

**NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MAY 2015 MEETING NOTES**

DATE: MAY 21, 2015

TIME: 6:30 PM

To celebrate National Preservation Month and the Centennial of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, this meeting was devoted to a presentation by historian Linda Canada about the Japanese presence in Balboa Park that started with an ornate tea house built for the 1915 Exposition. To keep everyone informed, however, these notes include updates on NPHS activities as of May 25, 2015.

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** June 18, 2015 at 6:30 pm in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard. The next meeting will be a regular Board meeting.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Katherine Hon | Hilda Yoder |
| Steve Hon | Paul Spears |
| Michael Thornhill | George Franck |
| Sharon Turner | Robert Bauer |
| Jody Surowiec | |

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

| | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Bill Vivian | Randy Sappenfield |
| Louise Russell | |

Members Claudia, Charlie, Juliet, Pat and Don, as well as other attendees also joined us. Welcome!

2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Steve announced that the NPHS May meetings are typically devoted to historical presentations because May is National Preservation Month. He heard Linda's presentation at the Congress of History conference in March, and thought it would be of interest to NPHS members and friends. We appreciate Linda's willingness to give her fascinating presentation again at the NPHS meeting.

3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE

The minutes from the April 16, 2015 NPHS meeting have been posted on the website.

BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The financials were sent to the Board in advance of the meeting. In the period from April 14 to May 19, 2015, the following numbers of original North Park history books were sold: 4 to Paras Newsstand, 1 at the Festival of the Arts, 5 to the Grove, and 4 to Amazon. NPHS sold 5 Arcadia books at the Festival of the Arts, and 2 Burlingame books to the Grove. Three NPHS members renewed and one generously donated an additional \$150. The car show action has begun with three entries and several sponsors signed up already. The total income in this time period was \$782. Expenses of approximately \$146 included the Old House Fair booth fee and the cost of printing a poster to be displayed for the NPHS award in Community History from the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board.

ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING

5. 100 YEARS OF JAPANESE LEGACY IN BALBOA PARK



About 30 people attended this special presentation. We appreciate the Board members who attended and also brought friends and family! Historian Linda Canada explained that the original tea house in Balboa Park was in the location where the zoo is now constructing a parking garage. At the time of the 1915 Exposition, Japanese culture was very popular in the United States, and the pretty building with its red arched bridges, harmonious gardens, and ornate facade was a well attended attraction. After the Exposition closed, the City reached out to the Japanese community to have a family live in the tea house, and the Asakawa family agreed to operate and maintain it. They lived there from 1917 until 1942. The tea house remained until 1955, when it was demolished. Subsequent buildings and gardens in the park include the House of Japan and Japanese Friendship Garden, which is now presenting the exhibit "Garden of Unity: Balboa Park's Japanese Legacy." The exhibit contains artifacts, photographs and personal stories. Linda also discussed the creation of the San Diego Yokohama Sister City Society, and the very interesting exchange of gifts that occurred through the years. The websites jahssd.org and niwa.org have more information. Thank you, Linda!

6. FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

NPHS had a fine day at the North Park Festival of the Arts on May 16. Thank you to everyone who joined Steve and Katherine in the NPHS booth throughout the day, including Sharon, Robert, Claudia, Turner, George, and Bob. We especially appreciate Robert's creativity for the water tower donation "can," which inspired \$30 in cash donations. An attendee who bought two books from us via Square gave us an online favorable comment of "Friendliness!" Good job, everyone!

