

NORTH PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY OCTOBER 2017 MEETING NOTES

DATE: OCTOBER 26, 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 1, 2017.

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY November 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
Jody Surowiec	Sharon Turner
George Franck	Randy Sappenfield
Paul Spears	Michael Thornhill
Judy Ciampoli	Claudia Watts

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

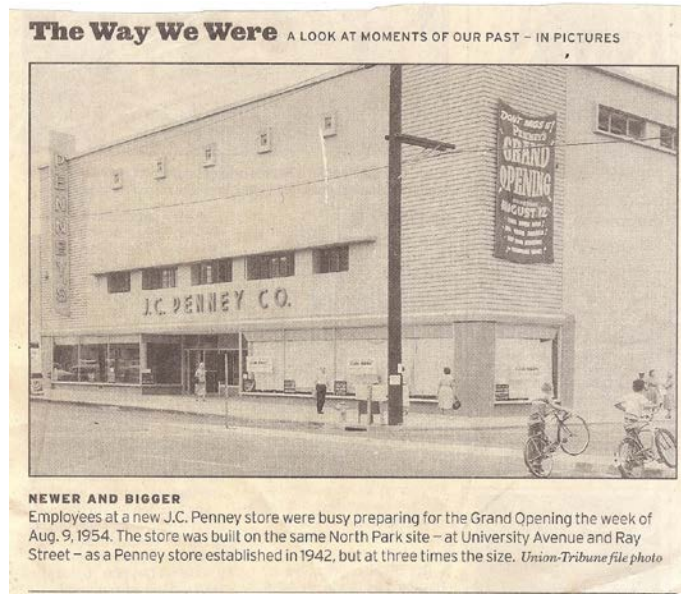
Bob Bauer	Hilda Yoder
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Members Turner and Sue, and visitor Alex also joined us. Welcome!

2. AGENDA REVIEW AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The latest Pacific Beach Historical Society newsletter and PastMatters column in the *Uptown News* were circulated for viewing. See the last page of these notes for how the article looked in the paper.

Steve announced that he and Katherine met with the project manager, architect, and real estate coordinator for Target. The store is working on leasing the building on the southeast corner of Ray Street and University Avenue at 3029 University Avenue (the former location of Wang's North Park) for a Target Express. The family that has owned this building for a long time would continue to own it. The building originated as a J.C. Penney department store in 1942 and was expanded to its current appearance in 1954. The Target staff recognize the historical importance of the building's features. They are working with San Diego Historical Resources Board (HRB) staff to maintain the facade. In response to our request, Target will consider finding space in the building for a small community meeting room where groups like NPHS could hold meetings. If all goes smoothly, the store could reactivate this important building and increase retail foot traffic into the evening hours by next October.



Randy shared an issue of *Old House Journal*, which featured an article written by Tom Shess about the Dryden District in the December 2017 issue. It looks like a very interesting magazine, and is available at Paras Newsstand on 30th just north of University Avenue.



3. MINUTES ACCEPTANCE

The minutes from the September 21, 2017 NPHS meeting have been posted on the website.

BUSINESS PORTION OF MEETING

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The financials for the period of September 18 to October 22, 2017 were sent to Board Members before the meeting. During this period, we received donations totaling \$200 from three renewing members and one new member (thank you Jody, Paul, Sharon, and Christine!). Four members renewed and two new members signed up, for revenue of \$120 from dues. We sold one Arcadia book at the regular price. Expenses were a total of \$505 (\$396 for traffic police at the car show, \$84 for renting barricades and no-parking signs for the car show, and \$25 for the Toyland Parade entry fee).

ACTIVITIES PORTION OF MEETING

5. WEBSITE UPDATE

Jim has transferred all of our northparkhistory domain names to GoDaddy, which is our website host. He has also migrated the https security certificate throughout the website. He has installed a feature so we can place multiple photos on the website like all the photos from the car show that we have received from Jim Brady. Randy noted he has photos from a neighbor that were considered for the Arcadia book, but not chosen. We could put those on the website on the "Community Scrapbook" page and really enhance that part of the website.

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 remaining annual event NPHS is participating in for 2017 is the Toyland Parade! The 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 with Jody as the contact and person to register the group at 9:00 am on parade day Thank you, Jody, we know you are not usually an early bird! Victor has confirmed he will dance again as the Water Tower, the most popular entry in the parade. Michael will deliver the water tower "costume" to the parade site and take it back to Victor's house. Other marchers are Judy, Sue, Claudia, Sharon, and George. 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.

