



# La Mesa Historical Society

The Newsletter of La Mesa Historical Society

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**La Mesa Historical Society** is a professional association of the San Diego Historical Societies. The La Mesa Historical Society operates the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House, a 1908 house/museum located at 8369 University Ave, La Mesa, CA 91942. Open 1-4 p.m. every second and fourth Saturday of the month or by appointment. Group tours are available. Call 619-466-0197 for further information.

## **Newsletter:**

The *Lookout Avenue* is the official quarterly publication of the La Mesa Historical Society.

**Closing dates** for quarterly newsletter contributions are:  
**Mar 1, Jun 1, Sept 1, Dec 1.**

Provide text in Word document and photos in jpeg.

## **Mailing address:**

La Mesa Historical Society  
P.O. Box 882  
La Mesa, CA 91944  
Send contributions to Editor  
Glenna A. Bloemen at  
[gab11853@aol.com](mailto:gab11853@aol.com).



## **MID-CENTURY MT. HELIX SHINES IN 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HOME TOUR**

Some 600 members, guests and Mid-Century Modern enthusiasts descended on Mt. Helix on Saturday November 5, 2016. They were attending the Historical Society's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Historical Home Tour.

Once again the Society's Home Tour earned its well-deserved reputation as one of the most popular and enjoyable home tours in the county. The Society's "free-style" touring allowing ticket-holders to visit the homes at their own pace—and they did so at record numbers with our first sold-out tour.

Our tour guests definitely got their money's worth in experiencing seven of the most pristine and high-quality examples of Mt. Helix's Mid-Century Modern heritage. Homes designed and built for local professionals including locally-prominent doctors, lawyers, business leaders and their families.

The tour featured designs by famed and revered Mid-Century San Diego architects and builders including Lloyd Ruocco, Homer Delawie, Henry Hester, John Mortensen, Tucker-Sadler and John Mock. Mock making a tour day appearance at one of the homes of his design.

*Continued on page 4*

**LMHS Officers**

**President**

Jim Newland

**Vice President**

George Fahouris

**Secretary**

Tracey Stotz

**Treasurer**

Jeremy Martinson

**V.P. Membership**

Ken D'Angelo

**Past President**

Donna Niemeier

**LMHS Directors**

Natasha Bliss (thru 6/18)

Mickey Moreau (thru 6/18)

Linda Rankin (thru 6/17)

Susan Stowe (thru 6/18)

Pat Stromberg (thru 6/17)

Rod Whitlow (thru 6/17)

**LMHS Committee Chairs**

**Archives**

Donna Niemeier

**Communications**

George Fahouris

**Membership**

Mickey Moreau

**Home Tour (2017)**

Kristin Dooley

**McKinney House**

Linda Rankin

Pat Stromberg

**LMHS Newsletter Staff**

**Glenna Bloemen**

Newsletter Editor

[gab11853@aol.com](mailto:gab11853@aol.com)

**By Jim Newland  
LMHS President**

It has been quite a busy and successful autumn for the La Mesa Historical Society. Hopefully many of you got to attend our 2016 Home Tour in November. For the first time we sold out of tickets, with over 600 visitors getting to see seven of Mt. Helix's Mid-Century Modern masterpieces.

Thanks to our hard working Home Tour Committee. This successful event could not have been accomplished without the amazing efforts of the great team of Ken D'Angelo, George Fahouris, Tracey Stotz, Mickey Moreau, Jeremy Martinson, Kristin Dooley, Sheryl Castro, Wendy Tinsley-Becker and Kari Dodson as well as several dozen tour-day volunteers. Of course, the Home Tour can't ever happen without the generosity of our homeowners. They and their tastefully preserved homes clearly represent what is so great about our community and those that care for our local heritage.

By the time you read this, we will have also held our annual Christmas Open House at the McKinney House (hope you could stop by) and have now bid adieu to 2016. This year we have introduced several new board members and will be moving forward on some important strategic initiatives for 2017.

Keep an eye out next year as we will be undertaking a Members Survey to gather information on what is going well and what we can improve on. We are also working on updating our by-laws and will be looking to more exciting events and programs in the coming year. Let us know if you would like to get more involved in any of our programs.

Also, don't forget to like us on Facebook, and check our website to keep up with all our activities, purchase books and DVDs—and even renew your membership! [www.lamesahistory.com](http://www.lamesahistory.com)

Feel free to contact me directly to discuss any ideas you might have to help us continue our invaluable mission for preserving La Mesa's history.



