

## MAR VISTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Meeting Minutes -June 23, 2005

ATTENDANCE: Nadine Gallegos, Hal and Cicely Golden, Linda Guagliano, Bill and Madelyn Hahn, Glen and Nancy Howell, Dorothy

Nichols, Marie Wallace

HOST: Hal and Cicely Golden

PRESIDING: Hal Golden

Hal Golden called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. and the following business was conducted: A motion was made by Linda G., seconded by Marie W., to approve the minutes of the previous, May 12, 2005, meeting and it was carried by a unanimous vote. The MVHS first public event, Glen Howell's talk on Mar Vista water at the Venice Library on June 15th, was deemed a success and Glen was applauded by the group for a job very well done. The turnout was good, with people attending from various areas, not just locals. The audience question portion of the program was lively and interesting. Marie W. stated that the fund for reimbursements is now \$40.00. After discussion, \$10 was given to Nancy H. to pay for flyers she had printed, and \$5 went to Glen for the blowups he had made at Kinko's for charts he used in the presentation, leaving \$25 for future events. Other locales could be used for future events, because using the library means the premises must be vacated by 8:00 p.m. when the library closes and the event must start around 6:30 p.m., not a convenient time to attend for people who work until 5 p.m. or later. Alternative locations (some may charge a fee) include the Lutheran Church on National Blvd., where the MVCC had an event a few months ago; and Nancy H. reported that the SMC Bundy Campus has a community room set to open July 1st, though the parking lot is presently not complete and is able to accommodate only a small number of cars. However, it was felt that since SMC may be eager to please their new Mar Vista neighbors, they might be happy to have us use their community room.

Dorothy Nichols reported on the progress being made for preservation of the Westdale Village Courtyard Apartments. She has done considerable research. The apartment buildings were part of the original architectural plan for Westdale Village, meant to blend with the single family dwellings and look like the houses. Dorothy has been working with Amanda Seward on the Application for Historical Cultural Monument, which must be filed shortly. Dorothy researched Paul Trousdale's life via his death certificate and found data leading her to his daughter, who lives in Carmel, who was delighted to be interviewed and had not been aware of the impending destruction of her father's work. The daughter gave Dorothy a lot of information that backed up the arguments in the preservation document. The history was that Trousdale asked President Franklin D. Roosevelt to back him with the FHA in building homes for returning WWII Vets, and FDR did.

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Westdale village was Trousdale's first community concept –he wanted to build not just homes but complete communities. In 1946, TIME magazine ran an article about Trousdale's work and the Bank of America loans, which backed it. Los Angeles wanted 40,000 new postwar homes, and during the postwar building frenzy, Paul Trousdale decided to build the 4-plexes to match the houses. The CC&R's specified that these buildings were to remain one-story with lawns, to make them look like the houses in the same tract. Dorothy concluded her report by asking that the MVHS be put on the Application as the "supporting organization." Discussion followed as to whether the MVHS is actually an organization and therefore able to give support as such. Bill H. suggested simply stating that the MVHS supports the application and if there are any questions from the reviewers of the application, it will be explained that the MVHS is a Mar Vista group sponsored by the Mar Vista Community Council. The Application must be completed and filed soon because the developer is invoking the Ellis Act to justify tearing down the Courtyard properties he has so far purchased --now seven of the original 19 buildings. Nancy H. suggested we commend Dorothy for all her hard work. Marie W. made a motion, seconded by Glen and unanimously passed, that Dorothy may use the MVHS as the organization supporting the Application. Dorothy and Glen then briefly discussed Paul Howard, the Stevens Ranch, and the Trousdale history. Glen Howell gave a talk about Malibu Creek tonight at 6:30 p.m. on Ch. 28's Life and Times program. The subject of the program was whether or not the Malibu Creek Dam,uilt by the Rindge family many years ago,should be torn down. Proponents argue that the steelhead trout population would increase if the Creek water flow was not blocked by the dam because it would encourage the fish to migrate further upstream to spawn; those opposed say that the stream is so polluted now from treatment plants, golf courses, homes (Malibu has no sewage system) and other sources that it is not worth the years of work and the expense to tear down the dam because there may still be natural barriers to upstream migration after the dam is gone. Discussion was had at the meeting about the dam being almost invisible except from above on Piuma Rd., near the tunnel that once displayed the infamous "Pink Lady" painting; about the "cliff jumpers" who jump off the 90-ft. dam for thrills; and the fact that L.A.'s Hyperion sewage treatment plant pollutes the ocean even though it dumps its effluent 5 miles out.

Glen H. told a story. He said the Mar Vista water history got him looking into other early people in the area. Land grants in the early 1800s were to Mexican "transplants" living in So. Calif. The first American to own Rancho Ballona land (3 grants) was Benjamin Wilson (Mt. Wilson bears his name). He was from Mississippi and spoke Spanish and several Indian dialects.

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Wilson was the first elected L.A. mayor and owned Westwood, West L.A. and Cheviot Hills. Two Talamontes and two Machado men owned the Rancho in common. One of the Talamontes men who owned a ¼ share needed money, got a loan at 5% per month interest, couldn't pay, and the land was auctioned; Wilson bought it in 1857 for \$2,000 and sold it a year later for \$5,500 to a Mr. Young. In 1868, Young sued 23 Machado and Talamontes family members in the Rancho Ballona Partition to determine the actual boundaries of his property --the four in-common owners had never delineated the boundaries. At that time there were four classes of Rancho land: 1st, next to Ballona Creek; 2nd, next to 1st class; 3rd, what is now worst of Mar Vista; and 4th {worst} on the beach. During the Civil War, Camp Latham was established in Culver City on Ballona Creek to forestall the possibility of Union troops invading Los Angeles from Catalina Island. A man named Mesmer, formerly from back east, had a bakery in downtown L.A. and provided bread for the army camp. Mesmer owned marshland property and intended to build a harbor. His name is memorialized on a street in Culver City --Mesmer Avenue.

Next Meeting: Thursday, July 21, 5005, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Host: Glen and Nancy Howell, 12607 Rose Avenue, Mar Vista.

Glen Howell will preside at the July 21st meeting and Dorothy Nichols will take the minutes of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Linda Guagliano  
Recording Secretary, Pro Tem