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# The Glendale Historical Society

Preserving and Celebrating Glendale's History and Architectural Heritage

Spring 2009

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## City Approves its Second and Third Historic Districts

by Elaine Wilkerson

**O**n February 8, 2009, Glendale City Council unanimously approved two new historic district applications: Cottage Grove and Ard Eevin Highlands. There was unanimous support from those attending the hearings and in the remarks by Council. This is a gratifying change in attitude from 2000 when TGHS held its first community meeting to rally support for a new historic district ordinance in Glendale. Since then, there has been a long process of proposing new ordinances to enable the designation of districts and almost as long a process of neighborhoods proposing the first three districts for Glendale. Royal Boulevard was approved in 2008.

The Cottage Grove Historic District was submitted as a historic district overlay rezoning application in June 2007. The district includes 14 homes in the Adams Hill neighborhood, on Cottage Grove Avenue between Palmer and Green. Nine of the 14 homes were built between 1924 and 1926 in the Tudor-Revival style, in keeping with the developer's goal of building an English village. The Cottage Grove district also includes the original farmhouse of this area, built in 1901. There are other traditional homes among the 14 and only one non-contributor. Twelve of the 14 homeowners signed the petition supporting the zoning of the historic district—an overwhelming majority of 85%. The historic resources survey conducted for the application found that the district qualified under two of the City's criteria for designation, 'G' reflecting a significant geographic pattern and 'H' conveying a sense of historic or architectural cohesiveness.

**“It is interesting . . . how this Council has come, in a relatively brief time, from viewing this with great trepidation and controversy to wild acceptance, fervor even.”**

**Mayor John Drayman**



Top: Three representative houses in the Cottage Grove Avenue Historic District. Below: Three representative houses in the Ard Eevin Highlands Historic District. PHOTOS: City of Glendale Planning Department

The Ard Eevin Highlands Historic District was submitted as a historic district overlay rezoning application in August of 2007. The district includes 87 homes that are a subset of the original Cumberland Heights area, the first historic district proposed in Glendale. That initial application was later withdrawn. The district homes are of various Revival periods, located on portions of Ard Eevin, Highland, Cumberland and West Mountain. Ard Eevin House (Dan Campbell's home now on the National Register) gave the district its name.

Both the Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning Commission unanimously supported the zoning of these historic districts. During the zoning hearing, Mayor John Drayman said, "It is interesting to me how this Council has come, in a relatively brief time, from viewing this with great trepidation and controversy to wild acceptance, fervor even."

Congratulations are due to all those who worked so hard, in some cases for several years, to make possible Glendale's second and third historic districts.

# President's Message

The Glendale Historical Society celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, and we've planned a yearlong series of events to commemorate this milestone: feature articles in our newsletters focusing on our founding members and watershed events; two new exhibits at the Doctors House Museum; our annual home tour, focusing this year on Glendale's three new historic districts; an anniversary party in the fall, coinciding with our Annual Meeting. And, for one very special evening this summer, one of the city's most famous landmarks will be brought back to life when we re-create an evening at the Casa Verdugo Restaurant, in the private residence that once housed the renowned eatery (for details please see calendar on page 8).

Even as we celebrate, we know that 2009 also finds us in the depths of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Some might assume that the recession's halt on development has reduced the risk to our historic resources, rendering our work less urgent. But our educational and outreach efforts must continue even during these slower times; in fact, this is the best time to press for the identification and preservation of as many of our historic resources as possible. Neglect can often be just as destructive as the wrecking ball; and, as the economy recovers, the pressure to allow unfettered development will be overwhelming, making preservation efforts that much more difficult.

As we all, of necessity, tighten our belts and trim our expenses, it is important to remember the crucial work that TGHS accomplishes in advocating for the very real long-term benefits of historic preservation in Glendale. Sound historic preservation policies can contribute to the city's economic vitality and enhance residents' quality of life. Your membership in TGHS is therefore an investment in your own future.

So I thank you in advance for your continued support and invite you all to join in the festivities as The Glendale Historical Society begins its fourth decade of service to the community.

*John LoCascio*

## Former President Honored



Last December, TGHS former President Arlene Vidor was honored by the Character and Ethics Project at the Glendale Board of Education. Arlene was nominated by

longtime TGHS members Peter Rusch and Scott Halloran. The award is given to those exemplifying the Project's guiding principles.

Congratulations, Arlene!