## Member Invitations & Reminders

**Have newsletter feature articles/ideas? Send them to Glenna Bloemen at [gab11853@aol.com](mailto:gab11853@aol.com)**

We are currently seeking feature articles for the upcoming issues of the newsletter. If you've read something great or have an idea or an article that you believe would be of interest to your fellow members, please submit it to our Editor, Glenna. Thank you for your continued support.

### **Want to be profiled in the newsletter?**

Would you like more exposure to fellow members? One way to do that is to be featured in the Member Profile section of LMHS's monthly newsletter, *The Lookout Avenue*. All you have to do is be an active (read "current") LMHS member, answer six questions in some depth, provide a JPG head shot, and optionally provide one to two JPG images related to your work or historical interests. Getting profiled is an effective way to become better known to your fellow members. It's easy to be profiled; just submit your name to editor Glenna Bloemen and let her know if you wish to participate. We are currently scheduling member profile features through October. Thanks, and let Glenna hear from you soon!

## **McKinney House Docent Opportunities**

**We are looking for additional docents for working the McKinney House Museum. The House is open from 1 to 4pm the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month. Come join us in educating the public on our wonderful historic site and museum.**

**Contact Linda [2LJRankin@cox.net](mailto:2LJRankin@cox.net) with any questions or just show up at the Palermo Building directly behind the McKinney House to inquire about opportunities to join the team.**

## **Archives & Collections Volunteer Opportunities**

**We are also looking for additional volunteers to help with our Historical Archives. The Archives are open every Saturday afternoon from 1 to 4 for researchers. Archives Committee Chair Donna Niemeier also holds archives work shifts on Friday mornings.**

**If you would be interested in helping out, please contact us at [info@lamesahistory.com](mailto:info@lamesahistory.com)**





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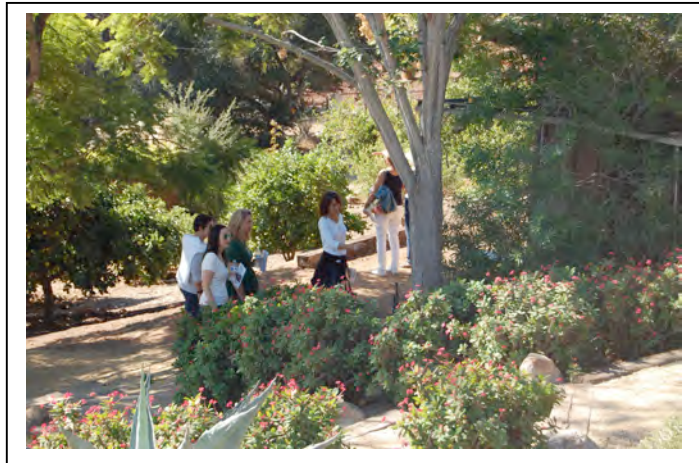


Tour guests started their day at the Foothill United Methodist Church, one of our generous local institutional supporters. There they got onto the complimentary Old Town Trolleys and were shuttled around to the immaculate homes. These homes, although well-preserved examples of this distinctive period and style (five are listed County Historical Landmarks), are illustrative of how such well-designed and constructed houses continue to serve as family homes—and not just architectural artifacts.



This year's generous owners, who are the heroes of these tours, were all present at the homes to provide their wonderful stories of restoration and rehabilitation of these architectural gems. Although tastefully and compatibly period furnished and landscaped, they continue to provide the current owners, several with young families, the same functions and assets that the original owners experienced well over 50 years ago.

Once again, the La Mesa Historical Society's Historical Home Tour proved a not-to-be missed event.







## Friday Night Pre-Tour Party

*Photo captions:*

*Top photo left to right:  
George Fahouris, Lynn Moreau,  
Loretta Chavez, Ken D'Angelo,  
Tracey Stotz and Mickey Moreau*

*Center photo left to right:  
Vice President George Fahouris,  
Architect John Mock, President  
Jim Newland*

*Bottom left photo left to right:  
Docent Coordinator Kristin  
Dooley and Kathleen Grassetti.*

*Bottom right photo left to right:  
Chef Indo, Jim Newland*



Many thanks to our tour partners Modern San Diego and San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles magazine and our sponsors/supporters Bob & Laura Duggan, Digiriot, Laura Lothian Real Estate, La Mesa Lumber, Johnny B's, EDCO, Elizabeth Calloway & Sally Schoeffel Real Estate, Foothills Methodist Church, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Chef Indo, San Pasqual Winery, Del Williams Studio, Tracey Stotz Real Estate, Southwestern Builders, Avocado Elementary, Grossmont Mt. Helix Improvement Association, Mesa College Design Program, Mt. Helix Park Foundation, New School of Architecture and the City of La Mesa Historic Preservation Commission.





