

Winter 2025

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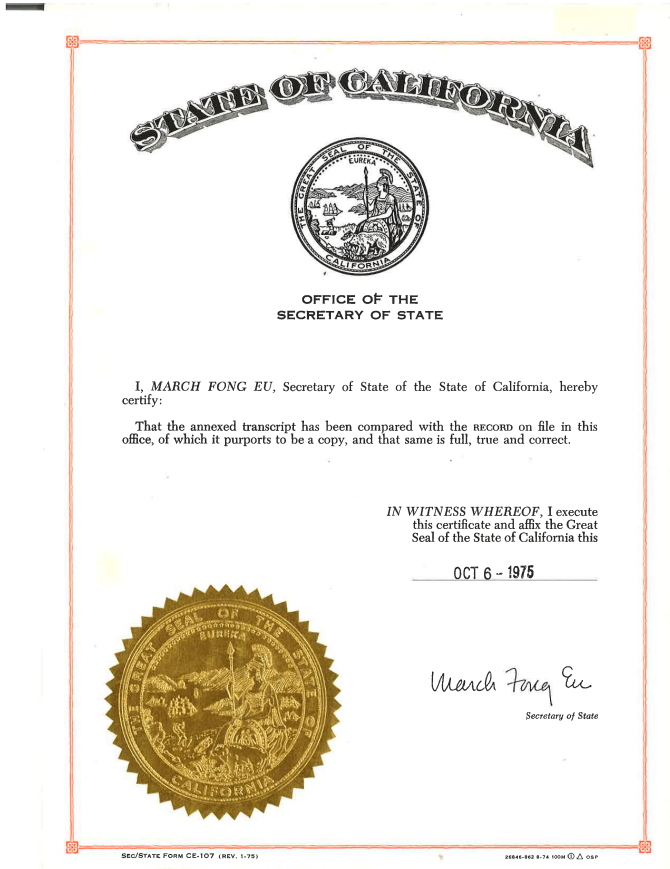
LA MESA
History Center

**lookout
avenue**

The NEWSLETTER of the LA MESA HISTORY CENTER

VOLUME 50, #1

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS



The La Mesa Historical Society was officially incorporated with the State of California on October 6, 1975.

The La Mesa History Center is excited to launch into our 50th Anniversary year. The Board is working on a series of events and activities to highlight and honor not only the history of the organization, but also of the people who have given of their time, money, and other resources over the past five decades. Here are some highlights for the upcoming anniversary year:

Oral History Interviews with founding members

Current Board member Sharon Smith has been leading our efforts to gather the memories

and recollections of founding members of the La Mesa Historical Society such as Carol Lockwood, Pat Kettler, and Donna Regan, as well as other past society presidents such as Donna Niemeier.

Founders Exhibit

The next planned exhibit for the McKinney House will honor the group's founders and highlight the role that the La Mesa Quilters group played in funding the Society's early activities.

Community Archiving Event

Do you have a story or photos of La Mesa that you would like to contribute to the La Mesa History Center archival collections? Sign up for a time to record your story and scan up to 10 photos at our upcoming Community Archiving Event. This event is tentatively scheduled for May 3rd and sign-ups will begin March 29th. More details will be sent out the last week of March for how to register for a timeslot.

Display Building and Shade Trellis

Work is scheduled to begin on our new display building and shade trellis. These new landscape features are much needed additions to our landscape that will allow us to share some of our larger artifacts on a more permanent display basis.

Annual Picnic

Save the Date for our annual picnic on Sunday June 29nd from 4pm to 6pm.

Online Collection Catalog

Our volunteers have been working hard to catalog our archival collections, and we are looking to launch a new online interface in July to allow easy searching of our collections.

And of course, we can look forward to another fantastic Annual Home Tour in November. Be sure to stop by the McKinney House and Archives any Saturday from 1pm to 4pm to see everything we have going on!

**Veronica Martzahl, President
La Mesa History Center**



Stop by the archives and buy a book on area history.

On behalf of the La Mesa History Center Board of Directors, we thank our Jewel and Benefactor members for their generosity and continued support in helping us preserve and celebrate the rich heritage of our community!

