



West Adams Matters

Heritage Day at El Pueblo

by Elizabeth Fenner

Sunday, April 29 11 a.m. -4 p.m. El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument

The 4th Annual Los Angeles Heritage Day is coming soon, held at the perfect venue—and I'm not saying that just because I work there. On Sunday, April 29, an expected 75 organizations treasuring the region's history are meeting in the oldest public square of Los Angeles, now known as El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument. I am a museum guide for the City of Los Angeles, and I am also a volunteer for Las Angelitas del Pueblo, a group that provides free tours of the Plaza. Everyone involved in WAHA is well versed in L.A.'s history, but steeped in its earliest beginnings on an almost daily basis, I'll try here to tell you at least one thing you don't already know.



El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument

After you've found parking, or taken convenient public transportation by trolley, subway, bus or train to the Plaza (we're across the street from Union Station)—take a moment and just look around. In the middle is a bandstand (known as the Kiosko) with giant Australian Moreton Bay fig trees at the four compass points. Churches, buildings, trolley tracks, pavement, plants: everywhere and in everything you will see the push and pull of history—cultural, political, technological—forces that have molded and evolved the area from L.A.'s founding in 1781 to now.

(continued on page 10)

WAHA's Annual Preservation Brunch: The Restoration of the Landmark Soriano/Lukens Home

Sunday, May 6 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. 3524 West 27th St. (Jefferson Park)

Six years ago, WAHA stepped out of its usual comfort zone of preserving Victorian and Craftsman homes, and embarked on a Don Quixote-like quest to save an overgrown wreck of Modernist architecture. The Glen Lukens Home and Studio, designed in 1939 by the architect Raphael Soriano, is one of the few architect-designed Modernist buildings in all of West Adams. It is also one of the few extant Soriano residences in Los Angeles. And, it was a mess.

We are happy to report that "was" is the operative word. The Lukens Home has been rescued and restored, and WAHA is please to invite you to visit this Modernist masterpiece at our Annual Preservation Brunch. Please join us as we toast (with champagne and Mimosas) not just the house, but also its new owner/rescuer, Michael Chapman, the restoration's architect, Barry Milofsky, and of course WAHA itself for its role in saving this landmark property.

As is traditional, WAHA will be hosting this mimosa brunch – which includes light fare, and beverages. The property includes multiple terraces of kid-friendly lawns and gardens. The brunch and tours of the house will take place from 11 a.m. to 12:15, after which speakers, including Chapman and Milofsky, will talk about the Lukens Home's road from ruin to restored. The presentation of this year's Martin Eli Weil Historic Preservation Award will follow.

(continued on page 8)



WAHA Newcomer's Dessert & Garden Party

Thursday, May 17 7-9 p.m. 2500 10th Avenue (West Adams Avenues)

Celebrate Spring in West Adams! Come meet many of the more than four dozen new members who joined WAHA this past year, and to enjoy the beautiful backyard garden of our host, long-time WAHA member and volunteer-extraordinaire, Vern Menden.

Menden graciously extends an invitation to all WAHA members to enjoy his garden for this special event. His Neo-colonial house was built in 1919, with coved ceilings and significantly larger than normal windows and doors. While having had only two previous owners, it has undergone some significant renovations following an attic fire in the mid-60's and in the aftermath of the 1994 Northridge earthquake. Built originally with 4 bedrooms plus maid's room and three full baths, the house retains numerous original features that are guiding its restoration, including a built in vanity that separates the master bedroom from its outdoor sleeping porch.

Menden's proudest achievement is his complete conversion of the gardens. "When I moved in, the house had virtually all grass and no gardens. It has now been completely changed by the removal of the grass in the front yard and parkway and replaced with native and drought tolerant plants. As a consequence, water usage has decreased by one third. The back yard is more of a period garden inspired by my grandmother's gardens as I was growing up and are in a riot of bloom this year after six years of nurturing."

Please bring a dessert to share, come greet our newest WAHA members, and enjoy the surroundings of this beautiful backyard. ●

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Megalith in West Adams — In last month's issue of WAHA Matters, we failed to give photo credit to Jeff Valdez for this terrific shot of the Big Rock traveling past the landmark Golden State Mutual Life Insurance building at Adams and Western, on its way to its permanent home at LAMCA.

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Pathways to Yesteryear: Strolling the Street of Dreams

Saturday, June 9* 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. University Park

"Back in the Day," as old timers say, 125 years ago, Adams Boulevard was Los Angeles's Street of Dreams – the main artery of a "Bon Ton District" that included Chester Place, St. James Park and the Belgravia Tract, home to some of the City's finest residences.

For this year's **Annual Spring Homes and Architecture Tour**, WAHA invites you to stroll these pathways to yesteryear. Featuring Victorian cottages and turn of the century mansions alike, the self-guided tour will open the doors to a collection of historic buildings that evoke the times and memories of the late 19th century in Los Angeles.

