

# West Adams Matters

## Art in Historic Places Returns on March 26: Celebrate the Arts — Artists of West Adams Tour

WAHA presents the Second Annual Art in Historic Places Tour in its new "home" – the last Saturday in March, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Historic West Adams and nearby environs are becoming a new hotbed for fine art, with a growing number of emerging and established artists who now live and/or work in the community. Last June, visitors were invited to visit a collection of West Adams' most interesting historic places, showcasing works by some of West Adams' most talented contemporary artists. The tour opened the doors of a dozen architecturally diverse historic homes and buildings throughout the West Adams District, eclectically pairing historical architecture with bold, cutting edge works and more traditional contemporary art alike, from landscapes to portraits to abstract paintings to sculpture, photography and ceramics.



*(continued on page 8)*

## CHESTER PLACE, ZANJA: SAVED FROM DEVELOPMENT!



*The Zanja today*

WAHA is pleased to let you know that we have a reason to celebrate.

After several years of historic preservation advocacy by WAHA, Mount St. Mary's College, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Esperanza Community Housing Corp., and many other concerned West Adams residents who wanted to keep the Chester Place Historic District intact and save the Zanja, Mount St. Mary's College has stepped in and purchased the St. Vincent church parking lot. This will end a development proposal that would have significantly impacted the character-defining features of the historic setting by its massing, scale, and spatial relationships. At this time, the open space will be preserved.

As you can see from Mount St. Mary's College announcement (on page 6), the proposed development of student housing at Figueroa and Adams would have had many negative effects on Chester Place and its many historic structures, along with serious impacts on the students and the nuns who live adjacent to the property. WAHA has been equally concerned ever since the project was announced for this historically sensitive location in Historic West Adams.

WAHA thanks Mount St. Mary's for being a great neighbor and a true partner in our historic preservation efforts.

*(continued on page 6)*

## Chinese New Year's in West Adams

**Toast the Lunar New Year with an Asian-Themed Potluck Event**

**Sunday, January 30 4 p.m.**

**2093 West 28th Street (Jefferson Park, west of Western)**

The Lunar New Year is the most celebrated holiday of the year for nearly 1.5 million persons of Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese decent in Southern California. It is celebrated with colorful festivals, parades, and large family gatherings. It is also a time when

ancestors are fondly remembered and families give thanks for their blessings. Red packets of money ("Lai See" or "Hung Bao") and firecrackers add fun and excitement to the Chinese New Year celebration.

WAHA invites you to help kick off 2011's Chinese New Year's festivities at an afternoon soiree at Rory Cunningham's Gothic-inspired bungalow in Jefferson Park (or should we say, Pagoda for a Day?) Feel free to dress in Asian-inspired attire. It's a potluck: please bring a tasty Asian dish (to serve ten) so there will be a sumptuous and lucky New Year spread.

According to the Chinese Zodiac, the Year of 2011 is the Year of the Golden Rabbit, which begins on February 3, 2011 and ends on January 22, 2012. The Rabbit is the fourth sign of the Chinese Zodiac, which consists of 12 animals signs. The Rabbit is a lucky sign. A person born in the year of the

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## PRESERVATION ON THE EDGE

### 2011 California Preservation Conference to be Held in Santa Monica May 15-18

Join fellow preservationists in the beachfront community of Santa Monica for the 36th Annual California Preservation Conference Preservation on the Edge from Sunday, May 15 through Wednesday, May 18.

Stand on "the Edge" as participants explore the future of preservation and its essential role in sustainability, economic development, and community character in a region with a rich and diverse history. This annual conference brings together a gathering of professionals, cultural resource specialists, government representatives, property owners, and non-profits engaged in preserving historic buildings and sites from across the state of California.

Learn from more than 100 professionals who will lead over 30 educational sessions and workshops in five major tracks:

- Gaining the Technical Edge: Innovative Preservation Practices
- Peering Over the Edge: The Future of Historic Preservation
- Redefining the Edge: Conserving Community Character
- The Cutting Edge: Partnerships, Development, and Incentives
- On the LEEDing Edge: Sustainability, Preservation, and Rating Systems

Register for the Conference at [www.CaliforniaPreservation.org](http://www.CaliforniaPreservation.org) after February 1. ●

## Jefferson Park Moves Forward as an HPOZ

For eight years residents in Jefferson Park have worked hard to have the City of Los Angeles recognize the Jefferson Park area as a culturally and historically significant neighborhood.

