

# West Adams Matters

## A Landmark Victorian Cottage Needs New Home

by Laura Meyers

The little 1890 Queen Anne cottage on Washington Boulevard is battered and beaten up, but not bowed. And now the Henry Obee Cottage, boarded up for more than a year, has passed one hurdle in the effort to save this little piece of West Adams history.



Henry Obee Cottage's  
north gable detail

In May, eight months after Anna Marie Brooks took the initiative and nominated the property for landmark status, the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission voted to declare the Henry Obee Cottage a Cultural-Historic Monument (HCM). But that vote came with a caveat: the Victorian cottage has lost its original context and should be moved to a more compatible site, near residences of similar character.

Brooks, WAHA, and several other preservation activists, including Ben Davis and Mitzi Mogul, played a seminal role in having this home's historic status recognized and made official. Indeed, the City's staff had recommended against an HCM determination, saying that the cottage wasn't "distinguished" enough. But we rallied to the cause, attending the May hearing and arguing, in part, that in fact vernacular cottages are as much a fabric of Los Angeles history — telling the story of Southern California's development from pueblo to cosmopolitan metropolis — as are mansions designed by famous architects.

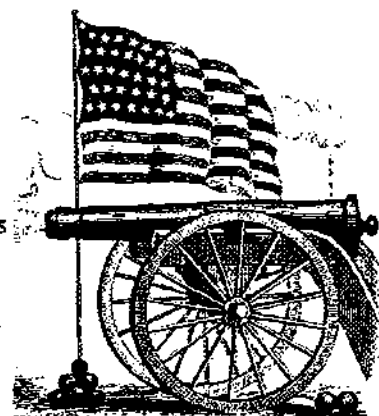
Located at 1408 West Washington Blvd. near the corner of New England Street (between Hoover and Vermont), the Obee Cottage sits on a lot that is slated for the development of new  
*(continued on page 10)*

## WAHA's Star Spangled 4th of July

Wednesday, July 4, 1 - 4 p.m.

27 St. James Park

Bring the kids -- your own or someone else's -- and wear your summer whites or patriotic attire at WAHA's annual 4th of July picnic, which will be on Wednesday, July 4, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the historic Stearns-Dockweiler Residence, a Victorian-era Colonial Revival erected in 1900. Owners Jim and Janice Robinson are hosting WAHA's annual event celebrating America's birthday at their lovely property in St. James Park, in the heart of the University Park HPOZ just north of Adams Boulevard. Live music and lots of fun is on the schedule. As always, Wa-hot dogs will be for sale, cold drinks are on the house, and the potluck theme is summertime picnic -- please bring salads, main dishes, desserts, or fruits (enough for at least 10 people, please! And, let's avoid food that will melt on a summer day) to share. ●



## Annual Preservation Meeting:

### VISUAL HISTORY IN WEST ADAMS

Saturday, June 23, 3 p.m. (Reception) to 6 p.m.

At the Mrs. Wilshire Residence, 2501 4th Avenue

WAHA hosts its Annual Historic Preservation Meeting in June at the historic Mrs. Susan Wilshire Residence, a 1912 Colonial Revival designed by famed architects Hudson and Munsell. Mrs. Wilshire was the wife of George Wilshire and mother of H. Gaylord Wilshire, the entrepreneur/developer for whom Wilshire Boulevard is named.

We have a great program planned. (At least, we think so!) This past year, the City of Los Angeles has begun to require visual presentations in Powerpoint about proposed historic landmarks. As a result, preservation advocates have had to learn how to be visual

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## Visual Stories *continued from page 1*

storytellers, using vintage photos and other graphic material to tell the history of the people and architects of our wonderful West Adams community.

For this event, we will be showing and telling the story of four of our local landmarks (and soon-to-be landmarks). See old photographs, drawings, and ephemera related to Felix Chevrolet, the first (1878) farmhouse in Jefferson Park, a 1902 Tudor mansion on what was then Bankers' Row by USC, and a fab Craftsman/Art Nouveau mansion in Victoria Park built by Nellie Holmes Shannon and Michael Shannon, L.A.'s first traffic cop.

Special guest: Ken Bernstein, manager of Los Angeles's Office of Historic Resources.

We'll be serving light refreshments: sweets and savories, and beverages. The Wilshire Residence is owned by David Raposa and is located on the corner of 4th Avenue and 25th Street, one block north of Adams Boulevard, in West Adams Avenues. Please do us a favor and RSVP so we have an idea of how many people to expect. Send an e-mail to WAHAHoliday@aol.com, and many thanks. ●

## WAHA Paint and Garden Contest Deadline June 10

Have you recently painted your home in new, perfect colors? OR, is your old paint job still looking fabulous?

And, how does your garden grow? Is it an extraordinary cottage garden, or prime example of drought-resistent beauty?

WAHA is looking for the best exterior paint finishes in the West Adams area and the most spectacular gardens among us.

