



The Mount Washington Association

Serving the Mount Washington community since 1955.

January 2004

www.mtwashington.org

Toy and Food Drive

Marcia Neiswander

This whole thing came about for me as a result of a story about a little girl and a starfish. Once there was a huge storm and there had been thousands of starfish that had been swept up on the beach. A man was walking and saw a little girl throwing back starfish into the ocean one at a time. He reflected that this was a large and daunting job and it seemed like an impossible job for her to do. He went up to the little girl and asked her why she was throwing back starfish when there was no way she could make a difference with all those washed up. She looked at him, picked up one of the starfish, and as she threw it back into the sea she said "It made a difference to that one."

In this holiday season I am humbled and grateful for the gift of compassion that the Mount Washington Association has given to our clients here at Northeast Mental

Health. Today I was looking at the extra teddy bears that I had to give away and thought of one of my clients who wasn't on the list. I remembered that she was the parent of a disabled child who was 6 years old. She was always doing for everyone in the family and had very little money. I called her and told her about the teddy bear under my desk. There was a long silence at the other end of the line and she said "He will now have something for Christmas." We both cried. What an amazing gift to give to others. I am so grateful that I have never given up on the starfish.

You have made so many people's lives easier and happier. We are grateful to your generosity.

Toy Share Report

Ann Walnum

1,350 new and like-new toys were sent to Northeast Mental Health Clinic, St. Mary and Good Shepherd Centers, Anahuac Soccer League, and eight agencies designated by Congressman Xavier Becerra.

Mount Washington School children and parents gave generously to this Fourth Toy Share, simultaneously with a Book Fair and PTA Food Drive. Thanks also to these community residents who made sizeable donations: Paul Ahrens, Grayson Cook, Poy and Pat Everts, Ron Johnson, Allen Palmer, Gillie Schaeffer, and Veronica Smith.

All toys were inspected and cleaned and refurbished when necessary. Many thanks to these Association members who helped store, sort, clean, repair and deliver: Judy Call, the Christensen/Herron family, Grayson Cook, Alejandra Gillette-Teran, Richard Lewis,

Susan Pfifer, Ed Raspa, Maya Rumble, Gloria Schneider, Emma Simon, and Cheri Uno.



President's Message

Carol Jacques

January is a time to savor accomplishments as well as look forward. As we look back, we see that much has been accomplished.

At last, the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council has been certified and a board of directors duly elected. Let us not forget that this coalition of neighborhoods took five years and countless meetings to come about. Some have questioned whether we still need residents' organizations if we have neighborhood councils. The answer is "Yes, we need both for a truly empowered community." Neighborhood councils are part of the government of the City of Los Angeles, established by the City Charter, and are subject to all of the

ordinances and bureaucracies of the city. What cannot be accomplished through the neighborhood councils, due to structural limitations, must be brought about by the neighborhood organizations. Northeast Los Angeles is developing so quickly that we need many groups operating on its behalf.

General Membership Meeting
Monday, January 19, 2004, 7:30 PM
Southwest Museum
234 Museum Drive
History: the Arroyo and Debs Park
Details on page 3.



David Brunk, Rob Schraff, Carol Jacques, Maria Gray & Julie Nagesh pose in front of food donated by several dozens of Mt. Washington and Glassell Park residents who dropped by throughout the morning of Dec. 6 to drop off bags of food for the needy in the Northeast area. People's generosity was more than Rob's huge SUV could handle! Thanks to all who helped make this program such a success.

Last January, we had readings from some of Jack Smith's books. Denise Smith, Jack's widow, honored us with her presence and read some of her favorite selections. This meeting attracted about a hundred Mount Washingtonians. It was followed, the subsequent spring, by the Association's annual Jack Smith Walk.

This year, we'll see the groundbreaking for the Jack Smith Multi Purpose Room at Mount Washington Elementary School. This project was started when my daughter, Maya, was a student at the school. Maya is now twenty years old. Worthwhile neighborhood projects take time, dedication, and tenacity. A big "thank you" to Warren Christensen, Liz Herron, and all of the others who participated in the work and made this dream a reality.

