



# SOUTH PASADENA PRESERVATION FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

## September 2025 Issue

Theme:

Public Elementary Schools

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## BIG CHANGES TO OUR NEWSLETTER!



We're excited to announce changes to our quarterly newsletter format, beginning with this new issue!

- Consistent design with more visuals.
- Recognition of new members and our wonderful volunteers.
- Themes that convey memorable events and individuals, along with historic buildings and sites, that represent South Pasadena's historic small-town character.
- Letters to the editor.

Why make changes?

- To share inspiring and interactive content.
- To include more historical images.
- To engage and generate participation from a broader audience.

We hope you enjoy this new format and direction! Your questions, comments, and recommendations for new content are **IMPORTANT!**

Communicate with us at: [sppfnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:sppfnewsletter@gmail.com)

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



**September 13-14:** Treasures Unlocked: South Pasadena's Attic –  
2025 Doors Open California

**September 20:** The Raymond Hill Twilight Walking Tour

**September 28:** Mission District Scavenger Hunt and Craft

**October 18:** Rialto Theater Centennial Celebration

**November 9:** Donor Appreciation Event – Open to Business & Sustaining  
Members Only

**Details** on these delightful events can be found on **Pages 4 to 8.**



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This year promises growth and new community connections for SPPF. Our team is energized and working hard behind the scenes to bring a full slate of activities and events that celebrate our local history in this charming place we all call home.

At the same time, it is important to take a moment to honor our dear friend, neighbor, and Board Member Joanne Nuckols. From its inception, Joanne was at the heart of SPPF and her passion for protecting South Pasadena was tireless. Our city would be a very different place today were it not for her. We hope to honor Joanne's legacy by doing our best to carry her work forward. In our next newsletter, we will highlight her many accomplishments and the lasting impact she made on South Pasadena.

One of the core facets of community life in South Pasadena is our schools. It is, after all, what brought many of us here in the first place. When our family's oldest child was headed to middle school, we suddenly realized our options were limited. We found ourselves in a situation where our 3 kids were headed to 3 separate charter schools scattered all across Los Angeles. Time to move.

A realtor showed us a home in San Marino and suggested that a better fit for our family might be South Pasadena. It seemed a strange thing to say at the time, but he turned out to be right. After touring South Pasadena, we loved the walkable neighborhoods, small town vibe and impressive collection of well-preserved historic buildings.

In our first year at Arroyo Vista Elementary, our son's 5th grade state float project *Arizona* nearly did us in. He bravely tackled it all by himself, covering a wheeled platform with sand, gluing a rock on top and adding the state name. Done. With a dog leash attached, he was ready to pull it into the parade.

Arriving at AV in the morning, we were gobsmacked to find other families rolling in with elaborate floats sporting ski slopes, ferris wheels and even roller coasters. Realizing he may have actually created "the worst float in the entire 5th grade" (his words not ours), our son refused to go inside. We eventually convinced him everything would be fine. Fine, right?! Fingers crossed.

Somehow, he won a prize. It was called something like *Most Authentic*, which everyone including him knew was code for *Wait, this kid actually made this float by himself!* Consolation or not, he ended up having a great day. He was so excited to meet the MAYOR (!) and came home full of energy. We definitely found the right place. Nailed it.

With our kids now graduated from SPHS, I'm honored to serve as President of SPPF this year. We hope you join us in celebrating South Pasadena's rich history and consider becoming a member to keep preservation strong in South Pasadena.

*Jenny*

## BUSINESS MEMBERS

The following entities and individuals have generously supported our work to preserve South Pasadena history for future generations:

- **Thano Adamson, Mission Tile West**
- **Cathy Billings, City of South Pasadena Public Library**
- **Kevin Bourland, Compass**
- **Tanya Christos & Greg Mallis, Twoheys Restaurant**
- **David Clark, The Shellhamer Real Estate Group**
- **Pete Kutzer, The Kutzer Company,**
- **Conrado Lopez, 2\_L Studio LLC**
- **Dina Morgan**
- **Odom & Kate Stamps, Stamps and Stamps**
- **Eric Steen**
- **Becky Thompson & Mark Smeaton, Crux Studio**
- **Derek Vaughan, South Pasadena Homes**

SPPF Venmo Donations:  
@MeridianSPPF





## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2025-2026

### President

Jenny Bright

### Vice President

#### Museum Director

Brian Bright

### Secretary

Mark Gallatin

### Vice President

#### Preservation, Outreach, and Communication

*Vacant*

### Treasurer

Odom Stamps

### Board Members

Steve Friedman

Felix Gutierrez

Richard Helgeson

Dina Morgan

Tom Polansky

Dr. Richard Schneider

Delaine Shane

Rebecca Thompson

Derek Vaughan

### Advisory Board Members

Glen Duncan

Dan Evans

Larry McGrail

**Joanne Nuckols\***

Lori Rusch

Mary Urquhart

\*SPPF mourns the passing of the incomparable Joanne Nuckols.

## TEAM MEMBERS

### Museum Archivist

Colleen Boken

### Consultant

Peggy Christ

## RENEW OR BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Join us in preserving the history and character of South Pasadena and in supporting the continuing operations of the South Pasadena Historical Museum. We can't preserve our local heritage without you! Your donation is tax-deductible.

SENIOR/STUDENT: \$25

INDIVIDUAL: \$35

HOUSEHOLD: \$50

BUSINESS: \$100

SUSTAINING: \$125



*Membership Sign Up*

Start or renew your membership today at:

<https://sppreservation.org/membership/>

Founded in 1972, the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. It is led by an all-volunteer board of directors elected from the membership.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

As the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation continues to grow, we welcome new volunteers who can bring their energy and ideas to help shape our community. If interested, please use the QR code to the right and sign up!



*Volunteers Sign Up*

## DONATIONS OF ARTIFACTS AND MATERIALS

If you think you might have something relevant to the history of our town, please let us know! As part of our collection process, proposed donations are carefully reviewed to ensure they align with the Museum's focus. We also consider whether we already have similar items in the collection and whether we have the appropriate space and resources to care for the artifacts properly. Please contact us at: [info@sppreservation.org](mailto:info@sppreservation.org).