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. On September 25, 1978, a PSA jet carrying 135 people and a single-engine Cessna with two pilots on board collided in the skies above North Park. The jet crashed at Dwight and Nile streets and the Cessna crashed at 32nd Street and Polk Avenue. Seven people on the ground were killed as well as all people on the two planes. This was the largest loss of life in an aircraft disaster in U.S. history at the time, and the crash remains the deadliest aircraft disaster in California.

A plaque with the names of the 144 people who died in the crash is at the Air and Space Museum in Balboa Park, and a very small and weathered plaque is in a median at the parking lot of the North Park Library. However, Michael B.'s group feels there should be another marker with all the names in a memorial installed closer to the crash site in North Park. They have advocated for a memorial plaque installation at the triangular intersection of Felton and Boundary streets, but many property owners at this location have objected. We asked Alex, the historic consultant who got the Water Tower designated on the State and National registers, what issues would be associated with a designation process for the PSA plane crash (which occurred about 40 years ago, so is not yet a 50-year-old event) and if such designation would help site a plaque at an appropriate location. He referred NPHS to the Supervisor of Cultural Resources Programs at the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), and also conducted research of his own.

The Supervisor of Cultural Resources Programs at the California OHP sent this information via email in response to our inquiry:

A property may be eligible for the California Register within the fifty-year period if sufficient time has passed "to obtain a scholarly perspective on the event or individuals associated with a resource. A resource less than fifty years old may be considered for listing...if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance" (taken directly from the California Code of Regulations). Note, too, that the resource in this case would be the site, which is perfectly acceptable. Establishing boundaries may be somewhat difficult, and there may be difficulty with property owner support. These issues are not abnormally difficult to deal with, but they will be issues.

Largest does not necessarily establish historical significance. The California Register would require that the event be placed within a historical context. How did the crash effect aviation safety? How did lapses in aviation safety lead to the crash? Or perhaps there are other contexts that you are aware of.

Alex, who recently retired from 20 years as a historian for the State Parks Department, attended our meeting to report on the research that he conducted in response to our inquiry. He made the following points:

- An event cannot be designated as a historic resource without being associated with a physical space.
- The physical space (boundaries) of a potential historic resource must be defined as part of the nomination application.
- Physical spaces, which could include building(s) and/or an area, have property owner(s).

- The State will not designate a resource if any property owner objects.
- Historic designation by the State does not guarantee or mandate placement of a plaque.
- A plaque being placed on a property is at the discretion of the property owner.
- Maintenance and protection from vandalism and theft is always a concern for any installation.
- For the 1978 PSA plane crash, the boundaries of the historic resource could be defined as the area that experienced the most damage, which was focused along Dwight Street between Boundary and Nile, based on aerial views published in newspaper articles in the days after the crash occurred. None of the houses that exist here now could become part of a designated resource (they would not be "eligible"), and therefore, being included within such boundaries would not affect property owners' rights to alter, remove or replace those structures. However, since the boundaries of the historic resource would have to be identified in an application, the State would not approve the nomination if any of those property owners objected to the designation.
- Based on aerial views published in newspaper articles in the days after the crash occurred, Caltrans right-of-way for I-805 at the end of Dwight Street appears to be east of the area damaged by the plane crash, and Felton Street appears to be west. These areas would therefore not be within the boundaries of the potential historic resource.
- Historic designations can be controversial, especially for tragic events that resulted in loss of life within residential neighborhoods that encompass private property and owners who were not involved in the historic event.
- Alex is compiling historic information about the event that he would propose to donate to the North Park Library to add to their archive about the plane crash.

During additional discussion, one approach suggested was for a complete plaque to replace the weathered plaque at the North Park Library. This location has the advantage of being on public property in a very visible area that would be less prone to vandalism or theft. The group acknowledged that the library is not within the crash impact area, but the intersection of Felton and Boundary and the Caltrans right-of-way for I-805 at Dwight Street are also outside of the crash area.

NPHS will document the findings about this issue in the notes from this meeting, making sure to share with Michael B. and any other interested parties. Board members agreed NPHS will not pursue historic designation of the plane crash. Steve noted that in our book "Images of America—San Diego's North Park" pages 102 and 103 present photos and text about the crash; therefore, as an organization we have acknowledged its significance in North Park's history.

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. He developed a blurb for the website and a handout that we could send to people whose property might qualify for designation. Paul and others could be available to consult with people who have questions. The draft versions of these materials are almost ready for the NPHS Board to review. Judy, Michael, George and Claudia are interested in working with Paul on this project.

