



ALTADENA HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2010

Save the Date! Not to be missed!

Annual Golden Poppy Garden Event

Sunday, June 27th

This year's Golden Poppy Garden Awards and Fete will take place Sunday, June 27th, from 4 to 6:30 p.m. in member Pat Corcoran's lovely gardens at 1011 Altadena Drive. Her 1920s classic Spanish Revival home (whose garden features an avocado marriage tree) will provide the backdrop to again celebrate Altadena's gardens and gardeners. We will honor gardens whose creators have added beauty to neighborhoods by "giving" to the street. In keeping with Altadena Heritage's sustainability theme, we will pay special attention to gardens whose delights do not

depend on excessive watering, and those making use of native and drought tolerant plantings.

Renowned cellist Diego Miralles will provide musical entertainment — and tea, cocktails and refreshments will be served.

\$15 for members and \$20 for others. A perfect opportunity to join or renew; bring friends and neighbors to Altadena Heritage's quintessential summer celebration.

Make reservations at altadenaheritage@earthlink.net or by calling (626) 797-0054.



Coming Events

- Wed June 23 **Greywater Workshop with Erik Knutzen** 7-9pm, Altadena Community Center. See page 2.
- Sun June 27 **Golden Poppy Garden Event** 4-6:30 pm. See this page.
- Sat August 28 **Mark McAfee of Organic Pastures** speaking about the history, politics and nutrition of milk. 2-4pm, Altadena Community Center. See page 6.

A Glorious Day:

Altadena Heritage's Visit to the Theo Clarke Residence

On Saturday May 22, a clear and sunny spring day in Altadena, 40 members of Altadena Heritage gathered at the home of physicist Theo Clarke for a hike into El Prieto canyon to survey the damage to, and rebirth of, the canyon after the Station Fire and subsequent rains. Clarke lives above The Meadows and La Vina and the fire department, as he explained, set up camp at his house and "made their stand" there to protect his home and the

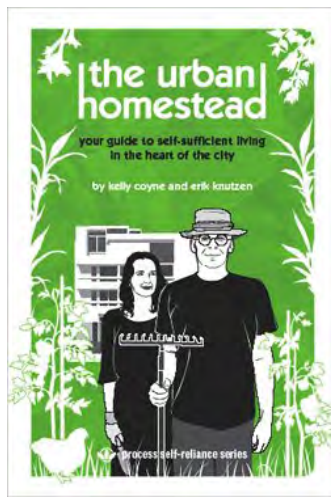
communities below.

Heritage Board Chair and landscape architect Mark Goldschmidt began with some remarks about how dynamic, and at times dangerous, the front range of the San Gabriels is. He explained that several of the plants we would see are "fire followers," appearing only after a fire.

[continued on page 5]



WE'RE ON FACEBOOK 
[BECOME A FAN OF
ALTADENA HERITAGE](#)



Check out Erik Knutzen and Kelly Coyne's fantastic blog: www.homegrownevolution.com

Greywater Workshop Coming June 23

Part of the *Altadena: Heritage of Abundance* Series

Did you know that your grandmother was a revolutionary?

You can be one too!

Rediscover the practice of using water twice. Pay for it once; use it twice.

Learn how to harvest and redirect your greywater to your landscape safely and simply.

Altadena Heritage welcomes back Erik Knutzen from Home Grown Evolution, co-author, with Kelly Coyne of The Urban Homestead for an evening focused on understanding the niceties and necessities of greywater systems for Altadena landscapes.

Join us for an engaging presentation and a lively discussion on this important water resource. Learn what greywater is and what it is not; what's legal in California; where greywater can be used in the landscape; and successful examples of local greywater systems.

For more information please contact altadenaheritage@earthlink.net.

Wednesday, June 23, 2010

7:00pm-9:00pm

\$5 Members ~ \$10 Non Members

Altadena Community Center

730 E. Altadena Dr.

Preservation: Eames Couch, Loose Screws

Altadena Heritage board member Thomas Stahl is pictured here on one of our library's original couches. The library was planning to remove one of the couches over concerns that the seats might slide off the supporting rail and the sofa could tip over. Following the intervention of Altadena Heritage board member Michel Choban, our Treasurer Thomas Stahl decided to secure the seating elements with a couple of screws (as intended by the designer); while doing so, he discovered the original label "DESIGNED BY CHARLES EAMES HERMAN MILLER ZEELAND MICH."

