

# THE WILLMORE CITY ENTERPRISE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLMORE CITY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION SEPT. 2006



## S e p t e m b e r M e e t i n g

Looking for some help finding the history on your house or the neighborhood? Come join us on September 20th at 7:30 p.m. at the Willmore Community Police Center (910 Daisy Ave.) where Stephanie Spika, Long Beach History & Special Collections Librarian at the Long Beach Main Public Library, will be on hand to provide us some helpful tips on how to research our houses through the history archives at the library.

Stephanie is responsible for all Long Beach Public Library history archives such as clippings, photos, books and memorabilia as well as providing public desk, telephone, and electronic reference services on all subjects. Stephanie will discuss some of the history of Willmore City and will be bringing samples of some of the research tools available at the library.

A native of Long Beach, Stephanie received her first library card at the age of 4, first worked at the library through a summer student work program, and later received her MS in Library and Information Services. Obviously her love of the library is contagious as her two college student daughters are also working at various libraries in Long Beach.

This will be a great opportunity for all of us to learn a little bit more about how our unique neighborhood got started over a century ago and help direct us where to find some more details about our own specific little piece of Willmore.

## It Really Was Moved!

It really happened - the four-square house we lovingly call the "school house" (because it originally was located on the site of Cesar Chavez Elementary School) was actually moved to its new location at 419 Daisy Avenue last month. Even though the move took place around midnight, long-time Willmore supporters Ernie Villa, Cesar Castillo, Josefa & Tim Curtin, Richard Fehr, Xenia Izzo, Jill Anne Black, Ben Goddard and others were on hand to witness the event.

We have had a stroke of good luck in finding out some history about the house. A woman who grew up in the house in the 1940s was in town visiting and made a wrong turn down Daisy Avenue recently and saw the house. She was astounded because she thought the house had been destroyed when the school was built. Her father had lived in the house from 1906 to 1977. She and her sisters have pictures of the house which they are going to share with us as well as providing some stories of the house and the neighborhood. They are excited that WCHA is restoring the house and are looking forward to seeing it when it is completed.



**Friends' House**

**Literacy Center**

**English Classes**

Monday & Thursday 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Childcare provided: ages 4-10

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The Willmore City Heritage Association is committed to the preservation, protection and improvement of the physical environment and quality of life in the Willmore City/Drake Park neighborhood.

**WCHA Board Members\* - 2006/2007**

- |                              |          |
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| Sherron Leno, Secretary *    | 432-5140 |
| Jill Anne Black, Treasurer*  | 495-3377 |
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- |                                     |          |
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| Newsletter - Mark Perry             | 436-2815 |
| WCHA Voice Mail                     | 436-8611 |
| Police Center Chair: Carrol Goddard | 618-9507 |
| Willmore Community Police Center    | 570-1146 |
| 1st District Council Office         | 570-6919 |

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**WILLMORE CALENDAR**

- Sept 20th - Code Enforcement - 6:30 P.M.
- Sept 20th - Willmore Meeting - 7:30 P.M.
- Oct. 1st - Bembridge House 100-year Celebration and Fashion Show
- Oct. 18th - CDAC Meeting
- Oct. 18th - Willmore Meeting-Drake Park

Mark Your Calendar!!

**All Fronts, No Backs cont'd**

Clearly, the citizenry needs to take the lead in solving our neighborhood's problems. The city has invaluable resources and services, but history has shown its reluctance to offer creative solutions, enforce existing codes and provide follow-up. We need to define our needs and boldly put forth creative, cooperative solutions. All Fronts, No Backs can be an effective program to continue building momentum for constructive change.

Allen McDaniels

**Willmore City Residents Complete CERT Training**

Willmore City residents received certificates for their successful completion of the CERT training program offered through the Long Beach Fire Department. This 6-week program teaches skills and knowledge to assist family members and neighbors after a major disaster until professional emergency services arrive.



