

THE *Preservation Conversation*

MAY 2024 VOL 32 NO 5

MOHPG.ORG

"PRESERVING MONROVIA'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE"

AN HONOR WELL EARNED

At the City Council meeting on Tuesday evening, March 19, the Monrovia City Council unanimously concurred in renaming "Station 103" to now be called "Crudgington Station."

The staff report from the city listed Gloria's impressive accomplishments, both before and during her service as a city council member:

- Leading efforts to create the Monrovia Hillside Wilderness Preserve in roles including community activist, commissioner and Councilmember .
- Supporting the City's historic preservation efforts, which include over 160 local historic landmarks, 2 historic districts, and serving on various boards and commissions.
- Serving as the City's liaison to "all-things-stormwater" and navigating the City through contentious compliance-related efforts. The City is per-

ceived as a regional leader in stormwater compliance, including creation of a regional joint powers authority, which brought together cities within defined watersheds.

- Involvement in the City's Monrovia Renewal Efforts between 2015 and 2020, which significantly enhanced Monrovia's infrastructure.



The newly designated Crudgington Station.



By far and away the most significant contribution was the effort by Gloria and her husband Cleve to get Measures A and B passed in 2000 to allow the city to purchase over 1400 acres of hillside land above Monrovia to prevent any future development. Those measures were passed with an 83% voter approval, thus setting aside that land to be enjoyed by residents *in perpetuity*.

The city has a list of criteria to be considered when deciding whether or not a city-controlled property/facility can be named after a person or organization, and it was determined that Gloria met all six of the criteria.

Congratulations Gloria (and Cleve)!

MONROVIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION GROUP

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Monrovia Historic Preservation Group
P.O. Box 734
Monrovia, CA 91017

MISSION

The Monrovia Historic Preservation Group (MOHPG) seeks to preserve Monrovia's architectural heritage through **advocacy and actions that promote historic preservation.**

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The MOHPG Board of Directors meets the first Sunday of each month except August at 10 a.m. All members are welcome to attend. Contact Jim Wigton or any board member for meeting location.

MOHPG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit California corporation. Donations and membership dues may be tax deductible; consult your tax adviser.



NEWSLETTER

Staff

Jim Wigton
Susie Ling

The MOHPG newsletter staff welcomes article submissions and letters from our members for publication in the newsletter. All submissions are subject to editing.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Jim Wigton

WALKING TOURS CONTINUE

It has been eight years since I conducted my first walking tour in downtown Monrovia. The purpose was to share with others the long and varied history of this town and how we have arrived at a point where folks move here expressly because living here epitomizes the lifestyle they hope to enjoy.

Tours are usually held on the first Saturday of the month, although that time sometimes is moved. Some months get rained out, and sometimes events in the area preclude having a tour. Nevertheless, during these eight years, 341 people have participated and hopefully gained a greater appreciation of what has transpired over the years since the town was founded (1886) and the unique circumstances that have brought us to where we are today.

If you have not availed yourself of this opportunity, take time out of your busy schedule to join us some Saturday for an interesting history lesson.



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WITH A LITTLE HELP

One of the most important tasks in my role as president is to make sure that I always acknowledge and thank those who play a role in furthering the goals of this organization, whatever part they play. As far as the 2024 home tour goes, a special thanks is due to Charlie Phillips, one of the homeowners on this year's home tour but more importantly the one who sought to return the tour to Wildrose and who lined up several of the homes to be on the tour.

Charlie's vision of a tour on his home turf included a band, a food booth, the vintage cars of his neighbors, and several vintage travel trailers. He is the one responsible for lining all of this up, taking a huge load off my shoulders.

MOHPG held a home tour on this same block of Wildrose back in 2009, and it was a huge success, given that tour goes only has to park once to see all the homes, rather than drive around town, parking several times. This tour promises to be every bit as successful as the one in 2009, largely due to Charlie.

THANKS, CHARLIE!!