In response to these community efforts the City is now in the process of designating Jefferson Park as a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ). The official public workshop/open house was held on December 7. City Planning staff presented the proposed historic district and the proposed Preservation Plan. Next steps include, in the next few months, public hearings at the Cultural Heritage Commission, the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Jefferson Park's houses, built mostly in the Arts & Crafts style in the early 1900s, are recognized for their craftsmanship and beautiful details. *American Bungalow Magazine* says that Jefferson Park "offers some of the oldest and best-constructed [Arts & Crafts] housing stock, with a level of architectural detail and variation that is the hallmark of the finest bungalow neighborhoods across the country."

But Jefferson Park also has a rich and important cultural history that is woven into houses in the neighborhood. Famous past residents include actress Hattie McDaniel (the first African-American to win an Oscar), jazz musician Melba Liston, the Mills Brothers, and other great artists.

For more information about the workshop or the proposed Jefferson Park HPOZ, or to sign up for e-mail updates, go to [www.JeffersonParkUnited.org](http://www.JeffersonParkUnited.org), and click on "History," or call 323-606-8177. ●



## *President's Message* by John Patterson

It is with great personal excitement and anticipation of the New Year that I pen these words. 2010 has had its share of challenges, especially the economic impact of the recession on our declining membership revenues, but this has been more than mitigated with our extremely successful series of WAHA tours over the course of the year, culminating with the spectacular success of the Holiday Historic Homes & Progressive Dinner Tour in Harvard Heights.

WAHA has also seen a long list of preservation successes over the course of this past year. The battle against the Washington Square development has resulted in that project being sidelined in its current format, and I hope that all of you heard the exciting news at the end of the year that the proposed "Red Oak" student housing development on Figueroa has been stopped in its tracks with the purchase of the property by our friends at Mount St. Mary's College.

We opened the year with a mix of good news and bad news related to the 2nd Church of Christ, Scientist Church and its Reading Room. Mitzi March Mogul and other members of WAHA's Historic Preservation Committee had prepared an HCM nomination for the Reading Room in 2009 (to accompany the already-designated historic church building), which was ratified by the city's Cultural Heritage Commission but eventually turned down by the Los Angeles City Council. However, although HCM status was not achieved, some ungodly development plans were discouraged, a different buyer came forward, and the property is now undergoing a glorious restoration by its new owners, The Art of Living Foundation. WAHA members had the privilege of touring the buildings in late March, a few weeks before the property's rededication ceremonies.

In the months since that event, WAHA supported the HCM nominations of two very important West Adams properties. We salute Laura Meyers (with help from the Los Angeles Conservancy) for her successful nomination of the Greene & Greene-designed Lucy E. Wheeler/Martin E. Weil Residence on Cambridge Avenue, and commend Anna Marie Brooks for her success in nominating the "Hauerwaas/Kusayanagi Residence" on West 27th Street, the first HCM associated with the Japanese-American heritage in Jefferson Park.

Following several years of work that culminated in 2007 with HCM status being bestowed on the derelict Soriano/Glen Lukens Home and Studio, WAHA this year aggressively challenged the manner in which the property on West 27<sup>th</sup> Street was being marketed by its court-assigned Receiver. The outcome was its purchase, not by a developer or nearby church envisioning an expansion of parking, but by Mark Chapman, a very preservation-minded new stakeholder in Historic West Adams. If you drive past, you will note the extraordinary progress being made to bring that property back to its mid-century glory.

And in what is perhaps the biggest success of all, WAHA worked tirelessly to coordinate with the many concerned residents of Jefferson Park to move forward the multi-year effort to have this neighborhood, a very important resource of Craftsman Bungalows, receive HPOZ designation. Much progress was made this fall in gaining momentum on this long-stalled effort.