Officers

President

Carol Jacques (225-0501)

1st VP (Action)

Pat Griffith (225-8330)

2nd VP (Programs)

Natalie Seaman (223-0996)

3rd VP (Membership)

Ed Raspa (223-9934)

4th VP (Hospitality)

Rob Schraff (254-4207)

Secretary

David Brunk (223-1533)

Treasurer

Ron Johnson (256-2162)

Historian

Pat Samson (223-4895)

Past president

Rob Newman (221-9030)

Directors

Susan Baldwin (227-5597)

Judy Call (223-2834)

Grayson Cook (227-8899)

Scott Folsom (224-0006)

Paul Girard (221-7822)

Maria Gray (225-4256)

Nancy Lilly (225-7597)

Jerry Schneider (225-2748)

Ann Walnum (222-8327)

Committee Chairs

Advertising

Paul Girard (221-7822)

Beautification

Jerry Schneider (225-2748)

Communications

Eliot Sekular (344-9955)

Finance

Judy Call (223-2834)

Gold Line

Paul Ahrens (227-9392)

Land Use

Liz Herron (225-5711)

Public Safety

Cheri Uno (222-0410)

Webmistress: Donnette Thayer
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Newsletter edited by Scott
Burleigh (225-4546)

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While we're celebrating people's tenacity, many thanks to our neighbor and pro bono attorney Larry Hoffman for the hundreds of hours of intricate legal work he put in to insure that the new Gold Line train system would be safe and community-sensitive. Thanks, also, to Paul Ahrens (chair) and the many volunteers who worked on the Gold Line Committee.

Last year, we had several opportunities to join with the Glassell Park Improvement Association and Glassell Park Neighborhood Council. We scored a tremendous victory for sensible development when the East Los Angeles Planning Commission voted to deny permission to McDonald's for construction of a new restaurant on Eagle Rock Boulevard. All three organizations had voted to oppose the development. This coalition mobilized more than a hundred members to attend the Planning Commission meeting and speak against the proposal. Very rarely does a community defeat the McDonald's Corporation, and the MWA

is terribly proud of having assisted the Glassell Park community in doing so. Our three organizations also sponsored an educational forum on the Mount Washington/Glassell Park Specific Plan. Approximately two hundred people attended the forum. We learned a lot, had fun, and met such kindred spirits as Tony Scudellari and other Glassell Park activists.

Tony and I assisted Raúl Macias, founder and president of the Anahuak Youth Soccer Association, in bringing 1993 Nobel Peace Prize recipient Rigoberta Menchu Tum to Eagle Rock High School. She is a dynamic and inspiring speaker. Raúl has 1,500 neighborhood children enrolled in his soccer league. He has also founded the Anahuak Academy, which inspires youth, teaches them leadership skills, and prepares them for college. Raúl uses soccer as a "hook" to keep the kids off the street and developing good citizenship. Raúl is a great man and a good neighbor (his office being located in Cypress Park.)

Thank you to those Association members who made financial donations or contributed to our annual food and toy drive and Adopt-a-Family programs. Your generosity made all of us feel good and was especially appreciated by the recipients.

Heidelberg Park was purchased by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy last year and will remain green space forever. As such, it could easily be included in the "Heritage Parkscape" proposal of Robert Garcia, executive director of the Center for Law in the Public Interest. Garcia's proposal, in turn, is based on the 1930 comprehensive plan for park development commissioned by the LA Chamber of Commerce and drawn up by Frederick L. Olmsted, Jr. (the most respected urban designer of his time and son of the man who designed New York's Central Park.) The Garcia/Olmsted Plan starts at El Pueblo (the area surrounding Olvera Street, the birthplace of Los Angeles) and will use hiking trails, bike paths and parkways to connect such green spaces and monuments as Olvera Street, China Town, "the Cornfields", the River Center, Arroyo Seco, the Audubon Center, Elysian and Griffith Parks. It will be reminiscent of the Freedom Trail area of Boston. As originally conceived, in 1930, the plan never materialized, due to the nation being caught up in the Great Depression. Now, working with Garcia, the Center, and other community groups, we can revitalize the Heritage Parkscape vision (which I have been calling the "Emerald Necklace"). It is vital that we do so because, according to demographers, over the next twenty years the population of Los Angeles is expected to grow by twice the current population of Chicago. We need to preserve our public monuments and green spaces for future generations.

