

West Adams Matters

Here, Kitty, Kitty

by Jim Childs

In West Adams, we constantly speak of endangered Victorians and beautifully-restored Craftsman Bungalows, sparkling Spanish Revivals, and Beaux Arts masterpieces.

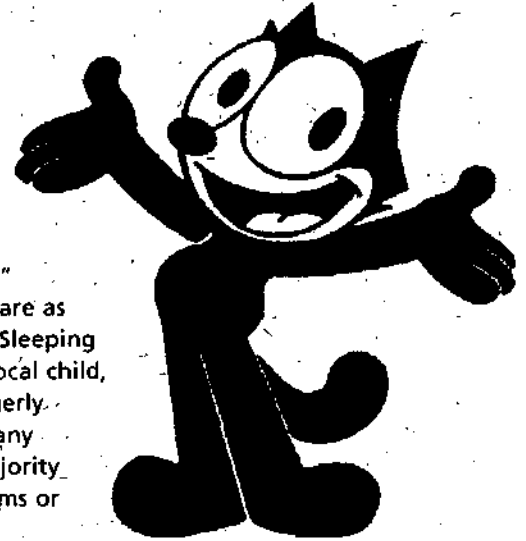
But today we purr about a cat.

Not just any cat, but a famous, iconic cat that greets visitors arriving by freeway to the eastern edge of the Historic West Adams District. Fabulous Felix the Cat, perched above an automobile dealership across from USC, is, according to the experts, an "iconic example of 1950s commercial signage."

The Felix Chevrolet neon sign and showroom at Jefferson and Figueroa are as well known an icon to Southern Californians as our City Hall, Disneyland's Sleeping Beauty Castle, the Queen Mary, or the Hollywood sign. There is hardly a local child, since this landmark Felix the Cat sign was installed in 1959; that hasn't eagerly awaited its magical appearance while traversing the Harbor Freeway. Ask any adult today who grew up in the Southland about Felix the Cat and the majority will first respond with a memory related to the Felix sign; the animated films or the comic strip character are a distant second.

Over the decades the Felix the Cat sign has welcomed millions of arriving northbound motorists to downtown Los Angeles. It has also served as the last signpost of departure, offering those leaving a whimsical farewell smile. Like the Hollywood-land sign, which was

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Celebrate Historic Preservation Month

Saturday, May 20, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. - Brunch & Discussion

1415 South Manhattan Place

WAHA has a special treat in store as we celebrate Historic Preservation Month. We'll be enjoying Continental breakfast and sipping Mimosas at an extravagant three-story Arts and Crafts mansion erected by the Althouse Brothers firm in 1910. And, we'll hear from one of the City's foremost experts in the Historic Restoration process.

If you are an appointee to an HPOZ Board, or your house is in a current HPOZ (West Adams has six) or National Register District (seven), or if you and your neighbors are working toward HPOZ designation for your own historic neighborhood, you might be curious about what it means when consultants and City officials talk about "applying Secretary of Interior Standards." Architect Tom Michali will explain the nuances of these guidelines and what are the most critical elements to look at in applying historic standards to projects.

(continued on page 13)

The Althouse Brothers

by Laura Meyers

Daniel T. Althouse and John B. Althouse, the "Althouse Brothers," were active designers, builders and real estate developers in the early part of the 20th century. The pair built numerous substantial homes along Wilshire Boulevard, in the Westlake District and, especially, in West Adams in the W.G. Nevin Tract adjacent to the Los Angeles Country Club's Pico and Western Links.

The pair were among the founding members of the Los Angeles Board of Realtors, and helped develop Ramona Park (now a neighborhood in Alhambra), where the designs of their Greene and Greene-influenced, custom-built homes – featuring quartersawn oak and curly maple hardwoods, and river rock from nearby mountain streams – were lauded in an early edition of the *Alhambra Advocate*.

John Benjamin Althouse and Daniel Tyler Althouse were not the only Althouse brothers. The pair descended from a Pennsylvania Mennonite family. They and their siblings – James, Charles, William, and Samuel – along with their parents,

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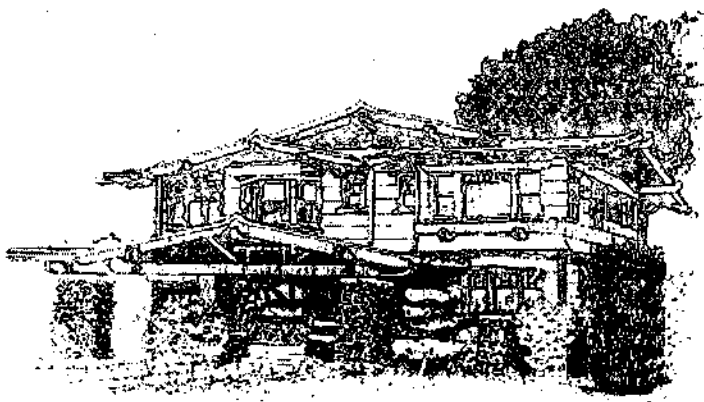
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President's Message by Jefferson Davis

There is nothing permanent except change.
 —Heracitus, 544 BC

This has always been my favorite quote...and I believe it's very fitting for WAHA.

Our neighborhood has been in a permanent state of change from the day she was laid out by the early land speculators in Los Angeles. West Adams began life as the home of the rich and powerful. She has also been home to waves of immigrants (Armenians, Japanese, Latinos), she survived the Depression, and West Adams witnessed the rise of the African American upper-class. She suffered through the freeway demolishing literally hundreds of West Adams homes and splitting cohesive neighborhoods in the 1960s, and the riots in 1992. We have celebrated West Adams' "rebirth" several times in the past three decades – more evidence that our neighborhood has always been on the fast track of change.

West Adams Heritage Association is a very different group than what it was when WAHA was established in 1983 on the occasion of the very first historic homes tour in the community. Our cornerstone mission — local historic preservation — remains the same, but our organization has grown by leaps and bounds (both in membership numbers and projects), and can count some major achievements in saving architectural treasures, renewing community pride, and sharing our past with the world.