There are 3 Eames-designed couches in the library's reading area and several other Eames items in the downstairs offices.



Letter from the Chair

It was with a great sense of relief that I put a hefty check from Altadena Heritage in the mail a few days ago. At long last we have begun the process of moving our trove of digitized files on Altadena's architectural heritage to a new, state-of-the-art database, the CHRID (it stands for Cultural & Historical Resource Inventory Database). Collected and collated with great time, effort and expense by teams of dedicated AH volunteers in the late 80s and early 90s, most of our information on all existing homes built in Altadena before 1940 is currently stored on an obsolescent program. We've been talking about "migrating" it to a modern platform for since Sandra Miller, who organized and ran our office for years, recommended signing up with the CHRID.

Frugal with our limited funds, and determined to find the best deal possible, the board researched all options. While we dithered, board member Michele Zack wrote a grant proposal, which was accepted by Southern California Edison (thank you SCE!!!), thereby insuring funds to initiate work. AH member and computer systems expert Dick Rubin, who has been maintaining our old database for years, analyzed our situation and helped us reach a decision. Now he has taken on the major work of making some of our data more compatible with the new program, thus saving AH a bunch of money and earning our undying gratitude. Interestingly, the longer we waited, the more the cost of translation and hosting came down. Goes to show, procrastination can be good policy, but I am so glad we are finally moving on.

Maintaining this data, and making it available to all who wish to learn about the history of their homes, are two of our core functions. The founders of Altadena Heritage aimed to raise public consciousness of our community's significant stock of architectural resources at a time when Altadena was losing many of its treasures. They were remarkably successful. People now come regularly to our office at the Community Center to research the history of their homes, and we look forward to adding more data in the future. With some of what's left from our Edison grant, we will hire an archivist to look over

our collections and help us plan how to expand our archive.

Meanwhile, our fantastic board (this is a board that gets things done and we have fun doing it!) continues to put on new events that educate and reveal more history and treasures of our town. Eileen Alduenda is in charge of our Heritage of Abundance Series -- this year we had a great program on restoring windows, and a grey water workshop is on schedule for June 23rd. These events provide useable information to help us improve our homesteads and live more sustainable lives. Many of you were lucky enough to join us at Theo Clarke's mountainside home to witness the aftermath of the Station fire -- deep erosion and rampant growth of wildflowers, including great drifts of purple *Phacelia grandiflora* -- a rare glimpse of our natural heritage as these flowers bloom only after the chaparral burns. Don't miss the Golden Poppy Garden Event on June 27th. It will be a great one. See you there.

Mark Goldschmidt



Above: Close-up of the fire follower Phacelia grandiflora on Theo Clarke's property. According to the Catalina Island Conservancy, Phacelia grandiflora had not been seen on the island in over a century until the 1999 fire there.

PLEASE BECOME A MEMBER

JOIN OR RENEW TODAY...
BE PART OF SOMETHING SPECIAL!

PLEASE EXPRESS YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE PRESERVATION AND APPRECIATION OF OUR COMMUNITY'S UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT.

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY/ZIP _____

EMAIL _____

CHECK ONE CATEGORY:

- \$15 STUDENT/SENIOR (65+)
- \$25 INDIVIDUAL
- \$35 FAMILY
- \$100 PATRON

MAIL THIS FORM AND CHECK TO:

**ALTADENA HERITAGE
730 EAST ALTADENA DRIVE
ALTADENA, CA 91001**

OR SIGN UP ONLINE: WWW.ALTADENAHERITAGE.ORG

“Replacing old wood or metal windows doesn’t always make economic, energy efficient, or sustainable sense.”



