

# West Adams Matters

## **Treasures Tour: Chamber Music and Architecture on Van Buren Place** *by Leslie Evans*

Historic homes, chamber music, champagne, and brunch – what a perfect way to spend a late spring Saturday! Treat yourself to some of life's great pleasures: Visit some of West Adams' most beautiful historic homes, accompanied by chamber music performed by one of the city's most innovative and exciting musical ensembles. And, you'll also be treated to a champagne brunch, when the West Adams Heritage Association presents its annual spring tour on Saturday, June 3, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

WAHA has joined with the Definiens Project, a group of young musicians drawn from USC, UCLA, and other acclaimed music departments and conservatories, to offer an intimate day of chamber music performed in four National Register homes. Called the "Treasures Tour" to celebrate both musical and architectural treasures, the tour will be hosted by the Van Buren Place National Register Historic District. Four sets of musicians will present American classical music chosen to complement the time and architecture of the houses. The houses open for performances and visits will include two Los Angeles Cultural Historic Monuments.

The Van Buren Place Historic District is one of the most intact streets in West Adams. Comprised of large two-story turn-of-the-twentieth century wood frame and shingle homes, its handsome residences date from the period between 1903 and 1910.

Subdivided in 1902 by the Pasadena developer and builder George W. Stimson (1848–1927), and known originally as the West Adams Street Tract, Van Buren Place was developed largely through the efforts of Percy H. Clark (1860–1925), a



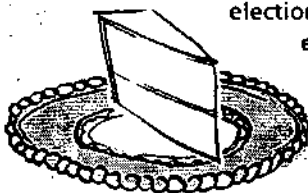
*(continued on page 5)*

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## **Just Desserts**

*WAHA Board of Directors Election and Meet & Greet, Thursday, April 27, 7:30 p.m.*

WAHA's hostess with the mostest, Jean Cade, opens the doors to her lovely Lafayette Square home for our annual elections meeting and dessert & coffee soiree. Please come greet, and meet, the candidates for election — and many of your other neighbors, too! Located at 1821 S. Victoria in Lafayette Square (enter on St. Charles from Crenshaw), this house was built in 1926 for Walter T. McGinley, an oil company owner who wintered in Los Angeles. In 1939, famed African American architect Paul Williams directed a remodeling, re-envisioning the residence as a classical Regency Revival structure. For this event, bring your post-dinner sweet tooth—WAHA is bringing desserts and caffeine.



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## **WAHA Board Elections**

**Thursday, April 27, at 7:30 p.m.**

West Adams Heritage Association's annual Board elections will be held on Thursday evening, April 27, at 7:30 p.m. WAHA currently has a 15-member Board, and one-third of these positions are up for election each three years, on a rotating basis.

Six candidates for election to the Board have submitted statements, which appear on page 3. You may also choose to run by presenting yourself at the Election Meeting. No proxy voting. No nomination in absentia. And, the same criteria apply: a love of old houses, commitment to neighborhood-based historic preservation, membership in WAHA for at least six months, and the availability to attend monthly WAHA Board meetings and a variety of WAHA events.

Don't forget to turn to page 3 to "meet" the candidates. ●

# Table of Contents

<b>AROUND THE HOUSE</b>	
Resources .....	4
<b>STEPPING OUT</b>	
Oscar Nominated Costumes .....	6
Doheny Mansion Tour .....	6
Alice in Wonderland - in West Adams .....	7
<b>COMMUNITY MATTERS</b>	
Exposition Light Rail .....	8
<b>PRESERVATION MATTERS</b>	
Historic Districts on the Rise Nationwide .....	10
<b>IN THE GARDEN</b>	
California Poppies .....	12
Tea at Peace Awareness Gardens .....	12
Brentwood Historical Society Gardens .....	12
Garden Conservancy Local Tours .....	13
<b>MEMBER DISCOUNTS</b> .....	11
<b>WAHA BOARD MEMBERS</b> .....	14
<b>WAHA CLASSIFIEDS</b> .....	11

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## President's Message

by Jefferson Davis

### Preservation Challenges

WAHA was started by a group of concerned neighbors who could not watch more of our irreplaceable structures being demolished. Not so many years ago, "Victorian" and "Craftsman" were not selling points, but rather, dirty words that Realtors would not disclose in their ads.

We have come a long way from those days. With a lot of hard work from the West Adams community, a half dozen Los Angeles Historic Preservation Overlay Zones have been created, well over 100 City Historic-Cultural Monuments have been designated, and another half-dozen-plus local and federal historic districts have been carved out in the greater West Adams District, thus protecting scores of buildings from the wrecking ball.

But, we are not out the water yet and have some challenging days ahead for us, as many commercial and residential buildings are under current attack. Engine House No. 18 may be headed for the auction block. While it has protected status, who knows what will happen if the winning bidder plans a conversion to apartments -- along with a new apartment building built on the fire station's parking lot.

