

Preservation Conversation



December 2009

www.MOHPG.org

Volume 17, Number 11

Holiday Party

'Tis the season to make new friends

■ MOHPG members don't want to miss this chance to socialize and meet our newer members at the annual party Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009.

by Pam Barkas

The MOHPG Holiday Party will be held Dec. 5 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the home of new members Joyce and Lincoln Fairchild. Not only are they new to the group, but they are also new to Monrovia. They are anxious to meet more people in Monrovia's preservation community, which is why they volunteered to host the Holiday Party. Their 1948 home is located in the most easterly part of Monrovia, at 502 Bradbury Road, on the southeast corner of Bradbury and Lemon Avenue.

New members are especially encouraged to attend the party so we may welcome you to the group and get to know you better. In addition to socializing, members will have the opportunity to win some unique raffle prizes. We will also announce recipients of the MVP (Most Valued Preservationist) award, an occasional award given to members of our group who have made outstanding contributions as volunteers. Please RSVP for the party to Jim Wigton at (626) 599-8187 or jimwigton@altrionet.com.

The Holiday Party is a potluck, and mem-



Photo: Pam Barkas

New members Joyce and Lincoln Fairchild will be hosting this year's Holiday Party on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 5 to 8 p.m. The Fairchilds moved with their dog, Coco Chanel, to Monrovia from Washington, D.C.

Join Us

- **What:** Holiday Party
- **When:** Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009
- **Time:** 5-8 p.m.
- **Where:** 502 Bradbury Road, southeast corner of Bradbury and Lemon Avenue
- **Contact:** RSVP to Jim Wigton at (626) 599-8187 or jimwigton@altrionet.com

bers are asked to bring a food dish with serving utensils corresponding with their last name: A-D dessert, E-L appetizer/salad, M-Z main dish. MOHPG will provide the drinks (wine, beer, soda, water) and table service (plates, napkins, cups, plastic ware). The party will be outside, so everyone is encouraged to dress warmly.

Party hosts Joyce and Lincoln Fairchild landed in Monrovia after 30 years of living in

Read about the MVP award / 5

Washington, D.C. They were faced with a choice: Go south to Florida with thousands of other East Coast retirees or follow Joyce's daughter and her family to Sierra Madre, Calif. Lincoln was at first skeptical. For many on the East Coast, L.A. is the home of tofu-eating, tree-hugging, hip-hopping, culturally deprived people. Any doubts they may have had disappeared once they got here.

"We became familiar with Monrovia because of my daughter living in Sierra Madre," Joyce explained. "Once we saw Monrovia, we didn't look anyplace else for a house. We love it here and have no regrets." With her husband nodding his agreement, she continued, "This place is perfect. You're five minutes

Please see **Party**, Page 5

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MOHPG

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The MOHPG Board of Directors meets the first Sunday of each month at 10 a.m. All are welcome to attend. Contact MOHPG President Jim Wigton or any Board member for meeting location and more information.

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



NEWSLETTER

Editors Sheila McCarthy (626) 358-8825 Kathleen Jolly (626) 301-0733	Staff Jean Andresen Pam Barkas Sylvia Dohnal Larry Marotta Martha Rund
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The MOHPG newsletter committee welcomes article submissions and letters from our members for publication in the newsletter. All submissions are subject to editing.

President's Message

Something to ponder: What is vintage?

At the Oct. 28, 2009, meeting of the city's Historic Preservation Commission, a landmark decision was made that may alter our perception of what we refer to as a "vintage" home. Amid spirited discussion and at the recommendation of city staff, the members of the commission voted 5-2 to recommend to the City Council that a ranch-style home in Monrovia be designated as a historic landmark (if approved, the owners will also enter into a Mills Act contract). According to City Planner Craig Jimenez, this 1949 structure is an excellent example of the ranch-style house and it is appropriate that it be the first of its kind to apply for landmark status.

The ranch-style house originated in California, and its single-story, low-profile design became popular by the country's increasing dependence on the automobile. The first ranch-style house was built in San Diego in the mid-1930s and it became the dominant housing style in the country in the 1950s and 1960s.

As if right on cue, our Holiday Party this year is being held in a 1948 vintage house. Perhaps you are a traditionalist who will only consider a vintage house to be one built before 1930. That was pretty much the case when MOHPG came into existence in 1980. But that was almost 30 years ago. Do we now consider a vintage home to be one built prior to 1960? As an organization dedicated to preservation, MOHPG should lead the way in the discussion of what homes need preserving in the city. My own point of view? We should be preserving neighborhoods, and if that includes more modern-looking homes, so be it.

