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Spring 2010

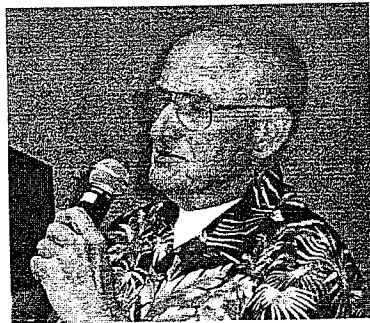
La Mesa in the WWII Years

On Saturday March 13th our presentation on La Mesa in WWII was a memorable event. It was held in the auditorium of the Grossmont Healthcare District. This was the third time that we have



utilized this fine facility. Our speakers, Charmon Lehew and Andy Smith, each related what it was like

growing up in our fine city (then a town) during a unique period in the history of this wonderful country. The details of rationing, blackouts, the army camp in Fletcher Hills, and the sacrifices and unity for the war effort came to life with their personal experiences and memories. We also had comments from some of the audience members who grew up in La Mesa in the early to mid forties.



Donna Niemeier took photos. Jim Newland audiotaped the speakers. Jim Stieringer, Grossmont Healthcare District trustee and LMHS member, provided refreshments. The presentation was an enjoyable and outstanding event.

Aaron Landau

For Your Calendar ...

- May 22, 2010 Archives/Accession Committee Work Party
- May 1, 2010 Spring Tea and Annual Meeting
- June 5, 2010 La Mesa Book Sales Begin at Flag Day Parade

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We Welcome Our New Members!

Thomas Blackwood & Kitty Nicholson
 Mrs. Vera Skop Knianicky
 Wade Douglas
 Anthony and Leah McIvor
 Barbara Smith
 Pamela Cook
 Bill and Diane Svensson

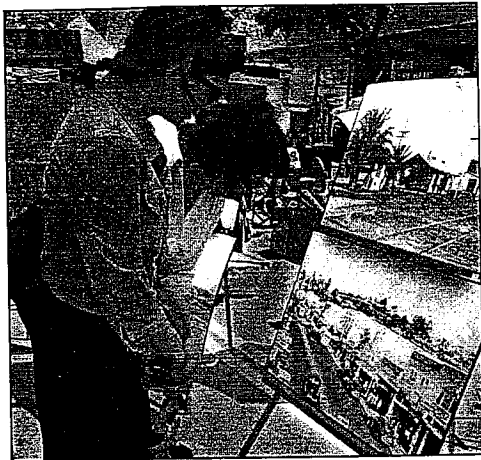
We are delighted to have you with us!

Remembering Norrie West

Well-known throughout San Diego, Norrie West was synonymous with golfing, especially with the development and on-going successes of junior golf programs. Norrie passed away on March 25 at age 93, but we remember him as the man who put together our landmark La Mesa history book: *LA MESA Through The Years*. It rapidly sold out two printings and greatly contributed to the strength of the La Mesa Historical Society. A 1934 graduate of Grossmont High School, he related great stories of the first municipal swimming pool and his connections with the popular La Mesa Country Club. We send our warmest wishes to Jane, his wife of 58 years.

2010 Antique Street Faire

Held Sunday, March 28, we always enjoy detailing La Mesa's history to hundreds of visitors.



Grossmont High School Roundtable

The LMHS is proud to announce an upcoming joint presentation with Grossmont High School in conjunction with its 90th anniversary celebration. Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 28th time to be determined. The presentation on the history of GHS will take place on its campus on Murray Drive in El Cajon (just over the "border" from La Mesa).

Also, three weeks later for all you GHS alums, the school will hold a daylong celebration with many events at the school on Saturday, September 18th. There is a committee working on this upcoming celebration.

FYI Grossmont High School has a wonderful museum with all kinds of photos, yearbooks from every year, sports trophies and sports memorabilia, and general memorabilia going all the way back to the 1920s. Please call Connie or Lynn Baer at the museum phone at (619) 668-6140 for hours and general information.

Aaron Landau

President's Comments

Donna Niemeier

We have had a very busy winter and anticipate many exciting projects, activities and events this Spring. Our plans to continue established activities such as the Antique Street Faire, annual meeting, Rose garden celebration, English Tea and quarterly Round Table meetings are already scheduled. We are also anticipating the arrival and first sales of our new book, *Images of America La Mesa*, which will be available at the Flag Day Parade in June.