I have been present at City Hall hearings for many of these hearings. When I wrote an article for *WAHA Matters* in early 2009 entitled "The Secret Society of the Preservationists," I never really believed that one day I would not only understand much of what was being discussed in the coded language of these meetings, but that I would be speaking on behalf of our preservation advocacy efforts to the city officials who determine the fate of what is at the very core of our organization, the heritage of our community.

I take this opportunity to send each and every one of you, esteemed WAHA members, my Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year!

*John Patterson may be reached by e-mail at [President@WestAdamsHeritage.org](mailto:President@WestAdamsHeritage.org)*

## **Nominations Sought for HPOZ Awards**

The Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources is now accepting nominations for the second citywide HPOZ Awards. The HPOZ Awards program offers an excellent opportunity to recognize projects that have reinforced the unique identity of one of our many historic neighborhoods.

Has a house in your neighborhood been transformed from a drab all-white bungalow to a four-color painted masterpiece? Did the neighbor across the street strip off 20 years of stucco to reveal a house's combed-wood shingles? Is there a new in-fill duplex around the corner that blends beautifully with the streetscape? Has your neighborhood completed an interesting outreach or education initiative to raise residents' awareness of its HPOZ? Let's make sure that these great projects are recognized for their excellence.

Last year award winners were: Nolte Lofts in University Park, Pisgah Village in Highland Park, and the rehabilitation of 1400 Alvarado Terrace in Pico-Union. Community Outreach Awards were presented to the Mar Vista Tract Website, the Highland Park Heritage Trust Brochure, as well as Rev. Carlos Paiva of Angelica Lutheran Church and Gloria Farias of Pico-Union Housing Corporation.

Please visit the Office of Historic Resources website, [www.preservation.lacity.org](http://www.preservation.lacity.org), to learn more about the eligible award categories and how to nominate a project. Nominations are due by Monday, March 14, and awards will be presented at the 2011 HPOZ Conference this spring. ●

# Stepping Out

## Tour the Historic Hughes Aircraft Campus in Playa Vista Sunday, March 20, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In a unique tour that will explore aviation, industrial history, and the legacy of Howard Hughes, the Los Angeles Conservancy will offer a rare, one-time-only visit to the former headquarters of Hughes Aircraft. It was here that Howard Hughes and his team designed and built planes, helicopters, and most famously, the H-4 Hercules Flying Boat -- more commonly known as the Spruce Goose, the largest plane ever to fly.



Photo: Mass production of OH-6 Cayuse helicopter at Hughes Aircraft in Culver City, circa 1967. Courtesy Herald-Examiner Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.

In 1940, Hughes began to purchase farmland between Culver City and Playa del Rey to build an aviation campus. The first building opened in 1941, and the campus grew exponentially from there: it eventually spanned over a thousand acres, employed over 30,000 workers, and housed the longest private runway in the world.

The site is now known as the Hercules Campus, and it has rarely been open to the public. During World War II, its airfield seldom even appeared on maps. While the Spruce Goose itself is now housed in Oregon, eleven of the original campus buildings remain on the now twenty-eight-acre site. An exciting \$50 million historic preservation development project by the Ratkovich Company will adapt the remaining structures for creative use, including design, technology, and movie production.

The docent-led tour will include several sites on the campus, including the 750-foot long hangar where the Hercules was assembled. Tickets are \$25 for the general public, \$20 for Los Angeles Conservancy members, and \$10 for children 12 and under. For details, tickets, and up-to-date tour information, visit [www.laconservancy.org](http://www.laconservancy.org) (direct link: <http://lac.laconservancy.org/> Hughes). If you have questions, call 213-623-2489. ●

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### New WAHA Member Discount Coaching Sessions from True Synergy, Inc.

True Synergy, Inc. is offering WAHA members a free 30 minute coaching session to help them reach their fullest potential in their career, business, and personal lives.

True Synergy is a professional coaching, training & brand development consultancy devoted to empowering and inspiring clients to be their best selves. Founded by Gena Yvette Davis, MBA, True Synergy offers services in career and business coaching, professional development training, and brand marketing consulting.