## TGHS Mourns the Passing of Dorie Biggs



Known to all as "Dorie," she was a 30+ year member of the Historical Society and managed our membership database and correspondence for many years. Dorie was a

resident of Adams Hill and passed away at 85 years of age on Monday January 26th. She volunteered as the TGHS membership chair and handled many other volunteer activities for the Society with great cheer and efficiency until only a very few years ago.

## The Glendale Historical Society Officers & Board of Directors

### PRESIDENT

John LoCascio

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### VICE PRESIDENT

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### PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Marcia Hanford

### DOCTORS HOUSE CURATOR

Isabelle Meyer

### COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR

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### BOARD MEMBERS

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[www.glendalehistorical.org](http://www.glendalehistorical.org)

The Glendale Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter is the official publication of the Society



# Glendale's Rose Float Showcases Historic Alex Theatre

by Greg Grammer

Glendale's rich history and architectural heritage were on proud display at the 2009 Tournament of Roses Parade with its entry of a float that depicted a movie preview at the historic Alex Theatre.

The "Sneak Preview" float, which won the Past Presidents Trophy for most creative use of floral and non-floral materials, was the creation of the Glendale Rose Float Association, an all-volunteer organization responsible for coming up with the design and raising funds for construction.

A registered historic landmark, the "Alexander" Theatre opened in 1925 as a local vaudeville and movie house. Sneak previews of new movies were held at the Alex Theatre during Hollywood's golden age.

Thanks to the Alex Theatre's treasured historian, George Crittenden, there is a record of over 500 sneak previews that took place at the Alex Theatre during 1941-1946, from "Going My Way" to "The Bachelor and the Bobby Soxer."

The Alex Theatre closed its doors in the 1980s, but TGHS played an instrumental role in making sure that the building was preserved by carefully documenting its history and presenting a convincing case to the City Council. A debt of gratitude is owed to the proactive and determined efforts of former TGHS Presidents Steven Preston, Andrea Humberger and Zelia Blanton; Vonnie Rossman, and Greta Reed and many, many other stalwarts who successfully fought to save the Alex for future generations. The Alex reopened on New Year's Eve in 1993 after the Glendale Redevelopment Agency invested \$6.2 million to transform it into a performing arts center.

"Sneak Preview" was Glendale's 95th float entry in the Tournament of Roses Parade, the second longest standing participant in the parade's 120-year history. Last year's float, "Bon Voyage," depicted the historic tower of the Grand Central Air Terminal in Glendale and won the coveted Mayor's Trophy for most outstanding city entry.

PHOTOS: Glendale Rose Float Association



Top: The float showcases the Alex's ticket booth which was designed in the 1940s by S. Charles Lee. It was added along with the marquee during a remodeling after a fire at the building. Bottom: A reminder of Hollywood's golden age, the float depicts a car fit for a star on the red carpet in front of the Alex.



# *Celebrating 30 Years* *Historical Society Off to a*

**W**e begin our year-long celebration in honor of The Glendale Historical Society's 30 anniversary by retelling the story of the organization's founding.

TGHS was born from the efforts of a group of dedicated Glendale citizens who, over the course of three extraordinary months in the fall of 1979, banded together to prevent the demolition of one old house.

The Queen Anne Eastlake Victorian house had been built at the northwest corner of Wilson Avenue and Belmont Street sometime between 1887 and 1895. Very early on it became popularly known as "The Doctors House" as in its first two decades it was successively occupied by three prominent Glendale physicians. It was later occupied by silent film actress Nell Shipman. By the 1970s, the Doctors House was one of only two remaining Queen Anne structures in the city and was identified as a city landmark in Glendale's draft Historic Preservation Element. Nevertheless, in September 1979 a Beverly Hills developer, Larry Sade and Associates, announced plans to demolish the house to make way for condominiums, and the City Council granted approval, claiming they had no funds with which to preserve and maintain the landmark.

The Council's decision created a flurry of public protest, prompting Councilman Jack Day to call a community meeting to explore ways of saving the house. The meeting was heavily attended and indicated strong grass-roots support for preserving the Victorian architecture and Glendale history embodied in the house. Councilman Day, struck by the crowd's passion, suggested they form a citizen's committee to explore the feasibility of moving the house from its present site to one usable and accessible to the entire community.

"Somehow I was appointed Chairman," says Carole Dougherty, one of the speakers who impressed Day at the community meeting. Joining her on the Committee for Relocation of The Doctors House were a number of other Glendale residents including Frances Grigsby, Isabelle Meyer, Audrey Hales, Natalie Montgomery, Dr. Robert Newcomb and Vonnie Rossman.

