



West Adams Matters

In Memoriam: Corinne Pleger, 1954-2011



It is with extreme sadness and a profound sense of loss that WAHA shares with you news of the sudden and unexpected passing of our close friend and neighbor Corinne Pleger, who died unexpectedly in late November.

Corinne was an award-winning costumer, expert ballroom dancer, volunteer extraordinaire, and a CPA and partner with Brakensiek Leavitt Pleger LLP. She was a past president of WAHA, its longtime treasurer and CPA, and she coordinated our annual Living History Tour for more than a decade. She was also a vital and integral participant in many other organizations, including the Art Deco Society, the Costumers Guild West, the American Women's Society, and Curious Collectors of Bakers Street. She was a past dean of Costume College, and she taught classes every year.

Her presence and friendship will be sorely missed. She is survived by her husband Dave Pleger, son Evan Pleger, mother Bobbi Batchelder, and a full roster of siblings, in-laws, nieces and nephews, and literally hundreds of friends.

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3rd Annual Art In Historic Places Tour Saturday, March 24

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (last ticket sold at 1 p.m.)

West Adams' artistic traditions and contemporary art efforts will be on view again on Saturday, March 24, when WAHA presents the third annual Art in Historic Places Tour, "The Arts in West Adams: Pattern, Decoration and Diversity."

The 2012 tour's Honorary Chairperson is actress and art collector/gallery owner C.C.H. Pounder. WAHA's tour partners are the California African American Museum (CAAM) and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library. The tour will showcase work by local West Adams artists along with several art collections housed in the community's historic places.

Historic West Adams and nearby environs are becoming a new hotbed for fine art, with a growing number of established and emerging artists now living and/or working in the community, along with a small but steadily growing number of galleries. In this now-annual tour celebrating the arts in West Adams, visitors are invited to visit a collection of West Adams' most interesting historic places, showcasing works by some of West Adams' most talented artists, working in media and subject matter from classic to contemporary. The tours have opened the doors of nearly two dozen architecturally

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New Life for Murals in Los Angeles?

Comment Deadline: February 8

Los Angeles is considered to be the mural capital of the world. It was here beginning in the 1960s that artists like Wayne Healy created a strong tradition of outdoor, public art painted on walls. So you might be surprised to learn that new murals on private property have been outlawed in Los Angeles for nearly a decade.

That's about to change.

Councilman Jose Huizar, art preservationists, including the Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles, and muralists from across the city were on hand at a December 7th press conference in Boyle Heights for the unveiling of a new, draft mural ordinance.

They were announcing a major change in the way murals would be regulated in the city. Under the proposed ordinance, artistic murals on private property would be legalized and permitted in an effort to separate murals from the tangled sign ordinance that attempts to regulate billboards. The proposed ordinance also provides direction on how to protect and preserve existing murals.

The city has been buried under sign ordinances, billboard policy and tagging of late. Companies seeking to put up billboards and super-graphics challenged city's mural exemptions by claiming First Amendment protection. The moratorium

(continued on page 8)

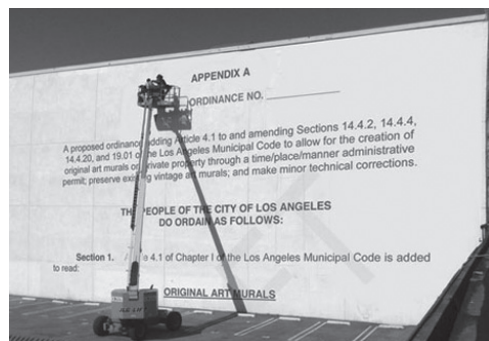


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Bank of Tokyo Update

by Laura Meyers and Eric Bronson

The Bank of Tokyo/Union Bank building in Jefferson Park, which exemplifies the community's important Japanese-American heritage, will be partially retained in a revised plan by the developers of the commercial parcel at Crenshaw and Jefferson Boulevards. After months of negotiations and meetings, WAHA has reached an agreement with the developers, CIM Group and West Angeles CDC, whereby a Fresh & Easy grocery store and a small bank branch building will be erected, and the frontage portion (about half the building) of the existing Bank of Tokyo will be retained and rehabbed. This compromise will bring a desired grocery alternative to the Jefferson Park neighborhood, while supporting WAHA's goal of recognize the history represented by the Bank of Tokyo.

A mid-century modern building designed by a pair of noted architects, Tosh Terasawa and Arthur O'Leary, the Bank of Tokyo building is associated with the Japanese American resettlement experience in Jefferson Park after the internment camps of World War II, with the Japanese Americans' quest for financial equality in the face of racism, and with the development of a thriving commercial business corridor (Jefferson Boulevard) catering to the nearby Japanese American community during the late 1940s until well into the 1980s.

WAHA – along with the local neighborhood council and Council District 10 – has had to balance the neighborhood's desire for a new development at the long-vacant corner of Crenshaw and Jefferson, near the new Expo Line light rail train station, with our equally-important passion for historic preservation and design that is compatible with not just the adjacent community but also with "New Urbanism" goals of pedestrian-activated streets and transit-friendly development.

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WAHA Upcoming Events

WAHA plans many (many) events. Please mark your calendars for these upcoming activities.

Tuesday, January 31 @ 10 a.m.