The Carl Bean house, a historic landmark at Adams and Gramercy, is now closed and the owners are considering a sale. The (original) Washington Irving Library, a National Register monument, has been vacant for years and continues to deteriorate as a community cannot decide on its future.

The three houses that we are in immediate danger of losing include the 1409 and 1415 South Gramercy Houses, both of which were residences for important early Los Angeles families, and a marvelous Victorian farmhouse on Washington Boulevard at New England (between Vermont and Hoover).

WAHA has stepped up to the plate on these properties and is working hard to preserve these treasures. Thank you, Eric Bronson, Jean Frost and Laura Meyers for your leadership in these endeavors. Hat's Off!

But, we need many more members like these three who have the dedication and drive to keep our neighborhood intact. Can you help?

*Jefferson Davis can be reached via e-mail,  
jeffdavisv@yahoo.com*

## WAHA Board Candidates Statements

### Catherine Daly

I have twenty years of experience as a manager, developer/designer, publisher, writer, and teacher. I envision a WAHA which garners small grants for teaching West Adams residents of every age not only about historical preservation and true renovation, but how to make it new again; a WAHA which includes all members of the neighborhood in its efforts to preserve and revive this neighborhood which makes the larger city make sense. WAHA is about understanding what's great and what works in the neighborhoods we love.

### Jean Frost

I've lived in West Adams since 1978 and currently am one of WAHA's two Vice Presidents; I am running again for the Board to help WAHA continue its preservation advocacy and monitor land use proposals in South Central. As WAHA Preservation Chair, the North University Park National Register District was completed, after twelve years in the making. WAHA has assisted with many historic designations and has several currently pending. I support the continued designation of HPOZ's in West Adams and its entire environs. Among my preservation recognitions is an Award for Individual Achievement in Community Preservation, Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission. I also am Publications Chair for WAHA and assist with the newsletter *WAHA Matters*.

### Lore Hilburg

My background and education is working as an attorney for the title and escrow industries since 1976. I have been the proud owner of my 1922 Prairie Craftsman in LaFayette Square since 7/14/04. But I come by my love of restoration and preservation the old fashioned way. I inherited it from my mother who owns a fabulous Julia Morgan designed 1907 Swiss Chalet Craftsman in Vallejo, CA. I watched as my mother restored it and listed the property on the National Register of Historic Homes. I have been working on doing the same to my home where I hope to live for the next 40-50 years. I am still learning so much every day and am really a novice but I would love to work to help preserve these homes which cannot be duplicated and are becoming extinct.

### Paul Neilsen

My partner and I bought a 1907 house in West Adams in 2001. Restoring the house has been a rewarding undertaking but equally rewarding is discovering and integrating into this community. Key to enjoying this wonderful area is preserving the unique architecture and aesthetic within it. I want to become more involved in the preservation effort.

To that end, I think it's very important to get the West Adams Terrace HPOZ board up and running. I'm on the board and have actively sought recruits for the other slots. We are very close to getting a functioning quorum. With its grass roots nature, serving on the WAHA board would also be a great way I could contribute.

### E. Marita Sheeran

I was introduced to WAHA in 2003 by friends who invited me to join them on a tour of Jefferson Park's bungalows. I was hooked and ended up purchasing a Colonial Revival bungalow in Wilshire Park that year. Meanwhile, I became more active in historic preservation, volunteering for WAHA and Los Angeles Conservancy events and causes. This is my second year as secretary of Wilshire Park Association.

When I read last year that WAHA was forming an alliance with neighborhood associations north to Olympic Boulevard, I was instrumental in requesting that WAHA extend the borders north to Wilshire, thereby allowing the alliance to include Wilshire Park, Fremont Place, Windsor Village and Country Club Heights. As part of WAHA's new "extended family," I see myself as part of the emerging strength through networking with larger numbers of like-minded people. I also see myself as a liaison between Wilshire Park residents and West Adams residents to achieve our mutual and common goals. My career involves fundraising through planned gifts and one of my personal passions is calligraphy.

### Judy Tedrick

I am 3 yrs new to Los Angeles. My husband (Jim) teaches at USC. We have a 21 year old son (Ben) who attend SC. We live in the neighborhood in a 1907 Craftsman. I was previously employed by Federated Dept Stores for over 10 years in Florida. I transferred to Macys downtown as an operations person in facilities management. And in the last year received my real estate license and I am currently employed by Jim Weber Realty Inc. My hobbies include collecting aluminum, mid-century pottery and home decorating. This has lead to my interest in WAHA and the preservation and restoration of these beautiful homes in the area. I would be pleased to assist in any manner I can in your organization. ●

# Around the House

## Resources *by Susie Henderson*

I have only one referral for you this month, but I promise it is a good one. If you are looking for a house/pet sitter, Catherine Raught is the name to know. I have known her for over 20 years and she is very reliable. She charges \$20 to \$50 a night, depending on location and number of animals. She can be reached on 323-243-1361 or curlyraught@yahoo.com.