Here are the simple contest rules: To qualify, you must be a member of WAHA. Either a WAHA member or yourself can nominate your paint job or your garden. Just e-mail a photo to EdTrosper@aol.com. (If you don't have a digital camera, you can deliver a standard photo, in an envelope labeled "WAHA Paint & Garden," to Ed Trosper's house, at 2515 4th Avenue – just slip it through the mail slot.) Deadline: no later than June 10. The photos should be labeled with the owner's names, property address, and, if it seems pertinent, a brief explanation.

A distinguished group of judges (or a SUV full of sloshed WAHA members drinking cheap wine) will drive by to visit all qualified entries. We'll display photos of the nominees at the annual 4th of July picnic.

What's in it for the winners? Your garden and/or your exterior paint job will be lauded in a future *WAHA Matters* and you will win a plaque and bragging rights for one year. ●

## IS THIS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER?

WAHA sent out dues renewal notices in March for the membership year 2007-2008 (the membership year runs April to April). If you haven't paid your dues for the coming year yet, this will be your last newsletter. However, if you joined late in 2006, WAHA extends your membership through the following year. If you are not sure of your status -- but want to guarantee that your newsletter keeps coming -- please contact Candy Wynne, candywynne@yahoo.com or 323-735-3749. ●

# President's Message

by Lore Hilburg

I came to preservation the old fashioned way. I inherited the gene from my mother. But my first experience with preservation can hardly be called old fashioned. I was a 16 year old high school student in the late 1960's when my Mom took me on a field trip. (I thought we were running another boring errand.) In fact, we were going to meet the "contractors" she hired to liberate (salvage) the stained glass windows from a mansion slated to be destroyed to build the 10 freeway through West Adams.

But when we reached the contractors' office (some street corner near Jefferson Blvd.) they told Mom they had decided to keep the windows for themselves (meaning sell them for more money to a dealer). My Mom then stepped out of the van to have a few words with them that I did not hear and she has never shared with me. But they obviously reached some kind of deal.

I was told that I would go with the 3 men in their truck to go pick up the windows which were located at an undisclosed location. I would then turn over to the contractors the unmarked envelop filled with cash which I was given by Mom. They would then transfer the windows to the van and I would be returned to where Mom was waiting. This plan was potentially dangerous, maybe even a little crazy. What loving mother would agree to this dubious exchange? Before putting me in the truck, Mom took me aside and said, "Lore, go with these gentlemen and bring me my windows." Tony Soprano's mother would have been proud.

Much to my happy surprise, the plan was executed as intended.

Once Mom had the windows (consisting of a 10 foot-in-diameter dome and a panel 5 feet by 30 inches), she hand cleaned them of years of smog, soot and smoke. They were revealed to be a field of green glass filled with fanciful birds, bamboo and blooming dogwood flowers in iridescent (sp) glass. Mom was convinced they were made in Reims, France. She sent professional photographs of them to experts in France only to be told they were American in origin. She was crushed. For this she had risked her older daughter's life. (She claims that is a gross exaggeration.)

Then, she heard from the Victoria and Albert museum in London, England. The crummy windows were made by this obscure, mildly talented American named Louis Comfort Tiffany. Would she mind loaning them to the museum for an exhibit? No, she didn't mind. They stayed on exhibit for 15 years.

Now, the dome is in Mom's kitchen ceiling and the panel is in my kitchen wall. Don't you love a happy ending? But, it could have been so much happier if the house had been saved. Help us save what remains. Be active. Give money. Support WAHA.

*WAHA's newly elected President Lore Hilburg can be reached at 323-737-4444*

## Call for Bortfeld Award Nominations

WAHA's highest award, the Bortfeld Award, named after WAHA co-founder Bob Bortfeld, is presented to a member who has given special service to the community in the prior year and over time.

Two decades ago, when Bortfeld purchased his home in a long-ignored neighborhood, he had a vision for this community. Bortfeld felt that with strong community activism and a shared love for old houses, West Adams could be one of L.A.'s best neighborhoods. West Adams Heritage Association established the Bortfeld Award to honor his vision and inspiration after he passed away in the late 1980s.

Nominations now are being sought for this annual award. The nominee must be a member in good standing who demonstrates the following qualities: 1) consistent and visible leadership in WAHA and the preservation community, 2) an obvious commitment to preservation, 3) leadership in deed, not just title, 4) notable accomplishments/contributions over a range of activities, not just in one particular activity, and 5) an ability to bring people together to address issues and resolve problems.

Normally, the candidate would NOT currently be a WAHA Board member.

The award has been presented in the past to Kathleen Salisbury, Harry Anderson, David Raposa, Harold Greenberg, Lindsay Wiggins, Jodi Seigner, Jon Rake, Lana Soroko, Norma Latimer, John Kurtz, Audrey Arlington, Jim Meister, Joe Ryan, Laura Meyers, Linda Scribner, Corinne Pleger, and Peggy King. As you can see by this listing, all former Honorees have had leadership roles in WAHA and have undertaken a diverse range of activities in the organization and in the community at large.

