



THE
MONROVIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION GROUP
presents

The Preservation Conversation



MARCH 2018 VOL 26 NO 3

MOHPG.ORG

MONROVIA'S OWN TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

At the beginning of World War II, African-Americans were allowed to serve in the U.S. military only in racially segregated units. And specifically, they were not allowed to train as pilots. All that changed when, on April 3, 1939, Appropriations Bill Public Law 18 was passed by the U.S. Congress, and it contained an amendment which designated funds to train African-American pilots.

But it wasn't until June 1941 that actual training for black military pilots would officially commence. The Tuskegee Army Air Field near Tuskegee, Alabama was selected as the site where these men would become the first African-Americans in the military to learn how to fly. At the beginning, the program consisted of 47 officers and 429 enlisted men. As a result of the location of training for these soon-to-be pilots, they came to be known as **Tuskegee Airmen**. In all 992 pilots would be trained and graduate in Tuskegee from 1941-1945. Three Tuskegee airmen would go on to become generals. The last surviving member of the original Tuskegee airmen died in 2016.

On 29 March 2007, the Tuskegee Airmen were collectively awarded a Congressional Gold Medal at a ceremony in the U.S. Capitol rotunda.

Leroy Criss, affectionately known to his family as "Buster," was born in Los Angeles on August 28, 1925. From an early age Leroy had an interest in flying, and up to and including high school made and flew model airplanes. He even took flying lessons at Monrovia airport. On December 6, 1943, Leroy volunteered for the United States Army Air Force not long after graduating from Monrovia-Arcadia-Duarte (MAD) High School in Monrovia. At the end of his basic training, he was selected to become an air cadet in the black air force, thus becoming one of the original Tuskegee Airmen. During his training he



Leroy "Buster" Criss, 1925 - 2008

Photo Courtesy of the Monrovia Historical Museum

learned to fly a variety of aircraft, including the Piper Cub, the Stearman, and the B-25 Mitchell bomber.

Leroy left the service as a second lieutenant in 1946, entered college and played football at UC Santa Barbara (He was even asked to play football for the Los Angeles Rams). During his first few years out of college he served as a flight instructor and

(con't on page 4)

INSIDE

President's Message /2
Monrovia's First Houses /6

March Program /3

Recap February Program /7

Board Report /5

Calendar /8

MONROVIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION GROUP

Newsletter - March 2018
Volume 26 Number 3

Published monthly by the
Monrovia Historic Preservation Group
P.O. Box 734
Monrovia, CA 91017
(626) 599-8187

MISSION

The Monrovia Historic Preservation Group is entrusted with Monrovia's heritage through **preservation, education, and community involvement.**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Jim Wigton	Vice-President Hal Leavens
Secretary Martha Rund	Treasurer Alan Morse
Membership Helen Falco	Members-At-Large Gloria Crudginton
Programs Lee Schamadan	Edie Ramirez
Tour Chair Ami Perry	Charles Perry
Historian Steve Baker	One position open

■ ■ ■

NON-BOARD POSITIONS

Legal Adviser Darrell Brooke	Emails John Zuk
--	---------------------------

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

EARTHQUAKE WORKSHOP RETURNING

MOHPG, in partnership with the Monrovia Fire Department, will be holding its second annual workshop on earthquake safety on Saturday, September 22, 2018, from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. in the Community Room of the library. Last year's event saw almost 60 people in attendance and was extremely well received, hence the return engagement.

RSVPs will be required so watch for further information as September approaches.

SPECIAL THANKS

A special thanks is to due board member **Gloria Crudginton and her husband Cleve** who have offered to purchase enough *Monrovia's First Houses* books to provide one to each of the owners of the 67 first houses (built before the end of 1887) that are still standing. These homes were recently identified by the Monrovia Legacy Project.

Thanks, Gloria and Cleve!