Since this column is so short this month, you know I need your help. Please send your stern warnings and glowing recommendations to WestAdamsGoddess@aol.com.

Thanks, Suzanne ●

## Please Don't Bury Your Pet

*by Carla Aubin Sotelo*

I have been putting off writing this for some time now, but I feel that it's an important message to share. Recently, we lost our beloved cat, Romeow, who contracted cancer, just a month shy of his 20th birthday. The cancer spread so quickly in such a small and old animal, and we didn't want him to suffer at all, so we had to make the tough decision to have him "put down."

Then the issue of how to handle his remains arose. My dad decided that since he was such a special part of our lives, cremation was a dignified way of dealing with his remains. A wonderful company, Cal Pet Crematory, Inc. (in Sun Valley) actually went to the vet's office (in West Hollywood), picked up the remains, performed the cremation service, and then returned the ashes to the vet's office in West Hollywood. In Dad's backyard, we planted a bush in Romeow's honor and buried his ashes around it.

Then I remembered the newsletter article about the family who buried their sweet little dog right in their backyard wearing his little sweater, placed in his grave with his favorite little basket and I realized these people don't even know that...

...It is illegal in Los Angeles to bury your pet (even on your private property) under penalty of fine (LAMC ordinance 61034). Moreover, while I am digging large holes in my backyard to plant trees and bushes, I personally don't wish to uncover remains of a previous owner's pet.

If you're going to be a pet owner, please be responsible regarding their deaths. "It is perfectly legal and acceptable to scatter or bury the cremated remains of a pet" (Cal Pet Crematory, Inc.). So, please, plant a memorial instead. ☺

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## Music and Architecture Tour

*continued from page 1*

prominent real estate developer and a resident on Van Buren Place between 1903 and 1911. Clark commissioned at least six of the fourteen homes on the 2600 block of Van Buren, and probably others as well on the adjoining streets.

These elegant homes give the visitor a rare glimpse at the lifestyles of affluent West Adams residents during the early 1900s. The twelve beautifully preserved homes comprising the historic district are an imaginative coupling of the Craftsman and Shingle styles, using elements of Victorian in the earlier houses and of Tudor Revival and Gothic Revival in the later ones. The four homes on the tour are all on the Secretary of the Interior's National Register of Historic Places. The interiors are marked by dark wood paneling, period light fixtures, traditional fireplaces, and in some cases stained and leaded glasswork.

They include Los Angeles Cultural Historic Monuments Number 672, the Percy H. Clark House (1903), and Number 678, the Furlong House (1910). Percy H. Clark (1860-1925) planned and built many houses in this part of West Adams and helped to found Beverly Hills. He was president of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce (1910-11) and director of the Automobile Club of



Southern California. Thomas Furlong (1872-1950) was a founder and for forty-five years city clerk (treasurer) of the City of Vernon. He lived on Van Buren Place from 1921 to his death, while his son Robert Furlong (1908-1974), who was mayor of Vernon from 1948 to 1974, lived on Van Buren from 1921 to 1958. The Furlong House was designed by architect Frank Tyler. The other two houses on tour are the largest and grandest on the street, the Minton House (1904) and the Greenbaum House (1905-06).

Van Buren Place was designated a National Register Historic District in 1989. In 1996 it was made a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) by the City of Los Angeles. The Van Buren HPOZ was later expanded to become today's Adams-Normandie HPOZ.

The Definiens Project is a nonprofit music organization. It describes itself as "committed to redefining chamber music in the contemporary context." Its participants have been working to establish collaborations with artists from different mediums and musical genres to create programs that are new, invigorating and

challenging for performers and audiences. Involving more than a dozen talented musicians, the project has a fluid membership, drawing in other musical artists for unique performance events. The project's goal is to take chamber music to its audience, so they play in homes, clubs, art galleries, hotels, and other nontraditional but more intimate spaces. They have also been developing performance workshops to take into Los Angeles area schools to inspire youth to become involved in the arts. Definiens seeks to match the music to the listeners, favoring contemporary composers and novel works over well-worn standards.

For those who have heard the Definiens, they are an exciting crossover group, drawing their performers from rock bands and jazz combos as well as from orchestras and string quartets.

The music for the tour falls into two categories: that which is inspired by either architecture, or that which was written in or inspired by the same time period in which these Craftsman homes were constructed. Exclusively featuring American composers, some of whom are living, all of the music is classical chamber music. One piece will be Andrew Norman's *Light Screens*, for flute, violin, viola, and cello, inspired by windows created by Frank Lloyd Wright.

