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# The Glendale Historical Society

Preserving and Celebrating Glendale's History and Architectural Heritage

Summer 2009

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Photo: Arlene Vidor



White tablecloths and red carnation centerpieces set the tone for a one-time-only re-creation of dinner at the historic Casa Verdugo, now a private home.



## A Taste of Old California at Glendale's Historic

# Casa Verdugo

One hundred guests joined us on June 14 to celebrate the legacy of Southern California's original "celebrity chef" Piedad Yorba y Sowl and her famous Casa Verdugo Restaurant. Deb Ann Orfalea, owner of the house that was once the Casa Verdugo, graciously opened her home to The Glendale Historical Society and for one magical evening, the long-gone restaurant came back to life.

Guests sipped champagne while mingling on the broad veranda and touring the interior of the grand old house. An exhibit of vintage postcards, photographs and memorabilia illustrated the story of the renowned eatery that was once a must-see destination for Los Angeles residents and tourists alike. Then, just as they did a century ago, our guests settled themselves at the elegantly set tables clustered under the oak trees in the garden, there to enjoy a delicious multi-course dinner of Casa Verdugo favorites. The authentic menu was faithfully recreated by culinary historian and author Charles Perry.

"We felt as if we really were transported back in time to early Glendale," said Peter Rusch and Scott Halloran. "Everything from the reception to the docenting to the gently paced dinner was perfectly executed." Longtime Glendale resident Louise Peebles said "The food was delicious...historic and authentic."

TGHS extends its sincere gratitude to Deb Ann Orfalea, Charles Perry and all the volunteers who worked so hard to make this extraordinary event possible.



Photo: Arlene Vidor



Photo: Sonia Montejano

From the top:

A display of vintage postcards accented the special nature of the evening.

One set of diners takes time to smile for the camera.

Scott Halloran, Arlene Vidor and Peter Rusch, in their sartorial best, toast the occasion.

# President's Message

The second article of our 30th anniversary series focuses on The Glendale Historical Society's first President, Marie Luft, and her four-year effort leading the restoration of the Doctors House. The story serves both as a tribute to the Society's founders, and as a reminder of what can be accomplished when residents take a stand on an issue that affects their quality of life.

We are currently faced with another such issue. It is not as singularly dramatic as the threatened demolition of one beloved historic structure, but an insidious, incremental degradation of entire swaths of the city: the rash of inappropriate vinyl and aluminum replacement windows that is ruining the character and value of Glendale's oldest and most beautiful neighborhoods.

The Planning Department has strict policies toward window replacement applications, reviewing each on a case-by-case basis and referring to Design Review those found to be incompatible with the subject house and neighborhood. But on June 9 the City Council asked Planning for a report on these policies, apparently in response to complaints from residents whose window replacement applications have been denied or sent to DRB. The report is tentatively scheduled to be presented to Council on the evening of July 14.

Windows are one of the most significant character-defining features of Glendale's fine old houses, from grand mansions to modest bungalows. The window types, proportions and design are unique and specific to each architectural style. They feature recessed frames, projecting sills and true divided lights that add depth and scale to individual façades and entire streetscapes. They are made of materials that are far superior to anything available on the market today – sometimes steel but usually old-growth wood, dense, strong and naturally pest-resistant. They rarely need replacing; if properly maintained, they will last

indefinitely. And they can easily be retrofitted to improve their energy efficiency, at a fraction of the cost of replacement.

When these original custom windows are replaced with inferior, off-the-shelf, flush-mounted vinyl or aluminum units with flat, fake muntin grids sandwiched between panes of highly reflective glass, a great deal of the charm and value of an older home is irretrievably lost. This in turn decreases the value of adjacent properties and, like falling dominos, the entire neighborhood will become less desirable.

We need you to help us prevent the gradual ruin of Glendale's beautiful old residential neighborhoods. It is imperative that City Council hears from those who support strict limitations on the use of vinyl and aluminum replacement windows. Please write or e-mail all five Council members, copying the City Clerk, and ask them to support the Planning Department policy of limiting the use of vinyl and aluminum windows where they are incompatible with the character of existing neighborhoods. TGHS will keep you updated of developments on this issue via e-mail and on our website.