Nominations should be submitted in writing to Suzanne Henderson via e-mail at [WestAdamsGoddess@aol.com](mailto:WestAdamsGoddess@aol.com) or letter sent to WAHA's office, 2263 S. Harvard Blvd., Historic West Adams, Los Angeles, CA 90018. Please briefly describe the activities your candidate has undertaken for West Adams Heritage Association and in the West Adams community, and explain why you believe he or she should be chosen for the Bortfeld Award. The winner will be selected by WAHA's current President, Membership Chair Candy Wynne, and last year's group of winners, Suzanne Henderson (2005), and Leslie Evans and Jennifer Charnofsky (2006).

Deadline for submission is FRIDAY, JUNE 22. ●

# Around the House

## Resources *by Suzie Henderson*

Happy June! Can you believe that the year is nearly half over? It is time to get busy on those household projects, while the days are longer.

I have just finished painting clouds on the ceiling of our outdoor pavilion, which required scaffolding. I found a great price at Western Equipment Rentals, conveniently located in West Adams.

Lisa Berns highly recommends Julian Del la Torre, general contractor. He rebuilt her foundation quickly and reasonably. He also will do room additions.

Martin Weil tells me that Lindsay Shuford is back in West Adams with her custom furniture and repair shop. Next door, Joyce McCrae has an antique shop with some fine things. He recommends a visit to both of them very soon.

Since we are speaking of things back in West Adams, I will add a personal note, I am returning to real estate. With nearly 25 years of commitment to West Adams, I am a great resource, too! As always, I can be reached at WestAdamsGoddess@aol.com with your wonderful resources and stern warnings. Thank you for your help. Suzanne


**Julian Del la Torre**, General Contractor, 323-733-3377

**Joyce McCrae**, Antique Shop, 310-274-2322

**Lindsay Shuford**, Custom Furniture and Repair, 4464 W Adams Blvd.

**Western Equipment Rentals**, 3665 S. Western Ave., 323-731-2990





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# Community Matters

## Elizabeth Lulu Scholarship Foundation

A year ago, Lizzie Lulu passed away from complications of a lifetime with cystic fibrosis -- just four days after her 13th birthday. To help keep her name (dream of attending college) alive, her parents, WAHA members Beth and Alan Lulu, established a foundation. Every year, in Elizabeth's name, scholarship awards will be presented on the anniversary of her passing to high school students with cystic fibrosis.

On May 12th of this year, the first awards were granted to Lauren Edwards of Arizona and Eric Hein of Pennsylvania. The Elizabeth Lulu Scholarship Foundation Scholarship award was for \$500 each. Both recipients will use the funds to help pay for college tuition and books.

"We couldn't be more proud of them. Thanks to the charity and generosity of people like yourself the ELSF was able to accomplish the first leg of our dream in record time," Alan Lulu said. "We are a fully recognized 501(c)3 charity, and all donations are tax-deductible. We had in mind giving the awards by the 12th of May, effectively altering the date of Elizabeth's death to one commemorating her memory and spirit. For that we thank you.

"It is our hope to grow the foundation to a point where we can give more than just two scholarships per year," adds Lulu. For more information, visit [www.lizzielulu.org](http://www.lizzielulu.org). ●

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# Stepping Out

## A Father's Day Antique Auto Show

Sunday, June 17, Noon to 4 p.m.

Heritage Square Museum, 3800 Homer St., Highland Park

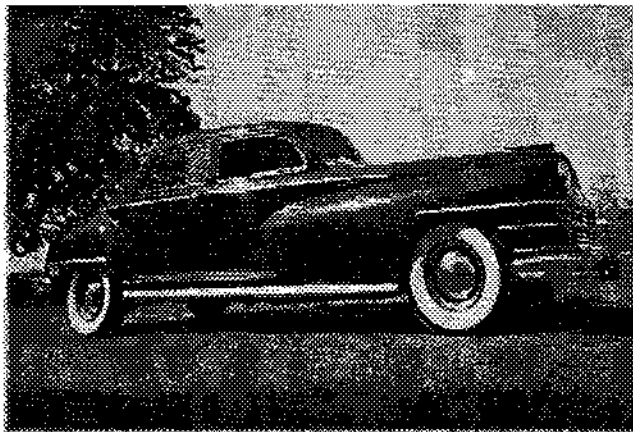
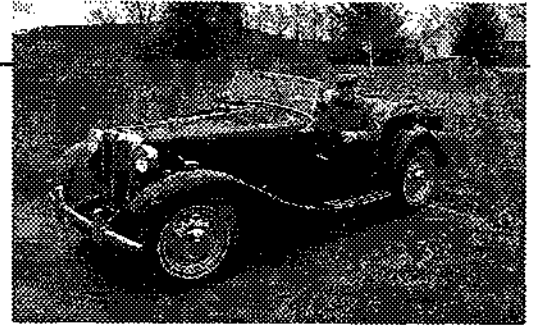
**Time Travel!** - Bring your Fathers to Heritage Square on Father's Day to enjoy an up-close look at several rare and beautifully restored automobiles from the 1900s to the 1950s.

