



LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

LOOKOUT AVE.

VOLUME NUMBER 4, ISSUE NUMBER 3

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow Members: As I write this note to you, the air is filled with hopeful news of the hostage situation and the presidential inauguration. In perspective and by comparison, our problems seem minor. However, the business of the world goes on, and we must continue to function "as usual". The restoration of the House is soon to be completed, and I am looking forward to that date. In February we will have our Annual Dinner Meeting. It will be a pleasure to meet so many old friends again and renew our memories. The year 1980 was a successful year for the Society, both financially and activity-wise. The Quilters, the Fund Raisers and the new Crafts group spent many hours in preparation of sales items. There is progress with the Railroad Depot and Museum. See for yourself the next time you go downtown. Space limits crediting all those who worked so hard in their committees. Our next big FUND-RAISING EVENT will be the Sixth Annual Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social on Flag Day, Sunday, June 14, 1981. Plan to be there and bring a friend. "Woody." Helen Wood Linke, President.

FEBRUARY 9 DINNER

Our Annual Dinner Meeting is Monday, February 9 at Anthony's, La Mesa. Again, there are only 150 places available, so get your reservations TODAY with your check and the names of your guests. Call Thelma Todd, 466-5970; or Vivian Higgins, 466-9244.

\$25.00 per couple \$12.50 singles

DEADLINE: February 5-Thursday

	<u>Menu</u>	
Shrimp	Green Salad	Shell Fries
Potatoes	Rolls	Beverage
		Ice Cream

Our program will be fun. A short business meeting for the Nominating Committee will be necessary. If you have camellias, will you share them with us? They add so much in their beauty. Call the above numbers, please. Thank you. Vivian Higgins, Hospitality Chairman.



LOOKOUT AVENUE is the official publication of the La Mesa Historical Society, Inc., P. O. Box 882, La Mesa, CA 92041. Telephone 714-463-6886. Published quarterly. Editor: Lucile DeWaide. Reporters: Eckoe Ahern and Lanette Wray. Artist: Clete Gress.

SWEET ADELINES QUARTET AT FEBRUARY 9 DINNER PARTY

The Chapter Four Quartet of the Singing Hills Chapter of Sweet Adelines of La Mesa will bring the joy of their music to this always lively occasion. The ladies in Chapter Four are Patti Glendenning, Bonnie Cross, Larinda Pilkerton and Sally Brumfield.

This dinner is the time of the year for renewing old friendships. Come in plenty of time to visit. One special thing about the LMHS is the way this group can become engrossed in conversation. This warmth and friendliness is important. Our own Hospitality Chairman, Vivian Higgins, will be Mistress of Ceremonies. She will introduce Ben Polak whose team will lead us in humorous reminiscing about Old La Mesa. Be sure to send in your reservation TODAY. The seating is limited to 150 persons. Last year many people did not get to attend the dinner. Be on time. Look forward to a fun evening. There is a flier elsewhere in this LOOKOUT. Clip the form and send in your reservation by February 5! OR BEFORE! HOW ABOUT TODAY! Pat Kettler, Program Chairman.

WARNING OF HISTORY LOSS

Much of La Mesa's history may be lost because of a population that keeps moving. Every time people move, they clean house and throw what may be valuable historical documents into the trash. There is a need to save, preserve and find a loving home for photographs, papers, artifacts and books that might be of historical significance. The danger is in throwing them out willy-nilly. If you have old documents or photographs, preserve them in plastic or copy them before they crumble any further. Often descendants are not aware of the historical value of things. They find things dumped in their laps and don't know what to do with them. If you find yourself in this position, please call the La Mesa Historical Society or whichever historical society appropriate to what you have. La Mesa Historical Society - 460-3726, 463-0197 or 466-5970.

WHAT ABOUT LA MESA'S BOOMING CITRUS INDUSTRY - 1890's?

