

# West Adams Matters

## The Sound of Church Bells

by Laura Meyers

The West Adams District no doubt has more historic churches than any other one community in Los Angeles, many of them designated landmarks or identified heritage resources. But with aging infrastructures and dwindling congregations, we are faced with the challenge of helping ensure their bells are ringing for decades to come.

West Adams area religious buildings represent many firsts and foremost: our community boasts Los Angeles's first synagogue erected for a Conservative congregation (Temple Sinai in Pico Union) and the first Sephardic temple (in Exposition Park West). Architect Paul Williams designed one church, First AME in West Adams Heights, for an important African American congregation, and prepared the master plan for another, Trinity Baptist Church in Jefferson Park. The West Adams District is home to mosques, synagogues (most converted now to other religious and cultural uses), Buddhist temples, and an array of both century-old and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century churches, many by notable architects and in styles ranging from Gothic and Mission Revival to Spanish Colonial and even Art Deco.

(continued on page 12)



This classic Victorian era cottage (above) was demolished without warning (right)

## Fraudulent Demolition Dampens Holiday Cheer

by Jean Frost

For all of the WAHA members who thought we would cheerily enjoy this holiday season without a lump of coal in our stockings, our season's cheer has been interrupted by a senseless and fraudulent demolition of a historic 1902 cottage.



On December 10, University Park developers Henry Fan and Charles Kim, having been informed by Building and Safety that their demolition permit was invalid and was going to be revoked, directed their project manager-contractor Aaron Belliston of BMR Enterprises to demolish the Victorian cottage at 1208 West 25th Street which had been identified by SurveyLA as a historic resource.

(continued on page 10)

## WAHA's Holiday Progressive Dinner Tour Explores A New Neighborhood: The Charles Victor Hall Tract

by John Patterson

It's always exciting to discover something new in the West Adams District. And that's just what WAHA planned when it slated its first-ever tour of the Charles Victor Hall Tract on December 5 and 6. More than 450 tour visitors were on hand by the time the weekend's festivities, including the annual Progressive Dinner Tour and Sunday Walking Tour, were over, along with some 150 WAHA volunteers, exploring this neighborhood also known as "Halldale" and "Normandie 5."



Photos Courtesy of Cliff Hall and the Carbon Canyon Chronicle

This year's five-course Holiday Feast showcased North African cuisine, a menu created by our local West Adams celebrity Chef Farid Zadi of REVOLUTIONARIO, who consulted with us on creating a delicious and authentic menu. To set the scene, we even erected a festive Moroccan tent for the main dinner course.

WAHA partnered with the West Adams Neighborhood Association on this year's event, and we gratefully acknowledge all the neighbors' help to make the 2015 Holiday Progressive Dinner Tour one of our most successful ever.

And what a wonderful neighborhood! While Charles Victor Hall is the man most responsible for the initial development of the area located just southeast of the intersection of Adams and Western where this year's Holiday Tour takes place, it was actually his mother Eliza Jane Hall and older sister Mary Hall who took the first steps. Taking advantage of the Homestead Act of 1862 (which awarded settlers with free land) they applied for and were granted two 160-acre parcels. Originally recorded as "Adams Street Homestead Tract #2" and the "Mary Moore Tract," these

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WAHA explored the Charles Victor Hall Tract for our annual Holiday Progressive Dinner Tour, “Deck the Halls.”

## Holiday Tour in Charles Victor Hall Tract *continued from page 1*

parcels stretched from what is today Western Avenue east to Normandie, and from Adams Boulevard north to Washington. This area eventually came to be known as the West Adams Heights Tract.

Charles was barely a teenager at this point in time, but after graduating from the University of California in Berkeley, he became a claims lawyer, and moving back to Los Angeles, purchased an additional 160 acres just south of his sister’s spread, which came to be developed as the “C.V. Hall Tract.”

In 1878 Charles married Josephine S. Dalton, whose father also owned a significant tract of land “south of town near Central Avenue and Washington Boulevard.” His first experience in real estate was the subdivision of his father-in-law’s land.

In keeping with the tradition of naming streets after family, this year’s tour will include homes on Dalton Street (named for his wife’s family) as well as Halldale, named to commemorate his own place in history.



CHARLES VICTOR HALL.

Around the time of Hall’s marriage, a significant change was in the works in the nearby “West Los Angeles Tract” when three prominent investors purchased 308 lots. These acquisitions were donated to the Methodist Episcopal Church to revive a planned creation of a new university. In September of 1880, the University of Southern California was dedicated.

Combined with the horse-drawn car line that ran from Main Street downtown to the “Agricultural Park” (today’s Exposition Park), the new university was a boon to local development. Streetcar lines soon ran throughout the area, and by 1897 extended along Adams from Normandie to Arlington, offering easy access to the Charles Victor Hall tract, which had by now been annexed to the City of Los Angeles.

In 1898, Hall expanded his interests by investing, with three experienced oil men, in a lease of 58 acres of land from Edward Doheny’s Olinda Ranch in the area just northwest of downtown in what is today known as Rowland Heights. After drilling just a few shallow wells, his fellow investors in the Columbia

Oil Company grew frustrated and sold Hall their shares. Soon after drilling a much deeper well, he found success, and for a short period of time was reaping a staggering 20,000 barrels a day. A second successful well followed soon after launching the Fullerton Consolidated Oil Company.

By 1912, numerous homes had been constructed throughout the family’s land holdings. The earliest homes built south of Adams were primarily Queen Anne cottages, a few of which still exist. By the turn of the century, the housing styles had evolved to the American Foursquare, Arts & Crafts and Craftsman residences. Most prominent in the mix are the designs of Frank M. Tyler, who is credited with almost two dozen homes, and which today provide residences for many proud members of the West Adams Neighborhood Association, the hosts of this year’s Holiday Progressive Dinner Tour.

Thanks to their support, and that of the many visitors and volunteers, we are also happy to report that the tour was a great financial success, earning \$17,000 net income. ●

## *President's Message* by Lore Hilburg

I'm pleased to report that we had another very successful series of WAHA events. First, the Living History Tour did not disappoint anyone who attended the annual celebration of West Adams history. The weather was warm, the tour was lots of fun and as always happens with this event, there was a lot of unknown history to take in. I'm not sure how the committee managed to find a perfectly preserved Indian motorcycle similar to one the first L.A. policeman used for his work, but it's an example of the hard work our dedicated volunteers put in to make the event very successful.