Tour visitors may also ramble through the grounds of Chester Place, the oldest gated community in Los Angeles. Developed in 1899 as an exclusive enclave for the wealthy and powerful, these historic mansions are now home to Mount St. Mary's College.

Please mark your calendars for this event (more details are forthcoming and will be posted to WAHA's website, www.WestAdamsHeritage.org.) The Spring Homes and Architecture Tour is one of WAHA's principal fundraising efforts, so we encourage you to invite your friends and colleagues to purchase tickets and take the tour. (A reminder: tickets for this and other WAHA tours may be purchased online at the website.)

We will also need many volunteer docents: please let us know if you are willing to help by e-mailing volunteer@westadamsheritage.org.

Please note the date change to Saturday, June 9 – the SECOND Saturday in June. ●



WAHA's Spring Homes & Architecture Tour will open doors to Victorian cottages and grand manses alike. The Queen Anne-style Kane Residence and the Stearns-Dockweiler Residence are two of the featured properties.

President's Message *by John Patterson*

This is the time of year that we celebrate historic preservation in West Adams, greater Los Angeles, and throughout the country. We began with our WAHA Board elections on April 1st at the Odd Fellows Temple on Washington Boulevard and Oak Street. Those who attended had the incredible opportunity to see the wonderful restoration underway of this unique (and incredibly huge) space, which is slated to become a premier event space for the area.

Starting the last weekend of April, there are several historic preservation events that I hope you'll be able to attend. These events include the Titanic Centennial taking place at the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood (4/28); Heritage Day at El Pueblo Historic Monument in Downtown's original Plaza (4/29); WAHA's own Annual Preservation Brunch will be held at the newly restored Glenn Luken Residence designed by noted mid-century architect Raphael Soriano right here in West Adams (5/6); and then there's the HPOZ Conference on May 19th, which offers many workshops on preservation topics and is open to all Los Angeles residents – whether you live in a designated HPOZ or not.

So there's plenty going on this coming month to keep Preservation at the forefront. We'll look forward to seeing you at one or more of these great events!!

John Patterson may be reached by e-mail at President@WestAdamsHeritage.org

Steppin' Out with WAHA Titanic Centennial: Lecture and Film Screening of "A Night to Remember" Saturday, April 28 2 p.m. Egyptian Theatre, 6712 Hollywood Boulevard (Hollywood)

To commemorate the centennial of the launch (and sinking) of the Titanic, our very own WAHA resident Titanic scholar, Don Lynch, will be presenting a lecture on his favorite subject at the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood. As the author of *Titanic – An Illustrated History* and *Ghosts of the Abyss*, and as the Chief Historian of the Titanic Historical Society, Lynch has personally met and interviewed 20 Titanic survivors. He also had the unique experience of actually diving to the depths to view the Titanic's wreckage first-hand. Lynch will give a talk on the events surrounding the disaster that struck the Titanic luxury liner, comparing and contrasting it with the movie *A Night to Remember*. Lynch recently appeared on the National Geographic Channel's "Titanic: The Final Word with James Cameron" as a member of the famed director's "dream team of experts" in developing a detailed summation of how the great ship met its demise in the icy waters of the North Atlantic on April 14, 1912.

Followed by a screening of...*A Night to Remember* (1958, MGM/Park Circus, 123 min, UK, Dir: Roy Ward Baker):

Just before midnight on April 14, 1912, the "unsinkable" Titanic struck an iceberg, and in less than three hours, had plunged to the bottom of the sea, taking with it more than 1,500 of its 2,200 passengers. In his unforgettable rendering of Walter Lord's book of the same name, Roy Ward Baker depicts with sensitivity, awe and a fine sense of tragedy the ship's last hours.

This event is sponsored by AMERICAN CINEMATIQUE -- "Movies on the Big Screen as They were Meant to be Seen."

The lecture begins at 2:00 p.m. and is co-presented by WAHA and Art Deco Society Los Angeles. Visit www.americancinematiquecalendar.com for more information.

WAHA and Art Deco members are eligible to purchase tickets (in advance or at the door) at the discounted



Don Lynch

Stepping Out

Annual HPOZ Conference Focuses on Neighborhood Preservation

Saturday, May 19 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Celebrity Centre International, 5930 Franklin Avenue (Hollywood)

Whether you are an HPOZ Board Member or a preservation enthusiast, please plan to attend the 10th annual HPOZ Conference. It will be a day of workshops, tours, and networking to learn more about how to protect the unique character of Los Angeles' historic neighborhoods.

The HPOZ Conference is an annual event focused on the professional development of Los Angeles's nearly 150 HPOZ Board Members as well as those who are interested in neighborhood preservation throughout the Los Angeles area. The Department of City Planning and the Los Angeles Conservancy host this event each year, offering informative sessions tailored to the needs of our preservation community.

The conference will be at the Celebrity Centre International in Hollywood. Early registration (by Sunday, May 13) is \$20, or \$25 after May 13th and on the day of the event. Sign up for the conference at <http://lac.laconservancy.org/hpoz>. The registration fee covers the conference costs as well as continental breakfast and lunch. Limited parking is available on site; carpooling and public transportation are encouraged.