Through one-on-one coaching, group training, and personal brand development, True Synergy creates possibilities for clients to reinvent themselves, follow their passions and make a contribution to the world.

Davis is certified by the Certified Coaching Federation; is a Coach Training Alliance member; a member of Professional Coaches, Mentors, and Advisers; and a member of the International Coaching Federation, Los Angeles. Call 310-292-4948 for a FREE 30 minute coaching session. Feel free to visit her website at [www.mytruesynergy.com](http://www.mytruesynergy.com) for more information and to make an appointment. ●

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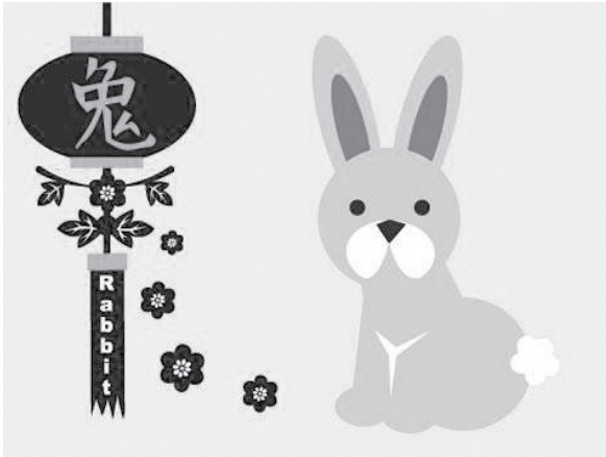


# Stepping Out

## Chinese New Year's

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Rabbit possesses one of the most fortunate of the twelve animal signs. The Rabbit, or Hare as he is referred to in Chinese mythology, is the emblem of longevity and is said to derive his essence from the Moon.



When a Westerner gazes at the Moon, he may tell a child the story of the Man in the Moon. When a Chinese looks at the Moon, he sees the Moon Hare standing near a rock under a Cassia tree and holding the Elixir of Immortality in his hands. The Rabbit symbolizes graciousness, good manners, sound counsel, kindness, and sensitivity to beauty. His soft speech and graceful and nimble ways embody all the desirable traits of a successful diplomat or seasoned politician.

Hope to see you at WAHA's event! Don't forget: Asian food to share, at 4 p.m., Sunday, January 30. ●



## GOLDEN DRAGON PARADE

SATURDAY,  
FEBRUARY 5


Chinese New Year in Los Angeles is famous for its Golden Dragon Parade, which involves a spectacular procession of painted dragons down North Broadway. On February 5 at 1 p.m., the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles presents the 112th Annual Golden Dragon Parade, with an expected 110,000+ individuals lining the parade route. More information on this event here:

<http://www.lagoldendragonparade.com>.



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# Preservation Matters

## Zanja, Chester Place Saved

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The WAHA Board would also like to thank the members of WAHA's Historic Preservation Committee (Jean Frost, Chair, Jim Childs, Laura Meyers, Mitzi March Mogul, David Raposa, Roland Souza, Eric Bronson), who worked tirelessly to prepare (literally) hundreds of pages of documentation and testimony in support of saving the historic district and opposing the project. It underscores the reason why WAHA, through its Historic Preservation Committee, takes the time to diligently review environmental documents and arrange for appearances at public hearings.

In this matter, the proposed development began with a Mitigated Negative Declaration which was circulated for comment. The comment by WAHA and others was responsible for the City requiring an EIR. Later, the Draft and Final EIR provided the opportunity to scrutinize the true effects of the project. With the Final EIR being issued, WAHA was reaching a crossroad regarding what action might be necessary to prevent this insensitive and harmful proposed project. This will now be unnecessary. Many other WAHA members joined this effort, including John Arnold, Maggi Fajnor, Jim Robinson, Suzanne Lloyd Simmons, Terry Speth, and so many others too numerous to mention. We appreciate everyone's effort to make this hard-fought victory a reality.

That said, it is truly Mount St. Mary's College that deserves our special thanks today. — John Patterson, WAHA President

### The Mount St. Mary's College announcement:

Dear Neighbors:

Mount St. Mary's College President Jacqueline Powers Doud just made the following announcement to the College community, and I wanted to make sure that you had also received the news.


