California Garden & Landscape History Society
www.cglhs.org
Eden

Journal of the California Garden & Landscape History Society *Vol. 15 No. 4 • Fall 2012*

America's Playground and Theme Park Heritage:
Launching the First Annual HALS Challenge

Chris Pattillo

In 2001 the National Park Service, the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), and the Library of Congress established the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) to document cultural landscapes that offer tangible evidence of our nation's development. In the years since its founding, HALS has made much progress in documenting this heritage. But when garden and parks were mainly chosen it was evident that HALS projects should reflect a wider understanding of what qualifies as a "historic cultural landscape." The list should include such diverse categories as planned communities, golf courses, campuses, and vernacular, agricultural, and industrial landscapes—to name just a few.

Sonoma TrainTown Railroad's engine, with a passenger car. Photo: Janet Gracyk.

To stimulate more participation by other states, the Northern California chapter of HALS challenged the country to submit HALS short forms for theme parks in their states. The National Trust offered $1000 prize money for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. This Challenge was announced in the spring of 2010, and winners were announced in fall at the annual American Society of Landscape Architects conference. Volunteers had prepared one or more HALS forms, and in doing so learned the HALS documentation process while having some serious nostalgic fun.

This National Challenge—"Revisiting Cultural Landscapes of Childhood"—was a call to record for archival preservation cultural landscapes specially designed for youthful enjoyment. Developing a nationwide survey of these unique resources would increase awareness of now-historic places still available for sheer play. Urgency could be involved, since theme park sites constructed during the past century are increasingly threatened with extinction due to maintenance problems as well as safety and access rules introduced since their inception. Good examples of this particular form of cultural landscape should be documented before they are greatly altered to conform to current standards, or destroyed when costly changes cannot be made.

The Challenge announcement pointed out that the storylands, fairytale parks, "game farms," miniature golf parks, kiddy parks, and other theme park landscapes in our communities represent an important 20th-century cultural landscape type that most American adults of any age relate to with nostalgia. A significant part of our national landscape heritage, they are relevant as historic cultural properties—especially after reaching or surpassing the National Register's 50-year benchmark. Good examples of aging theme parks were cited in the Challenge announcement, and on the list was Oakland's Children's Fairyland. (See pages 10-11.)

California has many theme parks primarily created for the enjoyment of children and families. The most notable and ambitious one is, of course, Disneyland in Anaheim, which opened in 1955. It spawned more Disney theme parks while inspiring the creation of many new theme parks and amusement centers across the planet. (Yet no one submitted a Challenge recordation for the iconic Disneyland, perhaps because the summarizing work seemed much too daunting.)

Our Northern California chapter was delighted when Janet Gracyk (a CGLHS member) won 3rd prize for her description of the Sonoma TrainTown Railroad. This issue reproduces her original text, which follows her essay that briefly explains the recordation process itself. (Janet also submitted a recordation for the Pee Wee Golf park in Guerneville; "It was the most fun," she says.)

That initial HALS Challenge alerted communities to the importance of raising funds to preserve unique places that fulfill young people's need for play spaces. Though some child-focused landscapes will be lost, HALS now has some fine records of examples of this much-loved aspect of 20th-century American culture. It also started something. Other HALS Challenges have followed, and will continue to follow, focusing on other cultural landscape categories.

***Chris Pattillo**, a landscape architect, is one of the three founders of the Northern California Chapter of HALS. She also founded PGAdesign. This Oakland-based firm of landscape architects provides services on all types of landscape projects—with one area specializing in historic landscapes. She recently received the high honor of being inducted as a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects.*

Some readers who are landscape architects may have considered responding to a HALS Challenge because a particular cultural landscape in their vicinity intrigued them and they believed it deserved to be officially acknowledged, with a detailed description archived in the Library of Congress. But they didn't get around to doing this because they thought doing it would require a huge expenditure of time and effort. Also, they had no prior acquaintance with the process of preparing and submitting a recordation form. CGLHS members who belong to ASLA sometimes offer programs that will help others in their region, whether or not they are landscape architects, learn how to prepare a recordation.

To encourage people to enter into future HALS Challenges, or to submit documentations for other cultural landscape types, Janet Gracyk succinctly explains the documentation process, focusing on the "short format history." She has also allowed* Eden *to reproduce, as an example, her short form submission to the HALS Challenge contest, which earned the 3rd prize. The original format has been slightly changed in order to accommodate it in the available space and also to include the photos within the text.

Options in Submitting Documentations to HALS

Janet Gracyk

HALS, as part of the National Park Service's Heritage Documentation Program, was formed to create a lasting archive of places of significance, with prepared documentation submitted to the Library of Congress. Anyone unfamiliar with the documentation levels may find them confusing. Guidelines must be followed and accuracy is stressed, but acceptable HALS documentation is surprisingly varied. The NPS makes the process as flexible as possible within government-established standards. Documentation would ideally consist of three components: measured drawings, large format photographs, and written data. Yet it might even be as simple as a large format photograph, since it is possible, in most instances, to establish a documentation record with just one of the three components or by using the short format approach.

It is also important to know that the program is dynamic; additions may be made to documentation at a later date, as when additional funding becomes available, or when new information is acquired. The Library of Congress contains many examples of HABS (Historic American Buildings Survey) documentation that consists of a single large-format, black-and-white photograph. Although such situations do not attain the desired level of recordation, and it's not efficient to submit documentation over time, it is helpful to know there is built-in flexibility. However, the documentation needed in the case of mitigation—planned improvements to property—requires preparation of all three components and strict adherence to NPS standards.

The simplest documentation method is the short format history, often referred to as the short form. According to Paul Dolinsky, Chief of HALS, it is a "placeholder for future, more in-depth documentation, but may also stand as the history component." The NPS provides a Microsoft Word template, which asks for location information, a description of the site, a history of the site, a statement of significance, and digital photographs. The statement of significance on a short form need not meet the high standards expected for full documentation or for similar recordation methods, such as a National Register nomination.

Traditional HALS documentation may be done to one of three levels of complexity, numbered I, II, and III, with I being the highest level of recordation. All traditional documentation requires measured drawings showing the site as it exists at the time of recordation, a thorough history of the site, a statement of significance, and large format photographs. (Note, however, that this procedure requires using film cameras and special equipment.)

Differences in the recordation levels are based on the site's rank of significance. These documents are printed on archival paper with archival ink, and there are guidelines for the extent of detail they require, as well as for methodologies for taking measurements and preparing appropriate field notes. (Field notes should be retained for possible future research.)

Determination of an appropriate level of recordation is often driven by mitigation requirements. If this is not a concern, the significance of the site and availability of funding or personnel will determine the appropriate level of recordation. For instance, a National Historic Landmark property, or a significant property scheduled for destruction, would be candidates for Level I recordation—which would result in several pages of detailed drawings, as well as extensive written data and a history of the site, using primary sources whenever possible.