The more one learns about our local history the more one's curiosity leads them to want to learn more. For instance, by 1895 La Mesa really began to grow after the railroad came through and large amounts of water were brought through the East County via flume from the Cuyamaca Mountains. This in turn brought people west on trains and many of these people established La Mesa's first industry - citrus. Curiosity led to looking for any visible reminder of this citrus industry in La Mesa and, to date, I have seen nothing. There was a citrus packing house on the northwest corner of Lemon Avenue and Nebo Street which was torn down in 1920. We have several photographs of it for a visual reminder but no citrus packing labels, boxes, machinery or actual photographs of people working at and in the packing house. It's strange that out of this booming little industry there isn't something left behind as a remembrance.

If you have any information regarding this or know of someone who does, please call or drop me a line.

Mrs. Pat Kettler (463-0197)
9146 San Juan Place
La Mesa, CA 92041

LOOKOUT AVE. LOOKS AT A BIT OF FEBRUARY NOSTALGIA

A good deal of excitement broke out at the Cooley and Rumsey homes on that February Tuesday morning in 1916. The wedding of Rhoda Cooley and Lieutenant Dexter Rumsey in the Central Congregational Church was set for noon, but because they had to catch the steamer YALE to San Francisco long before that, their wedding ceremonies took place at 8:00 A.M. The lieutenant had been stationed at the Exposition Cavalry Center but had just received orders for Honolulu, and the bride and bridegroom were to sail from San Francisco Saturday.

The La Mesa Scout supplies details: "The bride and bridegroom were unattended, and the lovely young bride, who is only 18, wore a gown of white chiffon and had a wreath of orange blossoms in her hair. Her traveling suit was of white broadcloth trimmed with midnight blue leather. We can guess she"...did La Mesa proud."



THE HISTORIAN'S BOOK can be greatly enlivened by YOUR contributions. Please donate pictures, snapshots, news articles, etc. Identify these by place, names and dates. Your contributions can be picked up by calling Eva Quicksall or Lucile DeWaide.

ELECTION. In accordance with our By-Laws, two members of the nominating committee and their alternates will be elected at the business meeting during the February 9 Dinner. Just a reminder that it is a courteous gesture to obtain prior consent of the persons whose names are placed in nomination for this committee. Betty Teague, Parliamentarian.

HISTORY ON TELEVISION. "Twelve Who Shaped San Diego" with Dr. Clare Crane will be presented in a series of eight one-hour programs on KPBS-TV Channel 15 on Thursdays, beginning January 22 from 1:00 to 2:00 P.M. The series is based on the award-winning KPBS Radio series of the same name broadcast in 1978. The program is sponsored by TEGO, Televised Educational Growth Opportunities, on the "Talkback" program. Talkback gives viewers an opportunity to interact with program participants via telephone call-in during the program. Call 296-2044 for more information.

DESIGNERS SHOWCASE 1981. May 2 - May 24. Empty House Party, February 27. Empty House Preview, February 28 - March 1. Group Tours only, April 25 - May 1. Reservations: 239-2211. Adjoining the La Jolla Country Club, this two-story, Spanish-Mediterranean home (THE SCHMIDT-NICO LEK DUZE) of 6,000 square feet has 14 rooms, 7 bedrooms, 6½ baths.

THE LITTLE FOXES" by Lillian Hellman. Matinee 2:00 P.M. March 1, and

THE GOODBYE PEOPLE" by Herb Gardner, 2:00 P.M., May 17. These special Sunday Matinees are being given for the benefit of the Community Center Fund.

DUES REMINDER. Be sure to fill out your Directory Information Form when it comes in the mail, and send your dues to Vicki Willis (460-0748). Everyone's membership is important. You will feel a part of the Society and the Restoration if you belong.

RESERVATIONS are necessary for the February 9 dinner. The deadline is February 5.

HELP WANTED. Telephone committee (Call Gladys Johnson to volunteer - 466-4125.) LOOKOUT AVE. newsletter (Call Lucile DeWaide to volunteer - 463-6886.) Other positions - (Call Woody Linke - 469-9988 to volunteer.)