## LMHS Home Tour “Class of 2016”



**Don't Miss Out in 2017!**

*LMHS Patron and above Members Receive 2 complementary Home Tour Tickets!*

## ROUNDTABLE LECTURE OPENS MID-CENTURY CELEBRATION

On Saturday October 8 2016 at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in La Mesa over a hundred aficionados of Mid-Century Modern architecture and lifestyle met for the Society's History Roundtable event. This special 3-hour event opened our Mid-Century Modern season, serving as a prelude to the November 5<sup>th</sup> Home Tour.

The program opened with Society President, historian and master of ceremonies Jim Newland providing both an introduction and short presentation on the La Mesa and Mt. Helix areas' cutting-edge architectural heritage. Landscape architect and Lloyd Ruocco historian Todd Pitman followed with a detailed discussion of the San Diego Modernist pioneer's local work. Newland returned for a brief presentation on the breadth of the Mid-Century Modern style landscape of the Mt. Helix area. After a brief break and refreshments provided by host St. Andrew's Church, Mid-Century architect John Mock spoke on his projects in Mt. Helix and La Mesa, including the two featured in this year's home tour. Modern San Diego webmaster and historian Keith York followed with a conversation with Mock and fellow architect Hal Sadler. Both discussed the Mid-Century architectural scene in San Diego and the importance of the homes they designed that were featured on this year's tour. The Mid-Century Mt. Helix Roundtable proving to be one of the best attended and memorable of our popular long-running series.



*Todd Pitman speaks on Lloyd Ruocco, pioneering San Diego Modernist architect*



*Keith York (left) interviews architects John Mock (center) and Hal Sadler (right)*



### *St. Andrew's Episcopal Church* *Pastor Father Wayne*

- Traditional Services Every Sunday 8 a.m.
- Blended Services Every Sunday 10 a.m.
- Wednesday Holy Eucharist 11:30 a.m.
- Wednesday Prayer Services 6:30 pm.

**4816 Glen Street  
La Mesa, CA 91941  
619-460-7272**



## ***In Memoriam: Gordon Jones***

*Gordon Jones, president of the La Mesa Historical from 2002-2010, died Sunday, January 15, 2017 at his home in La Mesa Village. Gordon had numerous health scares since a quadruple bypass in 2006, although he continued to give back to the Society and the La Mesa community.*

*Gordon was a native of Pasadena, raised in a small Oregon logging town and a proud University of Oregon graduate. He was a retired CEO of Denver's Coors family foundation and member of numerous non-profit boards nationally.*

*While president of the Historical Society he organized the first Historic Home Tour in 2006 and served as chairman of this popular event until 2011. He also was a member of the City of La Mesa's Historic Preservation Commission until this past year, was actively involved in land marking several La Mesa historic homes and wrote a downtown walking tour booklet.*

*Gordon was preceded in death by his wife Carol. He is survived by his daughter Shelly. He will be sorely missed and long-remembered.*



***On February 10, 2017 a Celebration of Life Ceremony was held for Gordon Jones at the Historical Society. Friends and family shared memories of Gordon and Carol Jones. Funds donated in their name will go to the upcoming historical landscape rehabilitation project.***



## Collections Corner: STRAIGHT RAZOR and RAZOR STROP



Various forms of razors were used throughout history, which are different in appearance but similar in use to modern straight razors. In prehistoric times clam shells, shark teeth and flint were sharpened and used to shave with. Excavations in Egypt have unearthed solid gold and copper razors in tombs dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC.

Several razors were recovered from Bronze Age burials in northern Europe and the razor was introduced in ancient Rome in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The first modern straight razor complete with decorated handles and ground blades was constructed in Sheffield, England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Daily shaving was not a widespread practice in the 19<sup>th</sup> century so some people never shaved. The custom of shaving every day among American men is a 20<sup>th</sup>-century innovation which was started after World War I. Men were required to shave daily so their gas masks would fit properly and this became much easier with the advent of the safety razor, which was standard issue during the war.

Straight razors were the most common form of shaving before the 20<sup>th</sup> century and remained common in many countries until the 1950's. Straight razors eventually fell out of fashion. Their first challenger was manufactured by King C. Gillette: a double-edged safety razor with replaceable blades.