Here is an opportunity, in our 30th anniversary year, to follow in the footsteps of the Society's founders and take a firm stand on one of Glendale's most critical preservation issues. I trust that we are up to the task.

*John LoCascio*  
Summer 2009

## The Glendale Historical Society Officers & Board of Directors

### PRESIDENT

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

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



Photo: Arlene Vidor

This 1911 Craftsman bungalow was meticulously restored by the City of Glendale Parks and Recreation Department as the centerpiece of the Cedar Harvard MiniPark.

## Mini Park Project Underway

By Elaine Wilkerson

THE GROUNDBREAKING on a unique new mini-park at Cedar and Harvard was a recent cause for celebration. The Park, featuring a 1913 Craftsman bungalow, will be lushly planted and provide a 1/2 acre oasis in a densely populated area of central Glendale that is in dire need of green space. The Glendale Historical Society advocated for the bungalow's preservation and worked closely with city architect Layla Bettar who, with her team, realized the TGHS vision of a meticulously restored architectural jewel.

The bungalow will serve as a youth center and is being furnished in the style of its era.

This project is living proof that the community and city government can cooperate and team up to make great things happen.

Visit [www.ci.glendale.ca.us/parks/CIP\\_CedarHeritageGarden.asp](http://www.ci.glendale.ca.us/parks/CIP_CedarHeritageGarden.asp) for more information.

**CORRECTIONS** to page 3 of the Spring 2009 issue of the TGHS newsletter courtesy of Andrea Humberger. Andrea was TGHS president from 1990-1993 and spearheaded the Historical Society's efforts to preserve the Alex Theatre. The Alex Theatre closed for regular film presentation in 1991. The ticket kiosk, marquee and tower designed by S. Charles Lee were added in 1940. A fire in 1948 was the impetus to redecorate the interior of the Alex.



Photo: Scott Lowe

Cyclists begin History Ride at the Southern Pacific Rail Depot in Glendale.

## The LA County Bicycle Coalition and TGHS Team

By Arlene Vidor and Scott Lowe

WE'RE THRILLED to have participated in an event that was a historic first for TGHS - a bicycle tour of Glendale's history. The tour was sponsored by Glendale Safe and Healthy Streets, an action-oriented partnership between the City of Glendale and the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition.

Glendale Safe and Healthy Streets will be implementing some physical improvements to our city and advocate for city-wide policies that will ultimately give us more bicycle and pedestrian friendly streets.

The History Ride took 63 cyclists on a leisurely 12 mile round-trip pedal from the Southern Pacific Rail Depot all the way to Brand Park. People smiled and waved at us as we rode down streets many of us residents had never even been on. Bike touring allows for a much closer look at the great diversity and energy of Glendale than exploring by car.

On July 11th, we'll again team up with the LA Bicycle Coalition for a History Walk event in Central Glendale. See the events calendar on the last page for details and get ready to venture into two interior spaces the public rarely, if ever, gets to see! We won't tell you what they are - you have to go on the tour.

LACBC and TGHS plan to do even more events together in the future. A quote from the film "Casablanca" comes to mind: "Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

For more info on Glendale Safe and Healthy Streets visit [la-bike.org/glendale/](http://la-bike.org/glendale/)



Photo: Sonia Montejano

A recent addition to Glendale's Register of Historic Resources.

## Wellman House # 70

By Sonia Montejano

BUILT IN 1930, the Wellman House is a fine example of Spanish Revival architecture.

Sharla and Mark Bohman are the current owners and responsible for the home's extensive interior restoration, using materials in keeping with the Spanish Revival style. In April the Bohmans kindly opened their doors to The Glendale Historical Society and invited Glendale residents to hear City Planner Jay Platt provide information on "How to list a building on the city's historic register." He is also responsible for the City's historic preservation program. The event was well attended and provided an opportunity for neighbors to meet, show and share their personal restoration projects.