Mount St. Mary's College closed escrow on the St. Vincent church parking lot, which had been purchased by a developer in March 2007. The building project that had been proposed for the lot would have adversely affected the surrounding neighborhood, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet at Stimson House and the College in several ways, including compromising privacy, elevated noise levels, shadowing and diminished views. One of the overriding factors in this decision is the adverse impact the building project would have had on the unique historical and cultural character of our neighborhood.

We do not have current plans to build on the lot, but will continue to use it for parking. We will also provide the St. Vincent parishioners with parking for liturgical services and other official Church functions on the site. Historical preservation of our Doheny campus is a priority to the College, and we are pleased to be part of the West Adams neighborhood.

— Debbie Ream, Director of Public Relations, Mount St. Mary's College [www.msmc.la.edu](http://www.msmc.la.edu)



The Red Oak/Adams and Figueroa student housing project would have been completely out of scale for the historic district, as shown in this rendering



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## The Last Zanja

by Don Sloper

There is much history in the block of Figueroa Street between Adams Boulevard and 23rd Street. At the north end is Kate Slauson Vosburg's white, colonial mansion dating from 1887, now part of New Designs Charter School. At the south end is St. Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic Church, an elaborate Churrigueresque landmark built in 1925. Between them stands Thomas Stimson's sandstone castle (1891), once the most expensive house in Los Angeles.

But as you stroll along the sidewalk between the church and Stimson's mansion, you could easily miss a rare piece of history lying at your feet. Half hidden behind a 2-foot-high ornamental fence is the only remaining evidence of the once ubiquitous, open-air canals whose life-giving water allowed the City of Los Angeles to spread south to West Adams and beyond.

The 105-foot section of concrete channel that fronts St. Vincent's parking lot is the last portion of an irrigation system that extended throughout the central city, more than a century ago. Known by their Spanish name of zanja, the channels were integral to the founding and growth of Los Angeles. The city's most important, highest-paid official was the zanjero who controlled the flow of water.

Back in 1781, a canal called the zanja madre, or "mother ditch," was the first public project for the newly arrived settlers of Los Angeles. Completed in October, one month after the pueblo's founding, it brought water from the Los Angeles River to the pueblo and adjacent farm land, allowing the small settlement to become a thriving agricultural community. Of the 21 California missions, only the nearby San Gabriel Mission produced more food than the pueblo of Los Angeles.

The availability of water had decided Los Angeles' location when it was established by the Spanish government, and it has remained the most critical, and sometimes most controversial, factor in the city's growth. For 87 years, the original zanja madre and its offshoots were sufficient to serve the small pueblo's residents and fields. The ditches carried water past the plaza to the low-lying areas to the immediate south and east.

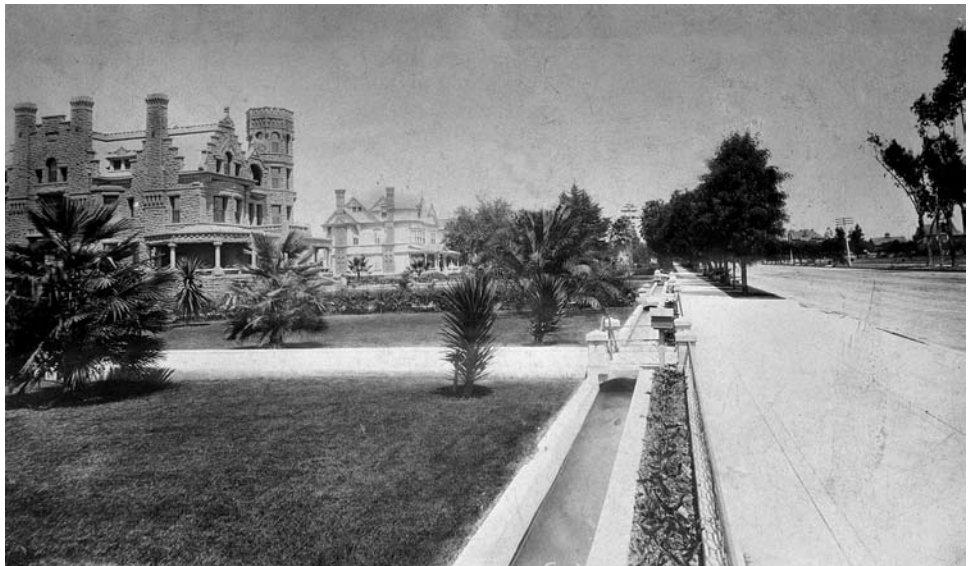
But as the city grew, the limitations of the old zanja led to a demand for a higher-elevation canal to serve the area along Figueroa Street and bring water to what was to become the West Adams district. In 1868, George Hansen, who had surveyed the city's boundaries in 1855, formed a private company, the Los Angeles Canal and Reservoir Company, which created a second "mother ditch." In 1877, the company was purchased by the city, whose original zanja system it had leased to another company, the Los Angeles City Water Company, from 1868 to 1902.