A Reception and Tour at the Clark Library

Saturday, February 25

Tour the Oscar Costumes at FIDM

Thursday, March 1

Lecture on the History of Lighting

Saturday, March 24

Art in Historic Places Tour



WAHA also believes that adaptive reuse of the building will enhance the overall project on the site.

In the initial proposal, the Bank of Tokyo building would have been demolished to create a surface parking lot with, literally, three times the required parking for the associated development project, a new Fresh & Easy grocery store and a much-smaller branch of the bank. The surface parking was proposed even though the development partners control a nearby parking structure with 500 spaces, nearly all of which are empty every day

(continued on page 7)

President's Message by John Patterson

The New Year is upon us, and this year we have had the additional challenge to reach a little bit deeper into our hearts as we celebrated the holiday season and the beginning of a new year without the benefit of sharing these moments with our dear friend Corinne. As is exemplified in her own words below, she was ever the strong supporter and promoter of all things "West Adams" and I personally benefitted greatly from her words of encouragement and always helpful advice.

The message that she wrote as she departed the WAHA President's chair are as pertinent today as when she first penned these words over a decade ago, as WAHA was approaching its 15th anniversary. I would ask that you all please take a moment to reflect on her encouragement and support as we all move into the New Year together as an organization and a neighborhood of friends and family.

Not only was the tremendous attendance at Corinne's Memorial a reflection of her widespread impact on our community, I came away from the gathering most touched by the compassionate words that were shared that afternoon, comforted in the knowledge that Dave and Evan will have the embrace of an entire community as they trudge bravely onward.

And I will close by quoting Corinne's own words, perhaps paraphrased slightly, but reflecting of a philosophy that she and I shared of living life to the fullest with our friends and family — "Use your good dishes!!!"

John Patterson may be reached by e-mail at President@WestAdamsHeritage.org

President's Message, May 1997 by Corinne Pleger

WAHA has a tradition, when our Presidents leave office, that they write a farewell message. In 1997, Corinne Pleger did just that. Today we share her long-ago words with you:

Jill Prestup, a WAHA member and an organizer of the 1st Annual Venice Historical House Tour, called me the other day and said that she was so impressed with our organization. Although she lived in Venice, she attended all of our tours and read our newsletter monthly with great interest. She couldn't believe all the ideas, resources, community spirit and people who were so actively involved! This is very nice to hear as I leave my term on the Board and as President of WAHA. Our preservation message is being appreciated.

Early in WAHA's organizational life we were like our houses earlier this century. Newly built from new ideas in a new style. We were enthusiastic and had many diverse activities. We were building a new organization to preserve West Adams historic structures and its community spirit. Look at all we have accomplished! We are widely acknowledged as the best home tour organizers. We have a wonderful newsletter, which is consistently full of excellent and timely articles, ideas, and resources.

Now after 14 years WAHA may be ready for renovation!...

Just as our houses still have so much life left in them, so does our organization. As our homes have matured, so too have we as an organization. That means we can continue renovating all areas of our organization or we can slow down and enjoy our organization with fewer planned events. I certainly do not feel our homes or our organization are ready for demolition. We have a viable preservation organization that has status and prestige and as such we should maintain it as we do our homes with a little attention now and then. Nothing worthwhile is maintained with out some effort. Homes and organizations are worthy of preservation. Without such our lives would be all cold glass, concrete, isolation and helplessness. With preservation we have warm beautiful homes, green and flower-filled yards, community spirit and a means to make a difference in Los Angeles. It will take continued effort on all of our parts. A home needs repairs, a friendship needs a phone call, an organization needs volunteers.

I wish to thank all of the Board members with whom I have served over the 8-9 years I have been on the Board. The time and energy of these dedicated people have been astounding. I have learned so much about preservation issues, home repairs, community issues, Tours and WAHA members. I will miss the Board meetings, especially the Good and Welfare sections we used to have where we learned about each other's lives. Dave and I would still like to shepherd during the Holiday Tour and will volunteer for other things as needed. I am looking forward to becoming one of those very special people. A WAHA member! ●



Dave Pleger and Evan Pleger would like to thank all the members of West Adams Heritage Association for their support after Corinne's death. Dave writes, "the neighborhood really came out and helped us when we needed it the most and both of us are very appreciative."

Stepping Out

From the Gilded Age to the Space Age: A Century of American Lighting, 1870-1970

Reception and Lecture

Thursday, March 1

7 p.m.

Rejuvenation at the Historic Helms Bakery District, 8780 Venice Blvd.
(between La Cienega and Robertson)

You're invited to a presentation, Q&A session and reception at Rejuvenation Classic American Lighting at the company's new Los Angeles store at the historic Helms Bakery complex. Bo Sullivan, architectural and lighting historian for Rejuvenation, will discuss lighting from the Victorian era through mid-20th century.

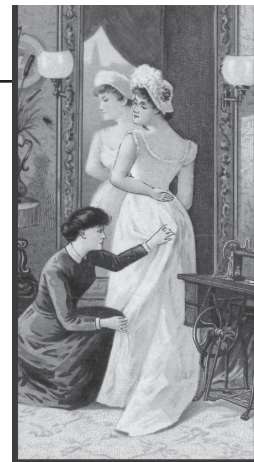
In addition to his post at Rejuvenation, Sullivan is the owner of Arcalus Period Design, where he consults with old house owners, preservationists, and design professionals on history inspired projects. He also manages the Arcalus Archive and Rejuvenation Collection, a private research library consisting of some 3,000 rare original trade catalogs, plan books, sales samples, photographs and other materials related to the period building arts.

