



The Glendale Historical Society

THE TGHS NEWSLETTER

Volume 15, Number 1

January 1994

ALEX THEATRE REOPENS

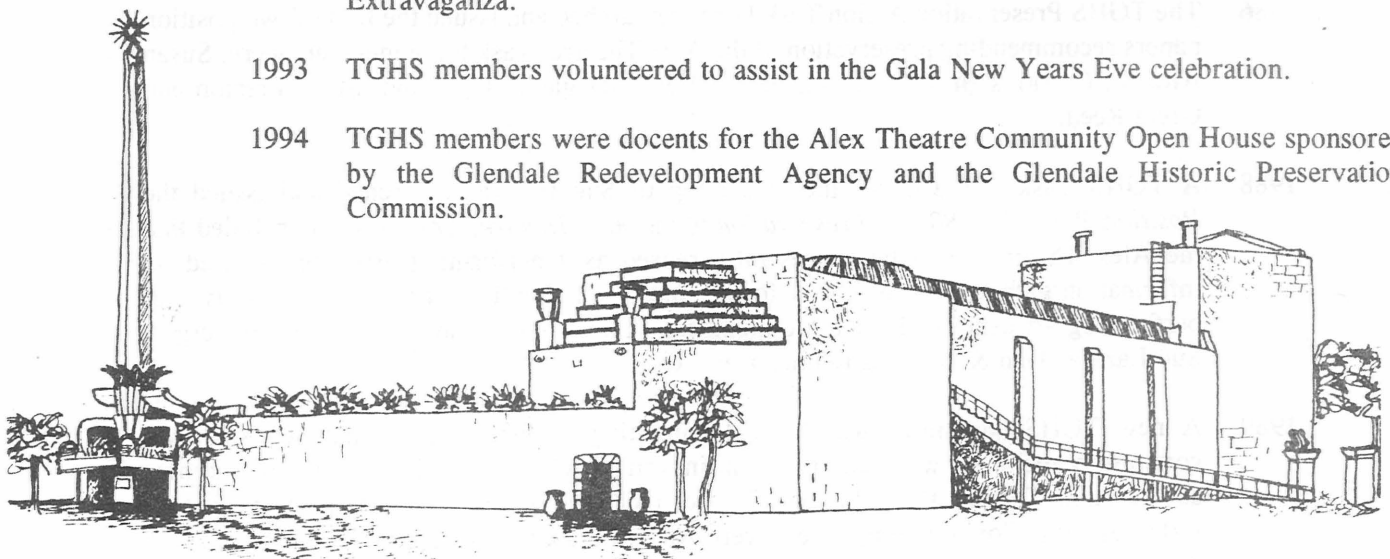
Culminates Many Years of TGHS Involvement

The grand reopening celebrations of the Alex Theatre occurred just after this newsletter went to press. The April issue will include coverage on the opening celebrations. This article outlines the involvement of The Glendale Historical Society in the efforts to preserve the Alex over the last eight years.

- 1986 The TGHS Preservation Action Task Force researched and issued the first of two position papers recommending preservation of the Alex Theatre. Task force members were: Susan Allison, Catriona Bryan, Georgia Kajer-Weis, Margaret Hammond, Steve Preston and Greta Reed.
- 1988 A TGHS Task Force under the leadership of Sue Lazara researched and issued the *Position Paper No. 88-1 -- Preservation of the Alex Theatre*. This report concluded that the Alex Theatre could be successfully reused as a performing arts center based on information gathered on over fifty former movie palaces that were finding new lives as performing art centers. Task force members were: Jeanne Graves, Connie Humberger, Sue Lazara, Dan & Barbara Leimeter and David Smith.
- 1989 A new TGHS committee was formed consisting of three TGHS members and two community members with entertainment industry backgrounds. This committee, known as the Alex Theatre Revitalization Project (ATRP), organized the two evening Alex Extravaganza. Committee members were Andrea Humberger, Connie Humberger, Paul Shipton, David Smith and Ralph Ziegler.

