



# OUR CORNERSTONE

Volume XI Issue IV November/December 2006

## PAT SAMSON (1932-2006) HPHT FOUNDING MEMBER

Highland Park Heritage Trust Treasurer and long time board member passed away on October 18<sup>th</sup>, leaving a wonderful legacy and a void that will be impossible to fill.

Patricia Ann Rogers was born on January 27, 1932, in Hawthorne, California, where she spent her early years on her family's goat farm. She graduated from Leuzinger High School in 1948 and moved Rock Springs, Wyoming with her first husband, Dale Dodge, a railroad man, who she married in 1949. When Pat learned she was expecting a baby, she insisted that their child be born in a more "civilized" area. After the birth of their son, Dale, in Salt Lake City, Utah, the family came back to California and moved to Downey. The marriage ultimately ended in divorce.

She married Roy Samson in 1961 and the couple bought a home on Mount Washington in April of 1975, after Pat was drawn there by her love of the

writing of Los Angeles Times columnist, Jack Smith.

The house was a ram-



Pat Samson

shackle late Victorian structure that has previously been occupied by a rock band who had painted some of the interior walls red and black. Roy, a plumber by trade, soon began working on the house, fixing walls and redoing all of the worn out plumbing and electrical systems.

In 1980, Pat joined a task force for the Highland Park Improvement Association that was created to conduct

the first comprehensive Historical Resources Survey of the Highland Park, Mount Washington and Garvanza area. After the survey was completed, the task force became the nucleus for the formation of the Highland Park Heritage Trust in 1982.

Pat was one of the first board members and was to remain on the board for the next 24 years, doing the jobs as Secretary and Treasurer. She never opted to become HPHT president, but her tireless dedication and behind the scenes work was the main support of the young Trust, as she saw to it that the books were kept

straight and all papers were properly filed. She saw to it that the HPHT got its tax exempt 501C3 status and that the proper permits were in place with the City for HPHT functions.

Pat also typed up most of the early HPHT Historic Cultural Monument nominations, starting in 1984 with the nomination of the Northeast Police Station, which had been slated for demolition

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Anne Marie Wozniak,  
Highland Park Heritage Trust  
President

A chill is in the air, we have “fallen back” and before we know it will be Christmas. The year is also winding down for the HPHT.

We had two successful program events starting with a presentation at the Southwest Museum, which featured two representatives of the Gabrieleño-Tongva tribe. Barbara Drake and Julia Bogany shared glimpses of their history and also exhibited some remarkable artifacts that were used on a daily basis in their villages in and around Los Angeles. They also discussed Heritage Park, in Santa Fe Springs, which features an authentic Gabrieleño-Tongva village.

Author, Don Newton also share with the audience his extensive research at the Southwest Museum Braun Library, which ultimately led to his book, “The Beginning of the World”.

The second program was held in the Judson Studios Gallery, which was a very fitting place to show the “Saga of Weatherwolde

Castle.” The 1928 vintage castle was saved from the jaws of development due to the tenacity and determination of the residents of Tujunga and the “Little Landers Historical Society”. The presentation was to be given by Mary Lou Pozzo, who was the main proponent of the Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument application, but she was under the weather and it was done by the HPHT’s own Charlie Fisher, who had helped with the monument advocacy and later wrote a Mills Act for the new buyer who had wrested it away from the developer.

Our 24<sup>th</sup> annual awards ceremony was a smashing success. Six homes and the Hermon Community sign were presented with awards. Following a slide presentation of the award winners was a “Preservation Primer,” presented by Janelle McGlothlin, Charly Kemp and John Arroyo, which was loaded with information on how navigate the maze of City preservation resources from Cultural Heritage Monuments to the financial benefits of the Mills Act. It went over the “nuts and bolts” of doing research. It also focused on a number of handouts including some from the Getty Museum which made for a very informative program.

The end of June featured an old fashioned ice cream social complete with hot dogs. It was a real success and sitting in Troy Evans and Heather McLarty’s back yard at the historic Hiner House was well worth the price of admission.