The HPOZ Conference offers lectures, panels, interactive discussions, and hands-on workshops aimed at community leaders and local residents in historic neighborhoods. We'll conclude with walking tours of HPOZs in Hollywood. It's a great opportunity to meet other neighborhood leaders from around Los Angeles, and to take new ideas back to your own community.

This year's conference sessions include:

Design Roundtable: Take part in an interactive session presenting and analyzing preservation projects in a mock critique format.

Gaining Community Consensus: Before, During, and After: Hear about real-life experiences in engaging community members and how to reach out and maintain support

HPOZ 101: The Basics of L.A.'s Historic Districts: Gain a fundamental overview of the HPOZ Ordinance, Preservation Plans, project review, and Historic Resource Surveys.

The HPOZ Project: Getting Your Project to the Finish Line: Learn practical tips to ensure success when you upgrade, renovate, or otherwise change your HPOZ property, including initial planning, getting approval, and managing the construction process.

Understanding Architectural Styles and Their Role in Preservation: Learn about historical building styles popular in Los Angeles and their appropriate alterations.

Informal lunchtime discussions will explore topics important to HPOZs including sustainability, code violations, preservation plan feedback, and City Council redistricting.

Registration to the conference also includes your choice of free afternoon walking tours, offering an opportunity to experience the Hollywood Grove HPOZ immediately adjacent to the conference venue, or two other Hollywood-area HPOZs (Whitley Heights and Melrose Hill) within a short drive.



Chateau Elysee, Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument No. 329 (now known as the Celebrity Centre International) is the host venue for the HPOZ Conference.

About the Venue

This year's conference will be held at the Celebrity Centre International. Located adjacent to the Hollywood Grove HPOZ, the building originally opened in 1928 as Chateau Elysee, a residential hotel catering to the Hollywood elite. Numerous Hollywood stars resided here over the years, including Clark Gable, Carole Lombard, Humphrey Bogart, and Elizabeth Taylor.

In the 1950s, it was converted into a senior citizens home by the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles. In 1973, the iconic landmark was purchased by the Church of Scientology, which has carefully maintained the historic building and its grounds. The property was designated as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #329 in 1987.

If you have any questions, please contact Flora Chou of the Los Angeles Conservancy at fchou@laconservancy.org. ●

Stepping Out

A Home Tour to Remember Monrovia's Annual Mother's Day Historic Homes Tour

Sunday, May 13 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Celebrating its 30th year of hosting a home tour, the Monrovia Historic Preservation Group (MOHPG) will showcase several of Monrovia's finest vintage homes and public buildings.

Thirty years ago, MOHPG held its first home tour in conjunction with the Los Angeles Conservancy. Little could MOHPG have imagined back then that the tour would have continued to be an annual event for the town of Monrovia, drawing upwards of 1,000 visitors a year. The tour, which is MOHPG's main annual fundraiser, also enables the preservation organization and the city to showcase some of the vintage homes for which it is so well known.

The 30th anniversary home tour will be held on Mother's Day. Three trolley buses will enable guests to park once and easily travel from house to house for no added charge. Make plans now to attend one of the oldest home tours in the region.

Tickets may be purchased at www.mojpg.org, in advance at select locations in Monrovia (Monrovia Chamber of Commerce, 620 S. Myrtle Ave., Monrovia Bakery, 506 S. Myrtle Ave., and Paint 'n Play2, 418 S. Myrtle Ave.), or on the day of the tour at the Monrovia Historical Museum, 742 E. Lemon Ave, between Mountain Ave and Shamrock Ave, starting at 9:30 a.m.

Ticket prices:

Advance Tickets -- Adults, \$17; Seniors (65+), \$14; Teens (age 13-19), \$9; 12 & under, free.

Day-of-Tour Tickets-- Adults, \$20; Seniors, \$17; Teens, \$12; 12 & under, free. ●

2012 Historic Western Heights Home & Garden Tour

Sunday, June 3 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The Western Heights Homeowners Association (WHHA) is sponsoring a "2012 Historic Western Heights Home & Garden Tour." This streetcar suburb attracted up-and-coming young professional families, who built their homes in the tract in the early part of the 20th century. Eight historical homes and gardens will be open for tour. The Western Heights Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ), created in 2001, contains 150 structures dating from the late 19th century to the 1930's.

Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$35 the day of the tour. Final tickets will be sold at 3 pm. Tickets for the self-guided tour are available through Western Heights Homeowners Association at 2143 W 20th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90018 or at www.WesternHeightsonline.com. E-mail westernheightstour@aol.com for more information. Check in at 2233 West 21st Street, Los Angeles, CA. Flat shoes, please.