LA MESA DEPOT MUSEUM UPDATE

Expect to see the fence protecting the La Mesa Depot removed in early February because when or soon thereafter, the City of La Mesa linear park landscaping project will get underway. By that time most exterior work on the depot, other than painting, should be completed.

Hopefully, by midyear all depot reconstruction and restoration will be complete and attention will then be given to furnishing the building in a style reminiscent of that of 1920. Before we talk about the railroad rolling stock display, let us take a look at the world of Co-Sponsor, Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association. As most of you know, the railway museum group a few weeks ago purchased from the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, 3.59 acres of land in Jambo, including the old Camp Lockett Gym, for the headquarters of its planned operating and static railway display. Lease or purchase of additional land, a one-mile right-of-way and an additional parcel of land, has not yet been finalized.

PSRMA's rolling stock includes four small steam locomotives, a small diesel locomotive, seven passenger cars, a troop kitchen car, a locomotive crane, nine freight cars, a street car body and line repair truck, a gasoline-powered rail bus, the depot building, a railroad crossing guard house, a water tank, section cars, baggage carts, tools, models and a library collection.



On February 11, 1921, the Helix Rebekah Lodge ladies gave a bridal shower in the Odd Fellows' Hall for Miss Hazel Johnson (Mrs. Fleming) who was "...delightfully surprised. Gifts were concealed in a large sunshade suspended from the ceiling and decorated with smilax. Hostesses served coffee and four kinds of cake." The guest list included thirteen ladies and five babies and appeared in The Scout in its entirety.

Also in the hearts and flowers department is an advertisement in The Scout on February 18, 1916. "Now on display, our big stock of Valentines--La Mesa Drug Store."

On February 15, 1921, members of the Kinnikkinnik Club were to meet. Members, girls over 16, were urged to bring their friends, and "...each will please bring a Valentine and a stick of wood or kindling." The Scout leaves us cliff-hanging on the kindling matter.

How about some Rex Brand sauerkraut at nine cents a can at the Right Grocery in 1916? And the La Mesa Drug was pushing aspirin at 20¢ a dozen. Over at Skinner Grocery, the ad promised quality; their slogan: Once a customer, always a customer. They delivered groceries. Remember? Their phone number was Pacific Phone--La Mesa 23-W. (Two phone systems existed for some time, you know.)

A George Washington Evening (no lie) was the project of the ladies of the Methodist Church at the IOOF Hall on Tuesday, February 22. Supper at 6:00 P.M. cost 25¢. Music and readings followed and everyone was invited. A couple of nights later, the Women's Guild at the Central Congregational Church had a "do." Their program was a representation of exhibits in Mrs. Farley's Wax Works. Admission was 15¢--and that handsome sum included refreshments, and Heaven knows how many kinds of cake!

Seems all was not rosy in 1916 for the new school house. The Scout says, "A number of people have had occasion to call up the school house since the new telephone has been installed and have experienced considerable trouble in getting the right number. So here it is: La Mesa-31WK"

In February of 1916, the Annual Banquet of the La Mesa Merchants Association took place at Maxwell's Restaurant. The secretary, Mr. Noyes, didn't have his speech copy ready for The Scout, so they published it a week later. Mr. Noyes said, among other things, "A merchants' association is not a new thing in La Mesa. The first was brought into existence when La Mesa had fewer merchants and the little city was at the beginning of its growth. The second was organized about two and a half years ago with Mr. H. A. McKinney as president." The associations served as a sort of chamber of commerce and board of trade.

An ad in The Scout of February 11, 1921, advises readers they can get a Buddy Bug free. (Retail price...\$3.50) Eleven of the Bugs were to be given away. WHAAAAT is a Buddy Bug?

Of course, you will be glad to know the following bits of news: Mr. J. T. Donohoo left Wednesday for Los Angeles after a visit of several days at the home of his brother, Mr. Roy T. Donohoo...Miss Irma Rombauer, who recently returned from St. Louis, accepted a position with the new La Mesa Bakery (Joy of Cooking, indeed!)...and a deputy collector of the Internal Revenue Service was at the Bank of La Mesa all day Thursday, February 21, to assist those who needed assistance in making up their income tax reports.