WAHA is about to go through a very concrete change, following our April 27 election of new members to our Board of Directors. With the addition of strong new voices, filled with excitement and ideas, I expect to see more and improved changes to our mission, our commitment, and our accomplishments.

On another note, several board members will be retiring this year and we wholeheartedly thank them for their work in our community over the last several years. Hats off to John Kurtz, Todd Moyer, Michael LaChance, Sean O'Brien, and former president, Jacqueline Hill.

A special thank you goes out to a board member who has spent 12 years on the board and 10 years as the treasurer. Jim Meister has written every check, deposited every donation, dues, and ticket sale, and balanced every bank statement for us since 1996. Knowing how hard it is to balance my own checkbook, I can only image how difficult it must have been to have a hundred people waiting on reimbursements, while depositing as many as 500 checks for tour tickets. We are indebted to your effort!

As we start our new fiscal year, we look forward to many changes to make our organization stronger, more productive, and a better steward for our community. Join us!

*Jefferson Davis can be reached via e-mail,
 jeffdavisv@yahoo.com*

Big Sunday - Citywide Day of Service

Calling on Angelenos to step up and step in, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has joined with civic volunteers and the organizers of the annual "Big Sunday" event to encourage residents to participate in the city's annual Day of Service on May 7.

"Government cannot do it all," Villaraigosa said. "From Watts and Willowbrook to Woodland Hills and Wilmington, there are things people can do to make Los Angeles better. This is an opportunity for each of us to give back and reach out and say we are one Los Angeles."

On May 7, up to 25,000 volunteers (!) of all ages will roll up their sleeves and pitch in at more than 200 different non-profit sites, including several in and near West Adams, and/or efforts sponsored by our own WAHA members. Big Sunday volunteers come from neighborhoods all over Los Angeles - and volunteer in

neighborhoods all over Los Angeles. There are volunteer opportunities for every passion, every talent, and every age. WAHA encourages all of our members to bring their families, and neighbors, to help out at one or another of these efforts. In our area, please consider volunteering at the 24th Street School, and/or at the LAPD Stop-In, and/or at St. John of God, and/or at the Sunshine Mission.

The Avenues Neighborhood Watch will have two cleanup/paint days for May 6 and May 7, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the LAPD Stop-In/Community Center on Washington Boulevard and 10th Avenue. Volunteers can stop in either day to help weed and prep

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Kids play in the 24th Street School garden

WAHA Helps in Arlington Heights *by Brenda Bankhead*

WAHA has donated \$500 towards the beautification efforts of the Avenues Neighborhood Watch (ANW) for the clean-up and establishment of a new garden space next door to the LAPD Stop-In / Community Center on 10th Avenue and Washington Boulevard in Arlington Heights.

The area to be re-landscaped is on the side of Mixed Nuts Comedy Club, a wonderful example of mid-century "Googie" commercial architecture. It sits behind a well-used bus stop frequented by many members of the community, old and young alike. There are two elementary and one middle school nearby as well as an adult vocational school across the street.

The exterior of the LAPD/Stop-In Center was rehabbed and beautified last year through a Neighborhood Matching Fund Grant. Most of the volunteer labor was provided by members of the Avenues Neighborhood Watch.

"Once we finished with our center we thought, hey, why stop there, let's continue it to the corner," said Myrtle Bankhead, co-coordinator of ANW. "There can be such a sense of apathy in our neighborhood. Everyone waits for someone else to improve things or for the business owners to do it or for the city to do it. We feel that as a grass-roots organization we can do a lot ourselves. And we're so thankful that WAHA supports our vision."

Besides the WAHA grant the group has gotten permission and a donation from the owner of the property. In addition Stephen Jerom, whose business Glass Garden, Inc. (www.landscape2go.com) has been featured on HGTV, "Visiting with Huell Howser," and in Sunset magazine, has agreed to supervise some of the landscape work as well as giving a hefty discount towards the purchase of tumbled glass to be used as mulch.

(continued on page 8)

MAY 4 HEARING SLATED FOR CLINE AND STANTON/FRAMBACH RESIDENCES

For the past few months, WAHA has been working diligently to save two century-old mansions in the W.G. Nevins Tract, which is located just south of Pico and Country Club Park. Now, a public hearing before the City's Cultural Heritage Commission has been scheduled for Thursday morning, May 4, and we need your support.

The Cline Residence, at 1409 South Gramercy Place, and the Statton-Frambach Residence, at 1415 South Gramercy Place, are both endangered from their current poor condition and potential development in the multi-family zoned area. But they are also wonderful and unique examples of early 20th century architecture, designed by important architecture firms, and are associated with historic persons and families who were important to the development of this region and the nation.

10th District Councilman Herb Wesson nominated both of these properties at City Council in January. In April, we toured both mansions with the Cultural Heritage Commission, and discovered - to our delight - that the main public rooms' interiors of both homes are essentially intact. The Statton/Frambach Residence (1415) was designed by architect Frank M. Tyler and built by the Althouse Brothers firm. It is most associated with Col. Henry A. Frambach, who patented paper-making processes and owned the Ansonia Apartments. The Cline Residence and Museum (1409) was owned by a pioneer Los Angeles family, the Clines, whose members included early sheriffs and City commissioners. The Spanish-Moorish Revival residence was designed by the architects Oliver Perry Dennis and Lyman Farwell.

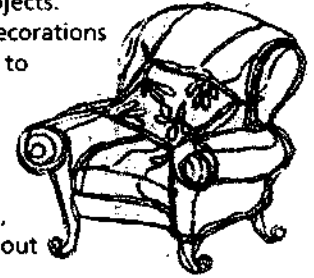
It is essential that we demonstrate that WAHA members think it is important to save these properties. If you can attend the hearing or write a letter of support, please contact Jean Frost, 213-748-1656 or jfrost@aftra.com for more information.

Around the House

Resources *by Susie Henderson*

Happy Spring! We have an eclectic group of recommendations this month for all your spring projects.