At each house on the tour, the visit will begin with a formal short concert by a small chamber ensemble. This will be followed by some discussion of the featured music, and then a docent-guided tour of the house. As people progress through the houses they will thus have the opportunity to hear an entire concert of four different sets of pieces by four groups of musicians while appreciating them within the setting of this amazing architecture.

A champagne brunch featuring quiche, fresh fruit, and pastries will be served as part of the tour.

Tickets are by advance reservation only and will be held at will-call at the beginning of the tour. Early registrations is advised, as WAHA's docent-led tours regularly sell out. No walk-ins are allowed; no tickets will be sold on the day of the tour. This is a walking tour; so please wear comfortable shoes; no high heels are permitted. Tour starting times are from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Tours last approximately 2.5 to 3 hours. All WAHA members will receive a postcard invitation and reply form in April (check your mailbox!)

"Treasures Tour" tickets are \$50 (\$45 for WAHA members) per person, including brunch. For more information, contact 323-732-4223, e-mail [WAHAjunetour@yahoo.com](mailto:WAHAjunetour@yahoo.com), or visit [www.WestAdamsHeritage.com](http://www.WestAdamsHeritage.com). ●

# Stepping Out

## The Art of Motion Picture Costume Design

Much of the cinematic magic on the big screen comes from the perfect costuming of the characters. Whether it is in period sync, or science fiction future, the clothing worn by both lead actors and screen extras creates the time and place in which the film story emerges.

That is why the Motion Picture Academy awards an Oscar each year to the best in costume design, and has done so for 58 years.

And, for the past 14 years, that is why the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (FIDM) in Downtown Los Angeles has mounted an exhibit showcasing the best of the past year's films' attire.

"Costumes are pivotal. They often speak before the actor speaks," said Kevin Jones, FIDM's costume historian. "And a really good costume designer knows how to pull it all together to make it believable for the audience."

This year, the Oscar nod went to Colleen Atwood, who worked 'round the clock to put everything so masterfully together for "Memoirs of a Geisha." Her tough competition included:

- Gabriella Pescucci for "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" (Warner Bros.)
- Sandy Powell for "Mrs. Henderson Presents" (The Weinstein Company); she previously won for "Shakespeare in Love" and "The Aviator"
- Jacqueline Durran for "Pride & Prejudice" (Focus Features); previously won for "Age of Innocence"
- Arianne Phillips for "Walk the Line" (20th Century Fox)

You can see examples of each of these designer's work on these films, plus the work of several others, at the gallery at FIDM in the exhibit, "The Art of Motion Picture Costume Design," on view until April 29 (closed April 14-16).

This is the only place in the world where people can see up close and personal the masterfully woven designs of the Geisha's kimono, the transformation of Johnny Cash's wardrobe from country kid to mega superstar, and the intricate bead and feather work of Mrs. Henderson's showgirls.

Also on display are pieces from "Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire," "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," "Star Wars," and "King Kong."

Costuming is an intensive endeavor that only begins with the designs themselves. For instance, Atwood, who previously won an Oscar for "Chicago," only had six months to pull everything together for the period piece "Geisha." The work included custom-designed fabrics, which were hand-woven and embroidered.

The exhibit is in FIDM's first-level Gallery, 919 S. Grand Ave., Downtown. Cost: Free. For more information, call 213-624-1200, ext. 2224, or visit [www.fidm.com](http://www.fidm.com). ●



## Doheny Mansion Tour

Saturday, April 22

9:00, 9:45, 10:30, and 11:15 a.m.

The home of oil baron Edward L. and Carrie Estelle Doheny for almost 60 years, the Gothic Renaissance-style Victorian mansion was designed by architects Theodore Augustus Elsen and Sumner P. Hunt in 1898. This well-maintained home boasts a marble-pillared great hall, the Pompeian Room with imported Siena marble and a Tiffany iridescent glass dome, furniture copied by permission of the Italian government from Pompeian furniture in a Rome museum, and much of the original furnishings in its other opulent rooms. Visitors will step back in time as they learn the history of this

fascinating family, and the lifestyle of rich and famous Angelenos 100 years ago.

Docent-led groups limited to 20 people will visit the first floor of the Mansion and outside surroundings. The cost of the tour is \$25 per person and reservations are a must. No children under 12, please.

To book a tour, please call 213-477-2962. <http://www.msmc.la.edu/pages/473.asp>. Proceeds will benefit the preservation of this historic residence. ©

## Alice in Wonderland at USC

Every day through Wednesday, May 24

"Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and its sequel "Through the Looking-Glass" have delighted readers since their publication in the 19th century. Now, fans of Lewis Carroll's work can stay in Historic West Adams to view selected rare books, pamphlets, films, and other collected works that represent the lifelong work of the English logician, mathematician, photographer, and nonsense poet who is best remembered for "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland."