This is only the tip of an iceberg which shows in each Friday edition of the local newspaper the way things were in other days than these. One is amused, touched, and perhaps a little wistful...appreciative, too, for the record on film in the La Mesa Library. (Begun by LMHS.) Eckoe Ahern.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DOCENTS provide a very great service by helping keep our tax-free status. Without that a lot more money would have to be earned. More volunteers are needed. It is hoped that a docent would only have to serve one afternoon per month. The day could be changed from Thursday if the group wishes. Some people have had to drop out. We need YOU. If you can join us, call Bea Acers - 466-5812.

From this array, equipment and other exhibits will be selected alternately for display at La Mesa.

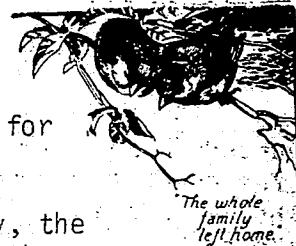
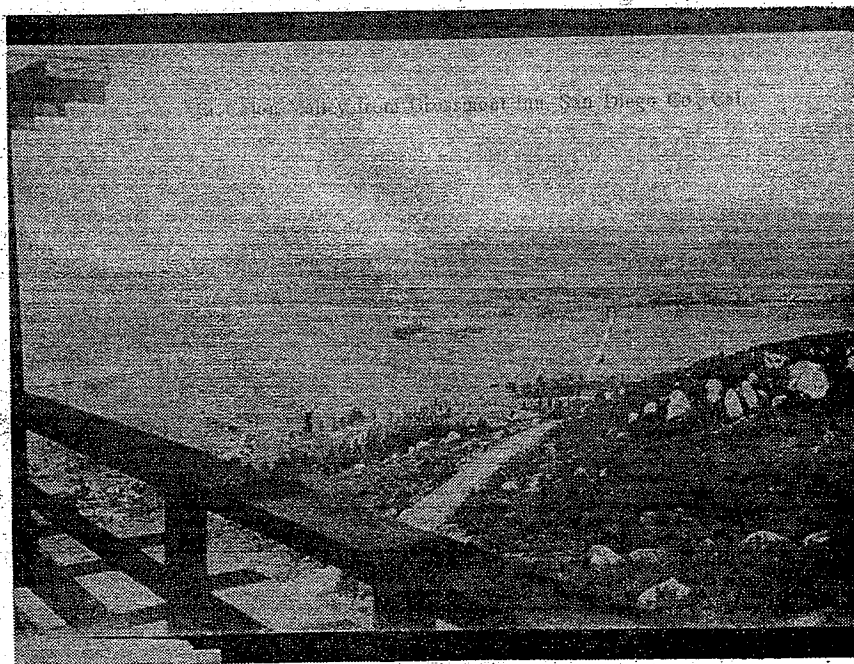
Railroad rolling stock presently is stored at Miramar N.A.S., Oxnard, Poway, the Embarcadero, Escondido, City of Commerce, Campo, Jamasha and backyards here and there.

The needs of the La Mesa Depot Museum display track are intertwined with the future needs of the operating railway museum in Campo. Both the La Mesa Historical Society and PSRMA were actively involved in the planning stages and continue the general supervision of the project through the Joint Committee. Almost all of the restoration has been carried on by PSRMA. However, as the museum nears completion and afterwards both organizations will be actively involved.

Next--a look at the future of the La Mesa Depot Museum.

SPRINGTIME IN THE VALLEY

This photograph, taken for a postcard circa 1905, reveals a barren El Cajon Valley, with a dirt Main Street running through the center of the Valley. My! How times change! (Lanette Wray.)



MEMORIES--OPEN HOUSE--DECEMBER 1980

Did you hear us giggling? It was fun as we put together Gingerbread Men and Thelma (Todd) wondered about the size of the noses on Santa's Helpers. Combing out beards on the Christmas tree decorations were Jean Guy, Earline Lourenco, Jane Field, Woody Linke, Vivian Higgins and Thelma Todd as we worked on Mondays to produce sales articles for the Open House. Filling the boxes with your good contributions at McKinney House brought the Christmas Spirit right along, too, as only group participation can do. Vivian.

