

**NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FEBRUARY 2017 MEETING NOTES**

DATE: FEBRUARY 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 March 5, 2017.

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** March 16, 2017 at 6:30 pm in a second floor meeting room at Grace Lutheran Church, 3967 Park Boulevard.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

Steve Hon	Katherine Hon
Bob Bauer	George Franck
Jody Surowiec	Claudia Watts
Randy Sappenfield	Sharon Turner
Michael Thornhill	

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

Paul Spears Judy Ciampoli Hilda Yoder

Tim and Sue also joined us. Welcome!

2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The latest issue of the Pacific Beach Historical Society newsletter was circulated for viewing. Katherine shared her latest PastMatters columns in *Uptown News* (see the end of these notes). Her articles were about the newest tenant and the history of the "Claire de Lune" building at Kansas and University, and the Palisade Gardens roller skating rink.

Steve announced that the city Historical Resources Board staff are starting the historic district processing for Spaulding Place and Valle Vista Terrace and have requested information from NPHS. **Update:** Katherine clipped the text in the North Park history book about Valle Vista Terrace and emailed it to Kelley Stanco at the HRB for their use.

George announced that the garden apartments built in 1947 on Ohio Street may be at risk for redevelopment. He describes these units in an article he is preparing as follows: "4469-4517 Ohio Street: Midway between Adams Avenue & "The Boulevard" corridors, these garden apartments appear to be the largest group in North Park. Grouped



around three shared garden areas, the two story buildings are of a modernist, Minimal Traditional style. Second floor entrance balconies reflect a Monterey Revival style popular during the 1935 Exposition in Balboa Park." The Los Angeles Conservancy is trying to preserve such kinds of post-World War II development in their city, but San Diego may not be so inclined.

Jody announced that the Post Office development on North Park Way is for sale.

3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE

The minutes from the January 19, 2017 NPHS meeting have been posted on the website.

BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The financials for the period of January 1 to February 14, 2017 were sent to Board Members in advance of the meeting. During this period, three members renewed (thank you, Linda, Cia and Bob) and we gained one new member (welcome, Kate!). Two tee-shirts ordered in advance were distributed and paid for, and Amazon paid us for one North Park history book. We received \$134 in donations. Our expenses included \$323 for the City permit to use the Balboa Tennis Club parking lot for the 2017 Car Show (coming September 9, 2017 - save the date!). We also donated \$100 to Grace Lutheran Church to thank them for letting us use their meeting room for our monthly meetings.

Steve submitted the County grant application for 2017-2018 that was incorporated into the budget and approved unanimously at the January 19, 2017 meeting. He has received confirmation that the application is complete.

ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING

5. WATER TOWER PUBLIC ART PROJECT UPDATE

Steve and Katherine have a meeting at the Water Tower set up with Christine Jones with the City Commission for Arts and Culture and our art consultant Gail Goldman for February 23. **Update:** On February 23, 2017, Christine Jones met Steve, Katherine, and Gail Goldman at the Water Tower. We got a lot of useful information from Christine. The City is open to considering an art installation on the fence above the rectangular concrete reservoir, which is the element that NPHS had decided late last year would be the most feasible. At the site, we agreed that the expanse of fence along the top of the concrete reservoir facing Howard Avenue from the intersection of Howard Avenue and Oregon Avenue eastward would be the best segment of fencing to focus proposals on. Christine also communicated to us that the City may consider a "loan" process where the art would be displayed for up to 5 years, which could be a good compromise between a short-term exhibition of up to a year and a permanent donation of the art to the City. Our next step is to revise our draft Call for Artists for review and approval by the NPHS Board reflecting this information, and then allow Christine to read the Call for Artists so she can provide her comments and guidance.

6. NORTH PARK PLANNING COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The North Park Planning Committee will hold elections for new board members on March 21, 2017. Tim announced that he is running for a seat on the board. In his career he has been a city planner and was chief Policy Advisor for Councilmember Marti Emerald. He also has served on the Tierrasanta Community Planning Committee, so he is very familiar with the activities and responsibilities for volunteering in that kind of organization. Good luck, Tim!

