



The Glendale Historical Society

TGHS QUARTERLY

Volume 21, Number 3

Summer 2000

COMING SOON 20 YEARS ANNIVERSARY OF THE DOCTORS' HOUSE MOVE

By: Isabelle Meyer

Its been 20 years since a small group of Glendale residents banded together to save the historic Doctors' House. That hard working group's efforts resulted in the moving and restoration of one of the City's most historic treasures. On **September 2000**, TGHS will celebrate the 20 year anniversary of the moving of the house from its original location on the corner of Wilson and Belmont Streets to Brand Park. A grand celebration is being planned to commemorate the event.

Our Anniversary Committee consisting of Carole Dougherty, Terry Richman, Michael Kouri and myself have been preparing for the **20th Anniversary of the Relocation of the Doctors' House**. The names of approximately 12 TGHS members will be randomly selected and they will be invited to ride in the Vintage Car Caravan along with TGHS Board members, docents and City dignitaries along the original relocation route. So, please mark **September 16** on your calendars. We hope that those of you who have involved with the museum from the beginning will be on hand at Brand Park for the ice cream social to share memories of our grass-roots effort. Do plan to come and bring friends and neighbors to this free event. Any ideas on this event will be most welcome. Contact a member of the Board of Directors with any questions or suggestions you may have.

To get ready for the celebration, the Doctors' House Museum was closed for summer break during the month of July. But, that did not mean things were not happening behind the scenes. The four weeks were put to good use by the City in an effort to keep the indoor flooring from deteriorating any further. Many feet have been pounding the wooden floors over the years the museum has been open to the public, and the floors urgently needed a gentle refinishing. Thanks to Golden Hardwood Floors, the whole downstairs is now gleaming brightly again, and a regular maintenance schedule should keep the floors looking good for many years to come. Emily Wargo, her mother, Anne, and I shifted all the furnishings from room to room with the help of caretaker Juan Morales and his crew - always one step ahead of the buffing and waxing equipment!

One thing that will be different as of August is that, with the City's approval, we will be charging a nominal \$1 entry fee for adults (ages 16 and over) to visit the museum. With voluntary donations fluctuating in the 27¢ to 33¢ per visitor range, we can no longer maintain the museum. School groups and other children visitors will still be free, except at Christmas, when all Candlelight Tour visitors will be asked to \$1. Members of The Glendale Historical Society will receive free entry as a benefit of membership; and those members are encouraged to take advantage of their membership and visit the museum often.

**FABULOUS FIFTIES
GLENDALE FEDERAL BUILDING
MAY DISAPPEAR....**

BY: Arlene Vidor and Rosemarie Ibanez

We recently became aware that the "Glen Fed" Building at 401 North Brand Boulevard, that shining example of mid-20th century architectural quirkiness, may be remodeled to look like every other building on Brand Boulevard (ugh). Not all the facts are known yet, but we thought many of you would want to know about this.

"Glen Fed" had been the signature building on Glendale's skyline from the time it was built through the 1970's and remains the City's most significant, if not *only*, example of high rise modernism. Built in 1958, the Building and its annex have been home to TGHS monthly meetings, Dupar's, the Model A Club and other landmark Glendale businesses.

The building is now home to Cal Fed Bank, the result of that bank's merger with Glendale Federal in 1998. The bank continues to display the City's annual Christmas Tree on its rooftop, after public outcry that the tradition be continued.

Although many among us are not big fans of 1950's architecture, we still have fond memories of and feelings for this off-beat character.

At a recent TGHS Board of Directors' meeting it seemed that everyone had a story about Glen Fed. We are excited about a preservation movement for this building because it is the first major building of its vintage (yes folks, "vintage" is the right word here!) to be a target for a grass roots preservation movement. Glen Fed is very much a part of Glendale's Golden Era and folklore. And stylewise.....well let's face it....it has no equal.

Do you have a memory or story you would like to share with us about Glen Fed? If so, please let us know. Updates will be provided on the Glen Fed story in future newsletters.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By: Deborah Dentler

I hope you had a chance this summer, as I did, to visit some historical sites. I made my semi-annual pilgrimage to my family's home in Lexington, Massachusetts for Fourth of July. Our children were taken, as always, to see the "rude bridge that arched the flood" in Concord, where their maternal ancestor, Joseph Hosmer, roused local farmers to resist the Redcoats. A cardboard life-size cut-out of Hosmer stands at the entrance to the museum that graces the new federally-funded Battle Road. My 11-year old is already much taller than our ancestor!