Newsletter mailed, or web edition?

Unless you are reading this newsletter on the MOHPG website, you have in your hand the mailed copy sent out to all members. The cost of sending out one newsletter currently runs about \$1.10 — that includes printing and mailing costs. Multiply that by the number of



Jim Wigton

households (don't forget to add the complimentary copies) and then multiply times 11 for the number of months we mail a newsletter (that takes it to just over \$3,000 if you are doing the math) and you will understand why the Board is looking at transitioning over to a website-only edition of the newsletter. However, if you are like me, you would rather hold that newsletter baby in your hand. But, then, I still get my news from the morning paper.

Let your Board members know how you feel about getting your newsletter from the website. While the mailing costs are not out of line, you may be just as comfortable reading your newsletter online. Newsletters are now being posted in the members-only section of the website (one added bonus — the pictures are in color!) and currently have been archived back to September 2009 with plans to add previous newsletters. Go to our website and try it out (don't forget that you will need Adobe Reader to view these PDF files. It is downloadable free off the Internet). Use the +/- at the top of the page to increase/decrease print size to make the reading easier.

Holiday Party for all

I hope you can make our Holiday Party on Dec. 5 (see the front page of this newsletter for all the details). It is a potluck and will be held at the home of Joyce and Lincoln Fairchild, new members who have impressive backgrounds in preservation: Joyce is a former fashion historian and Lincoln is the former Chief Information Officer for Cultural Resources with the National Park Service. You will need to RSVP for the party, as we are printing name badges for each attendee and they will be used for a drawing later on. I want to especially encourage our newer members to come. We are excited to meet you. See you there!

Jim Wigton
MOHPG President



This 1949 ranch-style house was recommended for historic landmark status by Monrovia's Historic Preservation Commission.

Board Report

Welcome Wagon name change; talk of tour homes

by *Sylvia Dohnal*

At the Board of Directors' meeting on Nov. 1, 2009, the Board changed the name of the Welcome Wagon committee, made plans for January's meeting program and discussed homes for the 2010 home tour.

Hal Leavens reported that the name he and John Watson have been using for their welcoming committee for new residents to the city — the Welcome Wagon — is a trademarked name and should be changed. He suggested changing the name to "Welcome to Monrovia." The Board agreed and voted to pay for two new magnetic signs for Hal's car to replace the old ones. For just about seven years now, Hal and John have been visiting new Monrovia residents to welcome them and give



Sylvia Dohnal

them packets of information about the city and MOHPG.

Membership Chair Karen Young reported that three more people joined

MOHPG, bringing the membership total to 219. The Board voiced approval for sending out membership renewal notices with the December newsletter to facilitate on-time renewals for 2010.

Programs Chair Rena Delgado confirmed that plans are in the works for several upcoming meetings. A presentation by the owners of Window Restoration and Repair is tentatively planned for Thursday evening, Jan. 21, at a home in Monrovia. For the future,

Rena will try to have programs at members' homes, which will allow for a pre-meeting tour of the house. These types of meetings have been popular in the past.

Tour Chair Sylvia Dohnal and President Jim Wigton reported on plans for the 2010 Home Tour. Jim has been communicating with homeowners on Highland Place as a possible tour location; other suggestions were a tour of Victorians, homes on El Nido and homes on North Melrose. Sylvia is looking into neighborhoods or individual homes for the future. She is planning to meet with the Tour Committee to discuss options and strategies for the upcoming tour.

In old business, Jim Wigton noted that new features are being added to the website all the time.

In one month, the website was visited 490 times. Sheila McCarthy turned in a report on the sales of "A Motor Tour Through Historic Monrovia"; all but one of the six sellers in town wished to continue selling the driving tour, as well as the book "Monrovia's Heritage: An Architectural Perspective." Jim reported that he met with nine of the 33 homeowners on Highland Place and gave them information about how to become a historic district. Some of the homes on the street have already been designated historic landmarks by the city.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 6, at 10 a.m.

Sylvia Dohnal is Tour Chair and has been an MOHPG member since 1982.

