



The Mount Washington Association

Serving the Mount Washington community since 1955.

March 2005

www.mtwashington.org

A Look at Southwest Museum's Future

Ann Walnum

Two years after the Autry-Southwest Museum merger, the Friends of Southwest Museum Coalition have

concerns about what lies ahead. The Autry report issued last September regarding Brenda Levin's architectural preservation study and the Economic Research Associates data was unclear. The conclusions presented by museum management were pessimistic.

Therefore we have opted for a peer review. On Wednesday, March 30, at 7 PM in Ramona Hall, we will present highlights of this review, the report, and the two original studies. There will be ample time for your comments and recommendations. All are welcome. We see this presentation as very important and urge wide attendance.

Restoring Rainbow Canyon

Lynnette Kampe

Please join me in a project to restore the lower portion of Canyon Park to a state as close as possible to the condition it had back when native Tong-va Indians last had stewardship of the land. (At least as far as the plants go – the wildlife will have to come on its own.)

With other like-minded community members, I want to rebuild the tapestry that was once here, using locally propagated plants and rescued plants from land that has been permitted for construction. Thanks to restoration efforts begun by North East Trees in 1994, Blue-eyed grass, Golden currant, Bush sunflowers and Monkey flowers were re-introduced to the canyon and are blooming now. Soap plant, miner's lettuce and other plants that disappeared due to over-collection, drought, or competition from exotic plants will be re-introduced

and bloom again! Eventually a complete, sustainable restoration will make this park a gem in our "Emerald Necklace".

Join me on March 20th from 9 AM to noon for "Mulch Madness" at Canyon Park. The park is located at Avenue 45 and Glenalbyn. Please stop by to lend a hand or just to visit.

Volunteers are needed to plant 50 plants and spread mulch in the meadow area. Work in the shade or feel the sun on your back.

I have been coordinating with the Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority and with respected members of the environmental community from both the Mount Washington Association and the Mount Washington Homeowners' Alliance. If you would like to be a part of this project, apply to be a volunteer naturalist at www.lamountains.com and indicate that Rainbow Canyon is your area of interest, or email me at lynette@pacbell.net to get a volunteer schedule.

The park is open from sunrise to sunset.

Although this will be my main focus for the next few years, I'd like to hear your ideas as well if there are other neighborhood

beautification projects you would like to see advanced.



President's Message

Natalie Seaman

It is February 26 and, after weeks of storms with endless pounding rain, violent thunder and lightning, the sun is shining. The lake in my next door neighbor's yard has receded and everything looks fine to me as I hike around Mount Washington.

We have had worse years. Apparently in 1884 the local milkman lost his life trying to cross the arroyo, and many of you remember the landslide in Rainbow Canyon in 1969 when, as a result of rainstorms and water-logged hills, a house was lost.

General Membership Meeting

Monday, March 21, 2005, 7:30 PM
Carlin G. Smith Recreation Center
511 W. Avenue 46

Saving the Museum, and Jack Smith Memories

Mount Washington culture has many aspects that make it unique, and the Southwest Museum represents many facets of our sense of place. Since the Autry's purchase of the museum, we have worked with the Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition to keep this important institution operating in Mount Washington. The discussions between the Friends and the Autry are at a crossroads and community support is now key. Several members of the Friends, including Nicole Possert, Carol Jacques, Eliot Sekuler and Ann Walnum, will be making an important presentation at our meeting. Come find out what you can do to save the museum.

Jack Smith was another icon of Mount Washington culture, who lived among us for many years and often mentioned Mount Washington in his articles. It's always fun to pick up one of Jack's story collections and read about the local plumber or his battle with the back yard gophers. At our next meeting some of his short stories will be read by members, an event which proved to be very enjoyable last year. If you have friends or neighbors who love Jack's work, or perhaps you are unfamiliar with it yourself, this would be a perfect meeting to attend and bring a friend.

As usual, an action packed and fun filled evening is guaranteed for all, and as always we will be serving refreshments. We look forward to seeing you there.