I also visited London and Portugal. I was astounded to see the importance placed on historic preservation in Portugal, Western Europe's poorest nation. European Union funds are being poured into preserving even humble village squares and medieval castles alike. I was inspired to find many great examples of Art Nouveau and later, Moderne, building and decoration beautifully preserved, complete with bi-lingual explanatory signage in the cities of Porto, Coimbra, and Lisbon.

Did your vacation lead you to discover historic preservation projects that could inspire us in Glendale? Send us your vacation memories for the newsletter!

**E-MAIL AND
PHONE TREE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

This fall the Society will embark on a few new approaches to old problems: how to increase attendance at our monthly meetings and at local government meetings affecting our city, and how to reduce the burdens of membership mailings.

E-Mail - We would like to start notifying members of events, whenever possible, by e-mail and telephone. If you are an e-mail user and would like to receive notices of meetings, please send me an e-mail to: ddentler@earthlink.net.

(E-Mail Continued on Page 7)

Celebrate!

20th Anniversary

of the

Relocation of the Doctors' House

at an old fashioned

Ice Cream Social

September 16, 2000
2-6 p.m.

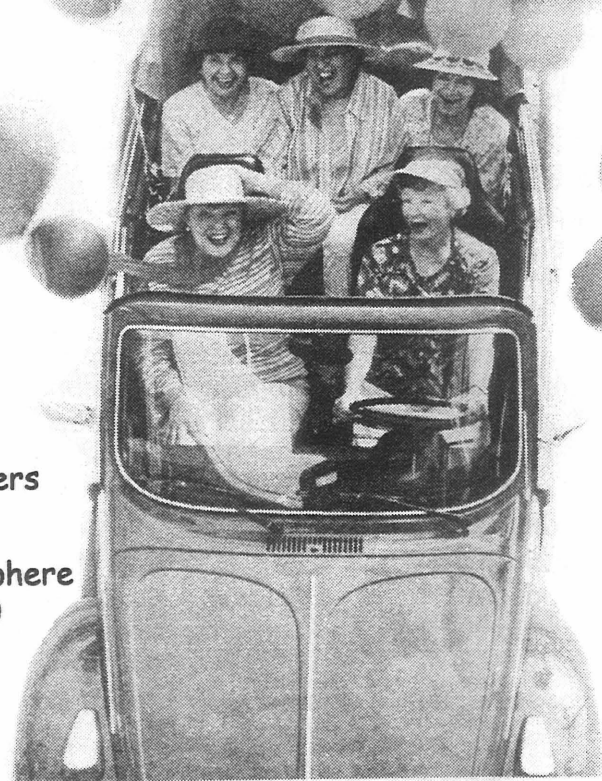
FREE ADMISSION

Brand Park

1601 Mountain Avenue
(at Western) in Glendale

- 2-3 p.m. Caravan of vintage cars along
the 1980 relocation route
- 3-6 p.m. Ice cream at old fashioned prices
Games for players of all ages
Music by Barber Shop Quartet
Reminiscing about the relocation
and restoration
Raffle of a reproduction antique doll
- 5 p.m. Dedication of the Gazebo donor
and volunteer plaques
Dedication of the Montgomery Family
Memorial Orchard
Presentation of quilt recognizing volunteers

OPTIONAL: Wear white to add to the festive atmosphere
INFORMATION: (818) 242-4290 or (818) 845-5400



**THE ALEX THEATRE
75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

By: Andrea Humberger

The Alex Theatre will launch its 75th Anniversary Season with two celebrations on Saturday, September 9, 2000 in appreciation of the patrons of the Alex Theatre and the City of Glendale. The 75th Anniversary Committee, Chaired by Andrea Humberger, is planning an exciting year-long celebration to commemorate this milestone in the history of The Alex Theatre, one of Southern California's most important landmarks. The goal is to celebrate this occasion with the Glendale community and the September and other year-long events have been planned, and priced, with that goal in mind. The Committee hopes everyone will join it to be introduced or re-introduced to the wonderful venue that has anchored Brand Boulevard for three-quarters of a century.