10. WALKING TOURS FOR DANISH BUSINESS STUDENTS FOLLOW-UP

We were contacted by the California International Business University in Little Italy to conduct a tour of North Park for about 30 young adult students from Denmark. We took them on a guided walking tour of the commercial district around 30th and University in the morning, and in the North Park Dryden Historical District along 28th Street and Pershing Avenue in the afternoon of Tuesday, October 24. Except for that day being the hottest **EVER** in North Park, it was a good experience for everyone. Angela with North Park Main Street introduced the commercial area and the importance of the business improvement district group before the morning tour.



Tour guides George, Steve, and Katherine, with helpers Jody, Sharon, Juliet, Hilda, and Sue conducted about 30 Danish business students through commercial and residential North Park. (Photos by Katherine Hon)

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be **THURSDAY November 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

Katherine Hon
Secretary, North Park Historical Society

When history knocks, invite it in

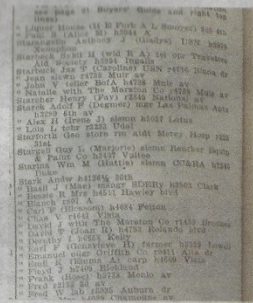
PastMatters

Katherine Hon

One advantage of having a nearly 100-year-old house is the number of previous owners out there who may have photos and stories to share about changes through the years. But how to find those people? Sometimes they find you, so be ready to invite them in.

Last month, Jo Ann, a lovely real estate agent from Escondido, and her husband John drove slowly past our house several times. We happened to be outside, and so we wouldn't wonder what she was up to, she declared, "I grew up in this house!" I asked what her last name was back then, and immediately recognized it as the second owner of our house from about 1947 to 1952, based on research I had compiled from old city directories. So we invited them in.

Jo Ann was only 7 when her family moved to this little North Park bungalow, so she wasn't sure if her mom and dad had even owned it. She was delighted to see her parents listed in the 1947-48 directory as owners. It was quite an experience for her to stand in her childhood dining room and take a photo of the directory page where her family was listed as living at that address. We found her best friend's family listed in the directory as living around the corner. She reminisced about playing "kick



Old city directories show homeowner's name, spouse and occupation. In this little clip from the 1947-48 directory, several residents worked for The Marston Company, the subject of September's Past Matters column. (Photo by Katherine Hon)

the can" and other games in the street, attending Jefferson Elementary School, and enjoying a happy childhood in North Park.

In walking through the house, she expressed surprise at how small it seemed now, and we expressed surprise at how many people lived there (she was one of six children) with only one bathroom. She confirmed that an addition we always thought was built in the 1930s was already there when her family moved to the house. She promised to try to find some old photos where the house was in the background, an incidental part of the view back then, but now the holy grail for historians.



For the owners of the little bungalow across the street, the cutie pie on the Plymouth bumper is an extraneous part of this 1953 photo. (Courtesy of Viola Treweek)

Jo Ann was not the first to ask if she could revisit her childhood home. The son of the young carpenter who bought the house in 1973 fresh out of the Navy has come by twice. On his second visit, Erik brought his own family, and he telephoned his mom from the living room to say, "You won't believe where I'm standing right now!" His dad created a woodworker's dream with pieced wooden counters in the kitchen and window seats of cedar and redwood in the living room, which he was happy to see were still there, but were new to Jo Ann.

Long-time neighbors, especially people who live across



Old city directories are full of information and make hefty paperweights if you actually own one. (Photo by Katherine Hon)

the street, are another potential source of photos. You never know when your house might show up as part of that incidental background. So get out there and meet the older residents on your block.

Knowing the names of previous owners and neighbors is essential to confidently inviting history into your home. It is easy to do with the resources available online on the City Clerk's website at bit.ly/2wfs6aR.

Directories have a "reverse" listing by address from 1926 forward. When you find the address of your home or your neighbor's home and the names of those residents, you can look up their names in the main part of the directory and even find their occupations. Keep

going through the directories as far forward as you can. The City Clerk website has digitized the directories from 1926 through 1954. Actual copies of the city directories are in the research library of the San Diego History Center in Balboa Park and the Downtown library up to about 1987.

When you have a list of previous owners compiled, you will be ready to invite history in if it happens to knock. If you already have a great story about a previous owner or descendant coming to call, post it on our North Park History Facebook page.

—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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such as site selection and me.