CHRISTMAS TOY EXHIBIT AT THE MCKINNEY HOUSE

In the bedroom at the top of the stairs an exhibit of children's toys awaited the guests attending the Christmas Open House at the McKinney House.

Books, dolls and other toys dating from 1880 to 1925 illustrated what children could have found as presents on Christmas morning. Many of the articles were from the San Diego Historical Society; the remainder were privately loaned.

Pieces dating from the 1880's included a mechanical Bulldog Bank and a "Little Daisy" treadle sewing machine. A lace-trimmed white cotton child's dress from 1880 drew comment since its original wearer was a little boy, as small children of both sexes were then clothed in dresses. A little golden-haired doll with a porcelain head was an actual 1885 Christmas present to a girl named Dot Moffat when she lived "way out in the country" on San Diego's 16th Street.

Also part of the exhibit were an illustrated 1890's copy of The House That Jack Built, printed on cloth; a stereoscope; a folding doll go-cart, c.1915; a Craftsman-style oak storage seat, c.1905; and a child's pink ceramic tea set from the early 1920's. Christmas postcards, colorful Christmas issues of magazines, and tinsel and paper garlands from the same period complemented the display.

Of local historical interest was a wheeled horse pull toy from the Porter family of La Mesa. Anne Porter Hall remembers the toy from her own childhood here, and feels it probably belonged to her father, James Tank Porter.

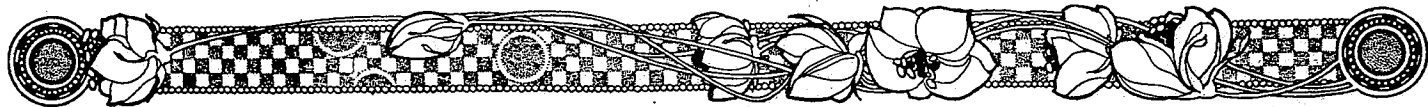
Donna Regan.

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LA MESA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S LOOKOUT AVE. 17



VOLUME NUMBER 4, ISSUE NUMBER 4

MAY 1981

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this Spring message to you, the Space Shuttle has made its first successful launch and safe return from outer space. We use those words so casually, as if they were always in our vocabulary. But I remember my first acquaintance with "space" as a sketch in the encyclopedia showing a train traveling to the moon and stating that it would take 120 years at a speed of 200 miles per hour. The Wright Brothers made their first successful flight of 59 seconds in 1903, but it remained their secret until 1905; and their first long-range flight of two hours and 20 minutes was made in 1908 in Le Mans, France. That same year the McKinney's built their home in La Mesa. It is also Easter time and I have it on good authority that Mrs. McKinney served Roast Chicken, with all the fixings from her garden including her special Berry Pie. And Rev. McKinney, the gregarious and popular Pastor Emeritus of the Methodist Church, was always asked to participate in the Easter Morn services.

My term of office is in the final months. I hope you will try to attend our Annual Meeting and Chef's Choice dinner on May 17th so that I may thank you in person for your support and cooperation. Sincerely,

"Woody"

ANNUAL ELECTION MAY 17, 1981

The LMHS Annual Election and Business Meeting will be at the La Mesa Adult Center, 8450 La Mesa Blvd., at 3:30 p.m. It is very important that members try to attend the annual election of officers. The nominating committee was Nadine Washburn, Donna Regan, Theima Todd, Earlene Lourenco and Richard, chairman, who will present the following slate:

President	Dorothy Griner
1st Vice-President	Eric Sanders
2nd Vice-President	Pat Kettler
3rd Vice-President	Helen Odom
Secretary	Brice Lockwood
Treasurer	Clifford H. Asay, Jr.
Director	Jean Guy
Director	Donna Regan

Other nominations may be made from the floor providing the nominee has given consent.