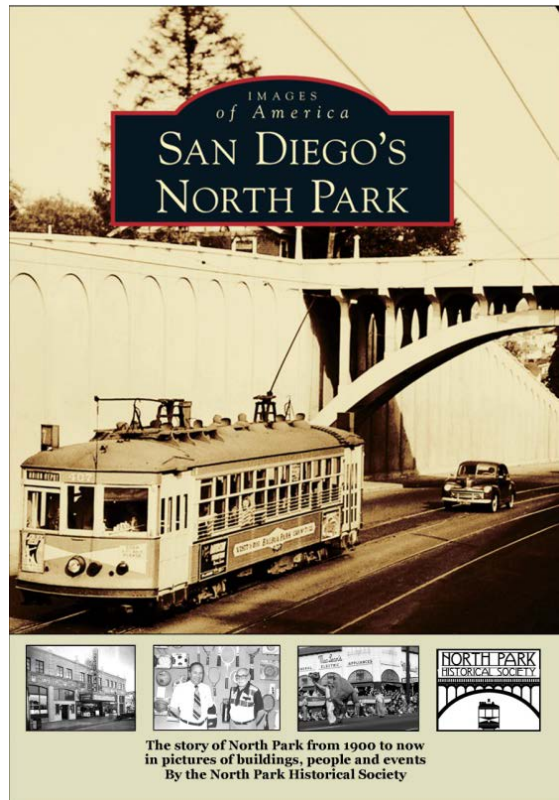


7. NPHS COMMUNITY HISTORY AWARD

The City of San Diego Historical Resources Board will be giving NPHS a 2015 Excellence in Historic Preservation Award for our preparation of the *Images of America: San Diego's North Park* book published by Arcadia last September. The awards ceremony will be Thursday, May 28th at 1:00 pm in the Copper Room at the San Diego Civic Concourse, 202 C Street. The City requires a poster from award recipients; these have been on display in the City Administration Building lobby. Our poster, which was designed by Katherine and printed at A7D, features the book cover and several photos from the book.

8. OLD HOUSE FAIR JUNE 20

The Old House Fair in South Park will be Saturday, June 20, 2015 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, and NPHS will be bringing all of our gear, including canopy. Please consider helping at this event. We need at least four people for set up and take down of the canopy. A sign-up sheet for the Old House Fair is shown below. You can contact Katherine at info@northparkhistory.org or 619-294-8990 with your preferred time frame to help.



OLD HOUSE FAIR SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 2015 NPHS BOOTH SIGN UP

| TIME PERIOD | NAME |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 9:00 am to 10:00 am (set up) | 1) Steve 2) Katherine 3) 4) |
| 10:00 am to 12:00 pm | 1) Steve 2) Katherine 3) 4) |
| 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm | 1) 2) 3) 4) |
| 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm (take down) | 1) Steve 2) Katherine 3) 4) |

9. DRYDEN WALKING TOUR JULY 11

We will be conducting a Dryden Historic District tour on Saturday, July 11 at 9:30 am. Save the date if you want to be a helper and experience this popular tour for free.

10. CAR SHOW PLANNING SEPTEMBER 12

The 6th Annual North Park Car Show will be September 12, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm in the same great setting of the parking lot along the tennis courts in Morley Field. As for the last several years, it is our privilege to be hosted by Balboa Tennis Club. The registration flyer has been distributed electronically. If you know anyone who would like a digital or paper copy of the registration flyer, please contact Katherine at info@northparkhistory.org.

We are looking for \$100 sponsors, who will receive a year's membership in NPHS and their logo on the poster and our undying gratitude. Randy and Steve have provided sponsorships. A new sponsor this year is Jaye MacAskill's Real Estate company. Jaye is a member of NPHS and is also President of the Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO). Thank you, Jaye!

North Park Trophy will donate trophies again this year.

We will hire San Diego Police security to enforce the early morning parking lot closure. We have also asked the San Diego Police Historical Association to exhibit as many historical vehicles as they would like to bring.

11. ARTICLES IN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

North Park News requested an article from Katherine, and she provided the following history of Paras Newsstand and the building it is in at the corner of 30th Street and University Avenue. This article appeared in the May 2015 issue of *North Park News*.

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North Park's Historic Corner Find it at Paras Newsstand

By Katherine Hon

From North Park's history to current world news and every printed word in between, you can find it at Paras Newsstand. The unassuming store with amazing inventory has filled the space at 30th Street and University Avenue with magazines, newspapers, comic books and novels, among other merchandise, for more than six decades.

Paras Newsstand sits in the northwest corner of what was originally the United Stores Shopping Center, a large brick and concrete building constructed in 1928 by Orndorf Construction Company for the United Realty Company.

Owl Drug Company refined the corner space at 3002 University Ave. for its drug store that opened February 1929 and stayed through the Depression and World War II. Joseph Jessop & Sons Jewelers occupied that main space through the 1950s.