The Doheny Memorial Library on the USC campus is currently showcasing its G. Edward Cassady and Margaret Elizabeth Cassady Lewis Carroll Collection of more than 1,000 Carroll-related items. Included in the exhibition are first-edition copies of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (1865) and its sequel, "Through the Looking-Glass" (1871). Also on display are artistic treatments of the "Alice" books in rare editions by Marie Laurencin and Salvador Dalí.


The English polymath Lewis Carroll (the pen name of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) composed the books during the Victorian era, a time largely remembered for its stifling propriety and constrictive morals.

Carroll's sense of the absurd and his amazing gift for games of logic and language have made the Alice books popular with both adults and children, and they have remained some of the best-known children's books written in English.

The books stand as evidence that children's literature need not talk down to its audience. In fact, it is the depth and sophistication of the Alice books that has won them recognition as some of the best children's literature ever written.

The exhibit is on view in the Doheny Library's Treasure Room. Free. For more information, visit [www.usc.edu/uscnews/stories/11216.html](http://www.usc.edu/uscnews/stories/11216.html), e-mail [gaskill@usc.edu](mailto:gaskill@usc.edu), or phone 213-740-2070. ●





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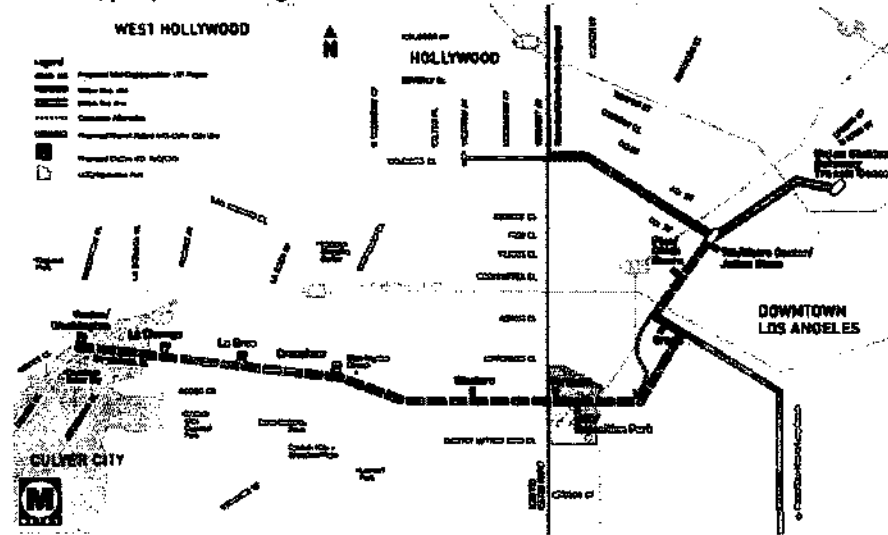


## Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority Approves Design/Build Contract for Start of Exposition Light Rail Project

Having reached a major milestone last month when the Federal Transit Administration issued the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Exposition Light Rail Transit Project from the federal government, the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority's Board of Directors has approved a \$420.2 million design/build contract marking the official start of the project. Construction on the line is expected to start this summer. The 8.5-mile light rail line, beginning in downtown Los Angeles, will share two stations (7th Street/Metro Center and Pico/Chick Hearn) with the existing Metro Blue Line. Just south of downtown the line will proceed west on the Metro-owned right-of-way on Exposition Boulevard, which parallels the heavily congested I-10 Freeway, with a terminus at Washington/National in Culver City.

The federal government in issuing the Record of Decision has determined that this project has satisfied all requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act thereby completing the environmental clearance for this light rail project.

### Mid-City/Exposition Light Rail Transit Corridor



The Board of the construction authority authorized their Chief Executive Officer Rick Thorpe to award and execute a design/build contract to the joint venture construction and design group of FCI/Fluor/Parsons in the amount not to exceed \$420,207,000. "We believe that we truly have brought on board the best joint venture construction and design team that will ensure that this transportation project is built on time and within budget," said Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority CEO Rick Thorpe. "We look forward to officially breaking ground on the Expo Light Rail Transit Project and getting this important project started."

In addition, the authority's Board gave their CEO authority to issue a Notice to

Proceed (NTP) for the design and professional services scope of work once plans have been submitted and approved in an amount not to exceed \$77,757,000.

"This is a vital transportation project that will help increase mobility and reduce congestion along this corridor," said Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority Chair Yvonne Burke. "The Record of Decision and the Board's action to authorize the award of this contract are important milestones in moving forward with this much needed project."

Metro, responsible for planning and preparing the environmental impact report on the project, now will hand off construction of the project to the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority. The Authority will be responsible for the final design and construction of the light rail line.