The second "mother ditch" tapped into the Los Angeles River five miles north of the city limits and brought water to Reservoir Number 4, designed to store 150 million gallons of water. A remnant of that reservoir is the lake in Echo Park, immediately northeast of the 101 Freeway and Glendale Boulevard. The water continued south from Echo Park, in what was called the Woolen Mill ditch, until it reached Pearl Street (now Figueroa) in the vicinity of Sixth Street, where it dropped 78 feet to provide power for the mill.

From the Woolen Mill, the zanja ran south along the west side of Pearl and Figueroa streets. (At that time, the street was called "Pearl" north of Pico Boulevard, and "Figueroa" south of Pico.) The Figueroa Street zanja, designated number 8-R, had five branches veering west from the main conduit. The Adams Boulevard branch extended at least to Hoover Street, while one reached Vermont Avenue and another stretched beyond Western Avenue, more than fourteen miles from the river source.

At first, the Figueroa zanja and its branches were just earthen ditches. Then, the City Council, in its 1885-1886 term, authorized \$187,000 to improve the system. The Figueroa ditch was replaced by open-topped, concrete channels, two feet wide and 18 inches deep. In residential areas, they were bordered by ornamental walls or fences, with concrete bridges at

*(continued on page 9)*



*The Zanja on Figueroa looking north toward the Stimson Mansion and 23rd Street a century ago*

## Art in Historic Places

continued from page 1

The event was such a success that WAHA and the artists in West Adams have decided to make it an annual happening, with new participating artists as well as returnees presenting new bodies of work, all in the artists' own homes and studios.

Among this year's artists and venues are:

- Donald Ferguson has been exhibiting his non-objective geometric abstractions and other art publicly since 1995 at galleries including Avenue 50 Studio, Gallery 825, Trópico de Nopal, and the Alex Haleigh Gallery, among others. His work is now held in important private and public collections throughout the United States, Europe, and Latin America, including the permanent collection of the High Art Museum of Huntsville, Alabama. Although a late bloomer as an artist, Ferguson began associating with artists in the early 60's. During trips to Mexico City he socialized with a group of artists that included Nahum Zenil, Ramón Martínez, and Manolo Casillas. Much later in Los Angeles, he became a close friend and neighbor of the late pioneer California assemblage artist Gordon Wagner, who strongly influenced his concept of art. Ferguson's work will grace the walls of his North University Park landmark, the Willard J. Doran Residence, Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument No. 820, designed by John C. Austin in 1905.

- Linda Frost was born and raised in rural Northwestern Pennsylvania surrounded by the untamed beauty of nature and wildlife. In early 2005, she began a series called 'The Tortured Souls,' which depicts the barbaric world of animal testing and focuses on the unwilling animal subjects who suffer in the name of science. Her current series, "Doll Dreams," evoke lucid memory, imagination, internal struggles, and autobiography in portrayals of wide-eyed but perhaps not so innocent dolls. Exhibited in galleries in both solo and group shows, she was selected by Dr. Peter Selz, former Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions, Museum of Modern Art in New York, to participate in a National Juried Exhibition at the Berkeley Art Center, Berkeley, California. Frost has a BFA from Temple University. Frost's varied work will be on display in her 1913 Craftsman Bungalow in Arlington Heights.