Directors currently serving whose terms will continue until June 30, 1982, are

Vivian Higgins, James Polak and Karna A. Webster. Certificates will be awarded members who have performed special services throughout the year.

The meeting will be followed by "A La Mesa History", a slide program prepared by LMHS Historic Sites Committee and presented by Pat Kettler.

HISTORICAL SLIDE PROGRAM

This slide presentation was originally compiled by Barry Worthington, Donna Regan and Pat with a lot of photographic help from Lee Griner and John Rojas. The program was first presented to the La Mesa City Council along with the Society's Historic Sites Committee.

presentation of an element and an Ordinance for La Mesa which they had prepared. Since December of 1980 the slide program has, with some changes, been enthusiastically received at La Mesa Junior High, at a La Mesa Methodist Church Women's program, and to the La Mesa Soroptomist Club. This 30-minute program will take you from the time of the Indians to the present. Questions and, hopefully, answers will follow.

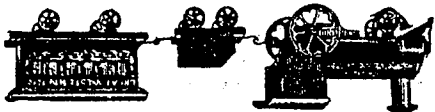
Recently acquired photographs of La Mesa, mostly the 1920's, will be on display. "See you there!", says Pat Kettler, Program Chairman.

CHEF'S CHOICE DINNER

After the slide program members will enjoy a Chef's Choice Dinner. The chef in each family is asked to bring a salad, a casserole or a dessert of his or her choice. Judging from past May dinners, this method of CHEF'S CHOICE turns out well. Don't miss the opportunity to visit with friends and taste their favorites! A gourmet dinner is promised.

MEMBERSHIP

The response was good from the recent membership drive. YOU are needed to make 500. Regular dues notices will go out soon to all members. If YOU haven't renewed this spring, please respond promptly in order to be included in the new La Mesa Historical Society Directory. Vicki Willis, Membership Chairman, 460-0748.



CABOOSES THEN AND NOW

Once more La Mesa has its charming small railroad station sitting beside the tracks. Along side it, rests a caboose. Both bring back special memories to one pioneer. The Maxwell family arrived in La Mesa in June 1906 from San Diego, riding a caboose. Marie Maxwell McKimney of Palm Avenue remembers that trip and their arrival at the little La Mesa depot. At that time cabooses had no cupola but was similar to a freight car with a divider that separated the freight compartment from the passenger section. Seats facing each other beside the windows, provided seating for about twelve people. Morning and evening trains provided seating for more riders, but mid-day passengers rode in the caboose. Local high school students attended San Diego High School and rode the train back and forth. When they got out of early classes and came out on the noon train, they, too, rode the caboose.

Today Mrs. McKimney lives a few blocks from the station and from her first home at Palm and Lemon Avenues. Trains pass through on the same tracks and although their whistles are different from early days, they touch a nostalgic note. Now we may find ourselves riding trains to San Diego again as changes in economy and life styles call for reviving passenger trains in East County. However, it is doubtful that many will have the experience of ever riding in a caboose.

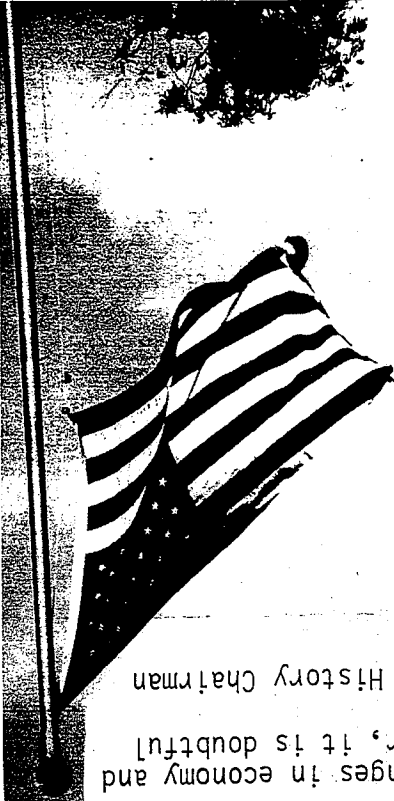
Mildred Bryan, Oral History Chairman

WORLD WAR I AND JULY 4TH DISPLAY PLANNED FOR ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL

The LMHS will be presenting a display of photographs, mementos and costumes at our 1981 Ice Cream Social on Sunday, June 14 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