Since the HALS program is a newcomer to the Heritage Documentation Program, there are many important land-

scapes yet to be recorded. However, readers should bear in mind that landscapes, or parts of landscapes, have often been previously captured in HABS documentation, and much of this work may be viewed on the Library of Congress website: http://www.loc.gov.

People who have been researching a significant landscape may find they have already amassed the necessary information to readily produce a HALS short form, at a minimum. The National Park Service's HALS webpage has additional information: http://www.nps.gov/history/hdp/hals/. The Northern California HALS chapter maintains a website with helpful information, and the group meets quarterly. Visit their website at http://halsca.org/. Other chapters in the state are: San Diego, Sierra, and Southern California.

One need not be a landscape architect in order to document a significant landscape, particularly when preparing a short form; however, there are a few considerations that will help those who aren't familiar with landscape analysis. To fully describe the overall appearance of the landscape, include the following landscape characteristics as they apply (on a short form, these may be captured best in the narrative with simple statements):

Topography	Cultural Traditions
Spatial Organization	Land Use
Buildings and Structures	Natural Systems and Features
Circulation	Small-Scale Features
Constructed Water Features	Vegetation
Water Conveyance Systems	Views and Vistas

Janet Gracyk *received a master's degree in Landscape Architecture from UC Berkeley. Early training in art and design, experience in plant nurseries, and staff positions with landscape architecture and engineering firms have informed her work. She founded Terra Cognita Design and Consulting, based in Petaluma, in 2007. Her work includes landscape design, historic landscape documentation, analysis, and treatment plans. In 2007 Janet was a HALS intern with the National Park Service and felt fortunate to work on the documentation of the White House landscape.*

Sonoma TrainTown Railroad

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY HALS NO. CA-61

Location:

20264 Broadway
Hwy 12 Sonoma, CA 95476

Lat: 38.277539967611396° Long: 122.45936393737793°

Significance:

Sonoma TrainTown Railroad is an excellent example of a vernacular landscape designed as a small amusement park and to showcase a scale model railroad.

The entrance to Sonoma TrainTown Railroad.

History:

In 1958 Mr. Stanley Frank, employed as a printer in Oakland, began constructing the park on a level piece of land that had formerly been a pasture near the small town of Sonoma. He was well known in the model railroad community for his extensive and well-designed O-gauge model railroad in the basement of his Oakland house. According to Robert Bennett, acting superintendent, Mr. Frank was deeply influenced by Japanese garden design and he employed many of the principles common to Japanese gardens to create the sense that the landscape is much larger than its actual size, compressing scenic elements into a small area. Mr. Frank sculpted the flat lot extensively to create hillsides, creeks, and ponds on the grounds and he planted the property with many trees, predominantly cedars *(Cedrus deodara)*.

Over a space of ten years Mr. Frank designed and installed the landscape to include the small town scenes and the structures to house the trains. All of the trains, train cars, and trestle bridges were constructed in Mr. Frank's machine shop and were built at one-quarter scale. The park opened to the public in the fall of 1968. Mr. Frank's sons run the operation now, which generally employs twenty-one people. Additional landscaping has been installed since the opening of the park and additional trains have been added. Between 1993 and 2003 six rides were installed.

Description:

Sonoma TrainTown Railroad is located one mile south of downtown Sonoma and covers 10 acres. It was opened in 1968. There are one and one-quarter miles of track. The main attraction is the train ride, which winds around the lot,

Sonoma TrainTown Railroad's caboose.

crossing from an outer circuit to an inner circuit. The train engine pulls several train cars, which are open on top and fitted with seats.

The west facing entry is a wood structure made to resemble a simple train station; three antique, restored cabooses form part of the entry. The structure also serves as an office and houses bathrooms. Immediately on entering one is on the concrete, ground-level railroad platform. Across from the platform, behind a landscapes area, is a pond with an aerator-style fountain, behind which is the amusement park area featuring rides. To the north is a small raised ornamental planting bed, behind which is an open wood structure housing an air hockey board. In the northwest corner is a modern carousel created to appear old, although it is predominantly made of plastic. Opposite and slightly south is an open area, simply landscaped with ivy and shrubs, through which a small creek meanders. Two gravel paths and concrete bridges invite the visitor to cross over this area, cross an area of track, and enter the small amusement park area of the grounds. South of the landscaped area is a raised concrete platform, recently added as a new location for the carousel. In the southwest corner is a quarter-scale roundhouse with several engines and cars, and a storage shed. A short distance east of the amusement park is the petting zoo and the miniature town of Lakeview. The town contains about 20 buildings. The main "road" has typical town buildings, such as a train station, school, church, etc., which can be entered easily by children, and carefully by adults. On the periphery are other model buildings of a smaller scale that cannot be entered. Nearby is a small fort containing a climbing structure.

The entry area, the amusement park area, a petting zoo, and the associated miniature town of Lakeview are all accessible to visitors on foot. Much of the park is experienced only during the train ride. The train passes over five steel trestle bridges and through two concrete tunnels. The layout of the tracks cleverly expands one's sense of the size of the grounds by revealing slightly different viewpoints of repeated viewsheds; it is only by paying close attention that riders realize they are travelling over already viewed sections of landscape. Various simple scenes are scattered through the landscape, including creeks, waterfalls, tents, cabins, and towns. Some contain human statues, and other scenes contain animal statues. The use of scale is imaginative and diverse. Variously scaled train track signage and signals are placed throughout the landscape.

Lakeview, the TrainTown village, seen from across the lake.

A view of the pond and a railroad crossing, as seen from an elevated platform above the entrance. The island containing the rides and petting zoo is visible in the distance.

The designer of the park chose an "old west" atmosphere established by the use of the trains and the style of the buildings, which are generally built in styles common to mid-1800s western settlements. Constructed topographical features, on what would otherwise be a flat lot, reinforce this atmosphere and include hillsides with constructed waterfalls and a large naturalistic pond. Plantings are simple and consist mostly of spruce, redwoods, cedars, scattered shrubs, ivy, and naturally occurring grasses. There are small areas devoted to ornamental and/or seasonal color plants, and

one palm tree.

The amusement park area consists of the spinning Chattanooga Choo-Choo-Chairs, a small roller coaster called the Dragon Train Coaster, and a Ferris wheel. Children shorter than 54" can also ride on TrainTown airlines, a spinning airplane ride. The rides are connected by relatively narrow gravel paths that are bordered by fences made of split-rail or of steel and steel mesh. Tickets for the rides are taken in booths made of train sections, and train track signage is often incorporated into the rides. With the carousel, called the Iron Horse Carousel, all the rides have been tied, at least by name, to the dominant train theme.