Eight new stations will be constructed for a total project cost estimated at \$640 million. A future second phase would extend the Exposition line to the City of Santa Monica.

For additional information on the Exposition Light Rail Project visit their Web site at [www.buildexpo.org](http://www.buildexpo.org).

### Art Program

Metro, in keeping with its mission to provide improved mobility for the people of Los Angeles recognizes that the inclusion of art in the Metro Rail system creates a more inviting environment and contributes to a positive experience for customers. Metro commissioned artists for each of the existing 74 Metro stations and is responsible for the oversight and maintenance of the artworks—all of which were created especially for their transit-related sites. In accordance with Metro policy, one half of one percent of the overall hard construction costs for each rail project is set aside to commission and incorporate art into the project. Metro will be working with the Exposition Construction Authority to incorporate artwork throughout the Expo Line project.

An artist will be commissioned for each of the Expo project stations. The artists will produce artworks that will help define



# Community Matters

the unique character of the station. Additional artist opportunities may be identified at a later date. Artists are selected through a peer review process with community input. Each station art budget will be approximately \$125,000 - \$150,000.

Metro Art will host informational workshops to inform artists about the program, practicalities (such as design, fabrication and installation parameters, maintenance related issues, etc.) and to clarify and answer questions about the artist selection process. The workshops are anticipated to take place in Fall 2006.

If you are interested in hearing about these workshops please join the Metro Art mailing list by contacting 213-922-4ART or visit [metro.net/art](http://metro.net/art).

## Art Advisory Groups

Community members are invited to participate in the art program as members of Art Advisory Groups that will be created for each of three alignment segments (Downtown/USC, Mid-City and West End). Art Advisory Groups will meet to develop station character profiles for station areas which will be provided to the artists and constitute a valuable resource in the artist's creative process. Participants will be expected to attend a minimum of six meetings and be able to provide insights into the community.

Representatives will also participate as voting members in the station artist selection panels. Metro is seeking enthusiastic individuals with an interest in the arts who would like to be involved in this exciting program. If you are interested in participating in one of the Art Advisory Groups please mail a letter of interest and resume to:

**Jorge Pardo**  
Art and Design Manager  
Metro Creative Services  
One Gateway Plaza  
Mail Stop: 99-19-4  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952  
[pardoj@metro.net](mailto:pardoj@metro.net) ●

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# Preservation Matters

## More U.S. Homeowners Seek Historic Designation

by Sara Schaefer Munoz, *The Wall Street Journal*

Thursday, March 16, 2006

As the real-estate market begins to cool, a growing number of homeowners are seeking to boost their property values by getting their neighborhoods designated as historic districts.

Local historic districts, which can trigger regulations on everything from window repair to demolitions, are proliferating across the United States. But the desire for historic designation has some communities touting characteristics with questionable preservation value. Homeowners in Denver say their neighborhood deserves historic designation because it is an early example of large front lawns. A Phoenix subdivision is seeking historic status because it says its ranch homes were the first in the city with central air conditioning.

Countrywide, there were about 34,400 local historic-district properties added to the books in the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2005, up from about 17,000 in fiscal year 2000, according to estimates by the department of the National Parks Service that encourages local preservation. In the past two years, Memphis, Tenn., has doubled the number of neighborhood historic districts it usually adds. Los Angeles now has nearly a dozen communities working toward designation up from just a handful in 2000.

The push for historic designation is partly a reaction to a flurry of development that has brought enormous changes to many neighborhoods, as developers have demolished older homes to make way for new construction. (Historic designation usually imposes regulations on new building.) A boost to property values is another big motivation. Values of homes in historic areas in Memphis, Tenn., rose 14 percent to 23 percent higher than those in non-historic areas, according to a 2005 study by researchers at Penn State and Rutgers Universities. A similar study of homes in Texas found historic designation was associated with value increases of between 5 percent and 20 percent over similar, non-historic neighborhoods.

Experts say designation can affect home value because it leads to neighborhood pride and better upkeep of homes and yards. Most designations encourage repairs to be made with high-quality material, such as wood, rather than vinyl, and prevent a hodge-podge of styles by blocking any new construction that doesn't fit in. Historic designation can also bring financial incentives such as tax credits and matching grant programs for home maintenance. For example, homeowners in many California cities can save between 40 percent to 60 percent a year on property taxes with an historic-district designation. A matching-grants program in Scottsdale, Ariz., will reimburse homeowners in historic districts for 50 percent of the total cost of an improvement, up to \$10,000.

