

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2023

The following summary of accomplishments was provided to the Board of Directors in the 2023 Annual Report on January 5, 2024:

The North Park Historical Society (NPHS) was formed in 2008 to educate residents and visitors about the history of North Park. The primary purpose of NPHS is "to conduct research and educational outreach in order to facilitate preservation of North Park's cultural and architectural history."

Accomplishments in 2023

The accomplishments of NPHS in 2023 grouped by the seven objectives stated in our Bylaws under the primary purpose are summarized below. Activities and product sales were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and public health mandated limitations on gatherings that began in early 2020 and continued through 2022, but we made a good start toward normal operations in 2023.

Objective 1. To market and distribute printed and digital publications consistent with our purpose (e.g., *North Park: A San Diego Urban Village, 1896-1946*, our book on the history of North Park's first 50 years).

- Local stores continue to sell the book we prepared in 2014, *Images of America: San Diego's North Park* published by Arcadia Publishing Company. During 2023, it continued to be available for retail sale at various locations. NPHS sold eight Arcadia books to individuals in 2023. We sold two at the North Park Book Fair on June 24, three at the Farmers' Market on October 5, and three at Rediscovering San Diego lectures on October 10 and 12. We received a total of \$123.75 in royalty payments from Arcadia for sales by others in 2023.
- We continue to sell our "original" history book: *North Park: A San Diego Urban Village, 1896-1946* by Donald Covington, which is published and distributed by NPHS. We sold 30 spiral-bound books wholesale to Verbatim Books for their retail in 2023.
- Our past agreement with Amazon was terminated in 2019. Paras Newsstand closed permanently at the end of 2019. The San Diego History Center closed their gift shop in 2020.
- A total of 0 perfect-bound and 30 spiral-bound North Park history books left our inventory in 2023. Since publishing the book in 2007, we have sold a total of approximately 2,880 copies. We have 55 spiral-bound copies and 16 perfect-bound copies remaining at the end of 2023.
- A total of 8 Arcadia books left the NPHS inventory in 2023. We have 79 copies remaining at the end of 2023.
- We sold 0 copies of the book, *Burlingame, the Tract of Character* by Donald Covington in 2023. We have 81 copies remaining.
- In 2017 we had 100 canvas tote bags with our logo printed at [AKA] Apparel-Supplies-Printing. We did not sell any bags to individuals in 2023. We have 23 bags remaining.

- In June 2023, we had 48 branded ballcaps produced by AKA Printing (12 navy, 12 khaki, and 24 black), and in August 2023 we ordered 40 additional navy and 20 additional khaki ballcaps. A total of 108 ballcaps were produced. Via email discussion, the Board approved providing one free ballcap per household current on member dues. As of the end of 2023, we gave 15 navy, 9 khaki and 3 black ballcaps for free, and sold 6 navy, 3 khaki and 2 black ballcaps for \$20 each. In 2023, a total of 38 ballcaps left inventory. We have 31 navy, 20 khaki, and 19 black ballcaps — a total of 70 — remaining.



▪

Objective 2. To coordinate with other organizations on public historical education and preservation efforts, including designation of historical districts and/or structures.

- NPHS Board Members Paul and Claudia continued a free advice service helping to inform people on the potential for their house to be designated as a significant historic resource. NPHS received and responded to a total of 4 requests in 2023.
- NPHS provided two letters of support for house designations and answered more than a dozen emailed questions, including this interesting question from Joan: “Do you know what this door was used for? It is in the living room and connects to the hallway between 2 bedrooms.” Board Treasurer Randy told us that his brother's former Spanish style house had such a door between living/dining rooms, and it still had the wiring inside for a candlestick telephone, so as to be accessible from either room.
- Paul provided input on whether a full historical report should be required for 174 building permit applications to the City of San Diego for changes to buildings more than 45 years old. Of these, 72 included ADUs.
- We have not requested grant funds from San Diego County since 2020, mostly due to the pandemic limiting our activities, but also because the County has changed that process.
- NPHS remains committed to installing the bronze plaque that NPHS paid to create in 2015 recognizing the Water Tower as a Local Historic Civil Engineering Landmark, but communication with the City has been hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic and construction going on at the Water Tower site.
- Since 2021, NPHS has been contacting various City staff about putting up demarcation signs for the North Park Dryden Historic District. In 2023, Council District 3 staff coordinated with the City Transportation Department, who sent us information about the signage and its specific locations, which the Board approved at the August 2023 meeting. Katherine emailed our city contact for an update on October 13 and November 8. On November 9, 2023, he replied: “I apologize for not getting back to you sooner, and thank you for your patience with us. We actually sent the work order back in 8/8/23. With these type of signs, street division department usually installs this within 90 days or less.” Unfortunately, as of the end of 2023, the signs have not appeared yet. We are hoping they will be installed in early 2024.