Membership Report

Time to renew, say hello to new members

by *Karen Young*

I hope everyone is planning to attend our annual Holiday Party on Dec. 5. It is a great opportunity to meet the people in our group and have some fun. At the party, please be sure to welcome our newest members:

Richard Andrews
Sabin Gray and Bryan Gerber
Carolyn Hayes
Kathy Knudsen
John and Alyssa Lang
Katherine Mahoney
Brian Morse
Robert and Carol Schult
Chris Thomas
James and Rachel Wan

As the year winds down it is also time to begin our annual membership renewal campaign. Your mailing label on this newsletter shows the year your membership expires. If your membership expires in 2009, you will find an envelope with an Application for Membership in this newsletter. Please take a moment right now to complete the application and return it with your dues in the envelope. If you want, you can also renew your membership at the Holiday Party. You also have the option of paying with a credit card by going to our website — www.mohpg.org — and clicking on the "Online Store" link.

MOHPG's per-year dues are still \$25 for a



Karen Young

household, \$20 for an individual, and \$15 for a senior (65 years and over). If you want to avoid the hassle of renewing again each year, you should take advantage of MOHPG's "pay for four, get one free" program. This is a great deal. When you pay for four years of membership you get the fifth year free. And since MOHPG is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, your dues or donations are tax deductible.

Remember that by renewing your membership you will continue to receive this newsletter full of information about our upcoming preservation-centered events and activities. Your membership also demonstrates your support for MOHPG's positive work in the community: the Mother's Day Home Tour, the purchase of preservation resource books for the library (over 300 to date), restoration of the bear mural in the library and the Box Jewelers Clock in downtown Monrovia, and various other efforts throughout the year.

Your donation helps members continue to work to make a tangible difference in the appearance and livability of our community. I thank you in advance for your generous support.

Karen Young is the MOHPG Membership Chair and has been a member since 1998.

Museum to host night of holiday music, singing

The Monrovia Historical Museum is hosting a holiday musical program sure to fill all with the Christmas spirit. The "Holiday Sing-along: A Musical Concert" will feature performers and musicians from the local Joe Ferrante Music Academy as well as community groups of Christmas carolers. The audience will be encouraged to join in with the group singing. Santa Claus is scheduled to make a special appearance to help usher in the holidays. The event will take place in the museum's courtyard on Saturday, Dec. 12, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The entrance fee is \$4 per person. The Monrovia Historical Museum is located at 742 E. Lemon Ave.

The concert will be outdoors — so attendees are encouraged to dress warmly — and refreshments will be served. The museum will be open during the concert and will feature a new holiday exhibit on display.

Performances at the sing-along will include 20 to 40 students and professional musicians from the Joe Ferrante Music Academy. The academy is located at 126 E. Colorado Blvd. in Old Town Monrovia. To find out more about the academy, visit www.jfmusicacademy.com.

— *Sheila McCarthy*

Consumed by cookbooks

On the bright, sunny morning of Nov. 21, MOHPG members visited a unique business in Pasadena — Cook Books by Janet Jarvits. Janet’s shop caters to the needs and desires of those who admire, remember and appreciate food-related literature or those who wish to resurrect childhood memories. She shares her shop with her Chihuahua and three cats, which also made us feel welcome.

Janet’s program focused on her collection of fund-raising cookbooks and those relating to California-centered cuisine.

She proudly displayed some selected items from her collection, including a cookbook from San Francisco’s St. Francis Hotel, published in the 1870s, which features a full-figure photo of its chef in his signature costume. She also displayed a copy of the Brown Derby’s cookbook, a restaurant that in its heyday

was the haunt of Hollywood’s who’s who. She has a 1938 copy of “Early Los Angeles Hospitality,” which features entertaining hints and how to’s of the time. She finished her presentation with some of her favorite items — period

advertising brochures featuring California produce: citrus, avocados, raisins, figs and dates. She reminded her audience that once the railroads reached California, the rest of the country became acquainted with its fresh, quality produce, which then required literature instructing them on its best use.

Pam Barkas asked Janet what her oldest book was — turns out it is an 1825 edition. Pam also noted the following curious titles: “Burnt Toast Recipes,” “Miami Spice” and “Lewd Food.” The store truly has something for everyone from every imaginable cuisine.

— Sylvia Dohnal



Above: Janet Jarvits sells cookbooks that cover all regions and styles of cooking. Far left: Her store contains about 30,000 volumes. Left: MOHPG member Lee Schamadan tries to lure one of Janet’s cats from its high perch. Below: Janet talks to MOHPG members about the rare books in her store.

Photos:
Pam Barkas



Q&A

Hal Leavens: Member at Large

This is one in a series of interviews with MOHPG members in leadership positions.