If you are planning a party or event, Laura Meyers recommends Floral Supply Syndicate for holiday decorations and floral supplies. This is a wholesale floral, gift basket and decorative packaging store right next door to Moskatels in the Flower District, sharing the same parking lot (you need to spend \$25 to get validated). Laura says, "I've purchased wrapping papers, fun gift bags (including 100 pastel bags for the recent WAHA-sponsored Easter Egg Hunt at the South Seas House), all kinds of holiday ornamentation, and, for WAHA members who took last year's Tinseltown Holiday Tour, the sparkling glitter-covered snowflakes that we used as badges." Throughout the year you'll find dried flowers, silk flowers, ribbons, craft materials, and all kinds of materials you would need to decorate for a party or other event. Check out the website (www.fss.com) to see available products, but unless you are a florist, party planner or other registered trade member, you'll need to shop at the bricks-and-mortar retail location in Downtown Los Angeles.



Rory Cunningham says that he called five different companies to get a gate made for his new house and four of them made appointments and never showed up. Luckily, the fifth company, Himco, was very professional, showed up on time and was very patient with him. He says they have a number of designs for wrought iron gates and they were willing to do custom designs, as well. He was pleasantly surprised at their reasonable prices.

Jerry Mendelsohn recommends Carlos Antique Hardware and Locksmith. In addition to being a reliable locksmith, Carlos has a collection of antique locks and hardware. He can also recreate skeleton keys for your original turn-of-the-century door locks. You may either take the door piece apart yourself and bring it to him, or he'll will do a housecall.

Jerry and his wife, Joyce Albers, also recommend a local upholsterer, Santiago. Joyce says, "He's very conscientious and works with you, placing the pattern, making the pattern flow and in doing the edging. He has good instincts and will propose solutions when you aren't sure what to do."

David Raposa and other WAHA members have been using Victor's Refinishing & Upholstery. Victor does stripping and refinishing, repairing, and upholstery. Laura Meyers says that he has repaired number of really beat-up pieces for her. One of these was an Arts and Crafts chair with arms that had been chewed off by a dog (not her own!). He pieced in the arm ends on the chair and refinished it. Laura primarily has had him refinish furniture which already had lost its original finish. She wasn't particularly concerned with what the new finish was, but David has spoken with him about refinishing better-quality antiques with their original finishes, utilizing tung oil and other more authentic finishes, and Victor can do that as well.

Adam Janeiro recommends Fantasy Lights, on Melrose near La Brea, for rewiring your vintage lights with silk and cloth cords.

Finally, if cleaning out the garage or attic is on your agenda, I recommend A Rent-A-Bin. They are family owned, friendly, prompt and reasonably priced. For big projects, ask about their multiple container discounts.

When you finish your next project, please write to me at WestAdamsGoddess@aol.com and tell me who was naughty and who was nice. I will look forward to hearing from you and sharing your information with other Wahonians. ●

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The following companies offer discounts to WAHA members. Remember to show your WAHA membership card when you make your purchase.

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10% discount on lock and safe labor and materials

Washington Dog & Cat Hospital
1692 W. Washington Boulevard, Los Angeles, 323-735-0291
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10% discount

Lighthouse Stained Glass
5155 Melrose, 323-465-4475
20% discount off regular class prices with WAHA membership card

Cafe Club Fais Do Do
5257 West Adams Blvd., 323-954-8080
No cover charge at door, and 20% discount on all meals.

Lady Effie's Tea Parlor
453 East Adams Boulevard, 213-749-2204
10% discount on all food purchases

Los Angeles Stripping & Finishing Center
1120 N. San Fernando Road, Los Angeles, 323-225-1073
5% discount on any single service order over \$1000.00.
No special discount on materials.

Lucky Chimney Sweep Contact: Susan and Alfredo Johnson
11433 Ruggiero Ave., Sylmar, CA, 91342, 323-258-0828
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Port Royal Antiques
1858 West Jefferson Blvd. 323-734-8704
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Vintage Plumbing Bathroom Antiques
9939 Canoga Avenue, Chatsworth, 818-772-1721
(hours: by appointment only)
10% discount on purchases at Chatsworth facility

Boulevard Vacuum & Sewing Machine Company
5086 W. Pico Boulevard, 323-938-2661
10% discount on sale of new vacuums, and vacuum service & repair

Wholesale Carpet Liquidators
1225 E. Washington Boulevard, Los Angeles 90021, 213-747-7474
Ask for Ali, or e-mail: wholesalecarpetla@yahoo.com.
Discount of 5% on purchase of carpet, ceramic tile, wood flooring and/or vinyl floor covering

A CALL TO MEMBERS

If you frequent a local business — retail store, restaurant, service provider, etc. — ask them if they would offer a discount to WAHA members. Explain that they'd benefit from the increased exposure to local consumers, and be listed in the WAHA monthly newsletter. Or, call me at 323-733-6869 and I'll contact them. — Steve Wallis

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Stepping Out

Bugs and Butterflies at Natural History Museum

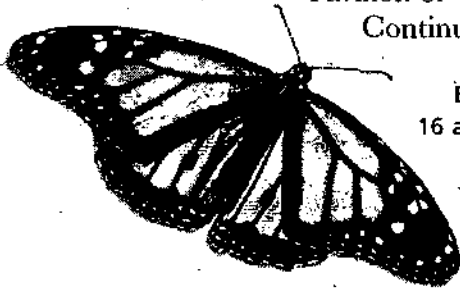
20th Annual Bug Fair

Saturday, May 20, and Sunday, May 21, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Natural History Museum in Exposition Park will once again be crawling with bugs at the 20th Annual Bug Fair – North America's largest. Explore the world of insects and their arthropod relatives. See live spiders and scorpions, start your own collection of butterflies and stay for some great cooking tips from two world-renowned insect chefs. Over 60 vendors will be on hand with books, entomological equipment and supplies, artwork, toys, clothing, and more! A variety of private collections will be offered for sale, along with an assortment of live bugs. The Los Angeles Urban Spider Survey enters its fifth year and we once again urge patrons to bring in any spider that they collect. The Bug Fair is included with Museum admission. ●

Pavilion of Wings

Continuing through September 4



Back for its eighth summer, Robynson-May Pavilion of Wings opened on Sunday, April 16 and runs through Labor Day.