The play, *The Princes of King Street*, raised \$795 for WAHA and everyone who went had a great time. We laughed, we cried and we marveled at these two giants of L.A. mid-century modern architecture while enjoying the terrific acting and amazing playwriting. The opportunity to be part of a dialogue with Dion Neutra was wonderful. Mr. Neutra was as witty as we could imagine him to be, entertaining us with great stories and displaying a passion for architecture and preservation at 90 years of age that is an inspiration to us all.

We have now been focused on our last major event of the year — the WAHA Holiday tour. Thank you to all of you who participated in the event, WAHA's major annual fundraiser.

*Lore Hilburg may be reached by e-mail at [president@westadamsheritage.org](mailto:president@westadamsheritage.org)*

## **The Legacy of the Sports Arena**

*by Laura Meyers*

The landmark Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena in Exposition Park is edging closer to demolition, as plans to replace it with a new global professional soccer competition stadium move forward. The Los Angeles Football Club (LAFC) and USC propose a Major League Soccer ("MLS") Stadium with a permanent seating capacity of approximately 22,000 seats along with approximately 105,900 square feet of "ancillary" facility space for office use, conference center, restaurants, retail stores and a 36,000-square-foot "World Football Museum."

The Sports Arena, an indoor stadium built in 1959 by boosters seeking a rival to Madison Square Garden in New York, was found to be historic in the original 2010-2011 Environmental Impact Report that proposed the stadium's demolition. But project proponents argued that it would be economically infeasible to invest funds into the aging Arena. Neither assessment has changed in the subsequent five years, and the Coliseum Commission in September moved the proposal closer to final approval.

First, though, the Los Angeles City Planning Commission must also approve the project and certify the environmental clearance. WAHA recently attended the City's first (of two) public hearings, and while the demolition at this point seems all but inevitable, WAHA has urged that additional mitigations be considered.

The Coliseum Commission has asked LAFC to develop an "interpretive program to honor the history of the Sports Arena," but WAHA is concerned that the program currently is NOT in fact included as a required condition of the demolition and new stadium construction. We asked that the program -- potentially being developed by Galvin Associates and possibly including museum exhibits, outdoor exhibits, documentaries and publications such as brochures -- be included as a specific mitigation, with monitoring to ensure that this and other conditions approved in the final determination actually end up happening.

WAHA has reason to be concerned. In 1993, upon approval of Exposition Park's Master Plan, one required mitigation was that Expo Park itself be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. It never happened. Then, in 1999, when the Swim Stadium was proposed for its rehab/reconstruction, the City of Los Angeles, the Community Redevelopment Agency, and "EPICC," which operates the Swim Stadium, all signed a legal settlement with "Preservation Parties" (the Art Deco Society, North University Park Community Association and the Adams Dockweiler Heritage Organizing Committee), again agreeing to prepare and submit a nomination of Exposition Park to the National Register (along with the then-new California Register). Again, with reasons lost to time, it never happened.

*(continued on page 11)*



# WAHA Matters

## THE DROUGHT MAY or MAY NOT BE ENDING Gray water Solutions should definitely be a part of our eco-consciousness

by John Patterson

On a recent, very hot Sunday afternoon, about three dozen WAHA friends and neighbors learned how they could re-cycle the water from their showers and washing machines to use in their gardens. Since about 50% of our monthly water bill is based on what we use outside, our wallets as well as our plants will appreciate the effort.

Aaron Kuehn presented a fairly detailed introduction to the simple concept of consumer water recycling. He shared with us that he and his business partners at 2G Water Solutions had all bought large homes in Orange County a few years ago, and as the drought persisted year after year, they all started feeling guilty about keeping their beautiful gardens green, and began to fear what future costs would be as more and more water cut-backs are demanded.

The solution: DON'T cut back on watering your garden, just re-use the water you've already purchased! It's that simple. Your washing machine utilizes the same pump to get the water out to your garden that normally just goes down the sewer line. And depending on the model you use at home, that can be anywhere from 15-20 gallons (front loading) up to 50 gallons (top loaders) each and every time you do a load of laundry!

There's also a simple gravity system available to transport your shower water out to your thirsty yard. An easy consultation will help determine which system would be best for your needs. And the beauty of what we learned is that our Historic West Adams homes, with their elevated foundations, are PERFECT candidates for the easiest graywater installations available!

Aaron told us that a DIY project will probably cost a couple hundred dollars for the mulch (which acts as a natural filter for the water) and the pipes and drip system required for distribution. And a couple days of digging. Their rate structure for a basic system ranges from \$1,600-\$1,800 with them supplying all the parts and labor. If two or more WAHA folks hire Aaron and his team, they will offer a group discount that will pencil out at about \$1,400, all inclusive. For all the details check out their website: [www.2gwater.com](http://www.2gwater.com).

Special thanks go out to Chris Baker and Christa Schmidt for hosting our WAHA potluck! ●



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# Community Matters

## Historic USC Fire Station Hits the Road

By Alysia Gray Painter

Changing things around at a university is pretty standard everyday stuff. A student wants to swap a drama class for a seminar on dance, a couple of professors want to trade offices, and the student union's busy coffeehouse will head to another building in search of larger digs.

To take the entire 250-ton concrete façade of a decades-old fire station and truck it over to a new location is a bit more unusual, however, even in the annals of the ever-changing, always evolving college campus.

But the University of Southern California did just that, on Monday, Oct. 5, when historic Fire Station No. 15 beat a path over to its next home at the USC School of Cinematic Arts.



The 1950s façade will “become part of a sound studio” at the 32nd Street-located school, says a USC representative. The school is three blocks away from the firehouse's longtime home.

And, of course, “beat a path” sounds as if dozens upon dozens of people weren't involved in the challenging move, which required “a custom rig

atop three 12-wheeled trailers” for the 24-by-51-foot concrete structure.

How fast does such a get-up go? There was not pedal-to-the-metal-ing happening in West Adams; speeds topped at a three miles an hour.

As for what happens to the firefighting company that serves the West Adams neighborhood and what comes next? A new station was built at USC's expense, at Hoover Street and 30th Avenue, and “the firefighters are already settled into their new digs,” which are described in a press release as a “state-of-the-art facility.”

