



EAGLE ROCK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spring, 2017

Tour Los Angeles Ragtime with Galen Wilkes

Ragtime pianist and historian Galen Wilkes presents a look at the world of ragtime in Los Angeles at the turn of the 20th century on April 18 at 7 PM at the Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock 2225 Colorado Blvd. This historic tour is accompanied by hundreds of photos and images plus performances on video. Galen jam-packs the program with all kinds of local history from L.A., a city bustling with bands, vaudevillians, publishers, and popular events. The landmark era lasted over 2 decades, giving birth to jazz. The presentation is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

The first time Galen was introduced to something from the early 20th century, he was 3 years old. And he distinctly remembers it! A friend and co-worker of

his dad's, Jack Whitaker, had a player piano. Being an engineer, he came up with a clever way to have the manual player play itself. He connected the bellows to a vacuum cleaner hose, which ran through a hole in the floor down to a vacuum in the basement, where you couldn't hear it. A tug on a string to the electric socket at the top of the stairs turned it off and on. Pretty ingenious, for adults or kids! As Galen got into his adolescent years, he continued down the road of Turn of the Century wonders, antiques, and arts & entertainment. He became most enthralled with silent films and ragtime music.

Wilkes has been a devotee of the ragtime era for over 40 years. He has hosted 2 radio series, "The Ragtime Years" (1976 to 1978) and "It's Rag Time!" (1980 to 1987). He has interviewed many people tied with the music, including original players and composers going back to the 19th century. His interests focus on the arts/entertainment and folkways/culture of early 20th century United States, and he was a primary factor in the Los Angeles ragtime revival of the 1970s and 1980s.

As a composer, Galen's current releases include his excellent CD, *Ragged Rhythm*. In 1985, he founded and conducted The Palm Leaf Ragtime Orchestra, a period-style group rendering vintage ragtime-era music in new arrangements of his own creation. He and dance-master Desmond Strobel also created The Ragtime Ball, a series of special evenings in the Los Angeles area with dancers in period attire competing in cakewalk contests.

LOS ANGELES RAGTIME
WITH
GALEN WILKES
CENTER FOR THE ARTS,
EAGLE ROCK
2225 COLORADO
TUESDAY,
APRIL 18, 7:00
FREE AND
OPEN TO ALL
EAGLE ROCK VALLEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
VISIT OUR WEBSITE EAGLEROCKHISTORY.ORG

Rehab Right

Many of us bought our Eagle Rock homes for the area's feeling of community and its architectural character, both of which date back to the time when Eagle Rock was an independent city. While the ERVHS has considered the creation of one or more Historic Preservation Overlay Zones, there does not seem to be a clear grassroots desire in the community at large. The reason for this may be that for the most part the community is zoned to allow only single-family homes and there appears to be no threat to the community's character. This is now starting to change. We are becoming more aware that there are some parts of the community characterized by single-family homes where the underlying zoning permits multiple unit construction. Additionally while property values continue to rise, our community is still considered affordable compared to other parts of the city, with some new buyers and longtime owners looking to enlarge and modernize their relatively modest sized homes. However, it is possible to expand and upgrade a home while retaining its historic quality.

A good resource for this is a book that was published in 1978 by the City of Oakland called Rehab Right: How to Rehabilitate Your Oakland House Without Sacrificing Architectural Assets, The 150 page book recently became available for download as a PDF on that city's website. Although the book focuses on Oakland's historical architecture, many of these styles and variations are found throughout Eagle Rock.

Published with a homeowner in mind, Rehab Right presents language and illustrations that are clear, simple and still valid today. The book begins with an overview of architectural rehabilitation and how it relates to preservation and restoration. Here one finds simple guidelines to bring a home's original style back to life, and advice on balancing your personal style and aesthetic as a homeowner with the character of your home. The next chapter details architectural styles, from 1860s Italianate through War Tract housing of the 1940s with descriptions and beautiful drawings providing information to identify the style of a particular home.