Enter a world of free-flying butterflies and stroll through a beautifully landscaped temporary exhibit housed at the Museum's South Lawn. See a Giant Swallowtail, Monarch, American Painted Lady or even a California Dogface - California's state butterfly. Over the summer, thirty different butterfly and moth species will call the pavilion home. Discover how butterflies interact with the plants and gain a new understanding of various environmental issues.

Special ticketed admission applies: \$3 for adults, \$2 for seniors and students, and \$1 for children ages 5 to 12. Tickets are sold in half-hour time slots through-out the day. Museum members receive free admission and the first available tickets.

For more information about these and other Museum programs, visit www.nhm.org or call 213-763-DINO. ●

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Mark Your Calendar for WAHA's Spring Home Tour:

"The Treasures Tour - Chamber Music in Architecture"

Saturday, June 3, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Enjoy a day of music and historic architecture on Van Buren Place! WAHA presents four landmark homes and four Chamber Music Ensembles, plus a Champagne Brunch at our annual Spring Tour. Members received postcard invitations in April. Our reservations-only tours DO sell out, so please return your reply forms as soon as possible. For up-to-date information about the tour, e-mail WAHAjunetours@yahoo.com or call the tour reservations Hotline, 323-732-4223. ●



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Coming soon - Restored West Adams Heights masterpiece. Total systems upgrades. \$1,999,999. Adam Janeiro, 323-401-3952

Jefferson Park Bungalow - Immaculate 1910 vintage bungalow with loft-like interior features, \$595,000. David Raposa

IN ESCROW:

Country Club Craftsman Extraordinaire! Meticulous restoration, 1132 Fifth Avenue. \$1,200,000, David Raposa (Seller's agent)

Stunning Victoria Circle Mansion - 3-story Arts & Crafts gem. David Raposa (Buyer & Seller's agent)

Expansive Jefferson Park Bungalow - Perfectly restored one-story Craftsman w/ extraordinary woodwork, leaded & stained glass. \$615,000, David Raposa (Seller's agent)

Adams Normandie - Victorian era (circa 1900) bungalow. 3103 Brighton. \$535,000. Jane Harrington (Seller's agent)

**David Raposa, Darby Bayliss, Nancy Deaven,
 Jane Harrington, Adam Janeiro, Carlton Joseph**

Our Offices are in the Victorian Village,
 23161/2 S. Union Ave., Suite 2, 213-747-1337

Community Matters

Big Sunday *continued from page 3*

for the garden project next door to the center. They should bring any garden tools, shovels, work gloves, etc. that they have. Contact Myrtle Bankhead at 323-732-9743 with any questions.

At 24th Street School, there are a variety of events, all sponsored by the Garden School Foundation, capped by a great Fiesta. The Garden School Foundation's mission is to provide a natural environment in elementary schools where children can discover the joys of planting, harvesting, and preparing their own food while enjoying a garden-enriched curriculum. To help with garden related activities on Big Sunday, chiefly mulching, litter-picking and repairing a fence around the test garden, volunteers will be working on the day for Nick Tan, Emily Green, and other Garden School volunteers. Bring pitchforks, wheelbarrows or mulch sacks, and dress for garden work. Renee Gunter is spearheading an effort to unstack now stake-bound saplings in Gramercy Park as an off-shoot of the school project. See more information on this event below.

Big Sunday started in 1999 as Temple Israel of Hollywood's Mitzvah Day. By last year, Big Sunday had evolved into an annual, city-wide volunteer day involving more than 8,000 volunteers from more than 100 different synagogues, churches, schools, offices and clubs at nearly 150 different non-profits. At the same time, Mayor Villaraigosa has – first as city councilman, then as mayor – sponsored nearly one dozen very successful and popular local community days of service. Last fall, at his first Citywide Day of Service, more than 7,500 volunteers worked together to do dozens of projects at six public high schools across Los Angeles. Now, the two separate efforts have joined forces to create more than 230 separate volunteering opportunities.

Big Sunday's slogan is: *Everyone helps, everyone wins.*

For information on Big Sunday's efforts citywide or to register, call 213-978-0811 or visit www.bigsunday.org.

Events (The event numbers are from Big Sunday's website's sign-up page. Just go online to sign up.)

#104 Sleep in, Then Help Some Under Dogs 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. If you want to help The 2nd Annual Walk for the Under Dog (to benefit no-kill shelters) but you didn't want get up at the crack of dawn, they could use your help in all kinds of ways.

(Or, if you prefer to participate as a dog walker, the event itself begins at 11 a.m., with sign-ups beginning at 10 a.m. at the La Brea Tar Pits, 5801 Wilshire Blvd. In addition to the dog walk there's a party, with live music, dog agility demos and silent auction. And if you are looking for a dog, come choose from hundreds up for adoption. Walk for the Underdog is organized like an AIDS walk. Walkers get sponsors (friends, family, and co-workers) to donate money to them for completing the walk. Only with this walk, you get to bring your dog. The event continues through 5 p.m. Visit www.walkfortheunderdog.com for more information.)

#165 Have a Day of Gardening and Giving at 24th Street School 12 noon - 4 p.m. 24th St. School is a "Garden School," a partnership with LAUSD designed to bring "verdant traffic buffers, sports facilities, native gardens, science gardens, kitchen gardens and teaching kitchens to public schools." For Big Sunday, there's a big work day and party, with something of a Cinco de Mayo (or would it be Siete de Mayo?) theme. Activities include art projects (painting, paper-flower making, and paper mache), a big drum circle, a beading booth, and chalk art on the playground. Wildlife on Wheels will be rolling in with their very cool and interesting animals, plus important lessons about endangered species. Plus, some great music, and some great Mexican food.

#181 Chill Out at a Concert at the EPICC Park Amphitheatre 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Just so you know, EPICC stands for Exposition Park Intergenerational Community Center. But, what better place to have the Rhythm and Greens concert #3? This is a beautiful park, and it's going to be a great concert.

#198 Host a Garden Party 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Join the girls from the Marlborough School as they host the women of Casa de Rosa Sunshine Mission for a special garden party luncheon.