Sullivan has an architectural degree and specializes in American lighting, hardware, millwork, and residential design from 1870 to 1970. He has been associated with Rejuvenation since 1993, where he has done product research and development, collaborated on retail design, bought and sold architectural salvage, written copy for the company's nationally distributed catalog, and given many trainings and presentations on old house lore.

Sullivan is a member of the Society of Architectural Historians and the Victorian Society of America, and his regular series, "A Page From History," can be found in each issue of *Old House Journal* magazine.

Rejuvenation was founded in 1977 with a passion for old houses and buildings. Today, it is America's largest manufacturer and leading direct marketer of classic American lighting and house parts. Inspired by history and period authenticity, Rejuvenation's lighting and home-goods product lines span periods from the 1870s to 1960s. Collections include: Victorian, Period Basics, Classic Revival, Old World, Arts & Crafts, Colonial Revival, Industrial, Mid-Century Modern and Deco. Products are sold through the brand's catalog, retail stores in Portland, Seattle and Los Angeles, and the company's website www.rejuvenation.com.

Reservations requested. Please RSVP to events@westadamsheritage.org. ●



Doheny Mansion Open for Tours:

Saturday, February 18 (9:45, 10:30 and 11:15 a.m.)

The Doheny Mansion at Mount St. Mary's College, former estate of early-1900s oil baron Edward L. Doheny, opens again for public tours. Home to the Doheny family for nearly 60 years, the mansion was designed by Theodore Augustus Eisen and Sumner P. Hunt in 1898. Doheny and his wife, Carrie Estelle Doheny, frequently remodeled the mansion.

Step back in time to experience and savor the mansion's exquisite appointments. Learn about its history - and about the lives of Edward and Estelle Doheny, and the many movers and shakers who lived on or near Chester Place.

Organized in groups of 15, docent-led tours commence in the former home of Edward Doheny's son, Ned, at No. 10 Chester Place and conclude in the Doheny Mansion. The complete tour lasts approximately 2-1/2 hours; the Chester Place segment, which lasts approximately 1-1/2 hours, involves walking and climbing a few stairs. So please wear comfortable walking shoes.

The public tours cost \$25 a person. Tours include the first floor of the mansion and surrounding grounds. Call 213-477-2962 for tour information, or go to www.dohenymansion.org for tour information and other mansion news. The Doheny Mansion is located in University Park at No. 8 Chester Place. ●



Stepping Out

Oscar Costumes at FIDM

Join WAHA on Saturday, February 25

2:15 p.m.

FIDM, 919 S. Grand (Downtown)

(Exhibit on view February 14 - April 28, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday)

Please join WAHA's own costume designer extraordinaire Rory Cunningham and fellow West Adams residents for an afternoon with Oscar -- Oscar costumes, that is.

For 20 years, the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) in downtown has been exhibiting costumes from the past year's best films to coincide with awards season. This year the Art of Motion Picture Costume Design exhibition includes work from 20 movies, including more than 100 costumes from films released in 2011. A gown from *Alice in Wonderland*, the 2011 Academy Award winner for best Costume Design, will greet visitors as they enter the galleries.

The exhibit is on view through April, but we hope you'll join WAHA for a fun and expert tour on February 25. As we tour this year's beautiful costumes, Cunningham will share his expertise about how costume designers conceive and execute clothing for the characters you see on screen.

The pieces on display are the actual ones used in the films. The mannequins used in the displays are shaped to match each actor's figure.

Selected by FIDM's museum and galleries staff, the exhibition is a way to highlight costumes from period, fantasy, sci-fi and contemporary films alike. FIDM says the idea is to offer a closer look, to see all the details and the accessories that get lost when so much else is happening in the film.

This 20th-anniversary exhibition will also showcase classic film costumes from the FIDM Museum Collection and the City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks department's Historic Hollywood Collection. Some of these same costumes were featured during the first Art of Motion Picture Costume Design exhibition in 1993.

The exhibit is free, and so is WAHA's special tour, but we'd appreciate it if you would let us know you are attending with an RSVP to events@westadamsheritage.org. After the tour, those who would like will walk to a nearby restaurant for cocktails and dinner (completely optional, no host). ●



Gown worn by Anne Hathaway as the White Queen in Alice in Wonderland. Costumes by Colleen Atwood.



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IN ESCROW

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Montecito Heights Craftsman — *Adam Janeiro, seller's and buyer's agent*

Jefferson Park Spanish Revival — *Adam Janeiro, buyer's agent*
Welcome, Nicholas Amorosa!

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Stepping Out

A Morning at the Clark Library

Tuesday, January 31 Tour: 10 a.m. Coffee reception: 11 a.m.

William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 2520 Cimarron St. (Kinney Heights)

The Clark Library in Historic West Adams has a new director, a new head librarian and new programs. Barbara Fuchs, Director of the UCLA Center for 17th & 18th Century Studies William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, and Gerald Cloud, Head Librarian, invite you to a private tour of the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library with remarks on a special collaboration between the L.A. Theatre Works and the Clark Library. This event also features Susan Loewenberg, Producing Director, L.A. Theatre Works.

Please RSVP by Friday, January 27, to 310-206-5379 or hbaylon@support.ucla.edu. ●

Pacific Standard Time: Jerry McMillan

Opening Reception: Saturday, February 11 4-7 p.m.