Benches are located throughout the public use area and are of steel or of pieces of split tree trunks. Some areas of park are accessible via railroad tie steps. Various small-scale bridges for crossing very small creeks occur in the use area; these are of wood, steel, and concrete and generally do not have handrails.

The quarter-scale roundhouse with engines.

The train's passenger cars enable rides on tours through Sonoma TrainTown Railroad's 10-acre, landscaped premises.

Typical of many children's theme parks, this one has a pronounced home-grown quality. Although the trains are of a consistent scale, other elements are of various scales, styles, and quality. There is a very small souvenir component, and simple snacks are available for purchase.

The layout also seems home-grown, appearing to have occurred in a happenstance manner, and may also reflect a time when fewer visitors were expected. The platform for boarding and exiting the train shares the entry and is very crowded on a busy day. Access to the rides section was not obvious, was circuitous, and not very wide. The rides are placed in a seemingly haphazard manner with minimal circulation area allowed. The scale of the areas is probably comfortable to small children. These cozy dimensions, simple landscape treatments, miniature town and railroads clearly have great appeal for the many children and adults visiting the park.

Owner: Mr. Robert Frank

Sources: Bennett, Robert, acting Superintendent for Sonoma TrainTown Railroad. Telephone interview, July 7, 2010

Site visit: July 7, 2010

Historian: Janet Gracyk, Landscape Architect,
July 7, 2010
Terra Cognita Design and Consulting
145 Keller Street
Petaluma, CA 94952
707-695-9360
gracyk707@gmail.com

*All photos were taken by author **Janet Gracyk** in July and August of 2010. (See her brief bio on page 3.)*

The Sonoma TrainTown Railroad's saloon.

Preservation Is Child's Play: Saving a Mid-Century City Park

Senya Lubisich

[Reprinted with permission from *Forum Journal*, Summer 2010, Vol. 24, No. 4.; updated by author]

In 2006, with construction documents at 30%, all environmental reviews in order, and demolition scheduled, four neighbors joined forces and jumped into preservation and advocacy for a modern resource. While preservation and advocacy were new to us, we did have a unique set of skills: of the four founding members of "Friends of La Laguna," two were professional historians (of the ivory tower ilk), one was a contractor (who also holds a law degree), and one was an engineer (married to a Parks and Recreation Commissioner). The threatened resource that had sparked our rapid-fire, grassroots, advocacy effort was a modernist, folk-vernacular playground created by a Mexican concrete artist, Benjamin Dominguez. The playground is formally named La Laguna de San Gabriel, but it is most commonly called "Monster" or "Dinosaur" Park. Admittedly, it is much easier to advocate for a modern resource that smiles at you.

La Laguna playground was built in 1965 and was intended to serve as an attraction for San Gabriel residents and visitors alike. It embodied the prevailing principles of playground design, blending recreation and aesthetics. In the words of Frank Caplan, the founder of Creative Playthings and a figure at the forefront of post-World War II playground design, parks should provide "an opportunity to observe sculpture and examine the arts and crafts of the community. The park is a museum, zoo, native folklore center."[1] For 45 years, the playground has been a meeting place for the community and an icon for the city; yet it was an icon for a particularly unique play experience and little more. The artist and story of its creation faded, and the playground was simply considered a "hidden treasure" by residents.

Friends of La Laguna founders, with play-sculpture octopus. From left to right: Eloy Zarate, John Harrington, Senya Lubisich, Eric Kirchhoff: Photo: http://www.examiner.com/article/la-laguna-de-san-gabriel-monster-park-historic-playground-wins-cche-preservation-grant.

In 2004, two years prior to our entry into preservation, my husband and I (the ivory tower historians) chanced to meet the son of Benjamin Dominguez, the playground's creator. Although the playground had been part of my husband's experience for more than three decades, the idea that the playground was also art was a revelation. Dominguez's son was visiting Laguna playground because his father's Las Vegas playground had just been demolished. He was looking to see if any others remained. We exchanged addresses and assured him that our community would never let such a unique and remarkable playground be demolished. Two years later, we were calling Fernando in a panic and driving to his home in Las Vegas to collect oral histories, documents, and photos. Evidently, the playground that had charmed us for years was no longer considered safe and needed to be replaced.

Within three months of our frantic phone call and research trip, the city of San Gabriel had signed an MOU with the newly formed nonprofit organization—Friends of La Laguna, or FoLL—and plans for demolition had shifted to plans for preservation. Like our resource, our effort to save the playground is not typical, but when considering advocacy for resources that are not "yet" or not "readily" on the radar of what is historic, there are lessons that we can draw:

First, our advocacy for "Monster Park" confronted front and center the "safety issue." This is a common phenomenon: modern resources and the spaces associated with them are blamed for social problems, whether they are safety, accessibility, crime, homelessness, etc. As we organized to save the resource, we heard concerns about crime, drug use, and safety. The playground does not cause these problems, yet it is blamed for these problems. One task was to separate the resource from the hand-wringing over the social problems that it purportedly caused.

Communicating historic relevance to the community is another challenge for advocates of modern resources. "Monster Park" is located in San Gabriel, home to a Spanish mission founded in 1774. For our community, Mission San Gabriel is the measure of what is historic. Our goal was to communicate that history considers change over time, and we worked with our community to articulate the trajectory of San Gabriel's history through its postwar development and population boom. Age may speak for historic relevance, but it does not communicate significance.

Lastly, bringing the community on board with an advocacy effort is essential with modern resources. While it may not be love at first sight, you can educate the broader public by working through the function and use of a modern resource. Using "function" to articulate "experience" can confer value. Indeed, it is experience that often builds the fundamental bridge between the community and an appreciation of modern resources.

The "Social Problem" Scapegoat

La Laguna playground showed its age when the city made plans for a larger park renovation. In the words of the city newsletter: "… the once vibrant, eye-catching Dinosaur

Park has received a lot of wear and tear over the years, and due to safety and maintenance concerns, the climbing structures must be removed."[2] Safety is a common problem levied against modern resources and often the sole complaint against historic playgrounds. In San Gabriel, the city had done its due process and notified residents living in the vicinity of the park. On two occasions, groups organized to stop the demolition. However, the "safety argument" proved insurmountable.

The advent of "no-risk" playground design in the 1980s spelled demolition for most post-World War II playgrounds. The playgrounds built in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s represented a creative period in playground design during which artists (such as Isamu Noguchi) and architects (such as Robert Royston) designed play areas in public spaces that would blend aesthetics with recreation. Efforts to comply with the modern safety standards has resulted in the wholesale demolition or neutering alteration of these landscapes.

Sea serpent with the dragon slide and Cape Cod lighthouse in the background. Photo: Lu Zhang.