Over the last 15 years many enhanced safety and structural requirements have been established related to building homes in the hillsides. But in the last few years development has accelerated, and building has been

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Webmistress: Donnette Thayer
(877-581-0833)

Newsletter edited by Scott
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proposed and approved in areas that have caused many to be concerned about the safety and stability of the hills and the homes. These issues have come up related to specific developments in Mount Washington, such Red Hawk Canyon, and in many areas of Glassell Park, which lacks the infrastructure that exists in Mount Washington.

Today, I learned that fourteen homes in Glassell Park have been red-lined – meaning that the homes are unsafe for the owners to return to.

The Neighborhood Associations and the Neighborhood Councils were right – we need to consider each project carefully in the hillside areas.

We support the outcry from our Glassell Park Neighbors to slow down, to implement a hold on development for now, and to consider requiring Environmental Impact Reports for projects in questionable hillside areas in the future.

Let's hope that we are over this intense winter storm period and the rest of us make it safely through the winter.

As spring begins to arrive – I do see sun and calla lilies – it is

time to take a hike through Mount Washington. It is an April tradition for our organization to honor Jack Smith, an LA Times columnist who put Mount Washington on the literary map with his stories of our rural existence in the heart of Los Angeles. Come hear a reading of Jack's stories at our meeting and then, on the morning of April 3, take the Jack and Denise Smith Walk through the hills of our community, enjoying a wonderful reminder of what a beautiful place we live in – and honor the wonderful folks who have been our neighbors.

Museums Of The Arroyo Day

Like great art, architecture, music, and family fun with some historical discoveries thrown in for good measure? How about having it all for free?

The 17th annual Museums of the Arroyo Day celebration will be held on May 22 from 11 AM to 5 PM, with five museums located along the Arroyo Seco in Los Angeles and Pasadena – the Gamble House, Heritage Square Museum, the Lummis Home and Garden, the Pasadena Museum of History, and the Southwest Museum – opening their doors for a free day of dance, storytelling, arts, crafts, and entertainment.

On MOTA Day, folks can visit one all of the museums during the day at no charge, with free and continuous shuttle service running between the museums. Park your car just once and then ride the shuttle to the museums of your choice.

For more information on MOTA Day, please call the MOTA hotline at (213) 740-TOUR (8687) or visit www.museumsofthearroyo.com.

Public Support for the Arts

Michael Alexander

[*Ed. note: Michael Alexander is Executive Director for the Grand Performances program in downtown L.A.*]

I was thrilled to hear the positive response when I mentioned that public support for the arts is still under attack on both the local and state level. I was asked to get information to you through this newsletter so you too can become Arts Advocates and tell our State Senator and Assembly member that you support the arts and the State's role in funding arts projects that serve the people of California.

California Arts Advocates now has links to a project called CapWiz that allows us to contact our legislators easily about arts issues. For information on current legislation (including bills that will provide a secure income stream for the California Arts Council) and about CapWiz, check out the California Arts Advocates website at www.CaliforniaArtsAdvocates.org.

As I mentioned, California now ranks 50th among all states in per capita support for the arts. A whopping 3¢ per person is coming from the general fund. The total rises to 9¢ per person when a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and revenues from the sale of Arts license plates (earmarked for arts education) are

added. Nationally, states average \$1.00 per capita in support of their arts councils. California is the creative capital of the country and yet there are industries that need artists in our state that are recruiting out of state to meet their needs. We now have a new generation of teachers working in the schools who, themselves, did not have quality arts educations.

Arts professionals know that we need more letters and more calls from the general public to elected officials if we are going to see a reversal of the trend to de-fund arts programs.

Thank to all who join this effort. Please feel free to contact me (MAlexander@GrandPerformances.org or (213) 687-2195) if I can provide any further information on this.

Draft Minutes of the January General Membership Meeting

Ed Raspa

The Mount Washington Association met on January 17, 2005 in front of the Carlin G. Smith Recreation Center located at 511 West Avenue 46 in Los Angeles, California.

President Natalie Seaman called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM.

President Seaman introduced 1st District Councilmember Ed Reyes who spoke briefly about the state of Northeast Los Angeles and installed the officers

and directors of the Board.

President Seaman thanked retiring Director Susan Baldwin for her service to the Association.