Resources:

Window Restoration and Repair
www.window-restoration-repair.com

Tico Tech Art Glass
www.ticotech.com

Workshop on Windows

Part of the *Altadena: Heritage of Abundance Series*

Fine craftsmanship and unique architectural details are reflected in the variety of windows found in many Altadena homes. These architectural elements contribute significantly to a home’s character and historic integrity. Restoring and maintaining existing wood and metal windows are just the steps toward sustainable living that the Altadena Heritage of Abundance seminar on windows promoted. More than fifty Altadena Heritage members and friends attended an informative and engaging seminar this past March to learn about the fine art and craft of preserving, restoring, and repairing wood and metal windows.

Homeowners often gravitate toward replacing windows as a way of improving the energy efficiency of their home. However, replacing old wood or metal windows doesn’t always make economic, energy efficient, or sustainable sense, as we learned when Altadena Heritage hosted the Fall 2009 residential energy efficiency workshop with Hartman Baldwin Design Build. At that seminar, we learned that window replacement often follows investments in a building’s shell, air quality and ventilation.

Thomas Stahl, local architect and Altadena Heritage Board Member, provided a concise overview of these points and a provocative comparison between investing in replacement windows and investing in restoring and repairing windows. His research found that the amount of money spent on replacing windows is often enough to repair windows and invest in several of the higher priority energy efficiency improvements, resulting in greater savings and comfort over the long term.

Certainly there are situations when windows are beyond repair, but Ed Sanchez owner of Window Restoration and Repair and Rafael Calvo owner of Tico Tech Art Glass shared some of their most challenging projects that illustrated that almost every window can be restored, repaired, and enjoyed for many more years.

Rafael Calvo of Tico Tech Art Glass is a local glass artisan with years of expertise repairing older windows and working with traditional stained glass and custom art glass. Rafael’s presentation provided a connection to Altadena’s artistic and cultural heritage. He shared his approach to repairing and designing custom art glass projects, and his collection of slides illustrated the range of historic window repair and custom art glass projects he’s successfully completed over the years. If you are out walking around Altadena’s neighborhoods, you just might see one of his colorful art glass projects.

Ed Sanchez, Window Restoration and Repair, provided an engaging presentation on why it makes sense to restore and repair older windows. Ed shared his top ten reasons for doing so, which reflect Altadena Heritage’s focus on sustainability, including improving energy efficiency and comfort of your home, while preserving its unique architectural character, and doing so affordably. Ed brought a unique perspective to the conversation of repairing versus replacing windows as he used to tear out old windows and replace them with vinyl windows. One day he decided to change course and preserve the beauty and durability of the windows that he had been replacing for years. Sometimes he returns to the very homes whose wood windows he once removed, tearing out his own vinyl replacements in favor of historically appropriate windows. Both Ed and Raphael shared a variety of project slides that illustrated the near impossible-to-repair or restore situation only to be followed by slides that demonstrated their passion for restoring windows that would last another 90 years.

Altadena Heritage looks forward to having both presenters return for future presentations and is currently exploring a couple of window related hands-on workshops: a simple art glass project with Tico Tech Art Glass and one on glazing with Window Restoration and Repair. Let us know if these workshops interest you.

Theo Clarke cont.

Clarke confirmed that in his thirty-two years there he had never seen the purple Phacelia that was blooming everywhere in the canyon.

Mark introduced Anthony Portantino, State Assembly Member for the 44th district that includes Altadena. Portantino, who had visited during the fires, spoke to the vibrancy of Altadena's communities and thanked the fire department. He also said he was impressed with County Public Works services and repairs after the fire and rains.

Two representatives of the County Fire Department also spoke, their presence especially poignant in a foothills community where people still display signs thanking the firefighters. Firefighter Erik Miller from Station 12 recalled the two colleagues lost during the Station Fire. He spoke to the reality of choices made in the midst of a wildfire: decide what homes are defensible and focus resources there. To help make our homes defensible, he discussed LA County Fire's program "Ready! Set! Go!" The program is described on the department's website,

<http://www.fire.lacounty.gov/default.asp>, which is full of useful information. He also suggested we visit San Diego County's website on fire defensible space. On that page is a link to a list of fire resistant plants that Miller thought was especially good: http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/dplu/fire_resistant.html. Deputy Forester Lopez focused on fire resistant building materials such as cement panels for the exterior, baffle vents that keep sparks out of attics, and materials that keep rain gutters from filling with flammable debris. Lopez commented that he was grateful that wind was not a factor during the station fire or it might have reached the Rose Bowl.