The scenario at La Laguna playground was no different in this sense. In our first meeting with the Director of Parks and Recreation, we learned that La Laguna did not comply with modern safety standards, as shown by a safety assessment. Efforts to bring it into compliance would be cost-prohibitive and, in some cases, impossible. Therefore, demolition and replacement was the only option.

Our first strategy was to move the conversation from potential, possibility, and hypothetical to actual. We asked for the safety claims that had been brought against the city. We asked for the records of injuries. When the city provided none, we were able to turn the conversation from "safety" to liability. Liability can be managed and interests can be protected.

Safety is important. The board members of FoLL are parents to 11 children; we too have an interest in keeping children safe. However, this playground was designed with child's play in mind, as are most. We spent a great deal of time talking to Child Development experts about children's need for play. Within that discipline and within the scope of playground design is the principle of "self-selecting play." This is the play experience that we seek to preserve. Playgrounds built to modern specifications embrace proscriptive play: the equipment should guide each child through the activity. Proscriptive play strips away a creative engagement in play. It prevents children from testing their limits and measuring their development.

As I worked on this article, my fourth child reached the critical milestone of climbing the whale—"All by myself!" We are working with the city to take "baby steps" on this issue and will find a solution that protects the resource, protects the child, and protects the experience.

In 2010 Assembly member Mike Eng sponsored a bill that would have amended the Codes governing Playground Safety to acknowledge that playgrounds can be historic and cultural resources. This bill, AB2701, would have created a way for Parks and Recreation departments to protect post-World War II playgrounds by placing their safety and accessibility under the Historic Buildings Code (HBC). Unfortunately, then-Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill, stating that it was not necessary. He was correct in that the HBC does provide adequate protection for cultural landscapes, such as playgrounds and gardens. However, the challenge is designation. If the people who manage these resources are not aware of their historic and cultural value and the potential of designation, action is not taken and, therefore, the resources are not protected.

Aging, But Not Old

A second shared challenge is the perception that modern resources are old yet lack any historic significance, in part because their creation falls within living memory. Our advocacy effort received vital support from the LA Conservancy's Modern Committee and, through their work, we learned a great deal about how to educate the public about modern resources. We also relied heavily on the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the resources they had available to fledgling preservationists.

However, we did not earn the "ear" of our local historical association until after we had entered into a MOU with the city. When we did meet them, hostility and dismay best describes their comportment. From their perspective, four young residents were wasting energy trying to save a decrepit playground when time could be better spent saving the remaining adobes in San Gabriel. We engaged our community in a discussion about "book-ends" and the need to physically frame the historical narrative. We asked them to call out the significant buildings and places that have marked the full arc of the city's history, including their experience and place in it. This allowed us to talk about the "Modern Period."

One of the most fundamental traits of modern resources is that they were designed with a diverse and large population in mind. The 1960s were a time when society as a whole became more inclusive. "Public" was intended to be more open and representative. People were supposed to be able to locate themselves in the public sphere, and they could do so because public spaces began to incorporate broader social and cultural trends. As suburban areas grew and developed, public spaces emerged to distinguish one

city from the next and to be truly public spaces—not simply civic spaces. In a letter to LA County Supervisor Frank Bonelli, Benjamin Dominguez argued that with his sculptures, "The Los Angeles Area … can have in its public parks the distinction and excellence of their ancestry."

Eventually, what we were able to communicate was that playgrounds are generational and cyclical. La Laguna playground represents a particular period in time and an important phase of the city's history. Yet the experience of play knows no bounds. The playground is a place where the center of energy does not change. Children continue to interact and function in the play space just as they have for the last 45 years. In that generational cycle, as children become adults, their experience of the space changes, yet their understanding of its function does not. What bothered us and motivated us was the fear that our grandchildren might be deprived of a chance to play in this uniquely designed playground. A historic playground can unite generations through a shared experience of play.

Whale and snail play-sculptures. Photos: http://lakidstuff.com/04/23/laguna-de-san-gabriel-nautical-playground-banjamin-dominguez/features/

Falling in Love with Concrete

As I mentioned above, it is much easier to get people to fall in love with a modern resource that actually smiles at you. Our efforts captured considerable media attention, in part, because when you say that the city is going to destroy a lagoon journalists perk up. When you stand next to Ozzie the Octopus or Sandy the Sea Serpent and ask how the city could bulldoze a grinning face, reporters take a photo. Mostly, though, when you show children running through sand, hugging a seal, or clambering into a lighthouse (to escape, of course, down the back of a dragon), people want to know why that experience is being taken away.

It is one thing to compose an impressive photo that captures the "artist's eye" for a building or landscape. It is quite another to communicate the function and use of a space. Again, in the case of La Laguna playground, a still photo simultaneously communicates artistry and function. However, we did we have our detractors. They felt that the park would be better served by replacing La Laguna with modern play equipment that was "clean," "safe," and "new."

When we were able to demonstrate the different experience that children have playing on play-sculptures, we were able generate an appreciation rooted in use. No matter how beautiful the photo, we cannot compose appreciation for modern resources outside of their intended function. If we can aptly educate our community about the use/function of a modern resource, we will better be able to communicate value. If the value is understood in terms of how the community can experience the resource, we can create the leverage necessary to protect modern resources.

Saving La Laguna

During the three months of advocacy before Friends of La Laguna turned the city from demolition to preservation, every day was a scrambled blur of talking to anyone who would listen. We kept constant public and media pressure on the city, strategized incessantly, and explored any and all opportunities that presented themselves. Very quickly we determined that the value of La Laguna extended beyond nostalgia. (We were not going to save La Laguna simply because my husband had played there as a child.) Once we knew that the value was greater than our own individual experience, we prepared for drastic action: if we needed to bring a lawsuit, we would; if we need to change the law, we will. It is our intent to turn stewardship of the resource over, not to our children, but to our grandchildren's children. Simply put, a ribbon-cutting doesn't mean our work is done.

In hindsight, we identify three strategies that have served us well:

First, our ability to move people. While those living in the immediate proximity of the playground were notified, the announced demolition of the playground came as a surprise to our community. If we could not mobilize people to speak for the resource, we mobilized them to speak against the perception that due process had not been followed.

Second, we consistently brought solutions. We were adamant that we would not simply raise our hands to the problem, but that we would work for a solution. When the city indicated that there were not funds to preserve and protect the playground, we got to work and started fundraising. When the city indicated that it did not have the staffing to manage preservation, we organized and sought training. We have found support and advice from any and every community and preservation organization. We also talked to the "usual" opponents of preservation, trying to understand their position. It serves us well in navigating a course toward a capital campaign to save our resource.