Speaking of public monuments, the Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition continues to advocate keeping the Museum and its artifacts as a public destination site, right here in Mount Washington. Saving our "crown jewel" is a priority for the coming year.

Thank you to Council Member Antonio Villaraigosa for appointing me to the El Pueblo Historical Monument Authority Commission. There are twenty-two monuments in the Olvera Street area, including the recently opened Chinese American Museum and the city's original fire station. I will have the opportunity to assist the councilman in raising funds for the restoration of the David A. Siqueiros "América Tropical" mural, painted by the Mexican master muralist in 1932.

I am grateful to my "better half," Bill Rumble, for his support and patience. Thank you, also, to the many dedicated activists from Mount Washington and the surrounding communities whom I met during my tenure as president of the MWA. Unfortunately there is not enough space in this column to mention all of them, but our accomplishments have truly been a team effort.

I have worked hand-in-hand with your newly elected president, Natalie Seaman. She is generous, hard working, and pragmatic. She'll be a great president.

Thank you all for giving me the opportunity to serve as the president of the Mount Washington Association.

January General Membership Meeting

Natalie Seaman

On Monday, January 19, at 7:30 PM the Mount Washington Association will hold the first meeting of the New Year at the Southwest Museum and install the new officers. While we have a full agenda, I want to first emphasize that this is the meeting in which we hold the Brownie contest, and I urge you all to participate in one way or the other – bake brownies or taste brownies!

The main event this month will be a presentation by a fellow Arroyo Seco resident and long time activist, Luis Quirarte, on the history of the Arroyo, with a special emphasis on Debs Park. I urge you to come join us. I have had an opportunity to be amazed at what Luis knows about Northeast Los Angeles and its landmarks.

We do not traditionally meet on Martin Luther King Day; we are making an exception this year because the first meeting of the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council – with the recently elected officers – will take place on Monday the 26th, the MWA alternative meeting date in January. We will take a few moments at the meeting to honor Dr. King and encourage anyone who wants to share brief thoughts in his memory to take the floor.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the meeting.

Draft Minutes of the November General Membership Meeting

David Brunk

Carol Jacques, President, called the meeting to order and discussed the following:

- the Mount Washington/Glassell Park specific Plan Meeting;
- the Southwest Museum Coalition Meeting;

- bringing Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Nobel Peace Prize Winner, to Eagle Rock High School;
- hearing re: McDonalds at Verdugo and Eagle Rock Blvd.

The program presentation "Who was Carlin G. Smith?" was presented by Steve Balmer, nephew of the benefactor who gave the Recreation Center to the City. It was a very entertaining description of the life and times of one of the prototype developers who promoted and built many areas of Los Angeles, including Mount Washington, Highland Park, Culver City, and others. Smith was a flamboyant character. We were regaled with many stories, making Carlin G. a real person to us.

The minutes of the September 15 General Membership Meeting from the newsletter were approved by voice vote unanimously.

The nominated Mount Washington Association officers and directors for 1994 were introduced and elected by voice vote unanimously. They are:

Officers:

President	-	Natalie Seaman
1 st VP Action	-	Rob Schraf
2 nd VP Programs	-	Maria Gray
3 rd VP Membership	-	Pat Griffith
4 th VP Hospitality	-	Grayson Cook
Secretary	-	Ed Raspa
Treasurer	-	Susan Phifer
Past President	-	Carol Jacques
Historian	-	Pat Samson

Directors:

Paul Girard	Ann Walnum
David Brunk	Susan Baldwin
Nancy Lily	Wendy Legacki
Bob Walters	Hank Schaeffer
Michelle Lewis	

The following Holiday Events were announced:

- the Holiday Food Drive (Maria Gray);
- the Adopt-A-Family Program and the Northeast LA Holiday Parade (Natalie Seaman);
- the Holiday Toy Drive (Ann Walnum).

Pat Griffith reported on the upcoming election for the ASNC Board and the work done to implement it.