RECAP OF TRIVIA EVENT

MOHPG and the Monrovia Historical Society teamed up to present an afternoon of competition for those who love trivia contests. The event was held in the Community Room of the Monrovia Library on Sunday afternoon, April 14, at 2 pm. The competition was open to all residents, and it was free to anyone wishing to participate. Drinks and snacks were provided to help nourish contestants as they struggled to answer the more difficult questions. All of the teams had three members, although the allowed composition of teams could range from two to five members.

There were 100 questions, divided into ten groups of ten questions each. Each group was a different category of related questions, and all the questions were connected to Monrovia in one way or another. For example, one question was, "In what country is located another city named Monrovia?" The answer, for those of you who fancy yourselves trivia buffs, is Liberia on the continent of Africa.

The ten categories of questions were:

1. transportation
2. all things Monroe
3. street names
4. famous people

5. potluck
6. industry
7. bees and "B"s
8. Monrovia schools
9. filming
10. grab-bag



John Zuk acted the role of moderator, using the overhead to show the questions and then after each grouping of questions, providing the answers. Score sheets were corrected by another team to insure fairness.

The competition lasted about two hours. After each round of ten questions, the teams exchanged answer sheets so that the answers could be checked by someone not a part of the team. This continued through all the rounds, and after the last round scores were added up.

The scoring was close but the winning team answered 78 of the 100 questions correctly. That team was comprised of Vicky Hansen, Oliver Beckwith, and Mark Harvis. Each member of the winning team received two tickets to the 40th annual Historic Homes Tour which will be held on Sunday, May 5, at the Wild Rose Historic District. The runner-up team of Janet Pack, Dick Singer, and Lee Schamadan each was able to choose one item from a selection of books.

All the participants found the experience to be challenging as well as fun, a nice way to spend a Sunday afternoon that saw a light rain coming down outside the library.

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIPS



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For information on how YOU can become a member at the Heritage Circle or Supporter levels, go to the MOHPG website www.mohpg.org and look under Membership.

Plumbing Services



HPC MEETING MARCH 27, 2024

The Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday evening, March 27, at 7:30 pm, at City Hall. All seven commissioners were present, and the minutes from the previous meeting were approved. There was no public input speakers.

There was only one item on the agenda.

Determination of Historical Significance for the home located at 184 May Avenue. Any home older than 50 years (This home was built in 1946) must be reviewed for historical significance before undergoing a major renovation or demolition. City staff determined that the house lacked design integrity as it had been substantially altered over the preceding years. The building was assessed under the seven aspects

of historic integrity including: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Since it does not have architectural or known historic value and is not a contributor to a potential historic district. Staff recommended that the commission assign a status code of 6Z. **Approved 7-0** with very little discussion.

Craig Jimenez then discussed progress for the HPC to develop guidelines for homeowners wishing to replace their windows. Currently, there is no permit or review to repair vintage windows, and the city would like to provide guidance for applicants needing to replace windows. While window repair is always better than replacement, the issue of energy efficiency is just one area needing clarification.

The next step will be to draft a policy which can then be approved by the HPC.



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OAK PARK PROJECT MEETING

The second meeting with developers of another proposed housing project adjacent to Monrovia's historic downtown was held on Thursday evening, March 28, at 5:30 pm in the Community Room of the Monrovia Public Library. MOHPG had requested both meetings so that members of MOHPG and residents could form a clearer picture of how the two projects could impact the area around Myrtle and Olive Avenues. (The first meeting was held on February 28 with about 60 people in attendance. That meeting concerned the 701 S. Myrtle Avenue project.) The attendance at this second meeting was roughly 30 people.

There is currently a housing project on the 2.7 acre lot with 156 units. The proposed project would include an interior courtyard and two parking structures.

Members of the audience voiced concerns over the obvious impacts such a project could have on the surrounding area, namely noise, traffic, and parking issues. MOHPG is concerned that the project borders the original downtown which has been the same since the city was founded on May 17, 1886.