Lastly, by bringing people, making the process public, and offering solutions, we were able to hold our elected officials accountable. We realized that our city staff did not live in the city and consequently may not have been as attuned to "the places that matter" to residents as we would have liked. Identifying a problem resulted in a passive response from staff and council. Bringing a solution required action by all parties.

A few months ago, as I sat at "Monster Park," a four-year old boy burst through the landscaped "Island Berm" and into the Sandy Lagoon. Repeatedly he yelled, "Whoa!" as he wove his way around the concrete sea creatures. Following behind him was his grandmother, who exclaimed, "I can't believe it is still here!" She had raised her family in San Gabriel, moved to Northern California, and was back visiting friends. She had hoped to bring her grandson to play at the "best playground around" before heading to Petrillo's Restaurant to get a pizza (that would travel home to her husband). Petrillo's turns 50 in 2016 … and happens to be housed in a "quirky" International-Style building. These are the places that matter. Guided by those values, Friends of La Laguna will remain vigilant.

An Update

An integral part of "saving" La Laguna playground was to designate the site as a historic landmark. In 2010 FoLL successfully listed the playground as a local landmark and on the Register of Historic Places for the State of California. As of now, a HALS short form recordation has yet to be completed. Doing so is a goal of Friends of La Laguna.

During the summer of 2012, the first phase of a capital project was completed, with the central slide feature fully restored, along with the formal entry to the playground. The work consisted of stabilizing the foundation of "Lookout Mountain" by filling the interior with grout and building a sub-grade berm. La Laguna is unique because, of all his playgrounds, it is the only site where Benjamin Dominguez colored the concrete itself. The result is a beautiful but fragile skin on all the pieces. The capital project sought to restore the original colors to the concrete mountain and slide. FoLL partnered with the Industrial Arts Program at Pasadena City College to rehabilitate the wooden dock entry that had fallen into complete disrepair.

On August 28 of this year the public was invited to attend the Grand Reopening of the La Laguna de San Gabriel at Vincent Lugo Park. Nearly 400 people were in attendance and youth of all ages enjoyed music, food trucks, and plenty of fun sliding down the backs of dragons.

Endnotes

1. Frank Caplan, *Parks and Recreation*, January, 1960.
2. San Gabriel Grapevine Newsletter, Autumn 2006.
3. Benjamin Dominguez, letter to LA Supervisor Frank Bonelli, 1962, Dominguez Family Archives.

Senya Lubisich *is a tenured member of the history faculty at Citrus College. In 2006 she co-founded Friends of La Laguna with her husband and two other community members. Their grassroots efforts to save the playground became the model for future preservation and community efforts in San Gabriel. In addition to advocating for the Dominguez playground in San Gabriel, FoLL has worked with the City of Garden Grove to protect their remaining Dominguez playstructures. In 2012 Senya successfully nominated the collection of Dominguez play-sculptures located in the Whittier Narrows, a recreational area in the County of Los Angeles, to the California Register of Historic Places. She has worked with the Arroyo Guild and National Trust for Historic Preservation to secure grant funding, including the competitive California Cultural and Historical Endowment grants, to study and rehabilitate the playground. Friends of La Laguna is still working to bring recognition of historic playgrounds to the State Playground Safety Code. For now, Senya is quite glad that her "fifth child" is safe and loved by its San Gabriel Valley communities.*

Benjamin Dominguez, born in 1894 in Guanajuato, Mexico, first came to the US during WWI I. He married and had a son, but after his wife's early death returned to Mexico. From 1922 to 1925 he studied at the National Academy of Plastic Arts and became highly skilled in working creatively with concrete, which led to making special enclosures for animals in the Mexico City zoo and other assignments. Meanwhile, he remarried and fathered a dozen children. After his eldest son, Benjamin Jr., settled in the US, he encouraged his father, by then in his early 60s, to join him, since the post-WWII economic expansion was opening up new communities and public areas like parks. He moved to El Paso with his family. His innovative sculptures—often brightly painted, whimsical animals that functioned in playgrounds as climbing structures and slides—became very popular. This interest in his work persuaded him to look elsewhere for commissions; he would write letters and applications in Spanish, then laboriously translate them into English. Soon he was contributing his unique sculptures elsewhere, in Beverly Hills and Las Vegas.

www.friendsoflalaguna.org/about/artist.htm

In 1960 he moved to La Puente in Southern California, where Benjamin Dominguez & Sons, a business featuring "Artistic Cement Work," produced his innovative play equipment for Whittier Narrows Regional Park in East Los Angeles. The success of this playground led to other commissions: first the Atlantis Play Center in Garden Grove, and then La Laguna de San Gabriel, which he began undertaking in 1965, when nearing age 70. "La Laguna" was conceived as representing a lagoon inhabited by a delightful collection of 14 denizens of the sea, including a whale, a dolphin, a sea serpent, an octopus, and a snail. The slide, shaped like a mythical sea monster, led to the playground's nickname, "Monster Park." (Another a.k.a is "Dinosaur Park," though no dinosaurs are here.)

Dominguez died in 1974. He left a legacy in this guiding message to his children, written late in life: "An individual's work is the only method in which you can obtain success. No one can obtain it for free." It is fortunate indeed that some of his work, at least, is still in place. His legacy of delightfully creative work endures still in those three California playgrounds, which local organizations and volunteers have fought diligently to preserve and keep open for the perennial delight of both children and parents. For views of the three extant Dominguez playgrounds: for Whittier Narrows, visit http://www.lacountyarts.org/civicart/projectdetails/id/82; and for Atlantis Play Center in Garden Grove, http://www.ci.garden-grove.ca.us/?q=commserv/atlantis. Numerous websites will come up when using search engines for *La Laguna de San Gabriel*. —BKM

Mid-Century Theme Parks: Oakland, Sacramento, Fresno

Phoebe Cutler

A long swath of California—from Sacramento to Fresno—entertained an unusual conceit during the middle decades of the last century. Aiming to enrich the region's youth, various civic organizations recreated scenarios signifying centuries-old nursery rhymes and fairy tales. Over a period of 11 years, three major parks—Lakeside Park in Oakland, William Land Park in Sacramento, and Roeding Park in Fresno—sprouted fanciful congeries of such age-old creations as the Old Woman in the Shoe's shoe, Pinocchio's (or King Arthur's or Goosey Gander's) castle, Cinderella's carriage, Farmer Brown's barn, and Farmer McGregor's garden. Populating these communities-in-miniature were well-known personages such as Humpty Dumpty, Thumbelina, the Three Billy Goats Gruff, the Three Little Pigs, Goldilocks, and of course the Three Bears.