On Father's Day, you can marvel over the engineering and quality of various car styles of the past. Available for viewing will be 1950s hot rods from the Early Rodder's of La Canada, classic cars from the Screenland Model A's of Culver City and the Vintage Chevrolet Club of America, historic cars from the Harbor Mark Model A Ford Club, and antique fire engines courtesy of the Los Angeles Fire Departments Liaison Office.

All Fathers admitted for Free **with One Paid Adult Admission.**

Heritage Square is an open-air, living history museum dedicated to telling the story of the development of Los Angeles. The auto show is included in the museum's admission fee: \$10/Adults, \$8/Seniors, \$5/Children ages 6-12. The museum is open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, from 12 to 5 PM.

Heritage Square is located off the 110 Arroyo Seco Parkway (110/Pasadena Freeway) at Avenue 43, just north of downtown Los Angeles. For further information, call 323/225-2700 or visit [www.heritagesquare.org](http://www.heritagesquare.org).



Heritage Square is also sponsoring A VINTAGE FASHION SHOW AND TEA on Saturday, June 23 (yes, in conflict with WAHA's own event, unfortunately.)

If 500 year's of fashion is your cup of tea, you'll certainly get a strong dose of caffeine at this event! Models will promenade in vintage and handmade, one-of-a-kind clothing based on historical patterns, designs and images from the Renaissance through the late 1940s. Many of the reproduction garments took hundreds of hours of finish work to complete, and contain details such as handmade flowers, beadwork, and lace. Models for the show will include members of the *Costumers Guild West* and *Heritage Square Volunteers*.

The Vintage Fashion Show will be followed by high tea. Ticket prices are \$15.00 for museum members and \$20.00 for the general public. For information or reservations, call the museum offices from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 323-225-2700. ●

## Well-Done: The Story of Cookbooks and Commerce

Continuing through July 15

Heritage Square Museum, 3800 Homer St., Highland Park

Heritage Square Museum also presents an exhibition of vintage cookbooks, pamphlets, and other ephemera which help tell the story of how advancements in commercial production of food and appliances changed culinary habits.

*The Story of Cookbooks and Commerce* looks at history through food: new products affected people's tastes, cooks and housewives experimented and created their own recipes, in turn creating new demands from consumers. Cookbooks were the means by which these items introduced and promoted. Although people are familiar with books by Betty Crocker or Hershey's Chocolate, there were perhaps thousands of books published by companies such as Kellogg's, Crisco, Schilling, Dromedary, Rumford, Sunbeam, or Kelvinator. Many of these companies no longer exist, while others remain household names, but they all played a role in developing our cooking and eating habits. Cookbooks were also produced by companies that did not produce food related products, but saw cookbooks as a promotional device: banks, insurance companies, hotels, railroads. Sometimes well-known artists were engaged to illustrate the books. Cookbooks were created and sold by community organizations as fundraisers. Cookbooks were—and still are—a popular and educational tool.

The exhibit features items dating from the 1880's though the 1950's. This is a fun—and mouthwatering—look at an aspect of history that we can't live without—food! A feast of an exhibit! ●

## Weird West Adams Crime Bus Tour

Saturday, June 23 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.\*

Advance Reservations Strongly Recommended!

Meet at the intersection of 3rd Avenue and 25th Street (at the park)

Scene of the West Adams crime: On this tour through the West Adams' notorious historic crime settings, passengers thrill to the carjacking horror of silent film starlet Myrtle Gonzalez, shiver as Dream Killer Otto Parzyjgla chops his newspaper publisher boss to pieces with the paper-cutting blade, and shudder at the pickled poignancy of the murder-by-brandly of Benjamin Weber.

You'll also marvel at the Krazy Kafitz family and their litany of murder-suicides, attempted husband slayings, Byzantine estate battles and mad bombings, then gag at terrible fate visited on kidnap victim Marion Parker by The Fox.

There will be some celebrity sites along the route, including the death locales of Motown soul sensation Marvin Gaye and 1920s star Angels baseball catcher Gus Sandberg. And the architecture too is to die for.

The tour is sponsored by Esotouric, which leads bus tours into some of Los Angeles's most interesting neighborhoods — the ones often overlooked by traditional touring companies. It's not your ordinary tour bus company. Esotouric's tour themes are provocative and complex, but never dry, mixing crime and social history, rock and roll and architecture, literature and film, fine art and urban studies, with original research and startling observations.

The June 23rd outing is a special edition of the Weird West Adams tour designed especially for members of the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles and the West Adams Heritage Association. Passengers are encouraged to dress in whatever period attire best suits them. Current (or brand new!) members of WAHA or ADSLA can reserve seats by phone (at 323-223-2767) or e-mail (via the contact form on the website below) and save \$5 off the \$55 ticket cost, provided they pay by check. Non-members can either pay by check or online using the link below.

There are no paper tickets: your name will be on a list at the bus door. Check in is at 10:30 a.m. for an 11 a.m. sharp departure from the park at the intersection of 3rd Avenue and West 25th Street in West Adams. There is street parking in the neighborhood. Watch for red zones and park legally.

Visit <http://www.esotouric.com/adams-6-23-07> to sign up and/or get more information.

