, December 14, 2008 • Southwest Museum Hard Hat Tour for Members, 1-4 p.m., to make reservations call Pam Hannah 323-221-2164

Saturday, December 20, 2008 • Highland Park Sycamore Grove Area Walking Tour, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., make reservations at www.laconservancy.org, \$5 members/\$10 non-members

Wednesday, January 7, 2009 • Docent training for HP Walking Tour, All individuals who have committed to the training process should attend, information: hphtpres@gmail.com

Saturday, January 10, 2009 • Last day for *Corita Watercolors: A Survey* exhibition at the Judson Studios Gallery, open M-F, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., 2nd Saturdays, 7-10 p.m., phone M-F, (800) 445-8376 for information and group tours

Monday, January 12, 2009 • HPHT Meeting, Ramona Hall, 7-9 p.m., general membership by-laws revisions and approval vote, light refreshments

Saturday, February 28, 2009 • Highland Park Sycamore Grove Area Walking Tour, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., make reservations at www.hpht.org, \$5 HPHT and LAC members /\$10 non-members

Please take a moment to join HPHT or renew your membership for 2009!

The mission of the Highland Park Heritage Trust is to preserve the heritage of Los Angeles' Arroyo Seco communities through education, advocacy and preservation projects for the benefit of present and future generations. LA's Arroyo Seco communities consist of Highland Park, Garvanza, Mt Washington, Hermon, Montecito Heights, and Cypress Park.

To join the Highland Park Heritage Trust,
send your tax-deductible check to:

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Southwest Museum Advocacy Update

By Nicole Possert

The unnecessary loss of the Southwest Museum as the primary (but not only) exhibition space for its vast and important Collection remains the largest historic preservation, education, cultural and economic development issue HPHT has ever faced.

To address this potential historical and cultural issue, the Trust spearheaded the formation of the Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition in 2003, when the merger with the Autry occurred and was announced. Now, five years later, the future of the very first museum in Los Angeles still remains uncertain. And, HPHT continues to engage with others in its broad and comprehensive efforts to prevent this travesty.

In June, the Autry formally applied to the City of Los Angeles and began the first steps of an approval process for their massive project in Griffith Park. A project that will both gobble up precious open space in the historic Park and include gallery space to which they

plan to relocate the heart of the Southwest Museum—its Collection. By relocating the primary exhibition space and thereby obliterating the culturally rich and complex museum experience of the real Southwest Museum, it renders the venerable institution a mere named gallery/wing in the new Autry National Center complex. The Southwest Museum will all but disappear from the identity/brand that it had carved into the fabric of the City over the last 100 years. And, what becomes then of the elegant and historic Museum building and the 12 acres Autry owns at the base of Mt. Washington?

The potential transformation of the historic museum into something else has become more immediate and distressing as just this month, the LA Community College District's Measure J School Bond measure passed. This bond provides for taxpayers (yes, you and me) to fund the conversion of major portions of the Southwest Museum into classrooms. \$11.5 million

was slipped into the College's bond project list in a backroom deal that potentially relieves Autry from significant merger and fiduciary trust obligations to the Southwest Museum.

If this continues to boil your community blood, we ask for your help. We need more voices for advocacy, activism, volunteerism and fundraising. HPHT continues to lead the way with our leadership on the Coalition. But we need everyone's commitment and support. Autry has benefit of high-priced lobbyists with political and media access to maintain their continued stubborn refusal to accept the fact that a viable Southwest museum in its present location is clearly and reasonably doable . . . and necessary for the economic, historic and cultural integrity and future of NELA and, indeed, the entire city of Los Angeles.

Can we count on you?

I hope your answer is "Yes We Can!"

Communication Alert

As you renew, please make sure you update all your contact information. For anyone wishing to receive newsletters, information and updates in online format, an email address is a must. Sometimes there is a spam block and we must have that arranged before we do "bulk" emails. Most importantly, please print legibly if you are mailing your renewal. Thank you.

Anne Marie Wozniak and Tina Gulotta-Miller

HPHT 25th Anniversary Picnic: October 12, 2008

Friends old and new, young people helping, the forge fired up, hot dogs and lemonade, cupcakes and water balloon toss, tours of the historic Heritage Square Museum, HPHT Retrospective display—all orchestrated by volunteers. We had a good time and created new memories. (Photos by Charles J. Fisher)



Carmela Gomes speaks at Heritage Square for HPHT Anniversary.



Frances Gomez breaks water balloon at games area.



Heather McLarty, demonstrates blacksmithing.



People enjoying Heritage Square.



Heinrich Keifer visits with Yim Tam.



Franklin students at Heritage Square.