The preserving of the historic façade is a part of the USC Village master plan. And, yes, just the facade, or a third of the original building, made the move (the remainder will be demolished to make room for a pedestrian walkway). ●

*Reprinted with permission of NBCLA.com*



# Community Matters

## Coming Soon to an Intersection Near You

by Jean Frost

A picture is worth a thousand words and Caltrans has finally made public what the flyover will look like. The large rendering below is just one of several examples from their September 8 "Finding of Adverse Effect" (FAE) of the I-110 HOV/HOT Flyover which WAHA has been tracking as a consulting party to the Section 106 process. (Have I lost you yet?)

As *WAHA Matters* readers know, Caltrans is proposing to build this adjacent to St. John's Cathedral and in the heart of the University Park historic neighborhood. Their latest take on this monstrosity? "The project will be compatible with the existing visual character and of the project corridor....The project was designed with the lowest possible profile..." and the conclusion Caltrans makes that "it is as compatible as possible with the existing properties." In their view such a flyover "does not introduce a visual element that would diminish the integrity of the property's significant historic features."

We concur with Caltrans new finding that here are serious and irreparable effects to St. John's Cathedral. That impact alone should call this undertaking into question. You cannot mitigate its severe and irreparable harm by (as they suggest) interpretive programs, or streetscape improvements or by preparing a preservation plan for the Church. The project damages the environmental setting of St. John's Cathedral and imposes further blight on the University Park/West Adams neighborhood. And we ask, for what cause?

To move traffic two blocks at a public cost of forty million which then dumps traffic at the intersection of Figueroa and 23rd Street where it will create further traffic and circulation problems. All to cut seconds off a car waiting in the HOV/HOT off ramp on Adams? This does not solve the traffic and mobility problems inherent in the downtown area but rather moves the mobility issue two blocks to an already challenging intersection.

Caltrans claims "the project would alleviate the congestion and reduce the queuing and delay on the HOV/HOT mainlines and Adams Blvd. off-ramp connector. Increasing capacity at this location is key to ensuring the HOV/HOT lanes can serve additional toll users and reduce the delay." More analysis needs to be undertaken regarding the purpose and need for this project.

When the visuals were first unveiled in a Caltrans meeting on February 2, 2015 with consulting parties the response was:

"Consideration of other alternatives that directly can be in nexus with the projects purpose or need. Consider surface route options that could address congestion without the need for the flyover." — Adrian Scott Fine, LA Conservancy

"Other alternatives should be considered....should not be built." — Fr. Dan Ade, St. John's Cathedral

"Less is more...no project" — Jim Childs, West Adams Heritage Association

"Eliminate the flyover" — Lambert Giessinger, Architect for the City of Los Angeles

"No build. Look at surface traffic solutions create green space ...all of the ...choices utterly offensive to the neighborhood" — Fr. Mark Kowalewski, St. John's Cathedral



*Two of the potential renderings of the Flyover published by Caltrans, providing views of the visual impact of the project (above and next page)*

# Community Matters

When the “consulting parties” were summoned to participate, there was no voice other than Caltrans staff that championed this undertaking yet it appears these remarks have fallen on deaf ears. There has been no “context sensitive solution” proposed or found pursuant to Caltrans Director’s Policy DPP-22. One needs to respect and understand the context in order to find a context sensitive solution.

Caltrans staff finds our neighborhood context a collection of mini-malls, gas stations and fast food uses – a selective and narrow view. These existing incompatible elements are used as a justification to continue to degrade the environment with the flyover. We strongly object to the theory that one



more visual blight will not make a difference. The flyover is just one more negative undertaking that will serious harm what is a historic community, pedestrian friendly, and an oasis from the downtown cement enclave.

WAHA sees a vibrant and significant historic neighborhood composed of a wide array of historic resources including but not limited to St. John’s Episcopal Cathedral, St. Vincent’s Church, the Chester Place Historic District, the Automobile Club, the Stimson House, the Slauson house, Stella Maris Residence, Texere Plaza, and the below grade in-cut of the I-110 itself which protects the historic neighborhood from viewing the freeways. (See “Doheny Ditch vs. I-110 Flyover,” *WAHA Matters*, October, Issue No. 315.) So much depends on where one stands and one’s perspective. The FAE report is so calculating and misleading as it skews its view sheds with pictures of mini malls and fried chicken outlets.

What the report fails to understand is the openness of the sky, the pedestrian ambience, the lack of an oppressive freeway ramp hovering over the buildings, dumping traffic and pollution and noise into what remains a historic and visually open setting. Where you decide to stand seriously changes your views. As the Fathers and Rectors of St. John’s Cathedral wrote “The proposed flyover project seeks to discount our vibrant and historic neighborhood by cutting through it once again.”

If you would like to help in this effort to fight the flyover, please e-mail me at [preservation@westadamsheritage.org](mailto:preservation@westadamsheritage.org). ●



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# History Matters

## Offbeat and Audacious: Living History Tour Brings Unique Personages to Life

Visitors to this year's Living History Tour at Angelus Rosedale Cemetery "met" nine historic personages who lived eclectic and colorful lives. In this photo gallery, please meet the wonderful actors who portrayed them.



Kate Lupo (above, left) portrayed vaudeville roller skater and later murder victim Mable Monohan; Sulai Lopez and Gabriel Diani portrayed, respectively, actress Alice Browning and director Tod Browning



History Came Alive: Alan Hall (above) portrayed the man who would be king, "Prince" John Rex de Guelph Windsor, who claimed to be the son of King Edward VII of England



Blaire Baron Larsen portrayed Actress Constance Crawley, here holding Crawley's pet monkey, "Dooley."

## Living History Tour Relies on Many Helping Hands

Producing the annual Living History Tour at Angelus Rosedale Cemetery would not be possible without the help of MANY volunteers, this year more than 80 strong. Thank you, everyone!