The tour is planned to end just as WAHA's Annual Preservation Meeting begins, one block away (yep, you can leave your cars parked where they are.)

## Catch the Wave!

Thursday, June 7 7 p.m.

A Benefit for Gramercy Housing Group  
Screening will be held at The Grove

West Adams residents are invited to an exclusive, advance showing of this summer's Sony animated feature, "Surf's Up," starring Shia LaBeouf, Jeff Bridges, Jon Heder, Zoey Deschanel and James Woods. This fun-filled evening is also a way to help one of West Adams' premier attractions Gramercy Housing Group, which provides child care and housing for young mothers in a beautifully restored, brick building on Fourth Avenue at Washington Boulevard.

The special showing of "Surf's Up" starts at 7 p.m. at The Grove, Third Street and Fairfax Avenue. The \$30

tickets are tax deductible, and thanks to Sony and Pacific Theaters, every dollar goes to Gramercy. To order tickets, please make your check payable to Gramercy Housing Group, and mail it to: GHG, 1824 Fourth Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90019.

For more information, call Joey Solomon at (323) 737-7351, ext. 13. To preview "Surf's Up," go to:

<http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/surfsup/index.html> ●



# Stepping Out

## COMMUNITY UNITY DAY

Saturday, June 9

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Adams Boulevard between Arlington and 3rd Avenue (the street will be closed)

Home Assembly Church and a host of co-sponsors including United Neighborhoods Neighborhood Council (UNNC) present the 8th Annual Community Unity Day festival. Look for a grand day of good music, entertainment, delicious food, activities for kids, access to healthcare providers, and much more.

At noon, UNNC will receive the Dr. Gregory R. Dantzier Humanitarian Award in recognition of its "mission of empowering and bringing together a diverse community to maintain and improve the quality of life." UNNC will also be giving away small potted drought-resistant plants at its booth.

The Festival will be emceed by Pearl Jr. Highlights include:

- A kidzone including sno-cones, a critter zoo, jumpers, and an aquarium on wheels
- Entertainment, including The Fourth Element R&B Jazz Band, Tony Sol Gospel Rapper, a Mariachi band, and Peilani African Drums, among other performers
- Health testing — diabetes, cholesterol, blood pressure, mammograms
- Food — both free and for sale by vendors

The Community Unity Day Festival is free – just come on down! ●

## Family History Writers Conference

Sunday, June 10 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Burbank Airport Marriott Hotel and Convention Center

The Southern California Genealogical Society will devote an entire day of its annual three-day Jamboree to family-history writing. The Family History Writers Conference, a special event offered in conjunction with Jamboree, will be held on Sunday, June 10. An exceptional group of authors, memoirists, journalists, and publishers will come together to provide a full day of lectures, workshops, and seminars devoted to various facets of writing family histories.

There will be something offered for every level of writer, and for every genre of family history projects, from memoirs, to journaling, to historical research, to technical tips for managing large writing projects.

The keynote speaker is well-known writer Carolyn See, discussing how to handle family secrets with discretion, honesty and sometimes humor. Other featured writers include Judith Barrington, with two presentations on memoirs; Linda Lawrence Hunt, author of *Bold Spirit*, talking about pulling historical research together into book-shape; D.G. Fulford, one of the founders of [www.therememberingsite.org](http://www.therememberingsite.org) and the author of several journaling workbooks, explaining how to start the memories flowing; and Thomas Curwen, editor-at-large at the Los Angeles Times, explaining how professional writers manage the challenges of taking notes, interviewing, story structure, dialogue, description, and characterization.

Walk-in registrations (\$150) will be available at the door if space permits, but the conference is filling fast, so early registration is recommended.

The Southern California Genealogy Jamboree and Resource Expo is a three-day gathering of genealogists, family historians, experts, novices, exhibitors, vendors, genealogical society leaders, speakers, and others who are interested in tracing their roots. Produced for 38 years by the Southern California Genealogical Society, it is one of the longest-running genealogical conferences on the West Coast and is expected to draw nearly 1,000 participants during the three-day event. For complete information, visit [www.scgsgenealogy.com](http://www.scgsgenealogy.com) or call 818-843-7247. ●

## South Seas House Summer Camp

June 25 - August 31

Ages 6-12 years

\$55 (per week) Regular Care 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. ● \$65 (per week) Extended Care 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Parent orientation: Saturday, June 16, 10:30 a.m.

For more information, call 323-373-9483



## At HPOZ Conference: A Look at L.A.'s Diversity

by Jim Robinson

It's the bane of preservationists – the stuccoing-over of historic wooden homes. So why do people do it? Because in Mexico, a stuccoed home is a sign of prosperity.

San Fernando Councilwoman Maribel De La Torre offered the explanation in a panel discussion May 19 that focused on a need to educate ethnically diverse communities about historic preservation. The panel was part of a seven-hour HPOZ Conference that drew about four dozen members of Los Angeles' Historic Preservation Overlay Zone boards and the city employees with whom they work.

The annual event, held this year on the historic Doheny Campus of Mount St. Mary's College, on Chester Place, was jointly sponsored by the Los Angeles City Planning Department and the Los Angeles Conservancy.

