



The Mount Washington Association

Serving the Mount Washington community since 1955.

January 2005

www.mtwashington.org

MW School Construction Preview Community Meeting

Fernando Chavarria

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) New Facilities Division will host a community meeting to preview construction of the Mt. Washington Elementary School Addition Project. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 19, 2005 at 6:00 PM at Mount Washington Elementary School, which is located at 3981 San Rafael Avenue. The meeting is open to the public.

At the meeting, LAUSD staff will introduce the project team, preview the construction schedule, and spotlight the construction management and community outreach program. A question and answer session will immediately follow staff's presentation. The meeting is expected to last 90 minutes. Spanish-language interpretation will be available.

Financed by Proposition BB, the project will total nearly 11,000 square feet and will feature a new 1,600 square foot library, a computer lab configured for 16 computer stations, and a 600-seat multipurpose facility, complete with a 900 square foot stage and a first-rate audio/video system. The project will also include a new kitchen, as well as new and separate dining areas for the student body and faculty. A new 3-stop elevator will make the entire facility accessible to those with mobility impairments. New restrooms will also be constructed and will be equipped with smart technology, making them cleaner and environmentally friendly.

When complete, the facility will be officially named the Jack and Denny Smith Library and Community Center.

For more information, please contact Fernando Chavarria of LAUSD New Facilities at (213) 633-8131 or (213) 276-7407.

Toy Drive 2004

Ann Walnum

Astounding! Over 2000 toys were collected, counted, sorted, cleaned when necessary, checked for function

and parts, given new batteries, and distributed. We received beautiful books, table games, amazing battery toys, luxurious stuffed animals, loveable dolls, toy cars large and small, and more. The huge collection box at Mount Washington school was filled and re-filled many times.

Our helpers list is long, starting at the school with principal Mrs. Poole and office staff, head custodian

Augustin, and Veronica Smith. Our MWA crew included Natalie Seaman, Rob Schraff, Ed Raspa, Susan Phifer, Emma Simon, Alejandra Gillette-Teran, Gloria Schneider, Richard Lewis, Cheri Uno, Cesar Giron, Ron Johnson, and Liz Herron and Warren Christensen and their sons.

In appreciation, Marcia Neiswander (Senior Mental Health Counselor for the Northeast Mental Health Center) writes:

I am sitting here right now with one of the people who received your generous donation of gifts for her family this holiday season. She is a person

who is on a very limited income and many months she struggles to pay her rent and utilities. This month the electrical bill is still not paid due to lack of finances.

Henrietta (not her real name) has 3 grandchildren and a daughter. She many times is not able to provide them gifts due to her financial problems. This year the generous donations of toys and blankets to her have made an enormous difference. This year she says

"This has been a blessed year from being taken care of to take care of my family. This has been like having angels care for me. I can give to my family this year and feel good about myself for doing this. Thank you so very much for helping me to put a smile on my grandchildren's face. Thanks you for helping me feel the joy of Christmas."

Taylor Yard High School Moves Forward

Pat Griffith

While the State and City continue development of the mixed-use State Park in Taylor Yard, LA Unified School District is now moving forward in their goal to construct a

General Membership Meeting
Monday, January 17, 2005, 7:30 PM
Carlin G. Smith Recreation Center
511 W. Avenue 46
ANNUAL BROWNIE BAKE OFF

Yes, it's that time of year again for the Mount Washington Association's famous Brownie Bake Off contest. We urge all of you to break out your family's secret brownie recipe and allow your brownies to be judged in this hotly contested and highly coveted annual MWA Brownie Bake Off. Once all of the batches have been judged, the rest of the brownies are enjoyed by everyone attending the meeting – just in case we haven't eaten enough sugar and chocolate during the holidays. Prizes and recognition will be awarded to the makers of the best three brownies.