Committee reports:

- Beautification: Jerry Schneider, Chair, reported on the Native Plant sale and the offer to mentor at the Rainbow Canyon Planting Party November 22-23.
- Northeast Trees Project: Lynette Kampe discussed the Rainbow Canyon Planting Party.
- Land Use: Chair Liz Herron discussed the confusing state and city regulations on land use and suggested some helpful changes. Moon Canyon was also discussed.

We adjourned at 9:15.

Giant Mount Washington Mural

Ann Walnum

A new mural, the third, is taking shape at the Southwest Museum wall on Marmion Way. The vivid colors and forms of the ten-foot panels command attention from motorists and Gold Line passengers.

Eagle Rock High School graduate Daniel Cervantes designed and researched the mural to utilize artifacts from the Southwest Museum shown in context of use, such as acorn-grinding and cooking. He was assisted in his research by Southwest Museum staff, especially Barbara Arvi, who also helped guide him through the Cultural Affairs Department approval process.

Mr. Cervantes secured a neighborhood matching grant for materials and supplies at the encouragement of Nancy Blaine, then of Hathaway House. He has painted other local murals, including those at Garvanza and Buchanan elementary schools and an interior mural at Luther Burbank middle school. His original plan was to utilize Chumash images, but he has now included other Indians of the Southwest, Alaska and Oklahoma.

He is being assisted by his sister Veronica and his friend Erik Rodriguez, also talented artists. Stop by and see how carefully they are painting the mural details and how stunning the large images and designs are.

Daniel's biggest future concern is to obtain the best protective coating to make the mural permanent. Most coatings give temporary protection, but the best product is costly and must be applied by a specialist. It would be appropriate for the Association to assist him in using the best product, in the interest of Mount Washington and Southwest Museum, keeping the mural free of the tagging and graffiti that destroyed the first two.

Call 311

Cheri Uno

Call 311 – one number for all LA City Services and Activities questions. This is a great service - you actually can talk with a person and get your questions answered without spending 20 minutes on the phone listening to music or being shifted from one person to another. They take calls for all services, but Event or Office Locations and Hours, Pothole Repair, Voting Information, Senior Services, Council Meeting Schedules, Graffiti Removal, and Recreational Activities are some of the most frequent requests for information.

What's Next at Southwest Museum?

Ann Walnum

Uncertainty is what's next in the long term. In the short term, the "Autry National Center" two-month calendar offers four events at the "Mt. Washington Campus" versus twenty-two at the "Griffith Park Campus". Also announced are monthly free admission days on January 13, February 10, and March 9, from 10 AM to 5 PM.

Two dates initiate a monthly program of art, music, and exploration for 3-to-5-year-olds and their caregivers: January 14 and February 11, from 11 AM to noon. Admission is free for members, \$3 for children aged 2 to 12, \$5 for seniors and students, \$7.50 for adults.

A Mata Ortiz pottery show and sale on the weekend of January 24-25 reconnects the museum to its long tradition of honoring Juan Quezada. Mr. Quezada revived an ancient pottery tradition and taught the techniques to others in his northern Chihuahua village. Many of us have traveled to Mata Ortiz for pottery classes and shopping trips in museum-led tours.

On February 21, at 2 PM, Dr. James Snead will discuss and sign copies of his book *Ruin and Rivals: the Making of Southwest Archaeology*, which details the roles of Charles Lummis and others in archaeological discoveries. The book helps to explain Lummis's choice of the Southwest Museum locale as the site of the first museum in Los Angeles. The scientific prominence of our local institution was demonstrated over many decades of important excavations, field trips, and resulting publications.

Finally we urge you to inform others about the free admission days. For many, this will be a chance to revisit the Museum after many years. For all of us these next two months offer an opportunity to visit before galleries are "reconfigured", possibly never to open again.

Arts Award to Mount Washingtonian

Ann Walnum

According to a December 20, 2003, article in the *Los Angeles Times*, the California Arts Council will give special recognition in January to eleven Californians who "have fought long and hard to protect and advance the arts". Among the recipients will be Mount Washington's own Michael Alexander, executive director of the Grand Performances series in downtown Los Angeles. Congratulations, Michael!