ALEX THEATRE REOPENS - (CONTINUED)

- 1990 ATRP announced that Bob Hope agreed to be Honorary Chair of the Alex Theatre Revitalization Project and that he would attend the gala. Numerous TGHS volunteers joined the effort by helping with publicity, writing program notes, stuffing envelopes and many other uncelebrated but vital tasks that made the Extravaganza possible.
- 1990 On September 26 & 27 Paul Shipton directed a fifty member cast in *Alexander Then and Now*, the first live performance on the Alex stage in over forty years. Two near sell-out performances galvanized community support for the revitalization of the Alex Theatre.
- 1990 ATRP moved forward by organizing a series of meetings involving city officials, arts organizations and community leaders with theater consultant Daniel Pierotti. Funds from the Alex Extravaganza paid for the costs of these meetings.
- 1991 The Glendale Redevelopment Agency appointed the Committee for Arts at the Alex (CAA) composed of a broad base of community members under the leadership of Chairman Larry Clarke. Andrea Humberger and David Smith are appointed as representatives from The Glendale Historical Society. TGHS and ATRP supported the CAA by reprinting the 1988 position paper, providing copies of the video tape of *Alexander Then and Now*, and providing other historical materials.
- 1992 The Alex Regional Theatre Board was created to oversee the Alex Theatre project. TGHS President, Andrea Humberger was appointed to this board.
- 1992-3 Andrea Humberger, as an ART Board member, continued her strong advocacy for a high quality preservation project. TGHS supported the ART Board by providing historical materials.
- 1993 The Glendale Historical Society's Alex Theatre Revitalization Project donated \$5,000 to restore the sparkle effect to the ball at the top of the Alex spire. This donation was followed by a \$1,000 donation toward the replication of the two urns for the front of the Alex auditorium. These donations came were from funds raised during the Alex Extravaganza.
- 1993 TGHS members volunteered to assist in the Gala New Years Eve celebration.
- 1994 TGHS members were docents for the Alex Theatre Community Open House sponsored by the Glendale Redevelopment Agency and the Glendale Historic Preservation Commission.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There are other historic buildings besides the Alex Theatre

By David L. Smith

The reopening of the Alex Theatre has dramatically demonstrated the value of historic preservation to Glendale.

To many people, preservation is perceived as a Herculean effort that may be culturally or artistically important but makes little economic or practical sense.

The Alex Theatre made economic sense by allowing Glendale to have a unique, first-class theater at an affordable cost. Restoration also reduced planning and construction time from the usual five years for new construction to less than two years. The downtown business district will benefit from the new nighttime activity. Crowds will be drawn to Brand for the musicals, Glendale Symphony Orchestra, and other attractions at the Alex Theatre.

When TGHS started talking about the Alex Theatre there were many naysayers. They had every reason imaginable for not preserving the Alex. It was either: "too expensive," "too big," "too small," "too ugly," "not grand enough," "an old dump," "unsafe," or "looked like a spouting humpback whale."

TGHS was instrumental in bringing about the revitalization of the Alex by raising public awareness, providing factual information that refuted many of negatives and by advocating quality preservation. The many TGHS members that got involved in the process made a difference.

The ART Board, which was responsible for the restoration, must be recognized for its creativity, its business-like approach to controlling costs, and for bringing in professionals knowledgeable in preservation.

Now that the Alex Theatre is completed we must turn our attention to the other remaining historic buildings in the downtown area that are threatened by a development mentality that sounds much like the old Alex naysayers. They presume that all existing structures must be removed since they are old. This makes no more sense than saying that every old building is worthy of preservation.

The Redevelopment Agency and the Glendale Partners are paying for a master plan for downtown Glendale in response to the failure of redevelopment to attract retail businesses to Brand. We suggest that these planners consider the negative effects that inconsistent policies have caused and to avoid repeating these mistakes. An example of inconsistent policy was the decision to approve construction of the movie theaters on Maryland and Orange while the agency was considering ways to attract nighttime activity to Brand. The removal of the movie theaters from Brand contributed to the failure to achieve this redevelopment objective.

The project currently under consideration for the block bounded by Brand, Maryland, Broadway and Harvard is an example of this inconsistency. The artist's renderings show a shopping center with a definite "old town" look to it. Yet the project results in the demolition of every building in the block. Three Alfred Priest designed buildings would be lost including the California Federal Bank building at Harvard and Brand. If an "old town" look is desired why not incorporate parts of the original old town rather than building a complete replacement?

There are other buildings of interest along Brand Blvd such as the Glendale Federal Building, which is an important example of 1950's architecture, and the Woolworth store that deserve to be considered as part of a revitalized downtown.

We encourage the Redevelopment Agency to include historic preservation as an integral part of any plans to revitalize downtown Glendale. It is vital the planning process begins by considering the inclusion of historic buildings before most of the design issues are decided upon. This will result in more effective preservation and reduce the adversarial contentions that occur when a historic building is threatened.