The book guides the homeowner through important

project planning: budgeting, setting project goals, determining relevant building codes, deciding whether to do it yourself or hire a pro. This is followed by detailed information on how to rehab exterior and interior elements, from repointing masonry to electrical upgrades, from fixing a squeaky floor to replacing glass panes in a door.

More than simply conserving the materials and effort embodied in a house or its market value, preservation fortifies the character of our places; our neighborhoods and community. We hope you'll take a look at Rehab Right, and that in its pages, you'll find a valuable technical resource provided in the spirit of maintaining our local history.

Frank Parrello

The objectives of the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society

- to preserve, clarify through research and to perpetuate the history of Eagle Rock Valley
- to make this history available to students, researchers, libraries and all interested persons
- to preserve and protect our local landmarks, especially the Eagle Rock

Membership is open to all who would further these objectives

Public Archive Hours 10 to 12 every Saturday
at the Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock
2225 Colorado Blvd. Eagle Rock CA 90041
for information call 323-257-1357

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Visit our website at:

eaglerockhistory.org

It's time to renew your membership. If you have already paid your 2017 dues, thank you. If not, please take a moment and mail your check now. If we have not heard from you, a dues form and envelope are included with this newsletter.

Thanks, we depend on you.

Eagle Rock High's Class Plaque Tradition

When Eagle Rock High opened in 1927, it was envisioned as a progressive school. Vassar graduate, athlete and pet, Miss Helen Babson, was appointed principal. In keeping with this ideal of a well-rounded education, signed, student-made artwork was included in the first yearbook. The first class plaque was probably fabricated in the school's metal shop; it was a simple, bronze "29", embedded in a colored concrete square, placed in the area outside the auditorium doors.

Thereafter, this tradition of a student-designed and fabricated plaque was continued with various materials and increasingly sophisticated designs, often reflecting the events or styles of the time. When the selection of a class name began in Winter 1935, the designs then reflected the class name. Thus

the "Skyscrapers" of Summer 37 depicted the recently completed Los Angeles City Hall. Recent students are probably unfamiliar with the winter (January) and summer (June) graduations that occurred each year until 1970.

The use of terrazzo began in 1939, possibly due to the familiarity with this ancient Roman technique by Italian Americans who had come to Eagle Rock in numbers in the 1920's and 30's. Marble chips are embedded in colored cement and bordered in metal strips, then polished to reveal a wide range of possible designs. Relatives of students, sometimes incorporating student-fabricated elements, probably made the plaques. The designs still came from students, reflecting class names and the times, thus the "Bombardiers" and "Liberators" of 1945.



Our Town, Our History

The tradition continued until 1970 when the original school buildings were replaced with the current campus. Charles Hamer '31, then principal, had the plaques removed and stored safely, as the plaza in front of the auditorium was to be replaced. A tradition of putting sentimental items under the plaques had arisen. Unfortunately, these "time capsules" had degenerated due to soil moisture. The plaques were placed in their current location in 1971, when construction was completed.

When the Alumni Association was founded in 1994, they discovered that the tradition of class plaques had been abandoned beginning in 1991. As they felt that it was an important part of the Eagle spirit, they appropriated funds and sought out a craftsman who could continue the work and refurbish the existing plaques. Master terrazzo craftsman Michael Menegazzi, in collaboration with the association and class representatives, fabricated plaques for the missing classes based on designs from the totem. The alumni resolved to continue the tradition in collaboration with the school and the graduating class, an effort that continues until today. As of 2017, there will be 130 class plaques in place in the Alumni Plaza in front of the Eagle Rock High School auditorium.

To contribute to plaque maintenance or student scholarships, write the Soaring Eagle Education Foundation. P.O. Box 411236, Eagle Rock, CA 90041.



Mike Menegazzi placing the plaque for the 2016 class in the Alumni Plaza at Eagle Rock High.