One of the final events of the year was the October rummage sale, which was also at the Hiner

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#### Editor

Charles Fisher

#### Layout & Design

Donnette Thayer

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arroyoseco@hotmail.com or mail to: 140

S. Avenue 57, Los Angeles, CA 90042

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Advertisements will be accepted for this publication from advertisers who are in keeping with the intention and goals of this organization. Contact Pat Samson for submission and rate information.

### HPHT Kiosk\*

#### Videos

**The House That Moved Twice (\$14.95)**

**The Lure & Legacy of the Lower**

**Arroyo Seco (\$19.95)**

#### Books

**The Five Friendly Valleys: The Story of Greater Highland Park (\$5.95)**

**Los Angeles County Route 66 Guide**

by Scott Piotrowski (\$18.95)

#### Street Banners

That hung on Figueroa Blvd. (\$50.00 each)

\* All proceeds benefit the HPHT. Orders may be picked up at the monthly meeting or shipped for an additional \$4.00 donation.

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## PAT SAMSON REMEMBERED (CONTINUED)

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and is now the home of the Los Angeles Police Department Museum.

Pat also found time to serve as the historian for the Mount Washington Association as well as to edit that organization's bulletin. She dug up many historic items about the hill and placed articles in that publication. Several years ago, she took over the editing of HPHT's "Our Cornerstone" and saw to it that the publication was both interesting and issued in a timely manner.

As editor, Pat could be a hard task master, demanding the promised stories get in by the deadline and writing many, herself, to fill any gaps. Her knowledge of local history made that task much easier. Pat also organized several excursions for the HPHT members to other areas.

She designed and produced many of the HPHT cards and notices that went out for events over the years. Pat and Roy also found and utilized discarded materials for the use of the HPHT. The panels that are used for displaying photos were discarded office partitions that they found. Roy made the posts that support the panels when they are standing up on display.

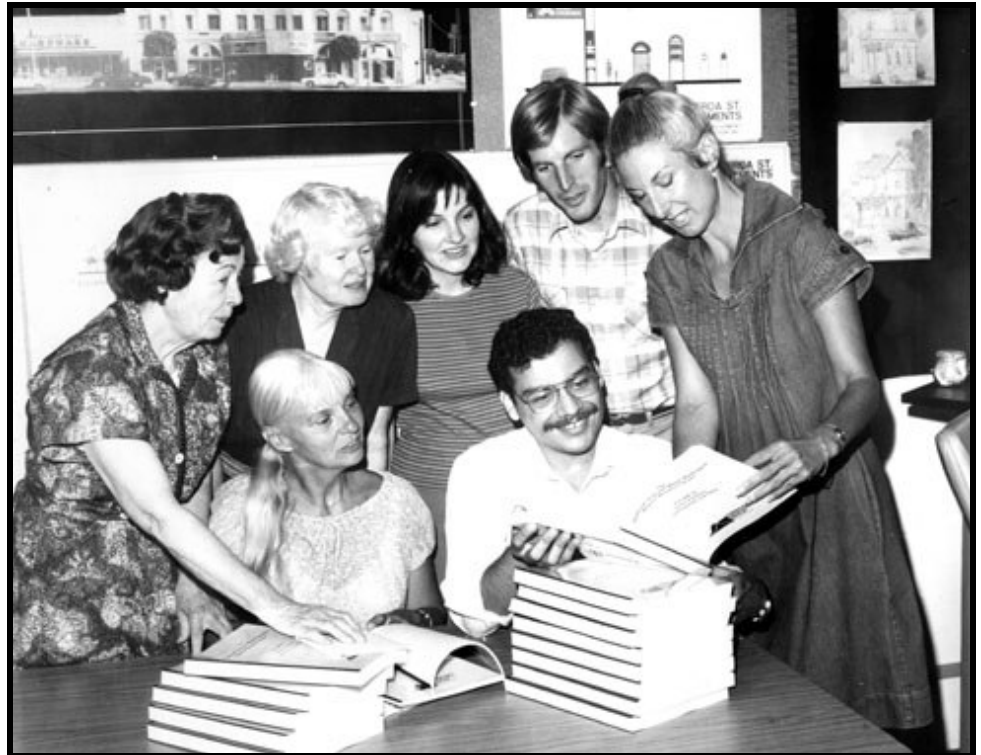
Both Pat and Roy also enjoyed sailing and square dancing, spending as much time as possible doing both. After Roy's death on November 9, 1994, Pat continued with square dancing up until her illness set in this past August.