#213 Play Bingo With Some Pros 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. Sunday afternoon is Bingo time at the St. John of God Retirement & Care Center. They'd love some new players. (Big Sunday went last year and, at their request, brought some great prizes.) ●



WAHA Donation *continued from page 3*

ANW hopes to involve young people in the landscape project as much as possible. "We have calls out to the LAPD Explorers and other youth groups to volunteer," Bankhead said. "This kind of action can really instill a sense of pride of community in young people. Since that bus stop is used by so many students in the area it's really connected to their everyday lives and its beautification will teach them that they can make a difference on their home turf."

Los Angeles Neighborhood Housing Services has also offered to provide paint and equipment to paint the walls behind the garden area. "It kind of seems to be snowballing. It's great to see so many entities willing to help," Bankhead concluded.

Nazelie Elmassian, a resident of Arlington Heights since 1937 and an active member of ANW, agrees. "I think it's wonderful of WAHA and the others. We are trying to upgrade our community to be as attractive as possible. We'd like this corner to be a place for people to enjoy the beauty of flowers while waiting for the bus." ●

Remembering Paul Hulse: AIDS Life Cycle 2006

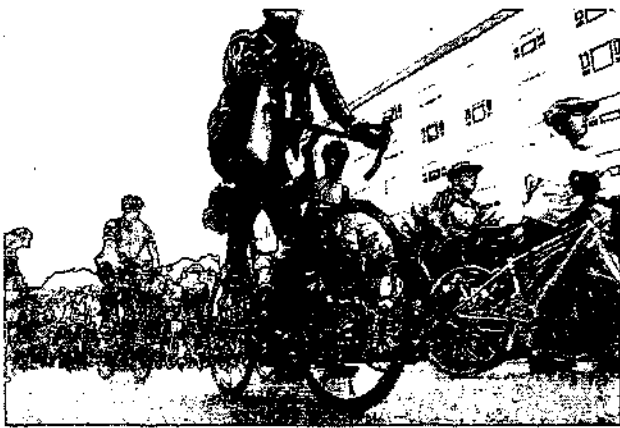
by Michael S. Smith

Back before the turn of the century (I love saying that!), Greg Stegall and I had the opportunity to meet an extraordinary West Adams neighbor and activist named Paul Hulse. Although we didn't know him well or for very long, our brief friendship inspired us to participate in an event we never dreamed we could or would be a part of – AIDS Life Cycle.

In the late 1990's many of you may remember our house on Oxford Avenue was completely unrestored and we had no idea where to start! Thankfully, Greg happened to be the co-chair on the events committee at the time, with Alma Carlisle. Together they decided to revive WAHA's defunct "Demonstration Day" event, and volunteer our house as the demonstration site.

No, we weren't planning to protest. Rather, the idea behind a demonstration day is to show WAHA-onians how to perform some basic repairs around the house. A committee was formed to plan the event and we met at our house one Sunday afternoon. Among the volunteers who would demonstrate a skill was a man we will never forget. Paul Hulse.

Over prerequisite glasses of wine, we brain-stormed ideas and came up with a plan of attack. We decided on demonstrations of paint removal techniques, re-glazing windows, repairing sashes, and plastering. Among the many activities, Paul volunteered to demonstrate faux finishing to cover wallpaper and wall blemishes.



Conversation that afternoon then turned to Paul's passion, which was cycling. Paul, it turns out, was an avid cyclist. He rode his bicycle to work, and it seemed just about everywhere. In fact he'd ridden to our house that afternoon. Paul told us he was a participant in the AIDS Life Cycle event, and tried unsuccessfully to get us to sign up. Although we did sponsor him that year.

For those who may not be aware, AIDS Life Cycle is a seven-day, 585-mile bicycle ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles, to raise money to help those living with AIDS and HIV. The event raises millions of dollars which support the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center. Both of these organizations provide life-sustaining services to people with AIDS and HIV.

As it turns out, Paul was being modest. Paul was one of the founders and organizers of AIDS Life Cycle and of the former AIDS Ride. As he told us about the ride, we marveled at the idea that someone could ride 585 miles on a bicycle, or would even want to!

We liked to cycle, but couldn't imagine putting our bodies through that kind of stress.

Several years later, in June, 2003, Greg and I were jogging along the bluffs in Santa Monica when we noticed literally hundreds of cyclist pushing their way up the hill. The cyclists were on the last leg of their journey and their enthusiasm showed on their faces as they eagerly peddled to the finish line. At the top of the hill was a group of people cheering the cyclists on. We thought of Paul, who had recently succumbed to the disease he fought so bravely against.

Caught up in the moment, Greg and I followed the cyclists to the closing ceremonies in West Hollywood. We were so moved by the testimonies and speeches that without thinking we signed up to ride in 2004.

About a month later, we received our rider information packets and we thought, "What the heck did we get ourselves into?!" But thoughts of Paul steeled our determination, and riding became a mission for us. We trained for months, and finished the ride. Together we raised more than \$5,000 for the cause.

This year, Greg and I are again participating in AIDS Life Cycle. On the back of our bicycles are little blue license plates (like the kind found at the Farmer's Market) with the names of friends who are no longer with us because of AIDS – Loren, Kevin, and Paul. Without Paul's influence, and the seed he first planted at our committee meeting, I doubt we would have found the courage to participate.

Greg and I invite you to be a part of AIDS Life Cycle, and Paul's legacy, by making a donation. Please visit our team homepage at www.aidslifecycle.org/605 or call me at 310-925-9522. We ride this year as part of Team Prudential California, Team No. 605. Our fundraising has gotten off to a good start already, but we have a long way to go, and need your help to fight HIV and AIDS.

The faux finish Paul painted remained on our office wall until we finally had to repaint the room. It was hard to paint over the wall we dubbed "The Paul Hulse Memorial Wall," the last reminder of a friend we barely knew, but who had influenced us so much.

