



La Mesa Historical Society
LOOKOUT AVENUE

VOLUME 30 , ISSUE 12 SUMMER 2007

RESTORATION: FROM A TO Z
BY: MARK L. GUNDERT— PART 2 OF 3

Some time before I owned the property, previous owners painted and remodeled the Dillon House to their specifications. Most of the remodeling, other than upgrading the utilities throughout the house, was more of a remodel than a restoration effort. As with most old homes, someone has decided to paint over the natural hand crafted wood work to modernize their old home to be more current with the times. Back in the 50s it was popular to have white appliances and bright colors throughout the house. Much of the wood has since been restored but there is still much to do.

White or off-white was used throughout the Dillon House over the years, to cover the interior solid core wood doors, base boards, the window frames and the built in wood china cabinets that were originally beautiful hand crafted dark wood. I has been my personal quest to bring this natural wood back to the original look. I have been successful in doing this but I must say it is often very tedious and time consuming. I am not an expert by any means but have discovered some tips on how to strip paint off wood that you may want to try yourself.

If you have the money to pay a real craftsman to do the work, I recommend you do so, to spare yourself the physical and mental frustration of a wood stripping. If you do not have the money or you want the wood stripping to be done correctly, do it yourself. I believe if you want a job done right, do it yourself. That is what I have done over the years.

I have personally stripped paint off of solid core wood doors, wooden baseboard, and window frames. The hardwood oak and Douglas fir floors in my house were beyond my expertise and I had to use an expert on sand-

ing and refinishing. It is the sanding part that is the trick. I have tried renting a floor sander but the wood floors at other homes I have owned came out bumpy and did not look good. Be sure to prepare the areas you plan on stripping paint with a drop cloth and use the 3-M blue (not white) edging tape if you use newspaper or clear plastic rolls to catch the paint strips that hit the



“If you have money to pay a real craftsman do the work, I recommend you do so...”

floor or carpet. Obviously, you should strip paint before you paint or refinish any wood flooring. The paint that is stripped-off is hot and wet and will present a problem to anything that is sticks too. Get a pair

of nitrile (Harbor Freight) or heavy rubber gloves to keep the paint and the chemical paint stripper off your hands. Latex gloves are to light and will not work. The chemical paint stripper will eat through latex eventually. Paint stripping is a messy process, be ready for it. Do not let the paint stripper chemicals get on your skin.

To strip paint off of wood, there are several ways to do this. I suggest you use a combination of wood stripping techniques. There is a tool you can use that power planes away the layers of paint.

Please look for the 3rd part of this three part series in the next issue. If you would like to obtain a copy of the entire article, please contact the Historical Society.

(619) 466-0197

**La Mesa
Historical Society**

8369 University Ave. La Mesa, CA
91941

LAMESAHISTORY.COM

Spring 2007

Vol. 30, Issue 12

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Gordon Jones

1st Vice President

Donna Niemeier

2nd Vice President

Ruth Contino

Secretary

Sharon Crockett

Directors-at-Large

Ed Blackman

Tom Hart

Dr. Rienzi Haytasingh

David Kievit

Aaron Landau

Linda Rankin

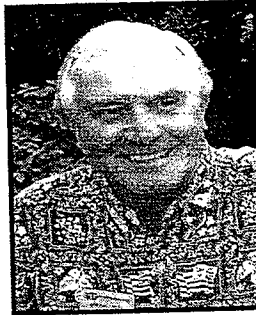
Kathy Tinsley

Newsletter Publication

Rienzi/Erin Haytasingh

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY GORDON JONES



The 2007 Historic Home Tour is well on its way, so mark your calendars!

You are probably aware of all the fuss generated by the Mayor's proposed renaming of Allison Avenue. The LMHS Board took a position opposing that action. As a result of more than 400 signatures on petitions gathered by Grace Fradanburg, Carol Jones, and Carol Yaranko, the council later reversed its decision.

There has been a wonderful increase in the use of our archives and research resources by many individuals, families and La Mesa businesses in land marking their historic homes, reproduction of photographs from our collection of 1500, etc. It's special that so many of them have chosen to become members, and even more importantly, volunteers.

NEW MEMBERS

Carol Soudan

Ruby & Sabel Aguiar

Pauline Attman

Priscilla F. Yip

James W. Eckles

Tom & Mary Curtis

Chat & Charlene Ashburn

Summer E. Meza

Cheryl Cook Shingeton

WANT TO BE A JOURNALIST?

Our current newsletter publishers, with a growing and very-active young family, have run out of time to devote to *Lookout Avenue*, our unique newsletter issued three to four times per year. If you've hankered to make your mark in journalism, enjoy writing and being one of the first to know, give us a call at 466-0197 to put together a meaningful publication for La Mesa.

LOCKWOOD MEMORIAL GIFTS

Harriet Lockwood, mother of member Brice Lockwood, passed away recently and the Historical Society was designated as the recipient of several donations in her memory. Our condolences and thanks to you, Brice and Carol.

HISTORICAL HOME TOUR 2007

Five gorgeous homes in or near the Date Avenue Historic District! Such a way to build on the resounding success of our first Home Tour. Set for 10 to 3 on Saturday, November 3, you may again enjoy the Old Town Trolley buses, meet the enthusiastic owners and docents of the homes, and the working artists in the yards. The event generates much-needed monies for the maintenance of our McKinney House and our third grade education programs for La Mesa schools.