Jewel Members

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Ed Blackman | Ron and Vickie Cady | Peter Camana |
| Sheryl Castro | Charlene and James Craig | Mr. and Mrs. Robert Duggan |
| Andrea Flint-Gogek | John and Rita Folsom | Norm Hapke |
| Linda Lee Hill | Dave Kesner | Brenda Leek |
| Larry Liebermensch | Jeremy and Katie Martinson | Vince and Kay McGrath |
| Jonathan Parker and Mary Earnest | Pamela Rader | Jeff Raybould |
| Eldon and Darlene Vogt | Leslie Witherspoon | The Rotary Club of La Mesa |
| | The La Mesa Police Officers Association | |

Benefactor Members

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Keith Achman | Lisa and Dan Kincaid | Jacob Liebenmensch |
| Ester Drew Long | Donna Niemeier | John and Valerie Richardson |
| Teresa Starrs | Jim Stieringer | Susan and Michael Stowe |

HISTORY ROUNDTABLE PREVIEWS GROSSMONT/MT HELIX' ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AND MASTER ARCHITECT SIM BRUCE RICHARDS & PARTNER ARTIST JAMES HUBBELL'S LEGACY

Thanks to all who attended our Roundtable Lecture on Grossmont/Mt Helix's architectural heritage associated with the History Center's 2024 Home Tour "Peaks of Preservation" held September 24th, 2024.

Historian Jim Newland presented on the Mid-Century architectural history of the Grossmont/Mt Helix communities as well as previewed the amazing, featured tour homes designed by noted architects and builders including Sim Bruce Richards, Richard George Wheeler, John Mortenson, Eckel & Smith, and Mabie & Mintz.

Following Newland's presentation, Modern San Diego's Keith York presented on the landmark architectural career of Sim Bruce Richards, including Richards' collaborations with artist/artisan James Hubbell. Richards and Hubbell's work in the Tour's Engstrand House was featured as York helped describe some of the duos' key work that can be found in the Grossmont/Mt Helix neighborhoods. The capacity crowd at the Grossmont Healthcare District's auditorium were all primed for the soon to-be sold out Home Tour.



*Jim Newland presenting to capacity crowd.
Photo courtesy Steven Churchill*



*Roundtable title slide.
Photo courtesy Steven Churchill*

If you were not one of the Roundtable Lecture attendees, do not fear.

The video is now posted on the History Center's YouTube page:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoayqyRWk4I&t=15s>

Keep an eye out for the next History Center Roundtable presentations.



Keith York, Sim Bruce Richards biographer, provided a great summary of Richards' local work, especially with artist/artisan James Hubbell.

Photo courtesy Steven Churchill.

SITE AND LANDSCAPE RENOVATIONS UPDATE

Slowly we continue to move forward on the multi-year site renovation project. Hopefully by the time you read this we will have broken ground on the display building and shade trellis which will provide more opportunities for outdoor interaction with the public and allow us to interpret local history to a wider audience. After those are completed, the next step will be interpretive signage. A \$1000 grant from the La Mesa Rotary has helped kick that project off. We are still looking for an additional \$4000 to fund the rest of the exterior signage which will tell stories about local history to those walking the site.

If you would like to help us cross the finishline please consider making a gift to the landscape campaign. You can mail in a check to our PO Box 882, La Mesa, CA. 91944 or donate with this website link https://lamesahistory.com/product/variable_donation/. All variable donations will count toward the campaign. Thank you for your support (and your patience.)



Construction has begun on the display shed and the shade trellis.

Check us out on social media!

On March 5 we are launching “What or Where is it Wednesday” where we will post fun historic photos with a current shot as well as photos of interesting objects from our collection.

Find us at:
lamesahistorycenter.com.

Picnic Time!

Save the date!
More information coming soon.

Sunday
June 29, 2025

4 - 6 pm
at the McKinney House
8369 University Ave,
La Mesa

18TH ANNUAL LA MESA HISTORY CENTER HOME TOUR “PEAKS OF PRESERVATION”

History Center Revisits Grossmont/Mt Helix

“Peaks of Preservation” Home Tour

Featuring Mid-Century Gems of Grossmont/ Mt Helix

The La Mesa History Center Home Tour returned its focus to the view towards, and from, the rocky hills and peaks of the Grossmont/Mt. Helix community on Saturday November 2, 2024.