An early depiction of Fairyland's Goosey Goosey Gander. William Russell Everett—a talented architect about whom little is known outside of his work for Oakland's Fairyland (and his own iconic modernist house in Orinda)—originally presented 17 unremarkable models, which he scrapped when they were judged too conservative. His successive offerings were colorful and all akimbo. Photo: Mid-century postcard, collection of author.

Entrance to Fairyland in Oakland—featuring "There was an old woman who lived in a shoe." Photo: Chris Pattillo.

The Jack of Hearts in a life-size deck of cards at Fairyland in Oakland. Photo: Chris Pattillo.

1950s California's experiment in bringing juvenile folk literature to life represented a heightened version of a national phenomenon. The instigator, Arthur Navlet, was inspired by a visit to Detroit's Children's Zoo. A leading Oakland nurseryman, Navlet would have been influenced in turn by his own early life in a household that consisted of himself, his poor, immigrant, French grandparents, and an occasional French boarder. With the blessing of William Penn Mott (then at the beginning of a stellar career that would lead from director of Oakland's parks in the '50s to head of the nation's parks in the '80s) and the financial backing of the Lake Merritt Breakfast Club, Children's Fairyland soon graced the eastern shore of the city's downtown water body.

For 72 years this park-within-a-park's target audience has been streaming in under the instep of the Old Woman's shoe to clamber into the open mouth of Willie the Whale, to navigate the card maze and the Alice in Wonderland Tunnel, to catch a ride on the Jolly Trolley, and, later, to pet live lambs and goats.

Following Oakland's lead, Sacramento, in 1956, was next to delve into the juvenile fantasy world. William Land Park was an early 20th-century donation (by William *Land*, no less) that experienced its major development during the hectic years of the New Deal. Its child-centered exhibits at Fairytale Town, like those of its prototype, drew heavily from the timeless 18th-century anthology of rhymes, *Mother Goose*. King Arthur's castle, Cinderella's coach, and the Little Engine That Could broadened the repertoire.

In her tour, conducted over the last two years, of the Sacramento and Fresno fantasy worlds, landscape architect Chris Pattillo displays a particular fondness for the latter's Storyland. "There is a child-size train that you board at the Storyland Train Station opposite the entry ticket booth, and then take a ride around Lake Washington, where you'll pass

At William Land Park this colorful red engine is the embodiment of the moralistic story that first appeared in English in book form in 1930 and then again, in its most influential format, the one illustrated by George and Doris Hauman, in 1954. Photo: Chris Pattillo.

Cinderella's pumpkin carriage pulled by its steeds, at Fairytale Town in Sacramento's William Land Park. Photo: Chris Pattillo.

The Round Table at Camelot—in Storyland in Fresno's Roeding Park. Photo: Chris Pattillo.

by a wrecked pirate ship and beneath the canopy of Roeding Park's wonderful trees." She concedes that the park's 25 exhibits can be "overwhelming," but praises the "Every detail scaled to accommodate children," where "adults have to stoop, bend down, and crouch."

The usual suspects—the Crooked Man, Mother Goose, Miss Muffett, the Old Woman in the Shoe—make their appearances. A novelty is the inclusion of a couple of fanciful party venues. To arrive at the first of these, a room in a castle tower, the young partygoer must cross a drawbridge, which requires braving a sea serpent lurking in the moat below.

How these imaginary microcosms must have expanded the inner lives of the children who inhabited them. In addition, Fairyland, the inaugural effort, enriched—literally and figuratively—at least one adult. Walt Disney visited Oakland's venue five years before he built his mega world. Further substantiating the pioneer park's influence, Disney hired Fairyland's director to run his Anaheim venture.

Pirate ship at Storyland. "This realistically detailed structure includes carved ornamentation, cannons protruding from the sides, a coat of arms, a lantern for night sailing, slides, shoots and hiding cubbies, chains and robes, a sliding pole for quick escapes, and a carved dolphins masthead." Comments and photo by Chris Pattillo.

This essay is based on the 2005 HALS Challenge application for Children's Fairyland, by Jennifer Lew and Chris Pattillo of PGAdesign, and on Chris Pattillo's blog: *http://halsca.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2011-09-04T18:56:00-07:00&max-results=7*.

***Phoebe Cutler**, with a BA in art history from Harvard and a master's degree in landscape architecture from UC Berkeley, is a founding member of CGLHS. A researcher and writer, she frequently contributes articles to* Eden. *She currently serves as recording secretary on CGLH's board of directors, and on* Eden*'s editorial board. She lives in San Francisco. (See also the brief bio on page 17.)*

Do Playgrounds Matter?

Paula Panich

A tree to climb on. Photo: Paula Panich.

Nature is not a place. It's an idea. Simon Schama writes about this in *Landscape and Memory* (Knopf, 1995), and it's a core teaching of the MIT-based landscape architect Anne Whiston Spirn. People use the word *nature* to mean entirely different things, Whiston Spirn has said, and often the definition is so individual as to be unexamined, unstated but deeply held, relating to personal identity and even belief.

When I was nine years old, I moved with my family to a new subdivision in the Walnut Hill section of Dallas. A prairie had been stripped naked for its making. Roaring, twirling trucks still poured sidewalks. A concrete culvert bisected the neighborhood, its sloped sides so glittering that the Texan sun bit into our eyes when you looked.

But there had been a little planning mistake, a bit of leftover land in the digging of the ditch, the engineering of streets, the platting of home sites. There were trees. Dirt. We neighborhood kids called this place the Dump.

So it is this Dump (without trash, it's important to say) I think of when I think of "nature." Trees big enough to climb, low-lying limbs, shade. But where it is deeply personal is that the Dump was a place where I felt free. No one to tell me what to do, or not to do—a place away, out of sight, and, especially, private. Relief.

At least some of us must have mentioned this place at home, but in my memory no adult ever ventured beyond the beyond to investigate.

Thank God.

And so what is to be done to allow children to experience "nature"?

Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder (Richard Louv, Algonquin Books, 2005 and 2008) makes a compelling argument for parents to unplug the electronic devices (of course, we have to do it ourselves first) and take the kids outside to look at the sky, to peer into a nest, to dream by a river, to think like a mountain.*

There's always the moon. There's always that darling moon.

So does a playground matter? I don't know. I've never seen the Adventure Playground in Berkeley, but it opened 33 years ago. Parents have to sign a waiver, but the kids get to build things. There are trees and grasses, building materials, paint. The kids build forts, houses. The idea came from a playground designer who, in Europe after the Second World War, noticed kids playing in dirt and rubble, making things.

