



# EAGLE ROCK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Winter, 2012

## Now What?

As we celebrated the centennial, a number of initiatives were begun to enhance our community and continue our history of innovation and activism. On Tuesday, January 17, 7:00, at the Center For The Arts, Eagle Rock, the Eagle Rock Valley Historical Society will welcome representatives of some of these efforts. The participants will outline progress and give us a glimpse of the future. Light refreshments will be served. Our meetings are free and open to all.

### Xeriscape the Medians

The Median Advisory Committee was organized by Councilmember Jose Huizar's office late in 2009 to propose a permanent solution for the landscaping of our medians. The irrigation systems were in disrepair and the plant materials inappropriate for our climate.

Focusing on the use of native and drought-tolerant plants, water and power conservation, and green technologies, the Committee's aims were to increase

the attractiveness of the medians while reducing maintenance requirements and cost.

The committee has produced a design for a pilot median in the 1800 block of Colorado Boulevard, in front of the Renaissance Arts Academy. This will be presented during this meeting as part of the committee's effort to gather community input.

For more information:

[www.urbanforestcollaborativeATgmailDOTcom](http://www.urbanforestcollaborativeATgmailDOTcom)

### Document the Region

The surprising acquisition of the bound archives of the Northeast Newspapers raised the question of how to preserve and present this mass of material of regional importance. Occidental College's long association with northeast Los Angeles and the new administration's enthusiasm for collaborative efforts made a partnership of the Society, the College Library, and Highland Park Heritage Trust seem a solution.

The group has been meeting to discuss the methods and fundraising needed to digitize the newspapers and facilitate the gathering and distribution of regional historical information while preserving the rights of the individual organizations and maximizing the community's involvement in the process. The group is financing safe storage and has begun a comprehensive inventory.

Foundation funding is being sought to plan how best to manage and distribute this material.

Visit [eaglerockhistory.org](http://eaglerockhistory.org)

### Buy the Canyon Trail

The Eagle Rock Hiking Trail is owned and maintained by the Collaborative Eagle Rock Beautiful, a non-profit organization founded in 2001 to bring local volunteers and agencies together to enrich and beautify Eagle Rock.

The Trail is only a small part of an overall effort to create a Historic Park preserving the natural surroundings around the Eagle Rock. Exploring 4.5

## EAGLE ROCK WHAT NOW?

- XERISCAPE THE MEDIANS
- DOCUMENT THE REGION
- TAKE BACK THE BOULEVARD
- BUY THE CANYON TRAIL
- ALL OF THE ABOVE

**4 SHORT PRESENTATIONS AND Q & A**

**EAGLE ROCK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
CENTER FOR THE ARTS, EAGLE ROCK  
2225 COLORADO BLVD.  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 17 7:00  
FREE AND OPEN TO ALL**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [EAGLEROCKHISTORY.ORG](http://EAGLEROCKHISTORY.ORG)**

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## Members and Friends

### The Centennial year is almost over

I hesitate to mention that, as Eagle Rock was incorporated on March 1, 1911, the centennial is not quite over. Fear not, I have no more events to propose. Delightfully, the celebrations ended with a collaboration with the Northeast Veterans Day parade that, by including the centennial, was expanded and made more enjoyable. We look forward to channeling the enthusiasm and spirit generated this year into this important yearly tribute to our veterans.

The efforts of many community members culminated in a delightful gala held at Chateau Emanuel, lent for the night by the Kvassay family. Eagle Rocker's looked their best at this evening of dining and dancing and the rare opportunity to enjoy and explore the large estate, long subject to curiosity. A wide range of folks joined together to celebrate our community, share in its success and look to its exciting future.

### Our second 50 years begin

Our first meeting of 2012, the Historical Society's 51st year, will be devoted to publicizing a few of the many projects which are contemplated to continue the record of innovation of which our community may be justly proud. Our dinner at "Fatty's" was a great success (see page 5). The slate of board members and officers; Eric Warren, President; Fred Guapo, Vice President; Katie Taylor, Treasurer; Karen Warren, Secretary; John de la Fontaine, Karin Heyl, Deborah Huntington, Don Krotser, John Miller, Corey Stargel, Sarah Stargel, and Doris Thielen, was elected by acclamation. I am pleased to be able to serve the organization for another two years, hopefully my last term in this office. You will note that our annual dues are due (see the box below). Your prompt payment saves postage and volunteer labor.

### Historic preservation working group

Incoming board member, Frank Parrello, comes to us with considerable expertise in the field along with an understanding of our previous community efforts and the intricacies of historic designation in our city. We will be exploring the formation of a working group of Society and community members to further this vital objective of the Society. We hope to give new momentum to this effort, which has suffered from lack of focus in recent years.