She was known by all for her bright attitude and her wry sense

of humor and she is missed by all who called her friend. She will

to be contagious.

Besides her son Dale, Pat is



**HPIA Historical Task Force, 1981, LtoR seated: Pat Samson, Martin Olivera; standing: Mary Jones, Caroline Deuerling, Renee Kesler, unidentified man, Diana Barnwell (photo by Joe Friezer)**

always be remembered for her long pony tail and her fun stories. She could take the most adverse situation and make light of it, such as the time she flipped her Volvo P1800 on the Pasadena Freeway. She had it repaired but never got around to repainting it, leaving the blue car with a red roof to the present day. After all, it gave her one more thing to laugh and talk about.

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, a tribute to Pat was held at the Eagle Rock Cultural Center, where she had also put in time organizing historic records. Over 100 people came to celebrate the life of a true friend, whose fun outlook tended

survived by her stepdaughter, Linda Gagnon and several grandchildren.



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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER (continued)

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*(Continued from page 2)*

House. It was amazing how much we were able to save up after only a year. It was another very successful fund raiser.

However, the Sun has set on a chapter of HPHT history with the passing of our long-time treasurer, Pat Samson, who died on October 18th. Pat was one of the original members of the Highland Park Improvement Association's Historic Resources Task Force, which

had evolved into the HPHT by 1982. As a charter HPHT member, she also served on the board for 24 years. Pat was also active in the Mt Washington Association and was their historian.

She was one of the anchors of the HPHT and will be sorely missed. Pat was also a friend of many of our members and a definite emptiness is being felt.

Pat's love of history and preservation prompted her to take on

the additional task of editing "Our Cornerstone" for the last several years. The current issue has been dedicated to the memory of Pat Samson who cared very deeply for our community.

P.S. I would like to thank all the board members for all their hard work and dedication this year.

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## SELF REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP AND NICKEL-LEONG MANSION DECLARED CITY MONUMENTS

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By Charles J. Fisher

Two more historic properties have been recognized officially by the Los Angeles City Council as Historic Cultural Monuments on September 16, 2006. This brings the number of City Monuments within the area covered by the HPHT to 89, which is over 1/10<sup>th</sup> of all declared monuments citywide.

The Self Realization Fellowship was established on Mt. Washington in 1925 by Paramahansa Yogananda who was an internationally respected religious philosopher and important spiritual figure in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Yogananda acquired the 1909 vintage Mount Washington Hotel building and the surrounding grounds and established the headquarters in the building, which had served as a tourist hotel for the Robert Marsh Company from 1909 until 1916.

Marsh had the structure built by the Milwaukee Building Com-



Self-Realization Fellowship/Mt. Washington Hotel (Photo courtesy of LA Yoga Magazine)

pany in order to supply a destination for his Los Angeles and Mount Washington Railway, which used cable cars to climb the hill. The real reason was to stimulate land sales on the top of the hill. Unfortunately both the hotel and the railway were to become victims of their own success

and within 7 years, both were closed as the land had been sold off as they were no longer profitable.

New owners made several attempts to reopen the hotel building, but they were unsuccessful. It also served for short times as a

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## SELF REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP AND NICKEL-LEONG MANSION DECLARED CITY MONUMENTS (CONTINUED)

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*(Continued from page 4)*

hospital for combat veterans of World War I and a boy's school, but by the time Yogananda found it, the structure was abandoned and slated for demolition. The adaptive reuse of the property is one of the great preservation success stories of Los Angeles.