The AIDS Life Cycle mantra goes, "We'll keep riding until AIDS is a thing of the past!" And so, remembering Paul Hulse, we ride. We believe – rather, we know – that as we crest hills like the Quad Buster or the Evil Twins, Paul rides with us. ●

Preservation Matters

Felix the Cat *continued from page 1*

conceived as commercial real estate advertisement, the Félix sign, a graphic pun, was erected simply to enhance automobile sales. Both signs however have transcended their commercial intent and have evolved into part of our cultural landscape and inheritance.

Beneath the neon-sign artistry of the W. Heath Company's giant triangular cats is an emblematic story of L.A. pioneers. The story of migrants coming to the Southland to fulfill their dreams is the very essence of our City's history. The lives of the intertwined principals connected with the Felix Chevrolet showroom and neon Cat sign are of particular merit and indicative of the social and economic conditions of early and mid-20th Century Los Angeles. The Felix Chevrolet story embodies classic

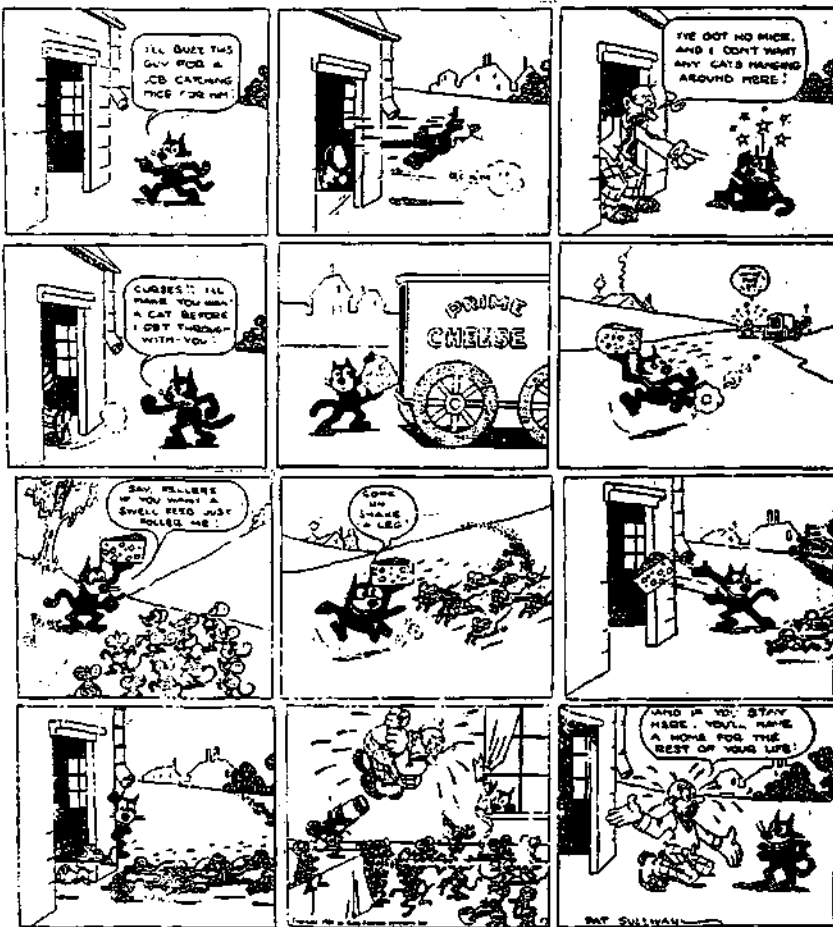
Horatio Alger achievements by men who were visionaries, full of innovative ideas, determination and persistence. They embraced an American ideal, which has equated hard work with eventual success, and they made it happen.



Winslow Felix and His Namesake

The central figure in the narrative is that of Winslow Felix. An Arizona native, he arrived in Los Angeles after serving in WWI. The L.A. City Directories of 1921 list his occupation as just "Chevrolet salesman." By 1922 he was the owner of a Chevrolet dealership. He rapidly gained success through his use of inventive merchandizing techniques, which created a formula that others in the embryonic automobile business emulated. He came up with a "trial purchase plan," founded the Greater Los Angeles Motorcar Dealers, organized the annual Southern California auto shows, staged midget-car races, and used the Felix the Cat cartoon character to advertise his dealership. He even put his Felix the Cat Chevrolet logo on the side of early bookmobiles that also played music similar to that of the Good Humor ice cream trucks. His gimmick was conceived to remind children to check out a book and their parents to, hopefully, buy a Felix Chevrolet.

With Winston Felix's business success came social advancement as well. Through memberships in fraternal organizations and clubs such as the Uplifters, he interacted with the rising celebrity-stars of the fledgling motion picture business such as Will Rogers,



Walt Disney, Spencer Tracy, and Daryl F. Zanuck. It was his personal friendship with Pat Sullivan that enabled him to gain the use of the already famous cartoon character, with whom he shared the same name, as his merchandizing symbol. After his untimely death in a polo accident at the Riviera Country Club in 1938, the Felix dealership continued under the ownership of his wife Ruth until she sold it in 1955. Winslow Felix gradually faded from our memory as Felix the Cat, itself, went on to become the personification of the Felix Chevrolet dealership.

The creator of Felix the Cat, Pat Sullivan, was an immigrant from Australia. After a succession of failed attempts to achieve prominence as a cartoonist at home and in England he came to Los Angeles in 1914. He turned his attention to animation and opened a small studio. After a few box-office flops, the Felix the Cat character was born and achieved immediate success. A meteoric rise established the Felix character as an international favorite. The success was so great that Sullivan was to produce over 100 more animated cartoons of the Felix character prior to his unfortunate death in 1933 (including the first sound cartoon and the first televised cartoon, in the historic NBC broadcast of 1930).

Setting an example for several of the Walt Disney creations who followed him (Mickey Mouse in 1930, Donald Duck in 1936) the Felix the Cat character stepped off the silver screen and into the funny pages. The King Features Syndicate approached Pat Sullivan with an offer to adapt the character into a comic strip that made its debut as a Sunday page on August 14, 1923, and a daily strip that followed on May 9, 1927. The Felix the Cat character is now imprinted on every product line imaginable from Aprons to Yo-Yo's and myriad variations of coffee mugs, baseball caps, and T-shirts. The worldwide merchandizing of the Felix icon began in 1920 and continues to this day.