The space held by Paras Newsstand started as the Basham Beauty Shoppe in 1930 and was Melody Beauty Shop later in the 1930s. During the 1940s, the space was alternately a beauty shop, gift store, and vacant. When the 1950s began, the space was listed in the City Directory as Baker's Cigar and News Stand. It became Paras Brothers

Cigar Store starting in 1953. The Paras brothers, Christ (Chris), Stratie, and William, were born in Illinois of Greek parents. Their father, George, came to the U.S. through Ellis Island in 1903, where his last name was changed from Paraskas to "Paras" to be shorter and easier to pronounce. George was the proprietor of a confectionary store in Chicago in the 1930s, and listed his employment on his World War II Draft Registration Card as "Self employed, Newsstand," which may be why his sons went into the business when they came to California. Eldest son Chris was born in 1923. He served in the Navy as a machinist mate on the aircraft carrier USS Intrepid, participating in many harrowing battles in the Pacific. By the mid-1940s, the family had all come to California. They initially lived in Escondido and later La Mesa, but in 1959 they are listed in the City Directory at 3930 Kansas St., just one block west of Paras Newsstand.

While Chris operated the North Park store, middle brother Stratie, born in 1928, operated a Paras Newsstand at 4861 Newport Ave. in Ocean Beach. There was a third Paras store in La Mesa for many years. Youngest brother William, born in 1929, also clerked in the stores.

Chris and the North Park store were a favorite news

topic through the years. The March 18, 1980, San Diego Union Currents section featured a story by Frank Green, "Read All About It At Paras." The store is described as "the oldest, best-stocked magazine shop in the city" where "there is something for everybody."

Chris said, "I get people of all ages from all over the area. I have a certain type of merchandise they're looking for, so they go out of their way to come here." Indeed, the large photo in the article shows a counter crowded with copies of TV Guide and Reader's Digest as well as every snack imaginable, including Velamints, Chewy Pecan Pralines, and Bubble Burger chewing gum ("We made it FUN for YOU!").

Reporter Bob Rowland visited Paras in November 1994 and proclaimed "North Park newsstand is world of its own." He interviewed Kent Snyder, who had started working at the shop for Chris in 1986 (and still works there today). When asked who shops at Paras, Snyder replied, "Hard to say—everybody, I guess." And in answer to the follow-up question—what are they looking for? — he said, "Just about everything."

Twenty years later, the answers are still the same. Chris sold the business in 1987. After his retirement, he and his wife Olga devoted a lot of time to the VFW and Fraternal Order of Eagles. They enjoyed socializing with their numerous friends at home-cooked meals prepared lovingly by Olga and at San Diego's classic restaurants including the Westgate, Hob Nob and Rudford's. Chris passed away in 2010 and is buried at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery.

But Paras Newsstand goes on. Brothers Rocky and Mike Attallah bought the store from Chris in 1987, and about eight years ago Junior Najor and Ken and Ann Gabbara bought the store from them. All kept the Paras name. The Gabbaras, who are the sole owners now, previously owned the Big K Market on Federal Boulevard, which they had bought from Rocky and Mike Attallah in 1985 and sold two years ago. Being experienced store owners, the Gabbaras are not only committed to maintaining selection, they are also making interior improvements to enhance the customer experience. They are remodeling the interior to create more visibility for the expansive inventory, including comic books, paperbacks and, of course, magazines about every topic imaginable in just about any language. Ann also wants to improve the convenience store supplies with healthy snacks and fruit for the multitude of riders who embark and disembark on the faithful No. 2 bus line right outside the door.

Of particular importance to the North Park Historical Society, Paras Newsstand is the only retail store in North Park's commercial core to stock their definitive history of North Park's first 50 years, "North Park: A San Diego Urban Village, 1896-1946," by the late Donald Covington. Although Paras Newsstand started just after that book ended, the store continues to be an important part of North Park's history and future.

Katherine Hon is secretary of the North Park Historical Society.



Ken and Ann Gabbara are the current owners of Paras Newsstand.