Q: How long have you been a Member at Large?

A: During the presidency of Katie and John Watson I was elected to a Board position — approximately 2000. I told them I am a worker bee, not a leader.

Q: What are the duties and responsibilities of this position?

A: My job is to contribute ideas, make suggestions, support the leaders, physically help with meetings, etc., and recruit new Board members.

Q: What do you like best about being a Member at Large?



Hal Leavens

A: I love to interact with smart, energetic, motivated and committed people. All the people on the Board are devoted to MOHPG and our wonderful city, and being a Member at Large gives me the opportunity to be a small part of a grand idea.

Q: Have you held any other positions within MOHPG?

A: With John Watson I am half of the New Residents Welcoming Committee; I have been a docent for many Mother’s Day Home Tours; I participate in the newsletter’s monthly Mail Prep Party; and I am involved in various aspects of the home tour: Tour Commit-

tee, poster distribution, delivery of tour flier through local newspapers.

Q: How can someone show interest in or learn more about your position on the Board?

A: Talk to me! I have recruited many new Board members by telling them how much fun it is to be involved in MOHPG.

Q: Why did you join MOHPG?

A: Our home was built in 1922 and I love history — and Monrovia.

Q: Do you have a vision for MOHPG? What do you see as the group’s potential?

A: My ultimate vision is that MOHPG emulates Pasadena Heritage in scope, power and prestige!

— Staff Reports

Party, from Page 1

away from anything you need.”

The Fairchilds have a great appreciation for historic preservation, as well as Art Deco, as those attending the Holiday Party will see. First of all, they come from an area of the United States where a “vintage home” may be 300 years old, unlike Monrovia whose oldest house is only 125 years old.

Furnishings for period homes are also much easier to obtain on the East Coast, and the Fairchilds have brought some interesting Art Deco pieces with them. Of special interest in the addition they refer to as the “California room” is a copy of an Art Deco table they saw at the Paris Flea Market. It was too big and massive to ship it back to the States, so they had a copy made of Bur Amboina and Indonesian wood. Hanging above the table is a vintage Deco hanging light fixture, which they disassembled for shipment to Monrovia. It arrived successfully!

Finding a home in Monrovia took a great deal of patience on behalf of the Fairchilds. Starting in 2005, they had a real estate agent sending them information on homes in the city and then the Internet provided them virtual tours of these homes. If they saw something promising, they would fly out from D.C. to check it out. But houses were going quickly at that time and, in one case, two prospects that had just come on the market were sold while the

Most Valued Preservationist Award

The Most Valued Preservationist award is an occasional award given to members of MOHPG who have made outstanding contributions as volunteers. For the first time, the MVP awards will be issued at our Holiday Party, so make sure to attend on Saturday, Dec. 5, to see who the well-deserving recipients will be.

There are no set criteria for the award, however, the following combinations are considered: years of membership (usually at least 10), number of activities participated in, and number of years as an active volunteer.

Because I am the group historian (a non-voting position), I have maintained records and pictures of our group and its activities since its inception, so it my very great pleasure to review the records and select the recipients. The recipients receive a certificate with a list

of all their activities over the years and a special MOHPG cap with the letters MVP embroidered on it.

The first MVP awards were presented in 2000, at the 20th anniversary of MOHPG’s founding. In a special ceremony at the after-home-tour barbeque, 25 people were honored for their service going back to 1980. After 20 years, some of the people had moved away, but they were tracked down and issued special invitations. Among the initial honorees were MOHPG’s founders – Charles and Janet Manning, Lyn Montgomery, and Bruce Carter.

Since then, MOHPG has occasionally awarded the MVP. The last awards were presented in 2007 when, to celebrate the anniversary of MOHPG’s 25th tour, all previous tour chairs received the MVP.

– Pam Barkas

Fairchilds were still winging their way to LAX!

In March 2006 they purchased their Monrovia house, yet spent the next two years in D.C. winding up their careers. During this period, they rented out the house and did some renovation work on it. In 2008, they moved to Monrovia and occupied the attached guest house while final work was being done on the main house.

such as the one that displayed the Jacqueline Kennedy collection.

Then there is Lincoln Fairchild’s profession, from which he is now retired, as the Chief Information Officer for Cultural Resources with the National Park Service. Specifically, this position involves the enforcement of Section 106 Compliance, the ordinance that protects the integrity of parkland and vintage structures owned by the National Park Service.