CSUN Art & Design Center Main Gallery, N. University Dr. (Plummer Street) on the campus in Northridge

WAHA member and Jefferson Park resident Steve Peckman is participating in the region-wide Pacific Standard Time series of art exhibits by curating the exhibition "Jerry McMillan" at the Cal State Northridge Art Gallery. If you are not familiar with McMillan's art, he is an acknowledged early innovator of photo-sculpture, whose work has been called "state of the art" by *Newsweek* and "a visual primer of photography" by *Artweek*. *Artforum* observed that McMillan's work "exemplifies the conflict and enigmatic quality of realism versus reality," and the *Los Angeles Times* called him "a rare master of the hybrid genre."

The retrospective highlights more than 50 years of McMillan's groundbreaking work and includes about 50 works from three distinct periods of McMillan's artistic oeuvre:

(1) Traditional photography from the early 1960s and his first attempts at blurring the boundaries of photography and painting;

(2) His pioneering photo-sculpture from the mid-1960s to mid-1970s, including the photographic paper bags, chrome-plated bags, and steel, copper, and brass three-dimensional photographic etched sculptures, as well as cut-out paintings and drawings; and

(3) non-objective pure camera abstractions from the late 1970s to the present.

The exhibition runs until March 31 and will also have a full color catalog.

Parking: Lot D6, E6, entry only at Halstead/Lindley. \$6.00 daily. Purchase permit from Info Booth at Lindley/Nordhoff or Prairie/Darby or at yellow self-serve dispensers. ●




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Bank of Tokyo Update *continued from page 2*

but Sunday. Plus, the parking structure had previously been approved for a joint/shared use with this project.

In an effort to preserve the Bank of Tokyo building while permitting the development of the new Fresh & Easy, there were a series of meetings with representatives from the developer (CIM), its partner West Angelus CDC, Fresh & Easy, Council District 10, WAHA, and the local neighborhood council (United Neighborhoods/UNNC). WAHA's goal has been to improve the project by encouraging pedestrian-friendly design initiatives, and at the same time save the building, which we consider to be a cultural and historic resource.

To that end, WAHA filed a series of land use appeals, including appeals requested by and on behalf of the developer, that ultimately resulted in the CIM partnership regaining additional square footage (as a result of WAHA's request, a 22-foot widening of the Crenshaw sidewalk was reduced to 11 feet, and a 2- to 5-foot dedication on Jefferson was rescinded).

The project, as proposed, had a nearly-blank wall on Crenshaw Boulevard, with Fresh & Easy's only entrance facing a surface parking lot that sprawled across the entire east side of the project to Bronson Avenue, and which created surface parking on Jefferson Boulevard. UNNC and WAHA argued that a true entry door for the Fresh & Easy store on the Crenshaw elevation would activate the street, make the grocery store pedestrian friendly, and accessible to future light rail riders.

UNNC also asked that a small plaza with tables be added to the project, to encourage a little more social interaction and to provide a place for customers to eat the "easy" prepared foods. CIM incorporated these design suggestions into the project.

That left the Bank of Tokyo building issue.

CIM has now agreed to save a portion of the building (not quite half), which retains many character-defining mid-century modern features and also helps retain the street face along Jefferson Boulevard. The 5,400-square-foot remnant building will be looking for a tenant.

The site of the former Japanese American relocation camp at Manzanar is now a registered historic landmark. It bears a plaque which reads, "May the injustices and humiliation suffered here as a result of hysteria, racism and economic exploitation never emerge again."

WAHA believes that the Bank of Tokyo building can similarly tell this story of a dark chapter in American history to future generations.

The Bank of Tokyo building represents a still-standing piece of community fabric in a neighborhood where much has been demolished. It is reflective of a time both past and present of a neighborhood filled with diverse culture. It is important to work toward goals that ensure the Japanese-American community's history in Jefferson Park, as expressed through physical structures, is not erased. ●

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Art Matters

Murals *continued from page 1*

began with a late-1990s lawsuit against the city by Regency Outdoor Advertising, which owns many of the billboards on the Sunset Strip. Regency said the city's sign code allowed restrictions on street advertising — while the Cultural Affairs Commission handed out street art permits like candy — thus violating the First Amendment.

A federal judge sided with Regency. Several state courts came to similar conclusions: It's a violation of free speech to have a sign code that sets out lax rules for fine art murals, even on private property, while banning or restricting billboards and outdoor advertising.

The public has until February 8 to comment on the proposal.

"Our new mural ordinance is designed with the artists and Los Angeles' diverse communities in mind," said Councilman Huizar, whose eastside district has twice as many murals as any other district in the city. "We want to create a document that allows art to happen and create an environment where murals can flourish once again and Los Angeles can reclaim its rightful place as the mural capital of the world."

Under the proposed ordinance, murals would be defined as "an original work of visual art that is tiled or painted directly upon or affixed directly to an exterior wall of a building."

Permits would be issued for new and existing ("vintage") murals under the proposed ordinance. The fees associated with those permits — \$199 for an original mural — would cover whatever administrative costs are incurred by the city. Violations of the new law would be handled via code enforcement rather than the current criminal penalties.

The release of the draft ordinance followed a lengthy October hearing that exposed the difficulties associated with regulating and preserving murals, given the challenges of regulating what many see as art while protecting neighborhoods from advertisements and graffiti.