This year’s tour provided five amazing examples of prime Mid-Century Grossmont/Mt Helix gems, all dating from 1958 to 1964; and featuring master architects *Sim Bruce Richards* and *Richard Wheeler*; custom builders *John Mortenson*, *Eckel/Smith* and *Mabie & Mintz*, as well as the designs and artisanship of *Gerald Jerome*, *Dilliard Harwell* and *James Hubbell*.

The spectacular tour homes, with their Mid-Century design pedigrees, presented home tour ticket holders the opportunity for experiencing this area’s distinctive place in the San Diego region’s Post-WWII Modern legacy.

Thanks again to our generous Homeowner participants for providing this unique opportunity to visit these well-preserved “Peak examples” of classic Mid-Century Grossmont/Mt Helix.

In addition to our Home Tour participant families opening their homes, our crew of dedicated volunteers, our sponsors and of course all those who purchased tickets in helping us have our second “sold-out” Home Tour!



Two of the Mid-Century homes that featured both exquisite exterior and interior settings.

Special recognition goes to our Platinum Sponsors:



Andrea Flint-Gogek, REALTOR®
Aaron Duggan, Broker/Owner



La Mesa Village
Association



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619-464-9535





La Mesa History Center Home Tour check-in staff Steven Christiansen and Veronica Martzahl (L) and (R) Docent coordinator Sheryl Castro and former LMHS President Donna Niemeier assisting our docents undertaking their essential tour support roles.



Appreciative homeowners such as Lauren Jones (L) accept kudos on their beautiful homes as they answer questions while showing off authentic period homes to tour guests.



Tour guests used our complimentary Shuttle Buses which helped transport over 500 tour guests and volunteers through the tour route



Homeowner Jolene Harwell and docent Mary Goins share house stories while Tour Guests admire Dilliard Harwell's classic 1967 Corvette—a period appropriate “artifact” of the 1960 house.



Owner Annie Neil (L) and special guest docent Keith York of Modern San Diego (R) share the stories of Engstrand House and its architect Sim Bruce Richards and artist James Hubbell.



Above, right: Smiling guests reflect the positive attitudes and experiences of this year's Home Tour.

Below: Owners such as Adam Jones with docent Rene Vigil (L) and Michael Newman and Matthew Wesenburg (R) (at counter and in center) share their home's incredible restoration and rehabilitation stories with visitors.





Period interiors and amazing artisanship trigger guest discussions. Teacher House (top L & bottom R); Castetter House (top r); James Hubbell chandelier at Engstrand House (bot L)

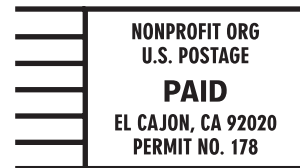


Grossmont High School once again served as our Tour Shuttle Center. Thanks Again to the school staff and to Directors Connie and Lynn Baer for opening the GHS Museum for Tour Guests.



McKINNEY HOUSE MUSEUM
AND HISTORY CENTER
ARCHIVES RESEARCH FACILITY

8369 University Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91942



LMHC MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box 882
La Mesa, CA 91942

A dark green banner with a yellow and purple border. It contains contact information for the La Mesa History Center, including a website, phone number, Facebook page, and Instagram handle, each accompanied by its respective icon.

 lamesahistory.com  [LaMesaHistoryCenter](https://www.facebook.com/LaMesaHistoryCenter)

 619.466.0197  [@LaMesaHistoryCenter](https://www.instagram.com/LaMesaHistoryCenter)

The La Mesa History Center is an all-volunteer non-profit 501c3 corporation charged with preserving the history of the greater La Mesa area. The La Mesa History Center operates the Rev. Henry A. McKinney House, a 1908 House Museum and the History Center Archives Research Facility located at 8369 University Avenue in La Mesa, California.

The **Lookout Avenue** is the official quarterly publication of the La Mesa History Center. Closing dates for submitting contributions are the 1st of every March, June, September, and December. Word document and jpeg image files preferred.

Submit contributions via email, or email the Editor at info@lamesahistory.com