You can help keep Glendale's heritage alive by joining one of our committees. The work of our committees made a difference to the Alex Theatre and can do so again for the other historic buildings in Glendale. For information on you can become involved please refer to the "Committees on the Move" section of this newsletter.

COMMITTEES ON THE MOVE

Exciting things happening in our committees. The following articles provide reports from committee chairs.

1994 AWARDS COMMITTEE

*Chair: Andrea Humberger
(818)-957-2615*

The annual TGHS awards presentation honors TGHS members and others in the community for their leadership, service and contributions to the celebration and preservation of Glendale's heritage. Preliminary plans are for this year's presentation and festivities to held during Historic Preservation Week in May. Volunteers are needed to make award recommendations to the Board of Directors and to plan the event ceremony. Please contact Andrea Humberger.

DOCTORS' HOUSE DOCENT GUILD

*Coordinator: Isabelle Meyer
(818)-242-4290*

December proved to be a very busy and rewarding month for the docents at the Doctors' House. The two Christmas events turned out more successfully than we had hoped.

On December 4th, we held the first-ever Candlelight Tour of the Doctors' House. Merry Franzen and Isabelle Meyer decorated the house with traditional Victorian trimmings and greenery provided by the Department of Parks and Recreation. Careful planning and the approval of the Fire Department assured a safe staging, with numerous candles placed throughout the house. To add to the safety of the event, the candles were supplemented with light from wall sconces. The soft, flickering lights showed the house and its furnishing to their best advantage and even those familiar with the museum commented on how magically transformed everything seemed.

Thanks to excellent publicity by Terry Richman, attendance during the two-hour period Saturday night was an astounding 360. A docent was needed for each room to enable a constant stream of visitors to

move through the house. Thanks to the dedication of the docents who freed themselves from other holiday commitments to help out, everything ran very smoothly. At the end of the tour, the guests were treated to free refreshments and there was a lively flow of foot -traffic up and down the driveway lit with luminaries. Several TGHS members escorted visitors safely to the house through the crisp night air.

It was obvious from the comments made to docents that everyone appreciated the fact that this event was completely free of charge, which enabled people to bring their whole family and enjoy a rare evening of peaceful reminiscing about our past. Donations for the evening amounted to \$300 and attendance for the following day was boosted to 73 as a result of lingering publicity effects.

On the second Sunday of the month, we invited area merchants to display and sell their wares (Victorian clothing, jewelry, and Victorian-style gift items) during regular four hours. Nine merchants set up tables and the additional effort attracted 136 people between 2 and 4 pm. Although merchants' sales proved disappointing, the sale by Andrea Humberger and Jean Kohler of TGHS merchandise was very successful. Doyle Kutch (who had also handled the refreshments on the 4th) and his assistants sold the many baked goods provided by TGHS members.

The number of visitors at these two events gave a much-needed boost the gradually dwindling number of visitors to the house. New interest was stirred and many people expressed their wish to return in the future to view our changing displays and see the house in daylight.

Many thanks to all the people who contributed to the success of these two events. They demonstrated that it can be very rewarding to try something new, and we hope to use the confidence in the talents of effectiveness of the our group to plan for other exciting events in the coming year.

Committees on the Move

LANDMARK DESIGNATION

*Organizational Chair: David Smith
(818)507-1999*

This newly created committee is to research, evaluate, document and nominate buildings to the local landmark list and the National Register of Historic Places. Watch for announcement of the first meeting. Anyone interested in joining this important effort to save Glendale's landmarks is invited to attend. Call David Smith for additional information.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

*Chair: Phyllis Kenney
(818)-507-6531*

The number of TGHS members remains high. This is remarkable as many clubs are losing members these days with so much competition and because people have a limit on their time and expenses in this "slow down" period.

Our members can help us insure that this momentum continues. Our programs and celebrations continue to be well attended. However, if each member would ask a friend to a party or a general meeting, more people in the community would be aware of all the worthwhile efforts TGHS makes in trying to keep Glendale's heritage alive.

So, mark your 1994 calendars for the first Wednesday of each month and for all our special events (when you get the flyer). As you see these dates each month, remind yourself to invite a special friend or business associate to attend the meeting or event with you. Show them how exciting and rewarding your TGHS membership is to you. If each member recruited one new member, TGHS would instantly double membership.

NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

*Organizational Chair: William Shepherd
(818)-241-8086*

A few months ago the Board of Directors created the new Neighborhood Preservation Committee. A primary goal of this committee is to work with neighborhood homeowner groups to recognize historic homes and buildings in their neighborhood. The committee also wants to act as a catalysis to have the various groups work with each other and with TGHS to preserve historic elements in their neighborhoods.