### Organizing Committee

Laura Meyers (Coordinator), Elizabeth Fenner, Anne Hakes, Don Lynch, Lisa Raymond, Rina Rubenstein, Michael J. Sonntag, Lana Soroko, Marius Stelly, Christie Webb

### Actors

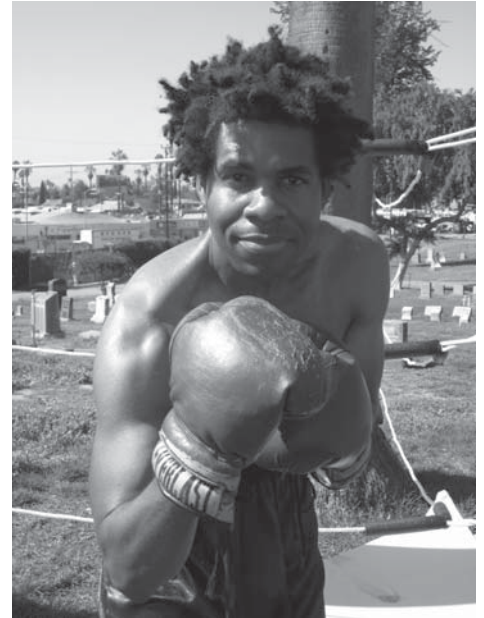
Gabriel Diani, Alan Hall, Mel Hampton, Larvell Hood, Blaire Baron Larsen, Sulai Lopez, Kate Lupo, Sharon Oxborough, Nathan Earl Rose

### Volunteers

Chris Barnes, Ansley Bell, Regina Berry, Paul Brynen, Paula Brynen, Jean Cade, SeElcy Caldwell, Chrissy Carr, Michael Chapman, Liz Cooper, Rory Cunningham, Randi Danforth, Lauren Deutsch, Mel Embree, Leslie Evans, Ellen Farwell, Maura Feely, Jean Frost, Julius Galacki, Martha Gruft, Dan Hakes, Alan Hamburger, Allen K. Hamburger, Suzie Henderson, Phoebe Heywood, Kim-Lai Jones, Spencer Jones, Nick Kasperek, Peggy King, Margaret Koon-Strong, John Kurtz, Sarah Lange, Katrina Lofgren, Arielle Max, Danny Miller, Frank Mitchell, Jenny Mogen, Mitzi Mogul, Marisha Corinne Morris, Marianne Muellerleile, Natalie Neith, David Nico, Gisa Nico, Hunter Ochs, David Pacheco, John Patterson, Lanna Pian, Carmen Price, Judy Reidel, Norma Reynolds, David Saffer, Lauren Schlau, Flo Selfman, Michael Smith, Roland Souza, Terry Speth, David Strong, Chris Taylor, Mark Tomlin, Ed Trosper, Sally Turner, Jeff Valdez, Amy Vuckovich, Lindsay Wiggins, Candy Wynne



Photos by Ansley Bell, Laura Meyers and Joe Susco



*Nathan Earl Rose (above) as Walter R. Kreps, the first LAPD motorcycle officer killed on duty; an actual 1916 Indian motorcycle (above, right) was the highlight of his set*



*The tour's Chapel Greeter was Sharon Oxborough (below, left), portraying armless aviatrix Josephine Callaghan; Larvell Hood (above) brought welterweight boxing champion Cecil Lewis "Young Jack" Thompson to life.*



*Mel Hampton (above) brought jazz saxophonist John J. "Jackie Kelso" Kelson Jr. to life; tour visitors (right) enjoy his performance.*

*Historical portraits of the actual personages, (below, from left to right): Contance Crawley, Jackie Kelso, Josephine Callaghan, Tod Browning, "Young Jack" Thompson, Walter R. Kreps, and Alice Browning*



# Preservation Matters

## Demolition *continued from page 1*

The developer filed for the demolition after a June 23 public Zoning Administrator hearing when his request to add 1,236 square feet and a second story to this 1,134-square-foot, one and a half story Victorian cottage, under a CE (categorical exemption) did not result in an immediate approval.

The developer and his agents were well aware that the permit was issued in error and invalid. It had two fatal flaws:

1). If there is a pending discretionary action associated with the property, which there was, any demolition permit should be placed on hold until the proper environmental review is completed and a determination letter is issued by planning.

2). Demolition of any property over 45 years old requires notice to the Council office, abutting neighbors and public posting on site per Ordinance 183312, which took effect on January 1, 2015. This ordinance was designed specifically to create time for the public and city officials to comment and react to proposed demolitions of potential historic resources. For this residence, a permit application was submitted on July 24, 2015 and issued on the same day, July 24, 2015, in violation of the 30-day notice requirement.

On December 7, when Building and Safety acknowledged that, "the notices were not mailed due to our error," the applicant was informed that they had no right to demolish the building. On that same day, Building and Safety's Siavosh Poursabahian contacted the applicant and informed WAHA that "she (Caroline Wilson, assistant to Mr. Belliston) has agreed not to demolish the building and wait for 30 days."

On December 10, Building and Safety's Siavosh Poursabahian reported: "Despite all the telephone calls to the applicant (owner's agent and Project manager) not to demolish the existing single family dwelling due to existing pending City Planning case, the building was demolished today. The applicant called for inspection yesterday and the inspector mistakenly allowed the demolition to start."

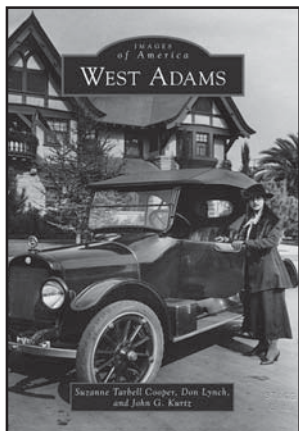
When Mr. Poursabahian asked Mr. Fan why he went ahead and demolished the building, his response was that he had spoken to his lawyer and, since there was nothing in writing, he could proceed with the demolition. Mr. Fan also informed the B&S staffer that he intended to build a duplex on the site.

When informed of the demolition, Ken Bernstein, manager of the Office of Historic Resources and Principal City Planner, responded "we certainly hope that DBS does follow up and ensure there are consequences to this apparently willful disregard of the City's stop order."

WAHA asks that the Department of Building and Safety in consultation with the City Attorney undertake all civil and criminal measures available to the City under the Los Angeles Municipal Code and State law to enforce and prosecute Mr. Fan and Mr. Kim for this clearly egregious violation of City codes and the California Environmental Quality Act, including but not limited to the invoking of Section 91.106.4.1(10) of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, otherwise known as the "Scorched Earth Ordinance."

The core of our society relies on the respect and adherence to due process. The willful and flagrant disregard for this must have serious repercussions. ●

*(Editor's Note: At press time, CD8 Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson was calling for an investigation.)*



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## Sports Arena *continued from page 3*

As a result, WAHA has now asked the City of Los Angeles to NOT certify this EIR without requiring that the prior mitigation be in place. We pointed out that the City itself is a party to the legal settlement – and signed the agreement – and thus should not be moving forward on yet another major project without the historic designation applications being prepared and submitted to the State Office of Historic Preservation.