There are several types of historic designation: national, state and local. A spot on the National Register of Historic Places, while prestigious, is insufficient in preventing most alterations or demolitions. Local designations, however, create regulations written into local laws, which block major changes and can even dictate details like gutter repair and fence replacement. The process starts when districts are either identified by local planning departments or by groups of residents. The city,



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**Jefferson Park Bungalow** – Adam Janeiro (Buyer's agent). Welcome, Kathleen Freeman

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Harrington,  
Adam Janeiro, Carlton Joseph, and Jerry Mendelsohn**

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# Preservation Matters

consultants or volunteers then survey the area, cataloguing properties and recommending boundaries. Most municipalities require a strong showing of support from district residents before becoming official.

Local preservation zeal has raised questions about what's worthy of designation. For example, the modest homes in Lincoln Heights and Highland Park, some of Los Angeles' earliest neighborhoods, may be historically significant, but "are they worth preserving?" asks Christian Redfearn, a professor at the University of Southern California's School of Policy, Planning and Development. "Many people don't want 1,200-square-foot houses."

The prospect of higher property values spurred residents on the periphery of the 19th-century Chapin Park neighborhood in South Bend, Ind. to be included in a local historic zone. But one opponent said the historic quality of the fringe area — which abuts a large medical center and includes mid-century homes — is questionable. "I live across from a multi-level garage with a heliport," says Sharon Schierling, a university administrator. "Whatever historic character my house had at one time, it's pretty much gone now."

A group of energetic, determined residents is often critical to winning designation. In Phoenix, residents of the Westwood Village and Estates — an area of modest, mid-century ranch homes — are paying Arizona State University students \$14,000 for an historical survey that city officials were too backlogged to conduct themselves. In addition to the claim that their homes the first in the city with central air, they also point out on a Web site devoted to the neighborhood their status as one of the city's first planned subdivisions, with "small, box-like" and "L-shaped" brick homes. Says neighborhood association president Forest C. Slaght III, "Historical significance is in the eye of the beholder, much like art."

Officials are considering designation for a neighborhood in Riverside, California that includes minimal, depression-era architecture and so-called Hollywood driveways that have strips of grass running down their centers.

Local criteria for designation varies. Usually, codes draw on guidelines from the Secretary of the Interior, which say landmarks should have characteristics that individually or collectively represent historic or artistic significance, or are related to important historic people or events. Different cities have their own twist. St. Petersburg, Fla. for example, has special criteria for protecting early sidewalks made from hexagon-shaped concrete blocks, because officials say they lend unique character to the city. Denver will consider buildings erected as recently as 30 years ago. ●

*Our thanks to [www.PreserveLA.com](http://www.PreserveLA.com) for bringing this article to our attention.*

## 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

# In the Garden

## Gardens Are Abloom, and Touring We Go

### CALIFORNIA POPPY FESTIVAL, APRIL 22-23

Warm breezes replace the winter chill, and poppies burst into bloom, blanketing hillsides in a sea of orange. The California Poppy Festival kicks off spring in the Antelope Valley with a glorious array of flowers, and two days of performers, kids-oriented activities, mouth-watering delicacies, more than 200 crafts/fine arts vendors, a flower and farmers market, local wildflower information and much more at the 15th annual California Poppy Festival on April 22 and 23. It takes place on some 55 acres of wildflower bloom at Lancaster City Park 43011 N. 10th Street West, Lancaster, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily; \$7 (kids, \$3, under 5, free).

In addition to the festival, the Jane S. Pinheiro Interpretive Center offers daily park tours. Admission is \$5 per vehicle. Be prepared for wicked strong winds. The park itself is open every day sunrise to sunset, year-round. The visitor center is generally only open during the wildflower season. For the latest information call the Mojave Desert Information Center at 661-942-0662. The Reserve is located 15 miles west of Lancaster on Avenue I. Take the Avenue I off ramp from the 14 Freeway, head west 15 miles to the Poppy Reserve. Avenue I becomes Lancaster Road.

The wildflower displays naturally evolve over the course of the season, with many other colorful flower species coming in at different times, keeping the reserve an ever-changing patchwork of purple, yellow, orange, white, etc. ●



### BRENTWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S CENTENNIAL GARDEN TOUR, APRIL 22

The Brentwood Historical Society sponsors its annual Garden Tour, this year in honor of its centennial, on Saturday, April 22, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. You may purchase tickets (\$25) from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the tour day at the Kaufman Brentwood Branch Library, 11820 San Vicente Blvd., or in advance at a number of locations, including the Ourdoor Room Nursery, 17311 Sunset Blvd., in Pacific Palisades; the Hashimoto Nursery, 1935 Sawtelle Blvd. in West Los Angeles, and Dutton's Books, 11975 San Vicente Blvd. in Brentwood. For more information, call Delores McKinney, 310-820-5093. ●

Open Saturday at

### Peace Awareness Labyrinth & Gardens with Afternoon Tea

Saturday, April 29, Noon to 4 p.m.  
Guasti Villa, 3500 West Adams Blvd.