Neighborhood preservation can bring new pride to an area. By preserving historically significant sites, neighborhoods can help maintain and even increase their property values. Groups interested in the integrity of their neighborhood and The Glendale Historical Society have common goals. We both want to preserve our community.

The Neighborhood Preservation committee needs volunteers to help us work with the community groups. We are especially looking for historical society members who are also members of the various homeowner groups. Our goal is to have at least one representative from each of the homeowner groups on our committee. That person can take historic preservation issues to their neighborhood group and explain historical society positions. These liaisons will also bring to the historical society concerns of the neighborhood associations.

We hope to have our first organizational meeting in late January or early February. If interested in this committee, please call William Shepherd.

Committees on the Move

NELL SHIPMAN- DOCTORS' HOUSE

*Chair: Terry Richman
(818)-241-5621*

A committee has been formed to consider various ideas to promote Nell Shipman's, one-time residency at the Doctors' House. The silent screen actress, writer, director and independent producer lived in the house from 1917-1920 with her parents, husband and son.

Six of her films have been restored, and we may present a Shipman Film Festival (which has had a good response in other parts of the country). We are also considering special tours at the house, featuring her memorabilia for sale while running a video in the display room on her life and contributions. Another possibility is to present a one-woman show called "Between Pictures: The Nell Shipman Story" which was successfully produced in Boise, Idaho.

Nell's story is fascinating - full of tragedies, adventures, and her fierce independence and dedication to her art. She has earned the interest and respect of animal rights activities, feminists and silent film buffs.

Our committee is currently made up of Andrea Humberger, Suzanne McKay, Terry Richman, Anna Rundle & David Smith. We will welcome any other TGHS members who would to join us. If you have any suggestions for promoting the Shipman/Doctors' House connection or know individuals or groups that might want to learn about her, please pass the information along to one of the committee members. Thanks!

PRESERVATION ADVOCACY

*Chair: Andrea Humberger
(818)-957-2615*

The Preservation Advocacy Committee is an important TGHS committee which monitors preservation issues in Glendale, attends and speaks on behalf of TGHS at public hearings, provides input to the City on projects impacting vintage and historic buildings, and attends the monthly meetings of the City's Historic Preservation Commission. After

several years of operating on an ad hoc basis on important issues such as the Alex Theatre and the Public Services Building, the Preservation Advocacy Committee will resume regular monthly meetings starting in February. We count on seeing many returning members and encourage new members to join this active committee. Please contact Andrea Humberger for more information or to receive meeting announcements.

SPEAKERS BUREAU

*Program Coordinator: David Smith
(818)-507-1999*

We have purchased a new slide projector, dusted off the slides and brought back to life the dormant TGHS Speakers Bureau. Speakers from TGHS are available to visit local civic groups, homeowners associations, senior centers, service clubs or any group that would be interested in seeing either of our two shows, "Historic Buildings of Glendale" and "the Restoration of the Doctors' House." To schedule a presentation, please contact the Program Coordinator.

Available speakers include Robert Newcomb, Phyllis Kenney and Margaret Hammond. If you are interested in volunteering to be a speaker please contact David Smith.

TOURS

*Chair: Art Fisher
(818)-246-7059*

As reported in the last *TGHS Newsletter*, TGHS is planning a spring tour of some of Glendale's churches. The tour committee will have its first meeting in January and is looking for additional volunteers to help plan the event. Planning will include site selection, working with the appropriate governing bodies to obtain permission to tour their churches, research on the churches' histories, tour logistics, publicity, tour publicity, and volunteer coordination. Additionally, docents will be needed to conduct tours of each site. If you can help with this event, please call Art Fisher.

Committees on the Move

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

*Chair: Caroline Beniasians
(818)353-7749*

As the newest member of the Board of Directors, Caroline wants to develop programs that will involve the youth of Glendale. One possibility would be a competition by youth groups for the best video that portrays some aspect of Glendale's Heritage. Also under consideration are ways to work with the local schools. If you have other suggestions for getting youth involved in historic preservation call Caroline.

EDITOR NEEDED

As reported in the last *TGHS Quarterly*, after many years of dedicated service, Suzanne McKay resigned as Editor of this publication. Interim co-editors, William Shepherd and David Smith, are anxiously seeking a volunteer to assume duties as editor of the *TGHS Quarterly* starting with the next edition. Please call either of the co-editors if you are interested in taking on this rewarding project.