The archives/accession committee has been working on Thursdays and Saturdays. We have started to input data on the new computer and have begun putting accession numbers on objects in the McKinney House and archives building.

On May 22, 2010 there will be a work party at the McKinney House to inventory, label and photograph all items in the house museum. We are looking for volunteers to help on that day. If you would like to join the work party please call me. (619-461-2419)

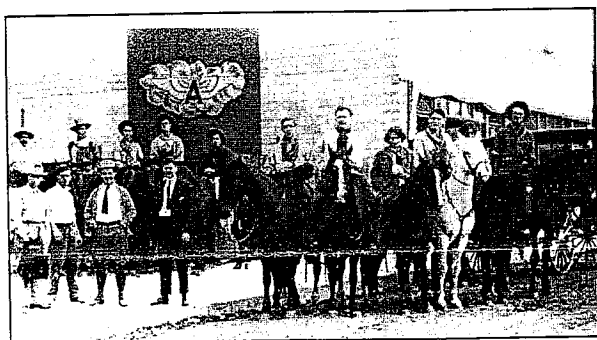
Now let's move on to the History Highlights. On April 4, 1915 Prospect Point on the summit of Mt. Nebo became the site of La Mesa's first Easter Sunrise service. Since that Easter in 1915, which was the second sunrise service in the United States, outdoor services have been held each year in La Mesa. For more information please read the article in this issue about Prospect Point and the sunrise service.

The "History Highlights" question for this issue is: What La Mesa-Spring Valley School was dedicated on January 26, 1958 and had a personal letter from Walt Disney read at the dedication? If you know the answer or have information about the school give me a call at 619-466-0197 or contact me at www.lamesahistoricalsociety.com.

Board of Directors:

Board meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 7:00 PM.

President	Donna Niemeier
1 st Vice Pres.	Aaron Landau
2 nd Vice Pres.	Ruth Contino
Secretary	Sharon Crockett
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Past President	Gordon Jones



Before Hollywood: La Mesa

That's right. La Mesa was the site of one of the state's first brick and mortar filmmaking studios – just months before film companies settled in Hollywood. It was August of 1911 when 28-year-old film director Allan Dwan brought his actors, cameramen and crew to town and set up his production headquarters at 8360 Lookout Avenue (now La Mesa Boulevard), just north of Third Street. He used vacant lots to the west of the building as an outdoor stage, and other nearby lots for horse corrals. In 1911, La Mesa had a population of

about 700 people, and many served as extras for the Chicago-based American Film Manufacturing Company, or "Flying A".

Dwan and his company made 8- to 10-minute one-reelers (two per week) from the La Mesa base of operation until the summer of 1912. That's when he felt the scenery and faces of the extras had become too familiar, and he moved on to Santa Barbara.

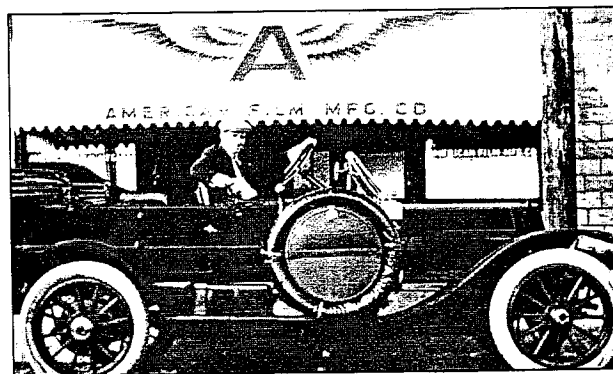
While located in La Mesa, Flying A made over 100 films and eventually shared the territory with other independent film companies like the Essanay Film Company. Essanay filmed several episodes of its western series, "Bronco Billy", around La Mesa and also did a bit of filming in Lakeside.

La Mesa continued to be a pioneering movie town throughout the early 1900's with several other independent film companies moving into and out of the area. But, earning its reputation as one of California's first and finest was Flying A, putting La Mesa on the "Tinseltown" map.