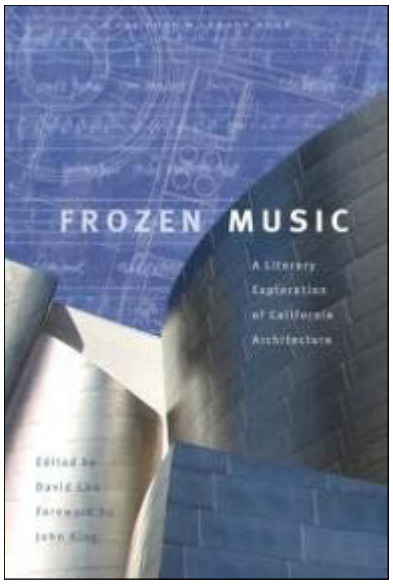
Best of all, at the Berkeley playground it is permitted, if you are over seven years old, to play there free from watchful parental eyes. At least for three whole hours, even if time flies like the wind.

* "Thinking like a mountain" is a famous phrase. It's the title of a notable essay by Aldo Leopold. For people who know the literature of landscape, it is like a phrase from Shakespeare or the King James Bible.

***Paula Panich**, a writer, editor, teacher, and lecturer, lives in Los Angeles. A member of CGLHS, she has a lifelong love for gardens and landscapes. She currently serves on* Eden's *editorial board.*

Two views of Adventure Playground in Berkeley. Photos: http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/

Book Review



***Frozen Music: A Literary Exploration of California Architecture*.**
David Chu, editor. (Berkeley: Heyday, 2010), 247 pp, $18.95 (paperback).

Ostensibly, the subject of *Frozen Music* is architecture. However, the anthology contains some fine writing about California landscape. For this, it is highly recommended. David Chu, the editor, has degrees in medieval studies and religion. He is not an architect. He has unearthed descriptions and criticism of the California environment beginning with George Vancouver's impressions of Northern California in the 1790s.

The book is organized chronologically. The difficulty with this is that the first piece, about Native Americans, was published in 1950. So the chronology is based on the subject matter, not when the pieces were written. The bibliographical citations for the individual pieces at the end of the book are listed alphabetically. The lack of an index makes it difficult to pursue people and places through the book. In other words, the record-keeping in *Frozen Music* is frustrating.

These petty criticisms aside, Chu brings a fresh perspective to California design and does not treat architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture as independent disciplines. He finds writing which has been ignored for many years and is rarely seen in scholarly bibliographies. The book includes articles originally published in *The New York Times*, *LIFE*, *Smithsonian*, *The New Yorker*, and many other places. The viewpoints extend beyond the usual academic and professional journals. Although the authors' styles can be captivating, Chu has let errors of fact stand. An occasional footnote or [*sic*] would help the reader get past journalists' earlier mistakes.

Two of the most noteworthy inclusions in *Frozen Music* are Winthrop Sargeant's "Close Up: Bernard Maybeck" from *LIFE* (1948) and Robert Duncan's 1959 poem celebrating the Watts Towers. Sargeant, a San Franciscan by birth, was for many years the music critic for *The New Yorker*. His descriptions of the Maybeck household in Berkeley, the outdoor drafting table in the meadow overlooking the Golden Gate, and the grandiose urban design schemes for San Francisco capture the architect, his landscape, and his perpetual dichotomies perfectly. Sargeant's opening, about the plea to rebuild and save Maybeck's 1915 Palace of Fine Arts from San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition, has been one of the city's most popular refrains ever since. Duncan (1919–1988) was a significant experimental poet, essayist, and painter of his generation and is now enjoying reassessment and republication. "*Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*" was written when the Watts Towers were facing condemnation. His poetic vision of Simon Rodia and his efforts is far more interesting than the current wave of academic interest in the famous towers.

The Watts Towers in south-central Los Angeles, created by Simon Rodia beginning in the 1920s. Photo: http://www.wattstowers.us/

We will all find new material in this delightful collection which enables us to rethink our ideas about long familiar people and places. The book is especially important for new generations of historians and designers who may not know these writers or have been exposed to their points of view.

—Margaretta J. Darnall

Plants, Passion, and Propagation

A Horticultural Tour of Sonoma County

GCLHS's Annual Conference in Santa Rosa, September 8 & 9, 2012

Leslie Comras Aiken

"I firmly believe, from what I have seen that this is the chosen spot of all this earth as far as Nature is concerned."— Luther Burbank, 1875

This year's annual conference in Sonoma County was appropriately centered in Santa Rosa, to celebrate the horticultural heritage of Luther Burbank's "chosen spot" by focusing on the region's notable history and diversity of plant nurseries. On Saturday, September 8th, gathering in a meeting room at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel, we were welcomed by CGLHS's president Judy Horton and conference convener Sandra Price. This was the time to elect new or returning board officers and members-at-large, so a quick, vocal, and unanimous vote took place. (See page 17 for board member bios.)

We then heard about the upcoming two days of tours devoted mostly to talks and walks. These would involve drives through the countryside to five places that exemplify the beauty and diversity in California's historic nurseries and gardens—some known mainly to clients and friends. Their past and present owners and caretakers have shared a passionate commitment to developing a horticultural heritage in Sonoma county, achieved by collecting unusual plants throughout the world, creating new plants, or preserving and propagating rare ones to be shared later with other people and with botanical gardens.

Adele Yare, head of the Speaker's Bureau at Luther Burbank Home & Gardens, gave a lively lecture and slide show about Luther Burbank and his famous Shasta daisy, potatoes, walnuts, spineless cactus, peas, poppies, plums, plumcots, and other plant hybrids he patiently created—over 800 of them—during his half-century of residency in Santa Rosa.

Following this talk, Dave Fazio—radio host, landscape designer, and owner of Sonoma Mission Gardens nursery—told how in the past 35 years the nursery business has changed for him and others, citing such influences as weather, traffic, and big box-store competition, along with the current interest in urban orchards and sustainable gardening. He said he attributes his business survival to maintaining a full-service garden center and landscape nursery that offers exceptional selections and consulting. Good luck has helped him, too. (Visit http://sonomamissiongardens.com.)

Top to bottom: Adele Yare and LBH&G docent Claudia Silkey; Dave Fazio and Sandra Price; Burbank's Paradox walnut tree at the side of his first home in Santa Rosa, now a museum. Photos: Leslie Comras Aiken.

Mid-morning, we drove to Luther Burbank Home & Gardens, where in small groups we took specially arranged docent tours. Afterwards we enjoyed box lunches outdoors while former CGLHS president Thomas Brown, thanks to his own prior involvement, detailed the lengthy and complex restoration work that went on after Burbank's widow gave the property to the City of Santa Rosa. Now a Historic Landmark (for city, state, and nation), it contains many of Burbank's creations, whether originals or descendents. A notable specimen there is his Paradox walnut tree, produced not for edible nuts but its fast-growing hardwood prized for furniture. (Visit http://www.lutherburbank.org.)