September 9 begins with A Day at the Alex Theatre - 75th Birthday Bash, a free family event from Noon - 4:00 p.m., in the forecourt and the street in front of the theatre with singers, dancers, bands, entertainers, face painters, clowns and a birthday cake.

The 75th Birthday Bash is followed by A Night at the Alex Theatre - 75th Anniversary Show at 8:00 p.m. The evening event, priced in honor of the occasion at \$7.50 per person, will re-create the original opening night of the theatre in 1925, with vaudeville acts, dance numbers, newsreels, an orchestra, and excerpts from "Lightnin'", the 1925 silent film directed by John Ford, that opened The Alex. The 75th Anniversary Show is produced by Terry Hill and Milt Larsen. Tickets are only available at the box office. For further information call 800-414-ALEX.

The evening starts at 7 p.m. with a parade of vintage automobiles dropping off celebrities in front of the theatre. Guests will be greeted by kleig lights, a red carpet and a dixieland band in the forecourt. Steve Allen will be the master of ceremonies. An after show party is planned to conclude the day at 9:30 p.m. Nestlé USA, with headquarters in Glendale, is generously sponsoring the 75th anniversary season.

For some, the celebrations will offer a trip down

memory lane. For others it offers a sense of what the theatre was like in 1925, and what it has become: a local landmark that is known for quality presentations and the home to many of the region's best and well-known performing arts organizations.

Guided tours of The Alex will be also given during the 75th Anniversary Season on Saturdays November 4, 2000 and January 6, 2001 at 10:00 a.m. The tours will give guests a history of the theatre, discuss the architecture, and take guests throughout the entire venue, including back stage and dressing areas, normally not available to the public. For reservations call 818/243-7784 or reserve via e-mail at boxoffice@alextheatre.org.

The Alex Theatre, originally named the Alexander Theatre, first opened its doors September 4, 1925. The design, a unique combination of Greek and Egyptian influences, by noted local architects Arthur G. Lindley and Charles R. Selkirk, reflected the trend of the mid-twenties for building theatres with exotic motifs.

The opening night program included an overture by the Alexander Theatre Orchestra, a newsreel and movie shorts, the world premiere of the film 'Lightnin'', directed by John Ford, and eight vaudeville acts. The standing-room-only audience of over 2000 patrons for each of the two performances, was joined by overflowing crowds standing in the street, watching the searchlights and absorbing the excitement that was generated by having a premiere theatre opening in downtown Glendale.

By 1933, the major studios considered The Alex Theatre a prime preview location, where new movies would be tested on audiences. Close to the studios, Glendale's conservative middle-class clientele offered a good sounding board for the film industry - a position that the theatre held for almost half a century. Based on the audience response at the Alexander during the preview screening and the reaction cards filled out by attendees, the studios often rewrote or re-edited scenes.

The theatre survived the depression with free dish night and the advent of television with Cinemascope and Surround Sound. From its

premiere to the early nineties, it presented first run films, including the blockbusters *Gone With the Wind*, *Ben-Hur* and *Star Wars*. The final film was aptly *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* in 1991. The 100 foot neon-lit art deco marquee and tower, designed by theatre architect S. Charles Lee, were added in 1940, at the same time that the name was changed to *The Alex*.

The Alex Theatre was designated as a local landmark by the City of Glendale in 1977 and was listed in the prestigious National Register of Historic Places in 1996. In 1991, the Glendale City Council appointed a citizen task force to evaluate options and the Council accepted the recommendations that *The Alex* be preserved and revitalized as a performing arts center. It established *The Alex Regional Theatre Board*, a nonprofit corporation, to oversee the theatre's rehabilitation and operation. In 1992, the Glendale Redevelopment Agency purchased the theatre, and in 1993 began rehabilitation of the theatre for use as a center for the performing arts and film.

Much of the theater's original 1925 decorative painting and ornamentation was restored and the marquee and tower were returned to their 1940s glory. Enhancements included a stage house expansion and all new theatrical systems including sound, lighting and rigging.