Bring friends and family to enjoy the gardens and walk the labyrinth. Open Saturday is especially designed for people who want to visit the historic Guasti Villa, walk the labyrinth, and enjoy an afternoon in the gardens. No appointment necessary. Afternoon Tea will be served from 2 to 4 p.m. Fresh-made tea sandwiches and cakes and organic Urth Caffé teas. Cost for Afternoon Tea: \$10.00 (advance reservations and payment required) No charge for visiting the gardens: (but, donations are welcomed.) To make a reservation and pay in advance for the afternoon tea, please contact Zoe at 323-737-4055 ext 127 or e-mail registrar@peacelabyrinth.org. ●



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## GARDEN CONSERVANCY'S OPEN DAYS, APRIL 30 AND MAY 13

See how owners and designers have created private spaces from the traditional vine-covered arbor to the Japanese tea house to the American Indian tee pee...Inhale the scent of fragrant roses, view 100-year-old trees, admire artistic statuary, wander among boxwood parterres, listen to the splash of water and experience garden styles from formal to wild, lush to understated, palatial to intimate.....some newly created, some updated, some restored from neglect. A multitude of garden designs highlighting a variety of diverse plant materials are featured on the Garden Conservancy's annual Open Days program in the Los Angeles area. Create your own tour—spend the day visiting all of the gardens or just a few. Admission is \$5 at each garden. No reservations required. These are rain or shine events. The private gardens are open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on both Open Days. Open Days Directories and discounted admission tickets available at the following lead gardens:

### Five gardens in Pasadena and South Pasadena:

**Sunday, April 30, opens at 9:30 a.m. La Casita del Arroyo Garden, 177 South Arroyo Boulevard, Pasadena**

### Nine gardens in Beverly Hills, Bel Air, Brentwood, Pacific Palisades, Santa Monica, and Westwood

**Saturday, May 13, opens at 9:30 a.m. Greystone Estate Park, 905 Loma Vista, Beverly Hills**

The Open Days program is the primary educational and financial outreach for the Garden Conservancy's national preservation work. The Garden Conservancy is the only national not-for-profit organization working to preserve gardens in the United States. Its most recent preservation projects include Alcatraz Island where they are partnering with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy to rehabilitate what remains of 150 years of tenacious gardening within this spectacular natural setting, and Steepletop, Pulitzer-prize-winning poet Edna St. Vincent Millay's garden in Austerlitz, New York. ●



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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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**WAHA is looking for office space.** If you have a commercial space in West Adams or know of one, please let me know. Jefferson, jeffdavisv@yahoo.com.

*Roommate Wanted? Vintage Stove for Sale? Garden Plants in Search of New Home? Place your classified ad here to reach preservation-minded readers. Contact lauramink@aol.com.*

*NO LATER THAN the first of the prior month.*

## WAHA's Annual 2006 "No Excuses" Calendar

**Important future dates - Please cut this out and save!**

### April:

Thursday, April 27 — WAHA Board Elections

### May:

Sunday, May 7 — "Big Sunday," Mayor Villaraigosa's citywide day of volunteer service

Saturday, May 20 — WAHA's Annual Preservation Meeting (tentative date)

### June:

Saturday, June 3 — "The Treasures Tour- Chamber Music in Architecture" (more details on page 3)

Saturday, June 10 — Community Unity Day

### July:

Tuesday, July 4 — WAHA's Annual 4th of July Picnic

### September/October:

Angelus Rosedale Cemetery Tour

### October:

Sunday, October 29 — Frightful Halloween Festival

### December:

Saturday and Sunday, Dec 2 and 3 — Holiday Tour

Sunday, December 10 — WAHA Holiday Party

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner, Saturday Brunch

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# Calendar ✓

## WAHA April Calendar

### Easter Celebration and Egg Hunt

**Saturday, April 15**

South Seas House & Benny H. Potter Park, noon to 2 p.m.

### WAHA Board Elections

**Thursday, April 27, 7:30 p.m.**

Please join WAHA for a very sweet meet-and-greet at Jean Cade's home, 1821 S. Victoria, in Lafayette Square. Meet your West Adams neighbors, and vote in WAHA's annual Board of Directors election. WAHA will provide desserts and coffee.

## The Treasures Tour Chamber Music in Architecture

Saturday, June 3  
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Enjoy a day of music and historic architecture on Van Buren Place! WAHA presents four landmark homes and four Chamber Music Ensembles, plus a Champagne Brunch at our annual Spring Tour.

For up-to-date information about the tour, e-mail [WAHAjunetour@yahoo.com](mailto:WAHAjunetour@yahoo.com) or call the tour Reservations Hotline, 323-732-4223.

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. Letters 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 for 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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