Jody announced that the North Park Maintenance Assessment District (MAD) has decided they do not want to become a subset of the North Park Planning Committee, and will discuss withdrawal of that proposal at the next Planning Committee meeting.

7. OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE LECTURE AND DRYDEN DISTRICT TOUR

Katherine and George are presenting a PowerPoint lecture about North Park's history and architecture for this adult education group on March 7, 2017 at 1:00 pm at UCSD. Then on March 11, the following Saturday starting at 10:00 am, NPHS will conduct a tour of the Dryden District for the class. There may be 25 people so George and Michael will each guide a group, with several helpers for each. Claudia and Jody can walk with George and show photos, and Randy and Tim can help Michael and show photos. Steve and Katherine will be there to coordinate with the Osher leader and take latecomers. If you want to help, the Dryden tour is a great one to learn about North Park. Contact Katherine at info@northparkhistory.org if you are interested. It is always good to have a few extra "herders" to keep people from wandering into the street.

8. ANNUAL EVENTS

The annual events NPHS is participating in or organizing include the following:

- NPHS Special Presentation by Elsa Sevilla: May 18, 2017. Elsa Sevilla, who presents " San Diego's Historic Places" on KPBS, has agreed to give a lecture at our special history presentation evening on May 18 at 6:30 pm at Grace Lutheran Church. The lecture will be free and open to all. There may even be cookies!
- North Park Festival of the Arts: May 20, 2017. We are getting our booth fee waived in exchange for George conducting a commercial walking tour for North Park business owners and staff on a day and time to be arranged by Angie at North Park Main Street.
- North Park Car Show: September 9, 2017. The Balboa Tennis Club has agreed to host us for our 8th Annual Car Show, and Steve has already obtained the permit from the City to use the parking lot.
- Old House Fair - although Maureen is not organizing this event, as she is retiring from her store in South Park, we believe this event will go on in June. More later.
- Toyland Parade: December 2, 2017. We expect the parade to be held the first Saturday in December like last year. This year, Steve and Katherine will not be in town on parade day, so we will be looking for other volunteer(s) to coordinate participants and delivery of the water tower to the parade site if Victor is inspired to dance again as the most popular entry in the parade.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY** March 16, 2017 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
Secretary, North Park Historical Society

Colorful makeover

What's happening to historic building at Kansas and University



The historical Newman/I.O.O.F. building shows off its fresh and colorful makeover. (Photo by Katherine Hon)

PastMatters Katherine Hon

Fresh colors highlight architectural elements of the arcaded historical Newman/I.O.O.F. building at Kansas Street and University Avenue in North Park, which until recently housed Claire de Lune Coffee Lounge.

While interior construction for the Tamarindo restaurant continues in the building's large western corner, fresh colors of pretty clothes have popped up in the window of the eastern-most space. This is the new home of RAE, the latest store for Shelly Vanderlinden. Her Pretty Please and Daisy Blue stores throughout San Diego and Arizona provide fun and affordable fashion for those of all shapes, sizes and ages.

Sales lead Carley Watts said they are excited to be part of North Park, a neighborhood where people like to walk, savor great restaurants and shop in distinctive stores. The RAE concept aims to provide a unique selection of carefully curated gifts, jewelry and clothing. As they settle into their new location, they plan on getting involved in the community by hosting pop-up yoga, private parties and other events in the store.

The origins of the spacious building constructed in 1929 were highlighted in a July 1, 2016 San Diego Uptown News article by editor Ken Williams about the Tamarindo restaurant [read it at bit.ly/29AX00t].

Watts was interested to learn that the building originally housed North Park's first comprehensive department store, founded by Edward Nathaniel Mudd when he was 54 years old. Mudd had a long history in the dry goods business. He worked as a retail merchant for the J.C. Penney Company in the 1920s in Nebraska. His new store in North Park "offered a complete stock of ready-made clothing for the entire family as well as a dry goods department," according to the history related in Donald Covington's book, "North Park: A San Diego Urban Village, 1896-1946" (available at Paras Newsstand

at 3911 30th St. for those who want all the fascinating details of North Park's first 50 years).