Women's Twentieth Century Club —keeping their history alive

The Women's Twentieth Century Club of Eagle Rock (WTCC) has been a seminal institution in Eagle Rock since a small group organized the Club in 1903. There were very few residents here, but the women who started it were very forward thinking. They saw a need to make their community better, and together they were very successful. The women were part of a larger movement sweeping the country that saw women making more of a difference outside of their households. The Women's Club was instrumental in collecting funding for the first Eagle Rock Public Library (later rebuilt and now the site of the Center of the Arts, Eagle Rock), for providing scholarships for women attending Occidental College and for nursing students during wartime, among many other vital community functions. In 1961 several WTCC members were instrumental in the forming of Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society.

Throughout the years, the well-organized women kept a lot of the paperwork, notes, event programs, menus, financial records, scrapbooks and photographs. Over one hundred years of materials were enough to fill twenty-eight boxes. Through the work of a succession of club historians, including Karen Warren, the records were organized, but had no real searchable catalogue. During the lead-up to the centennial of the clubhouse, it became apparent that the club had a rich history that needed to be protected and more accessible.



The original logo of the Women's Club who's current motto is "Knowledge is Power".

At a chance meeting between club members and Dale Ann Stieber, Special Collections Librarian/College Archivist at Occidental College, Dale proposed to partner with WTCC to process the collection using club funding. Assistant College Archivist and Metadata Specialist Anne Mar made several visits to the club to ask members what they wanted to accomplish. After the initial collection assessment, Anne chose Genevieve Maxwell to do the processing. Over the next year, from October 2015

to October 2016, she worked outside of her normal workday at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to catalog the entire collection. "I found the project very rewarding. I was able to interact with several club members to hear their hopes and concerns for the preservation of the club's history." She gave two presentations about the project to the club members and created a finding aid containing detailed information about the collection and the location of the items (online at <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c88s4vkd/>).

Eagle Rock owes much to the Women's Twentieth Century Club for their role in shaping our neighborhood. Luckily for all of us, but especially the club itself, through the work of this talented team, the record of their work will be preserved for future women (and men) to gain insight and inspiration.

—David Dellinger



**at the Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock
2225 Colorado Blvd. Eagle Rock CA, 90041**

LOS ANGELES RAGTIME!!

PRESENTED BY GALEN WILKES

TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2017 7:00

**THE CALIFORNIA SOCIETY
MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC,
SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 2017, 1:00**

THE HIGHLAND THEATRE

A LEGACY UNCOVERED

TUESDAY, OCT. 17, 2017, 7:00

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

E-mail _____

Membership Category:

Individual \$20 Business \$35 New
 Family \$25 Life \$300 Renewal

Will you help with the ongoing activities of the ERVHS?

Yes No
 Archives Newsletter Oral history
 Meetings Fundraising E-mail me
 Publicity Displays to help

Other _____

Clip and mail to : **ERVHS**
c/o Center for the Arts
2225 Colorado Blvd.
Eagle Rock, CA 90041

Date _____

The Member's Corner



Renee Dominique

How appropriate that our newest Life member is Renee! She is a third generation Eagle Rocker. Her great grandmother purchased a hillside home near Sparklett's and Occidental College in 1926. Renee's grandmother even remembered when a wooly mammoth skeleton was discovered at Sparklett's during the 1939 excavation!

Renee graduated from both Eagle Rock High School and Occidental College. She has been tirelessly civically active supporting numerous local organizations over the years including TERA, CERB, and the Historical Society to name a few. She received the distinct honor of receiving the Women in Business "Non-profit Employee of the Year 2008" awarded by the California State Legislature for her work at Center for the Arts Eagle Rock. Currently she serves on the Board of Directors of the Women's Twentieth Century Club and is on the Development Committee for Solheim Senior Community. Renee also received a Distinguished Service Award from the Kiwanis Club for Service to the Community.

When she's not event planning, Renee enjoys her life with her long time partner of 20+ years, Brian Smith and their French bulldog, Auggie. Renee appreciates being a part of a community that feels like a village in a large metropolitan city. She states, "It's great to be part of a community that has improved by the actions of the dedicated residents who care about where they live...It's very easy to stay local here."

Thank you, Renee, for your incredible commitment to our "village." Your dedication is inspiring!

-Katie Taylor