In addition to the brownie fun we will be swearing in board members for 2005 and catching up on local developments that have occurred since the last time we met in November. We look forward to seeing all of you at the Carlin G. Smith Center, Monday, January 17th at 7.30pm.

new high school on what is known as Parcel F. On December 14, the LAUSD Board voted to designate the site located at the northwest corner of Division Street

Officers

President

Natalie Seaman (223-0996)

1st VP (Action)

AnnWalnum (222-8327)

2nd VP (Programs)

Maria Gray (225-4256)

3rd VP (Membership)

Pat Griffith (225-8330)

4th VP (Hospitality)

Grayson Cook (227-8899)

Secretary

Ed Raspa (223-9934)

Treasurer

Susan Phifer (222-2424)

Historian

Pat Samson (223-4895)

Past president

Carol Jacques (225-0501)

Directors

David Brunk (223-1533)

Paul Girard (221-7822)

Lynette Kampe (221-1782)

Michelle Lewis (258-6874)

Nancy Lilly (225-7597)

Julie Nagesh (223-1144)

Hank Schaeffer (221-9695)

Rob Schraff (254-4207)

Laurie Trachtman

Committee Chairs

Advertising

David Brunk (223-1533)

Child Care, PTA Liaison

Cheri Hanamoto

Communications

Eliot Sekular (344-9955)

Emerald Necklace

Carol Jacques (225-0501)

Finance

Michelle Lewis (258-6874)

Gold Line

Larry Hoffman (221-5277)

Land Use

Liz Herron (225-5711)

Public Safety

Cheri Uno (222-0410)

Public Service

Rob Schraff (254-4207)

Webmistress: Donnette Thayer
(877-581-0833)

Newsletter edited by Scott
Burleigh (225-4546)

© 2005 Mt Washington Association

and San Fernando Road as the "Preferred Site for the Location of the New Central Region High School No. 13 (Taylor Yard)". This approval allows the Board to conduct planning and feasibility studies for new construction.

The new school will serve Mt. Washington children reaching grade 9, presumably by 2010, and will relieve overcrowding at Eagle Rock, Franklin and Marshall High Schools. The school is targeted to serve 2,295 students on a standard school calendar (i.e. not year-round) and should allow Franklin High School in Highland Park to return to a standard calendar. The site is particularly favorable to all of us – Mount Washington, Glassell Park, Cypress Park and LAUSD – as it is a currently unoccupied site and construction will not involve relocating any families or businesses.

Steering Committee Formation

Warren Christensen

On Wednesday, February 2, at 7 PM in the library of Mount Washington Elementary School, Friends of Mount Washington School (a non-profit 501(c)3

tax-exempt booster organization for the school) will host the first organizational meeting of the Jack and Denise Smith Library and Community Center Steering Committee. Everyone interested is invited to join the steering committee, which will be responsible for programming the theatre, kitchen, and library center when the building is completed.

Early formation of the committee is important: we need to plan the programs, joint use agreement, and contract responsibilities that must be implemented in conjunction with the community use of the building. The joint use agreement contractually obligates LAUSD to turn over the use of the newly built Center, complete with a theatre, full kitchen, library and computer center, for the exclusive use of the community, year round, during all non-school hours.

If you cannot attend and wish to be notified of future planning meetings and programs, please email Warren Christensen at NNAPNOW@AOL.COM with your complete name, address, phone number and email address. Make sure you put "Jack and Denise Smith Library and Community Center" in the subject box of your email or it may be accidentally deleted by my spam control program.

We look forward to seeing you at the organizational meeting. Tell a friend.

More Good News for the Emerald Necklace!

Carol Jacques

It's time for an update on the open space front.

The state has awarded \$3 million of Proposition 40 funds to create a one-hundred-acre natural urban park, Ascott Hills, in the El Sereno district of East Los Angeles. East L.A. is one of the most park-poor areas in this region – actually, in East L.A. the largest open space is Evergreen Cemetery!

The City of Los Angeles, Department of Water & Power, owns the Ascott Hills parcel. Transformation of the property into an urban park will be accomplished through a creative partnership between the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the City of Los Angeles. Thanks to Councilmember Antonio Villaraigosa and Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg for helping to make this dream a reality!

More open space good news: state Proposition 40 has also awarded \$5.5 million for soccer fields and youth services at Taylor Yards as part of the greening of the Los Angeles River, and the federal government has awarded \$3 million for the River Revitalization Plan.

