



OUR CORNERSTONE

VOLUME XVI · ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2011

MT. ANGELUS' "STAIR STREET GHOSTS"

By Louisa Van Leer • Photo by Louisa Van Leer

Mt. Angelus, the hilltop Highland Park neighborhood near the intersection of York Blvd. and Figueroa Street has a wonderful collection of historic stair streets, nine to be exact. Stair streets are the urban residue of the days before cars were the exception not the rule and provided Angelenos in neighborhoods with challenging terrain the means of getting up and down hill quickly and safely.

There are numerous stair streets scaling the hilly neighborhoods of Echo Park, Hollywood and Mt. Washington, just to name a few. The Mt. Angelus stairs were originally mapped out in 1907 by a dynamic woman named Cora Scott Pond Pope (born in 1856), the original developer of the Mt. Angelus Tract, or Hotel Tract as it was sometimes referred to, as there was a hotel planned for the hill prior to the land crash of 1889. The actual construction of the stairs occurred over the next few decades, along with the paving of the roads as the houses were built.

Before developing the Mt. Angelus Tract, Pond Pope was an influential shaper of the woman's suffrage and temperance movements in Boston. As a believer in equal rights for women, she organized eighty-five suffrage leagues and created "the National Pageant," a theatrical recruiting mechanism for the movement that traveled the country. Pond-Pope came to Los Angeles to develop the land and continue her activism. She built a home in Garvanza with Rev. Anna Howard Shaw, who was Susan B. Anthony's deputy, in early 1887.

In researching the stairs and Pond Pope, I discovered that many of the Mt. Angelus streets and stairways are named after people who figured prominently in her own life including well-known



activists in the women's suffrage movement as well as many abolitionists of the day. Stowe Terrace is named for Harriet Beecher Stowe, LaFollette for "fighting Bob" La Follette, US Representative, Senator and Governor of Wisconsin, and his wife Belle Case La Follette, who was a lawyer and activist in Wisconsin's women suffrage movement and personal friend of Cora Pond Pope. Less well known figures in the suffrage movement are journalist/founder of *The Agitator*, Mary Livermore (Livermore Terrace), and abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison (Garrison Drive), publisher of *The Liberator*, an influential weekly abolitionist newspaper. Sumter Drive may very well be named for the Battle of Fort Sumter in which the opening shots of the Civil War were fired, and the abolitionist movement gained a beachhead.

In 1987, five of the nine public stair streets on Mt. Angelus were closed by the Los Angeles City Council due to neighborhood complaints of crime. Today, the stair streets are gated and much of the original street signage has disappeared over the years. There is a movement to rediscover the stair streets of Los Angeles—the popular 2-day "Big Parade," the urban hike of over 100 staircases put on by Mt. Washington resident Dan Koeppel. This spring I was lucky to join a walking tour of the five open Mt. Angelus stairs lead by Bob Inman, author of *A Guide to the Public Stairs of Los Angeles*.

A look into the future is to raise the closed stair streets from the dead on Hallowe'en weekend, as if by historical séance, and host a one-day walking tour of all nine stairs that will allow the community to experience the history of Mt. Angelus through a public tour of its unique and memorable stairs.

Calendar of Upcoming HPHT & Community Events

HPHT Board meetings, 2nd Monday of each month, 7PM to 9 PM, Hathaway-Sycamores, 840 N. Ave 64, unless otherwise advertised, www.hpht.org or 323-256-4326 for information

Saturday, July 9, August 12, September 10: Second Saturday Gallery Night, NELA Art Galleries open 7 to 10 PM, <http://www.nelaart.com> for map and information each month

Saturday, July 9, 2011, 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM: Eagle Rock Library—HPHT, ERVHS and Occidental Library Archiving information table; Volunteers needed.

Monday, July 11, 2011, 7:30 to 9:00 PM: HPHT Board meeting, Hathaway-Sycamores, 840 N. Avenue 66, final report from Marta Soligo, HPHT summer intern, light refreshments served.

Sunday, July 24, 2011, 5-8 PM, Friends of Southwest Museum Fundraiser, Galco's, 5702 York Blvd. Tickets on sale at Galco's or www.friendsofthesouthwestmuseum.com.

Sunday, July 31, 2011, 2:00 to 5:00 PM: Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society Ice Cream Social, at the Eagle Rock Arts Center.

Sunday, August 21, 2011, 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM: Wine and cheese fundraiser and tour for preservation advocacy, at Abbey San Encino, limited to first 100 people, \$40. per person. Registration will be online and by mail. More information will be arriving soon.

August through November 2011: Nomination Form for Bi-Annual Awards available online

For other events check with Los Angeles Heritage Alliance <http://www.laheritage.blogspot.com/> and use the large member organization button to become informed

Keep abreast of events online www.hpht.org or by phone 323-256-4623

Blog items should be sent to Justine Leong: jleongarch@gmail.com

All of us who renew our membership deserve recognition. If you have already renewed please use the enclosed membership form to encourage your friend or neighbor to become a member of HPHT for 2011.