A database put together by city officials found there are at least 1,614 murals in Los Angeles. Of that total:

- 402 murals were painted over
- 424 murals are located on a Los Angeles Unified School District-owned building
- 261 murals are on city-owned buildings
- 507 murals are painted onto private property

Of the 369 murals that are painted on the exterior walls of private buildings, 353 were done between 1931 and 2006. It is likely that when the L.A. City Council eventually signs off on a grandfather clause, 2006 or 2007 will be the cut off date. It is also expected that the maximum allowable size of a mural will be 1,000 square feet.

The Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), a Venice Beach arts center founded in 1974, is advocating for some changes to the proposed ordinance. In particular, SPARC is requesting the inclusion of the California Art Preservation Act (CAPA) and the Visual Artists Rights Act (VARA) in the ordinance. "CAPA and VARA provides artist rights protection, has a case body of precedence that addresses many questions between artwork and private property, and distinguishes work for commercial advertising from non-commercial artwork."

The Planning Department's Tanner Blackman, the ordinance's author, has been presenting a PowerPoint presentation on the matter, to demonstrate how difficult it is to define and regulate murals, which are currently technically referred to as "mural signs" in the city code.

Among the challenges: Under the current law, no more than 3 percent of a piece may include text if it is to be considered a mural. Yet many of today's fine artists practice text-based art. Where should the ordinance draw the line between art that includes words versus commercial (advertising) speech?

Blackman has also written the following background memo:

"Since 2008, the City Council – informed by multiple City agencies, non-profits, advocacy groups, individual muralists and artists, and interested stakeholders – has been discussing ways out of the current ban on new murals on private property. A Citywide discussion is occurring – in City Hall, in the media, in galleries, on the corner – with rumblings that LA may reclaim the title of Mural Capital of the World.

"We may be on the verge of another flowering of the mural movement, but we should not congratulate ourselves too soon. First, we must do the actual work of policymaking. There's a long way to go in that process. And, the mural ordinance is only part of a broader discussion.

"...The discussion draft is not a public art ordinance; it is a land use ordinance. The discussion draft only amends the zoning code, not other sections of the municipal code or the City's budget. It will not change existing programs. It will not redirect current funds for art or graffiti abatement. [We are] attempting to address a very narrow policy issue: how to let people paint on their own walls (while maintaining regulations on outdoor advertising). That's it. This ordinance will not solve all of Los Angeles' public art woes.

"There is plenty to like in the discussion draft of the mural ordinance. As much as possible, while still maintaining protections against outdoor advertising, City policymakers aim to get out of the way and let art happen."

The full proposed ordinance can be found at www.planning.lacity.org under "What's New."

Submit comments to tanner.blackman@lacity.org by February 8. ●



WAHA Matters

Art in Historic Places Tour

continued from page 1

diverse historic homes and buildings throughout the West Adams district, eclectically pairing historical architecture with bold, cutting-edge works and more traditional contemporary art alike, from landscapes to portraits, abstract paintings to sculpture, photography and ceramics.

For this year's tour, along with artists' own homes and studios, visitors will be invited into two important cultural institutions: The William Andrews Clark Memorial Library (which along with thousands of rare books houses two distinct and diverse art collections), and the California African American Museum, which currently has on view its Pacific Standard Time exhibit, "Places of Validation."

The Honorary Chairperson, Actor (and West Adams resident) CCH Pounder, is equally at home in art galleries and sound stages. She is an avid collector of art of the African Diaspora, and Pounder is the owner of Pounder-Kone Art Space gallery. Along with her husband, she also has established an art museum in Senegal (The Boribana Museum in Dakar, Senegal). Pounder is currently appearing in the SciFi Channel's *Warehouse 13*, and she is also recognized for her television roles on *The Shield*, *Law & Order: SVU*, and in her pioneering role as a top female surgeon on *E.R.*, among many other series. Pounder also appeared in *Avatar*, and first achieved renown for her role as a café owner in the art-house film *Bagdad Café* (1987).

Check-in is again at WAHA's "pop-up gallery" at the c.1923 Majestic Pharmacy, 1824 South 4th Avenue, a restored commercial/mixed use building that today houses Gramercy Housing Group/PATH. This is a self-guided drive-yourself (or bike-yourself) tour, with a brochure and map that will guide visitors to these historic venues, toured in any order and at their own pace. Visitors are encouraged to set aside several hours to enjoy the tour.

Ticket information (prices, where to purchase advance tickets) will be available shortly on WAHA's website, www.WestAdamsHeritage.org

Write tours@westadamsheritage.org for more information and/or to volunteer to help plan the event, or to volunteer on the day of the tour. ●



The William Andrews Clark Memorial Library will open its doors for the Art in Historic Places tour



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Community Matters

In Memoriam: Corinne Pleger

continued from page 1

One of her friends, Colleen Crosby, noted, "Corinne was a regular person in the same way George Bailey from *It's a Wonderful Life* was a regular person. Not that she had regrets about anything, but in how much she touched the lives of so many people. So many different groups were represented at her [December 10] memorial service, which filled the Egyptian Theater: Costumer's Guild West, the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles, and West Adams Heritage Association, as well as her business associates' groups and her family and neighbors."

Don Lynch served on the Angelus Rosedale Living History Tour Organizing Committee with Corinne for several years. "She made working on the tour a pleasure. She was so organized, you could always rely on her," recalled Lynch at the funeral service. "And she was so easy to work with! She never seemed stressed. If a problem came up, she just handled it.