In the early afternoon we dropped by Wildwood Farm, a family-run nursery in Kenwood that's nestled in a park-like setting in the Valley of the Moon. Initially intended in the 1920s for a private residence, the site was landscaped (by Donald McLaren) with numerous trees, which by now have reached impressive sizes. We accompanied the owners on a fascinating tour of the nursery. It specializes in about 250 varieties of Asian maples, as well as dogwoods and dwarf gingkoes. Whimsical yard-art here and there enhances the browsing experience. (Visit www.wildwoodmaples.com.)

We then moved on to Quarryhill Botanical Garden in Glen Ellen. "Quarryhill is a premier woodland botanical garden featuring one of the

world's largest collections of documented, wild-collected Asian plants": This brochure write-up scarcely describes the 20 acres that hold a great assemblage of unique plants acquired in the past quarter-century. (Native plants are considered invasive here, so they get extracted!) While hiking around on pathways through the hills and around a small lake, dozens of imported specimens were identified and discussed. Later, while we rested in the nursery building, horticulturist Corey S. Barnes, the manager and education coordinator, described tactics in specimen acquisition and then demonstrated plant propagation. Enchanted, we'd all probably like to make future return trips during different seasons. (Visit http://www.quarryhillbg.org.)

Sherrie Althouse of California Flora, with some of the CGLHS group. Photo: Leslie Comras Aiken.

Saturday night's Happy Hour reception and refreshments at Hotel La Rose in downtown Santa Rosa allowed us to settle down and share our impressions of this busy first day. After quick dinners, we retired—to ready ourselves for the second bout of horticultural adventures in Sonoma.

On Sunday morning we converged at the California Flora Nursery. This unexpected gem is located in a modest residential neighborhood in Fulton, a few miles north of Santa Rosa. We stood around in quiet awe while co-owner Sherrie Althouse told us about the history and production cycle of this small-container nursery devoted to California natives and other plants appropriate to our Mediterranean climate. It offers an exceptional diversity of plants, and during our admiring strolls around the property, some fellow viewers exclaimed, "This is the best nursery ever!" People soon heading for nearby homes loaded up on purchases, while several Southern Californians began planning trips, in trucks and vans, to come back and acquire a sizable number of the unusual plants on display there. (Visit www.calfloranursery.com.)

The pond at Quarryhill, with lotuses; a summertime meadow at Western Hills. Photos: B. Marinacci.

The weekend conference's final tour came at Western Hills Garden, following a drive along a narrow rural road that wound through sunny pasturelands, shadowy redwood groves, and ubiquitous vineyards. For some of us this lush, sprawling, three-acre site was the *supremo* garden of those we'd visited, with its fantastic assemblage of exotic plants of all shapes, colors, and sizes collected from many distant places on the globe. They were once lovingly tended by the initial owners, Lester Hawkins and Marshall Olbrich, beginning in 1959. By the 1970s this popular place had been converted into a rather informal nursery. A friend operated it after their deaths, but then sold the property in 2007. It soon went into foreclosure, causing great distress among its many admirers. Two years ago it was rescued by Christine and Tim Szybalski, who now operate it as a botanical garden. Open to the public by reservation, and only on Saturdays, it is tended primarily by volunteers. Sandra Price (who volunteers here) had arranged for Tim and several others to guide us along pathways and point out particularly intriguing rare specimen plants, such as the once almost extinct Australian Wollemi pine, which Tim said is actually an Araucaria. (Visit http://westernhillsgarden.com/.)

As the conference was winding down in the early afternoon, we assembled at the nearby Union Hotel in Occidental to enjoy a delicious country-style lunch. Everyone we talked with agreed that it had been a great weekend—instructive, stimulating, and full of fascinating and gorgeous plants, as well as fine companions. A good time was had by all.

So just where will CGLHS be taking us next year?

Note: See the Summer 2012 issue of *Eden* for a brief bio of Luther Burbank (pages 13-14) and background histories of the both Western Hills and Quarryhill (pages 9-10 & 11). The initial article presents an overview by Thomas Brown of Sonoma County's agricultural and horticultural history.

***Leslie Comras Aiken**, a Southern California native, began investing in residential real estate while studying International Relations at UCLA. For over 20 years she has been converting her properties' landscapes into urban orchards and edible gardens, each with insectiaries that bring in the "right" bugs. As a garden connoisseur, during her travels she tours representative installations, and most recently explored ancient gardens in Israel and China. An avid reader, she has belonged for many years to several lively book clubs. The proud mother of two UC grads, she resides in Pasadena with her husband, cat, and dog.*

Postings

President's Message

This issue on the subject of theme parks and playgrounds brought a smile to my face; hope you will feel the same. Big thanks to those creative, hardworking members of Northern California Chapter of the Historic American Landscape Survey (http://halsca.org), Chris Pattillo and Janet Gracyk, for inspiring this issue and allowing us to use their work. (Congratulations, too, to Chris for her induction as a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects.) Three related and high-spirited articles follow their contributions.

Forty-plus members, including myself, had a memorable time at our annual conference, September 8 & 9, in Sonoma County. My passion for plants and a love of the California landscape—natural, agricultural, and designed—has progressed from pure enjoyment to curiosity about botany, the history of plant introductions, and the seemingly limitless possibilities with plants in our California gardens. This conference was, for me, a candy store—nurseries, gardens, fellow enthusiasts. Many of us returned with green and living things tucked away in our bags. Oh, the opportunities if I had arrived by truck! (Leslie Comras Aiken's report on pages 14 & 15 summarizes it all.)

The subject of CGLHS conferences has been much on my mind. Organizing a conference in the chosen location requires imagination and creativity in selecting the right sites and speakers that can be woven into the big idea or theme. Arranging for hotel discounts, site visits and tours, group receptions and meals; setting up a precise schedule for all events; publicizing the conference; compiling driving directions; creating information packets and name tags for attendees—this is a lot of work. My great thanks go to Sandra Price for the countless hours she put into producing our sold-out weekend of "Plants, Passion, and Propagation: A Horticultural Tour of Sonoma County." Also deep thanks to our speakers and hosts and to all of you who attended.

Several CGLHS board members are now investigating ideas for our 2013, 2014, and 2015 conferences. Members' suggestions are always welcome. Please send them to me at president@cglhs.org. We also much appreciate those who volunteer during the planning and support stages once a conference venue has been chosen.

We began our September conference with the CGLHS annual membership meeting to elect the slate of 2013–14 directors. I am honored to continue to serve as president for two more years. Christy O'Hara will continue on as our treasurer, and Phoebe Cutler as recording secretary. New officers will be Nancy Carol Carter, vice president, and Ann Scheid, membership secretary. New members-at-large are Carolyn Bennett and Sarah Raube. (You'll find brief bios of us all on the opposite page.)

Four members of the current board of directors will step down at the end of the year. