

# NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOVEMBER 2017 MEETING NOTES

**DATE: NOVEMBER 16, 2017**

**TIME: 6:30 PM**

The first part of this meeting was a Business Meeting of the North Park Historical Society (NPHS) Board of Directors, and the second part was the activities discussion for the organization. These notes include updates as of November 19, 2017.

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY January 18, 2018 at 6:30 pm** in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard. **We will not meet in December.**

## 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The following members of the NPHS Board of Directors were present:

Steve Hon	Katherine Hon
Jody Surowiec	Claudia Watts
George Franck	Randy Sappenfield
Paul Spears	Michael Thornhill
Judy Ciampoli	

The following members of the NPHS Board of Directors were absent:

Bob Bauer	Hilda Yoder
Sharon Turner	

Members Michael B., Charlie and Juliet also joined us. Welcome!

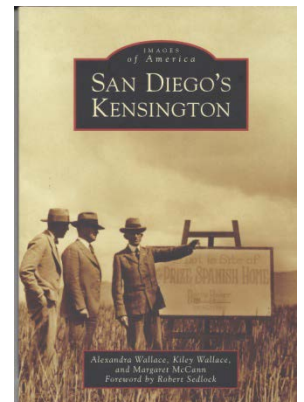
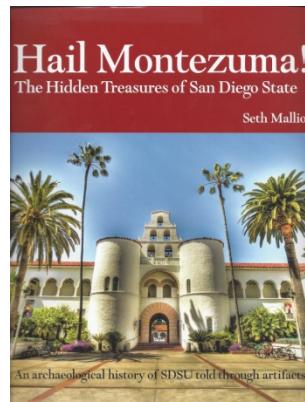
## 2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The latest Pacific Beach Historical Society newsletter was circulated for viewing. The latest PastMatters column in *Uptown News* is at the end of these notes. George announced that the Valle Vista Terrace Historical District on Panorama Drive and Cliff Street has been approved.

Steve showed two recent history books produced by others:

- *Images of America, San Diego's Kensington* by Alexandra Wallace, Kiley Wallace, and Margaret McCann and published by Arcadia Publishing Company
- *Hail Montezuma! The Hidden Treasures of San Diego State* by Seth Mallios and published by Montezuma Publishing.

Both books are very interesting and have great photos.



Katherine announced she was interviewed about North Park's history on a Facebook talk show called "TruthRadioLIVE" hosted by Jesse Ibanez on November 8. It was a great opportunity to share North Park's unique story and promote our books, *Images of America, San Diego's North Park*, and *North Park, A San Diego Urban Village 1896-1946*. Go to [www.facebook.com/TruthRadioLIVE](http://www.facebook.com/TruthRadioLIVE) and click on "See all" under Videos to find the Nov. 8 video show. It has nearly 6,000 views so far!



### **3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE**

The minutes from the October 26, 2017 NPHS meeting have been posted on the website.

### **BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING**

#### **4. TREASURER'S REPORT**

The financials for the period of October 23 to November 13, 2017 were sent to Board Members before the meeting. During this period, we received donations totaling \$65 from the Danish business students we guided around commercial and residential North Park. One member renewed for revenue of \$20 from dues. We sold 10 tote bags at \$5 each (Steve figured out they make a great early holiday gift). Expenses were a total of \$42 for renewal of the North Park Historical Society fictitious business name.

### **ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING**

#### **5. WEBSITE UPDATE**

Jim is working on the security update for the website. Katherine noted the website needs more RAM working memory (don't we all??) to improve the website performance. **Update:** GoDaddy recommended the next level up in hosting support, which will double the RAM. The total for hosting at Level 2 resources for the next five years is \$168.20 (approximately \$3 per month more than Level 1). This upgraded hosting has been purchased.

#### **6. WATER TOWER PUBLIC ART PROJECT**

The artists are scheduled to present their concepts to the selection committee on November 29. North Park Main Street has generously volunteered their new office space at 3939 Iowa Street for this meeting. We look forward to reporting the results in future communication with everyone.

#### **7. TOYLAND PARADE**

The Toyland Parade will be held on December 2 at 11:00 am (the first Saturday in December). The route will be the same as last year (University Avenue from Utah east to Herman then west on North Park Way back to Utah). The entry form has been submitted. Volunteers to date are:

- Jody is the contact. She will notify everyone about what our position number is and where to meet on parade day, and will register the group at 9:00 am on parade day.
- Victor has confirmed he will dance again as the Water Tower.
- Michael will pick up the water tower "costume" from Victor's house, bring it to the parade site, and take it back to Victor's house.
- George will get the banner from Steve and bring it to Michael for transport on parade day.
- Judy, Sue, Claudia, and Sharon also will march.

All of our friends and members are encouraged to join in the fun! You do not need to be a member of NPHS to march in the parade with us. We expect to mobilize on Utah Street just north of University Avenue across the street from the Lions Club building as in previous years.

#### **8. PSA FLIGHT 182 CRASH MEMORIAL**

Last month, NPHS member Michael B., who is with a group trying to establish a permanent memorial to the 1978 plane crash of Pacific Southwest Airlines (PSA) Flight 182 in North Park, asked for input from NPHS because this was a significant historic event in North Park. We documented the extensive discussion about this issue presented at the October 26 meeting in the October 26, 2017 meeting notes, and Katherine gave Michael B. a paper copy of the notes at the November 16 meeting. Michael B. expressed his appreciation for the research conducted by Alex, the historic consultant who attended last month's meeting, and asked that Alex be

given Michael B.'s contact information so that Michael B. can share the extensive information he has about the plane crash. **Update:** Katherine sent Michael B.'s contact information to Alex.