In addition to the hotel building, special mention was also noted by the Cultural Heritage Commission of the upper cable car station, which now serves as an office, the tennis court, which was originally two side-by-side courts at the time of the hotel and the landscaped grounds which were installed by the SRF and were partially developed by the noted botanist, Luther Burbank.

The final designation reads: "Mount Washington Hotel/Self Realization International Headquarters, Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument No. 845" in recognition of the two historic uses of the site. The nomination was submitted by the Self Realization itself so that they will be able to take advantage of the California State Historic Building Code as they do some needed work on the building.

The "Nickel-Leong Mansion" is a large two-story Greek Revival residence built in 1905 on Isabel Street in Cypress Park. The home was designed by

famed Los Angeles architect John C. Austin, who maintained a practice from 1895 until his death in 1963. Austin designed the



Nickel-Leong Mansion (photo by Charles J. Fisher)

home, built for restaurateur Max Nickel, as a representation of an Antebellum Southern plantation mansion of the old South. The home has been a visual landmark in Cypress Park for over 100 years. In 1936, it was acquired by Jeung Leong. Leong was born in Los Angeles, which gave him the ability to purchase the property, which was something that immigrant Chinese were not allowed to do under the exclusionary laws that existed at that time. The refined home may have served as an influence to his son, Gilbert Leong, who went on to study architecture and ultimately design many of the buildings that stand today in Los Angeles Chinatown. The Leong family and

the mansion are discussed in Lisa See's book, "on Gold Mountain", which is a history of her family in California. Gilbert's wife was Lisa's great aunt.

One reason for doing the nomination was to finally set the record straight on one rumor about the house. It has been alluded to and pub-

lished many times as the home of Heavyweight Champion Jim Jeffries. In fact Jeffries lived several blocks away on land that is today occupied by Nightingale Middle School. When two of the three Jeffries homes were demolished for the school in 1936, his name and the history drifted to the Nickel-Leong Mansion. The remaining Jeffries home, on the corner of Cypress Avenue and Jeffries Avenue, belonged to his brother and is Historic Cultural Monument No. 735.

The official designation of the Cypress Park Mansion is: "Nickel-Leong Mansion, Historic Cultural Monument No. 849".

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## REPRINT OF FIRST YULE PARADE ARTICLE—1935

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On December 3rd, the Highland Park Heritage Trust will be participating in the annual Northeast Holiday Parade. This parade has been going on since 1935, with a few missed years. —*editor*

# First Yule parade big event in 1935

(Reprinted from the Highland Park News-Herald, Friday, Nov. 29, 1935)

Highland Park's first annual Christmas parade will take place on the night of Friday, Dec. 6, and already the business streets are being dressed in yuletide gala attire.

This work of decorating was started Tuesday night so that everything will be in readiness for the big Santa Claus parade, according to A.J. White, parade chairman, who says that virtually all merchants, are preparing to participate by entering a decorated car or float. The date was decided upon at a recent meeting of the Commercial Club, the sponsoring organization.

11-30-75  
The special lighting for the decorations will not be turned on until the night of the parade. From that time on the lights will burn every night up to and including Christmas. Stores will be open on evenings during shopping periods.

The parade is so planned as to be of material benefit to the crowd that will line the streets. Newspapers on the day of the parade will be numbered. Persons in the crowd who hold these lucky numbers will be entitled to free prizes at the participating stores.

The Bolin Sign and Display service reports that finishing touches are

now being put on the Santa Claus float, which will consist of a bungalow house, half hidden among evergreen trees and with a real life Santa Claus caught in the very act of descending a spacious chimney.

Snow will cover the imitation ground around the trees and the housetop will also have its blanket of whiteness. Icicles will be seen hanging from the windows and eaves. The house, on a Busk truck, will head the procession.

The parade will form on York Boulevard, near Avenue 50. The line of march will be up York to Avenue 54, thence to North Figueroa, thence on that street to Garvanza and then to Ave. 64, then turn left on Avenue 65 and disband, according to tentative plans announced today.