While the project is many years away from completion - projected to be around 2028 - there are lim-



Artist rendering of the proposed apartment complex that would have 269 units. Of those units, 96 would be classified as low and very low income units.

its to what the city can do in the way of softening the size of the project. Legislators in Sacramento have drastically regulated any city's ability to control many aspects of proposed housing developments in an effort to increase the amount of housing in the state. As recently as January of this year, those restrictions have increased the possible scope of projects like this to the point where the city's hands could well be tied when it tries to limit the building's size.

An EIR (Environmental Impact Report) still needs to be completed as well as several other steps before the project can proceed.

LET THERE BE RAIN

With two solid years of rain pummeling the communities of Southern California, residents can breathe a sigh of relief at the prospect of water restrictions easing and the threat of a critical water shortage put to rest, at least for now. After many years living with water restrictions, the prospect of no restrictions is welcome.

But a deluge of rain was not always a welcome thing in Southern California. The storm drains and channels that we see today that enable water to be

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safely carried away were not always a fixture in the area. The picture **above** shows White Oak Avenue (Today's Foothill Boulevard) looking east with Myrtle Avenue crossing it. The mud that flowed down the streets occurred prior to storm drains, and it is easy to see how dangerous things could develop after a heavy rainstorm. The picture at the **right** was taken during the same 1938 storm and looks north up Myrtle Avenue from Foothill Boulevard. The large volume of mud is an indication of just how dangerous storms can be without flood control.



Photos Courtesy of the Monrovia Legacy Project

Recently, the so-called Bobcat fire in 2020 burned over 100,000 acres of forest, and while no Monrovia homes were lost (thanks mainly due to the efforts of our firemen), enough damage was caused to the watershed in the hills above the town that winter storms since then have caused millions of dollars in damage to Monrovia Canyon Park.

The park has been closed while forest service personnel work to implement repairs and improve the water runoff capabilities so that future storms will not such a devastating impact.

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

On January 31, a fire gutted or damaged four classrooms at Bradoaks Elementary School on East Lemon Avenue in Monrovia. The fire erupted some time before 7:40 am, shortly before school was set to begin for the day. There were no injuries, and the cause of the fire is under investigation. The school was closed for the rest of the day.

The incident was discussed at the March 3 MOHPG board meeting, and the consensus among board members was to offer some financial assistance as there was a significant loss of classroom materials, and replacing the lost items could prove difficult. However, the board felt that before providing any financial assistance, we should have a clear idea

of how the money would be spent. Edie Ramirez volunteered to contact the school for further information. She was able to obtain a partial listing of some of the items that the money would be used towards replacing. The listing included:

- Water Stations for classes displaced by fire.
 - Books to replace those purchased by teachers that were lost in the fire.
 - Wet ones (to clean off items recovered from the fire)
 - Printer for Speech Therapist
 - Emergency buckets
 - Posters purchased by teachers for class lost in fire
- Six representatives from the board were on hand on Monday, April 22, to present a check for \$1000 to the school's principal, Calvin McKendrick.

Chris Shevlin

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Six members of the MOHPG Board were on hand to present a check for \$1000 to Principal Calvin McKendrick

(center in red) to assist staff at the school to replace some of the materials lost in the January 31 fire.

BOARD REPORT APRIL 14, 2024

The MOHPG board met on Sunday, April 14, at 10 am with eight of the eleven board members present. The minutes from the March 3 meeting were approved as submitted by the secretary Michael Scharf.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Kristen Norton reported that membership for the current year stands at 204 households (although two more memberships were presented at the meeting, bringing the total to 206. New members for 2024 are: **Myvonwynn and Razu Hopton-Ahmed and Amy Teitel**. Since Kristen will be at the MOHPG table on the day of the home tour, we will be offering to new members only a membership through the end of 2025 for the cost of one year.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial reports were emailed to the board ahead of the meeting. Michael Kaplan explained some of the difficulties he is having with QuickBooks, so the board approved monies to allow him to get some professional assistance in order to resolve the issues.

PROGRAM CHAIR REPORT

There were 18 people who attended the March 3 visit to the Blinn House in Pasadena, home to Pasadena Heritage. Later today, April 14, there will be a trivia contest at the Monrovia Library as MOHPG will partner with the Monrovia Historical Society to sponsor the event. A possible return visit to the Moran Auction house in Monrovia will take place some time in June. The annual MOHPG meeting is set for July 21 in the Community Room of the library. MOHPG is dark during the month of August, so the next program will be the 5th annual earthquake workshop on Saturday, September 14. Lee Schamadan will also try to arrange a visit to the Gamble House in Pasadena for some time in October.

TOUR REPORT

Tour chair Edie Ramirez brought the board up to speed on plans for the home tour. The tour will consist of four Craftsman homes on Wildrose, Fred's Monrovia, and the two town museums. We have ordered 550 copies of the tour brochure, and the quoted price is \$1923.86. Total ad income was \$2735, but that is substantially less than ad income from last year. Information about the tour was emailed to 335 former online ticket purchasers on April 2. A video trailer of the tour has so far received 196 views on YouTube plus another 92 views on the KGEM YouTube channel. Online ticket sales so far are 38 tickets (Last year at this time it was 50). There will be a meeting on the homeowners and house captains

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on Sunday, April 21. Kristen will make several posters for the tour once she receives the file. They will be placed in shops around town. The 300 block of Wildrose will be closed off to through traffic, and vendors and vintage cars will be lining the street. In addition, there will be a food vendor, and several vintage travel trailers will be on display. A band will also be playing two sets of music at one end of the street. Flowers for the houses and a porta-potty on a trailer have been ordered. Visits to our website, which normally hover around 100 per week, hit over 500 visits this past week.

OLD BUSINESS

A walking tour of downtown was held yesterday with three people in attendance. The next tour will be May 18. Fred Wasson summarized the meeting MOHPG members had with the developers of the Oak Park project on Colorado that took place on March 28. Because Edie Ramirez was able to get a list of items from Bradoaks Elementary that they need to purchase after the fire, the board voted to donate \$1000 to the school (see article on page 6).

NEW BUSINESS

The board voted to reimburse Edie Ramirez half the cost of her landmark plaque (\$124.65). The MOHPG page for *Monrovia Today* Summer 2024 was submitted on March 25. There was a discussion about whether MOHPG should fund hiring a consultant to look into the possibility of putting Monrovia's downtown area either on the National Register or the state register to help deal with future development in or around our historic downtown area. The board agreed to look into it.

CORRESPONDENCE

There were several inquiries into our website over the past month, all of them with questions relating to the home tour.

ADJOURNMENT

The next dates for a board meeting are May 26 and July 7. There will be no board meeting in June.



*Preserving
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Address Correction Requested

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CALENDAR OF MOHPG AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

| | | | |
|---------------|---|------------|---|
| May | 5 | Sun | 40th Annual Historic Homes Tour, 10am - 4pm |
| | 5 | Sun | Cinco de Mayo |
| | 12 | Sun | Mother's Day |
| | 26 | Sun | MOHPG Board meeting, 10am |
| | 27 | Mon | Memorial Day |
| June | (no board meeting this month) | | |
| | 1 | Sat | Visit to John Moran Auctioneers in Monrovia, 11am — noon, (Full details in the June newsletter). |
| | 6 | Sun | Father's Day |
| | 20 | Thurs | Summer Begins |
| July | 4 | Thurs | Independence Day |
| | 7 | Sun | MOHPG Board meeting, 10am |
| | 21 | Sun | Annual Meeting, Community Room of the library; 5:30 pm |
| August | MOHPG has no activities scheduled during the month of August. | | |