Our host, Theo Clarke, who bought his home in 1978 from Ferris and Elizabeth Wakely who built it in 1948, explained that the land at one time belonged to Owen Brown, son of abolitionist John Brown of Harper's Ferry fame, and is the site of Owen Brown's cabin. Looking west, Clarke said the fire arrived two days after he first saw smoke above Sunland and came right up to his driveway.

He led us on a hike through his property down to El Prieto creek. Everyone was struck by the surreal landscape of charred manzanita and chaparral surrounded by the rebirth of yellow mustards, purple Phacelia and green plants of many types. We could see where subsequent rain had severely eroded parts of the hillside, making the trail dangerous in spots, and Heritage members, familiar with creek, said it was much changed. Impact scars on trees made by rock carried by the flooding waters of the creek showed how high creek had raged.

At the bottom of the canyon, where Big Prieto and Little Prieto Creeks meet, Heritage board member and foothills communities historian Michele Zack shared stories about Robert Owen, a Texas slave who bought his freedom in 1856 and settled in mountains above Altadena. Winning a contract to supply wood to the army, he earned enough to buy freedom for his family. Both Owen Brown and Robert Owen's stories are told in greater detail in Michele's book [Altadena: Between Wilderness and City](#).

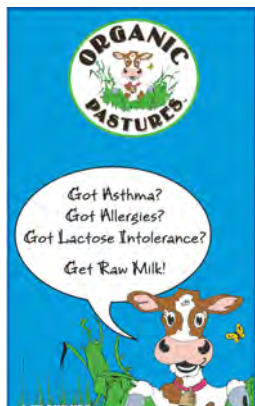
As we hiked back to our cars, we all expressed gratitude to our host Theo Clarke for opening his home so soon after it narrowly escaped destruction. We were left a very visceral feeling of how destructive but renewing wildfire is to the mountains above us, musing about how we who live here become a part of that cycle and how we might fit in.



Theo Clarke describes the station fire before leading Altadena Heritage on a hike into El Prieto Canyon

Below: Rebirth in El Prieto Canyon. Charred manzanita, mustard, and Phacelia.





Organic Pastures:
www.organicpastures.com

Milk: History, Politics, and Nutrition

Part of the *Altadena: Heritage of Abundance* Series

Altadena Heritage is excited to bring Organic Pastures founder and CEO Mark McAfee to Altadena as part of his campaign to "share the secret" of raw milk.

Michele Zack, local historian, will give a brief overview of Altadena's milk-producing past. Mark McAfee will explain how our industrialized food chain and the supporting regulation systems limit access to fresh raw milk and why access to this nutritious living food is worth fighting for.

This event is free and open to the public.

Light refreshments will be served, and Organic Pastures raw milk will be available for tasting.

This event is co-hosted by the Arroyo Food Co-op and the Cooperative Fruit Exchange of Altadena. For more information please contact altadenaheritage@earthlink.net.

Saturday August 28, 2010
2:00-4:00pm Free and open to the public
Altadena Community Center
730 E. Altadena Dr.



Coast Range Newt in Millard Canyon

Newts in the News

The Coast Range Newt lays its eggs in Millard Creek in the winter. Now those babies are crawling out of the water to start the grown up part of their lives on land. As a result, these creatures, normally hiding in rotting logs or under rocks, can't be missed by hikers in the canyon.

This salamander, also called the California Newt, lives along the coast of California and in the Southern Sierras. Salamanders are often associated with fire, but they're not

"fire followers." The connection is most likely a result of their tendency to hide in rotting logs. When humans burn the logs, the salamanders evacuate their homes giving people the mistaken idea that salamanders can survive, or are even born from, flame.

More information about our local newt can be found at www.californiaherps.com, and you can become a fan of the California Newt on Facebook.

ALTADENA HERITAGE
730 EAST ALTADENA DRIVE
ALTADENA, CA 91001-2351