(WAHA has rescheduled its own annual June tour for the following weekend, Saturday, June 9, to lesson conflict of volunteers and attendees for these two separate historic tour events.) ●



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Art Matters

Art in Historic Places Tour

Last month's third annual Art in Historic Places Tour underscored the artistic side of our historic neighborhood. Special thanks to Ms. CCH Pounder who served as our Honorary Chairperson, and provided us with a vital connection to some of our area's resident artists. Guests were delighted to have her join our Artist's Gallery reception following the tour.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank two local eateries for their generous contributions to our reception's menu. La Cevicheria on Pico @ 5th Avenue provided two delicious versions of their famous ceviche, and Restaurant del Valle, which just two months ago became the latest addition to our neighborhood — located on Pico just east of the new Lowe's. The two brothers augmented our dessert selection with multiple trays of tasty sweets. (Please see their ads on this page, and be sure to visit both locations in the coming weeks.) Several members of the tour committee were so impressed by the wonderful menu at Restaurant del Valle, we each ordered a different meal: Rabbit stew, Tilapia, two styles of shrimp Diablo, and their very unique offering of a hamburger with peanut butter. A must addition to the growing list of great places to eat in and around West Adams.

The tour showcased work by many diverse artists, including a collective group housed at a surprising historical commercial building located at Washington and Arlington. Our thanks to Kathe Beltran, Bryan Freeny, Christopher Kuhn, and Nathalie Dierickx for participating in the tour. We also showcased three historical residences in the West Adams Avenues, with work on view from Art Tobias, Kim Reese, Laura Cechanowicz, Marcus Perez, Josh Atlas, Allie Williams and, in addition, beautiful costumes designed and sewn by Corinne Pleger, a longtime WAHA leader who suddenly passed away last November. And of course a highlight of the tour for many visitors was the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, itself an art work and historic place. ●



Corinne Pleger's beautiful costumes were showcased at the Mrs. Susan Wilshire Residence.

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Community Matters

HPOZ Boards Need New Volunteers

A unique feature of Los Angeles' historic preservation program is that its 29 historic districts (or HPOZs for Historic Preservation Overlay Zones) are all administered with the guidance of local HPOZ boards.

HPOZs in the West Adams area are in need of volunteers to serve on their respective boards. Architects, landscape architects, contractors, real estate agents, preservation experts, community activists, and folks with a positive and proactive interest in serving historic neighborhoods are all invited to submit letters of interest, and Spanish speakers are highly desired. HPOZs are perhaps the City's strongest tool to protect the West Adams area's culturally and architecturally rich neighborhoods and HPOZ board members play a major role in reviewing rehabilitation projects, monitoring code enforcement issues and providing educational outreach to local stakeholders.

In some cases HPOZ board members must live in or near an HPOZ in order to serve, but there are often occasions where volunteers from outside of a specific HPOZ may serve.

The Adams-Normandie, Harvard Heights, Jefferson Park, Lafayette Square, North University Park,* Pico-Union, University Park, West Adams Terrace, and Western Heights HPOZs are all in need of board members who will serve four-year terms at meetings that occur no more than twice a month in regular intervals. Depending on your board's current vacancies, board members are appointed by the Cultural Heritage Commission, the Office of the Mayor, the local Council Member, or the HPOZ board itself (with input from the local neighborhood council).

Interested candidates should submit a resume and a one-page letter of interest outlining their particular expertise and interest in serving. While some vacant positions must be filled by volunteers with specific credentials (listed above), many others may be filled simply by enthusiastic volunteers who want to help their respective communities. While the City of LA provides training for all board members, candidates should be generally familiar with historic preservation standards.

Send resumes and letters of interest in PDF format to Shana Bostin in the Department of City Planning's Office of Historic Resources at shana.bostin@lacity.org or 200 North Spring Street, Room 601, Los Angeles, CA 90012, or call 213-978-1217 for more information. ●

**North University Park actually has a Design Review Board that deals with both historic preservation and broader land use issues.*

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Installation & Repairs

Preservation Matters

Preservation Brunch

continued from page 1

Milofsky, the project's architect, is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati (BS. Arch, 1971), and is a Registered Architect in California and Massachusetts. Projects on which he functioned as Project Architect have received both National and Regional design awards. His experience ranges from large-scale urban design projects to cultural facility planning. Milofsky has served as visiting juror at numerous architectural schools, and currently serves on the Hollywood Design Review Board. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Conservancy and Issues Committee. He previously chaired the Preservation Issues Committee of Hollywood Heritage.

Mike Chapman, a costumer in the film industry and a real estate agent, has restored seven prior historic properties, ranging from a Victorian home within a historic district and a historic church (both in Ashland, Oregon); a Craftsman bungalow in a historic district (in Los Angeles); and four mid-century homes (in Palm Springs). He has won a Preservation Award from the Palm Springs Modern Committee, and he actively supported PS ModCom's preservation advocacy.

Background

In 2006, the nuisance abatement unit of the City's Building & Safety Department sought to have the property completely abated and demolished as a nuisance. Eric Bronson, Stevie Stern and I spent seven hours at a Building & Safety Commission hearing – in effect, holding hands with an unlikely partner, Ron Carroll, the man who brought ruination to the residence – to argue its historical importance. By day's end – after Carroll lost control and told the Commission that he was planning to move back into the house, the Commission ruled both FOR and AGAINST us. The decision was to abate the property, giving the department the legal ability to clean it up, but to not permit its demolition, since we had provided enough evidence that the property was historic.