ENDOWMENT FUND

Richard Montgomery, at TGHS charter member, has established an endowment fund with the Glendale Community Foundation for the benefit of The Glendale Historical Society. The Foundation invests the donations, insures that the principal amount is never touched and gives the interest earned to TGHS. This guarantees a permanent source of support.

Donations to the fund make excellent memorials for relatives or friends, and thoughtful remembrances for birthdays, anniversaries or other special occasions. Donations may be made in any amount and are tax deductible.

Many Glendale citizens have been upset by the loss of our special landmarks such as the Public Services Building and the Egyptian Village Cafe. A donation to the endowment fund is a terrific way to honor your favorite building and will help TGHS in its preservation efforts.

For more information, please contact either Tom Miller at the Glendale Community Foundation 818-241-8040 or David Smith at 818-507-1999.

WISHFUL THINKING

The Glendale Historical Society is seeking office space at little or no cost to the organization. For some time now, most of our activities have been conducted from various members' homes and businesses. Our files and resources are scattered and we have need to consolidate them into a central place.

To ensure that our organization continues to expand its role in protecting and promoting Glendale's heritage, we are establishing a "TGHS Wish List". We hope, through this list, to appeal to our members who have resources they may wish to donate for our use. The first "TGHS Wish List" is below.

Office Space
Office Furnishings (once we obtain space)
Office Equipment (once we obtain space)
Additional Committee Volunteers

In addition, monetary donations to the organization are always welcome.

Please contact David Smith at (818) 507-1999 or William Shepherd at (818) 241-8086, if you can help.

TGHS HOLIDAY PARTY

The annual TGHS Holiday Party was a grand success. On December 5, 1993, TGHS members and friends gathered at the Tuesday Afternoon Club for its annual holiday party. Special guests included Ellen and Bruce Perry and City Councilman, Larry Zarian. President David Smith awarded several potted poinsettia plants to lucky attendees who won these door prizes by having Christmas birthdays, New Year's birthdays, being charter members of TGHS, etc.

Special thanks for making the event a triumph go to Margaret Hammond for setting up and bringing the main food dishes, beverages and door prizes, David Smith for designing the invitations, Daphne Lindstrum for help in mailing the invitations and to Sid Gordon for providing music.

Members are asked to start thinking about next year's party. As always, we would like to hold the party in a historic site. In the spring, the Board of Directors will set up a committee to plan the 1994 event.

Doctors' House Candlelight Tour



Docents pose after busy two hours of showing house to 360 visitors.



Doctors' House glows during its first nighttime tour.

VICE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Keeping informed on the issues

By William M. Shepherd

One reason The Glendale Historical Society exists is to urge the preservation of historically significant sites in Glendale. We do this through several ways: our monthly educational meetings, attendance at public hearings, this newsletter, letters to the editor of local newspapers, etc. But, it is not enough that TGHS exhort historic preservation. It is also necessary for our individual members to be fully aware of local preservation issues and of what actions our elected officials are taking to ensure our heritage will be here for future generations.

I am urging all of our members to keep informed about local issues that impact historic preservation. For example, the City of Glendale through the Redevelopment Agency and in working with the Glendale Partners is making plans to redevelop the downtown block just south of the Exchange. In that block are several historic structures which should be rehabilitated and integrated into the final plan. But, the early plans for this project provide for demolition of the entire block and rebuilding it. What is needed is some creative thinking by our elected officials before plans for this area are set in concrete. It is imperative that all of our members keep apprised of the plans for this block. Members should let members of City Council know that we want the historical buildings in this area rehabilitated and incorporated into the final project. We do not want them torn down and an artificial "old town look" built to replace them.

Members of TGHS should follow City Council's actions in this project and any other activity which could impact historic preservation within our community. We must continue to remind them that it is our community. Glendale is not the personal property of a small group of business persons,

some of who do not even reside in the city. Lastly, keep in mind that you and I elected council members to represent us. As individuals, you and I should keep informed as to what action each individual member of council is doing toward historic preservation.

Along with other matters of importance to us, we should consider individual council member's historic preservation stances when deciding how to mark our next City Council ballot.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Public Meetings: When & Where

Glendale Redevelopment Agency & Glendale City Council

Every Tuesday 1:30 and 2:00 p.m.
613 E Broadway
City Hall - Council Chambers

Historic Preservation Commission

First Monday of the month - 2:00 p.m.
633 E Broadway
Municipal Services Building Room 105

Environmental & Planning Board

Thursdays 3:00 p.m.
633 E Broadway
Municipal Services Building Room 106

TGHS LOSES A FRIEND

Just after *TGHS Quarterly's* editorial deadline, we were saddened to learn of the passing of Paul Shipton. Paul was an invaluable member of the Alex Theatre Revitalization Project and wrote, staged, directed and choreographed *Alexander Then & Now*.