Theirs was a daunting task, made more difficult by their collective inexperience and the fact that not everyone in Glendale, including some of the



PHOTO: Michael E. Hogan Photography ©



PHOTO: Sid Gordon

Top: The Doctors House at its original location at Wilson and Belmont.

Bottom: The east side of the house being towed on a special flatbed truck. Here it is on Central Avenue approaching Glenoaks Boulevard.

City Council, thought the house should be saved. Nevertheless, the Committee plunged into the effort, and events moved rapidly. By mid-October numerous local organizations and businesses supported the project, while Councilmen Day and Eric Schneirsohn

# Moving Start

by John LoCascio

were lobbying their colleagues to provide land to which the house could be relocated.

That month developer Sade offered to donate the house to the City provided it could be moved off the Wilson property in time to start construction in February 1980.

Reports indicated that the house was structurally able to withstand the move, but the moving costs were estimated at \$42,000.00. An additional \$150,000.00 would eventually be needed for a complete interior restoration.

Faced with the prospect of fundraising on such a scale, and the longer-term prospect of restoring the house after the move, the ad hoc Committee decided to form a permanent non-profit organization to move and restore the Doctors House and address future historic preservation issues in Glendale (one of which, the imminent demolition of the Egyptian Village Café, was already brewing). Local attorney Bill Heyler drew up the bylaws, with Marie Luft as president and Carole Dougherty as vice president. Although a preservation advocacy organization and not a historical society in the strict sense, they chose to revive the name of the old Glendale Historical Society, originally founded in the 1930s but long since disbanded, in hopes of attracting the support of the defunct organization's former members (which unfortunately never materialized). On October 24, 1979 came the formal announcement that "The Glendale Historical Society has been reactivated" (with the "T" in "The" capitalized to help distinguish it from Glendale High School and the Glendale Humane Society).

The new Board of Directors scrambled to raise funds and lobby support to meet the February deadline. In early December, President Luft was able to confirm the support of two of Glendale's biggest development companies, Gregg-Gangi Development and Howard Development Company. Later that month State Assemblyman Pat Nolan and City Manager Hugh McKinley threw their support behind the move. When on December 26, Marie Luft asked for the Council's support, saying "Let us in Glendale be judged not by the monuments we have destroyed, but by the monuments we save," Mayor Carroll Parcher voted with Councilmen Day and Schneirsohn to provide a site in Brand Park and spend up to \$36,000.00 to prepare it

for receiving the Doctors' House, as well as committing \$8,000.00 annually to the house's upkeep. The Glendale Historical Society, barely two months old, had won its first victory.

The move would ultimately be delayed for nine months, the result of escrow complications, contract negotiations and cost overruns when it was determined that the house was too wide to safely maneuver the streets of Glendale and would need to be cut in half. At last, just after midnight on September 16, 1980, the Doctors House began its five mile, eight hour journey to Brand Park to await its reassembly, restoration and reopening as a public museum.

"It was a very scary project for a small group of novices and we ran on sheer nerve in the early days," says Isabelle Meyer, one of the original ad hoc Committee members and the longtime curator of the Doctors House Museum. "To this day, I find it amazing that we succeeded to such a degree." That they did, and that the organization they founded still thrives three decades later is a tribute to the vision and tenacity of those pioneers who stood up to preserve one small piece of Glendale history.



This photo—a timed photo taken by Marie Luft in 1982—includes most of the regular volunteers who worked each weekend restoring the exterior of the Doctors House.

Back row: Ray West, Dorothy West, Bill Dodson, Bea Pennial, Sid Gordon, unknown, Craig Montgomery, Glenn Luft, Shannon Pedlow.

Middle row: Wally Forstall, Bridget Mahoney, Graham Latta, Audrey Hales, Frances Grigsby, Dick Brouillard.

Front row: Dick Montgomery, Natalie Montgomery, Suzanne McKay, Marie Luft



by Isabelle Meyer  
Doctors House Curator

## Candlelight Tours

Our annual Candlelight Tours in December were exceptionally successful with 421 visitors on the two evenings. Musical performances by the Crescenta Valley High School Chorus and the Glendale High School Bell Choir added greatly to the festive atmosphere, and free refreshments were enjoyed in the gazebo.