Score one for the historic preservation community. Now the real work of designating the property as a landmark began.

We had quickly nominated the Glen Lukens Home and Studio as a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument despite its truly miserable (aesthetic) condition. The property grounds and house itself were filled with trash, and although WAHA knew this was an important Modern structure, we were uncertain how it would be received by the Cultural Heritage Commission and/or other City officials.

Nonetheless, it was clear that the Lukens property was very important.

The Lukens Home and Studio is an example of International Style architecture as it transitioned in response to the Southern California environment. It displays characteristic Modernist elements, including ribbon windows and extensive use of glass, smooth stucco skin, flat roof, low horizon line and horizontal volumes cantilevered over the landscape, walls and glass surfaces kept on the same plane, and lively seamless indoor-outdoor flow.

Soriano's importance was also clear to us. Soriano was an advocate of the new construction techniques and building materials developed just before and after World War II. His body of work is characterized by transparent exterior walls, indoor-outdoor relationships, open floor plans, and floating roofs. Soriano was one of the most crucial architects in the generation that followed Rudolph Schindler in Los Angeles, a generation centered around the Case Study House program and which included such luminaries as Craig

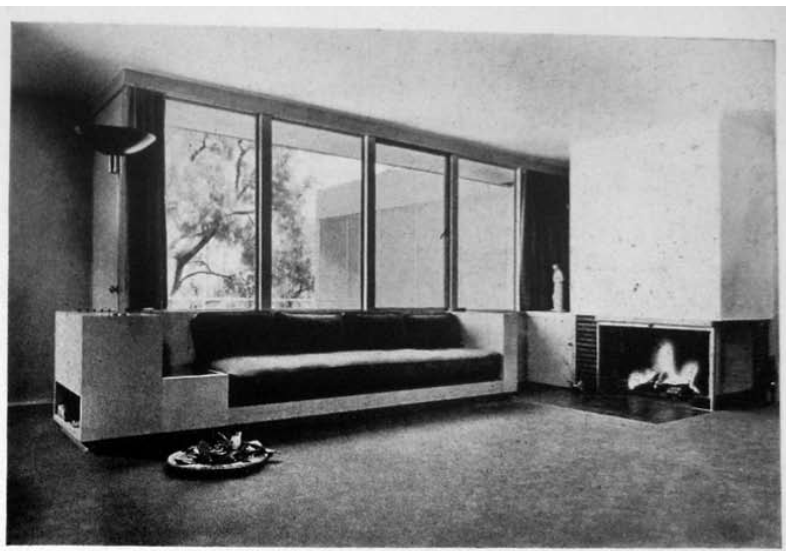


Raphael S. Soriano, *Designer*

GLEN LUKENS HOUSE LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Built-in wall-length couch and radio-phonograph; indirect light reflector. Upholstering cover, apple green. All wood panels of magnolia. Carpet, sand color. Drapes, canary yellow.

Photo: Julius Shulman



The Glen Lukens Home, restored (above, left), and shown in an early photograph by Julius Shulman (left).



Abated: Before the restoration

Ellwood, Pierre Koenig, and Richard Neutra, all of whom Soriano worked with. Although he designed more than 150 homes and other buildings during his career, only about 50 were actually erected, and of those, only about a dozen remain, including this house.

The Glen Lukens Home and Studio is also specifically significant because it marks Soriano's transition from International Style to California Modern. The significance of the house is in its configuration, which began to establish the strong indoor-outdoor relationship of Soriano's best work. The Lukens Home and Studio's U-shaped plan is organized around a raised terrace linking living spaces, working spaces and the outdoors. Its interior was extremely efficient, utilizing built-in furniture and a corner fireplace.

Glen Lukens, the original owner-occupant, is worthy of note as a pioneering artist, an arts educator who taught a generation of artists, and a progressive thinker who advocated for integration and equal rights. Lukens fought poverty, here and in Haiti, and helped develop new industry in that country after WWII. In addition, when the U.S. entered the war and required that all metals be devoted to the war effort, the government called upon Lukens' skills in ceramics technology to develop a non-metallic cookware (stoneware pottery) for use on the "homefront."

In the 1930s, at a time when an emphasis on design and decoration dominated American pottery production, Lukens helped elevate contemporary ceramics to a fine art form. He cast aside tradition to explore the expressive potential of ceramic materials and pioneered a bold approach to pottery, creating simple, massive, Modernist forms that married bright colors and glazes to raw surfaces. Lukens helped create what is now known as the California School of fine art ceramics, and was known for his landmark innovations in glazing, which gave rise to what became known as vibrant California Colors.

As a professor at USC, among the artists Lukens taught and mentored are Beatrice Wood, Harrison McIntosh, Barbara Willis, Vivika Heino, Eugene White (who became head of Pepperdine's Art Department), Carlton Ball, and Laura Andreson, among others. Lukens was also an early teacher of the famed architect Frank Gehry. Lukens also taught and mentored many Haitian artists, most famously Marcus Douyon and Myrton Purkiss.

We had also learned that this one house actually marked a seminal moment in architecture history: the day that Frank Gehry decided to become an architect. Indeed, Gehry himself ended up writing a letter to the Mayor and to the Commission, urging that the Lukens property be designated as a landmark – and it was. On April 11, 2007, the Glen Lukens Home and Studio was added to the City's list of Historic Cultural Monuments as HCM No. 866.

WAHA's battle to save the house had just begun.

Building and Safety officials were still smarting from their "loss" at their Commission, when they were not permitted to demolish the structure. Even though the abatement granted the department the power to clean up the property and to keep it in good repair, they did not do so. By early 2010, the situation had gone from bad to worse. Carroll was arrested – he was living illegally in the house, with small children. Some time after the arrest, the City went to court and had a Receiver appointed to oversee the property, and return it to "compliance" with all ordinances and orders (including those related to its being a historic landmark.)

Unfortunately, the Receiver almost immediately listed the house for sale — for all cash, at what at first was marketed as land value. Then, it was advertised as its façade is intact — as if the landmark designation did not include the interior and/or the grounds, both of which include character-defining features. Behind the scenes, WAHA and the Los Angeles Conservancy raised a ruckus, each organization writing stern disclosure letters and lodging them with the real estate agent, the Receiver and the Superior Court where the matter was lodged. We were worried that a buyer would misunderstand the requirements, and that easily could have happened had Chapman not entered the picture.

There is, of course, a happy ending to this chapter of the story, and that is what we are celebrating at WAHA's Annual Preservation Brunch on May 6. ●



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Preservation Matters

Heritage Day

continued from page 1

What you see is very different from how it started out when Los Angeles was part of Spain. Imagine this space as an open rectangle anchored on the west by a modest adobe church and surrounded by single-story adobe houses. Today we might consider them homey and simple, but in their time they were the grandest in-town residences of the richest rancho families in Los Angeles. The church bells, which would ring several times a day, could be heard for miles. The open plaza, without trees, shrubs, or structures, was also excellent for horse races, non-fatal bull fights, and fiestas, the biggest perhaps being Pio Pico's 1834 wedding, to which he invited the whole town and many dignitaries from California's capital of Monterey. Food, drink, dancing and music kept the party going eight days. But aside from the occasional fiesta or sporting event, imagine a place that could get very quiet, and very dark, since there were no cars, planes, sirens, and no public lighting until gas lights were installed in 1868.

Many events for Heritage Day will be held in the Pico House. Open for guests in 1870, it was the first 3-story building in Los Angeles; you could see it for miles around, and for at least a decade it was the finest hotel south of San Francisco, its façade faux painted to resemble blue granite, its open air central courtyard filled with potted ferns and caged parrots. If you squint, seeing some of the older folks who sit around the Plaza, you can imagine Pio Pico sitting, as he used to, on a chair looking out over the plaza until his death as a very old man in 1894. Senor Pico lived to see Los Angeles change from Spanish to Mexican, from Mexican to Yanqui; he was part of it all, and once upon a time owned with his brother Andres nearly all of the San Fernando Valley. From a combination of adventure, bad luck, and malfeasance he saw all his wealth slip away, until all he had was a view of his former hotel, the kindness of good friends, and the knowledge that he had lived a remarkable, even epic, life.

What you will see today: diversity, grandeur, commerce, religion, conflict, struggle. Come to think about it, those things have always been here.

Here are a few things you shouldn't miss:

Plaque of the Pobladores: Los Angeles represented the end of a long journey for the original 44 Spanish citizens of diverse racial heritage who walked a thousand miles to start a new town in this river valley. The first wave of immigrants to the area, they were probably the best: the Pobladores got along so well with the native Tong-va people that the first two sons to come of age in LA married two daughters from the tribe.

The Avila Adobe: The oldest existing residence in Los Angeles, the Avila Adobe was built in 1818 by Don Francisco Avila, a Mexican-born Spaniard who represented the Californio aristocracy. The house's interior accurately represents the rancho life of the 1840s—simple but elegant. Read more about the history of the house and the area in the house's charming courtyard.

Firehouse #1: First some back story: significant cultural change came after 1850, when California became a US State. Gold had been discovered at Sutter's Mill, and it seemed every enterprising young man was coming to California to try and get a piece of the action. Population growth occurred faster than infrastructure could keep up, land was changing hands precipitously, and often dishonestly, and for awhile Los Angeles was a true wild west. Literally a man's world, residents had a predilection for gambling and liquor, violence and vigilante justice. The Los Angeles Fire Department dates to 1869—part of an effort to create an environment of law and order—and fittingly the Plaza is home to the city's oldest firehouse. Volunteers lived at the station and worked every day of the month but one, and often had to pull the equipment to the fire themselves. Still, they had some great jackets.