HIGHLAND PARK HERITAGE TRUST—MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION/RENEWAL

You may join or renew online at www.hpht.org or by sending your tax deductible check to:
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PRESERVATION THROUGH PRACTICE PILOTS AT HERITAGE SQUARE

By Dana Anderson, Secretary, Board of Directors, Heritage Square Museum

If you've driven by Heritage Square Museum recently, you will have noticed there is a lot of restoring going on! This spring started with the pilot class of *Preservation Through Practice*. Preservation Through Practice program recruits, teaches, and trains craftsmen and construction novices through hands-on preservation courses. Instruction and training was provided by Preservation Arts a restoration company. Funding for Preservation Through Practice was provided by grants from the US Department of Labor, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, and the Weingart Foundation. .

The pilot class of students was provided by New Directions, Inc., an LA based treatment center and transitional program for homeless Veterans. On Friday, June 17th, this first class of 6 post

combat Veterans will celebrate the completion of their 12 week pilot course. Heritage Square, Preservation Arts, and New Directions will be hosting a graduation ceremony to honor their work. Heritage Square Executive Director, Jessica Maria Alicea-Covarrubias, stated "Preservation Through Practice trains individuals the real skills in historic restoration. During the actual hands-on-training process, and working with our partners on the project, its relevance and impact has grown exponentially. Working with and teaching military veterans this level of preservation, giving them new opportunities for employment after their service to our country is the least we can do as a museum, as well as a community."

If you have not visited Heritage Square Museum lately, it might be time for another visit.

RELIGHTING THE HISTORIC SIGNS OF FIGUEROA STREET UPDATE

By Amy Inouye • Photos by Gary Leonard

The May 17th relighting ceremony for the Highland Theatre sign was totally wonderful—what a lively, fun event! Thanks to so many people for making it such a great success. As to the question "Why isn't it lit every night?" The answer is: As the bulbs were being replaced, a closer inspection of the sign's wiring uncovered unbelievably unsafe conditions. We are having the sign repaired and expect to establish a regular lighting schedule sometime this summer. Meanwhile, plans have been made to restore the Manning's Coffee Store sign. Another relighting event is planned for the fall. Watch this space for breaking news! Or go to: http://futurestudio.typepad.com/highland_park_lights/



The relighting of the Highland Theatre sign was especially appreciated by member Tom Catherall, who currently resides in Springvale, Utah. He thanks us for restoring the lights in the historic theater because it brought back earlier memories. He had worked in the theater in 1959 and 1960 and his mother was the manager in the early 1960s.



OMG! This is the current state of the wiring which we are endeavoring to fix for once and for a long time to come.

Photo by Stuart Rapeport.



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Editor: Carmela Gomes

Layout: Future Studio

Distribution: Anne Marie Wozniak

Frances Thronson
Marcia Gurrola
Carol Van Beek
Brenda Hurst

Please email articles to:

Charles Fisher

arroyoseco@hotmail.com

or mail to: 140 S. Avenue 57

Los Angeles CA 90042

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Highland Park Heritage Trust

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to

**preserve and digitize these valuable records of
our community's past**

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Benevenuto Marta Soligo



Kristi Lopez, Marta Soligo and Assemblymember Anthony Portantino • HPHT members greet Marta at Future Studio

On Thursday, June 16, 2011, just one day after arriving at LAX and taking residence in the Occidental College Guest House, HPHT members greeted Marta Soligo in a reception held at Future Studio, as the first ever HPHT summer intern, from the Università degli studi di Bergamo, Italia, where she is a master's degree candidate in Cultural Tourism with an emphasis on juxtaposition of entertainment and education—"edutainment."

How we came to this juncture exemplifies the reach that the HPHT website has had. Marta became fascinated by the extent of our information, and the activities in which we engage, so she emailed and found me at the other end of that communication tool.

Marta and I had many interesting "conversations" via email for nearly a year, when she asked me if I knew of a way for her to complete an internship in Los Angeles. Being the inveterate teacher that I am, I assured her that I would find a way for her to do that. Consequently, I arranged for Marta

to be the HPHT summer intern and work with the administrator of the National Scenic Byway Grant, HPHT Vice President, Nicole Possert, to work on the collection of data for the completion of the commitment we made to the grant.

I also approached the executive director of the Historical Society of Southern California, Dr. Patricia Adler-Ingram. HSSC is working on a project to use QR codes as historic markers on buildings for visitors to access online information from their smart phones. The goal of all this data collection is to assist in plans for Northeast Los Angeles as the historic, artistic and cultural tourist destination we know we are.

On Monday, July 11, 2011, we will spend time at the beginning of the monthly board meeting to have a report from Marta about her adventures and her work. We hope you will be able to come for a while and wish her success for the coming year as she prepares her master's thesis that will highlight HPHT.



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P R E M I E R E E V E N T



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**Sunday, July 24, 2011
from 5 - 8 PM
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Galco's, 5702 York Blvd., Highland Park, LA, Cal. or
www.friendsofthesouthwestmuseum.com**

Proceeds from all products purchased at Galco's during the event will be donated to support the "Friends"!

*Tickets will be \$15 day of event

**Sycamore Grove Walking Tour schedule:
Saturday, August 27, October 22, and December 17, 2011**

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