## Victorian purchases

An updated inventory was submitted to the Parks Department before the end of the year. It is thrilling that the financial success of our museum allows us to purchase several Victorian artifacts each year, to be enjoyed by the public, as well as appreciated by our hard-working docents. During these difficult times it is well that we do not depend on the City budget for support but have managed to be financially self sufficient. Therefore, we will continue our programs as usual.

## Valentine's Day dinner

The generous support of the TGHS membership is again obvious in this year's fundraising for our Valentine's Day Dinner Raffle, which, in spite of difficult economic conditions, raised more than the hoped-for \$1,000. Thank you all who mailed in tickets. This year's winners were Robert and Mireya Romo, who enjoyed a romantic evening in vintage finery.

## Repairs to exterior

City carpenter Doug and his crew have been busy making repairs to the museum exterior, damaged by weathering and termites. Especially the porches and steps showed signs of aging and had to be largely rebuilt. The restoration was overseen by Jay Platt, Glendale's historic preservation planner, to make sure all replacements were in keeping with the historic nature of the project. The painters gave the house a new coat of paint, and the Doctors House looks beautiful, once again.

## Exhibits

During our annual Docent Tea, we decided on this year's exhibit schedule: During the months of March and April, we will be paying tribute to the Dzaich and Kordich families, who lived in the house from 1922 until 1980, keeping it safe all those years. If not for



Robert and Mireya Romo, the lucky winners of the Valentine's Day dinner at the Doctors House, got into the spirit by wearing vintage clothes.

their love of what they called "Papa's house," we could not have saved and restored the home to its 1900 condition. This recognition is long overdue, and we appreciate the help of Martha McDaniel (Dzaich) and Charles Maas (Kordich) in assembling the information for the family tree and sharing family artifacts for the exhibit. Our exhibit will paint a new picture in the life of the Doctors House, and we hope you will all come and enjoy this novel perspective.

During the months of May and June (when numerous Glendale second-graders visit the house) we will have the Glendale School Exhibit in place. These field trips include vintage outdoor games and chores for both boys and girls.

## The 30th Anniversary of TGHS

Last, but not least, the 30th anniversary of TGHS is the perfect excuse to indulge in some reminiscing about what brought our group together and its first successful venture in Glendale historic preservation. In time for our fall celebration in Brand Park, an exhibit about our Society's efforts over the past 30 years will be on display from mid-September to mid-November. This trip down memory lane will be sure to lead to sentimental memories about old friends and activities. A tribute to deceased members who were instrumental to our early ventures is also planned.

Well, there it is: the Doctors House, alive and well, 29 years after being moved, ready to celebrate its own anniversary next year. Come and see the many additions to our collection and meet the docents. Just this month we added five new members to our docent guild. They are eager to learn about our treasure and all our docents enjoy sharing their love of the house with our many visitors.

# Welcome New\*Members

A HEARTFELT THANKS to our renewing members,  
members who have upgraded+ and to members who have rejoined.

## JEWEL CITY PATRON (\$500)

Glendale Adventist Medical Center\*  
Larry Tison  
Tison and Associates Landscape Architecture

## VERDUGO PATRON (\$250)

International House of Pancakes  
(IHOP #708)  
Ray Podesta  
Michael Resnick  
Rossmoyne Properties

## TROPICO PATRON (\$100)

Bill & Sydney Bennett  
Pamela Elyea/History for Hire\*  
Steve Hales  
(In Memory of Audrey Hales)  
Thomas McIntyre  
Leonard Schaustal & Chris Huntley +

## SUSTAINING (\$50)

Mark & Sharla Bohman\*  
Barbara Conry\*  
LA Public Library  
Jordan & Elizabeth Cohen\*  
Helene Marnell  
Carol Merry\*  
Maureen Palacios\*  
Once Upon A Time Bookstore  
Peter Rusch & Scott Halloran\*  
Jeanette Stirdivant

## FAMILY/DUAL (\$40)

Ken Batchelor & Leticia Gonzalez  
Rima & Donnell Cameron\*  
Steven Chapman & Ricardo Ordoñez  
Moria Delaney & Julio Moline  
Arno Frankian\*  
Douglas & Cathy Green  
Robin Lee Hansen  
Holly Keenan & Jordan Levine  
Richard A Lieboff  
Ray & Virginia Newburn  
Madison Leigh Paine\*  
Theodore Walters\*  
Sharon & William Weisman

## INDIVIDUAL (\$25)

Russell Cinque Jr  
Paula Devine  
Joan Doyle  
Jane Edwards  
Timothy Foy\*  
Viora Grunewald  
Connie Humberger  
Victor King  
Ann McDonald  
Joan Morris

Please consider a membership upgrade+  
the next time you renew.