"She always dressed the people portraying the different characters, and always made everyone look good! Every year it seemed she had to use Dave's Edwardian suit on someone – but it was never obvious. She even helped out with casting the characters. One year we needed someone to portray a man who only had one arm. Corinne said she knew someone who would do it. I thought, 'How far will your friends go to help you?'"

We all knew Corinne as a costumer with a passion for historic reproduction. Corinne's first sewing project was a Granny dress made at age 12. Her first costume was a Medieval outfit for an early Renaissance Faire. She was involved with various re-enactment groups and attends historic themed dances and events, and eventually discovered Costume College, joining its "faculty" in 2000 and serving as dean in 2005.

Corinne was a staunch preservationist and the recipient of WAHA's Bob Bortfeld Award in 2003. In her nomination letter, Cat Slater wrote: "I believe that she has gone above and beyond the requirements that make someone so special as to deserve this honor." Slater went on to list many of Corinne's activities and accomplishments:

- Helped create the LACRG (Los Angeles Committee Reinvestment Group), and gave first grant money from the LACRG to start the South Seas committee and fund in 1996

- Did a successful matching grant proposal with Public Works for the South Seas House
- Chairperson of the South Seas House Action Committee of the United Neighborhood Council
- Represented WAHA as an elected member of the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of LA -Mid-City PAC
- A Co-Chair of the organizing committee for the Angelus-Rosedale Cemetery Tour
- Was a house captain for the WAHA Holiday Tour, and was a Docent/Shepherd for years (many times in costume)
- Delivered the newsletters in her neighborhood, and wrote articles for the WAHA newsletter

Slater concluded: "An impressive list by anyone's standards, but moreover it is how she accomplished everything on it. I believe most people don't realize all she has done for the West Adams area and the people here. Corinne asks for no fanfare or kudos. She ruffles no feathers. She uses all the grace, style and charm of what I believe a true leader requires. She never makes anyone feel unappreciated or not needed. She is always ready to give a helping hand, answer all your questions or just stop what she is doing to listen to the problems of the moment. She will do her best to help find a solution if one is required. Corinne will even walk up to someone new at a WAHA event, put out her hand and say, 'Hi, I'm Corinne, you must be new to the neighborhood.' She goes out of her way to make everyone feel comfortable and welcome. This is who Corinne Pleger is and I feel she is more than deserving of this honor. She is the epitome of West Adams at its Best."

Corinne and Dave Pleger were married in 1987, and moved to West Adams a year later. The Plegers completely refurbished their 1908 Craftsman home within a year, and soon after that embarked on a new "project" – pregnancy and the birth of their son, Evan, now a sophomore in college.

In West Adams, recalled Dave Pleger in his tribute to Corinne at her funeral, "Corinne blossomed, joining every organization in sight and in each one of them made people's lives better by her kindness and friendship."

He continued: "I loved every minute with Corinne and found myself doing everything I could to bring on her smiles. An observer might have thought that she had me wrapped around her finger; in truth my greatest joy in life was to please her, for her happiness was mine too. Together we marveled at our son Evan, who at every stage of his life was always more confident, happy, and assured than either of us had been. In the last few years it was hard to find holiday gifts for Corinne because she felt that she had everything she needed and wanted." ●

In lieu of flowers, Dave and Evan Pleger have requested that memorial donations be made in Corinne's honor to West Adams Heritage Association. A separate memorial fund will be established, and a specific preservation issue will be identified for these funds. Memorial donations may be made online at www.WestAdamsHeritage.org or can be mailed to:

West Adams Heritage Association, 2263 South Harvard Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90018



Community Matters

Where is West Adams?

by Corinne Pleger

15 years ago, even 10 years ago, I'd be out somewhere, at a party or professional career meeting, and someone would ask where I live. I'd say "West Adams." "Oh, where's that?"

West Adams is:

- A place to honor gorgeous old homes and be a looky-loo
- A place of cultural diversity and neighbors knowing neighbors
- A place where the parties are for the Oscars, birthdays of spouses and houses and celebrations of new kitchens and all in black tie and rhinestones!
- A place where people care about planting trees to beautify their blocks and where vacant lots become parks.
- A place where crack houses become gracious homes, alleys are cleaned up and reclaimed as gardens, an eyesore becomes a community center
- A place where kids can do their homework safely and are taken on fieldtrips to the Hollywood bowl or to the theatre
- A place where animals are saved – Anyone need a kitten?
- A place to hear about new restaurants, recipes or resources
- A place to garden or visit fabulous gardens
- A place to barbeque or survive a barbeque by learning preparedness training and damage control for earthquakes or other disasters
- A place to learn how to make grape jam or how to un jam your windows
- A place to learn the power of a group to stop crime, clean up graffiti, ban drugs save a house, how to work with the city government
- A place to learn the power of an individual to save a house from demolition or mentor a child or put West Adams signs on the freeway.
- A place to learn about HPOZ's, the Mills Act, zoning & planning, and preservation and renovation standards
- A place to learn about history of fascinating people from a cemetery
- A place to get to know our council offices and our police officers
- A place to provide noon meals to people on Skid Row
- A place to welcome out-of-area visitors to our Historic-Cultural Monuments and HPOZ's, preservation conference, garden tours and house tours
- A place where awards are won by individuals, in community action, for historic preservation and even for costuming
- A place to get – West Adams Matters – the best newsletter in the country that chronicles our successes and challenges
- A place to make friends

So now when I say that I live in West Adams, they reply – "I know where that is!" ●



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for the use of their parking lot

Preservation Matters

Annual Conservancy Awards Nominations Sought

The Los Angeles Conservancy welcomes applications for its 31st Annual Preservation Awards, which recognize outstanding achievement in the field of historic preservation in L.A. County. Applications are due by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, January 31.