## UPCOMING EVENTS



*Photo Archives of South Pasadena Preservation Foundation*



*Photo Archives of South Pasadena Preservation Foundation*

**September 13-14:**

### **Treasures Unlocked: South Pasadena's Attic—2025 Doors Open California**

**Time:** 11 am to 1 pm for both days **Free Admission** (Cash and/or Venmo Donations are Always Welcome)  
Venmo handle: @MeridianSPPF

**Location:** South Pasadena Historical Museum Building, 913 Meridian Avenue

**Sponsored by:** South Pasadena Preservation Foundation in partnership with the  
California Preservation Foundation

Drop into the South Pasadena Historical Museum Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup> open from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm for its inaugural membership in “Doors Open California.” This is the largest statewide celebration of historic places in California.

Enthusiasts of historic architecture, design, and cultural heritage will have access to over 75 sites across the state, (including now the South Pasadena Historical Museum!) through the California Preservation Foundation.

Operated by the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation for close to 40 years, the South Pasadena Historical Museum illuminates local history in the oldest commercial building in town (1886). The museum is easy to find at 913 Meridian by the Metro station and located in a National Register-listed local commercial district that's also ideal for a weekend stroll and a bite to eat.



SPPF Venmo: @MeridianSPPF







## UPCOMING EVENTS – continued



*Courtesy of The Southpasadenan Rick Thomas Collection*

**September 20:**

**The Raymond Hill Twilight Walking Tour**

**Time:** 4:30 pm

**Admission:** (\$15 for Non-Member Tickets; \$0 for Member Tickets) –see below

**Location:** Initially meet at Twohey's Restaurant at 424 Fair Oaks Avenue, South Pasadena; then proceed on a guided walk up Raymond Hill

**Sponsored by:** South Pasadena Preservation Foundation and Twohey's Restaurant

### ***BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!!!***

The South Pasadena Preservation Foundation and our local historians invite you for a walk in the Raymond Hill District to explore the fiery history of the Raymond Hotel and the fascinating architectural story of the resulting housing development that resides in its place today.

Twohey's Restaurant will sponsor a free ice cream kick off before the walking tour and a hilltop city-view reception will close out the event with time to mix and mingle over refreshments and light bites.



**Member:** Raymond Twilight Tour Ticket Registration (\$0):  
<https://shorturl.at/djqPo>



*SPPF Board Member Mark Gallatin in grey tee shirt telling the history of Raymond Hill in 2024 to a group of people on tour at the corner of Fair Oaks Avenue and Raymond Hill Road*

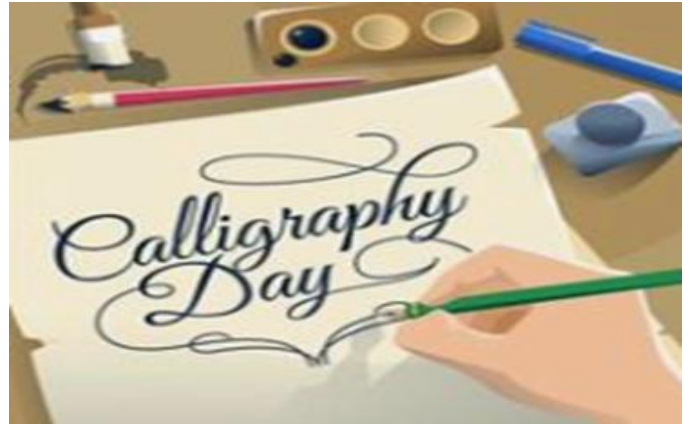


**Non-Member:** Raymond Twilight Tour Tickets - **Make a \$15 Donation and write "Raymond" in the notes:**  
<https://sppreservation.org/product/donation/>





## UPCOMING EVENTS – continued



**September 28:**

### **Mission District Scavenger Hunt and Craft**

**Time:** 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm **Free Admission** (Cash and/or Venmo Donations are Always Welcome)  
Venmo handle: @MeridianSPPF

**Location:** Begins at the South Pasadena Historical Museum Building, 913 Meridian Avenue,  
and then a short, walkable loop in the nearby historic Mission District

**Sponsored by:** South Pasadena Preservation Foundation

### *Family-Friendly Activity!!!*

Bring the kids for a family-friendly scavenger hunt through the historic Mission District. It's a short, walkable loop that begins and ends at the South Pasadena Historical Museum. The scavenger hunt will result in small prizes for the youngsters who complete the challenge.

Once inside the Museum, stop by our craft station with calligraphy coach, Jennifer Woo, where kids can create their own "vintage document" featuring their names in beautiful hand lettering. It will be a fun way to explore a slice of 19<sup>th</sup> Century life before computers, smartphones, and tablets ever existed.



SPPF Venmo: @MeridianSPPF



Inside the Museum





## UPCOMING EVENTS– continued



*Photographs of the Museum and Rialto Marquee - Courtesy of the Friends of Rialto*

### October 18<sup>th</sup>: Museum Open to the Public

#### Rialto Theater Centennial Celebration

**Time:** 3:00 pm to 9:00 pm    **Free Admission** (Cash and/or Venmo Donations are Always Welcome)  
Venmo handle: @MeridianSPPF

**Location:** South Pasadena Historical Museum Building,  
913 Meridian Avenue

**Sponsored by:** Friends of the Rialto in partnership with the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation

### Mark Your Calendars for this Special Event!

Join us in celebrating the 100-year birthday of our treasured Rialto Theater. Alongside Friends of the Rialto, we will be unveiling the all-new Rialto Theater exhibit in the South Pasadena Historical Museum and throwing a big bash during the Arts Crawl on Meridian, Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. This lively event will feature classic cars, a vaudeville stage and all things Rialto for a vintage leap back in time.

As the sun sets (around 6:30pm) a special show will be presented in the lawn just north of the museum, showcasing the wide variety of entertainment as seen on the Rialto's Stage and Screen over the last century. The Friends of the Rialto's website will be updated as artisans, vendors, and performers are confirmed: <https://www.friendsoftherialto.org/rialto100.html>. To help the Friends of the Rialto with their mission, please visit: <https://www.friendsoftherialto.org/#help>.



SPPF Venmo: @MeridianSPPF





## UPCOMING EVENTS – continued



Wynyate House circa 1950s - Courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library

**November 9:**

**Donor Appreciation Event – Business & Sustaining Members Only**

**Time:** 3 pm to 5:30 pm

**Location:** The Historic Wynyate House, South Pasadena (Private Residence)

**RSVP and Register by October 31st**

**Sponsored by:**

South Pasadena Preservation Foundation

### **Business & Sustaining Members: You are Invited to Experience History at Wynyate!**

Join us for a Sunday afternoon gathering at Wynyate, a private residence listed on the National Register of Historic Places and one of South Pasadena's most cherished historical homes.

This is a complimentary event and a rare opportunity to step back in time and explore the rich architectural and cultural heritage that defines our beloved community. Experience this unique history by:

- Touring the beautifully preserved Victorian residence.
- Discovering fascinating insights into Wynyate's legacy and South Pasadena's past.
- Enjoying a wine and cheese reception and meeting fellow preservation enthusiasts.

*SPPF provides a complimentary annual event exclusively for our Business and Sustaining Members. This is the perfect chance to support local preservation and celebrate the unique charm of our historic town!*

*Become a sustaining member (\$100) or business member (\$125) or renew your existing membership level to attend. Each member may bring 1 guest to the event. **You must RSVP and Register by October 31st.***



**Become a  
Business or  
Sustaining  
Member!**

<https://sppreservation.org/membership/>



**RSVP and  
Register  
Here by  
October 31st**



<https://shorturl.at/AV29F>





## THEME: PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS – PAST AND PRESENT



By: Delaine W. Shane

“Education is the key to success!” said my mother to my sisters and me more than once. She grew up on a Wyoming farm that her immigrant father eventually lost in the mid-1920s. She was taught in a one-room schoolhouse by one of her older sisters. Her goal and legacy were for her daughters to be educated. It happened and we became successful in our chosen career paths.

Undoubtedly, such determination is what has driven parents and other adults to enroll their school-aged kids in South Pasadena’s public elementary schools. Everyone knows that our education system has always been a draw for new families moving here.

Today, three excellent public elementary schools serve our South Pasadena youth:

- **Arroyo Vista – Go Wildcats!**
  - 2005 & 2019 National Blue Ribbon Award
  - 2023 California Distinguished School
  - 2016 California Gold Ribbon School
- **Marengo – Go Lions!**
  - 2020 National Blue Ribbon Award
  - 2009, 2023, & 2025 California Distinguished School
- **Monterey Hills – Go Roadrunners!**
  - 2019 National Blue Ribbon Award
  - 2008, 2012, 2018, 2023, & 2025 California Distinguished School
  - 2016 California Gold Ribbon School



*Photo to the left is the quarter-ton bronze bell that hung from the 1890 tower of Center Street School. It is now relocated at the South Pasadena Unified School District at 1100 El Centro Street.*

*The other three photos are the mascots for the three active elementary schools: Top-Arroyo Vista, Middle-Marengo, Bottom-Monterey Hills.*

**Enjoy reading from pages 10 through 16.**



Did you know other public elementary schools existed besides those three? And except for Monterey Hills, were you aware that the other elementary schools may have had other names and/or different locations?

If you do know these answers, then you are a long-standing resident of South Pasadena. I’m not, but our daughter did attend Arroyo Vista.

*Which elementary school did your kids, grandkids, possibly yourself, or your bestie’s kids attend?*

Drop us a line at: [sppfnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:sppfnewsletter@gmail.com).

FYI, though this issue doesn’t focus on the high school, here is a link to an excellent review of the high school’s building history by William F. Peters, SPHS Class of 1953:

<https://www.sphsaa.org/000/3/0/5/5503/userfiles/file/History%20of%20SPHS.pdf>.



## THEME: PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS – PAST AND PRESENT --continued

This article gives a brief history of public elementary schools in South Pasadena. The information is from a variety of sources such as: “South Pasadena 1888-1988: A Centennial History,” by Jane Apostol; “Images of America: South Pasadena,” by Rick Thomas; and “South Pasadena: A Century of Education: An Historical Anthology of the South Pasadena Unified School District,” by the South Pasadena Unified School District. All three publications are available at the City of South Pasadena Public Library. An online source, [www.hathitrust.org](http://www.hathitrust.org), has 1920’s bulletins of the “Southwest Builder and Contractor” that identifies the architects with the buildings planned to be built.

Information was also gathered from the South Pasadena Unified School District’s website. An online link has a document compiled by Elmer J. Erickson in 1963 entitled “History of South Pasadena Schools.” Current elementary schools’ websites were also consulted.

### South Pasadena Schoolhouse (1880s)



*South Pasadena Schoolhouse-1883-Courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library*

Private homes and simple wooden structures initially provided settings for educating South Pasadena youth in the 1870s and early 1880s.

The architect of this era, Clinton B. Ripley, designed the early wooden schoolhouses, including the South Pasadena Schoolhouse that was built on Columbia Hill, east of Orange Grove Avenue. It served approximately 50 pupils. Later, the school was sold to Sierra Madre College but eventually landed in private hands.



### Orange Grove School (1908 to circa 1918)



*Orange Grove School (formerly first Center Street School and former Lincoln Park School-circa 1910. Courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library*

This transitional Late Victorian/Craftsman-style building, designed and built by Ripley & Ridgeway, got passed around by the School District! It was the first Center Street School in 1885, then moved to Lincoln Park in 1888 to become Lincoln Park Elementary (where Arroyo Vista now stands) and was moved once again to Orange Grove in 1908 dedicated as the Boys and Girls Orphanage School. Today, an altered version of its former self (private residence) is located on Orange Grove Avenue (as seen below).



*Photo taken by Russell Shane*



## THEME: PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS – PAST AND PRESENT -- continued

### EL CENTRO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – CLOSED PERMANENTLY

**Timeframe and Names:** Center Street School (1885 – 1888; 1888 - 1903; 1903 - 1928) / El Centro Elementary School (1928 - 1979)

**Location:** For Center Street School, one-acre lot at Center Street and Oak Hill Avenue (street names changed to El Centro Street and Fairview Avenue). The 1903 version had an entrance on Mission Street that changed for El Centro Elementary School in 1928, now legally addressed as 1020 El Centro Street.

**Original Architecture:** First three buildings-wooden; 1928-arcaded brick school building

**Original Architect:** First two buildings by Ripley & Ridgeway; 1903-Norman Foote Marsh; 1928-Marsh, Smith & Powell.

**Originally Built to Serve:** Unknown

**1978-1979 Student Population:** 210 students

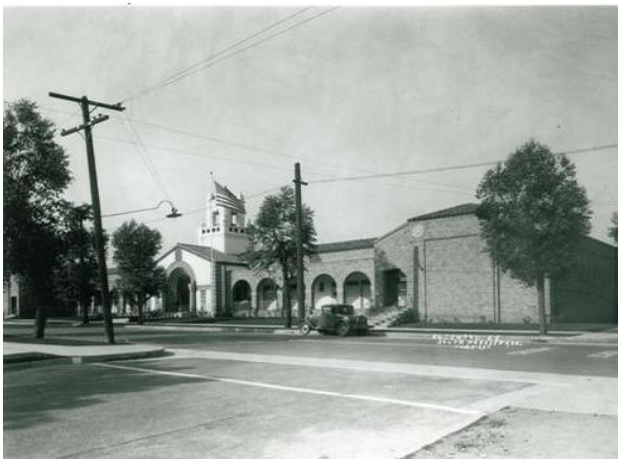
**Grades:** Kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade (In 1892, when there was no junior high school/middle school), four 8<sup>th</sup> grade students graduated from Center Street School). In 1912, 17 eighth grade students graduated.

**School Colors:** Unknown

**Mascot:** Unknown

**Notable:** The initial Center Street School was the first downtown school in South Pasadena and served other purposes beside education, including social gatherings, town meetings, and religious services. A new and improved building for the Center Street School had its first fall classes in 1888. The school continued to experience growth in student numbers and was expanded, rebuilt, and rebuilt again.

**Fun Factoid of the Past:** After the bell tower was removed due to earthquake concerns, the bronze bell was mounted on a concrete base and placed on the front lawn in 1952. This historic effort was due to the foresight of the South Pasadena Junior Chamber of Commerce. From then on, as part of the graduation, the 6<sup>th</sup> graders would march from the auditorium to the front lawn and strike the “grand old bell.”



*El Centro Elementary School – circa 1929 –  
Courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library*



*South Pasadena Unified School District – circa 2019 – Source:  
Announcement from South Pasadena Unified School District;  
Construction in 2025 underway to readapt this building as a  
commercial building for entertainment and fine dining  
experiences.*





## THEME: PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS – PAST AND PRESENT -- continued

### ARROYO VISTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**Timeframe and Names:** Lincoln Park School (circa 1908 - 1939) / Lincoln School (1939 -1979) / Arroyo Vista Elementary School (1979 - Present)

**Location:** Lincoln Park School on Center Street, east of Pasadena Avenue; Arroyo Vista Elementary: 335 El Centro Street

**Original Architecture:** 1888-transitional Late Victorian/Craftsman-style building-recycled from Center Street School as 1908 Lincoln Park; 1910 Beaux-Arts Classical-style building; Arroyo Vista = Vernacular-style

**Original Architect:** 1888-Ripley & Ridgeway

**Originally Built to Serve:** Unknown

**2023-2024 Student Population:** 698 students

**Grades:** Initially kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade; currently transitional kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. In 1912, seven eighth grade students graduated.

**School Colors:** Blue and red

**Mascot:** Lincoln Elementary School = Unicorn?     Arroyo Vista Elementary School = Wildcat

**Notable:** Lincoln Park Elementary School had the first organized Parent-Teacher Association in South Pasadena in 1911.

**Fun Factoid of the Past:** This school had the most name changes of the elementary schools in South Pasadena. The original site is itself identified as “Lincoln Park” tract. There was no Lincoln Park (as in a real park) in South Pasadena. When the old schoolhouse was moved to Orange Grove Avenue in 1908, the “new” building still retained the name “Lincoln Park.” By 1939, when it was torn down, the school dropped the park in its name to just Lincoln. Then, when El Centro closed in 1979 and its pupils were transferred to Lincoln, the current school was renamed to Arroyo Vista, which is still its name today.



*Original Lincoln Park Elementary School – circa 1910 –  
Courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library*



*2025 Photo of the Office's Entrance to Arroyo Vista  
Elementary School – Photo by Delaine Shane*



## THEME: PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS – PAST AND PRESENT -- continued

### MARENGO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**Timeframe and Names:** Marengo Avenue School (1910 - 1948) / Marengo School (1949 - Present)

**Location:** 1400 Marengo Avenue

**Original Architecture:** 1910 building was Mission-style; starting in 1949, temporary portable buildings were used, then by 1955 and later in 1985, additional vernacular-style buildings were erected creating a sprawling campus along the eastern side of Marengo Avenue.

**Original Architect:** Unknown

**Originally Built to Serve:** Unknown

**2023-2024 Student Population:** 781 students

**Grades:** Initially, kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade; currently transitional kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. In 1912, 23 eighth grade students graduated.

**School Colors:** Navy blue and white

**Mascot:** Lion; in 2022, the students personalized the Lion to Mango the Lion

**Notable:** The school and surrounding neighborhood are within the Marengo Craftsman School District.

**Fun Factoid of the Past:** One of the more famous students at Marengo Avenue School was Ward Ritchie (1905 – 1996). He was a true Renaissance man, becoming a successful printer, book designer and collector, and writer of approximately 100 books. He was associated with the "Golden Age" of fine printing during the 1920s/1930s in Southern California, as well as being part of the Artists of the Arroyo Seco community. In his later years, Ward and an old college classmate developed a close relationship and inspired her to design her own handprinted books. Her name was Gloria Stuart, a Golden Age actor, who made a tremendous comeback by starring in the movie, *Titanic*, as the elderly Rose in 1997.



Original Marengo Avenue School-1920-Courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library



2025 Photo of the Office's Entrance to Marengo Elementary School – Photo by Delaine Shane



## THEME: PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS – PAST AND PRESENT -- continued

### ONEONTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – CLOSED PERMANENTLY

**Timeframe:** 1921 - 1983

**Location:** 1955 Fremont Avenue

**Original Architecture:** One-story brick school building

**Original Architect:** Hudson & Munsell, Architects (Partnerships) (An interesting side note, these men designed several distinguished commercial, institutional, and residential buildings in the Los Angeles area including the 1913 Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.)

**Originally Built to Serve:** Unknown

**1982 - 1983 Student Population:** 320 students

**Grades:** Kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade

**School Colors:** Unknown

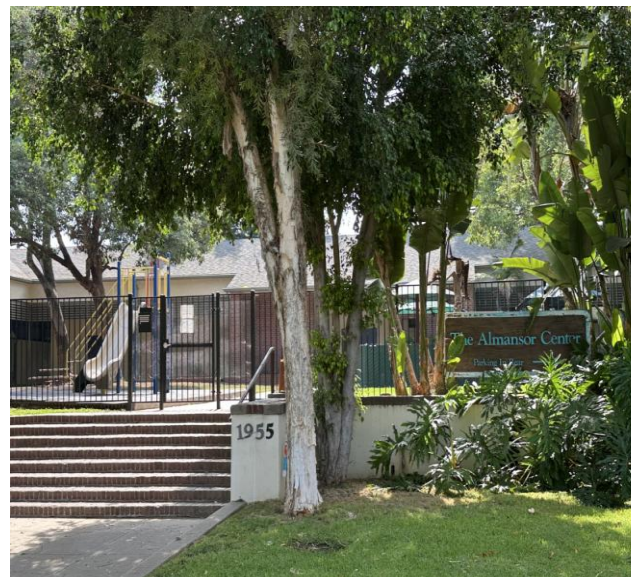
**Mascot:** Unknown – maybe Eagle?

**Notable:** Parents were extremely active in volunteering for Oneonta's Early Childhood Education Program. Administrators with the State of California's Department of Education in 1974 were greatly impressed that this program, the first in South Pasadena, was an excellent role model of its kind.

**Fun Factoid of the Past:** The Henry E. Huntington (railroad magnate and art collector) sold a 4 ½-acre property to the City that would be the site of the Oneonta Elementary School. According to the historian, Jane Apostol in her book on South Pasadena (page 213): "The electorate voted bonds for the school and also for a pedestrian tunnel under Huntington Drive and the four PE trolley tracks. At the ground-breaking for the tunnel, kindergartners from Oneonta School each dug a tiny shovelful of dirt."



*Oneonta Elementary School-1928-Courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library*



*2025 Photo of the Entrance to the Former Oneonta now a private school- The Almansor Center – Photo by Russell Shane*





## THEME: PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS – PAST AND PRESENT -- continued

### LAS FLORES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – CLOSED PERMANENTLY

**Timeframes:** 1924 – 1950; Los Flores Primary Unit, 1955 – 1981. The old schoolhouse was used as an education center from 1955 to 1977. In 1981, South Pasadena Unified School District sold the building and property, which became the site for condominiums.

**Original Location:** 512 Garfield Avenue near the historic Adobe Flores; after 1950, new classrooms were built on the school's playground in 1955 (with the address as 1815 Hardison Street).

**Original Architecture:** One-story brick school building

**Original Architect:** Hudson & Munsell, Architects (Partnerships)

**Originally Built to Serve:** Unknown

**1950 Student Population:** ~140 students

**Grades:** Kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade then to Marengo Elementary

**School Colors:** Unknown

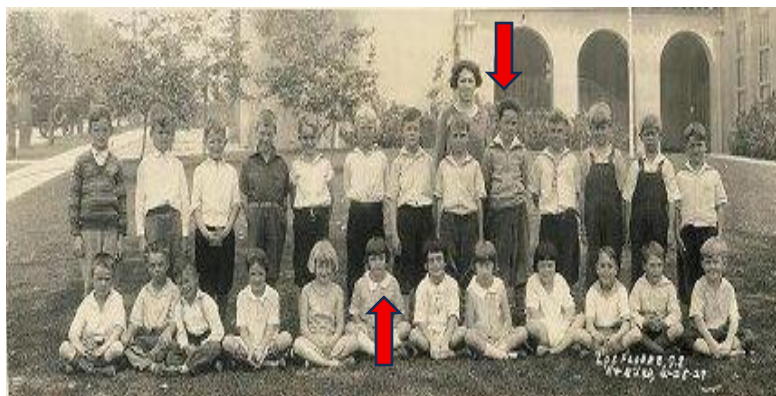
**Mascot:** Unknown

**Notable:** Before its grand opening, Las Flores Elementary School was “baptized” on August 31, 1924, with the failure of the newly built City of South Pasadena’s Garfield Avenue Reservoir on Raymond Hill. The reservoir caused major flooding damage to the school and to nearby homes. The end of the school came in 1950, when it was deemed to be unsafe due to its proximity above the Raymond Earthquake Fault. It appears “Mother Nature” was not kind to Las Flores.

**Touching Factoid of the Past:** Saving the original school was the unifying outcry of parents whose children were attending Las Flores in 1950. Over 500 individuals petitioned for the school to remain open with the children sending to the School Board \$19.56 (in today’s dollars, \$261.80) to help make the old schoolhouse earthquake proof. The School Board was not persuaded by these actions and voted to close the school.