De La Torre, a founding member of the San Fernando Historic Homes Preservation Group, said she learned her stucco lesson after she and her sister bought a 1921 Craftsman house in the city of San Fernando. A previous owner had covered the house with stucco, De La Torre said, and when the sisters removed it to uncover the original wood siding, their Mexican-born mother got angry. She could not understand why her daughters would destroy what to her was a sign of prosperity.

Their mother also questioned why the sisters took down a fence on their new property, making it easier for burglars to get in. Fences may offer a false sense of security, De La Torre said, but they also can be a status symbol.

The two-term councilwoman said historic preservation isn't just about buildings – it's a tool to create a sense of community. She urged her preservationist audience to keep an open mind, talk to people one-on-one and build relationships with city officials. It's also important to learn a little of other languages, she said, and to find sources of funding for owners who can't afford to buy double-hung, wood windows for their historic homes.

Mexican-born panelist Francisco George, of Harvard Heights HPOZ, said many Americans have a strong sense of freedom and an attitude that "nobody tells me what to do" with their property.

He said some people fear that an HPOZ is simply a way to control people, and he finds it hard to play the role of police.

George urged a relaxed attitude when dealing with people about their homes. Paint colors and fences can change with time, he said, and anything not attached to the house should be ignored. As an HPOZ board member, he said he also discovered his own prejudice about Latinos: It surprised him that some Latinos came to the board urging that buildings be preserved.

Panelist Bong Kwan Kim, assistant general manager of the city's Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, urged HPOZs to partner with non-profit housing groups to advance the goals of both.

The fourth panelist, First District Councilman Ed Reyes called West Adams the "home of the original suburbs" and said the city's dynamic history has seen many changes through the decades. He said historic buildings can be used as a tool to teach children about the city's past.

City Planning Director Gail Goldberg opened the conference by outlining plans to further increase the number of staff members devoted to historic preservation issues, and praised the state's recent designation of Los Angeles as a "certified local government" for historic preservation under the National Historic Preservation Act.

Ken Bernstein, manager of the city's Office of Historic Resources, described the groundwork being laid to conduct a city-wide survey of historic resources over the next five years.

The day included a conference first: attendees were assigned to one of four hour-long tours of different portions of the surrounding University Park area, with guides pointing out examples of HPOZ successes and challenges. ●

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# Preservation Matters

## Save the Henry Obee Cottage

*continued from page 1*

condominium residences. The developer, Anastasi Development of Redondo Beach, has had these plans in the works for some time, but recently was required to return to the City Planning Department to apply for additional variances plus new environmental clearances triggered in part by Brooks' research and monument application.

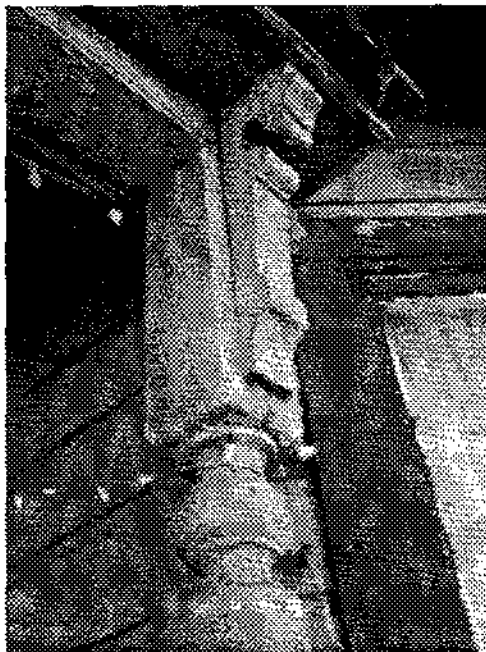
WAHA Matters had previously reported on the house's availability for moving, but now time is of the essence! All the players in this situation, from the City's commissioners and staff to the developer to WAHA and the preservation-minded neighbors, are keenly aware that this house **MUST** move to a new location, preferably nearby in the greater West Adams area (and preferably on a residential street near homes compatible with its character.)

The Henry Obee Cottage is historic both because of its characteristic Queen Anne architectural details and its association with an early Los Angeles businessman.

Brooks did extensive biographical research and discovered that Obee was active in the organization of masons in the Los Angeles area and was the Supervisor of the Los Angeles Pressed Brick Company, which was founded in 1887. It was a predecessor company to the Gladding, McBean & Co. By 1893 the Los Angeles Pressed Brick Company's color coordinated bricks and terra cotta products had been specified by architects creating, among other projects, the Stimson Block, "the first story of which...entirely of terra cotta and the upper stories of mottled, buff and brown 'Roman' brick, with brown terra cotta trimmings." Among other Los Angeles Pressed Brick and Terra Cotta Company projects were City Hall, the two Abstract buildings, the Burdick Block, Bryson-Bonebrake, the Y.M.C.A., Bicknell, McDonald, Crystal Palace, and many others. The Company also supplied "beautiful mantels for nearly all the fine residences in the country," according to the Los Angeles Times of May 14, 1893.

