

La Mesa Historical Society
LOOKOUT AVENUE

VOLUME 30 , ISSUE 8 SUMMER 2006

LA MESA FIRE DEPARTMENT: REMEMBERING THE BELL



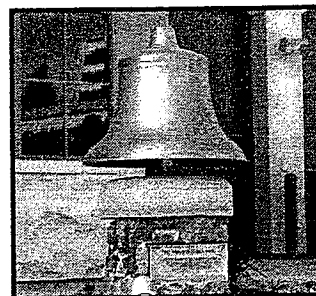
Blaze and the old fire bell monument at the Allison Avenue Station c. 1962

On June 13, 1924 La Mesa's first Fire Bell was installed. It was purchased, used, from the City of Coronado. The bell's toll was used to alert volunteer firefighters in the surrounding areas that there was a fire. Weighing over half a ton, it was 36 inches in diameter and 36 inches high. That new bell was indeed an improvement to the previous alarm method, which was the fire gong. In fact the fire gong was used from about 1910 to 1924.

historic bell is now mounted in front of the new fire station that is scheduled to open for usage on July 30th, 2006. Below is a poem written by Eleanor Robeson, wife of fireman Gene Robeson, placed on a plaque with the bell and reads:

*"This bell that rang for many years
to call out the volunteer's
a symbol of the days gone past
It stand here proudly,
resting at last." 1924-1952*

By 1929 the alarm bell was attached to boxes and wires that allowed the bell to be rung from the railroad depot, the fire station where the truck was housed, and the fire chief's residence. Until about 1930 the La Mesa Fire Department provided fire protection for a radius of about 10 miles around the city. In 1941 the bell was moved to the back of Nebo Drive fire station. In 1959 the bell became a monument. The



The new home of the bell. 2006



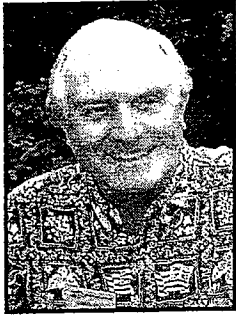
The James Morrison House was build in 1910 and will be included in the home tour.

FALL HOME TOUR

On Saturday, November 4, 2006 from 10 a.m. to 3p.m., we will conduct our first-ever tour of historical La Mesa homes. We intend this to be first of a series of tours highlighting La Mesa history, its commercial and cultural develop-

ment, its people and its achievements. Planning is currently underway and we hope to bring together many aspects of the city's history to make this day special. Please stay posted, as there will be more to come.

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
BY GORDON JONES**



Though it came only through the recent passing of a special friend, Hope Fellows, we now possess nine well-done, comprehensive scrap-books for the mayoral years (1962-1970) of La Mesa Mayor Paul Fellows, Hope's late husband of many years. Their daughter, LouAnn Fellows Johnson of Buena Vista, CO, delivered the materials to us and a real treasure trove of La Mesa mu-

nicipal history they are. See them in our Palermo building. We have completed the edging/framing of our most-displayed enlarged photographs since they had become dog-eared from so much use in our off-site displays. They look really attractive, so we have decided that our unusual panoramas deserve the same treatment.

New Historical Society Members

Edye & Ken Brown	Janyce Covey
John & Cathie Robbins	Cindy Davis
Jo-Ann & Brad Boswell	Clarke & Charmon Lehew
Joan Boeman	

Board of Directors

Ed Blackman	David Kievit
Tom Hart	Linda Rankin
Dr. Rienzi Haytasingh	Kathy Tinsley

Tom Hart nominated to Historic Preservation Commission

Tom is a new member of our Board, works as a civil engineer with the County of San Diego, serves as a member of SANDAG's Bicycle and Pedestrian Working Group and is a member of several other community organizations. He also plays in the big band, Moonlight Serenade Orchestra. He has Bachelor Degrees from Georgetown University and UC Irvine, and a Master

of Science from UC Berkeley.

Tom owns a 1909 bungalow atop Mount Nebo, in La Mesa.

He joins Donna Niemeier and Gordon Jones on the Historic Preservation Commission, replacing Stephanie Glazer, whom we thank for her years of service.