The Sports Arena was designed by Welton Becket and Associates, considered one of the premier post World War II architects of modern buildings in Los Angeles. Among the firm's designs are many UCLA buildings, including Pauley Pavilion, the Music Center, the Pacific Cinerama Dome, the iconic Capitol Records Building in Hollywood, and, in 1958, what was then the largest urban development in the nation, Century City.

Getting the Sports Arena constructed was a lengthy process, with initial efforts (and several false starts) beginning in the 1930s. After World War II, interest focused on Exposition Park. But voters three times rejected municipal ballot bond issues. Undeterred, the Coliseum Commission and its president, County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, enlisted State Assemblymen Jesse Unruh and Augustus Hawkins to introduce a bill authorizing the County Board of Supervisors to simply issue \$7 million in revenue bonds to build the stadium.

Finally, the Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena opened on July 4, 1959, with then U.S. Vice President Richard M. Nixon delivering the celebratory remarks. Its first event followed four days later, a bantamweight title fight between Jose Becerra and Alphonse Halimi. Soon after, Wilt Chamberlain played his first professional basketball game there. In 1960, the Democratic National Convention nominated John F. Kennedy for president at the Sports Arena. The 1961 Freedom Rally, sponsored by the Western Christian Leadership Council, featured Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as the primary speaker.

Over the years, the Sports Arena hosted numerous sporting events, and was home court to (at one time or another) the Los Angeles Lakers, the Los Angeles Clippers, the Los Angeles Kings, the USC Trojans basketball team, and the UCLA Bruins Basketball team. The arena has also hosted concerts by many famous artists, including Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band, Bon Jovi, the Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, Van Halen, Def Leppard, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Prince, Michael Jackson, U2, Grateful Dead, Aerosmith, David Bowie, Madonna and Daft Punk, among others. ●



*In 1960, the Democratic National Convention nominated JFK for president at the Sports Arena*

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# Preservation Matters

## West Adams area Churches Designated as Historic Cultural Monuments:

No. 57  
**Second Church of Christ, Scientist** (below)  
930-948 W. Adams Blvd.  
Declared 7/17/1968



No. 89  
**Central Spanish Seventh Day Adventist Church**  
1366 Alvarado St., 1447-1459 Alvarado Terrace  
Declared 7/7/1971



No. 90  
**Saint Vincent de Paul Church** (above)  
621 W. Adams Blvd.  
Declared 7/21/1971

No. 120  
**Saint Sophia Cathedral** (below)  
1324-1420 S. Normandie Ave.  
Declared 6/6/1973



## West Adams Churches *continued from page 1*

We can learn about West Adams' cultural history by visiting its churches. In the 1920s a new wave of immigrants erected churches reflected their own heritage: the magnificent St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Cathedral is filled with gold leaf and Byzantine iconography. The Armenian St. James Church (now a charter school at 3200 West Adams Blvd.) was designed to emulate Armenian churches of the Middle Ages. Its stained glass windows depict Armenian saints.

But as time marched on, many congregations in these historic churches and synagogues dwindled. Consider Temple Sinai, built in 1909, but by 1925 already sold to the Welsh Presbyterian Church. The latter congregation maintained the building's original Jewish ornamentation, but by 2012 it, too, had dwindled in size to a handful of weekly worshipers. That year, the Presbyterians approached the Jewish Historical Society of Southern California, hoping to return the building to its roots. A Jewish benefactor, Craig Taubman, stepped up, bought the property, and has turned it into a thriving interfaith and multi-cultural center.

One sanctuary on WAHA's current radar is the Roger Williams Baptist Church at 1342 West Adams Blvd. As longtime readers know, the congregation faced financial issues and sold the entire property to a housing developer a few years ago, and that developer gutted the adjacent Bishop Mansion without permits in anticipation of changing its interior to student apartments. (WAHA successfully litigated over the proposed project and its lack of proper environmental review.) Recently, its diminished congregation was given its walking papers, and the property owners are considering adaptive reuse projects. WAHA is monitoring the situation.

Meanwhile, we celebrate our historic religious buildings, and share with you today some of their interesting stories.



*Final service at the Welsh Presbyterian Church, 2012*

## GLASBAND, GROMAN AND GLASBAND MORTUARY ON "MORTUARY ROW" 901 West Washington Blvd.

A Phoenix recently arose from ashes on the northwest corner of Washington and Oak. Designed by noted Architect Theo J. Scott, it was originally built in 1927 to house Glasband, Groman and Glasband Mortuary, a firm that catered to all denominations – a service reflected in its stained glass windows which featured both a Christian cross and a Star of David. Architect Scott was adept at all of the popular "revival" styles and designed hundreds of homes throughout Southern California, among them the Spanish style estate of silent film star Colleen Moore in Bel-Air. In 1940 Groman left the firm to open his own mortuary at 830 West Washington Boulevard to specialize in serving the Jewish community. The windows at 901 West Washington were removed shortly before a fire of suspicious origin significantly damaged the structure in 1995. The building sat forlorn and empty for years (see photo above). The new Church members came to the University Park HPOZ Board with their plans to restore the Church. Today it is the Iglesia De Dios Casa De Oracion. "Mortuary Row" is that stretch of Washington between Flower and Union that by 1940 had two dozen funeral parlors lining the Boulevard and this represents just one of the adaptive reuses of these stately historic mortuary buildings. Groman Mortuary continues to offer funeral services but other mortuaries have become a charter school, a union headquarters, and a glass company.

Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, the new congregation at 901 now offers a bright light to the Boulevard known as "Mortuary Row." — by Jean Frost





**WEST ADAMS HEIGHTS METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH/GREATER PAGE  
TEMPLE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST**  
2610 South LaSalle Avenue  
Architect: John C. Austin

In 1904, as the first grand homes were being erected on the hill in the exclusive West Adams Heights Tract, the City's Methodist leadership announced plans for an impressive Gothic Revival house of worship to serve these new residents. However, fundraising stalled until 1912, when the cornerstone was finally laid for the West Adams Heights Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1952, it became home to Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church. In 1963, Bishop Lucius C. Page, a "noted soul winner," brought his congregation to this location, now known as the Greater Page Temple Church of God in Christ. — by Laura Meyers

**MOGEN DAVID TEMPLE/CHURCH OF DIVINE GUIDANCE**  
1520 South Gramercy Place

A unique Art Deco religious sanctuary, noted by SurveyLA as "exhibiting a high quality of design," is nestled on Gramercy Place in the Nevins Tract, once an exclusive enclave adjacent to the Los Angeles Country Club. By the mid-1920s, a growing number of the Jewish faithful had settled in the vicinity, and in 1925 the Mogen David congregation formed and began meeting in private homes in West Adams. Mogen David's Womens Auxiliary soon raised \$50,000 to build a handsome Art Deco temple, erected in 1933. Under the long tenure of Rabbi Abraham Maron, who died in the early 1980s, the congregation grew to as many as 1,800 members. Congregation Mogen David moved to West L.A. in the early 1950s.