DIVINE'S

SINCE 1932 • Over 10,000 sq. ft. of quality furniture
WE BUY & SELL USED • ANTIQUE FURNITURE

BRIAN HORN

Contact us at: www.divinefurniture.com

(626) 280-8484 (323) 283-8000

802 E. GARVEY, MONTEREY PARK, CA 91755

2018 HISTORIC HOMES TOUR ALMOST HERE

May is fast approaching, and with it will arrive the 36th annual Historic Homes Tour, this year set for May 6. By the time you read this newsletter, we should have secured the lineup of homes for the tour. The April newsletter will feature a pictorial essay of those homes, giving members an opportunity to select the home in which they would like to be a docent.

MOHPG has been sponsoring a home tour since 1983 when it co-sponsored its first tour with the Los Angeles Conservancy. Each year since, residents and visitors alike relish the chance to peek inside some of the architectural gems for which this town has become so well known.

The tour is our main fundraiser, allowing us to pursue our mission of **preservation, education, and community involvement**. For many members this may be the one occasion they have to make a tangible contribution to supporting the organization.

Look for further information in the April newsletter for ways in which you can assist with what promises to be another spectacular home tour.

MARCH 2018 PROGRAM -FOR MOHPG MEMBERS

GOING FOR A RIDE

For our March program we will be the guests of the Metro Link Rail System as we will be taking a docent-guided art tour of the stations along the Gold Line from Arcadia to Union Station. The day will begin as we board the Gold Line at the Arcadia station and from there travel to Union Station. The total time for the trip will be approximately two hours. Because of the time limit, we will only be getting art tours of the Arcadia station, our starting point, Union Station, our ending point, and two more stops in between.

The tour will be held on **Saturday, March 17**. We will be leaving from the Arcadia Gold Line station promptly at **10 am**, so be sure to arrive early if you will be attending.

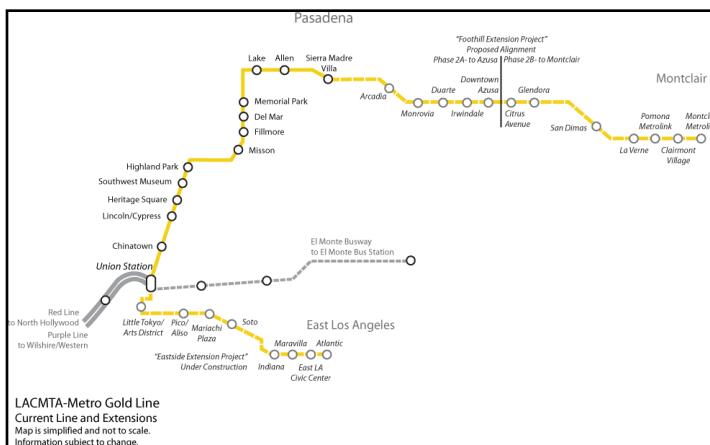
There are 14 station stops along the way, but we will not be stopping at all of them as time will not allow for that. At each station where we do stop, the Metro docent will discuss how the art of each station was selected to represent the history of the area.

Metro Art Moves is a free series of regularly scheduled and special tours of artwork in the Metro Rail system. Regular tours are led by trained Metro Art Docent Council volunteers and provide insights into the artworks, artists and art-making processes. MOHPG will be taking a special tour designed just for its members.

As part of this tour, participants will receive a free, pre-loaded TAP card that will enable them to ride all day on the metro for free.

Because group size is limited, we are requiring that members who would like to attend this event **must RSVP** to Jim Wigton at (626) 599-8187 or email to jimwigton1946@gmail.com by **March 11**.

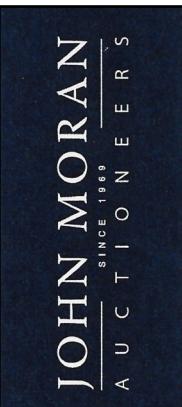
Once the tour ends at Union Station, MOHPG members will be free to have lunch at one of the local eateries in the area.



This map of the stations along the Gold Line includes the uncompleted portion which will extend the Gold Line to the city of Montclair.



The focus of the trip will be to learn more about the artwork that beautifies the stations long the Gold Line. This tile mural, entitled Traveler, is located at the entrance to Union Station and depicts travelers from different eras and features historical references to Spanish galleons, the Pico House, Olvera Street and actress Carole Lombard.