Upcoming History Roundtable: Did La Mesa have a wild, wild West?

10:00 AM, Saturday, September 16 in the Palermo Building at 8369 University Avenue.

Hear and speak with Jim Newland, LMHS member, professional historian and author, and home tour chair in the

College/Rolando area; a recognized expert in the early development of the western half of our City. A free continental breakfast will be served. Please make reservations at (619) 466-0197

THE LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ENGLISH TEA

BY DONNA M. NIEMEIR



As the La Mesa Historical Society began planning refreshments for their annual rose Garden Celebration on Sunday, July 1, 2001 a suggestion was put forth to have an English Tea. I was delighted because my fascination with the English tradition of having tea, which is

much more than just a simple refreshing drink, began with my first visit to the British Isles in the summer of 1974. I am always excited when given the opportunity to perform the ritual of an English Tea.

A tea can be done on many levels. You can just be taking a break from your workday, you can meet a friend at a teahouse, you can greet visitors to your home with tea and a digestive biscuit (shortbread or sugar cookies), or you can invite friends over for high tea (served at 5p.m. and includes small portions of broth or soup, fish, red meat, vegetable, and a sweet). No matter if it is a planned occasion or spur of the moment activity the English Tea has traditions that must be followed. It is a social event that allows people to take time to talk: to share ideas, learn about each other, catch up on

daily happenings and/or just gossip. You stop what you are doing and enjoy the company of others while the tea steeps and small delightful pastries and finger sandwiches are passed around. During the summer of 1974 I took a college class in London and after its completion went to Scotland to visit a friend living in Stonehaven. I learned a great deal reading and visiting historical sites that summer but having "tea" with classmates and visiting Scottish homes where the ceremony of "tea" was performed taught me to love the country, the people, and the tradition. I brought that love of the tradition home with me and since that time have had guests over for Tea, used my English bone china tea set to impress my relatives and friends, as well as volunteering to put on teas at work and for the La Mesa Historical Society. Using linen tablecloths, china cups with saucers, sterling silver spoons, fancy tea pots, antique sandwich plates, and tiny vases with fresh flowers are as much a part of the ceremony as the finger sandwiches, shortbread, meringues, crumpets with marmalade, scones with strawberry preserves and clotted cream, or pastries with lemon curd. The setting must be special. The food is special. The time to sit and relax is special. Tea Anyone?

lamesahistory.com: WHERE THE PAST MEETS THE FUTURE.

This Spring LMHS launched the society website on the world wide web. Thanks to the hard work of Stephanie Glazer, information will be become readily available and interactive for all to view. The website features upcoming events, La Mesa's history, and an array of other interesting topics about the society and La Mesa's history. Don't forget to check us out at: www.lamesahistory.com

STUDENTS VIEW THE PAST

BY DONNA M. NIEMEIR



Student Tours of the Rev. Henry McKinney House Museum help us celebrate our local history by giving third grade students a view of the past. This year 180 students from

Lemon Avenue and Murray Manor schools took a docent-led tour of the McKinney House. The students also participated in lessons about antique toys and school practices of 100 years ago.

The La Mesa Historical Society has designed a youth educational program focusing on the importance of understanding history. The 8 teachers were given a packet with information about historic La Mesa. This packet included a variety of curriculum

activities to be done as follow-up units in their classrooms.

The following are students reactions to the McKinney House Tour:

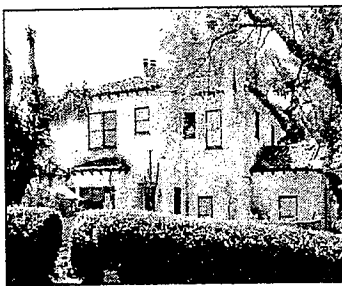
"My favorite room in the house was the parent's bedroom. I learned that girls had to wear long dresses, stockings and leather shoes. This field trip brought me 98 years into the past!" Kathy, Murray Manor.

"I really liked the McKinney house because it was very interesting and historical. One of my favorite things in that house is the little door in the dining room that you opened to see where Mrs. McKinney stored food and the children hid in." Thomas, Murray Manor.