This year's display themes will be "World War I" and "July 4th in Early La Mesa." The display will be in the dining room and upstairs in the north bedroom. The Society has several photographs of La Mesa's earlier July 4th celebrations, but is always looking for different photographs to display. Also, July 4th mementos such as flags, programs, etc. would be appreciated to put on display. If you have anything that you would be willing to lend the Society, please let me know.

We are also looking for World War I mementos to display June 14, particularly of La Mesa men in service at that time. We would appreciate the loan of small articles such as medals, buttons, canteen, mess kit, American helmet, photograph of the La Mesa in uniform, a post card or letter from him, newspaper article regarding him or the war, or popular sheet music of the period. There are,



I'm sure, other things that I can't think of that would be appropriate for the display. Perhaps American Red Cross mementos related to our area at the time or mementos related to home-front events or activities in La Mesa. We would like to display a uniform, of one is available, and a small, 48-star American flag.

The display space isn't large, so items to be shown should be rather on the small side and there isn't a proper place to display guns so we can't ask to show them. We plan to have all items secure behind a roped-off area and smaller articles will be in a glass case. Docents will also be on duty all day to explain display items to visitors.

THE QUILTERS

The quilters have finished the beautiful Dresden Plate quilt. Many people have worked on this project--Bee Acers, Jane Field, Barbara Copeland, and others. But it is the Faithful Four--Julie Bras, Chairman and Designer of the quilt, Margaret Pearson, Mildred Bryan and Nadine Washburn--who have given many, many hours on many, many Wednesdays and have put in countless tiny stitches.

The quilt has become almost a fixture in my home. I shall miss it, but most of all, I shall miss the quilters. It would be impossible to find a nicer, more friendly group of women.

There have been travelogues, jokes, reminiscences or an exchange of recipes at the coffee break, but no gossip. We all hope that the lucky person who wins the quilt will appreciate it. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." Thelma Todd.

"ICE CREAM SOCIAL"

Our 6th Annual "Ice Cream Social" is going to be held on Flag Day, Sunday, June 14th, from 11:00 to 4:00 p.m. We hope to make it "Bigger and Better" this year, but we need all your help to do so.

Tickets are now on sale for the Drawing of beautiful gifts. If you would like to sell tickets now for the drawing, please call me at 466-7385.

We also need donations for the Bake Sale, Plant Booth, White Elephant Table, Country Kitchen, such as homemade jams, jellies or fresh garden vegetables, etc.

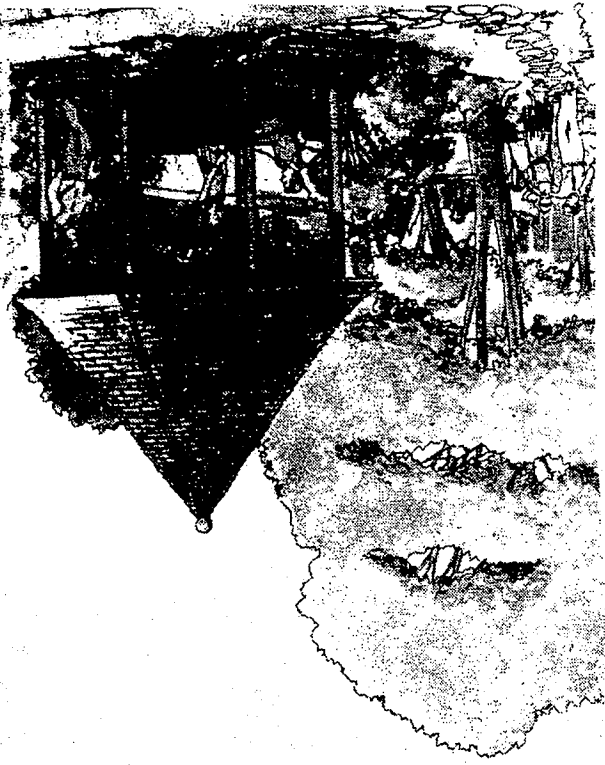
We will have entertainment periodically throughout the day, plus a delicious Bar-b-que Chicken Dinner and as in the past, "31 Flavors" ice cream.