## SENIOR/STUDENT (\$15)

Ross Adams\*  
Dr Ray Galloway  
Curtis Kendall  
Judee Kendall  
Jane S Kneeder  
Beth Lee Knox  
William Koster  
Don McDonald  
Doris McKentley  
Shannon McShane  
Dorothy Montapert\*  
Carol Rossow

## NONPROFIT (\$35)

Historical Society of Crescenta Valley  
Glendale Arts

## PAST PRESIDENTS HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Zelia Blanton\*  
Deborah Dentler  
Carole Dougherty  
Andrea Humberger  
Marie Luft  
Steve Preston  
Bill Shepherd  
David Smith  
Arlene Vidor

o Deceased

## Join The Glendale Historical Society and Support Historic Preservation in Our Community

THE SOCIETY IS A NON-PROFIT tax exempt organization and we encourage you to join and volunteer. Please complete this form and mail it with a check payable to  
The Glendale Historical Society, PO Box 4173, Glendale CA 91202

Jewel City Patron (\$500)  
Verdugo Patron (\$250)  
Tropico Patron (\$100)  
Sustaining (\$50)

Family/Dual (\$40)  
Individual (\$25)  
Individual Senior or Student (\$15)

*Nonprofit organizations are encouraged  
to join TGHS as Associate Members  
(No voting rights)  
Nonprofit (\$35)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

WANT TO GET INVOLVED? WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS?

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Special events/Tours     | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic research/Surveys |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Districting  | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach/Education       | <input type="checkbox"/> Archiving/Organizing      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising           | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctors House volunteers | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership/Outreach       |

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Check the website for details and for additional events: [www.glendalehistorical.org](http://www.glendalehistorical.org)

March 18, 2009  
7:00 pm

**AUTHOR TALK AND BOOK SIGNING**

Havana Modern:  
Mid-Century Architecture in  
Pre-Castro Cuba.

Peter Moruzzi, noted architectural historian and author, will speak about his book *Havana Before Castro: When Cuba was a Tropical Playground*.

Brand Library  
Co-sponsored by Associates of  
Location: Brand Library.  
**FREE!**

Sunday, March 22, 2009  
11 am -4 pm

**2ND ANNUAL L.A. HERITAGE DAY**

\$5 Free with flyer  
Call 323-225-2700  
Heritage Square Museum  
2800 Homer Street  
(Ave 43 exit 110 Fwy north)

April 18, 2009

9:30 am  
**GLENDALE HISTORIC SITES BY BICYCLE**  
Begin at Glendale's train station  
Check out: <http://la-bike.org/glendale/>  
Sponsored by City of Glendale and  
LA County Bicycle Coalition

April 30, 2009

7: 00 pm  
**DISTINGUISHED HISTORY:**  
The Glendale Register of Historic Homes.  
How to Get Your Historic Property Listed  
Jay Platt, Historic Preservation  
Planner, City of Glendale  
Tim Gregory, The Building Biographer  
Location: The Wellman House  
Glendale Historic Register #70  
**FREE**

Save the date!

June 14, 2009

5- 8 pm

A unique opportunity to  
**TOUR AND DINE AT THE FORMER  
CASA VERDUGO RESTAURANT,**  
now a private residence in northern  
Glendale.

Save the date!

September 20

**CELEBRATE THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY**

of the revival of TGHS. The annual  
meeting and party will be held at  
the Doctors House.

Save the Date

October 11

**TGHS ANNUAL HOME TOUR**

Every Sunday afternoon  
2:00-4:00 pm

**DOCENT-LED TOURS**

of the Doctors House Museum in  
Brand Park.



The Glendale Historical Society  
PO Box 4173  
Glendale CA 91202  
[www.glendalehistorical.org](http://www.glendalehistorical.org)

TGHS had good reason to celebrate this December. Not only was the site of the party—the Lewis House—designated a landmark, but Royal Canyon—its location—became the city's first Historic District. Party goers: Sonia Montejano, Lew Locascio, John Locascio, TGHS president; Marcia Hanford, TGHS program chair. Dan Cabrera, Carol Merry and Mary Ann Prelock. Laura Friedman, Dana Doyle, Eric Van Der Werff, and Chris Till. PHOTOS: Elaine Wilkerson



# Holiday Celebration