"The boy's toys were made of wood or tin. It is very different from now toys. The outhouse was very, very, very interesting too! I learned that boys sometimes wore dresses!" Taylor, Lemon Avenue

RECENT LANDMARKED HOMES:

#22: Dillon House



Dating to early 1930's, the rather large Dillon House is a fine example of the Spanish Colonel Revival (aka Spanish Eclectic) style in La Mesa. It is a two-story home, with a ground-level basement to the rear. It features a mostly-unaltered stucco exterior and hipped, gabled red mission tile roof. The paneled front door set in an ornamental

surround is centered in an otherwise asymmetrical façade. A stucco wall enclosed an entry courtyard which is entered through a wrought-iron gate. The attached garage reflects the design of the house although it is a later addition. Dillon Drive is named after Lloyd and Lydia Dillon, one of the first homeowners in this part of La Mesa.

Dating to 1911, the McNeil House is a good example of a California Craftsman style bungalow, and is characteristic of many La Mesa homes of the time. It has a front gable with a full porch, square posts and a low solid balustrade, with the front gable bargeboard resting on brackets attached to the house by twisted steel cables. It has open eaves and straight-cut rafter tails, and an ornamental gable window decorates the gable peak. The large fixed porch win-

dows are topped by geometric leaded glass window lights, while the rest of the house uses double-hung and casement windows. The south and north sides of the clapboard house shows bay windows which are likely original. The house was constructed by local builder John Hurlburt, and served as a home to real estate developers, a La Mesa City Treasurer, and a pioneer in the prestigious La Mesa Women's Club.

23: McNeil House

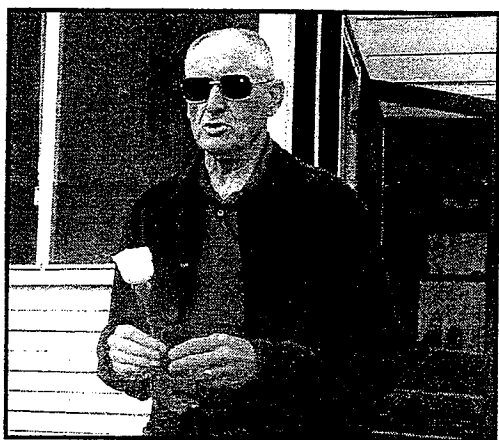


2006 ROSE GARDEN CELEBRATION

This year's Rose Garden Celebration was well attended by many LMHS members and guests. The La Mesa Historical Society honored six individuals during the ceremony. Sixty one guests listened attentively to the array of memories brought back by those honoring loved ones. Honorees whose names appear on the LMHS Rose Ceremony plaques include; Hannah Bishop, Eleanor Doerr, Hazel North Frates, Lester Foundation, Dr. Andrew G. Smith, and Fred and Lulo White.



REMEMBERING A LOVING FATHER: DR. SMITH, JR. HONORS HIS FATHER DURING THE 2006 ROSE CEREMONY



Dr. Andrew Smith Jr., was announced and he walked up to the staging area to delight all who listened. His deep admiration for his father was apparent during his brief speech, recollecting some of the many stories and memories his father left him. Dr. Smith arrived in La Mesa fresh out of medical school in the summer of 1927, not knowing any one in town. During that time La Mesa's population was roughly 1,600 people and growing rapidly from post World War One years. He lived in his office, 2nd floor apartment building, until he could afford a room. What was most notable by all who attended was Dr. Smith Jr.'s

recollection of how his father made home visits to his patients. Because he couldn't afford a car, he made house calls on foot, carrying his portable treatment table, even as far as south 70th street. This information awed many in the audience. Just the sheer thought of walking that far on a summer day in La Mesa is daunting, let alone carrying a portable treatment table along.

Dr. Smith passed the California Surgery boards with the highest score recorded, and Governor Pat Brown asked him to serve on the state board. Dr. Smith also served 12 years (1938-1950), on the La Mesa-Spring Valley School Board, as President. Andrew thank you again for sharing a piece of your father's story.



Non-profit Org.
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 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

Change Service Requested

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

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.

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

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Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Ph. (____) _____

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