Unfortunately for Mudd, experience was no match for the collapsing national economy. In the early years of the Great Depression, he closed his ready-to-wear department and moved his dry goods section to 3916 30th St., where Core Power Yoga is now. The bargains offered at the clearance sale are reflected in store advertisements published in the San Diego Union. "Lovely silk dresses ... priced far below cost" could be purchased for \$5.00, \$7.35, and \$11.88. Women's hats were reduced to \$1, \$2, and \$3. Other bargains mentioned in the Covington book included "men's pure wool sweaters, \$5.79; women's fur trimmed dress coats, \$39.00; boy's wool knickers, \$1.00; and girl's sweaters, \$2.35."

It would be a whole decade before another department store followed in the 30th Street and University Avenue commercial district. Finally, in 1942, J.C. Penney Company opened the first segment of its store at Ray Street and University Avenue. This building, which retains its historic character from a 1954 makeover, is now awaiting another tenant since Wang's restaurant closed.

Through the 1930s, various businesses filled the retail



Advertisement from the San Diego Union on Feb. 15, 1931, noting closeout bargains at the E.N. Mudd department store. (Courtesy of North Park Historical Society)

spaces in the Newman/I.O.O.F. building, including a clothes cleaners, florist and cigar store. By 1940, appliances were being sold in the western space at 2906 University Ave., and Hughett & Smith linoleum had set up shop in the eastern space at 2912 University Ave. Through the 1950s, MacLean Appliances and Smith Shade & Linoleum activated the building. In 1969, Bab's Bridals replaced appliances at the corner, and by the late 1970s, Smith Shade & Linoleum had moved to 30th Street and North Park Way, currently the home of Waypoint Public. In place of tile and Venetian blinds, the discerning shopper walking to 2912 University Ave. could find custom fit bras at Joy Bra Salon.

North Park residents and visitors who remember the neighborhood's doldrums before this latest renaissance wholeheartedly thank new restaurants and retail stores like Tamarindo and RAE. These incoming businesses are activating our historic buildings while retaining the authentic and irreplaceable historic architecture of such special places. Welcome to the neighborhood!

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



This undated photograph is from the decades when Smith's Shade & Linoleum anchored the eastern space of the Newman/I.O.O.F. building. (Courtesy of North Park Historical Society)

Gone but not forgotten

PastMatters
Katherine Hon

A columnist's favorite words must be, "Your article is the first one I read when I open the newspaper." Although she did not leave her name or phone number, the reader's charming voice message absolutely made my day. And since she asked so nicely to tell the story of the Palisade Gardens Roller Skating Rink, dear anonymous caller, this column is dedicated to you.

Of all the buildings along University Avenue in North Park, the Palisade Gardens Roller Skating Rink is the one remembered most fondly. The long, two-story building with

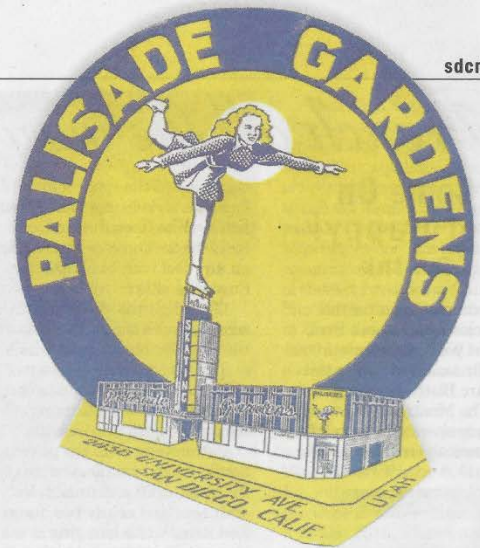
distinctive signage tower once occupied 2838 University Ave. at the northeast corner with Utah Street. It was built in 1945 at the end of World War II by three brothers, Leonard, Robert and Mortimer Zlotoff. They were sons of Jacob Zlotoff, a Russian candy-maker who had come to the United States in 1903.