The Church of Divine Guidance was founded in October 1953 in an empty theater on Pico Boulevard by Reverend Clayton Donovan Russell. Russell was an important religious and political leader in the African American community in Los Angeles. For much of his life Russell was associated with the People's Independent Church of Christ, one of the city's largest congregations. He was ordained at the church in 1929, a year after he graduated from high school. At 25, Russell became the church's pastor in 1935. During World War II Russell organized the Negro Victory Committee, which sponsored mass meetings and demonstrations to protest discrimination against African American workers. Russell and his church, whose membership peaked at 4,000, were also the driving force behind the Victory Markets, a chain of cooperative grocery stores that served the rapidly expanding African American community during the war. Russell also worked to elect African Americans to political offices. In 1946 he was a candidate for a seat on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, and in 1959 he ran for a seat on the Los Angeles City Council.



Russell's affiliation with People's Independent Church ended abruptly in 1953, when he was accused of financial improprieties. Russell immediately established the Church of Divine

Guidance, over which he presided until his death in 1981.

Soon after the church's founding, Russell's small band of faithful worshippers began to look for a more permanent home. In the words of Rev. Russell, "God is guiding us in a search for the right place in which to accomplish the work that The Lord has put in my mind to do. When we find the right place we will know it." When Rev. Russell and his search committee went to the Mogen David building, the doors were locked and there was nobody around to unlock and open the doors. With a forceful hard push on the doors, they sprang open "like the wings of an eagle." It seemed as if the very doors, themselves, were glad that the group had come by, and with open arms they were inviting the group to enter. The Church of Divine Guidance continues to operate from that former Jewish synagogue. — LM

*(continued on page 14)*



No. 173  
**Temple Sinai/Welsh  
Presbyterian Church**  
*(above)*  
1153 S. Valencia Street  
Declared 4/20/1977

No. 200  
**Second Baptist Church**  
1100 W. 24th Street/  
2408-2412 Griffith Ave.  
Declared 10/18/1978

No. 229  
**Westminster  
Presbyterian Church**  
2226 W. Jefferson Blvd.  
Declared 6/11/1980

No. 341  
**First African  
Methodist Episcopal  
Zion Cathedral &  
Community Center**  
*(below)*  
1439-1457 W. Adams Blvd.  
Declared 1/22/1988



No. 512  
**Church of The Advent**  
2614 Longwood Ave &  
4970-4976 W Adams Blvd  
Declared 1/16/1991

# Preservation Matters



No. 516  
**Saint John's Episcopal Church** (above)  
510 W. Adams Blvd.  
Declared 1/22/1991

No. 531  
**Wilshire Ward Chapel** (below)  
1209 S. Manhattan Place  
Declared 5/10/1991



No. 548  
**Korean Independence Memorial Building**  
1368 W. Jefferson Blvd.  
Declared 10/2/1991

No. 578  
**Emmanuel Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
4254-4260 3rd Avenue  
Declared 5/25/1993

No. 754  
**First Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles** (below)  
1809 West Blvd.  
Declared 6/3/2003



## West Adams Churches *continued from page 13*

### HOUSE OF GOD/MOTHER TATE 3425 West 15th/corner 5th Avenue

This diminutive Carpenter Gothic Revival church was erected by 1901, and has been home over more than a century to a number of congregations with varied religious beliefs. SurveyLA identified this church as a potential individual historic resource, describing it as "an incredibly early church in the area...one of the oldest buildings in the neighborhood." In 1923, Rev. P.O. Youtz sold the then-named Fifth Avenue Christian Church for \$10,000 to Rev. Edgar T. Coyner's Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Epiphany, which was seeking a larger home. (Youtz in turn moved into larger quarters: the Pico Arlington Christian Church.) Rev. Coyner had come to Los Angeles in 1912 from Missouri, where he had launched several previous Lutheran congregations. Today, the Little Church



is home to the House of God Church, a denomination founded in 1903 by Mother Mary Magdalena Lewis Tate. Born in Dickson, Tennessee, her character and demeanor brought on the nickname "Miss Do Right" during her youth. Tate's followers were also known as "The Do Rights" and later she became known as Mother Tate. In 1903, she along with her two sons, Walter Curtis Lewis and Feliz Early Lewis, established "The Church of the Living God, the Pillar and the Ground of the Truth Without Controversy" (House of God).

### FIRST AME CHURCH 2270 Harvard Blvd. Architect: Paul R. Williams

By 1900, the two leading churches in the black community were the First African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Second Baptist Church. They attracted elite and middle-class segments of the community, and remained influential for decades. The First AME Church was the first black church to form in Los Angeles. It began in 1872 in the home of Biddy Mason, who sustained the church financially in its early years. In 1903, the church moved to a structure at 8th and Towne, six blocks west of Central Avenue. The building was a "magnificent architectural landmark," with a sanctuary four stories high, topped by a bell tower with four spires. Before long, several other black churches built structures nearby. First AME was well known for its 50-voice choir, as well as its leadership role in the community. In 1903 it launched the Los Angeles Sunday Forum, which became a key civic hub. It continued strong over the years, organizing and mobilizing the black community.

Outgrowing their facilities on Towne Avenue and "engulfed by commercial and industrial establishments," the location was "somewhat undesirable for a church." A move was imperative for the 95-year-old congregation. As a First AME board member, Paul R. Williams contributed design plans for the new church building. In a contemporary newspaper article the architect elaborated on the spectacular features of his design. The complex "will include a sanctuary seating 5,000, a 150-seat chapel, an auditorium with space for 700, and another seating 600, equipped with a stage, dining facilities and other conveniences...The plant will include underground parking, facilities for medical and counseling care and so on." On an August Sunday in 1963 a brigade of five hundred people, each equipped with a gold-painted shovel, broke ground for a new \$1 million church building at 25th Street and Harvard Boulevard. Over 2,000 visitors watched movie stars Marlon Brando and Tony Curtis along with civic and religious dignitaries "turning over the soil" for First AME's new sanctuary.