The Alex Theatre reopened as a 1460-seat performing arts center with a gala grand opening on December 31, 1993. It was formally dedicated on January 2, 1994. It is now the City of Glendale's premiere venue presenting performances by its resident companies, performing arts attractions, and special films.

TGHS ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

By: Dr. Robert Newcomb

The June 7, 2000 Annual General Meeting of *The Glendale Historical* was the 20th Annual Membership Meeting of our Society; and hence, a most celebratory gathering. After the call to order and introductions, Margaret Hammond presented a Treasurer's Report. The report found the Society's finances in sound condition. As the Society is in the middle of its annual budget year, a more detailed report will be given

at one of Society's fall meetings, when next year's budget is adopted.

The central point of the evening's meeting was the election of four members of the Board of Directors. Normally three seats are up for election this year, but a vacancy on the Board resulted in the need to fill four seats. Board members Isabelle Meyer and David Smith were re-elected to new three year terms. Two new Directors, Arlene Vidor and Merry Franzen, were also elected to the Board. Arlene was elected to a three year term and Merry will fill the unexpired two year term.

Isabelle Meyer gave her annual report on the Doctors' House Museum operation. Among the items reported upon was that a new fireproof roof replaced the 20 year old roof that was aging and in need of work. Outstanding exhibits included a Quilt Exhibit, a joint event with the Jewel City Doll Club, and the annual Victorian Christmas. Throughout the year, the docents conducted special School tours and at the beginning of 2000 a special School Exhibit commemorating a century of the public schools in Glendale was installed.

Volunteers continued to be the driving force behind the successfulness of the museum. The hard working docents continue to provide tours each week. Periodic cleaning of the House by members of the Society kept the house shining. And special events are always aided by the help of other Society members. A Volunteer Recognition Quilt is being prepared by the Glendale Quilt Guild to recognize the work of the volunteers who give so generously of their time to the House.

A Preservation Action Report followed with special attention being paid to the Society's support and contributions to undertakings in the Historic Adams Square/Hill area of the City. The Society also supported the City's application for a grant request from the Getty Preservation Trust. The Society continues to keep its eyes upon current developments which impinge upon historic buildings or upon historic neighborhoods.

After the business meeting, those attending the meeting enjoyed refreshments and a few minutes to socialize with friends.

BRAND BIRTHDAY CELEBRATED!

By: William Shepherd

On May 6, 2000, Glendale held its annual Brand Birthday Celebration in Brand Park. The Park was named after Leslie Brand, one of Glendale's early citizens. It was Leslie Brand's 141st birthday that was being celebrated and the event included two historical tours.

The first was a walking tour to the Brand Cemetery. Park Rangers, Lin Dinh, Bill Lutton and George Strouble, led about 25 tour goers on a small hike up the hill and to the Brand family burial site. Along the way we saw a staircase to no where. Our guides stated that there are two theories about the staircase; it led either to a long ago razed hunting lodge or to a no longer standing radio tower. We also saw a small cave entrance. The cave was thought to have been used as storage for the hunting catches. It may have also been used to store dynamite when the California Conservation Corps was excavating a water run-off trench.

Once we arrived at the Brand family cemetery we visited the graves of the various family members. A small pyramid stands above the remains of Leslie and his wife, Mary Louise and Mr. Brand's parents. Other persons buried in the cemetery are all related to Mr. Brand.

The second highlight of the day was a tour of the Brand Library led by one of the library's fine docents. The Brand Library was originally Leslie and Mary Brand's home. Build in 1904, its Moorish exterior was based on the East Indian Pavilion from the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. The home was originally built as a summer residence, but the Brands made it their full time residence. Mr. Brand died April 10, 1925 at home. Mrs. Brand continued to live in the house until her death in October 1945. The Brand home and estate were left to the City as a library and park. The Brand home opened as Brand Library in 1956.

The original interior of the mansion was done in the Victorian style and included Tiffany glass in the doors and windows and an Italian tiled fireplace. Light fixtures could be lit by either electricity or gas. Early photographs of the solarium show a large seating area, with heavy

Victorian style furniture surrounded by ferns and other plants. Other photographs showed the typical high Victorian ceilings which contained rich paintings.