JEFFREY MORAN
Senior Vice President, Auctioneer

jeff@johnmoran.com

626.793.1833 ext.102 | www.johnmoran.com
145 East Walnut Avenue, Monrovia, CA 91016

JOIN US

WHEN: Saturday, March 17, 2018
TIME: Tour leaves at 10 a.m.
WHERE: Meet at the Arcadia Gold Line Station,
200 N. 1st Avenue, Arcadia.

You must **RSVP at least one week ahead of time as space is limited**. Contact Jim Wigton at (626) 599-8187 or jimwigton1946@gmail.com. Be sure to arrive early enough so the group can leave at 10 a.m. Day passes for the metro will be provided **free-of-charge** to each person in attendance..



626-408-5437
815 S. California Ave., Suite J
Monrovia, CA 91016

www.mmcesq.com
michael@mmcesq.com

PrimeLending 
A PlainsCapital Company.

626-755-5764
fax 866-216-0120
dbalsamo@primelending.com
www.diane4homeloans.com
420 S. Myrtle Ave #B
Monrovia, CA 91016

Diane Balsamo Gonzales
Senior Loan Officer
NMLS: 482962



Home Loans Made Simple.

(con't from page 1)

machinist at North American Aviation. Thereafter, he spent 37 years as a high school educator, teaching math, history, English as a second language, and special education. He lived in Los Angeles for most of his life after his military service.

Leroy Criss passed away on May 20, 2008 and is buried at Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier.

Note: In 1948 President Harry Truman enacted Executive Order Number 9981 which led to the end of racial segregation in the armed forces.

There is a Tuskegee Airmen National Historical Museum which is located in Detroit, Michigan.



Leroy Criss in training

MOHPG JOINS AMAZON SMILE

Treasurer Alan Morse, with approval from the MOHPG Board, has recently signed up the organization to participate in the Amazon Smile program. The benefit to MOHPG is that once each customer selects MOHPG as the charitable organization, **0.5% of eligible purchases will be donated to MOHPG.**

HOW TO SIGN UP

Go to smile.amazon.com. If you already have an account with Amazon, sign in. Then at the prompt for the charitable organization, type in Monrovia Historic Preservation Group and then confirm.

That's it!

Then, when you want to make a purchase on Amazon, use smile.amazon.com instead of ama-

zon.com. All the same products are offered here as on Amazon.com.

We will keep you updated on the amount of donation we receive from Amazon through this program. It costs you nothing extra to participate, and MOHPG benefits when you make a purchase.

Welcome to
amazon smile
You shop. Amazon gives.

BOARD MEETING - FEB. 4, 2018

Nine of the eleven board members were present for this meeting. The minutes for January were approved as submitted.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The current membership total is 229 with 204 paid for 2018. The board voted to grant a year membership to anyone who makes a donation to MOHPG that exceeds \$30.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial reports were passed around. There was little financial activity over the past month and only three checks were written. Federal and state e-forms for the past fiscal, taxable year (September to August) were submitted on January 27.

PROGRAM REPORT

There were 17 people in attendance at the January 20 program at a mid-century modern home. The winter potluck program will be Sunday, February 25, at 5:30 pm. Oliver Chi and Craig Jimenez from the City will be the guest speakers. On Saturday, March 17, we will be taking the Metro Art Tour from the Arcadia Gold Line Station to Union Station. Passes for the day will be free but **you must RSVP** to attend. Plans for the April program have yet to be finalized.

TOUR REPORT

Only two tour houses (plus the two museums) have been confirmed; three other houses have yet to decide. The board approved an expenditure of up to \$1200 for advertising for the tour (same as last year). Prices for ads in the tour brochure will also remain the same as the past few years. The homeowner/house captain meeting has been set for Sunday, April 22, at 3 pm.