*Las Flores School-Courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library*



*Las Flores Student Class Group Photo-1927-Photo Archives of South Pasadena Preservation Foundation*

**Special Note:** Notice the two red arrows in the right photo? These young children, Jeanne Miller and Charles Lloyd Fuller, were destined to be soulmates though they did not know that at the time. Years later, they married and today their adult daughter, Lori Fuller Rusch, is one of our SPPF Advisory Board Members!



## THEME: PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS – PAST AND PRESENT -- continued

### MONTEREY HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**Timeframe:** Fall of 1967- Present

**Location:** 1624 Via Del Rey in the Altos de Monterey area

**Original Architecture:** Midcentury Moderne Vernacular-style

**Original Architectural Firm:** Lee B. Kline, Inc.

**Originally Built to Serve:** 450 students (274 students first attended);

**2023-2024 Student Population:** 584 students

**Grades:** Originally kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade; currently transitional kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade

**School Colors:** Green and Yellow

**Mascot:** Roadrunner

**Notable:** “Most recent” and “smallest” modern school built by SPUSD

**Fun Factoid of the Past:** For the first promotion at Monterey Hills, a refurbished handbell was rung by each 6<sup>th</sup> grader as a farewell gesture. That vintage instrument was the original 1883 handbell from the first school (Columbia Hill Schoolhouse). In that earlier era, the handbell was rung by the teacher to call the children to their classrooms. Now, it was ushering the young students onward to (at that time) South Pasadena Junior High School. The gesture became a tradition during 6<sup>th</sup> grade promotion at Monterey Hills Elementary School; however, this tradition eventually ended.



*Construction of Monterey Hills 1967-Courtesy of the South Pasadena Public Library*



*Monterey Hills Elementary School-2025-Photo taken by Delaine Shane*



## MUSEUM NEWS



*Photo Archives of South Pasadena Preservation Foundation*

By Colleen Boken  
Museum Archivist

## SCHOOL TOURS AT THE MUSEUM

Educating the youth of South Pasadena has long been something that the Museum has participated in directly and indirectly, given our role as the guardians of the historical record. Since early on in the history of the Preservation Foundation there has been an emphasis on being able to share the story of South Pasadena.

Along with the obvious value of having the museum open, we have records that demonstrate a strong youth connection to an interest in the history of South Pasadena. Whether that has been with the many newspaper articles that have highlighted the roles in which docents such as the late Bill Hillard inspired young people to get interested in history, to a history of high school volunteers or in the wide range of events that the foundation has put on, with young people even being involved with the successful No on 710 fight.

**Article continues onto the next page and ends at the bottom of Page 19.**

### **Location:**

South Pasadena Historical Museum  
913 Meridian Avenue  
South Pasadena, CA 91030

### **Museum Open to the Public – Free Admission:**

Thursdays: 4:00 pm to 7:45 pm  
Select Saturdays: 11:00 am to 1:00 pm  
Special Events and by Appointment  
Appointment Scheduling: 626-833-5310

### **For More Information, Contact:**

Brian Bright, Museum Director  
Colleen Boken, Museum Archivist  
626-833-5310  
[info@sppreservation.org](mailto:info@sppreservation.org)



*SPPF Board Member & Board Secretary Mark Gallatin answers questions from visitor on the first floor of the museum*





## MUSEUM NEWS -- continued

In 2024, after much discussion and planning, SPPF restarted a long history of doing tours of the Museum for Marengo Elementary School. These were included as a part of the 4th grade curriculum, which includes a focus on local history and understanding a history of the place that these kids are growing up in. The kids were excited about all of the things on display thanks in large part to the teachers preparing them so well to be active participants, as well as the connections to the present that the students are able to make on their own.

The three most common questions we get relate to various aspects of the overall mission of the museum.

The first most commonly asked question is, naturally, about the ostriches and why South Pasadena had an Ostrich Farm to begin with. Fashion played a huge role in the development of the farm, as the feathers were extremely popular in fashion. It became significantly cheaper to raise the ostriches here in Southern California for export throughout the United States, with four showrooms in major cities to boot. The Ostrich farm, while starting as simply a place to raise these ostriches, became a tourist attraction in of itself.

Further bird questions tend to follow, such as "Why do we have wild parrots here?" And while it would be nice to have a simple answer, the real answer is "It depends on who you ask." The most common story that seems to be the most believable is that around 1959 a fire at Simpson's Garden Town Nursery caused the owners to release all of the birds in an effort to save them, though other stories date the Parrots to Busch Gardens. Whatever the case was it turned out that there was plenty of food and no real natural predators so the Red Crowned Amazonians were able to thrive and multiply, creating the flocks one sees today

The final question is more often than not related to the story of South Pasadena's transit history. For many kids whose experience with trains might be limited to Thomas the Tank engine or a visit to Travel Town, hearing that they could at one point hop on a train in South Pasadena and travel directly to Chicago, or that there were once streetcars that ran down the length of Mission Street as for them the closest they could get to seeing that would be the modern day LA Metro Rail.



*Third grade Marengo students with their chaperones and museum volunteers*

The Museum and its ability to lead quality tours for the schools of South Pasadena will only grow with time, and it is hoped that in future all students of every elementary school in South Pasadena will also get the chance to take a field trip to their hometown museum. Specifically, we hope that we will soon be able to include Arroyo Vista and Monterey Hills Elementary in exploring the museum as a part of a local field trip, while still welcoming students of all ages at the museum during our many open hours.



## GUEST WRITER

By Scott Christ,  
graduated from Marengo in 5th grade, June 1995

### MAY DANCE MEMORIES AT MARENGO



Photo taken by Delaine Shane

Over 30 years ago, I was a student at Marengo Elementary in the early 1990s. Looking back, one of the most memorable traditions was the annual May Dance. The May Dance transformed Marengo's expansive blacktop playground into a celebration of springtime, performance art, and school community.