- Joan Tucker's painterly abstractions include the gestures, the slashes and blocks of textural paint of her Abstract Expressionist forebears, yet articulate her ideas about subconscious creative expression. Tucker has exhibited at William Turner Gallery in Santa Monica, Toomey-Tourell Gallery in San Francisco, and Milo Gallery, LA Art Core, Gallery C, and The Loft at Liz's in Los Angeles. Tucker, who exhibited at the WAHA gallery last year, will open the doors to her own historic Spanish Revival home and studio in Wellington Square for the tour.

- Jenny Hager will present her recent paintings at her Arlington Heights Arts & Crafts home and expansive studio. She received her BA from Knox College in Galesburg, IL, and her MFA from the University of Pennsylvania in 1999. She also studied at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting, and Sculpture from 1994 to 1996. She has exhibited nationally and internationally. Hager was a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award in 1999, and received a second grant from the foundation in 2005. She is currently on the faculty of Santa Monica College.

- Tolanna (Georgia Toliver) is a sculptor, painter and photographer whose creative output was influenced by her prior career in science and forensics. Toliver became an expert in forgery, and notably was involved in an FBI case involving forged signatures of the artists Picasso, Dali, Chagall and Miro. This year Toliver will be showcasing new paintings and intaglio prints at her Wellington Square 1920s Spanish Revival villa.

Art in Historic Places: Celebrate the Arts – Artists of West Adams includes a variety of turn-of-the-century and post-World War I residences, including Craftsman bungalows and Spanish villas. Check-In is again at WAHA's "pop up gallery" at the c1923 Majestic Pharmacy, a restored commercial/mixed use building that today houses Gramercy Housing Group. This is a self-guided drive-yourself (or bike-yourself) tour, with a brochure and map that will guide visitors to these historic venues, toured in any order and at their own pace.

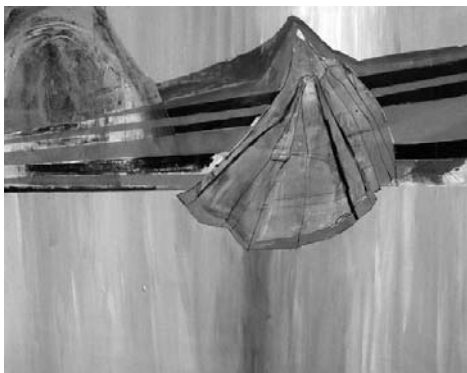
Tickets are \$25 in advance (deadline: postmarked by March 15) and \$30 at the door. To purchase advance tickets, please make out a check to "WAHA" and mail it to 2209 Virginia Rd., Los Angeles CA 90016. (Please be sure to include your name, phone, address, and e-mail contact).

Visit [www.WestAdamsHeritage.org](http://www.WestAdamsHeritage.org) to purchase tickets online, call 323-732-4223, or write [tours@westadamsheritage.org](mailto:tours@westadamsheritage.org) for more information.

Prepaid tickets will be held at Check-In, 1824 South 4th Avenue (at Washington Boulevard), the location of WAHA's pop-up gallery. The last day-of-tour tickets will be sold at 1 p.m., and most tour properties will close promptly at 4 p.m. (Visitors tour at their leisure, and are encouraged to set aside several hours to enjoy the Art in Historic Places tour.) ●



Linda Frost, *Before the Fall*, 2010



Jenny Hager, *Dogstar*, 2010



## The Last Zanja

*continued from page 7*

carriage entrances. The branch lines off Figueroa were placed in cement pipes as far as the western city limit, at what is now Hoover Street.

It was the availability of water that determined the value of land in Los Angeles. The Figueroa Street zanja led to early development of the West Adams area, beginning with a row of stately mansions constructed south along Figueroa Street, and with sea captain Nathan Vail's 1871 home on West Adams Boulevard, west of Figueroa. The old gates to Vail's home serve today as the south entrance to Chester Place, a private street that forms the nucleus of the Doheny Campus of Mount St. Mary's College.

During the 1880s, the demand for water grew explosively as the population increased. To improve efficiency, the city switched to water pipes and began closing the open-air zanjias, leaving only the Figueroa Street line. According to Blake Gumprecht in his book, *The Los Angeles River*, "... the last two zanjias, the Woolen Mill Ditch and the canal along the west side of Figueroa Street, Zanja No. 8-R, were eliminated in the spring of 1904."

Meanwhile, in 1888, Frank Sabichi, former president of the Los Angeles City Council (1872-1874), had built a two-story home at 2437 S. Figueroa St., immediately east of Nathan Vail's property. The house remained in the Sabichi family until March 30, 1948, when it was purchased by Carrie Estelle Doheny, widow of oilman Edward L. Doheny. Upon her death in 1958, her will left the property to an order of priests, the Vincentian Fathers, who serve as clergy for St. Vincent's Church. The house was razed to provide a parking lot for the church.

Yet remarkably, almost 50 years later, traces of the house and its surroundings remain. The old Sabichi gateways now serve as entrance and exit for the church parking lot. The old, semi-oval driveway encloses a well-kept lawn, its diamond-patterned central walkway flanked by towering twin palms. And out at the sidewalk, half-covered with leaves, lies the city's last section of open-air zanja.

In 1939, Charles Owens, a *Los Angeles Times* newspaper artist, drew the zanja section in front of 2437 South Figueroa for the Times' June 30 edition, and remarked on its uniqueness. "There was a time when Los Angeles owned no more outstanding feature than her zanjias – the concrete water ditches which brought irrigation water to the city. Even today, remnants of the old zanja system can be seen, particularly on the west side of Figueroa Street, north of Adams Boulevard." ●

*Don Sloper is the author of Los Angeles's Chester Place (Arcadia Press, 2007) This article first appeared in WAHA Matters in January, 2008.*



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*We support preservation of the West Adams community's architectural heritage and beautification activities, and seek to educate Los Angeles' citizens and others about cultural heritage and restoration techniques.*



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Los Angeles California 90018  
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**WAHA....Creating Our Future by Preserving Our Past**

# Calendar ✓

## Upcoming Events

Look for more details on upcoming events on WAHA's website, [www.WestAdamsHeritage.org](http://www.WestAdamsHeritage.org)

### MARCH

**Saturday, March 5:**

Hold the Date for a Special Outing

**Sunday, March 20:**

WAHA Potluck TBA

**Saturday, March 26:**

Art in Historic Places:

Celebrate the Arts -- Artists of West Adams Tour (see page 1)

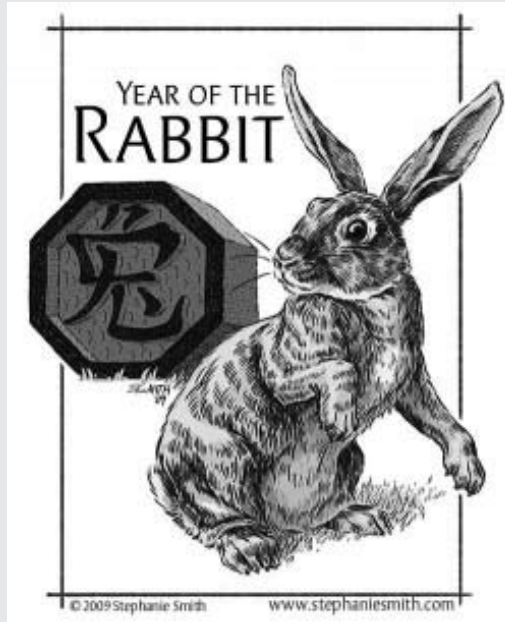
### APRIL

**Sunday, April 10:**

WAHA Elections/Brunch

### MAY

Historic Preservation Month!



## Chinese New Year's in West Adams

**Celebrate the Lunar New Year with an**

**Asian-Themed Potluck Event**

**Sunday, January 30 4 p.m.**

**2093 West 28th Street**

**(Jefferson Park, west of Western)**

(See page 1 for complete information)

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