The City of La Mesa, EDCO and other sponsors have assured us of their continued support, and we will enjoy the cooperation of *SOHO*, the *Union-Tribune* and *San Diego Home and Garden*. Naturally, La Mesa Historical Society members and last year's attendees will receive advance announcements and special admission prices.

ROSE GARDEN CELEBRATION ENGLISH TEA 2007

On Saturday, May 5, 2007 people arriving at the McKinney House for the Rose Garden Celebration and English Tea heard the wonderful music of the Grossmont College Jazz Ensemble and saw the rose garden in full bloom. They were also able to view a display of quilts and wedding dresses that decorated the McKinney House. The Rose Garden Celebration was first on the agenda. The McKinney House rose garden was initiated in 1996 with start-up monies from the La Mesa Women's Club. Its purpose is to recognize designated persons by the addition of their names on the Rose Garden plaque. This year six people were honored at the celebration.



Ethel Allen was the first honoree. She has lived in La mesa for 54 years. She was one of the original quilters who met at the McKinney house each week to make quilts that were used to make money for the Historical Society. **Mabel Lewis** was nominated by her granddaughter, member Pat Stromberg. Mabel had an extensive knowledge and love of roses. **Jeff Lehew** was postmaster in La Mesa from 1932 until his retirement. He also served as City Treasurer. **Von**



Marshall came to La Mesa in 1941. He was Vice President of the First National Bank and served as manager of the La Mesa branch. **Eulalie Polak** volunteered with many community organizations: including PTY, La Mesa Community Welfare Council, American Red Cross, Grossmont Hospital Auxiliary, and the La Mesa Woman's Club. The final honoree was **James Wollcott Porter**. James Porter came to La Mesa in 1916. He purchased a house and named it "Rose Hedge" after the large Cherokee rose hedges that lined the front of the house. In memory of his siblings James donated Porter Park and Porter Hall to the people of La Mesa.

The Annual meeting was followed by an English Tea. Fifty-one guests and over 15 helpers enjoyed a wonderful sunny afternoon sipping tea and eating scones, finger sandwiches, and deserts. It was a perfect afternoon to visit with friends. *By Donna Niemeier*

SPRING RAFFLE WINNERS

Quilt made by Rosemary Cosgrove— Pat Johnson, Barnes and Noble Gift certificate— Diane Sperber, Olive Garden Gift Card— Kathy Tinsley, Pacific Theatre Tickets— Al and Judy Platt, Pacific Theatre Tickets— Catherine Jervy, See's Candy Certificate— Susi Ruggles, See's Candy Certificate— Joan Boemen, Starbucks Card—Dorris Palley, Wall-Mart Certificate— Ernis Ewin, Two Whaley House Tickets— Carol Lockwood, Two Zoo Passes— Diane McCarthy

The La Mesa Historical Society Board of Directors thanks all members who participated in the raffle. The raffle brought in enough income to pay basic utilities and house maintenance bills for two months.

PORTER HALL IS NEW HOME FOR FOOTHILLS ART GROUP



The Foothills Art Association has found a new home in historical Porter Hall. At a ribbon cutting ceremony Thursday, April 12, 2007 Mayor Art Madrid reopened Porter Hall. The building had been closed for extensive renovations.



Left to Right: City Manager Sandra Kert: Council Man Dave Allan, Ernie Ewin and Mark Arapostathis: Vice Mayor Ruth Sterling and Mary Art Madrid

Foothills, a volunteer run art gallery, is leasing space in the more than 80-year old building, named for Edwards Porter, La Mesa's Mayor from 1920-1924. Present at the ceremony was Anne Porter-Hall, grand niece of Edwards Porter. Anne Porter-Hall still resides in the Porter family home. She is a long time member and supporter of the La Mesa Historical Society.



Non-profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 La Mesa, CA 91941
 Permit No. 208

La Mesa Historical Society

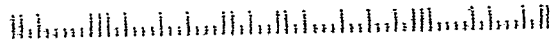
Museum: Rev. Henry A. McKinney House (1908)
 8369 University Ave., La Mesa, CA 91941
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 882, La Mesa, CA 91944
 Change Service Requested

WWW.LAMESAHISTORY.COM

Kenneth and Donna Niemeier
 4805 Lee Ave.
 La Mesa, CA 91941

Change Service Requested

9194134942 C105



AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Application

The Society depends on membership dues, bequests and fund-raising activities to support the restoration and preservation of local history.

The La Mesa Historical Society operates the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House, a 1908 house/museum located at 8369 University Ave. (at the corner of Pine Street) in La Mesa. Open 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday or by appointment. Group tours are available. Call (619) 466-0197 for further information. Lookout Avenue is the official quarterly publication of the

La Mesa Historical Society
 P.O. Box 882, La Mesa, CA 91944

- \$250 Patron
- \$100 Sponsor/Organization
- \$15 Individual
- \$50 Sustaining
- \$20 Family
- \$5 Student

Lookout Avenue was the original name of La Mesa Boulevard from the 1890s until the city council voted to change the name in 1940. Lookout Avenue was La Mesa's main street.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ Zip: _____
 Ph. (____) _____

Memberships and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.