A memorial article about the remarkable accomplishments of this great friend of The Glendale Historical Society will be featured in the April issue of the *TGHS Quarterly*.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

TGHS and other preservation organizations have some future events you may wish to consider attending:

- February 2, 1994 TGHS General Membership Meeting. The California Historic Route 66 Association will present a slide show about California sections of Route 66. 7:30 p.m. at the Glendale Federal Bank, 401 N. Brand Blvd. Public welcome. Free.
- February 26, 1994 California Preservation Foundation. 11th Annual Preservation Design Awards Event. 5:30 p.m. at Union Station's historic Fred Harvey Restaurant. For ticket information contact the Ruthann Lehrer at (310) 570-6864.
- March 2, 1994 TGHS General Membership Meeting. Subject to be announced. 7:30 p.m. at the Glendale Federal Bank, 401 N. Brand Blvd. Public welcome. Free.
- April 6, 1994 TGHS General Membership Meeting. Subject to be announced. 7:30 p.m. at the Glendale Federal Bank, 401 N. Brand Blvd. Public welcome. Free.
- May 1, 1994 TGHS General Membership Meeting. Subject to be announced. 7:30 p.m. at the Glendale Federal Bank, 401 N. Brand Blvd. Public welcome. Free.
- May, 1994 California Preservation Foundation. Annual conference. Contact CPF at (510) 763-0972 for additional information.
- May, 1994 TGHS Annual Awards Ceremony. Further information to be announced in April Newsletter.
- June 1, 1994 TGHS General Membership Meeting. Annual business meeting, committee reports, election of Board of Directors. 7:30 p.m. at the Glendale Federal Bank, 401 N. Brand Blvd.
- June 14-18, 1994 League of Historic American Theatres. 18th Annual Conference and Theatre Tour. For more information contact: League of Historic American Theatres, 1511 K Street, NW, #923, Washington D.C. 20005, (202) 783-6966.

-----Continuing-----

- Sundays Doctors' House Tours. Brand Park. 1601 W. Mountain. Open to public. Free. Docent guided tours of the restored Queen Anne-Eastlake home. Open 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.; last tour begins at 3:40 p.m. Special tours by arrangement. For further information: (818) 242-7447.

NEW MEMBERS

A special welcome to the following new members who have recently joined our organization:

Renee Keslet
Peter Musurlian
Mrs. Sally Ross
Barry Shipman

Renewing Sustaining Members

Howard D. Anderson
Mr. & Mrs. Harlan Banks

Renewing Corporate Members

Tawana Lamont - Sammons Cable
Knight Insurance Agency

EDITORIAL DEADLINES

TGHS QUARTERLY is published January, April, July and October by the Glendale Historical Society.

Editorial deadline for submission to the April 1994 edition is February 28, 1994 and for the July 1994 issue the deadline is May 31, 1994.

The editors welcome letters and articles relevant to Glendale heritage from members or other interested parties. Please mail to: The Editors, The Glendale Historical Society, P.O. Box 4173, Glendale, CA 91202.

THANKS

A special thanks from the Co-Editors to the committee chairs for submitting their articles and to Daphne Lindstrum for handling the mailing.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Glendale Historical Society is a non-profit tax exempt organization. Membership is open to men and women of all ages who are interested in the preservation and appreciation of the heritage of Glendale. Dues are for one-year.

Name

Address

City & Zip Code

Telephone

- Individual \$20
- Family/Dual \$35
- Senior/Student Individual \$10
- Sustaining \$50
- Small Business \$35
- Corporate \$100
- Non-Profit Organizations \$25

Please make your checks payable to:
The Glendale Historical Society
P.O. Box 4173, Glendale, CA 91202

Please indicate any committees or areas of interest.

- Doctors' House
- Landmark Designation
- Membership
- Neighborhood Preservation
- Preservation Advocacy
- Tours
- Youth Involvement

The Glendale Historical Society
Officers & Directors

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David L. Smith - *President*
William Shepherd - *Vice President*
Dan Cabrera - *Secretary*
Richard Montgomery - *Treasurer*

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Wishes You A

Happy New Year

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