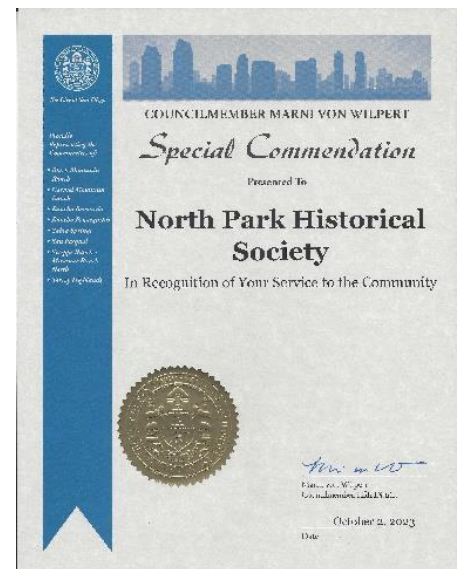


- San Diego County Archives staff made a presentation at our public meeting on May 18. The San Diego County Archives team discussed archival records in the County's new state-of-the-art Archives facility in Santee. The County Archives includes an estimated 65,000 recorded maps; 250 cubic feet of historic birth, death and marriage records; 600 cubic feet of official records; and around 40,000 rolls of microfilm.



Photos by Chipper Hatter, courtesy of San Diego County Archives

- The Office of the City Clerk celebrated their 5th Annual Archives Month this year on October 2 at noon. The exhibits this year highlighted the Klicka family and the 1935-36 Exposition in Balboa Park. Archives staff asked Steve and Katherine Hon to represent the North Park Historical Society at the opening ceremony. We received a nice certificate and met brother and sister Steven and Katharine Klicka. George Klicka, who developed the Klicka Studio Bungalow kit house to provide affordable housing in the 1930s, was their grandfather. Emil Klicka, who funded construction of the North Park Theatre, and convinced Reuben H. Fleet to bring his Consolidated Aircraft Corporation from Buffalo, New York to San Diego, was their great-uncle. Both Klicka families lived in houses now in the North Park Dryden Historic District. The Klicka Lumber Company provided the wood that built many North Park homes.



- George and Bob coordinated with the Old Spanish Trail Centennial Celebration Association for their Centennial Convention on November 3 and 4, 2023. George helped prepare a self-guided tour with nice photos and lots of information about history along the road in San Diego. After the event, George reported that he went to the OST presentations and they were well worth his time. The presentations provided an interesting history of the development of major auto routes in the U.S.
- We brought posters showing various aspects of North Park history to a North Park Main Street Business Forum in May.
- We provided historical information about the Balboa Tennis Club at Morley Field to assist with their centennial celebration in May.
- NPHS Secretary Katherine hosted a table at the North Park Book Fair in June.
- With an invitation from North Park Main Street, we had a booth at the October 5 Farmers Market. George, Allison, Jody and Bob helped Steve and Katherine. Allison did on-the-

spot computer research about several homes through online city directories, Ancestry.com, and historical newspapers. We gained three new members, sold two ballcaps, and sold three Arcadia books. We had many interesting conversations with attendees, including — appropriately for the season — several ghost stories from homeowners.

Objective 3. To develop and conduct walking tours relating educational information about the history of various areas in North Park.

- NPHS has developed a walking tour of the Pauly's Addition neighborhood. On April 15, 2023, Claudia led a practice tour with eight invited guests from the neighborhood on a route for the southern third of the neighborhood focusing on Mississippi and Texas streets from Upas to Landis streets. On July 22, George and Claudia led two groups of about 10 each on an advertised tour. We started the tour in Morley Field, where our new branded canopy made an effective debut, attracting many visitors. Three NPHS members renewed at the event and two new member households joined.
- In 2023, on January 12, May 30, November 14, and November 16, Steve conducted tours of Morley Field Recreation Area for classes of Rediscovering San Diego. The groups of senior citizens had about 20 to 25 people each time.



The group admired the expansive view out to the Coronado Bridge and beyond.



Tour guide Steve Hon discussed the history of the pool and tennis courts.

Objective 4. To research and write objective articles about the history of North Park's people, landmarks, architecture, homes, commercial buildings, tracts, and other topics for publications.