Action Report

Pat Griffith

The coming year will be an active one, but our efforts to form strong alliances with other activists in Northeast LA should bear fruit as we all jointly work to strengthen our common interests and assets.

We have already celebrated the acquisition of Parcel D in Taylor Yard and the coming open-air recreation near the River that this will offer us. Now, together with the Glassell Park Neighborhood Council and Glassell Park Improvement Association, we will work to persuade LAUSD to purchase Parcel F in Taylor Yard and "land bank" the property, with the intention of building a Senior High School or mixed-age school to serve our children. The Parcel's proximity to both the LA River and the new sports fields and park land in Parcel D makes it an ideal location for a school. This would offer Mount Washing-

ton children a Senior High facility that is neither over-crowded nor year-round.

Speaking of the River, Councilmember Reyes continues to explore means to revitalize and restore the LA River. We believe a revitalized River could be a natural retreat for all of us to enjoy while still retaining its ability to control floods. We join with many activists groups in looking forward to the long-term improvements that will come out of this careful planning.

Our Gold Line station at the Southwest Museum and Marmion Way opened this year, and the neighborhood's attention to potential safety and noise problems paid off in a safer Avenue 45 crossing and (eventually) quieter bells. We're not done yet, of course: we're still working with Councilmember Reyes on his Linkages project to improve Marmion Way and neighboring services.

Meanwhile, though, the Southwest Museum's financial problems led to a merger with the Autry Museum, and we had to fight to demonstrate to the Autry how much we value our Museum and our neighborhood's heritage. We will need to continue to work with the Autry to keep the museum operating and serving the general public.

To our east, Montecito Heights is struggling to preserve open space and to improve and maintain Debs Park. As our nearest hiking trails, and as our view across the Arroyo, these spaces matter to us as well. We will join our Montecito Heights friends in helping to maintain open space and wildlife corridors which will link with our own Rainbow Canyon, Elyria Canyon, Heidelberg Park, and (still at risk of development) Moon Canyon.

Mount Washington Elementary remains a local treasure, a consistently high-performing and high-achieving school, thanks to amazingly dedicated teachers, administration, and parents. This year, after 10 years of tireless work, Warren Christensen and Liz Herron succeeded in getting LAUSD to build the long-needed Jack Smith multipurpose room, and construction is now going out to bid. It's been a lot of effort to get something that so many other schools already have, but it shows that perseverance pays off – eventually!

Finally, much work is needed on Figueroa Street, our nearest commercial area. We will keep you informed as new businesses open to serve our community.

ASNC Election

Bill Murray

Chair, ASNC Transition Committee

I'm delighted and privileged to report that the League of Women Voters has verified the election of the 19 inaugural Members of the Board of the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council. This Board will serve the ASNC through 2004.

Geographical Representatives (by community)

Hermon (2 seats):

- John Acosta *

- Margaret Barto

Montecito Heights (2 seats):

- Louis Quirarte
- C. W. Scott Rubel *

Monterey Hills (2 seats):

- Patrick Botz-Forbes
- Ida Simms *

Mount Washington (4 seats):

- Samantha Allen
- Pat Griffith *
- Rob Schraff
- Eliot Sekuler *

Sycamore Grove (2 seats):

- Sheryl Getman *
- Donnette Thayer

(*) designates two year Board Member.

At-Large Representatives (by office)

Community Non-profits:

Roberto Escobar, Sycamore Grove

Education & Youth:

Scott Folsom, Mount Washington

Environment:

Jerry Schneider, Mount Washington

Faith-Based Organizations:

David Brunk, Mount Washington

Healthcare & Seniors:

Kay Marine, Monterey Hills

Recreation, Cultural & the Arts:

Cheri Toomey Uno, Mount Washington

Retail, Wholesale & Service Business:

Rob Newman, Mount Washington

A Couple of Notes

The term of office for Geographic Representatives is two years. For this first election, because they garnered the most votes, those marked with an “*” above will serve two-year terms; that is, they will not run again at the end of 2004. The others will serve one-year terms only.

All At-Large Representatives serve one year terms.