This brings us a giant step forward to our vision of a great urban park along San Fernando Road. Thanks to Councilmember Ed Reyes and Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg! Also thanks to all of you who voted yea on Proposition 40.

Draft Minutes of the November General Membership Meeting

Ed Raspa

The Mount Washington Association met on November 15, 2004 at the Carlin G. Smith Recreation Center located at 511 West Avenue 46 in Los Angeles, California.

Since a quorum was present, President Natalie Seaman called the meeting to order at 8:10 PM.

President Seaman introduced several Mount Washington residents who are candidates for office in the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council (ASNC). The election will take place on November 22nd.

President Seaman informed the membership that the Association website contains information on 2005 Community Services Directory of the Mount Washington Association and the Glassell Park Improvement Association.

President Seaman asked the individual members to consider participation in the Northeast Mental Health Center's "Adopt-A-Family" program by donating funds, clothing, and other necessities.

President Seaman introduced longtime member Lynnette Kampe, organizer of the Association's annual plant sale, who announced that members could place orders for plants and pick them up on December 4th. She also encouraged members to participate in tree

planting party on West Avenue 42 scheduled for December 4th.

Those present approved the minutes of September 2004 membership meeting without correction.

President Seaman introduced Past President Carol Jacques, who presented the Nominating Committee report. The Committee recommended the following individuals as officers and directors for 2005 MWA Board:

- President – Natalie Seaman
- 1st Vice President (Action) – Ann Walnum
- 2nd Vice President (Programs) – Maria Gray
- 3rd Vice President (Membership) – Pat Griffith
- 4th Vice President (Hospitality) – Grayson Cooke
- Secretary – Ed Raspa
- Treasurer – Susan Phifer
- Director (3 year terms) – Lynette Kampe, Nancy Lilly, and Laurie Trachtman
- Director (1 year term) – Rob Schraff

Past President Jacques nominated the above-listed candidates and called for nominations from the floor. No additional nominations were made, so the above-listed candidates were elected by voice vote after nominations were closed.

President Seaman introduced Laurie Arroyo, co-

MOUNT WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION – MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____ Phone _____

Email _____ Fax _____

Please check one: New membership Renew membership

Please circle Membership Category and Contribution Level below:

Basic:	Single \$15	Family/Couple \$25	Senior \$12	Associate \$15
Supporting:	\$35			
Business/Professional:	\$50			
Benefactor:	\$100			
Patron:	\$250			

All renewals due at start of calendar year.
Your cancelled check is your receipt. Please make check payable to :
MOUNT WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 50716, Los Angeles, CA 90050-0716

Your name and address shall be kept confidential and shall not be given to other organizations.

- *Membership (Single, Family or Senior) is open to adults who either reside or own property on Mount Washington. Membership includes the right to vote and hold office.*
- *Associate membership is open to any adult who resides outside of the Mount Washington community. Associate members may not vote or hold office.*

president of the Arroyo Arts Collective, who spoke about the organization's 12th annual Discovery Tour that will take place on November 21st.

Action VP Rob Schraff reminded the members present that the Annual Food Drive will take place on the morning of December 4th and encouraged all to participate.

MWA Communications Chair and ASNC Director Elliot Sekuler reported that the ASNC Mount Washington Local Issues Committee has discussed the following issues: identification of streets that need resurfacing, re-alignment of traffic line on San Rafael, and status of the development in Red Hawk Canyon. Given the Association's

previous action on this development of seven houses, ASNC Director Jerry Schneider and MWA Land Use Committee Chair Liz Herron will collaborate on a letter expressing the Association's concerns regarding drainage, tree removal, and undersize lots.

Director Ann Walnut encouraged members to participate in the Annual Toy Drive; informed the membership about the Cypress Park Branch Library's book Sale on November 20th; and reminded those present about the annual Highland Park Christmas parade on December 5th. She also reported on success of the vendor hospitality effort for the Inter-Tribal Marketplace at the Southwest Museum.

Membership VP Pat Griffith reminded those present to renew their memberships and distributed special gift bags to new members.

Public Safety Chair Cheri Uno reported that reports of auto theft and burglary had recently increased and warned members of a "family" burglary team in the area.