OLD BUSINESS

Martha presented information on an additional insurance policy that would protect board members from legal action (coverage not included in our current policy). The board voted to approve the expenditure of about \$600 per year for that coverage. Cleve and Gloria Crudgington have offered to purchase a copy of the *First Houses* book for the owners of the 67 first houses in Monrovia. The board voted to spend up to \$350 to have one first houses plaque made. The plaque will be used to show homeowners what that would look like. The hope is that we can place a brass plaque on each of the identified first houses by the end of 2018.

NEW BUSINESS

Sandy Burud has a copy of one of the 40 3-inch binders containing newspaper articles from 1887-1891.

DESIGN • ENGINEERING • CONSTRUCTION



Gary Schaeffler
Cell: (626) 484-5445

MOUNTJOY
CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

415 West Chestnut Avenue • Monrovia • CA 91016
Tel: (626) 359-3275 • Fax: (626) 239-3624
E-Mail: mtjoycons@aol.com • Cont. Lic. #762523

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIPS

• HERITAGE CIRCLE •
Cleve & Gloria Crudgington
Hal Leavens

SUPPORTER
Volunteer Center—San Gabriel Valley
Margaret Garemore
Aztec Hotel - owner Qinhan Chen
The Brooke Law Group, PC
Edie Ramirez
Joan Sullivan
Renee Bannoura

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.

She will be scanning them. Plans are being made to hold the 2nd annual earthquake workshop in conjunction with the Monrovia Fire Department. The date will be Saturday, September 22, 2018, from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. Further information will be provided at a later date. It is possible that the printer we are using, Denram on Maple, may close in the foreseeable future. We are looking at options for handling future printing jobs should that occur. Amanda Wray, who has handled our website support for many years, has moved to Maryland and will be assisting us from there. MOHPG is beginning to collect data from surrounding cities on their Mills Act programs, in advance of Monrovia's plans to re-evaluate the current Mills Act contract program.

CORRESPONDENCE

There were inquiries about the Aztec Hotel, the upcoming Easter egg hunt, landmarking a home, and information on historic districts.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is March 4 and will last three hours, the last half for a special discussion.

A 'FIND' FROM THE LEGACY PROJECT COLLECTION

by Sandy Burud

As we at the Monrovia Legacy Project digitize our City Historians' records for the Library, sometimes a gem reveals itself. One just did. A 1979 letter to the Mayor and City Staff from Janet and Charles Manning, owners of a great old home at 224 S. Heliotrope. They urged city officials to recognize older houses as part of Monrovia's "rich heritage, to be preserved and recognized." What a concept! They suggested ways to generate interest in our architectural heritage through articles and awards and perhaps even a photographic brochure of historic homes.

Their letter was passed on to Myron Hotchkiss, who responded regretfully on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce and the Historical Society. This very idea -- a project to produce a brochure with photographs of old homes -- was prevented by a tight budget. And furthermore, he said, "As far as I know, no present owner of an old home has gone to the trouble and expense to have his title traced back as far as 1887, when some of the houses were built and consequently we lack definitive information on this point."

It's poetic that it was Myron's 'breadcrumbs' that helped us document exactly which houses in Monrovia were built in 1887. It was his transcript (another 'gem' buried in his papers) of the December 31, 1887 issue of a *Monrovia Messenger* article listing homes built that year that was the impetus.

Steve Baker and I took it from there -- with Steve's deep knowledge of the city's beginnings and ability to interpret the tax records, a dose of my tech and design skills, and Dave Baker's beautiful photographs -- Voila! More than a brochure -- a 60-page picture book documenting every home built in 1887 or before still in existence. We titled it *Monrovia's First Houses*. (Published in 2017. It is available at City Hall, the Community Center and The DollMakers' Kattywompus.)

So one thing is checked off our collective wish list. The Manning's letter was a reminder of all the other

work that MOHPG, the Historical Society and the preservation community have done since then to celebrate our architectural heritage. There is a lot to be proud of, much to appreciate about those who came before us, and plenty more to do.



Monrovia's First Houses

A Window Into Our Beginnings
Homes from our earliest years still with us

This 1887 Queen Anne Victorian is featured on the cover of the First Houses book.

Photo by Dave Baker

In 2018 the whole Legacy Project Collection will go online through the Library and you can perhaps find a gem and start your own project to add to our history.