A razor strop is a flexible strip of leather, canvas, balsa wood or other soft material, used for straightening and polishing (stropping) the blade of a straight razor.

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Original EDCO yard on the corner of Center and Commercial St. in La Mesa circa 1970

## RE-LIVING HISTORY

Grossmont High history teacher Donald Ginn shares this story from one of his students involved in the 2015 Japanese-American History Project completed in his AP U.S. History class. Mr. Ginn partnered with the Society on this project. Donna Niemeier and Jim Newland helped the students with their research on former Japanese-American Foothiller students who had been interned during World War II. The Society also co-sponsored their public presentations at the school in February 2016. We then featured their findings in the McKinney House exhibit room in the Summer and Fall of 2016.

Ginn received this photo and email in August from student Sam Jungman on his visit to Manzanar National Historic Site:

*Hello Mr. Ginn,*

*I hope you enjoyed your summer and are excited for the new school year to commence. Below I have attached a photo that I thought you might appreciate. If you recall Bradley Justice's Japanese-Foothiller project two years ago, he talked about how his Japanese American subject, Thomas Hashimoto along with several other Boy Scouts, linked up arms to protect the flagpole from the group of hot-headed Japanese Americans who sought to tore it down during the infamous Manzanar Camp riot. Well during a road trip, my friends and I decided to honor Thomas Hashimoto by having 5 Eagle Scouts link arms in front of the Manzanar flagpole. I have linked the photo below of us five Eagle Scouts in front of Manzanar's flagpole and I thought you might appreciate it.*

In Spring 2016, Mr. Ginn's A.P. students researched former Foothillers who gave their lives in service to their country. We hope to repeat our sponsorship again in 2017 for a presentation and perhaps another exhibition.

Thanks again to Mr. Ginn and his talented and exceptional history students.



***Grossmont High Eagle Scout Students trace steps of former Foothiller and Boy Scout Thomas Hashimoto.***



## Collection Connection

|                                                                                   |                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Kathy Tinsley</b><br>(Kathy's father)                                          | 1964 letter from Elmer Drew to Kenneth Martinosky<br><br>Drew Ford Newsletter- March/April 1964                             |
| <b>John Steiger</b>                                                               | Valle de Oro Community Planning Documents<br>12 Map Rolls                                                                   |
| <b>Andy Smith</b>                                                                 | Hand Painted set of Bavaria China                                                                                           |
| <b>James and Charlene Craig</b>                                                   | Postcard of Grossmont High School<br>Advertisement card for House of Ice                                                    |
| <b>Lemon Grove Historical Soc.</b> - Photo Album of Harry Griffin Park Dedication |                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Gerald Skullerud</b><br><b>Louise Glanz</b>                                    | Book: A Grand Era in the Fletcher Family by Mary                                                                            |
| <b>GHS Museum</b>                                                                 | Pamphlet: June 14, 1950 – La Mesa Intermediate<br>8th Grade Graduation<br>1949 El Recuerdo Year Book – La Mesa Intermediate |
| <b>Unknown</b>                                                                    | La Mesa Heights Community Church Records Book –<br>1893/94-1935                                                             |
| <b>Jim Daugherty</b>                                                              | Seven (2 copies each) photos with negatives of early<br>La Mesa<br>Five negatives of early La Mesa                          |

### *LMHS Member Survey*

## ***WE NEED YOUR INPUT***

***Keep An Eye Out this Spring for the  
La Mesa Historical Society's Member Survey.***

***Please take a few minutes and provide your input on  
our existing programs as well as what things we need  
to be focusing on and how we can best fulfill our  
Mission to preserve and educate on the La Mesa  
area's wonderful heritage.  
More Details Forthcoming...***

### Membership Directory Update

**Attention LMHS Members:** Have you updated your Member Directory profile yet to make it more robust? You now have the opportunity to upgrade your photo to color, if it isn't already, and to expand your profile description if you wish, including social media links, contact info, book-cover images and descriptions, and more! Check out

#### New Annual Personal Membership Levels: Sponsor/Memberships:

- \$1000 Jewel Lifetime
- \$250 Benefactor
- \$100 Patron
- \$25 Family
- \$20 Individual
- \$10 Student

#### Business/Organization

- \$250 Basic Sponsorship
- \$500 Entrepreneur Sponsorship
- \$1000 Premium Sponsorship
- \$1500 Silver Sponsorship
- \$2000 Gold Sponsorship
- \$3000 Platinum Home Tour Sponsorship