Prior to the meeting artists from the Arroyo Arts Collective displayed their work for sale to the membership; President Seaman thanked them for the displays.

President Seaman read a letter from long time resident and former MWA president Lucy Lemmon, in which she informed the Association that she would leave Mount Washington in the early spring.

Motion (Schneider): **That the Board arrange for a City Council resolution commending Lucy Lemmon for her long service to the community.**

Motion passed by voice vote.

Since there was no new business, President Seaman adjourned the meeting without objection at 9:30PM.

MWA Annual Holiday Food Drive

Maria Gray



A busy time at the MWA Food Drive.

Continuing with the spirit of giving, the MWA held its Annual Holiday Food Drive on Saturday, December 4th. This year Mount Washington residents pulled out all the stops and many trunk loads of donated items were collected. Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa and members of his staff attended to lend a helpful hand, holiday

cheer and donuts for volunteers. All of the donated food was delivered to the North East Mental Health Center where it was very gratefully received.

Sincere thanks to all who participated in this very worthwhile community effort. The Mental Health Center could use extra food throughout the year, so if you're interested in donating further, please contact Maria Gray.

Sycamore Grove Tours

The Sycamore Grove area of Highland Park is one of Los Angeles' oldest neighborhoods, with a rich and varied history. Quarterly docent-led tours will feature visits to the Southwest Museum's Casa de Adobe, a 1917 replica of an 1800s hacienda, the Sousa-Hiner Bandshell, and La Casita Verde, a Victorian home formerly known as the Ziegler Estate. Tour goers will also stroll through Sycamore Park and past the fabulous

Craftsman homes of Sycamore Terrace ("Professors' Row").

Arrive via Gold Line at Southwest Museum station, depart from Highland Park station. Tour dates: 1 PM on February 26, May 28, August 27, November 19. For information and reservations call (213) 623-2489 or visit www.laconservancy.org.

C-PAB and Public Safety Report

Cheri Uno

Diversion Robberies

This is a "new" type of robbery that has been sweeping the area. The residents are "diverted" – lead into the yard to check a fence, retaining wall, look for lost animal, check a tree or mother uses phone while child needs to use the restroom – then, another person enters the house looking and taking valuables from the home while it is vacant or owners are distracted. There are a 100 different scenarios each time it may be a little different so don't be fooled into leaving your house or opening your doors to help strangers. The perpetrators are male, female and children – several different descriptions – probably a whole group are involved. Alone, there have been over 100 of these crimes in the Northeast since January – mostly in the homes of the elderly. The police suspect that the elderly people are followed home from shopping or targeted when they are out. Sometimes the people do not know they have been robbed for several months. Please be careful and spread the word, especially to the elderly people you know in your community.

Rain, Rain, and more Rain

Yes, the fire season is gone for a while and now we have rain – too much for us hillside dwellers with lots of substandard retaining walls. Please be careful and notice if the retaining wall looks like they are about to give way, are sagging or cracked they may be ready to go on you, your house or car. See if you can get neighbors to repair the wall. If they are next to sidewalks or streets, call the LA City Department of Building and Safety or the council district field office for assistance in getting the wall repaired. Think about prevention!

BT and the "Inclusionary Housing" Life-Saver

Namcy Lilly

BT is an old friend of mine who moved to Mount Washington with his wife and baby daughter many years ago. He was/is disabled, progressively so.

He and his family rented a house up the street. BT's wife worked, as he was on disability. He was the "house husband" and parent-in-charge of his growing daughter and son. When the kids entered school at Mount Washington Elementary, he became involved as a teaching assistant, regularly spending the day at the school every Friday (as his health permitted). Since he's

a literate guy and a published writer/poet, he was certainly an asset to the school's program.

When the marriage broke up, BT's wife moved away. The children stayed with him, and continued their stay at Mount Washington School. Eventually, in adolescence, the kids wanted to test their wings. They moved out and went to stay with their mom.

BT was not having an easy time making a go of it on his disability check, even though the landlord charged him minimal rent because he was so happy to have a dependable and responsible person renting his house. Then the landlord died and the property went into probate. Knowing that he would likely to need another place to live, and also facing the fact that his health was deteriorating and the climb up and down the stairs (typical Mount Washington stairs!) was becoming more and more dangerous for him, he tried to figure out how he could find affordable housing on his disability income.