The Chinese American Museum: Follow the red Chinese lanterns down Sanchez Street to the entrance doors; the subtlety of the entrance belies the treasures within. The Chinese experience with immigration into the States is not very well known (if I can judge from student visitors), and it is worth learning about. CAM gives visitors both the opportunity to learn about the history of Chinese immigration and the struggles and triumphs of Chinese Americans, but also, wonderfully, CAM presents exhibits exploring other aspects of culture, art, and life—currently housing the fantastic Pacific Standard Time exhibit "Breaking Ground" about four Chinese American architects and their significant contributions to the mid-century Modern style.

LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes: The newest museum in the Plaza, it is also newly free (but like the Plaza's other museums, it welcomes donations). Stunning, modern museum presentation of the oldest things about L.A.: its Spanish and Mexican beginnings, including tools, historic costumes, even early hand-written letters.

I could go on. There's so much to know, and the tapestry for me just keeps getting richer. Every day I work there, someone comes in who knocks my socks off: a visitor whose name is Pico, or who knew Christine Sterling once upon a time, or who just has a story about how life used to be in Los Angeles. So Welcome to El Pueblo. Enjoy the museums, the monuments, the shopping, and the food. Take a tour, if you have time, with Las Angelitas, and ask the Museum Guides to tell you what they know. I hope I'll see you there. If I do, I'll try to tell you something you didn't know, and if you can knock my socks off, that's always fun too. ●



Pico House at El Pueblo

L.A. HERITAGE DAY CELEBRATES SOUTHLAND'S COLORFUL, DIVERSE HISTORY

500 Years of Fascinating Facts and Objects on Display at Free Event
Sunday, April 29, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.,
El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument

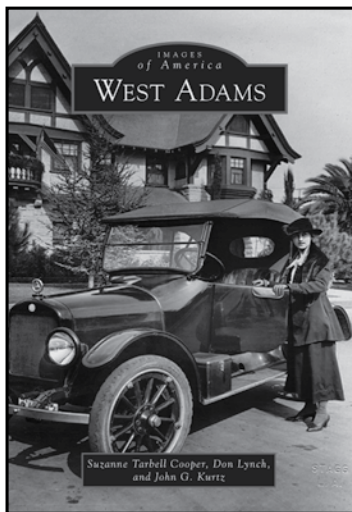
Fortune cookies, a Civil War tent, L.A.'s first fire "truck," menus from long-ago restaurants, a wooden nickel, and the city's first grand hotel each have a story to tell about the Los Angeles region's over 500 years of recorded history. On the last Sunday of April, the L.A. Heritage Alliance will host its Fourth Annual L.A. Heritage Day in partnership with El Pueblo Historical Monument, to share this history through tours, five museums, a scavenger hunt, children's activities, presentations, giveaways, food, and other activities. More than 50 historical-focused organizations, including West Adams Heritage Association (WAHA), will have booths at the event.

"In an area sometimes perceived as having no 'real' history, L.A. Heritage Day is an opportunity for people to learn about and enjoy the fascinating people, places, and events that have shaped Southern California," said Cindy Olnick, spokesperson for the Los Angeles Conservancy. "It's also a chance to learn about the incredible variety of local preservation groups, museums, libraries, and historical societies serving people today throughout Los Angeles County."

"With so many groups attending this event, there will be something for everyone. The legacy of the Mexican, Chinese, Italian, Spanish and African immigrant communities along with our region's indigenous people will be honored for their role in making Los Angeles the diverse metropolis it is today," said Robert Andrade, General Manager of El Pueblo Historical Monument.

This year's L.A. Heritage Day will take place inside the historic Pico House at El Pueblo Historic Monument (<http://elpueblo.lacity.org/>), adjacent to Olvera Street and across the street from Union Station in downtown Los Angeles. El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument is the birthplace of L.A., the original site of the early pueblo where the city was founded in 1781. Special tours of Olvera Street, Avila Adobe, Chinese American Museum, and Plaza Firehouse Museum will be available.

Admission is free, including tours. The event is also sponsored in part by the Office of LA City Councilman Tom LaBonge and Project Restore. More information is available at www.laheritagealliance.org. Don't forget to stop by the WAHA table and say "hello." ●



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History Matters

Mount Vernon Junior H.S. Grand Reunion: Memorabilia Sought

A one-time only Grand Reunion for Mount Vernon Junior High School (currently known as Johnny Cochran Middle School) and its elementary schools for the period of 1930 through the 1950s will be held on **July 29, 2012**, at the Sportsmen's Lodge in Studio City.

Mount Vernon Junior High School opened in 1926 and for many years was the pre-eminent Junior High School in Los Angeles. Alta Loma, Arlington Heights, Burnside Avenue, Cienega, Marvin Avenue, Queen Anne, 6th Avenue, 24th Street, Virginia Road, and Wilton Place sent their students to Mount Vernon.