The Birth of Auto Row

During the 1920s, the Spanish Colonial style headquarters of the Automobile Club of Southern California at the corner of Adams and Figueroa became the symbolic center of the emerging Auto-Row as new showrooms, garages, service stations, and associated facilities sprang up all along Figueroa. The magnificent residential Victorian mansions that once exemplified the now bygone era of the wealthy turn-of-the-century carriage-trade were systematically demolished to make way for the new commercial buildings, many designed to create opulent sales and model showrooms dedicated to the growing middle class's new status symbol, the automobile.

In 1913, the Tupman brothers, William and Thomas, a pair of wildcat oilmen, migrated from their family home in Kentucky to the Southland, like thousands of others seeking the opportunity of self-advancement. They however saw the automobile rather than oil as their avenue for success. By 1920, when they opened their new Ford dealership at 3330 S. Figueroa, at Jefferson, there were over 100,000 cars registered in Los Angeles. Their dealership's high visibility location across from the University of Southern California became the anchor for the southern end of what would become the Figueroa corridor's "Automobile-Row."

The Tupman brothers continued their family business operations at their location for four decades. The 1920s were very successful years for the Tupmans' growing automobile business. The 1930s and the Great Depression created new challenges but Tupman Ford survived and by 1939 it was able to introduce Ford's new Mercury line and by 1941 the luxury Lincoln Zephyr line.

The onset of World War II brought the cessation of the civilian production of automobiles. America would become the "Arsenal of Democracy" with all manufacturing committed to the war effort. The end of the war and the return of the troops created an immediate demand for cars. The ever-competitive Thomas Tupman vigorously responded by having the aging Figueroa showroom redesigned in 1946 by prominent architect A. Godfrey Bailey. The postwar modernization of the showroom included full-height canted glass "glare-free" windows, chamfered corners, a curvilinear canopy, and neon signage. The "Modern" design was particularly effective at accenting the showroom's interiors at night with the illumination the new car models highlighted like faceted jewels. Thomas Tupman continued operating the dealership until he retired at age 81 and sold the building to Nick Shamus in 1958.

Shamus, born in Pittsburgh, started his career in Los Angeles after WWII as a car salesman, just like Winslow Felix. By 1955 he was able to buy out the widow Ruth Felix and with the purchase of the Tupman facility in 1958 he began to transform the Felix Chevrolet automobile dealership into the centerpiece of an empire. In 1959 he installed the now celebrated Felix

the Cat neon sign that transformed the car dealership into a visual landmark.

According to Historic preservation consultant Peter Moruzzi, who recently surveyed the Hoover Redevelopment Project Area for the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency, the property is landmark eligible on the local and national level. "Felix Chevrolet is one of the best remaining examples of an early Los Angeles automobile dealership that evolved to address the changing tastes of its customers in the apply post-World War II era," he said. "The addition of the enormous three-sided Felix Chevrolet neon roof sign is characteristic of the exuberance of the late-1950s commercial architecture." ●



PHOTO: JIM CHILDS

Preservation Matters

Althouse Brothers *continued from page 1*

the Rev. Henry and Juliana Myers Althouse, moved to Los Angeles from Iowa in the 1880s, where the brothers established themselves in Downtown as fruit growers and sellers. James ("J.A.") Althouse established a 16-acre berry farm in Gardena, while the other family members opened a retail fruit business, under the name Althouse Brothers. This operation continued until circa 1901, when they sold the fruit business and John and Daniel, still utilizing the Althouse Brothers name, rented "commodious offices" in the Laughlin Building, according to a 1913 article in the *Los Angeles Times*, and became real estate brokers.

"The Althouse Brothers got a full share of the [real estate] business. They listed a great deal of eligible property and were tireless in ferreting out buyers," wrote the *Times*. "In such a vast extent of territory as the city of Los Angeles comprises [there] has never been any trouble finding buyers. There were few owners of real estate at that time who would not consider an offer....For several years the Althouse Brothers acting as brokers were able week by week to give the real estate reporter of *The Times* a long list of actual transactions."

Soon, the Althouse Brothers began handling the sale of entire tracts, including the West Ninth Street Heights Tract and then the Westminster Square Tract, where they also built the first house. And then, "For months they were alone in erecting buildings in the West Wilshire District, where out in a barley patch they planted here a good residence and away off yonder another." The Althouse Brothers acquired 120 acres just south of the City of Alhambra, and, capitalizing on the romanticism of early California and the legend of Ramona made popular by Helen Hunt Jackson, named the development Ramona Park. In the next few years some 400 homes, most of them large, two-story Arts & Crafts Bungalows, were constructed in Ramona Park, many built by the Althouse Brothers themselves.

In the same era, the Althouse Brothers firm was also actively building distinctive Craftsman and Tudor-influenced homes in the West Adams District. Indeed, Daniel Althouse, by now married (to Maud Shields) and a father (Daniel Tyler Althouse, Jr, was born in 1906; daughter June, in 1902), was living on 4th Avenue, while his brother John and his family lived on Manhattan Place. (The entire family remains "rooted" in West Adams – there is an Althouse family plot where Henry, Juliana and their descendants are buried at Rosedale Cemetery, at Washington and Normandie.)

Their firm was well-established and had a solid reputation, custom building elegant residences designed to the owners' specifications. Indeed, by 1913, by the time of the aforementioned newspaper account, the Althouse Brothers were "builders pure and simple. They operate in high-class residence districts and construct high-class homes [that] cost at the lowest price \$3,000 and run from that up to as high as \$60,000."

The Althouse firm became known not just for its "high-class" work but also its high quality. Indeed, the brothers were instrumental, according to the *Times*, in having a City ordinance passed that required builders to dig a foundation trench at least 80 inches deep for the footings and basement of a house (after they "found some rivals laying foundation sills right on top of the ground.")