To qualify, projects must have been completed by December 31, 2011, be located in Los Angeles County, and meet nationally recognized standards for the treatment of historic properties and landscapes (in the case of construction or landscape projects). Recipients will be selected by an independent jury of leading experts in architecture, historic preservation, and community development. The Conservancy will present the awards at a luncheon in May 2012.

Past Preservation Award winners have ranged widely, from sensitive restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse projects, to groundbreaking advocacy and education efforts by individuals and groups. We encourage submissions from throughout Los Angeles County that illustrate the value and power of historic preservation. Construction projects may be commercial, residential, or institutional. We also encourage nominations for historic landscape projects and significant contributions to preservation education or program development. Past recipients include the Antelope Valley Indian Museum State Historic Park, Dr. Ralph J. Bunche Peace and Heritage Center, Oaklawn Bridge and Waiting Station, Palomar Senior Apartments, Point Fermin Lighthouse, City of Huntington Park Historic Preservation Ordinance, and Valley Municipal Building, among more than 200 others.

The deadline for submitting applications is January 31, 2012. Each application has a nonrefundable application fee of \$50. You can download the application or request one by calling the office at (213) 623-2489.

Downloadable application (MS Word):

http://www.laconservancy.org/awards/PA12_application.doc

General information; info about past recipients:

<http://www.laconservancy.org/awards/> ●

HOLD THE DATE: On Sunday, March 18, 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Los Angeles Conservancy will offer a special, one-time-only tour showcasing the art and architecture of Millard Sheets in the Claremont and Pomona area. The Conservancy's contribution to Pacific Standard Time: Art in LA 1940 – 1980, this special tour will explore Sheets' indelible mark on the postwar Southern California landscape.

A native of the Pomona Valley, Sheets (1907-1989) was a nationally renowned and highly influential artist with the California School of painting. He helped found the Otis Art Institute, and served as the Director of the Scripps College Art Department for nineteen years.

Sunday, March 18, 2012; 11:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

\$30 (\$25 Conservancy members)

Tickets available at <http://lac.laconservancy.org/sheets>

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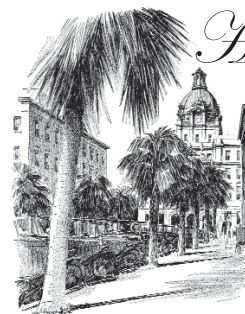
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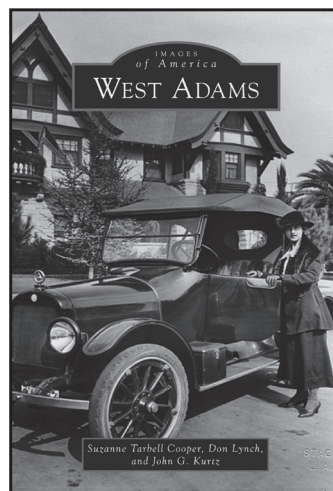
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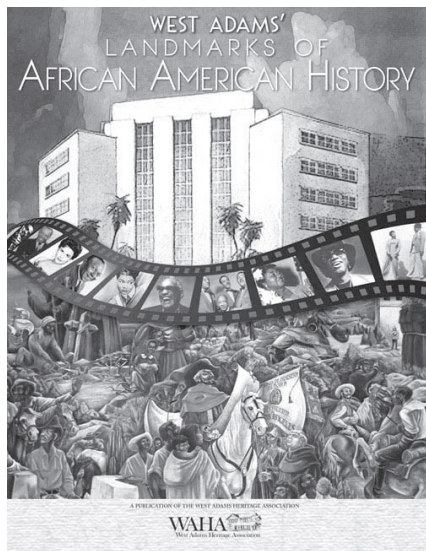
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www.westadamsheritage.org

WEST ADAMS' LANDMARKS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

WAHA presents *West Adams' Landmarks of African American History*, a compendium of photos and brief biographies of more than 70 prominent African Americans who lived in the West Adams area of Los Angeles and their homes. Also included are many buildings of historical importance to the African American community.

Inside the pages of *West Adams' Landmarks of African American History*, you'll learn about religious and civic institutions that play significant roles in West Adams' (and Los Angeles') black heritage, along with civil rights leaders, entertainers, sports figures, wartime heroes, and trailblazers in their fields. You'll meet many who forged the way:

- Los Angeles' first African American school principal
- The first black graduate of Caltech
- The first African American to lead a major U.S. symphony, and the first African American composer in the United States to have a symphony performed by a major symphony orchestra
- The first black judge west of the Mississippi
- Pioneering doctors, both male and female, including the first African American woman doctor to practice medicine in Los Angeles
- African American attorneys who fought for civil rights, not only for black residents but also their Japanese-American neighbors
- Trailblazing black journalists
- Jazz virtuosos, rhythm & blues legends, and many other black songwriters, composers, arrangers, and musicians
- A lauded African American soprano whose life was cut short by a tragic accident
- The first black dentist to graduate from USC's renown School of Dentistry, and his wife, the first female black dentist to do the same; together they helped found the Los Angeles chapter of the NAACP
- The first African American actor to find success on the Silver Screen — and many others who followed in his footsteps to a reel life in Hollywood and a real life in the West Adams District
- Buffalo Soldiers and Tuskegee Airmen