The home was named after Charles A. Wellman who lived in the home from 1957-1962. He was Vice President of Glendale Federal Savings, one of the largest S&Ls, ranking 11th out of 1,600 across the nation. Mr. Wellman was active in numerous governmental affairs and served as advisor to President John F. Kennedy.

A mature olive tree, once part of an onsite grove, greets visitors to the home. The exterior remains original to its construction, including steel casement windows with decorative spindles known as *rejas*.

The Wellman House stands today as it did when Rossmoyne Village first offered a place for graceful California living in this spectacular Glendale hillside community.



# Perils and Joys of the Doctors House Restoration

By John LoCascio

**M**arie Luft's initial involvement with The Glendale Historical Society grew out of adversity: her son was struck by a car in front of her house on Mountain Street. Over the course of many weeks in 1979 spent lobbying City Council for traffic-calming measures, Marie came to the attention of **Carole Dougherty**, the chairperson of the committee for relocation of the Doctors House.

Impressed with Luft's organizational skills and tenacity, Dougherty approached her about taking on the job of project director to supervise the move and restoration of the house. City Council member **Eric Schneirsohn**, a strong supporter of the preservation of the Doctors House, also encouraged Luft; the two had developed a friendship during her traffic calming campaign. Schneirsohn was successful in persuading Luft to take on the task, telling her "the project will only take 6 months and you can just tell people what to do!"

"I was to remember and rue those words," says Luft. "Little did I know that I would be using every bit of my knowledge gained from the remodeling of our own Spanish Revival during the past 10 years, or that I had taken on a commitment of 4 years of my life."

TGHS incorporated that autumn, with Luft as president and Dougherty as vice president. In December, they obtained City Council approval to relocate and restore the house. They spent the next nine months securing financial and technical support for the house's move, including negotiating a no-interest loan of \$16,000 from Gregg-Gangi Development. On September 16, 1980, the house was moved at last to Brand Park.

"Once on site, cut in half, its tower topped, the Doctors House was a sorry sight," Luft remembers. The fretwork on the porch had been removed only seconds ahead of the chainsaws for eventual reinstallation. To avoid an unsightly scar on the finished house, the clapboards in the path of the cut had also been removed and numbered in yellow crayon, corresponding to a key map drawn up by Luft and her husband Glenn.



1. When the exterior of the Doctors House was cut in half, the tower and porch were removed and numbered according to a key map drawn up by Glenn Luft. They were replaced in order when the house was restored.

2. The Doctors House on Wilson Street was moved on September 16, 1980. The house was cut in half, and the porch and tower were removed and numbered according to a key map drawn up by Glenn Luft. They were replaced in order when the house was restored.

3. Some of the weekly volunteers posing for a group photo. Back row: Glenn Peter Luft, Sid Gordon, and Glenn Luft. Second row: Craig Montgomery, West, Bea Penniall, Unidentified, Sha...



Until its new foundation could be completed, the house was supported by temporary steel girders. When the moving contractor demanded the return of the girders, Luft was assured that their removal would not harm the house. Alarmed, she asked her husband to take a look. A civil engineer by profession, he determined that the house had too few interior footings. When the girders were removed against Luft's wishes and without her knowledge, the house sagged inward; its walls wracked, and the chimney collapsed. Realizing that the job of reassembling and restoring the house would be more complex than any of them could have imagined, in 1981 Luft asked Dougherty to take over the presidency of TGHS so she could assume the role of project coordinator full time. Glenn Luft volunteered to serve as supervising engineer.

Their first and critical step was to stabilize and reassemble the house on its new foundation. Glenn Luft worked with local retired architect **Graham Latta** to design and install shear walls throughout the house to help resist earthquakes; Latta also designed the replacement chimney and a third porch, recreating them from old photographs. Meanwhile, TGHS successfully secured almost \$200,000.00 in Block Grants, allowing the work to continue.

The heart of the project was the group of volunteers who dedicated themselves to the house's restoration. Starting with only five or six, the ranks swelled to about fifty regular volunteers; most of them showed up for work each Saturday for almost four years. Under the supervision of the Lufts, they removed all the windows, doors and decorative woodwork and learned how to use sanders, wood strippers and heat guns on these pieces; once stripped and repaired they were reinstalled, ready for a fresh coat of paint. **Larry Winans**, a restoration expert from Heritage Square, was consulted to ensure that acceptable restoration practices were being employed.

"Through the efforts of our volunteers, contractor costs were greatly defrayed," says Luft. "The project simply could not have been done without them."

Despite the hard work, the volunteers were a happy lot; jokes and laughter abounded. The group gathered once a month for a tea, wine and cheese potluck after the workday. They were working on a project they believed in, and they relished its progress from week to week. Just before the house's final opening on May 4, 1984, the group held a last potluck at the end of the day. The Lufts had come up the day before and hidden throughout the house small brass plates, each bearing the name of a volunteer. The first to find his plate would receive a bottle of Champagne. The winner, Luft remembers, was **Bill Dodson**. The brass plates remain in the Doctors House to this day.

Marie and Glenn Luft moved to Portland, Oregon, in 2000, near their son and his family. They live on a floating house on the Willamette River and are both active in environmental concerns. Marie is a chair of the Watershed Vegetation Program, a partnership with the City for the restoration of wetlands. She is also involved with photography, honing her skills on birds. An avid birdwatcher, she is active with the Audubon Society of Portland; Glenn gives of his engineering and carpentry skills in cage building and other structures and, says Marie, "supports me in my obsession." Twenty five years after its completion, Marie Luft still treasures the memories of her years leading the restoration of the Doctors House. Most of all she remembers the volunteers. "The names and faces parade before me now, hard and dedicated workers, every one," she says. "They were pure gold."



House was restored, volunteer Marie Luft for their heroic square headed nail found in Marie's discarded work shoes

Belmont hours before its 1980. The boards covering the according to a map drawn by original position over the cut

se for fun and history in 1981. on, Tess Clink, Marie Luft, and gomery, Dorothy West, Rayannon Pedlow, Dick Brouillard

**1979-2009**  
*Celebrating 30 years*

This article is the second in a series during the 30th anniversary of the founding of The Glendale Historical Society. The series will report on the early activities of the Society and the people who pursued our mission: Celebrating and preserving Glendale's history and architectural heritage.

# Doctors House news



Isabelle Meyer



Sonia Montejano



Nick Macierz

## Change at the Doctors House

Over the years, TGHS has been fortunate to achieve many of its goals through the efforts of hard-working volunteers. Few have worked longer or harder than Doctors House Curator **Isabelle Meyer**, who has been involved with every aspect of the House, particularly for the past eighteen years as curator. The condition of the house today is a reflection of her years of dedicated service. But this year, the year of our 30th anniversary, is also a time of change as Isabelle has decided to resign as curator and TGHS Board member, effective September 20.

“The fact that for the past eighteen years I have been so heavily involved in every aspect of the museum’s operations is a testimonial to what a wonderful experience this has been for me,” Isabelle says. “Organizing new events, creating new exhibits and adding to our collection has taught me much. Most of all, I have enjoyed working with our docents who share my love of this little jewel.”

“It will not be easy to let go of the Doctors House – it has been such a big part of my life. However, I feel proud of all we have done to make the museum the best it has ever been.”

“For the time being, I plan to continue with the school tours, since those are so challenging to staff, and look forward to seeing what the future holds for the museum. I thank you for the support that our Valentine’s Day fundraiser and other events have received from many of our members over the years and would encourage you all to stay involved in the future well-being of the Doctors House.”

The Board of Directors has appointed **Nick Macierz** as the new Doctors House Curator and **Sonia Montejano** as the Doctors House Board of Directors’ liaison, both effective September 20th.