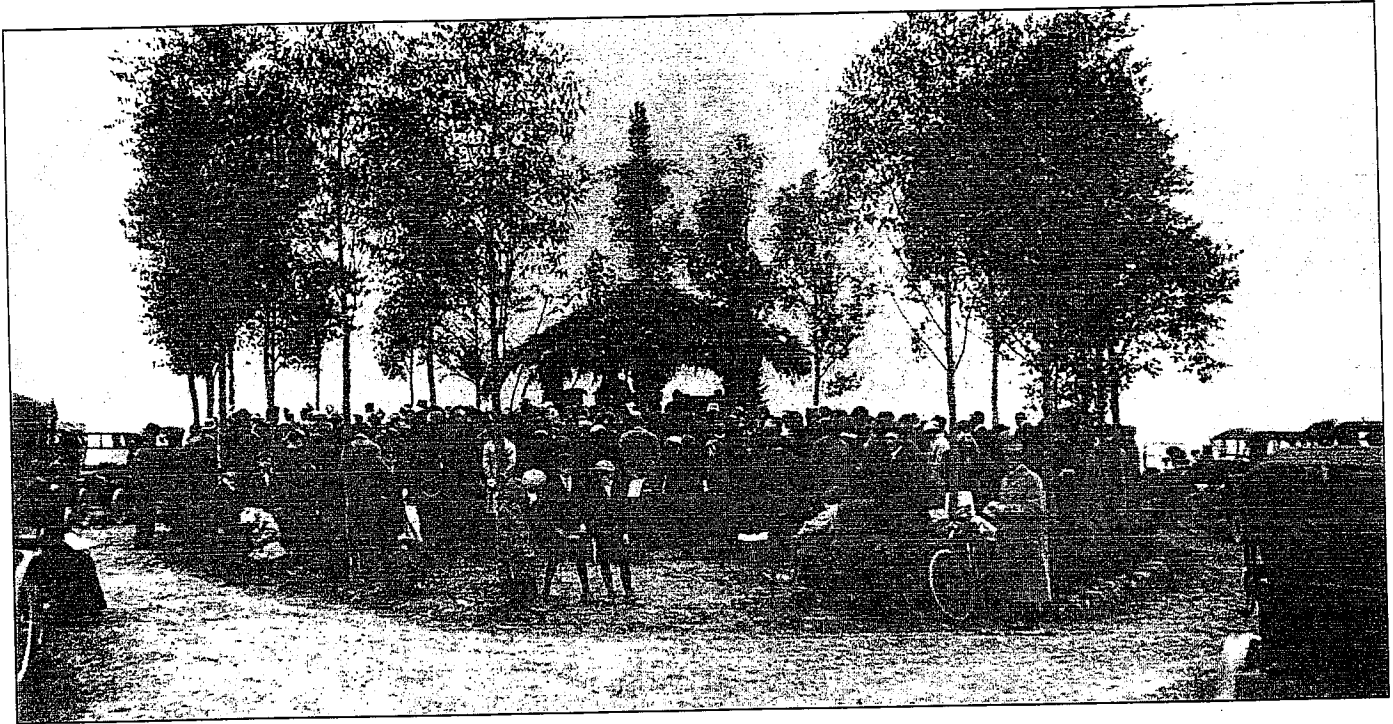
Note:

A group of individuals is working on commemorating Flying A's presence in La Mesa. For more information, or to participate, please contact Wade Douglas at (619) 697-0425.

Sally Hixson



Lookout Avenue is a publication of the La Mesa Historical Society. Please let me know your comments and suggestions! Editor: Gordon Jones (619) 465-1883. www.lamesahistoricalociety.com.



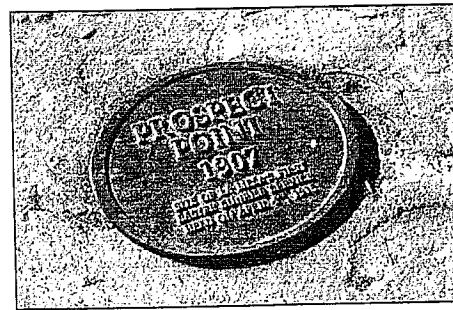
LA MESA'S FIRST EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

Prospect Point, one of La Mesa's first parks, is tucked away on top of a rise on Mt. Nebo. On April 4, 1915, before houses were built around the circle, this small park became the site of La Mesa's first Easter sunrise service. The Easter services were held there until 1917. Due to the growing number of people attending this community affair the services were moved to the summit of Mt. Helix the following year.