- More than 870 people like and follow our North Park History Facebook page. We posted 6 items throughout the year, including a post with four of the postcards from 1936 we have scanned. Twelve people liked this post. Twenty people liked the post advertising the Pauly's Addition walking tour. More than 30 people liked our post in December with four pictures we scanned from a 1915 booklet about the Exposition in Balboa Park that was donated to us by a friend of NPHS who found it in his late mother's belongings.

Objective 5. To make and sponsor presentations of information useful to helping the public understand the origin and significance of historical resources in the community, including buildings, landmarks, and other structures.

- NPHS Secretary Katherine Hon gave a PowerPoint presentation on North Park history to two Rediscovering San Diego classes on October 10 and 12 at the Joan Kroc Center, to about 15 people each time.
- The NPHS Board met in-person in January and March, and restarted meetings open to the public in April 2023. Meetings were held at Grace Lutheran Church. The Secretary emailed a “meeting summary” to all NPHS members each month containing information we shared or would have shared from January through November 2023.

Objective 6. To organize, convert to digital format (when possible) and provide the following materials for research and other purposes: documents, slides, data, notes, photos, and various ephemera and records related to history donated to the North Park Historical Society, and to establish a North Park collection for eventual donation to the San Diego Historical Society for preservation.

- On March 16, 2023, NPHS donated a 16mm film of the 1928 construction of the North Park Theatre and DVD of the film to the San Diego History Center. The complete story of this artifact was documented in the March 16, 2023 NPHS meeting notes, as follows:

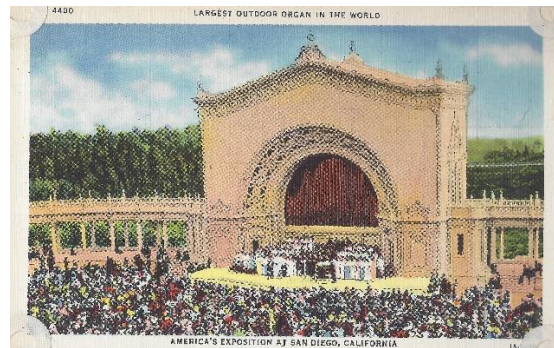
In November 2005, Karon Covington gave the History Committee — the predecessor group of the North Park Historical Society — a movie reel showing the construction of the North Park Theatre in 1928. In October 2006, the 16mm film was transferred to DVDs by a film company in Burbank courtesy of Jack Montgomery of the Lyric Opera, who had just taken on operation of the restored North Park Theatre. The film company thought that the 16mm film was produced in the 1960s from an original film made in 1928 (which has been lost to time). Based on History Committee notes from the late 1990s, we learned that the 16mm film was rescued by a former employee of the theatre right before the theatre closed down. That historic hero is Robert Simonet, and we are very grateful to him for saving this unique documentation of how one of North Park’s most important buildings was constructed 95 years ago.

Since 2005, the movie reel has been stored at Steve and Katherine Hon’s house. On March 13, 2023 via email vote, the NPHS Board approved donating the reel and one copy of the DVD to the San Diego History Center, where it can be properly stored and preserved. To determine the interest of the San Diego History Center, NPHS President Steve Hon contacted them via their online message page, saying: “I am President of the North Park Historical Society. We obtained a copy of a film recording the building of the North Park Theatre in 1928. We had the film converted to a digital format but still have the original film. We actually have two film versions a 16 mm version and I believe 32mm version. We do not have the appropriate storage facility in terms of climate controls to store the film and would like to donate it to the SD History Center in order to preserve it and make it available to the public etc.”

The San Diego History Center replied: “Hi Stephen Hon, Thank you for your interest in donating the film recording of the construction of the North Park Theatre. We will be more than happy to take both film versions that you have in your possession. Along with the physical films, would it be alright if you give us a copy of the digital format as well? Having both physical and digital versions will allow us to preserve the film and make it accessible for researchers and the public.”

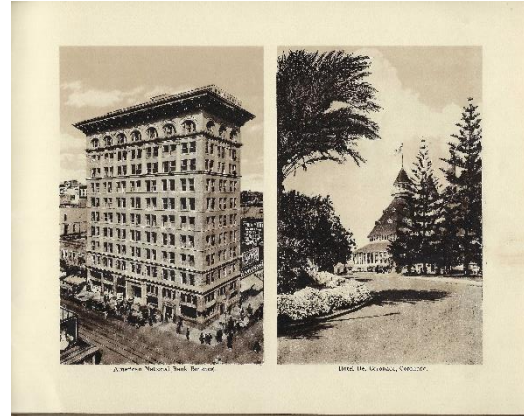
The materials were taken to the San Diego History Center on March 16, 2023. We now believe the “32mm” film is actually a public service announcement film, and not a duplicate of the theatre construction film.