The Fairchilds are now settled, with their dog Coco Chanel, into life in Monrovia. As Joyce Fairchild says, “We were at the Friday Night Street Fair the other night and we commented to each other how Monrovia looks like the type of small town everyone thinks of when they think of America.”

The Fairchilds are doing volunteer work at the Los Angeles County Arboretum, and Lincoln is considering involvement in Monrovia’s Historic Preservation Commission when an opening occurs.

They are also looking forward to meeting Monrovia preservationists and volunteered their house for the MOHPG party with that in mind. So please come out and join us at their house on Dec. 5, 5 to 8 p.m. to meet some very interesting people as well as to say hello to old friends.

Pam Barkas is MOHPG’s historian and is a former Membership Chair. She has been a member since 1986.

Quick Quiz: Christmas Edition

- 1) Where was Mommy kissing Santa Claus?
 - a. On the corner
 - b. In the bedroom
 - c. Under the mistletoe
 - d. In a dark alley
- 2) What kind of Christmas does Elvis Presley sing about?
 - a. White
 - b. Red
 - c. Blue
 - d. Snowy
- 3) Which Christmas movie has been played more than any other?
 - a. “A Christmas Story”
 - b. “Home Alone”
 - c. “Frosty the Snowman”
 - d. “It’s a Wonderful Life”

Answers below

Answers to Quick Quiz
1) c: Under the mistletoe
2) c: Blue
3) d: “It’s a Wonderful Life” — Sylvia Dohmal

Area Home Tours, etc.

- **Now–Jan. 3, noon–3p.m., Fridays–Sundays, Los Angeles:** Designer Holiday House Tour, heritagesquare.org, (323) 225-2700
- **Dec. 5, 10 a.m.–4 p.m., San Diego:** Point Loma Holiday Home Tour, (619) 518-8663
- **Dec. 5–6, Los Angeles:** West Adams Holiday Home Tour, westadamsheritage.org, (323) 732-4223
- **Dec. 5–6, 4–9 p.m., Los Angeles:** 15th Annual Holiday Lamplight Celebration, heritagesquare.org, (323) 225-2700
- **Dec. 6, 1–5 p.m., Pasadena:** Castle Green Holiday Tour, castlegreen.com, (626) 577-6765
- **Dec. 30, 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Pasadena:** City Highlights Bus Tour, pasadenaheritage.org, (626) 441-6333.
- **Jan. 8–9, 6:30 and 8:30 p.m., Riverside:** 15th Annual Victorian Twelfth Night Celebration, oldriverside.org, (951) 683-2725



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Address Correction Requested



On the Cover
You're invited
to a party

New members Joyce and Lincoln Fairchild are excited to be hosting MOHPG's Holiday Party potluck on Dec. 5. They are transplants from Washington, D.C., having retired to Monrovia to be closer to family in Sierra Madre. Let's give them — and all our new members — a hearty MOHPG welcome at the party. **Read all about it on Page 1.**

Calendar

of MOHPG and community events

December

- 1 Tuesday City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m., 415 S. Ivy Ave.
- 3 Thursday Monrovia Holiday Parade, 7 p.m., Myrtle Ave. between Olive, Palm
- 5 Saturday **MOHPG Holiday Party potluck, 5-8 p.m., 502 Bradbury Road, Monrovia. See Page 1 for more information.**
- 6 Sunday **MOHPG Board meeting, 10 a.m. All are welcome. Contact President Jim Wigton at (626) 599-8187 for location.**
- 9 Wednesday Planning Commission meeting, 7:30 p.m., 415 S. Ivy Ave.
- 12 Saturday "Holiday Sing-along: A Musical Concert" at the Monrovia Historical Museum, 5:30-7:30 p.m., 742 E. Lemon Ave. See Page 3 for info.
- 15 Tuesday City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m., 415 S. Ivy Ave.
- 23 Wednesday Historic Preservation Commission, 7:30 p.m., 415 S. Ivy Ave.

January

- 3 Sunday **MOHPG Board meeting, 10 a.m. All are welcome. Contact President Jim Wigton at (626) 599-8187 for location.**
- 5 Tuesday City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m., 415 S. Ivy Ave.
- 13 Wednesday Planning Commission meeting, 7:30 p.m., 415 S. Ivy Ave.
- 19 Tuesday City Council meeting, 7:30 p.m., 415 S. Ivy Ave.
- 21 Thursday **MOHPG program: Window Restoration and Repair, 6:30 p.m. Details in the next newsletter.**