Each grade performed a different dance, creating a joyful morning festival that brought together students, teachers, and parents. I remember kindergartners doing *Der Entertanz*—better known as the Chicken Dance—and other performances like line-dancing to “Achy Breaky Heart” or circling to the Boogie Walk. In fourth grade, my class performed *Tinikling*, a traditional Philippine folk dance using bamboo poles clapped together on wooden planks. But the highlight was always the Maypole Dance, reserved for the fifth graders. It was a rite of passage—just as it had been for children in European villages centuries ago.

Beyond the May Dance, I have many fond memories of my time at Marengo. I hope these recollections stir similar memories for others who were part of the school community during that era.



### MUSEUM NEWS – continued:



Photo Archives of South Pasadena Preservation Foundation

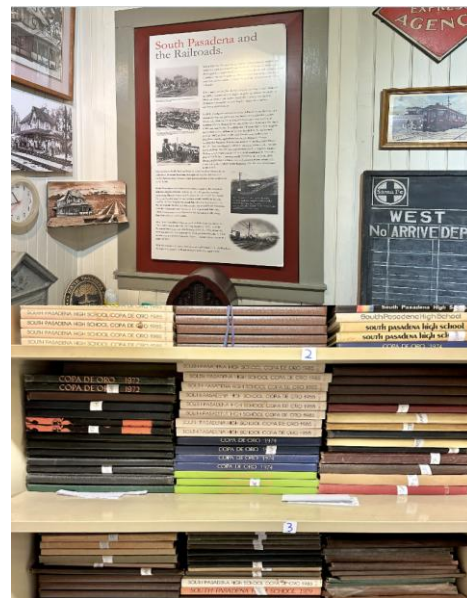


Photo Archives of South Pasadena Preservation Foundation

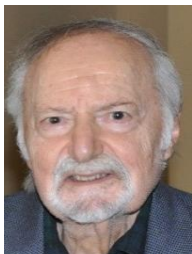
Photo to the left displays vintage outfits worn previously by South Pasadena High School cheerleaders (Tigerettes) and flag twirlers.

Photo to the right displays the numerous past editions of the South Pasadena High School yearbook, Copa de Oro.



## 2025 RAYMOND GIRVIGIAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD: THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF SOUTH PASADENA

By: South Pasadena Preservation Foundation (Jennifer Trotoux, Mark Gallatin, Delaine Shane)  
and  
The Woman's Club of South Pasadena (Liz Calvert, Nichole Dunville)



*Raymond Girvigian,  
FAIA*

*(1926 - 2022)*

*Photo Courtesy of Michael Girvigian*

Ray Girvigian was a South Pasadena architect who was known for his significant leadership role in historic preservation in California.

You can read about his remarkable life's journey in *The South Pasadenan*:  
<https://southpasadenan.com/obituary-raymond-ray-girvigian/>.

His energy, expertise, and deep knowledge were instrumental in the formation of local historic preservation ordinances and the recognition of the state capitol building as a significant historic monument.

As a founding board member and lifelong friend to our organization, Ray Girvigian was at the heart of the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation during his tenure.



*Photo Courtesy of Michael Girvigian*

After his passing, the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation created an award memorial to Ray by giving recognition to worthy and exceptional South Pasadena rehabilitation or restoration projects. This award is not presented annually, making it that more special to receive.

**Article continues on pages 21 through 24.**





## 2025 RAYMOND GIRVIGIAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD: THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF SOUTH PASADENA -- continued



*Left to Right: SPPF President Jennifer Trotoux; The Woman's Club: President Liz Calvert, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President and Project Manager Nichole Dunville, and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Claire Collins*

On June 26, 2025, the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation presented its first Raymond Girvigian Historic Preservation Award to the Woman's Club of South Pasadena for its building restoration at 1424 Fremont Avenue.

The clubhouse is an architecturally significant building in South Pasadena, and therefore, it is essential to preserve this significant historical resource to continue the Woman's Club activities and philanthropy, as well as function as a community space (i.e., rental venue).



## 2025 RAYMOND GIRVIGIAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD:

### THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF SOUTH PASADENA – continued

This project met the award's criteria:

- Complies with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation,
- Represents a model preservation project or contributes to the profile and importance of historic preservation, and
- Demonstrates meaningful public educational or interpretive benefit regarding the character and/or natural history of South Pasadena.

The Woman's Clubhouse of South Pasadena was designed in the Chalet Craftsman style by Architect, Norman Foote Marsh in the early 20th century. The building was completed in 1913. After World War II, during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the ladies of the club were impressed with the "modern look" of expansive white. They remodeled the interior, painting all the rooms in glossy white. An interior heating system was added, rendering the fireplace a decorative fixture. The ladies must have been influenced by the "country look" as they also painted the fireplace bricks white, edging it with an undulating wooden trim popular at the time. They changed interior walls to hide craftsman features and added white light fixtures. The remodeling focused primarily on the interior.



For the most recent 50 years, members of the community will recall the unpainted, peeling wooden shingles and the holes in the bricks edging the exterior of the once lovely building.

Club members also were concerned about the condition of the building. Shortly before Covid Closures, a lovely member of our club, Lynn Cathcart, passed away leaving a large sum of money to the club for needed improvements.

Early in 2022, the members decided the club house repair and restoration had to be the primary focus. The initial step involved conducting a thorough inspection of the building to assess its condition. This assessment prioritized the necessary work in three phases. Initially the focus was on exterior work to protect and preserve the building, followed by making the building accessible with a concrete ramp and ADA-compliant bathroom. Currently, the interior work includes updating electrical systems, repairing plaster, restoring or replacing wood trims, painting, and upgrading lighting.