Uptown News continues to feature historical articles from NPHS in the issues distributed at the end of the month. The latest article Katherine submitted is about Pauly's Addition and the builder John Pearson. This article appeared in the May 22-June 4, 2015 issue of *Uptown News*.

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COMMUNITY VOICES

www.sdcnn.com



John Pearson built a Revival-style home at 3544 Mississippi St. in 1926 (left) and a Craftsman-style house at 3593 29th St. in 1925. (Photos by Katherine Hon) Pear (left) and John Pearson enjoy a picnic on a San Diego beach. (Courtesy of Kari Koskinen)

Pauly's Addition: an early North Park subdivision

By Katherine Hon

If you think North Park south of University Avenue is a crazy quilt of mismatched streets and block configurations, you are correct. The patchwork of subdivisions ("tracts") resulted from various landowners designing their paper kingdoms as they liked and filing subdivision maps at different times.

One of the first areas to be mapped extended from Alabama to Boundary streets between University Avenue and Upas Street. In the early 1870s, two pioneer merchants, Aaron Pauly and Joseph Nash,

and the city trustees created three subdivisions on the three pueblo lots that encompassed this area: Pauly's Addition, Park Villas and West End.

Pauly beat the city trustees by six weeks, filing his map for Pauly's Addition on April 1, 1873. The West End map was filed May 17, 1873. Although Joseph Nash had a map of his large Park Villas tract prepared in 1870, the official subdivision map was not filed until Oct. 14, 1887 because of an extensive legal dispute.

Pauly's Addition is bordered by Alabama and Arizona streets on the west and east, and by University Avenue and Upas Street on the north




a year, and he took his meals at the Pauly home. Both Aaron and Charles entered the real estate business in 1875. Aaron Pauly died in 1900, just before his subdivision began to fill with homes. His son Charles died in 1925, when development in Pauly's Addition was thriving.

One of the first building permits in Pauly's Addition was issued on Feb. 2, 1910 for a house built by E.L. Edwards on the northeast corner of Texas Street at Landis Street. This rambling bungalow still graces the corner. Many master builders worked in the tract, including Alexander Schreiber, Edward F. Bryans, and the team of Ralph Hurlburt and Charles Tifal.

Certain builders had a particular fondness for Pauly's Addition. John Pearson obtained a building permit for a Spanish Revival house at 3435 Texas St. on Oct. 19, 1925, and permits for four similar houses on Mississippi Street in successive years, at 3544 on June 28, 1926; at 3530 on Dec. 1, 1926; at 3536 on March 21, 1927 (his family home); and at 3575 on Jan. 23, 1928.

John Pearson was the older brother of master builder Pear Pearson. The brothers were born Johan and Per Olsson in Espelunden, Sweden in 1885 and 1887, respectively. Johan came to the United States in 1904, and Per followed in 1905, where they both "Americanized" their first names and changed their last name to Pearson. The brothers lived in Denver, then came to San Diego in the early 1920s with their families. John Pearson lived in North Park homes, several of which he built, the rest of his life. He died in 1952 at age 67.

Although John Pearson is not recognized by the city as a master builder, he was responsible for many high-quality bungalows reflecting

various architectural styles and finely detailed interiors. Several of his Craftsman homes reflect his Swedish heritage with rounded porch columns and intricately scrolled eaves and rafters. An especially attractive example of his work is 3593 29th St. built in June 1925, which has been designated individually significant for both its Craftsman exterior and elements of its interior.

The North Park Historical Society (NPHS) plans to nominate John Pearson as a master builder. The nomination to the City Historical Resources Board will need to include his history and a compilation of the homes he built. Basic information has come from Pear Pearson's granddaughter, Kari Koskinen, and building permit records compiled by the late Donald Covington. NPHS invites anyone who has information about John Pearson or a house that he built to contact Katherine Hon at info@northparkhistory.org or 619-294-8990.

—Katherine Hon is the secretary of the North Park Historical Society. Reach her at info@northparkhistory.org or 619-294-8990.

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NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** June 18, 2015 at 6:30 pm in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard, corner of Park and Lincoln Avenue.

Prepared by

Katherine Hon

Katherine Hon
Secretary, North Park Historical Society