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new President



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ABOUTTIMES

the newsletter of the Burbank Historical Society



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

ALOHA! Welcome to a new decade.

I was thinking about the last decade and all the changes that happened right in front of our eyes in Burbank. Think of some of the places that we cherished, that are not in town any more. How about the fire in the hills. Think about friends and neighbors that have left, and others that returned back to Burbank and noticed change. Yes, new things have taken the place of those memories, and the newer ones start to take root.

On a daily basis, a lot of components come together to make up Burbank's history. That is what makes the Historical Society such a special place. We try to capture and preserve the images, but also the stories.

We had a group tour the museum the other day and a gentleman saw his grandfather's store in an image on the wall. I was fortunate enough to hear him recall the tales he remembered about that location.

Our history contains a lot of riches. That is why we are starting to digitize our archives. It's a daunting task that requires a lot of effort, but we can't let those precious images and documents fade away, or risk the possibility of losing them. We are still working on getting the process down, but we will get there. The images can then be shared with many more generations, and hopefully the stories they invoke will continue.

I would like to end this note to all of our members, volunteers, sponsors, and friends by saying it is truly a humbling honor to be elected as the president of the Burbank Historical Society. I will do my best to represent and promote our history. I feel it is my calling to continue the efforts that were created before us. With all of your help and input, we will continue to

have a truly wonderful place where people can go to find the cherished history of Burbank.

Sincerely,
Carey Briggs
President



BURBANK ON PARADE

by Sue Baldaseroni

Gather round! Gather round! Burbank On Parade is back and bursting at the seams to parade down Olive Avenue once again. It has been 75 years since the first parade took place in 1945, marching from City Hall traveling west on Olive to the recreation center.

Burbank On Parade began as a celebration of the surrender of Germany on May 7th. The first parade was simply called the May Festival and was sponsored by the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and backed by the merchants' division of the Senior Chamber of Commerce, and the City's Park and Recreation Department.

The Junior Chamber was successful in obtaining \$2,500 from the Burbank City Council for the purpose of advertising the city and raising the spirits of the people in attendance after the long war.

The first parade included a variety of weekend activities such as beard-growing contests, muscle contests, performances by the local school glee clubs, and the crowning of the May Queen.

In 1946, searching for a new name that would generate more excitement for the up and coming event, the

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BURBANK ON PARADE (CONT'D)

Junior Chamber consisting of all men under the age of 35, renamed the May Festival "Burbank On Parade" stemming from a sports writer column called "Sports On Parade." Those who were unable to attend the event but able to afford a television set, were able to view the parade when broadcast over an experimental station licensed as W6XAO. The transmitter was located on Mt. Lee, overlooking Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley.



Midway, 1950. Credit: Burbank Historical Society



Junior Chamber of Commerce, 1948. Credit: Burbank Historical Society

In 1947, Mary Francis Reynolds was crowned the city's May Queen. This was her big break into show biz, as she went on to become one of the most talented actresses in Hollywood. Burbank's own Debbie Reynolds.



Debbie Reynolds (left side), 1948. Credit: Burbank Historical Society

In 1948, the parade event was extended from three days to five days to allow more people to enjoy the new midway added to the commercial and industrial Exposition, allowing citizens to enjoy all the articles manufactured in their own hometown.

In 1950, Burbank On Parade had grown beyond the dreams of the city and the originators, from a May festival attracting approximately 50,000 people, to the parade that was considered the third largest event of its kind in the entire State of California. That year Burbank On Parade attracted over 500,000 people, only surpassed by the Pomona State Fair and the California State Fair in Sacramento.



City Employees Association, 1950. Credit: Burbank Historical Society

The parade began to deteriorate when the organizers began hiring out the task to professional event organizers. In 1957, the Junior Chamber discontinued sponsoring, and Burbank On Parade became just a memory.

In 1981, Burbank's own Sandy Dennis revived the parade from a week long event to a one day themed parade with floats and participants in themed costumes. The parade has gone through many changes and growing pains into what it is today, but Sandy just knew the people of Burbank wanted the tradition to continue. Sandy is no longer with us, but her spirit still continues in each float and participant going down Olive Avenue for the April 18, 2020, Burbank On Parade.

Burbank On Parade has been graced with a cast of Grand Marshalls—Debbie Reynolds, Donald O'Connor, Ron Howard, Jan & Dean, George Lopez, Andy Griffith, Alan Hale, Danny Bonaducci, Anson Williams, and Brooks Gardner, just to name a few.



PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

by Marie Dennis

We're serious about preserving Burbank's history, and so are our City officials. So much so that in 1994, the City passed the Historic Resource Management Ordinance which outlined specific procedures for designating and maintaining historic properties. In addition, the City also established the Burbank Heritage Commission to serve in an advisory capacity to the City Council on matters pertaining to the historic preservation process.

The Heritage Commissioners, like those of us in the Historical Society, serve as stewards of our city's history, but do you know how the two groups differ? Both are aligned in their commitment to preserving Burbank's heritage, but the primary difference for each is focus. The Historical Society is dedicated to the collection and preservation of historical artifacts and records pertaining to the City, while the Commission's focus is on the preservation of historic places and structures within the City.

There are, of course, structural differences between both groups, but one major detail underscores the relationship between the City and the Heritage Commission. The five members of the Commission are appointed by the City Council, a fact that explains why the qualification process for the Commission is more rigorous. All five are Burbank residents who are 'required to have a demonstrated competence or knowledge in historic preservation'. And if possible, the professional backgrounds of at least two of those members should include a field related to historic preservation.

Do you know who your current Heritage Commissioners are? You should know at least one since he also serves as a Historical Society board member, but there's a good chance you may be acquainted with a few of the others. Your Burbank Heritage Commissioners are:

- Lisa Robertiello (Chair)
- Arthur Solis (Vice-Chair)
- Donald Baldaseroni
- Karen Volpei-Gussow
- Marisa Di Domenico

This overview is just scratching the surface regarding the Commission's duties, and the importance of its role in preserving Burbank's heritage. So, why are we shining a spotlight on the Heritage Commission and its work. Curious?? Here's the answer. May is National Historic Preservation Month!

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Burbank Historical Society

115 N Lomita Street, Burbank, CA 91506
 burbankhistoricalsoc.org • 818-841-6333

So, in 1973 a joint resolution was introduced to designate May 6-12, 1973 as National Preservation Week. The resolution was signed into law that year by President Richard Nixon and the celebration week was eventually extended to a month in 2005 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

To commemorate the celebration and highlight the importance of preserving the heritage of our great city, the Heritage Commission and the Historical Society have planned a special program on Saturday, May 9. Please join us and meet your Heritage Commissioners in person, learn about their mission, and hear about their successes and current projects. The Historical Society's "Skeet" Lynn Wright will also be discussing local architecture and preservation, and then we'll conclude with a question and answer session.

Is there a historic preservation question you've always wanted to ask? Do you know what three properties in Burbank are on the National Register of Historic Places? Do you know why Burbank received a grade of A in the Los Angeles Conservancy's 2014 County-wide Preservation Report Card? You can find the answers to these questions online, but why not spend the afternoon with us instead and learn all this first-hand. Great topics, great conversations, and refreshments. Hope to see you then!



GORDON R HOWARD MUSEUM
115 N Lomita St, Burbank, CA 91506
Open Saturdays & Sundays 1:00pm to 4:00pm

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



We have two very special programs planned for you in April and May, so please remember to mark your calendars. And don't forget:

- Admission to our programs is free.
- We're next to the Creative Arts Center at George Izay Park with free parking off Clark Street.
- Questions? Call us at 818-841-6333.

APRIL 4 • 2PM – RESTORING THE INDIAN

Are you a fan of motorcycles? Are you a fan of history? Join us as we officially unveil the newest addition to our museum – a rare 1911 Indian V-twin motorcycle. Learn what it took to restore this gem to its original glory!

RESTORING THE INDIAN
APR 4 2020 | 2:00 PM

Learn about the remarkable journey of this wonderful piece of early American engineering.

GORDON R HOWARD MUSEUM
1100 W CLARK AVE | BURBANK CA

MAY 9 • 2PM – CELEBRATING HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH

Join us to celebrate Burbank's rich heritage. Program details are listed in the flyer below.

CELEBRATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH
Join the Burbank Heritage Commission & Burbank Historical Society
May 9 2PM

Program details:
• Meet your Heritage Commissioners
• Hear "Skeet" Lynn Wright's presentation on local architecture and preservation from 2 to 3pm followed by Q&A
Refreshments will be provided

Facebook Information: @BurbankHeritageCommission
For more information, call (818) 238-5250

GORDON R HOWARD MUSEUM
1100 W Clark Ave, Burbank CA