Despite this historical description, and despite the intact architectural details still present in the cottage, staff had recommended against designating this property. WAHA believes very strongly that cottages along with mansion are eligible for the City's landmarking designation, and as a result WAHA wrote a letter to the Commission, which reads in part:

*We strongly support designating the Henry Obee Cottage, an intact Queen Anne-style home dating from circa 1890, as a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument [because]...it is an intact example of a part of our local history that can never be replicated.*



*The house – the last remaining Victorian cottage on Washington Boulevard in the West Adams District – was built by Henry Obee at a time when the City was just beginning its expansion westward. Obee was one of the officers of the Los Angeles Pressed Brick and Terra Cotta Company, which was responsible for the exterior cladding of such notable Los Angeles structures/commercial blocks as the Bradbury Building, the Stimson Building and the Victorian-era Los Angeles City Hall. The company was one of the important firms in not just the development of Los Angeles but also in the rebuilding of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake, providing common bricks and terra cotta tiles for these efforts.*

*Importantly, the Henry Obee Cottage is also a very good example of vernacular Queen Anne style.*

*The staff report indicates that "this one-and-a-half-story residential building exhibits the character-defining features of Queen Anne Victorian architecture." The features of this cross-gabled residence include decorative sawn brackets with pendants, punch work pattern verge boards, fish scale shingle cladding, jigsaw cut bargeboard, and vertical tongue and groove wood siding, along with a projecting gable – among its extant exemplars and distinguishing characteristics of the Queen Anne style.*

*The City's Cultural Heritage ordinance specifies that a building is eligible to be listed as a Historic-Cultural Monument if it is identified with broad cultural, economic or social trends, as this house is, and/or if it embodies*

*"the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type, inherently valuable for the study of a period style or method of construction." Based on WAHA's own observations and the staff report, which, again, describes this residence as having "character-defining features of Queen Anne Victorian architecture," it is clear to us that the Henry Obee Cottage in fact meets the City's criteria.*

*Words in this case do have meaning. Staff argues that this structure is not "exemplary" or "distinguished." A structure that is "exemplary" or an "exemplar" is, in fact, merely something that is typical or representative, after which you can make*

a model. This house is an exemplar of Queen Anne Victorian architecture on a modest scale. As for the finding that it is not "distinguished": It does not need to be. The ordinance requires that it display distinguishing characteristics, not that a building is to be eminent or differentiated.

West Adams is home to perhaps the largest collection of landmarked properties in Los Angeles. That does not mean, however, that more recently-nominated structures should be turned down if they are not in some way "better" or more imposing than structures designated previously. We have literally lost several landmark properties in the last 12 months alone to fire. An earthquake could easily topple others. Since the City's ordinance does not suggest that a potential Monument be compared to other designated properties, it

is and always has been clear to us that each and every intact historic house in our community is important to our heritage. We cannot have "enough" representation of a style or of a period of history, since one can never know if a particular structure may end up being the last one standing.

We should not judge this property in terms of is it "the best" or the "most distinguished." Rather, it should be judged only as to whether it is a worthy example of Queen Anne Victorian architecture that tells a piece of the story that makes up the history of Los Angeles. West Adams Heritage Association believes the Henry Obee Cottage in fact does tell that story, and should be designated as a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

We would also like to address the integrity issues on this property. This residence was primarily intact when it was nominated as a Historic-Cultural Monument, with the exception of what we understand to be a later rear addition. It is the current owner's own failure to secure the building and negligence, particularly in these months after the Commission took the property under consideration in January, that has led to its compromised architectural integrity. In addition, on March 27, 2007, an architectural salvage company or other interlopers began to "harvest" certain architectural elements.

It is important for us to work hard to find a lot onto which to move this residence. If you have either a property -- or at least a good idea -- please contact WAHA's Planning and Zoning Chair, Roland Souza, at 310-392-1056. Anastasi Development is at this point serious about helping out with a move, and there may also be some public sector aid, so this really may be an opportunity for a preservation-minded potential homeowner! ●



## 2007 Mills Act Contracts - Deadline is June 29

It's that time of year again! The 2007 Mills Act Historical Property Contract applications are now available.

The Mills Act is California's leading financial incentive program for historic preservation projects, and the City of Los Angeles has one of the fastest growing programs in the State.

The Mills Act program allows owners of qualifying historic properties to enter into a contract with the City of Los Angeles for a revolving ten-year term, agreeing to restore, maintain and protect their property in accordance with historic preservation standards in exchange for a potentially significant reduction in property taxes. Qualifying properties include locally-designated Historic-Cultural Monuments and Contributing Properties in Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs).

Applications are ranked by priority consideration criteria to ensure that the program is benefiting targeted properties. For more information, link to the application at [www.lacity.org/PLN](http://www.lacity.org/PLN) and look under "New Features." The Office of Historic Resources will be accepting Mills Act applications through June 29. ●

## New Member Discount: Ted Gibson Art Supplies and Frames

Ted Gibson, Inc. is pleased to announce a 20% discount on all purchases of art materials and picture frames.