President Seaman announced that she and Director Rob Schraff will begin the planning for the Association's 50th anniversary and encouraged all members to participate in the celebration.

Director Michelle Lewis informed the membership about the thank-you notes she had received for the Association's sponsorship of a field trip for Aldama Elementary last year.

Communications Chair and ASNC board member Eliot Sekuler reported that the Mount Washington Local Issues Committee would address the issue of alternate use for the Southwest Museum and identify streets that need repaving.

Director Lynnette Kampe encouraged members to join the Beautification Committee.

Action Vice President Ann Walnum announced that she will need volunteers for the neighborhood clean-ups planned for the coming year.

Membership Vice President Pat Griffith encouraged the members present to sign up their neighbors for membership.

President Seaman announced that the draft minutes of the November 2004 membership meeting were approved as published in the newsletter.

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

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.*

General member Michael Alexander encouraged those present to write letters to elected officials, protesting decreased funding for the performing arts.

Since there was no new business, President Seaman adjourned the meeting without objection at 8:05 PM.

An Arroyo Seco Celebration

Ann Walnum

Come honor our local hero, Jack Smith! The tenth annual Jack and Denise Smith Trail Walk will be held Sunday, April 3. Departures from Southwest Museum tunnel will be at 9:00 and 9:30 AM. The trail – up (*huff, puff*), across (*ah, water at the school*), and down (*wheel*) – will be the same as always. Water stop will provide dog biscuits and individual water dishes for accompanying family canines (on leash, please). We'll have a mounted display of news articles by and about Jack and Denise.

Extend this day with a Southwest Museum visit and lunch at Mud Puppy, Tazzas, La Abeja, the pupusa restaurant, or our craftsman Jack-in-the-Box. Then cross the Arroyo to Montecito Heights for their Garden Tour, from 1:00 to 4:00 PM, and perhaps a visit to the Audubon Center on Griffin Avenue.

Public Safety

Cheri Uno

Northeast Crime Report – From Sgt. Sandy Rosenberg

Year to date violent crimes are down by 0.5% and Part One Crimes (Burglary, Grand Theft Auto, Burglary Theft From Vehicle, Personal Theft) are down by 6.4%. There is a recent trending increase in Grand Theft Auto, mostly Hondas, Toyotas, and Nissans. If you own one of these cars, you need a theft protection device. This was reiterated in most of the Senior Lead Reports as well.

Car owners:

- Lock Your Car.
- Do not leave valuables and car phones visible.
- Do not rely on your trunk to secure valuable items.
- Park in well-lighted areas.
- Check vehicle exterior regularly.
- Remove old registration tags before putting on a new tag and make small cuts in the registration tab to make it difficult to remove.
- Drive safely and defensively with your seatbelt on!
- Report any suspicious activity to Northeast Police Station: (213) 485-2563 or (877) ASK-LAPD.

Robbery With A New Twist – Still Plaguing The Northeast

Please spread the word to all your neighbors and friends concerning this new type of robbery that seems to be

hitting the elderly the hardest. Residents are “diverted” into the yard to check a fence or retaining wall, look for a lost animal, or check a tree – or a mother uses the phone while a child needs to use the restroom; then another person enters the house taking valuables from the home while the residents are distracted.

There are a hundred different scenarios; each time the scam 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. There have been over 100 of these crimes alone in the Northeast since January 2004.

The police suspect that elderly potential victims are followed home from shopping or targeted when they are out. Sometimes the victims 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.

War Is Declared – On Shopping Carts

Officer Falconer recently declared a no tolerance policy on shopping carts for his area. To help him clear the Northeast of “at-large” shopping carts, please call (818) 563-3070 with an exact location to report any shopping carts you see on the streets, side walks, or parks. I'm sure the businesses that have lost their carts will appreciate this service as well.

Graffiti Still The Biggest Quality Of Life Issue For NE

To report graffiti dial 311 or call Officer Colenzo at (213) 847-0511. To report businesses not keeping their graffiti materials locked – note the time and location you observe the violation – call Jeanne Munzo, the NE Neighborhood Prosecutor, at (213) 847-8045. Graffiti remover sold at Home Depot and other hardware stores really works for removal on a hard surface – metal, tile, graffiti coated murals and glass. Be very careful when you are removing graffiti, you don't know who may be watching you.