Nick, a resident of Adams Hill, is Assistant Collections Manager at the Gene Autry Heritage Museum and has a special interest in, and extensive knowledge of, the Victorian era. He has been a member of the Doctors House Advisory Group established by the Board in January of this year and has worked with Isabelle on the production of the last two exhibits at the House.

Sonia has been a Director of The Glendale Historical Society for the past year. In addition to her outstanding work on the Membership and Events Committees, she has been a docent at the Doctors House, has worked with Isabelle on some of the school tours, and is also a member of the Doctors House Advisory Group.

In the coming months, Isabelle will be working with Nick and Sonia to ensure a smooth transition in the operation of the Doctors House.

Please join the Board of Directors in expressing our heartfelt thanks to Isabelle for her many years of devoted service to the Doctors House and The Glendale Historical Society, and in wishing Nick and Sonia great success in their new roles.



Photo: Isabelle Meyer

Members of the extended **Dzaich** and **Kordich** families enjoyed lunch and a tour of the Doctors House.

## The Dzaich/Kordich Exhibit

By Isabelle Meyer, Curator

The early part of this year was spent on researching the years during which the **Dzaich** and **Kordich** families lived in the Doctors House. This 60-year tenure, when various members of the two families resided there, led to finding out what the surrounding Glendale community looked like, who their neighbors were and where they did business. I created a map which not only showed all their neighbors, but also which houses still remain today. With the help of Dzaich daughter **Martha McDaniel** and her family, a family tree was created and a time-line of Doctors House ownership demonstrated clearly, how important the long stay of these two families was in the life of our museum.

The exhibit ran during the months of March and April, and Martha came to the Sunday tours sharing many artifacts with us. They were supplemented by anecdotes of growing up in the house, adventures and everyday memories of the six Dzaich and four Kordich children and the experience of two Croatian immigrant families in Glendale. The highlight of the exhibit was a family luncheon/reunion which drew family members from as far away as Oregon and the Bay Area as well as from all over Southern California. The 18 family members and three former neighbors toured each room of the museum and shared additional memories amid much laughter. I thank **Judy Cabrera** and **Elaine Wilkerson** for helping serve the lunch.

I am particularly pleased that this was my last exhibit at the Doctors House. It gave the Historical Society a chance to heal an old wound, which resulted from our preoccupation (29 years ago) with saving the house. Many will recall what a struggle it was for our fledgling group to succeed, and we did not spare the energy to recognize these two families’ roles in the survival of the house. We have rectified this oversight and have reconnected this important period in the life of the Doctors House.

# 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

## VERDUGO PATRON (\$250)

Ray Podesta  
(International House of Pancakes  
IHOP #708)  
Larry Tison  
(Tison and Associates Landscape  
Architecture)

## TROPICO PATRON (\$100)

Marcia Hanford  
Sally MacAller +  
Alen Malekian  
Leanne Reynolds +  
David Smith  
Bill & Elaine Wilkerson +

## SUSTAINING (\$50)

Jane Brown & Gary Hart  
Norm & Evelyn Cecere

## FAMILY/DUAL (\$40)

Marty Bracciotti & Joe Selph \*  
Robert & Edwina Carnahan  
Loretta Chambers \*  
Kurt Christiansen & Andrew Wilder  
Theresa Colley \*  
Shanna & Scott Igoe

Laura Friedman & Guillaume Lemoine  
Carl & Gail Nelson  
Deb Ann Orfalea \*  
Allan & Desiree Shier  
Daniel Smith  
Jeanne & Michael Teahan \*  
Michael & Heather Victor \*  
David & Emily Williams

## INDIVIDUAL (\$25)

Ute Baum  
Richard & Susan Blasco \*  
Valarie Gardner \*  
Margaret Hammond  
Shirley Ann Hill  
Amiee Klem \*  
Reinard & Aida Knur \*  
Vreni Lease \*  
Sida Lu \*  
Kristie Major \*  
Patricia Marsh  
Mary Kay Prather \*  
Mireya Romo-Bowen \*  
Anna Rundle  
Dorothy Sundbye \*  
Richard Threlkeld  
Brit Trydal

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

## SENIOR/STUDENT (\$15)

Minerva Astengo \*  
Joan Carney \*  
Jan Craig  
Carol Jean Felkel  
Marie Fish  
Cecilia Friesen  
William Geist \*  
Roger Harmon \*  
Elizabth Hickman  
Herbert Jennings  
Richard Johnson  
Carolanne Rapisardi \*  
Michael & Irene Saluzzi \*  
Marjorie Vestuto \*

## NONPROFIT (\$35)

Chevy Chase Estates Association

## PAST PRESIDENTS LIFE MEMBERSHIP

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

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

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

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

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

WANT TO GET INVOLVED? WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS?

Preservation advocacy  
 Historic Districting  
 Fundraising

Special events/Tours  
 Outreach/Education  
 Doctors House volunteers

Historic research/Surveys  
 Archiving/Organizing  
 Membership/Outreach

# 2009 Events Calendar

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

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

**7/11** HISTORY WALK OF CENTRAL GLENDALE  
**FREE**  
SATURDAY  
10:00 am - 12 noon

RSVP requested: [colin@la-bike.org](mailto:colin@la-bike.org)

Parking in adjacent Orange Street garage—  
first 90 minutes are free

9:30 am - Meet at the Chess Park  
227 North Brand Blvd. for orientation.

Co-sponsored by The LA County Bicycle Coalition, City of  
Glendale Safe and Healthy Streets program and TGHS.

**The Glendale Historical Society**  
in collaboration with the Glendale Police Department  
&  
The Glendale Parks and Recreation Department  
presents

**8/23**



**FREE SCREENING OF THE MOVIE  
"CRIME WAVE"**  
SUNDAY  
7:30 pm

A great film noir starring Sterling  
Hayden, "Crime Wave" was filmed  
almost entirely on the streets of Glen-  
dale in 1954. Bring your lawn chairs,  
blankets and snacks to enjoy this  
movie under the stars at Brand Park.  
Police archive photo exhibit in Gazebo

and movie background presentation by Scott Lowe.  
Doctors House open for viewing 6:30-7:30 pm.

Presented in collaboration with the Glendale Parks and Rec-  
reation Department and the Glendale Police Department.

*1979-2009 Celebrating 30 years*

SUNDAY  
**SEPTEMBER 20**  
ANNUAL MEETING AND PARTY  
**FREE**  
Save the date! Details to follow.  
Celebrate the 30th Anniversary  
of the revival of TGHS at the  
Doctors House Museum.

**10/11**

## TGHS ANNUAL HOME TOUR

Save the date! Details to follow. Tour will include homes in each of  
Glendale's three historic districts.

EVERY SUNDAY  
DOCENT LED TOURS  
OF THE DOCTORS  
HOUSE MUSEUM,  
Brand Park  
No reservations.  
\$1 donation collected at  
the door.  
2:00 - 4:00 pm  
1601 W. Mountain  
Enter at Grandview and  
Mountain.

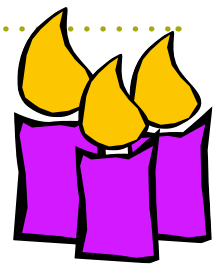
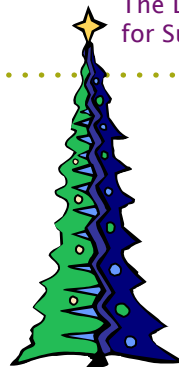
Note: The Doctors  
House Museum is  
closed during the  
month of July, major  
holidays and if raining.

**DECEMBER**

CANDLELIGHT TOURS OF DOCTORS HOUSE MUSEUM  
DECEMBER 12 AND DECEMBER 19

6:30 pm- 8:30 pm. No reservations. Refreshments.  
\$2 per adult, \$1 per child collected at the door.  
Visit at your convenience. Last tour begins at 8:15 pm.

The Doctors House is not open  
for Sunday tours in December



## Holiday Celebration

MEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY  
**FREE**  
Date and details  
to be announced.