Teamwork has been key to the success of this restoration effort. The painting contractor was Sam Garcia, owner of Casablanca Painting with his fantastic crew! Lights were purchased from Revival Antiques, with design help from owner Marie Gauthier. The electrician was CSG Electric, Inc. including company owner Cirino Reyes and son Giovanni Reyes and daughter Susana Reyes. Rebecca Hansen of Rebecca Hansen Design helped with some design choices including wallpaper. All of this happened under the watchful eyes of President Liz Calvert and Project Manager (3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President) Nichole Dunville with guidance and insights into decisions from the House Committee and Board of Directors, including Board Secretary Judy Rivera, Treasurer Jessica Mockler, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Claire Collins and Federation Secretary Sherry Plotkin.





## 2025 RAYMOND GIRVIGIAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD: THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF SOUTH PASADENA – continued

### BEFORE RESTORATION

#### Exterior



### AFTER RESTORATION

#### Exterior



2022-2024 The Woman's Club Board of Directors, from left to right: Liz Calvert, Claire Hervey Collins, Erica Goodrich, Nichole Fisk Dunville, Judy Harding Rivera, Diane Crum, Patricia Hong-Rodak, and Sherry Plotkin





## 2025 RAYMOND GIRVIGIAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD:

### THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF SOUTH PASADENA – continued

#### **AFTER RESTORATION: *Interior -- A Restored Beauty***



#### **BEFORE RESTORATION: *Interior Reconstruction***



*All photos in this article, except for the photographs of Ray Girvigian, are courtesy of The Woman's Club of South Pasadena*



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Our organization follows draft local and state laws. Our focus is to determine whether potential laws, if approved, will impact our city's historic resources. The State Legislature is now proposing Senate Bill 79 that could have negative outcomes for our City's historic buildings. In addition, this planning proposal may indirectly lead to overcrowding of school rooms, unless the School District is able to forecast and plan for the additional housing. Below is the letter we sent to the California State Legislature.

For a discussion on Senate Bill 79, see: [https://calmatters.digitaldemocracy.org/bills/ca\\_202520260sb79](https://calmatters.digitaldemocracy.org/bills/ca_202520260sb79)



South Pasadena Preservation Foundation  
913 Meridian Ave.  
South Pasadena, CA 91030

June 24, 2025

California State Assembly  
Housing and Community Development Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 156  
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Opposition to Senate Bill 79

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

The South Pasadena Preservation Foundation wishes to register our opposition to Senate Bill 79 (Weiner) that is coming before your committee. SB 79 does not contain any exceptions for federal, state and local historic resources or historic districts. The bill presents a grave threat to communities like South Pasadena, a city in which over one third of all properties are identified as historic resources. Furthermore, this bill represents a major usurpation of the authority of local jurisdictions to thoughtfully plan for more housing in ways that protect and preserve the character of their built environments.

South Pasadena has worked with very closely and very diligently in good faith with the California Department of Housing and Community Development for the past six years to develop a compliant housing element and is in the process of implementing strategic increases in allowable densities and building heights in those areas of the city that are best suited for them, including many areas in close proximity to existing and planned Tier 2 transit-oriented development stops. We urge you to oppose this well-meaning but misguided piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jennifer Trotoux".

Jennifer Trotoux  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark Gallatin".

Mark Gallatin, AICP  
Treasurer



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We invite our readership to send in letters and emails with questions and comments on the museum holdings, our foundation, and/or the architecture, history, or character of South Pasadena. Let us know your thoughts: [sppfnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:sppfnewsletter@gmail.com).

### EL CENTRO SCHOOL MYSTERY

Hi Newsies!

The El Centro School had two sculptures by Merrill Gage (renowned Professor of Art at USC). They were of a seated school age girl and boy, and they were perched on top of columns. There is a picture of a May Day dance [called the Lands of Friendship] and in the distance you get a hint of the placement.



*Lands of Friendship at El Centro School –  
Courtesy of South Pasadena Public Library*



*Enlargement of the Sculptures - Courtesy of the  
South Pasadena Public Library*

When the school was remodeled in the 1950s, they were long gone!

Where did they [the sculptures] go? Are they in “your grandmother's back yard?” Do you have a family photo with the sculptures in the background?

--From Lori Fuller Rusch, Art History Lecturer, California State University Los Angeles



Just for fun, we conducted an informal poll with the Board of Directors, Advisory Board Members, Museum Archivist, and Consultant. We asked them if any family members attended South Pasadena public elementary schools, and if so, name the school(s). Out of the 20 individuals polled, 14 had relatives (parents, uncles, children, or grandchildren) attend(ed) one or more of the schools:

- Arroyo Vista            19 students
- El Centro                2 students
- Los Flores              3 students
- Marengo                15 students
- Monterey Hills        2 student
- Oneonta                 2 students

In total, 43 students related to our volunteer board and team had the opportunity to attend our public elementary schools over many decades! What about your family? Let us know.





**SOUTH PASADENA  
PRESERVATION  
FOUNDATION**

913 Meridian Avenue  
South Pasadena, CA 91030

**Sustaining Members**

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Charley Lu  
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Carrie Miller  
Therese & Mario Molina  
Lisa Padilla & Greg Hise  
Helen Pekny  
Bianca Richards  
John Ripley  
Richard Schneider  
Eric Steen  
Jennifer Trotoux  
Mary Urquhart  
Lin & Alan Vlacich

**Lifetime Membership Circle**

Brian Bright  
Jenny Bright  
Jeffrey Burke & Lorraine Triolo  
Jim Christ  
Kelly Christ

**ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP LIST**

Thank you to our renewing members! Without your support, the South Pasadena Preservation Foundation could not exist.

**Lifetime Membership Circle-cont.**

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Peter Christ  
Richard Christ  
Scott Christ  
Katie Clark & Jamie Bock  
Patrick Conn  
Bill & Diane Cullinane  
Lori & Grant Davis-Denny  
Michele Downing  
Glen Duncan  
Evans, Daniel  
Feldman, Scott  
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Mark Gallatin  
Michael Girvigian  
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Clementine Muchnick  
Kelly Muchnick  
Pepper Muchnick  
Lisa Padilla & Greg Hise  
Helen Pekny  
Victor & Gretchen Robinette  
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*Member List Compiled by Peggy Christ*