Senior Lead Officers (SLOs) for Mount Washington

Officer Robert 'Red' Falconer now covers Cypress Park, Figueroa Strip west of Avenue 43 and the western portion of Mount Washington. Officer Falconer's phone number is (213) 793-0758.

Officer Cooper – (213) 793-0761 – covers the Northeast section of Mount Washington, bounded by San Rafael, Avenue 42, and Mount Washington Drive.

For Mount Washington residents in the Nob Hill/Terrace 49 area covered by Senior Lead Officer Galindo, there is a standing Neighborhood Watch meeting on the third Thursday of each month at Councilmember Villaraigosa's Eagle Rock Field Office from 6 to 7PM. Please call ahead to make sure they are meeting – (323) 254-5295.

Senior Lead Officers are not for emergencies but to help you with long-standing quality of life issues or to follow up on ongoing problems. They should be used as your

first line of communication with the LAPD to report any non-emergency problems in your area.

Annual Consent Decree Meeting

Every year the community is given an update on the progress of the LAPD in relationship to its compliance with the guidelines of the Federal Consent Decree. This is a chance to ask any questions you may have on the LAPD's Consent Decree. The meeting will be held at 6 PM on April 25, 2005 at the Northeast LAPD Station, 3353 San Fernando Road, Los Angeles, CA 90065.

Green On Green

[Ed. note: Lynnette is our local "Tree Lady." She has brought thousands of trees into our community and has participated in numerous habitat restoration projects from 1992 to 2004 for North East Trees, a local non-profit group. She played a key role in developing proposals and administering projects such as the LA River and Arroyo Seco Greenbelt and Mini-parks, the Living Lightly Guide to Arroyo Seco Watershed, and DWP "Cool Schools" campus shade tree projects at several schools including our own Mount Washington Elementary. Lynnette has been a resident of Mount Washington since 1979 and is a certified arborist and a member of the Los Angeles Community Forest Advisory Committee. She is enjoying semi-retirement with her husband Mark and is a volunteer naturalist for the Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority.]

Some years ago Carol Jacques invited me to a political event saying that they needed somebody Green. I agreed to attend, imagining that she meant someone "green." I was embarrassed when I realized my mistake but then realized "That's me, I'm green."

Somehow, with all the difficulties of this world, I find the color green to be very soothing. I believe better stewardship of the earth just makes good sense. I like to say that I spent much of my career as a "professional tree hugger", and living in Mount Washington had taught me to appreciate our local natural heritage.

So when Mount Washington Association Board members asked me to run a regular column on green issues – responding to questions from the membership – I agreed, and "Green on Green" sounded like the right name for the column.

There seem to be plenty of questions to answer. "When will the soil dry out?" (Answer: Do you live at the top of the hill or the bottom? The bottom will take months.) "Why is my plum tree gnarly and not growing anymore? Is it just old?" (Answer: probably. Many fruit trees only live for 20 or 25 years.) "What about my orange tree?" (Answer: don't worry, citrus live much longer; there's a grapefruit tree in Little Tokyo that's over 200 years old.) "What plants hold the soil best?" (Answer: ground cover, together with more deeply rooted shrubs or trees.)

Send me your questions via the MWA or email to: lynnette@pacbell.net. I'll try to answer all questions

personally, and I'll pick questions of general interest for more detailed responses in future columns.

A Different Kind of Love

Susan Baldwin

I was grumbling...feeling a bit sorry for myself that, yet again, another love holiday would pass me by with no personal sweetie in sight. I mean, where was the love? In general, the first idea that comes to mind on Valentine's Day is your sweetheart, right? Well, that is, if you limit your thinking and feeling capacity, and I guess I had limited both.

As Valentine's Day moved towards me like a freight train, action had to be taken, even if it was only the beginning of January. I like to plan ahead.

Somewhere between January and the dreaded holiday, I began to have an attitude change. Just because I wasn't "in love" with a sweetie didn't mean I couldn't do something about love – a different kind of love perhaps, for my human companions.