When the rink opened in 1946, it cost only 75 cents for an evening of skating. The price included clamp-on skates, but shoe skates cost an extra quarter. Day skating cost 35 cents. The weekend dollar special, good on Saturday and Sunday, included admission, skate rental, a soda and a bus ride from an outlying neighborhood to the rink and back.

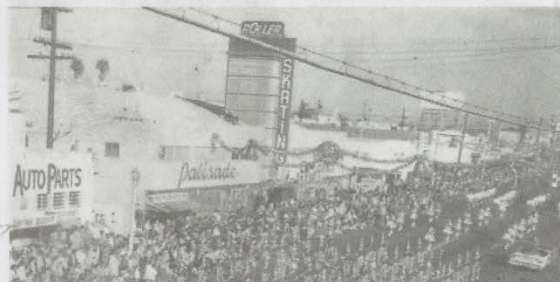
John Albert Wright, a World War II veteran of the 101st Airborne Division, operated the rink for 40 years until it closed in 1985. He helped revive the Toyland Parade after its break during World War II and introduced the sport of "rexing," a style of smooth backwards skating with scissoring movements and hourglass patterns. He extolled the benefits of skating, telling the San Diego Union in 1985, "It's a clean, healthy sport. It exercises more muscles than swimming. Just moderate skating burns 650 calories an hour. And it's a soother as far as hypertension. It does all the good things other sports do, and it's easier on the body."

Having "good old family fun" and skating to tunes like "The Happy Organ" by Dave "Baby" Cortez in the early 1960s are some of the memories shared by my anonymous caller. Many people who grew up in North Park have similar stories. The book "Images of America: San Diego's North Park" shows a rare Palisade Gardens interior photograph of contestants for Toyland Parade Queen roller skating in October 1966.

As late as June 1985, a Senior Olympics skating competition was held at the rink. But the popularity of skating was declining, and the cost to insure the business became larger than the income. The rink closed with an event called "The Last Great Skate," which Leonard Zlotoff described as "a



This decal from the Palisade Gardens rink shows the roller skating girl featured in the neon sign that once graced the doorway. (Courtesy of North Park Historical Society)



In an undated Toyland Parade photo donated to the North Park Historical Society years ago, the Helix High School band marches past the Palisade Gardens rink. (Courtesy of North Park Historical Society)

DISCOUNT FABRICS
The **Lowest Prices** on a huge

peaceful end." In a 1985 interview, Wright said he was "making a buck up to the last day," but he didn't mind having Saturday nights off in his retirement.

In 1986, the City Directory shows Mary's Doll World at 2838 University Ave. and in 1987, Rainbow Patio Deck is the business listed. The building was torn down in the late 1980s for the Palisades Pointe apartments. A condominium/mixed-use conversion project completed in 2006 and named Palisade Gardens is now on that corner. The condominium development echoes the architecture of its predecessor with elements that resemble the signage tower.

Missing from the building is the original roller-skating girl neon sign that hung above the angled doorway. A hint that she survived the building's demolition is in a May 24, 1990 Los Angeles Times article by Sarah Pattee titled, "Neon: The Lights of His Life: Hobbies: In five years, Mike Queen has managed to rescue and restore some of San Diego's finest pieces of sign art." Among the signs mentioned being saved is "the animated roller-skating girl from the former Palisades Rink in North Park." Pattee wrote, "Thanks to Queen ... the feet on the roller-skating girl still flash and flicker."

At the time, the restored sign was being stored in the warehouse of Queen's company, Phoenix Construction, located in Kearny Mesa. At the end of the article, Pattee noted it took Queen months to get the 1947 roller-skater neon sign. "First he searched city records to find the sign's owner. When he finally did, it took weeks of talking before the owner trusted him enough to let the sign go — along with a dozen three-foot-wide neon stars from the rink's ceiling."

If you are still out there, Mr. Queen, the North Park Historical Society would love to thank you for saving a North Park classic neon sign!

—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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