### Welcome, New and Returning LMHS Members!

Congratulations on joining the La Mesa Historical Society, dedicated to preserving the history of La Mesa, California. You have made a wise investment. While there are many benefits to being a member of LMHS, you'll need to take the following two steps to optimize your membership:

1. **Subscribe to LMHS Lookout Avenue** at [www.lamesahistoricalsociety.com](http://www.lamesahistoricalsociety.com). This is necessary for you to receive any and all notices from LMHS. Receiving the email that accompanied this newsletter does not mean your name has been added to the regular notice distribution list.
2. **Enjoy a spot in the Membership Directory** with LMHS. Go to [www.lamesahistroicalsociety.com](http://www.lamesahistroicalsociety.com) to promote your business by sending your JPG photo, brief contact information, and an expanded description to webmaster George Faharis.

You'll also enjoy these additional benefits of membership:

- **Quarterly electronic newsletters, *Outlook Avenue***, containing information about local, regional, and national publishing activities;
- **An opportunity to stay in touch with other members** by signing up for the LMHS Directory.
- **Regional collaborative marketing efforts**; and

Let us know if you have any questions or comments about your membership with LMHS, or any ideas to improve upon our mission. Again, welcome to LMHS.

Mickey Moreau  
Membership Committee Chair







***McKinney House Christmas Tree, donated again by former Board Member Ed Blackman and wife Beth. The Christmas Open House was another success on Sunday December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016 thanks to McKinney House Committee Chairs Linda Rankin and Pat Stromberg, and Past President Donna Niemeier. Sweets and cider were enjoyed by all and raffle prizes distributed.***



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### *Collection Connection Continued*

**St Andrews Episcopal** - Copies of the Church's Historical Files

**Grossmont Healthcare** - May 2016 Grossmont Healthcare Booklet

**Marjorie Wilson** - Five La Mesa Presbyterian Church Directories; Two La Mesa Presbyterian Church Financial Reports from 2008

**Linda Rankin** - Woman's celluloid vanity set (5 pieces) and one small glass shade

**Keith Dindinger** - 1993 La Mesa Chamber of Commerce Fact book and Directory  
Four Rotary International Applications – 1954, 1965, 1984, 1986

**Donna and Lee Swennes**

1. Four carousels of architectural slides showing styles in San Diego
2. Syllabus – A Review of San Diego Architectural History by Leland Swennes, May 31, 1994
3. Slide Script
4. The Architecture Book by Norval White



### **Society Recognized by State Senator Joel Anderson**

State Senator Joel Anderson honored the Society with a proclamation for our work to support and promote our community and its heritage. Here Society President Jim Newland accepts the proclamation at the November Board Meeting from the Senator's staff member, Matthew Sandfort

## **Foothills United Methodist Church** *Pastor Eric Smith*

- Traditional Sunday worship services 8:30 a.m.
- Contemporary Sunday worship services 10:30 a.m.

**4031 Avocado Blvd  
La Mesa, CA 91941  
619-670-4009  
foothillsumc.org**



## **2017 Events Calendar**

***Have an event/resource to report to the historical society community?***

***Send your information to***

***Newsletter Editor Glenna Bloemen at [gab11853@aol.com](mailto:gab11853@aol.com)***

### **McKinney House Research Archives Every Saturday**

Research Archives open every Saturday from 1 to 4 pm (except holiday weekends).

### **McKinney House Museum 2nd & 4th Saturdays each month**

McKinney House Museum is open the 2nd and 4th Saturdays from 1 to 4 pm (except holiday weekends).

**LMHS Likes Facebook!"**

**[Visit us on Facebook today](#)**

**and let us know  
you like us!**



## **WHY AND HOWS**

### **La Mesa Historical Society Mission**

To promote, collect and educate on and about the history of La Mesa and its area of historical influence for the benefit of the community through the McKinney House Museum, Historical Archives and public programs.

### **La Mesa Historical Society Vision**

An organization actively engaged in preserving La Mesa's unique heritage for future generations to access and enjoy.

### **Society Store On-Line**

Don't forget that you can purchase Society books, DVDs and even sign-up or renew your membership on-line on the Society's website [lamesahistory.com](http://lamesahistory.com). The Store is also open each Saturday in the Research Archives at the rear of the McKinney House property at the corner of University Avenue and Pine Street. Here you can also purchase historic photos and do research on your house, business or events of La Mesa and the surrounding region's past.

McKinney House Museum and Archives  
8369 University, La Mesa, CA 91942  
Mailing address: P.O. box 882, La Mesa, CA 91944  
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