## **HOLMAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** **3320 West Adams Blvd.** **Architect: Kenneth Lind**

In early 1945 a small group of spirit-filled lay people had a vision of a Methodist church that would serve the rapidly growing African-American population on the west side of Los Angeles. This vision soon became a reality and the first service of what would become Holman United Methodist Church was held in a Seventh Day Adventist sanctuary on West 36th Place. (Subsequent services were held in various nearby locations, including a dance hall and a Japanese church.) The congregation, then named Morgan Chapel, purchased its first permanent building in 1947 – a former Jewish Synagogue on the corner of Cimarron and Jefferson. In 1951 Holman Methodist purchased the property at 3320 West Adams Boulevard, and hired architect Kenneth Lind to design a new, contemporary church.



Lind, who taught at USC's School of Architecture, was known as an "architect's architect" with a style that merged aggressive modernism with a softer, prairie edge. He was commissioned to design a variety of residences, apartment buildings and shopping centers throughout Southern California, and won an award for a senior housing project in 1964. Lind's design for the \$200,000 Holman Methodist sanctuary, completed in 1958, was also award-winning. This Modernist edifice with a facade of charcoal plaster and crushed black granite stands out on Adams Boulevard. The 50-foot white concrete bell tower with ten chiming carillons was designed so that its wing-like sides symbolize the hands of a man in prayer. The bells symbolize the music forever in the soul of a man. — LM

## **EMANUEL DANISH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH** **4254-4280 Third Avenue, HCM#578** **Victory Christian Center/Church of God in Christ**

A unique (for Los Angeles) architectural style, a woman architect, and a direct connection to one of Southern California's many discrete immigrant communities bring this historic church to our attention. Built in 1937, the Emanuel Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church is an example of the significant contribution of an immigrant culture to Los Angeles and demonstrates the importance of churches in the cultural life of its parishioners and the wider community. Pastor Orbeg, who came from Denmark in 1975, described its heritage: This congregation was founded in 1906 as a Danish American congregation....our service is so much like the Danish service that he or she has no difficulty in feeling at home here." The congregation's first building was on 46th street and no longer exists. In 1936, the congregation's building committee decided to build a church in Leimert Park. Architect Rainer Neilson was chosen to design the church and he proposed a Spanish Mission Revival Style. The building committee rejected the design and then asked architect Edith Northman to design the building in a traditional Danish vernacular style. Northman's design replaced Neilson's design with one that possesses the qualities and features of the traditional Danish Church building form: the dominant crow stepped gable facade and rear elevation of the main building section, the recessed main doorway of concentric arches, the stepped gable side entrance leading to the Church social, and the white washed exterior. This picturesque church design developed in the late medieval period of the 14th and 15th centuries. Edith Northman's career spanned over three decades from the '20s to the late '40s. In a May 9, 1937 issue of the Los Angeles Times, she was included along with 41 other figures in a rotogravure section titled "Going Forward with Southern California." She was the sole woman, and one of three architects (Albert C. Martin and Claude Beelman) included in the article. The spirit of the Church's inclusiveness and service continues today as it has transitioned to the Victory Christian Center/Church of God in Christ. — JM ●

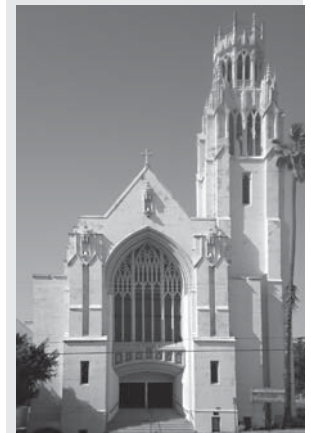


No. 987 and No. 988  
**St. Philip the Evangelist Church and Parish Hall**  
2716 - 2800 South Stanford Avenue  
Declared 10/5/2010

No. 1055  
**University Religious Center (USC) (below)**  
835 West 34th Street  
Declared 12/11/2013



National Register designated historic resource  
**McCarty Memorial Christian Church**  
*(below)*  
4101 West Adams Blvd.  
Listed 01/17/2002



Many other religious structures in West Adams are designated as Contributors to Historic Districts.

# Preservation Matters

## West Adams' Japanese American Heritage

During this year's Holiday Tour visitors learned how the West Adams District played an important role during the era of Japanese American Resettlement. WAHA opened the doors to several residences that became home to relocated Japanese American families after 1945.

As we all know, Japanese Americans in Los Angeles and most West Coast cities were rounded up after Pearl Harbor and housed in infamous relocation camps for the duration of World War II. Many lost their homes and personal belongings, permitted only one parcel on their journeys to the processing centers.

The Japanese American population in Los Angeles had steadily grown during the 20th century. In 1920, there were nearly 10,000 Japanese Americans in Los Angeles. By 1930, that number had doubled to nearly 20,000, and it nearly had doubled again by 1940 to 38,000.

The West Adams District was not the primary neighborhood for Japanese Americans in the early decades. But in 1925, the Centenary Methodist Church, which had a Japanese American congregation, moved from Little Tokyo to a new sanctuary at Normandie and 35th Street to serve a growing congregation. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the church closed its doors and didn't reopen again until 1945. But when the war was over, the church reopened as a refuge/resettlement center and hostel. The church's new function as a refuge center encouraged many Japanese American families to resettle in Jefferson Park and the Charles Victor Hall Tract, creating a legacy that lives on today with some remaining businesses – such as Tak's Hardware and Nursery on Jefferson Boulevard – and some remaining buildings on and adjacent to Crenshaw Boulevard – such as the Bank of Tokyo/Union Bank building at Crenshaw and Jefferson, designed by architect (and relocatee) Tosh Terasawa.

The mass relocation now truly represents days of shame for America. In the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor, many Japanese Americans (primarily the male heads of households) were arrested and jailed for a year or two, and in the weeks following President Roosevelt issued an executive order permitting the rounding up of nearly everyone else.