While on the tour, we learned that the City hopes to restore the structure to its original splendor including eliminating the fluorescent lighting and "cottage cheese" low ceilings. Much of the mansion would be used as reading rooms and the current art and music collections moved to a new addition to the structure. The plans are not final, so we will have to wait and hope.

DISNEY'S NEWEST GLENDALE PROJECT

By: Rosemarie Ibanez

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Disney's "Grand Central Creative Campus" was released for comment in July and public comment is due back to the Glendale Redevelopment Agency by September 4.

Part of the project includes plans for the old Glendale Municipal Airport facilities. According to the EIR, Disney plans to rehabilitate the Grand Central Air Terminal Building, on 1310 Air Way, for adaptive use. Disney will develop a "Visitors Center" in the building, and public access to the center will be available by reservation. The plans are to rehabilitate the original drop-off and turn-around at the entry of the Air Terminal for visitor traffic, and for landscaping to retain period features, like the two Canary Island palm trees.

TGHS review of the EIR is being done by our preservation committee, and comments from TGHS will be submitted to the Redevelopment Agency before the deadline. For members who are interested, the EIR is available through the City's Internet site: www.ci.glendale.ca.us. Members interested in providing input to future progress and plans for the Disney project can contact TGHS.

TGHS LECTURE SERIES REPORT

By: Dr. Robert Newcomb

The April 5 TGHS meeting featured guest speaker, Nancy Gneier, Executive Director, Travel Town Museum Foundation, in Griffith Park. Her topic concerned the painstaking restoration work which has been devoted at Travel Town toward bringing "The Little Nugget" parlor car back to its 1930's splendor. This famed car plied the route between Chicago and Los Angeles between 1937 and 1956 when the car was officially retired. Its elegant Victorian interior had been completely stripped by the time this restoration project began in 1987. The "before" and "after" photographs of the fabled car were most striking. The amount of work remaining to be achieved is considerable, but, when completed, this "Little Nugget" will be a central attraction at Travel Town.

Nancy also spoke about the International Society for the Preservation of Women in Railroading. This is an undertaking designed to retrieve and then to share with the public the dramatic tales and the outstanding personalities associated with this era in American railroading.

On May 3, our audience took a trip back into the History of Glendale when Florence Coutin spoke on The History of Judaism in Glendale. As a 50-year member of the congregation of Temple Sinai of Glendale, Florence was able to take us year-by-year and step-by-step through the spiritual and architectural evolution of this center of faith. From 1920 when the Sisterhood amid some Jewish families began worship and eventually saw to the establishment of a Temple School, there has been a continuity of practice of the faith and a gradual expansion and adornment of the Temple itself. Mosaic work, interior additions, Torahs of renown, all have been added by donors and the congregation itself over the course of the 60 years of the Temple's existence.

At the conclusion of Florence's formal presentation, a most fascinating series of questions were posed. The history of Orthodox worship in Glendale was sketched as well as historic changes in the climate in Glendale, through the years, regarding Judaism here in Glendale.

E-MAIL AND PHONE TREE

(Continued from Page 2)

Member Rosters - Some members have expressed interest in helping with a phone tree (telephone notice system of events). At our annual meeting in June, we voted to make the Society's membership roster available on request to any member. This will help us facilitate the phone tree. Use of the roster will be STRICTLY LIMITED to Society business. If you DO NOT WISH YOUR INFORMATION RELEASED, please leave a message on the TGHS answering machine by October 1, 2000: (818) 242-7447.

Meeting Notices - to reduce costs and paper-handling, the Board has decided to experiment with a new approach to advertising the 200-2001 lecture series. The monthly lectures will, as always, be advertised in the *Glendale News Press* calendar section and in our newsletter, but you will no longer receive a mailed notice each month. Instead, we will send members a quarterly notice announcing upcoming lectures for a 3-month period. Do let us know how you feel about this system.

TGHS QUARTERLY

Published by:

The Glendale Historical Society

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AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE GLENDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Glendale Historical Society invites you to become a member. The Society is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. Membership is open to all.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewel City Patron (\$500) | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual (\$20) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Verdugo Patron (\$250) | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Senior or Student (\$10) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tropico Patron (\$100) | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Organization (\$25) |
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Celebration!