In 1932, Meyer Flax, Gustav Gilbert, and Ted Gibson traveled across country on train to settle and live in Los Angeles. As young men having worked in the fine arts in New York, Meyer and Gustav opened a gallery, The Louvre, on 7<sup>th</sup> Street in Los Angeles across from MacArthur Park, employing the younger Ted.

The area was a Mecca for the fine arts movement, with galleries and artists' studios dotting the neighborhood. Chounards, Otis, and the Jepson Art Institute were doing a fine business with teachers such as Millard Sheets, Laurence Murphey, Sergie Bongart, and Rex Brandt. The area was also (and still is) home to the businesses that catered to artists, such as Cannel and Chaffen, Morilla Company Art Materials, Duncan Vail Art Supplies, and McManus & Morgan paper house. This was a very exciting time for art in Los Angeles.

Ted opened his first store at 2940 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street in 1946 after getting out of the service, selling art materials and making frames for movie stars, artists, collectors, museums and galleries in Los Angeles. Some famous customers and friends were Ira Gershwin, Zero Mostel, David Meyer, and David Niven. Ted's impeccable taste and well-honed frame crafting abilities allowed him to become one of LA's most desired framers.

Ted passed away in 2000 and his son Richard now runs the business. Gibson's four craftsmen were trained by Ted and each have been practicing their craft at Gibson's for over thirty years. Gibson's is an old world craftsman's shop with a staff that complements each individual job as needed to complete each work of art.

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- West Adams Avenues Craftsman** – 2425 9th Avenue (Buyer's agent). Welcome, Michelle and Kesharn Cortez
- Jefferson Park Bungalow** – 3736 2nd Ave. - Adam Janeiro (Seller's and Buyer's agent). Welcome, Raphi Fedida & Andrea Roth-Fedida

City Living Realty welcomes back Suzie Henderson to our company. Suzie was one of our original agents, and is now returning to real estate sales. Suzie has a rich history in West Adams: she was a founding member of WAHA and a recent recipient of the Bob Bortfeld Award.

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

We support preservation of the West Adams community's architectural heritage and beautification activities, and seek to educate Los Angeles' citizens and others about cultural heritage and restoration techniques.



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Contact Lore Hilburg for location.

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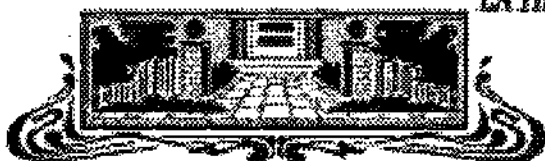
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## MEMBER DISCOUNTS

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

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### A CALL TO MEMBERS

If you frequent a local business — retail store, restaurant, service provider, etc. — ask them if they would offer a discount to WAHA members. Explain that they'd benefit from the increased exposure to local consumers, and be listed in the WAHA monthly newsletter. Or, call me at 323-733-6869 and I'll contact them. — Steve Wallis

# Calendar ✓

## WAHA June-July Calendar

**Catch the Wave, Thursday, June 7** (see story, page 7)

**Community Unity Day, Saturday, June 9:** The annual health and community fair, including live performances (singing and comics) is slated to be held on Adams Boulevard this year. (see story, page 8)

**Paint and Garden Contest Nominations are due by June 10** (see story, page 2)

**WAHA's Annual 4th of July, Wednesday, July 4, 1-4 p.m.**

Bring the entire family to celebrate America's birthday at a wonderful historic home in West Adams (story on page 1).



## WAHA's ANNUAL PRESERVATION MEETING: Visual History in West Adams

Saturday, June 23 3-6 p.m.  
Mrs. Susan Wilshire Residence  
2501 4th Avenue (West Adams Avenues)

WAHA hosts its Annual Historic Preservation Meeting in June at the historic Mrs. Susan Wilshire Residence, a 1912 Colonial Revival designed by famed architects Hudson and Munsell.

See visual narratives with old photographs, drawings, and ephemera related to Felix Chevrolet first (1878) farmhouse in Jefferson Park, a 1902 Tudor mansion on what was then Bankers' Row by USC, a fab Craftsman/Art Nouveau mansion in Victoria Pal built by Nellie Holmes Shannon and Michael Shann L.A.'s first traffic cop.

Special guest: Ken Bernstein, manager of Los Angeles's Office of Historic Resources.

Light refreshments: sweets and savories, and beverages. Please RSVP to WAHAHoliday@aol.com. we have an idea of how many people to expect. ●

*The WAHA Newsletter is a publication of the West Adams Heritage Association. Members and supporters of WAHA are invited to submit articles to the Newsletter. will be published subject to space constraints and will be cut for length if necessary. Articles will be published subject to acceptance by the editors of the WAHA Board. Advertising is subject to the approval of the publishers. Although the Association appreciates its many fine advertisers, the Association does not accept responsibility claims made by advertisers. Services and products are not tested and appearance of advertising does not imply, nor does it constitute, endorsement by the West Adams Heritage Association. Copyright 2006. All rights for graphic and written material appearing in the newsletter are reserved. Contact Director of Publications for permission.*



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