According to the Japanese American Legacy project, known as Densho, "The United States Government incarcerated 120,313 Japanese Americans during World War II, placing the majority of them in 10 concentration camps run by the War Relocation Authority or in other camps or centers of detention run by the Justice Department or other government agencies. Americans of Japanese ancestry, 70 percent Americans citizens, were forced off the West Coast or parts of Hawai'i."

In 1982, a committee appointed by the U.S. Congress concluded that the incarceration was carried out without adequate reasons of security and was motivated largely by racial prejudice, wartime hysteria and a failure of political leadership.

"This was a dark chapter in American history: the mass incarceration of loyal Japanese Americans into barbed wire compounds surrounded by guards by their own government," said the report.

"Concentration Camps" was the term used by U.S. officials at the time: Congressman John Rankin said on December 15, 1941, "I'm for catching every Japanese in America, Alaska, and Hawaii now and putting them in concentration camps." And Henry McLemore, a Hearst syndicated columnist, wrote in January, 1942:

"I am for immediate removal of every Japanese on the West Coast to a point deep in the interior. I don't mean a nice part of the interior either. Herd 'em up, pack 'em off and give 'em the inside room in the badlands. Let 'em be pinched, hurt, hungry and dead up against it . . . Personally, I hate the Japanese. And that goes for all of them."

The site of the former relocation camp at Manzanar (which was one of many) is now a registered historic landmark. It bears a plaque that reads, "*May the injustices and humiliation suffered here as a result of hysteria, racism and economic exploitation never emerge again.*" ●

West Adams is home to very few designated landmarks associated with Japanese American history. One exception is the Hauerwaas-Kusayanagi Residence, 3741 West 27th Street, Historic Cultural Monument No. 990. In 1945, the house was photographed as part of the U.S. government's documentation of the Japanese American resettlement efforts. This collection is now available online at U.C. Berkeley's Bancroft Library digital site.



*Mr. Takejiro Kusayanagi's 14-room home at 3741 W. 27th Street, in the fashionable West Adams district of Los Angeles, to which he returned from Manzanar on the first day the ban was lifted. Mr. Kusayanagi operated the National Trading Company dry goods store on Main Street, across from the Los Angeles City Hall, from 1906 to December 7, 1941, the day he was removed from the city. He was probably first to leave and first to return. Now he is retired and devotes his time to management of his extensive property holdings, which include several buildings in Bronzeville, formerly Little Tokyo. His wife Matsu is with him, also his son George. He also has five grown daughters and five grandchildren (all girls). His home occupies half an acre and includes a formal Japanese garden. -- Photographer: Mace, Charles E. -- Los Angeles, California. 6/26/45.*



*Japanese Americans boarding a bus in Little Tokyo, February 1942*



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— Steve Wallis

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*Annual Membership*

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 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*Membership classification (check one)*

\_\_\_ Individual/Household . . . . . \$ 50.00  
 \_\_\_ Senior/Student . . . . . \$ 25.00  
 \_\_\_ Preservation Circle . . . . . \$ 100.00  
 \_\_\_ Heritage Circle . . . . . \$ 250.00  
 \_\_\_ Patron Circle . . . . . \$ 500.00  
 \_\_\_ Benefactor . . . . . \$1,000.00

*Please make check payable to WAHA.*  
 Return to: WAHA  
 2263 S. Harvard Blvd  
 Historic West Adams  
 Los Angeles, CA 90018

## ADVERTISE HERE!

Advertisers are responsible for preparing their own camera-ready art for display ads. Note that they must be B&W. To place a display ad, e-mail [news@westadamsheritage.org](mailto:news@westadamsheritage.org). WAHA classifieds are free to paid members. If you can, please e-mail your classified ad to [lauramink@aol.com](mailto:lauramink@aol.com). Classifieds will be for one month only.

## ADVERTISING RATES

### FOR DISPLAY ADS

This Newsletter is published 10 times a year

**Half Page:** \$100 monthly; \$900 annually

**1/4 Page** (3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>): \$60 monthly; \$540 annually

**Business Card** (3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>): \$30 monthly, \$270 annually

The deadline for ad content is the 1st of the prior month.

*Please Note: WAHA does not endorse or claim responsibility for any of the services, products or items for sale that advertisers have listed in these pages.*

## WAHA CLASSIFIEDS

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*Roommate Wanted? Vintage Stove for Sale? Garden Plants in Search of New Home? Place your classified ad here to reach preservation-minded readers. Contact [lauramink@aol.com](mailto:lauramink@aol.com), NO LATER THAN the first of the prior month.*

## WAHA E-MAILS

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Facebook: [facebook@westadamsheritage.org](https://www.facebook.com/westadamsheritage.org)

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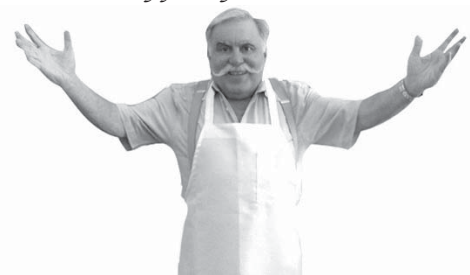
*JOSE NAVIDAD*

Address all communications to

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# Calendar ✓

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## Hold the Dates for 2016

### APRIL

WAHA Board Elections,  
date/time TBA

### JULY

WAHA's Annual 4th of July  
Picnic, Monday, July 4

### SEPTEMBER

Living History Tour at Angelus  
Rosedale Cemetery,  
Saturday, September 24

### DECEMBER

Holiday Tour and Progressive  
Dinner, Saturday and Sunday,  
December 3 and 4

**Best Wishes  
for a  
Happy 2016!**

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## ***WAHA....Creating Our Future by Preserving Our Past***

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*The WAHA Matters Newsletter is a publication of the West Adams Heritage Association. Members and supporters of WAHA are invited to submit articles to the Newsletter. Letters will be published subject to space constraints and will be cut for length if necessary. Articles will be published subject to acceptance by the editors of the WAHA Board. Advertising is subject to the approval of the publishers. Although the Association appreciates its many fine advertisers, the Association does not accept responsibility for claims made by advertisers. Services and products are not tested and appearance of advertising does not imply, nor does it constitute, endorsement by the West Adams Heritage Association. Copyright 2015. All rights for graphic and written material appearing in the newsletter are reserved. Contact Director of Publications for permission.*

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**WAHA**   
West Adams Heritage Association  
2263 South Harvard Boulevard  
Historic West Adams  
Los Angeles, California 90018

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**