**Concert in the Park**

With the help of Jana Shields of the Friends' House and the Long Beach Community Band, neighborhood children got to experience playing different musical instruments last month as they rehearsed their musical numbers and then performed with the band during the Concert in Drake Park on August 17th.



## All Fronts, No Backs

Think about the neighborhood's problems: deteriorating buildings, aged or crumbling streets and utilities, trash and unsecured trash containers, trash pickers and other assorted vagrants, loud "music" and noise, unlicensed and obnoxious street vendors, and children's safety. Now think about how many of these problems occur streetside or on the alleys (courts and ways) of our neighborhood. On my block at least 75% of them occur on my alley, Del Rey Court. But what might happen if we looked at the relationship of our homes to the streets and alleys in a different way---a way that might better address our neighborhood's problems?

Think about how you care for the front of your property, house and lot, compared with the back. The front faces the street and is the face you present to the world. You want to make a good impression by caring for this face: nice façade, trimmed front yard, well maintained walk and fence, raked leaves, swept sidewalk. The back of your property, its behind, can be another matter. The behind often fronts an alley which contains access to the utilities, storage of trash containers and location for their pick-up. It may include access to a garage or other off-street parking. The back may be defined by a fence or an outbuilding with its address on the alley. Because these functions, called natural processes by landscape architects, are hidden from the street, they generally receive less care than the front. Trash containers overflow and attract rummagers, nooks and crannies become toilets for vagrants, fences and walls invite graffiti. Drug dealers, prostitutes and renegade businesses find transactions easier hidden from direct public view. Garages fill up with junk, construction materials, rags, recyclables and residents-nearly everything except the automobiles for which they were intended. Add to this the confusing jurisdiction of and responsibility for the alleys-is it the city's, the county's, the state's or the property owners' domain?-and we have a real mess. But what might happen if we treated the backs of our properties like our fronts? Our fronts, in general, are better maintained, have less trash, fewer places for ad hoc toilets, and less graffiti. Any illicit transactions involving drugs, sex or contraband are more open to scrutiny and, therefore, less frequent than in the alleys.

With these thoughts in mind, I propose that we make a concerted effort to treat our backs as we do our fronts; that we treat them as second faces onto our neighborhood, onto the world. I would call the effort "All Fronts, No Backs," from a paper I obtained from the Department of Landscape Architecture at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

All Fronts, No Backs means maximizing all usable space, making natural processes visible to the public to raise awareness and access to nature, and prioritizing pedestrian access and shared transportation.

Although the complete definition may not apply to our neighborhood, as good stewards we could put into practice All Fronts, No Backs by:

- \* Cleaning and maintaining the backs of our properties;
- \* Insisting that public services-power, water, gas, refuse, sewer-be done conscientiously and competently in a timely manner;
- \* Securing all trash containers out of sight, away from alleys;
- \* Removing graffiti in a timely manner, not days or weeks later;
- \* Insisting that alleys are paved, repaired, maintained and regularly swept;
- \* Insisting that parking and traffic laws are enforced, especially in alleys;
- \* Simply landscaping our backs with small plots of greenery, planter boxes or pots (think how to secure them);
- \* Discouraging vagrants by securing trash containers, properly disposing of couches and mattresses, and reporting suspicious activities to the authorities;
- \* Cooperatively working with the city on historic preservation and community code enforcement issues;
- \* Holding landlords accountable and responsible for the maintenance of their properties and the behavior of their tenants (Of course, tenants have primary responsibility for their own behavior.).

WCHA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

September is Membership Renewal Month. Please take a moment to complete the renewal form below and return with your check. Your support of Willmore City Heritage Association is greatly appreciated! We are your organization, your neighbors, your friends working together to help preserve, protect, and improve the physical environment and quality of life in the Willmore City/Drake Park historic neighborhood.

**MEMBERSHIP:**

Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

General Family Membership \$20 \_\_\_\_\_

Senior Membership \$10 \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: WCHA  
P.O. Box 688  
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Would you like your address & phone number listed in a Willmore City neighborhood directory?