### A personal note

It has been a pleasure serving as your president the last ten years. I look forward to continuing our efforts to preserve and disseminate our history and to save and enhance our historic resources. I appreciate all of your volunteer efforts and support for the Society. We couldn't do it without all of you. Thank you.

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acres of open space between Glendale and Pasadena, this 1-mile trail ascends from Alatorre Park and leads to an overlook adjacent to the Rock.

Recognizing the value of open space in our urban area, John Stillion had the vision and diplomacy to negotiate the purchase of the land. Thanks to the many generous contributions of community members and donors, only \$72,000 remains to be paid.

For further information, see [www.cerb.us](http://www.cerb.us) or call 323-255-9400

### Take Back the Boulevard

Attendees at the TBTB community meeting, held at the Women's 20th Century Club, said they wanted their boulevard back from speeding traffic. Back so that they could cross Colorado Boulevard safely, patronize local merchants and live along a community-centric boulevard.

The TBTB committee brings together many community groups in its efforts to create a broad-based representative body. The committee seeks to gather information and input from all of the stakeholders in the Boulevard.

The focus of the initiative is on the public right of way from Ave 64 to the 2 Freeway. The plan has to be achievable, phaseable and community-based. The 2011 City of Los Angeles Bike Plan that calls for a bike path on Colorado Boulevard will aid with the overall efforts. If we are ready with a completed plan, it may be implemented as funds become available.

If you have any questions, e-mail [info@takebacktheblvd.org](mailto:info@takebacktheblvd.org)

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." --Margaret Mead

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**Visit us at [eaglerockhistory.org](http://eaglerockhistory.org) or in person  
Saturdays 10 a.m. to noon at the CFAER**

**It's time to renew your membership. If you have already paid your 2012 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.**

## Remembering our Losses Dedicating Ourselves to Furthering Their Work

Communities are built on the hard work of individuals who dedicate themselves to changing them for the better. As we have celebrated our Centennial, three such individuals, all long time members of the Historical Society, have passed on.

### Scott Wilson

My first acquaintance with Scott was as the star of the faculty follies "In Mr. Wilson's Garden". Later he sponsored my Eagle Rock High School graduating class, one of many.

"Dad was touting hydroponics, ecological balance and using the environment to make the world a better place long before it was cool to do so," his daughter Christine Richards recalled with a laugh. "His real talent was instilling a love of nature in young men and women. Hundreds of kids have grown up under his mentorship."

While he was still at Eagle Rock, he worked with community groups to plant trees on Townsend Avenue, Eagle Rock and Colorado Boulevards and many other streets. Later, he planted over 700 trees on Fiji Hill above Occidental College.

When he retired from teaching after 30 years in the Los Angeles City school system, he formed the non-profit North East Trees, an organization that for 20 years has planted over 50,000 trees and designed and built over 35 parks in the Los Angeles area.

"It's not about how many trees you plant," Wilson said in a recent interview. "It's about the right tree in the right place and about how many of those trees live."

Wilson was clipping red blossoms from a firewheel tree in the rose garden of his Eagle Rock home to decorate his church when he lost consciousness and fell Nov. 5, said Mark B. Kenyon, executive director of North East Trees, "I believe this is how Scott might have chosen his final act to be: in service to his community — and in a tree."

### Lucy Spurgeon

Lucy was born and raised in Eagle Rock and graduated from Eagle Rock High in 1944.

When she returned to the community after making a career as a legal secretary, she poured her enthusiasm into community organizations.

Linda Allen became aware that Lucy was always helping, constantly doing things to support not only the Chamber of Commerce but other Eagle Rock groups as



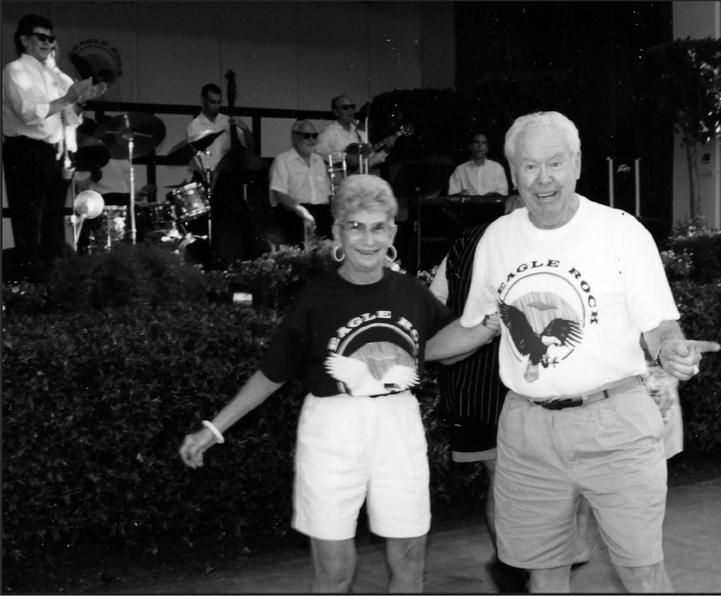
In 1964, the ladies of the Women's Twentieth Century Club led the community in replanting trees on a widened Colorado Boulevard. Club members, California Federal Bank president Jack Topping, Eagle Rock High students, and horticulture teacher Scott Wilson plant in front of the Department of Water and Power office. (Photograph by Joe Friezer.)