Please plan to attend as I know you will thoroughly enjoy it. Any questions, call:

Jean Guy - 466-7385
Fund-Raising Chairman

EASTER SUNRISE

Picture Prospect Park, La Mesa's first one, as it must have been in 1916. There it was--lovely trees, a view to the west with sea and sky, a few scattered benches, a small pavilion. Next, put some people into the picture. Not the ones who live there now, in close-together houses which block out the view, but a troop of Sunday School youngsters in white robes who, along with their folks, have straggled up Mt. Nebo well before dawn on Easter Sunday. They have been singing hymns as they arrive and they settle together on what probably was wet grass, to sing again and then listen to the prayers and an Easter sermon. In 1916, according to The Scout, Howard F. Worth directed the singing and Ruth Rider accompanied on what Thelma Todd remembers as the family piano, on loan for the day. Easter Sunrise Services had begun.. and the sun came up behind the worshippers, lighting much more than the day, and living still in memory.



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Lucile Dewaide. Reporters: Eckoe Ahern and Lanette Wray.

And so, again this year, thousands have climbed Mt. Helix to wait for Planet Earth
to spin far enough around to let the Easter sun shine in. Eckoe Ahern.

Although the earlier services in Prospect Park were arranged by ladies of the Metho-
dist, Congregational, and Baptist churches, then in the new and growing La Mesa, other
churches, over the years joined in the project. Service clubs and other community organi-
zations have also supported the annual trek up the mountain, and pastors have taken turns
in delivering the awaited sermon. As high school choirs were added to the growing popu-
lation, each year has seen and heard new lovely voices raised with joy into sunny or cloudy
skies.

One of Merle Donahue's tenors, Walter Ekard, shares a memory of one of those Easter
dawns. When he arrived atop Mt. Helix, all was dark as pitch and cold. Rain fell on those
waiting as they huddled under umbrellas and blankets and newspapers. You may also re-
member how Walter sings "The Holy City. Well, fog hung low as he began to sing, but by
the time he had reached "the new Jerusalem..." the drizzle had stopped... the fog lifted...
the sun burst through a million raindrops on trees and blossoms... and Easter Day had dawned
in true splendor.

Let's look at the tradition through the eyes and heart of Merle Donahue, longtime
creator and director of Grossmont High School's Red Robe Choir. Every Easter for 18 years
she and the Red Robers sang at that dawn service. They met at Grossmont High at 3:00 a.m.
By 4:00 a.m. all were robed and warming-up their voices if not the temperature outside
the choir room. (Everybody knew if the rains came; the girls' hairdo's would fall dismally
dripping....) At 5:00 a.m., the buses departed with all the lovely sopranos and altos,
the bartones and tenors and basses. Grossmont's organ had already been trucked to the
mountain top and by that time in history, the Rotary Club had assumed sponsorship of the
Service. In 1947, for instance, Lewis F. Smith was chairman of the occasion, and also
shuttle-bus operator, as he picked up stragglers puffing from the bus terminus to the
Service area.

and then walk the last distance uphill.
somebody thought of a bus... or two or ten... and people could ride up to a certain point
with her elderly mother, for example. No matter the cold. The service was all. Then
the mountain as best they could. Hester Cole of La Mesa, remembers a trek up the hill
sun rise and to share in the beauty of the chill morning light. Early on, they climbed
People brought blankets, sometimes spending the night there to have a good spot to see the
to roomy Mt. Helix. No cross. No amphitheater. Just trees and rocks and the high sky.
climbed Mt. Nebo to participate in the rites, so the site was changed in following years
By that 1916 day, little Prospect Park was jammed with at least 1,000 people who had