Someone suggested to him that he apply for an apartment in a complex under construction in Pasadena. A number of apartments were set aside by law for low income renters. There was to be a lottery drawing for those applying. At first he thought he would have very little chance, since so many people had already put their names on the list, but he was told that he actually would have a better chance than most – because his credit was excellent and people with poor credit histories were not considered.

Well, luckily enough, he "won" an apartment in the lottery, and was able to move just before the last bad earthquake hit and damaged the Mount Washington house enough to make it unlivable.

He needs a wheelchair to get around outside his apartment, but because of the reasonable rent, the elevators, the wide halls, etc. of his inclusionary housing, he's able to remain independent. I must admit that I've razed him a bit. The building has lots of rules and regulations about how neat your patio has to be kept, etc. so that everything is spiffy. But this inclusionary housing has been a life-saver for my friend, our ex-Mount Washington neighbor. I'm so pleased that he has had this opportunity.

Interview With Lucille Lemmon

Bill Rumble

[*Editor's note:* due to space limitations, we can only print here a few brief excerpts from this article. For the complete text, please visit the Mount Washington Association web site, www.mtwashington.org.]

On December 29, 2004, after fifty-two years of living on Elyria Drive, Lucille Lemmon moved out of Mount Washington. She is now residing in Eagle Rock, in a single apartment that is part of the Solheim Lutheran Home complex. She is eighty-eight years old. She is also eternally chipper, fabulously good-natured, and as steadfast as ever in support of the causes she believes

in. I learned this anew when I interviewed her on December 3.

...Lucille moved to Mount Washington in 1952. She remembers that there were fewer houses on Elyria Drive then, that her house and the next two downhill were owned by teachers at nearby Mount Washington Elementary School, and that Mount Washington West did not yet exist. In fact, Lucy says, the city of LA had plans to put an enormous dump there. "Basically, the community rose up against the City's plan," Lucy remembers, and the City backed down. Neighbors who were active in the struggle against the dump then joined together and formed the Mount Washington Association. Lucille joined the group when it began, became active in it in the 1970s, and served two terms as president.

...When I asked her what she considered to be the single greatest change in the neighborhood during the years she has resided here, she quickly responded, "Well, naturally, the saving of Elyria Canyon." She pointed out that, beginning in the late 1980s, various developers proposed building hundreds of condominiums and single-family homes in the Canyon.

The community worked together to fight every plan and developer. "I remember walking around the neighborhood and passing out flyers for folks to come to a City Council meeting about the Canyon." Eight years of organizing were needed but, in May 1994, Elyria Canyon came under the supervision of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Development will never take place in the Canyon.

In recognition of her years of activism, Lucy has been honored by the City of Los Angeles, the Board of Directors of the Alumni Association of the USC School of Social Work, the Southwest Museum, Mount Washington Elementary School, and the Northeast Democratic Club.

After fifty-two years, Lucille Lemmon's physical presence no longer graces Mount Washington. She lives nearby, however, and welcomes visitors. And her final message to her now ex-neighbors is a stirring one indeed. She asked me to pass it on to you:

"Watch out for those Cadillacs and 'Beamers' that cruise our narrow streets, looking for green areas to fill. Keep on fighting the developers!"

Coming up...

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| January 17 | Mount Washington Association <i>General Membership meeting</i> . 7:30 PM at Carlin G. Smith. |
| January 19 | Mount Washington School <i>construction preview community meeting</i> . 6 PM at Mount Washington Elementary School. |
| January 20 | Monthly meeting of Nob Hill and Terrace 49 <i>Neighborhood Watch</i> . 6 PM at the Eagle Rock field office of Assemblymember Villaraigosa. |
| January 24 | Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council <i>general meeting</i> . 7 PM at Ramona Hall. |
| February 2 | Community center steering committee formation meeting. 7 PM at MW Elementary School library. |
| February 26 | Sycamore Grove tour sponsored by LA Conservancy and the Highland Park Heritage Trust. 1 PM. |