NOTE: We should point out that Myron didn't let a little thing like a tight budget or scarce information totally stop him. He went on to produce two small books -- Monrovia's Heritage Vols. 1 & 2 -- with images and a short bit of history of many of Monrovia's older homes. But pinpointing the dates our earliest homes were built was never achieved. Until now. We hope he's smiling.

THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

If you are one of the approximately 25 households who have not renewed your membership for 2018, this will be the last newsletter you will be receiving. Two renewal notices have been sent out, one last October and one in January.

If this has been an oversight on your part, we hope that you will consider continuing your support of MOHPG as a member in good standing. Information about membership options can be found on the MOHPG website (www.mohpg.org).



FEBRUARY POTLUCK RECAP

The month of February is one of the few times during the year that MOHPG members gather in a member's home and share a relaxed evening of good food and stimulating conversation. This year was no different as 40 people attended the annual winter potluck in the home of Bruce and Kathy Carter.

As longtime member Charlotte Schamadan observed at evening's end, with a twinkle in her eyes, "The food was especially good this year!" And so it was as there was plenty to go around. Potlucks always provide an excellent cross-section of members' prowess in the kitchen.

The featured speakers for the evening were City Manager Oliver Chi and Community Devel-

opment Director Craig Jimenez. Craig was the speaker at year's potluck, and at that time he reviewed for members the new regulations regarding demolitions and new home construction (which went into effect in October, 2016). This time around Oliver and Craig highlighted some of the concerns people have with the new regulations and how the city will be reviewing policies. They also spent time talking about some of the new programs that are being rolled out (like transportation to the Gold Line Station from your front door) and how the city is responding to the critical need for additional housing.

The evening turned out to be a rousing success on several levels, and most everyone left feeling they had learned a few new things about the direction our city is taking.



City Manager Oliver Chi (left) and Community Development Director Craig Jimenez use a slideshow presentation to bring MOHPG members up to speed

on issues related to the recent changes in how Monrovia allows the demolition of older buildings and the construction of newer ones.

Vintage Homes are my Specialty!

VICKY HANSEN
GROUP
YOUR NEXT GREAT MOVE

BROKER ASSOCIATE
626.825.6122
vicky@vickyhansen.com

#00696228

Podley
PROPERTIES

242 W. Foothill Blvd. | Monrovia 91016

Specializing in painting
vintage homes

C LASS

S. Johnson
(626) 358-3621

P AINTING



MOHPG
P.O. Box 734
Monrovia, CA 91017
(626) 599-8187
www.mohpg.org

Address Correction Requested

CALENDAR

OF MOHPG AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

March

- | | | |
|----|-------|---|
| 1 | Thurs | Monrovia Reads Across Monrovia, 8-9 am - reading in local class rooms. If interested, call (626) 303-6600 to volunteer. |
| 4 | Sun | MOHPG Board Meeting, 10 a.m. Members are welcome to attend. |
| 11 | Sun | Daylight Savings Time begins |
| 17 | Sat | MOHPG tour of the Gold Line from Arcadia to Union Station, 10 am |

April

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|---|
| National Volunteer Month | | |
| 1 | Sun | Easter |
| 7 | Sat | MOHPG program on the Aztec Hotel by author/photographer Craig Owens, 10 am, at 624 E. Foothill Blvd, HL #131. |
| 8 | Sun | MOHPG Board Meeting, 10 a.m. Members are welcome to attend. |
| 22 | Sunday | Home tour homeowner/house captain meeting; site TBD; 3 pm |

May

- | | | |
|--|-----|---|
| Local, State, National Preservation Month | | |
| 6 | Sun | 36th Annual Historic Homes Tour, 10 am - 4 pm |
| 13 | Sun | Mothers' Day |
| 28 | Mon | Memorial Day |

September (Long Range)

- | | | |
|----|-----|--|
| 22 | Sat | 2nd annual Earthquake Workshop, held in conjunction with the Monrovia Fire Department, 11 am - 2 pm, Community Room, Monrovia Library. RSVPs required. |
|----|-----|--|