well. "And, she says, "as I got to know her better I saw her overwhelming dedication to the community. So many times I've heard her say 'I love Eagle Rock.'" When Linda became president of the Chamber, they began the Downtown Directions effort, which as a new idea encountered a series of obstacles. Lucy never let up, saying always, "Hang in there, we've come so far."

Lucy served for over 20 years on the Board of BLEND, a support organization for the men and women of the Northeast LA Police Department and served three terms as its president. Said Anne Wolf, "Whether it is coordinating the many restaurants that provide food for Police Appreciation Day, raising the funds to support the Eagle Rock police substation, or simply pushing a broom during a community clean up, we can always count on Lucy to commit her time, her energy, and her talent."

Lucy said, on the occasion of receiving the Soaring Eagle award from the ERHS Alumni Association, "The thing that means the most to me about ER is that lots of people who went to school here still live here. Maybe that's why

## Our Town, Our History



Lucy and Dean Spurgeon danced at Concerts in the Park in 1997. Lucy's enthusiasm and joy in community events was matched by her dedication to the organization necessary to put them on. She served on the board and as an officer in just about all of our organizations. She was a board member of the Historical Society at the time of her death. (Photograph by Ruby De-Vera.)

all of the things we are involved in are important to us—it's our hometown so we keep trying to make it a better place to live and to work. True, many things have changed, but there is still a small town feel to ER and it is almost impossible to go anywhere without running into people you know—I love it."

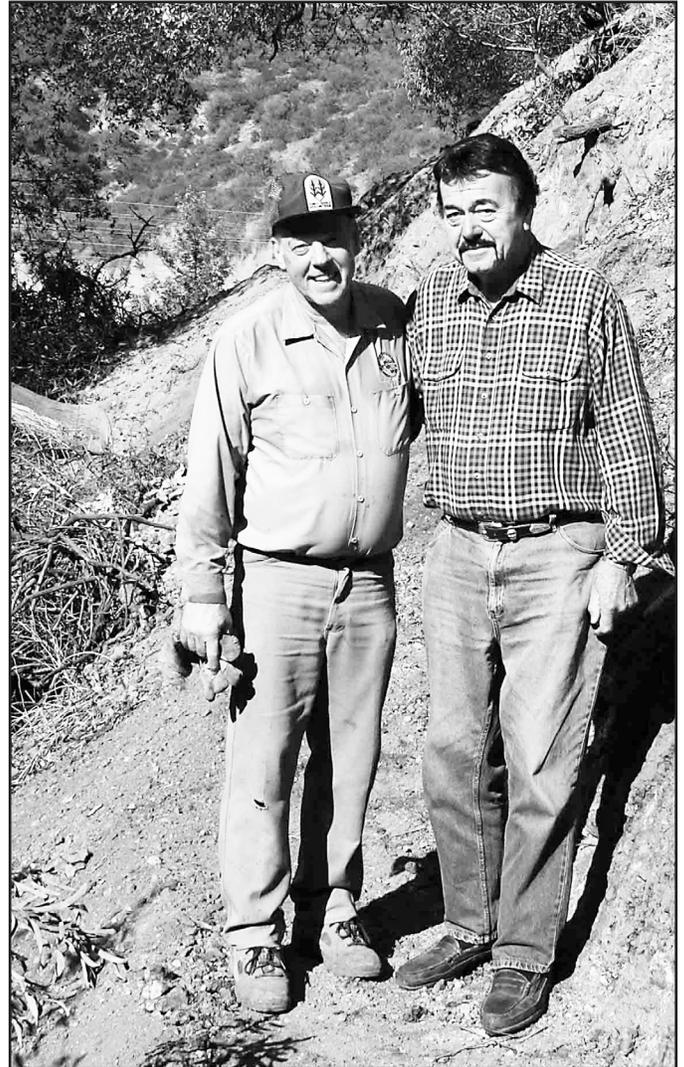
### John Stillion

John was an artist, an educator, a community-builder, and tireless advocate for Eagle Rock. In the words of Linda Allen, "He was a gracious man, a visionary, an incredible sense of the aesthetic....and a good, good friend."