In the W. G. Nevin Tract, the Althouse Brothers built more than half a dozen homes, two of which are now Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments. The Powers House, HCM No. 627 at 1547 South Manhattan Place, is a superior exemplar of the Althouse firm's signature style, with its Greene & Greene-influenced design motifs. Erected in 1910, the 7,000-square-foot mansion has a full third-floor ballroom, a quintessential Althouse

feature. Typical, too, are its multiple gables, partial Tudor cladding and third-floor balcony. Like other Althouse interiors, this one features the luxurious use of matched Guatemalan mahogany and other exotic hardwoods.

Unfortunately, only a handful of known Althouse Brothers homes in the Nevin Tract survive today, including the residence at 1415 South Manhattan Place which WAHA will visit on May 20. The Mary Chase Residence, which was a wonderfully intact home at 1520 South Manhattan Place, fell victim to fire during the 1992 civil unrest, burning to the ground on live television. Three other mansions that stood on the parcels at Venice and Western were burned in 1985.

In addition, the Statton/Frambach residence at 1415 South Gramercy, built in 1912 for William Otterbein Statton at a cost of \$7,800 by the Althouse Brothers firm, exhibits many characteristic features, including the expansive third floor, and its distinctive porte cochere. This residence has been nominated for City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument status, with its public hearing before the Cultural Heritage Commission tentatively scheduled for May 4 at 10 a.m. (see related story page 3). ©



The Powers House was erected by the Althouse Brothers firm in 1910.



The Statton/Frambach Residence at 1415 South Gramercy Place

Historic Preservation Month *continued from page 1*

Architect Michali of M2A Architects will be discussing "HPOZs and Applying the Secretary of the Interior Standards" in historic zones. Michali has 25 years of experience in the field of historic architectural design, including many types of adaptive reuse, rehabilitation and restoration. His projects have included libraries, churches, theaters, commercial buildings, and residences. Among his West Adams area projects are the Pico Union Branch Library, the Strong Residence, the Shrine Auditorium, and Casa de Rosas/Sunshine Mission. He currently is the Board Architect for the University Park HPOZ Board. He has received numerous awards including the Los Angeles Conservancy Preservation Award, the California Preservation Design Award, and the City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Preservation Award for various projects.



Architect Tom Michali restored the Pico Union branch library

The Tibbens-Long Residence has about 20 rooms — seven bedrooms and four baths. The first floor has quartersawn oak and old growth mahogany in very large rooms, along with a wide oak staircase and a 5X9 foot stained glass mural depicting a castle on a hill, a stone bridge over a river, and a lake. There are also three ample porches and two sunrooms in the house, which sits on a third of an acre in the W.G. Nevins Tract.

At the time of its construction, the Althouse Brothers firm was actively constructing expansive custom residences in this Tract, which was adjacent to the Los Angeles Country Club (now located in Holmby Hills). This home's first owner was an oilman, Charles G. Tibbens and his wife, Lavinia. The Tibbens lived in the house until 1913 when they sold it to James I. Long, who found his fortune in mining. The Long family owned this fine residence until 1940. The house then went through a series of owners until 1958 when the Phyllis Wheatly, Inc. non-profit owned the property and turned it into a rooming house for unwed mothers.

By the time the current owners, Lynn Rossiter and Dan Stumpus, bought the property, it had seriously deteriorated. It has taken six years for the primary restoration of the house and there are still rooms on the second floor awaiting work. Please do join us as we tour this unique mansion and hear from Tom Michali. This event is hosted by WAHA — not a potluck. ●

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NOTICE

May 4 Hearing Slated for Cline and Stanton/Frambach Residences, to Determine Historic Monument Status



For the past few months, WAHA has been working diligently to save two century-old mansions in the W.G. Nevins Tract, which is located just south of Pico and Country Club Park. Now, a public hearing before the City's Cultural Heritage Commission has been scheduled for Thursday morning, May 4, and we need your support.

The Cline Residence, at 1409 South Gramercy Place, and the Statton-Frambach Residence, at 1415 South Gramercy Place, are both endangered from their current poor condition and potential development in the multi-family zoned area. But they are also wonderful and unique examples of early 20th century architecture, designed by important architecture firms, and are associated with historic persons and families who were important to the development of this region and the nation.

10th District Councilman Herb Wesson nominated both of these properties at City Council in January. In April, we toured both mansions with the Cultural Heritage Commission, and discovered -- to our delight -- that the main public rooms' interiors of both homes are essentially intact. The Statton/Frambach Residence (1415) was designed by architect Frank M. Tyler and built by the Althouse Brothers firm. It is most associated with Col. Henry A. Frambach, who patented paper-making processes and owned the Ansonia Apartments. The Cline Residence and Museum (1409) was owned by a pioneer Los Angeles family, the Clines, whose members included early sheriffs and City commissioners. The Spanish-Moorish Revival residence was designed by the architects Oliver Perry Dennis and Lyman Farwell.

It is essential that we demonstrate that WAHA members think it is important to save these properties. If you can attend the hearing or write a letter of support, please contact Jean Frost, 213-748-1656 or jfrost@aftra.com for more information. ●

Calendar ✓

WAHA May Calendar

Cultural Heritage Commission Hearing RE: Cline and Statton/Frambach Residences, Thursday, May 4:
City Hall, 10 a.m. — WAHA does need your support!
(see story, page 3)

**Big Sunday - A Day of Volunteer Service,
Sunday, May 7:**

There are several opportunities to volunteer in West Adams, including at the Stop-In on Washington Boulevard at 10th Avenue, at the 24th Street School, at Casa de Rosas/Sunshine Mission, and/or at St. John of God. (see story, page 3)

**WAHA's Annual Historic Preservation Month
Celebration, Saturday, May 20:**

Thomas C. Michali, partner, M2A Milofsky and Michali Architects, will be WAHA's guest speaker on "HPOZ's and Applying the Secretary of the Interior's Standards."

11 a.m. Continental Breakfast & Mimosas (not a pot luck)
12:00 Guest Speaker

LOCATION: 1415 S. Manhattan Place (just south of Pico)—
Visit a wonderful Althouse Brothers mansion owned by our hosts, Dan Stumpus and Lynn Rossiter (see story, page 1)

The Treasures Tour Chamber Music in Architecture

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