- NPHS is scanning slides and notebooks with photos and notes from the Covington Family. A treasure trove of 140 historic postcards of San Diego and the 1935-36 Exposition in Balboa Park were discovered in a photo album from the Covington Family. The postcards were published by the Western Publishing & Novelty Company of Los Angeles, and by M. Kashower Co., Los Angeles.
- We shared 20 pictures in the monthly meeting notes distributed to NPHS members through the year. Fifteen of the pictures were the scanned color postcards from the album of the 1935-36 Exposition. We posted four of the pictures on our Facebook page in July.



- A friend of NPHS donated a 1915 booklet with photos of the 1915 Exposition and other scenes in San Diego, which he had found in his late mother's belongings. We scanned the 46 pictures in the booklet and posted four on our Facebook page in December.





Objective 7. To conduct outreach to schools regarding North Park history consistent with our purpose.

- On October 20, 2023, we got the following request from Jefferson Elementary School:
“I am a third grade teacher at Jefferson IB/STEAM Elementary School. We are working on a unit about how location, climate and access to resources can affect a community. My students and I were peeking through the book Images of America San Diego’s North Park and our interest was piqued. We became very interested in what North Park was like long ago. One of my students asked if we could take a trip around and see... this is when I thought to contact you. I would love to set up a guided tour for all third grade students at our school. We have two classes for a total of 60 third graders. Please let me know what dates/times you can arrange a guided trip for us. We would be most interested in the tour called Commercial Core.”

In response, George with Jody helping, and Katherine with Steve helping, split each third-grade class in two for a loop tour on Monday, November 6 and Tuesday, November 7. The students were variously engaged about the information, but universally excited about being outside the classroom. They were impressed with the fact that many of the commercial buildings are at least 90 years old and were originally grocery stores. There were about 15 students in each group, for a total of 60 students experiencing a tour.

Accomplishments in Previous Years

Accomplishments of NPBS since forming in 2008 include the following:

- Successfully nominated John Pearson, a craftsman builder in North Park in the 1920s, as a Master Builder in 2016.
- Printed approximately 100 more copies of *Burlingame: The Tract of Character* by Donald Covington in 2015.
- Received a 2015 Excellence in Historic Preservation Award in May from the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board (HRB) for our new book *Images of America: San Diego's North Park*.
- The City of San Diego HRB designated the Water Tower and surrounding historic district of water infrastructure as a local significant historic resource on April 23, 2015.
- The Water Tower was proclaimed a Local Historic Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) San Diego Section on January 27, 2015. NPBS had a bronze plaque made and a ceremony was held on site on November 5, 2015 to celebrate. Many community group representatives and elected officials attended, including County Supervisor Ron Roberts.
- Established a Facebook page for NPBS in 2015.
- Prepared *Images of America: San Diego's North Park* which was published by Arcadia Publishing Company in November 2014.
- Received a 2014 SOHO People in Preservation (PIP) Award for successful designation of the water tower and surrounding water supply facilities on the National Register of Historic Places, sharing the award with University Heights Historical Society, McKinley Elementary School, and historian Alexander Bevil, who prepared the historical designation application.
- At SOHO's request, NPBS was their partner for the SOHO Annual Historic Home Tour Weekend in June 2014, conducting multiple walking tours.
- Developed the Hamilton Streetcar Suburb tour.
- Achieved listing of the Water Tower and surrounding area of past and present water facilities on the National Register of Historic Places on June 25, 2013.
- Launched revised website in 2012.
- Supported community efforts to oppose the Plaza de Panama Project in 2012.
- Achieved local designation of the North Park Dryden Historic District on June 23, 2011.
- Reprinted *Burlingame; the Tract of Character* by Donald Covington, 2010.
- Won community awards from San Diego Historical Resources Board (2011 and 2012), SOHO (2011), and the American Planning Association (2011).
- Conducted numerous walking tours of Burlingame, Dryden District, commercial area, "Pershing Heights," and Morley Field.
- Displayed at community events, including at the North Park Festival of the Arts and Old House Fair.
- Held annual car shows from 2010 to 2019 (ten shows).
- Continued successful marketing of our first book, *North Park: A San Diego Urban Village, 1896-1946* by Donald Covington, published in 2007.