In other words, Registered Stakeholders in each community will vote on half their Geographic Board seats, and all seven At-Large seats, each year.

We are indebted both to the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) for its ongoing support and to the League of Women voters, who acted as a neutral third party and assisted us through our elections.

Michele Cuevas of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment is helping the Transition Committee coordinate the first Regular Meeting of the Board, which will occur on the evening of Monday, January 26, 2004. You'll hear more about this shortly as things firm up.

The Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council is your direct opportunity to have a voice in your community and in your city government.

The Transition Committee of the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council has always encouraged inclusion and participation. As the ASNC Bylaws state, the Transition Committee exists "... for the sole purpose of organizing and administering the initial ASNC election. This committee will conduct the registration of stakeholders and establish rules for the initial election in accordance with this Article. Its duties include the creation of additional ad hoc committees as required to accomplish its responsibilities. Membership in the Transition Committee shall be open to all ASNC stakeholders. The committee will cease to exist after the initial election."

Congratulations to all the new Members of the Board of the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council.

Ecology Corner

David Brunk

"The Drive to Survive", a rally by alternative fuel vehicles from Los Angeles to Washington D.C., covered here a few months ago, has led to other positive developments.

Tai Robinson, the young man who drove his hydrogen-powered Toyota pickup round trip to D.C. in a few days, returned to enter the 2003 Challenge Bibendum, the largest environmental vehicle event in the world. Over three hundred international journalists covered this event, designed to promote emission-free vehicles and environmentally sustainable fuel sources and to eliminate oil as a cause for war. Sponsored by the Institute of Ecolonomics, Tai won a Gold Medal in this Michelin Tire Company annual event. He received the highest award for CO2 emissions.

As Tai points out, "We were up against G.M.'s billion dollar Hywire vehicle. We clearly have better range and real world performance. I'm driving this truck every day, on either hydrogen or natural gas."

This quotation is excerpted from "Ecolonomics in Action"

at www.ecolonomics.org. An earlier feature article in the Ecolonomics newsletter was "America's 'Secret' Petroleum Alternatives", primarily about Biodiesel (usually vegetable oil) and ethanol. (Did you know that the Model T, Ford's first production car, was designed to run on either ethanol or gasoline? For more on commercially available Flexible Fuel Vehicles, see www.e85fuel.com.)

Other articles have discussed the growth of the renewable energy market and creating sustainable homes, off of the grid. Related websites include www.challengebibendum.org and the National Fuel Cell Research Center site www.nfrcr.uci.edu.

For a smog-free Los Angeles and a world free of war, support the development of clean and sustainable energy sources.

Then and Now

Pat Samson

Continuing our look back at Mount Washington in the late 1970s, we start off on a somber note.

Lauren Wagner was the 10th victim of the Hillside Strangler (Ken Bianchi). She was 18 years old and lived with her parents. Neighbors saw her park across the street from their home about 9:00 p.m. Two men pulled their car up beside hers. There was a disagreement, and Lauren ended up in the car with the two men. Her body was found on November 29, 1977, on Cliff Drive in the hills of Mount Washington.

Mount Washington's Neighborhood Watch program was organized by Bridget Matlock in 1977, and Grayson Cook served as Chairman in 1978.

"King Tut Comes to Mount Washington," a slide show and lecture presented by representatives of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, was the special event at the April 17, 1978 MWA meeting.

The high risks of a proposed Union Oil gas storage tank site in the Northeast area were a matter of concern in October 1978.

On Sunday, September 2 of 1979, a fire swept up the hill beneath the residents on Crane Boulevard destroying one house and damaging two others. Three major problems contributed to this disaster: lack of brush clearance; inadequate water pressure from old 4-inch mains; and illegal parking on these narrow streets. A new fire hydrant was put in at the corner of Crane and Moon, and new water mains were installed from 657 Crane to the end of Crane Boulevard. Replacement construction of 6 inch and 8 inch diameter pipelines had also started at Glenalbyn Avenue and Mt. Washington Drive.

Coming up...

January 19 Mount Washington Association *general membership meeting* at Southwest Museum. 7:30 PM.

January 26 The first-ever meeting of the *Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council*, at Montecito Senior Center. 7 PM.