A few of the more notable alumni during this era were actors Rita Hayworth, Tab Hunter and George Takei; internationally famed pianist Eugene List; prosecutor, jurist and member of the 'Band of Brothers' Lynn "Buck" Compton; writer Charles Bukowski, Virginia Knight (wife of Governor Goodwin J. Knight), and, of course, Johnny Cochran.

The Reunion Committee is seeking copies of the *Tribune News-Advertiser*, a weekly newspaper in the 1940s and '50s, that published articles about the people, businesses and schools in the greater West Adams neighborhood. Also sought are Mount Vernon graduates, memorabilia, pictures, local histories, and other historical information from these neighborhoods during this era.

Please contact the Reunion Committee at mjordan1941@verizon.net. ●



Mount Vernon Junior High School in the 1920s



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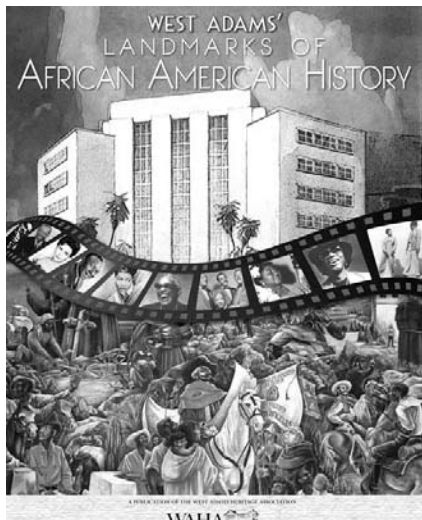
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 Sat-Sun 8:00am-4:00pm

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WEST ADAMS' LANDMARKS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY



WAHA presents *West Adams' Landmarks of African American History*, a compendium of photos and brief biographies of more than 70 prominent African Americans who lived in the West Adams area of Los Angeles and their homes. Also included are many buildings of historical importance to the African American community.

Inside the pages of *West Adams: Landmarks of African American History*, you'll learn about religious and civic institutions that play significant roles in West Adams' (and Los Angeles') black heritage, along with civil rights leaders, entertainers, sports figures, wartime heroes, and trailblazers in their fields and who all helped change the face of Los Angeles. *44 pages, 8-1/2 X 11, glossy, full color throughout. \$10.*

Purchase at www.WestAdamsHeritage.org (click on "WAHA store" — "WAHA books").

Take advantage of your paid WAHA membership! These vendors offer discounts to WAHA members. Please be sure to thank them for their support when you use their services.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

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

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Washington Dog & Cat Hospital

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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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Los Angeles, CA 90018

_____ Please DO NOT include my name, address, e-mail, or telephone in the WAHA membership directory.

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.



West Adams Heritage Association
2263 S. Harvard Boulevard
Historic West Adams
Los Angeles California 90018
323-735-WAHA (323-735-9242)
www.WestAdamsHeritage.org

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

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This Newsletter is published 10 times a year

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

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WAHA's Spring 2012 Calendar for History Buffs and Preservation Advocates

APRIL

Saturday, April 28:

Titanic 100th Anniversary event

Sunday, April 29:

Heritage Day at El Pueblo Monument

MAY

Thursday-Saturday, May 3-5:

California Preservation Foundation Annual Conference in Oakland

Sunday, May 6:

WAHA's Annual Preservation Brunch at the restored Glen Lukens Home & Studio, designed by Raphael Soriano



Saturday, May 19:

Annual HPOZ Conference

JUNE

Saturday, June 9

WAHA's Annual Spring Historic Homes & Architecture Tour --
Pathways to Yesteryear: Strolling the Street of Dreams



Visit Chester Place and St. James Park, on and off Adams Boulevard, the Street of Dreams



Calendar ✓

Upcoming Events

APRIL

Saturday, April 28, 2 p.m.:

WAHA Steps Out: Titanic 100th Anniversary
(see page 3)

Sunday, April 29:

L.A. Heritage Day at El Pueblo Monument
(see page 1)

MAY

Sunday, May 6:

WAHA's Annual Preservation Brunch at the
Raphael Soriano/Glenn Lukens Home & Studio
(see page 1)

Thursday, May 17:

WAHA Newcomers Dessert
(see page 1)

JUNE

Saturday, June 9:

WAHA's Annual Spring Historic
Homes & Architecture Tour
(see page 2)



From the Victorian Era to Modern Times: Two Great Preservation Events

*Celebrate the Restoration of the Raphael
Soriano / Glenn Lukens Home & Studio at
WAHA's Annual Preservation Brunch*

Sunday, May 6

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Tour this Modernist masterpiece, hear
about its path from wreck to wonderful,
and enjoy Mimosas and brunch.**

(See page 1 for complete information)



WAHA's Annual Spring Homes & Architecture Tour

*Pathways to Yesteryear:
Strolling the Street of Dreams*

Saturday, June 9


10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**From a Queen Anne cottage and a grand
mansion (and more!), this tour explores the
Late Victorian Era in West Adams.**

(See page 2 for more information)

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

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 2012. All rights for graphic and written material appearing in the newsletter are reserved. Contact Director of Publications for permission.

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