Merchants desiring to place an entry in the parade may do so by calling A.J. White, CL 6-6321. York Boulevard merchants are requested to call C.L. Beane, AL 0547. These men urge that reservations be made at

once.

While the Western Decorating company is placing the yuletide colors and banners on other business streets, the Bolin Sign and Display service will be installing Christmas decorations at the intersection of York Boulevard and North Figueroa Street.

On that traffic island there, a Christmas tree 25 feet high will be set. There will be gateway cutouts and three giant candles 14 feet by 6 feet in circumference will mark the intersection triangle. These candles will be silver in color with white tallow running down and red flames two feet high at the top.

Four electrically lighted stars, 18 inches from tips to tips will be used, one at the top of the Christmas tree and the others centering each of three garlands, marking the triangle. A surprise for children will be found at the base of the tree."



HPHT Highland Park Holiday Parade Entry "Model T" - 1994  
(photo by Charles J. Fisher)

## HPHT WELCOMES NEW HPHT PRESIDENT CARMELA GOMES AND NEW AND RETURNING HPHT BOARD MEMBERS

By Charles J. Fisher

The Highland Park Heritage Trust elected its Officers and Board of Directors for 2007 at the November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Carmela Gomes will serve as President, with Troy Evans as Vice President. Evelyn Ortiz-Winchester will continue as Secretary. Lori Fiacco will replace the late Pat Samson as Treasurer.

The Directors for the year will be John Arroyo, Steve Crouch, Charles Fisher, Charly



Kemp, Virginia Neely, Linda Phelps, Nicole Possert, Robert Spira, Ann Walnum, Eleana Williams and Anne Marie Wozniak.

We welcome Carmela and Lore to the Board and thank retiring Director, Donnette Thayer for her continuing service to the HPHT as newsletter in charge of layout/design.

Congratulations to all of our new and returning Directors.

As always, the new officers and board will officially be installed at the annual Christmas Party, this year at Carmela Gomes house, on December 11, 2006.

## HPHT WELCOMES NEW HPHT PRESIDENT CARMELA GOMES AND NEW AND RETURNING HPHT BOARD MEMBERS

By Charly Kemp, Fundraising Chair

On October 21<sup>st</sup> the HPHT held its second annual rummage sale. This year's event was held along Figueroa Street across from Sycamore Grove Park in front of long time members Troy Evans and Heather McClarty's historic Hiner

House.

Thankfully the weather cooperated with a sunny, clear and not too hot day. With help from over 10 HPHT members investing a full day's effort to set up, price, organize, and clean up, the HPHT was able to generate a healthy return needed for future project funding.

We would like to thank all of the non-members and members who donated items or time for this cause. Without your help this event would not have been possible. The HPHT is looking forward to another successful rummage sale next year, so please start collecting your donations!

### Help Strengthen the Preservation of Our Community ~ Become a HPHT Member

\$20 (Individual)    \$30 (Family)    \$50 (Sponsor)    \$51-150 (Benefactor)    \$151+ (Angel)

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New Membership    Renewal

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING HPHT & COMMUNITY EVENTS

### DECEMBER

- 2            **Holiday Open House at Lummis Home**, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., Southwest Museum, 200 E Avenue 43. Free. RSVP by November 25, 2006, 626-440-1883.
- 2,3         **West Adams Heritage Holiday Tour and Progressive Dinner**, time to be determined. \$85. Call 323-732-4223 for reservations.
- 3            **Northeast Los Angeles Holiday Parade**, 1:00 p.m., Figueroa Street. Free. HPHT will be a participant.
- 16         **HPHT Christmas Party**, 7:00 p.m., Carmela Gomes House For more information, call 323-255-2849.



Highland Park Heritage Trust  
P.O Box 50894  
Los Angeles, CA 90050-0894

### HPHT NEEDS A NEW LAYOUT DESIGNER!

Our Cornerstone, HPHT's bimonthly publication, seeks a new layout designer.  
If you are interested in this rewarding volunteer position, please contact Donnette Thayer  
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