#### **9. HISTORICAL DESIGNATION HELP**

Paul proposed that NPHS offer a free advice service helping to inform people on how historic designation happens, where there are resources explaining what needs to be done, the difference between historic designation and the Mills Act property tax reduction contract, and what factors into a structure qualifying as a significant historic resource. The blurb for the website, a summary reporting form, and a handout that we could send to people whose property might qualify for designation have been prepared and were sent to NPHS Board Members in advance of the meeting. At the meeting, paper copies were distributed to project participants, including Paul, Judy, Michael, George and Claudia. This group will meet separately to have a practice evaluation and learn about resources from Paul.

#### **10. 10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF NPHS**

NPHS officially "graduated" from being the History Committee of the North Park Community Association to an independent 501c3 organization in 2008. Next year will be our tenth anniversary as a stand-alone organization, and we can be very proud of all we have accomplished in that time. Steve asked if the group wants to have a special celebration, and where it could be if we do. Some ideas were a pizza party at Paesano's, or a presentation/celebration at the Lafayette, St. Patrick's Fellowship Hall, or Sunset Temple. The celebration could be timed as part of history events in May. Would we want to have some kind of memorabilia item made, like a patch? Everyone will give this some thought over the holidays and we will discuss early next year.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY January 18, 2018** at 6:30 pm in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard, corner of Park and Lincoln Avenue. **There will not be a meeting in December.** Warm Holiday Wishes to All!

Prepared by



Katherine Hon  
Secretary, North Park Historical Society



# Iconic retail

## The history of the J.C. Penney department store in North Park

**PastMatters**  
Katherine Hon

Newcomers may only know the boxy two-story building on the southeast corner of Ray Street and University Avenue as the former location of Wang's North Park.

Residents who have been here longer may remember Big Lots occupying that building during the early 2000s and REI before then. But the building we see today at 3029 University

By 1941, Penney operated 1,600 stores in all 48 states. He retired in 1946, taking the title of honorary chairman. Penney died in New York City on Feb. 12, 1971, at the age of 95.

The Kemmerer, Wyoming store and associated buildings were designated a U.S. National Historic Landmark in 1978 because they show the humble origins of the J.C. Penney Co., and because it was there that Penney formulated the merchandising ideas that enabled him to create the first

drying hoses, was just to the east at 3035 University Ave. on two lots donated by Mary Jane Hartley, known as the "Mother of the North Park District."

It is part of North Park lore that the fire station was destroyed in the winter of 1941-42 when the basement for the J.C. Penney store was being dug and a storm filled the pit with water, undermining the fire station's foundation. A Dec. 9, 1949 news article notes that although a new fire station was built by the city at the corner of 32nd Street and Lincoln Avenue in 1942, the damaged building was "altered and repaired, and it is now used by the Penney store, along with the old tower, an area landmark, for storage space." The tower likely remained until the expansion of the J.C. Penney



The J.C. Penney store is in the distance beyond the North Park sign hanging above University Avenue at 30th Street in this 1964 photo looking eastward taken by architect Sim Bruce Richards. The Jerome's store on the right is a dress shop. (Courtesy of the Sim Bruce Richards Family)

Ave. originated in 1942 as a J.C. Penney department store. It anchored retail in North Park into the 1980s and drew other major chain stores, including National Dollar Stores, Lerner Shops, Kay Jewelers, Woolworths and Thrifty Drug Stores to the busy commercial area along University Avenue.

The first J.C. Penney store at Ray Street and University Avenue was one of only two built by the company during World War II. The North Park store apparently was successful even during the war years, and the company decided to expand it in 1954, replacing it with the building seen today.

The J.C. Penney Co. started with one hard-working businessman, James Cash Penney. He was born Sept. 16, 1875 on a farm near Hamilton, Missouri. He worked for a local retailer after graduating from high school. He partnered with Thomas Callahan and Guy Johnson, who owned dry-goods stores called Golden Rule in Colorado and Wyoming, and moved to Kemmerer, Wyoming in 1902 to open a store in that small coal-mining town. He participated in the creation of two more stores and purchased full interest in all three locations when Callahan and Johnson dissolved their partnership in 1907.

By 1912, Penney had established 34 Golden Rule stores with sales of more than \$2 million. The next year he changed the chain name to J.C. Penney Co., with a motto of "Honor, Confidence, Service, and Cooperation."

truly nationwide department store chain.

The commercial blocks along the south side of University Avenue between Ray and 32nd streets are part of the original Hartley's North Park tract, which extended south almost to Dwight Street. In the decades before the J.C. Penney store was built at 3029 University Ave., an automobile service garage, which was operated by Paul Hartley from 1926 to 1933, occupied the corner. The city's Fire Station No. 14, with its tall tower for

store in 1954, when the City Directory lists the address of 3035-37 University Ave. as "Under construction."

Penney commented that his company "is the finest example I know of cooperative effort; people sharing in what they helped create have made it what it is." The same could be said of North Park.

—Katherine Hon is the secretary of the North Park Historical Society. Reach her at [info@north-parkhistory.org](mailto:info@north-parkhistory.org) or 619-294-8990.

### The Way We Were A LOOK AT MOMENTS OF OUR PAST — IN PICTURES



#### NEWER AND BIGGER

Employees at a new J.C. Penney store were busy preparing for the Grand Opening the week of Aug. 9, 1954. The store was built on the same North Park site — at University Avenue and Ray Street — as a Penney store established in 1942, but at three times the size. *Union-Tribune file photo.*

An undated San Diego Union-Tribune article looks back to August 1954 when the enlarged J.C. Penney department store was getting ready for its grand opening. The building has remarkably retained its iconic historic integrity for 63 years. (Courtesy of the North Park Historical Society)