



February 2015

ILLUMINATIONS

A quarterly publication of the Historical Society of University City

Spring Programs



Shelley Welsch



Carol Diaz-Granados

Mayor Shelley Welsch and City Manager Lehman Walker will be the speakers at the fifth annual State of the City. They will give us the “view from the top” of the challenges currently confronting our city and possible solutions. The program begins at 7 pm March 3, in the City Council Chamber atop City Hall, 6801 Delmar Boulevard.

In April, Carol Diaz-Granados, Washington University researcher and Society board member, will give the slide presentation “Digging up the 1904 World’s Fair.” The Fair is a subject near and dear to a large number of Missourians and possibly the most famous world’s fair of all time. It was a time in history when society was searching for industrial and technological advancement, and St. Louis was striving for world recognition and status.

Dr. Diaz-Granados will combine facts on the Fair with information and artifacts gleaned

through 12 summers of excavations in Forest Park. She will cover the process that led to this monumental undertaking and the components used to construct the Fair, then examine the remnant artifacts that reflect that glorious past of St. Louis.

At the close of the 12th field season, the number of artifacts, mostly fragments of ceramics, glass, staff, metal, and electrical items, numbered over 6,000. Items include such unusual pieces as a washtub, a “marble” doorknob, a wire puzzle, a jar of cold cream, a porcelain doll’s head, a stove leg, and then more common bits like shoe eyelets, nails, and electrical insulators. Included in the commentary is mention of the Fair’s “largest artifact” – the 70-ton axle from the giant Ferris Wheel. The program will be at 7 pm April 21 at University City Public Library, 6701 Delmar.

Rounding out the spring program season in

(Continued on page 2)

A Message from the President by Eleanor Mullin

I'm sure you are all aware of the proposal for a five-story apartment building and five-story garage to be built on the Delmar Harvard properties. Following is the position the Historical Society has taken. This statement has been sent to our government officials, commissions, and some neighborhood associations. We hope our voice is heard.

The Board of the Historical Society of University City has voted to take the following position on the plan currently proposed by Virtual Reality Enterprise for the Delmar Harvard buildings and properties within the Historic Civic Plaza:

The current plan does not meet Zoning Ordinance Historic District Standards, including standards set by the Civic Plaza Master Plan. It fails to preserve designated historic structures, and proposes structures with size, siting, mass and density not compatible with above plans, as stated in Section 34-82-2 of said plan.

Wherefore we strongly urge citizens, City Commissioners and Council Members to refuse the request to re-zone the property for this project.

Thanks to Our Donors

The Historical Society welcomes Michael and Nancy Georgen as life members and expresses gratitude to all our members for their support, especially the following new or returning members who gave at the Patron level or above. Their generosity supports the Society in carrying on its work of archiving U. City's history, answering the public's questions, programming speakers and providing tours of City Hall, Century Plaques and this newsletter. Thanks to all!

Sara Thomasson
Albert and Sheila Cawns
Roberta Dearing
Leo Glickert
Karen Handelman
Lindsay Monser
Sondra Ellis
Phil Pheiffer
Mike Hobbs
Paul Schoomer
Michael Honigfort
Miriam Wilhelm
William Gleiber
Rachel Wykes
Ed and Deb Schwarz
Peter Wollenberg
Dan and Kathleen Wilke
Carol Wofsey
Jen Jensen

Programs

(Continued from page 1)

June will be Edna Campos Gravenhorst, discussing her book, *Famous Barr, St. Louis Shopping at Its Finest*. The date will be announced in the next issue of *Illuminations*.

Finally, it's not too soon to mention the Annual Meeting in October. The speaker will be Carol Ferring Shepley, who will talk about her book, *St. Louis—An Illustrated Timeline: Blues, Baseball, Books, Crooks, Civil Rights and the River*.



Historical Society of University
City
6701 Delmar Blvd.
University City MO 63130

ucityhistory.org
ucityhistory@hotmail.com

In Memoriam



Patricia Perryman died Dec. 14, 2014. She had been a member of the Historical Society board since 1999. She served as recording secretary, vice president and president. A native of Mississippi and graduate of Jackson State University and the University of Southern Mississippi, she came to University City in 1969 to be a guidance counselor with the school district. She earned a graduate degree from University of Missouri-St. Louis. She worked at Hanley junior high, Brittany Woods middle school, and the senior high school, retiring in 2000. In retirement, in addition to the Historical Society, she devoted her time to editing *Limelight* magazine and teaching at St. Louis Community College. She had a son, W. Darnell Pickens, and enjoyed annual family reunions with her many siblings, nieces and nephews. Her memorial service Dec. 22 at Pilgrim Congregational Church was attended by many members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, to which she belonged for half a century.



Evelyn Kathryn Stacy, who died Dec. 14, 2014, served on the Historical Society Board for almost 20 years, beginning in 1988. She was corresponding secretary and served on the program committee. An indispensable boardmember, she was always willing to help out with whatever needed doing. In 2000, she helped Judy Little set up the Historic Bike Ride. This unique event was a joint venture with the Olivette Historical Society to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Central Plank Road. Participating cyclists rode 5 or 10 mile loops, starting in Heman Park. A native St. Louisan, she spent her working years at the St. Louis Art Museum and Barnes-Jewish Hospital. She was married to the late James Marchael; they had four children.



Richard Targee Smith died January 6, aged 89. His father started Smith Hardware. Richard liked to say that he worked there from the ages of 13 to 75, and "I had two years and seven months off for World War II, and that's about it." After serving in the Navy, he did take a few more years off to earn an engineering degree from the University of Kansas. Smith Hardware at 6662 Delmar was a beloved Loop fixture. When it closed in 2000, a loyal customer told the *Suburban Journal*, "This is a good old-fashioned hardware store. They really bend over backwards here." Richard was a great-great-grandson of Thomas B. Targee, the St. Louis fireman who died heroically fighting the Great Fire of 1849. He and his wife of 67 years, Betty, had five children

The Historical Society of University City
6701 Delmar Blvd.
University City MO 63130

Address Service Requested

Inside
Spring Programs
In Memoriam

Treasures of the Mo. History Museum Library

Dennis Northcott, archivist, displayed some of the most remarkable documents in the Missouri History Museum Library at an event for members January 10. From the extensive Civil War collection came travel passes issued by the military authorities: to get out of St. Louis, you had to swear eternal loyalty to the Union. Other nineteenth-century documents were a painting of Chouteau's Pond, the now-vanished downtown water feature, and the inquest book of Dr. Boisinière, a coroner, who frequently listed cause of death as "a visitation of God." Two private letters recalled long-ago disasters. One from 1855 described a train crash on the new Jefferson City-St. Louis line. In another, from 1912, Mrs. Carlos Hurd, sailing to Europe aboard the S.S. *Carpathia*, described how she awakened at dawn to find the engines stopped and went on deck to see the ship surrounded by lifeboats. The date was April 13, the lifeboats were all that remained of the *Titanic*, and Mrs. Hurd's husband, a *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reporter, had the scoop of his career. The

library has one of the biggest collections of Jefferson documents in the country. One, from 1803, is nicknamed "Thomas Jefferson's driver's license," actually the tax receipt for his coach and horses, which legally entitled the third President to ride around Washington, D.C. For baseball fans, there is a poster advertising the 1944 "streetcar series" between the Cardinals and the Browns.

For architectural historians, the library keeps a large collection of business letters, because businessmen circa 1900 liked to put a picture of their office building on the letterhead. Genealogists can glean personal information about their ancestors from company employee magazines. The library, at 225 South Skinker, has just reopened after some maintenance work. Its website is mohistory.org/lrc.