Hmmm, this sounded vaguely familiar, probably because it was not necessarily a new idea...it had become something of a tradition for the past couple of years and it began oddly enough, on a political campaign.

In 2001, when I was working on Eric Garcetti's primary campaign, the staff had to walk precincts on Valentine's Day. My area was a section of Hollywood. Eric had bought dozens of roses for us to distribute along with our campaign literature. As I approached a senior home, I looked at the list. Nearly everyone was over the age of 65 with surnames I couldn't pronounce. How in God's name was I going to communicate? But when the doors opened and I held out a rose, all language barriers broke down.

One woman particularly moved me that night. An 85-year-old woman answered her door, and when she saw the rose she wept, saying this was the first rose she had ever received in her long life.

I resolved then to make it a tradition not to forget seniors and others who were all but invisible in our society. If I could make a difference to only one person the way I had to that 85-year-old woman, then my Valentine's Day was complete.

So on Valentine's Day this year, with the help of Natalie Seaman – who I like to say "has never met a cause she didn't like" – and the support of the Mount Washington Association and Trader Joe's, we were able to bring smiles to the 80 or more residents at the Sycamore Park Care Center in Sycamore Grove. Trader Joe's donated half the cost of the beautiful roses we bought, while the Mount Washington Association picked up the rest.

Residents at Sycamore Park are at various levels of lucidity and mobility, so about a third joined the festivities and gathered in the "party" room. The room was decorated with hand-made cut-outs of valentines, and music reverberated from the boom box – to my surprise, pop music. While I distributed roses to the residents in

their rooms, looking for vases and talking to them about their families, Cheri Uno was serving up a delicious carrot cake and lemonade and handing out roses to the party revelers. Grayson Cooke entertained the group with some of his wonderfully animated stories and seemed undaunted when he was interrupted several times by spontaneous outbursts from the audience, both of the cheering and jeering kind. He carried on, consummate trouper that he is.

After distributing the roses to the rooms, I spoke with some of the residents and assisted where I could, feeding a blind man some cake and dancing to "I Will Survive" with an ex-nun – ironically named Lolita – with long braided hair who lit up the room with her spunk and energy.

Rose, a very sweet-tempered and determined woman, filled me in on the needs of the residents and their likes and dislikes. She told me they loved all kinds of music – but especially rock and roll. Barbara, a non-ambulatory resident wearing some not-so-artfully applied make-up,

asked what color my lipstick was and demanded to use some. Barbara was insistent that I comply with her request pronto. I never did get my lipstick back. And then there was Hermione, who would let out a yelp every 10 seconds; this was initially a bit distracting, but eventually just part of the program.

Clarence is President of the Residents' Council. His main concern is to find a bus that can accommodate 6 wheelchair residents and 2 ambulatory folks – it would be incredibly wonderful to have their own so that the group could go travel outside the facility together. I am looking into possibilities for leasing such a bus.

What struck me most about this place was the involvement and caring of the staff – particularly Merly, the Activities Director, who is easygoing, genuinely caring, intuitive and exceptionally patient. She also knows how to have a good time.

All in all, my day at the Center was incredibly rewarding and, yes, fun. I plan to return many times. I hope some of you will join me.

Coming up...

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| March 20 | Rainbow Canyon " <i>Mulch Madness</i> " restoration project. 9 AM to noon, Ave. 45 and Glenalbyn. |
| March 21 | Mount Washington Association <i>General Membership meeting and election</i> . 7:30 PM at Carlin G. Smith Recreation Center. |
| March 30 | <i>Southwest Museum planning review</i> meeting. 7 PM at Ramona Hall. |
| April 3 | <i>Jack & Denise Smith Trail Walk</i> . Starting at 9:00 and 9:30 AM from Southwest Museum tunnel. |
| April 25 | LAPD Annual Federal Consent Decree review meeting. 6 PM at Northeast LAPD Station, 3353 San Fernando Road. |
| May 22 | <i>Museums of the Arroyo Day</i> . 11 AM to 5 PM. For details call (213) 740-8687 or visit the web site at www.museumsofthearroyo.com . |