In the course of his 80 years, he improved every community he lived and worked in - starting with planting trees at the inner-city L.A. school where he taught after college. And ending, of course, with all his achievements here in Eagle Rock, with stops in Moorpark, Crestline, and Occidental along the way.

Stillion worked hard in the many organizations he joined. From the Compulsive Gardeners to the Pasadena Elks, from a local painting group to, of course, Collaborative Eagle Rock Beautiful (which he co-founded). We could always count on him for innovative ideas and sophisticated and well organized events. Everyone knew John's signature. We saw the beautiful succulents, picked from his garden, arranged with panache, lending just the right touch of beauty to an occasion.

He will live on in the many projects he started around Eagle Rock, especially the Eagle Rock Canyon Trail. The paved path down to the trail is now named the John Stillion Memorial Pathway, recognition he would have discouraged during his life. As Cheryl Leutjen, a CERB member who held a tearful remembrance for Stillion, reminded the crowd, "The way to preserve his legacy is to go out, get engaged, and carry on the many projects he cared for."



John Stillion, right, heard by chance that the four acres north of the rock were for sale. The Collaborative Eagle Rock Beautiful, using funds raised by the community to "Save the Rock", was able to make a down payment toward the purchase of the land. Master trail-builder Peter Schaller, left, volunteered to supervise construction of a trail to the top of the plot. (Photograph by Harry Chamberlain.)

## Historical Society Celebrates 50th Anniversary in Style

If you attended this wonderful evening, I'm sure you'll agree that a great time was had by all. Forty-something members of the Historical Society got dressed up and showed up at "Fatty's" for an evening of great food, drink, and even better company. Past Historical Society Presidents made appearances (Powell Greenland all the way from Ventura County and John Miller all the way from Glendale – ha!), along with other past and present Board Members and members in general who continue to support the efforts of the Historical Society. Kai Newkirk from Councilman Huizar's office made an appearance to present certificates commemorating the anniversary to Board

Member Doris Thielen, Greenland, Miller, and current president, Eric Warren. Speeches were made and laughs were heard. The food was a delicious culinary experience from the talents of chef Aude Charles. Kim Dingle and her staff made us all feel right at home. It was a night to remember. We are proud of the accomplishments this organization has made in the last 50 years and we are excited about our prospects and projects in the works. Here's to us still going strong in 2012, the 51st year of the Historical Society! Thank you to all of our members, we wouldn't be making these accomplishments without you.

Past president Powell Greenland (center) and his wife Billie (lower left) enjoy a moment of celebration surrounded by old and new friends.



A happy crowd fills the front room at "Fatty's". (Photographs by Nat Jirapatanachai)



EAGLE ROCK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
2225 Colorado Boulevard Eagle Rock, CA 90041

**WHERE TO NOW ?**  
**EAGLE ROCK 2012** —→  
**Tuesday, January 17, 2012, 7:00**

**Historic Preservation**  
**Working Group**  
**Tuesday, April 17, 2012, 7:00**

**ICE CREEK SOCIAL**  
**Music, Wine, Pizzas**  
**SUNDAY, JULY 29, 2012, 1:00**

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

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



### Jane Tsong

Born and raised on the East Coast, Jane Tsong came to California for her MFA at UCLA in 1997. She is currently a freelance designer and a Master's Candidate in Landscape Architecture at Cal Poly Pomona. You may remember her public art piece, "Time by the Rock". She worked with Jenny Krusoe, then head of the Community Cultural Center in 2004, to project the varying eagle shadow onto the Eagle Rock.

We met Jane back in 2005 when she used our archives for research on naturally occurring water in the area. She has written articles on the subject as a guest contributor on the blog, L.A. Creek Freak and created tours of local water related sites.

Streetscape improvements have always held an interest for her. The latest city budget cuts that prompted Councilman Huisar's office to form a Median Advisory Committee gave Jane her chance to get involved in revamping the medians on Colorado Blvd.

Jane moved to Eagle Rock in 2002 and lived here for only a year but it clearly made a lasting impression! "I feel very connected to Eagle Rock," she told me. She currently resides in Highland Park but is heavily involved in both communities. Come meet Jane at our next public meeting when the Median Advisory Committee will be presenting their project. Thank you, Jane, for putting Eagle Rock on the map in so many ways for the community! Her efforts can be viewed at <http://bipediality.wordpress.com/> and <http://myriadsmallthings.org/myriadunnamedstreams.html>

-Katie Taylor