From the early days of La Mesa's history in the 1890's and for many years thereafter, Prospect Point became a popular walking destination for many of the town folk. High on Mt. Nebo, before the trees were planted you could clearly see "the world at your feet". On the west San Diego city, San Diego Bay, Coronado and Point Loma, and the deep blue of the Pacific Ocean could all be seen with the naked eye. On the south the mountains of Mexico were visible, and on the east the higher peaks of the Coast Range mountains and inland fertile valleys could be seen. In a certificate of title, filed with the County of San Diego on September 12, 1907, the C.C. Park and S.C. Grable families

deeded the tract known as Prospect Point to the City of La Mesa for \$10. They specified that this tract was to be used for park purposes only.

By 1912 a pavilion had been built, trees and shrubs planted and public stairs starting at Lemon Ave had been constructed. As well as Easter services, Armistice observances and band concerts were conducted on top of Mt. Nebo.



In 1915 the La Mesa Scout newspaper article described the Easter sunrise service on Mount Nebo.

"It is estimated that nearly one thousand people assembled at the summit of Mount Nebo Sunday morning to participate in the Easter sunrise services held under the auspices of the churches of La Mesa. Shortly after daylight the pilgrimage to the top of the mount began. It was led by 200 singers from various churches. Many people from San Diego, El Cajon, Spring Valley, La Mesa Heights and other nearby towns joined in the services. The people formed a body around the pavilion upon

which was placed a large cross. The sky was overcast but there was still a splendid view of the ocean, bay, mountains and valleys, adding to the impressiveness of the scene."

In a 1948 newspaper article Mrs. O. W. Todd, pioneer resident of La Mesa, recalled the observance of Easter on Mount Nebo. "The Easter services, in those days known as Easter Pilgrimages were sponsored by Sunday schools of the Methodist, Baptist, and Congregational churches. The children wearing white robes would gather early in the morning at the La Mesa School from whence their pilgrimage started and walk to the

top of Mt. Nebo. They sang anthems along the entire distance."

If you visit Prospect Point today you will see that the circular drive is surrounded by houses which obstruct the view to the ocean and Mexico. There is however a rock with a dedication plaque attached to it, beautiful full grown trees and if you look carefully you will find that 3 sections of the public stairway still remain. You can start at Lemon Ave and use the stairs to reach the top of the Mount Nebo.

Donna Niemeier

ANNUAL MEETING, ROSE GARDEN CELEBRATION, ENGLISH TEA

Please mark your calendar and join us for the Annual Meeting, Rose Garden Celebration and English Tea that will be held on May 1, 2010. This event will be at the McKinney House and will begin at 2:00 P.M.

In you plan on attending the Tea, please make a reservation before April 23, 2010 by calling Donna Niemeier at 619-461-2419.

Rose Garden Commemoration Application

If you wish to honor an individual at our Rose Garden Celebration, please complete the following form and send it with your check for \$50.00 to the La Mesa Historical Society, P.O. Box 882, La Mesa, CA 91944. The information and check must be received by April 13, 2010 for the name to be included on a plaque and on the program at the celebration on May 1, 2010.

Name of Honoree _____

Donor Name _____

Donor Address _____

Donor Telephone Number _____ E-mail _____

Reason for commemoration and/or information about the Honoree to be read at the celebration:



NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EL CAJON, CA 92020
PERMIT NO. 178

McKinney House Museum and Archives:
8369 University, La Mesa
Mailing address: P. O. Box 882, La Mesa, CA 91944
(619) 466-0197
www.lamesahistoricalsociety.com

Change Service Requested

Cut along line and mail the section below with your check.

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 Avenue (at the corner of Pine Street) in La Mesa. Open 1-4pm every first and third Saturday of the month 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. Our address is:

La Mesa Historical Society
P.O. Box 882
La Mesa, CA 91941

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
- \$50 Sustaining
- \$20 Family
- \$15 Individual
- \$5 Student

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Ph: () _____

I would like to be a volunteer in the following areas:

- Docent/Education
- Events

- Grounds/Building
- Archives/House