- The black property owners who successfully challenged racial covenants, taking their cases to the Supreme Court
- The first African American female board member of the Musicians Union
- One of the "Little Rock Nine" — who braved intimidation to help desegregate America's schools
- The first African Americans to own a successful recording label, and a musician/sound engineer whose recording studio would rival the majors
- The first African Americans to run for local elected office in Los Angeles
- California's first black librarian
- A music teacher who opened a classical music academy on Central Avenue
- The first African American member of the prestigious American Institute of Architects (AIA), and two other architects of African American descent
- An innovative black businesswoman who established a national fast-food chain
- African American businessmen whose companies — Golden State Mutual Insurance, Broadway Federal, Angelus Funeral Home — helped change the face of Los Angeles

44 pages, 8-1/2 X 11, glossy, full color throughout. \$10.

Purchase at www.WestAdamsHeritage.org (click on "WAHA store" — "WAHA books").



3rd Annual Art In Historic Places Tour Saturday, March 24

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (last ticket sold at 1 p.m.)

For more information, visit
www.WestAdamsHeritage.org

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Annual Membership

Name(s) _____

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Membership classification (check one)

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- ___ Preservation Circle \$ 100.00
- ___ Business/Corporate \$ 200.00
- ___ Heritage Circle \$ 250.00
- ___ Patron Circle \$ 500.00
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Please make check payable to WAHA.

Return to: WAHA
2263 S. Harvard Blvd
Historic West Adams
Los Angeles, CA 90018

___ Please DO NOT include my name, address, e-mail, or telephone in the WAHA membership directory.

We support preservation of the West Adams community's architectural heritage and beautification activities, and seek to educate Los Angeles' citizens and others about cultural heritage and restoration techniques.



West Adams Heritage Association
2263 S. Harvard Boulevard
Historic West Adams
Los Angeles California 90018
323-735-WAHA (323-735-9242)
www.WestAdamsHeritage.org

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Advertisers are responsible for preparing their own camera-ready art for display ads. To place a display ad, call John Patterson at 213-216-0887. WAHA classifieds are free to paid members. If you can, please e-mail your classified ad to lauramink@aol.com. Classifieds will be for one month only.

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This Newsletter is published 10 times a year

Half Page: \$100 monthly; \$900 annually

1/4 Page (4 1/2 x 4 1/2): \$60 monthly; \$540 annually

Business Card (3 3/4 x 2 1/4): \$30 monthly, \$270 annually

The deadline for ad content is the 1st of the prior month.

Please Note: WAHA does not endorse or claim responsibility for any of the services, products or items for sale that advertisers have listed in these pages.

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Roommate Wanted? Vintage Stove for Sale? Garden Plants in Search of New Home? Place your classified ad here to reach preservation-minded readers. Contact lauramink@aol.com, NO LATER THAN the first of the prior month.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

The following companies offer discounts to WAHA members. Remember to show your WAHA membership card when you make your purchase.

Silverlake Architectural Salvage

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626-535-9655 www.pasadenaarchitecturalsalvage.com

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A CALL TO MEMBERS

If you frequent a local business — retail store, restaurant, service provider, etc. — ask them if they would offer a discount to WAHA members. Explain that they'd benefit from the increased exposure to local consumers, and be listed in the WAHA monthly newsletter. Or, call me at 323-733-6869 and I'll contact them — Steve Wallis

Calendar ✓

Upcoming Events

Look for more details on upcoming events on WAHA's website, www.WestAdamsHeritage.org

FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 25

Tour the Oscar-Nominated Costumes at FIDM

2:15 p.m.

919 S. Grand (Downtown)

Please join WAHA for an afternoon with Oscar -- Oscar costumes, that is. We'll step out afterwards for no host cocktails and dinner. (See page 5)

MARCH

Thursday, March 1:

A Century of American Lighting, 1870-1970: A Lecture at Rejuvenation

7 p.m.

8780 Venice Blvd. (the Historic Helms Bakery District)

WAHA is invited to a special presentation by lighting and architectural historian Bo Sullivan. (See page 4)

WAHA's 3rd Annual Art in Historic Places Tour

Visit the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, the California African American Museum, and a selection of historic homes and studios of West Adams' most talented artists

Saturday, March 24

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Check in at WAHA's "Pop-Up Art Gallery"

1824 S. 4th Avenue

(at Washington Blvd.)

(See page 1 for more information)

WAHA....Creating Our Future by Preserving Our Past

The WAHA Matters Newsletter is a publication of the West Adams Heritage Association. Members and supporters of WAHA are invited to submit articles to the Newsletter. Letters will be published subject to space constraints and will be cut for length if necessary. Articles will be published subject to acceptance by the editors of the WAHA Board. Advertising is subject to the approval of the publishers. Although the Association appreciates its many fine advertisers, the Association does not accept responsibility for claims made by advertisers. Services and products are not tested and appearance of advertising does not imply, nor does it constitute, endorsement by the West Adams Heritage Association. Copyright 2012. All rights for graphic and written material appearing in the newsletter are reserved. Contact Director of Publications for permission.



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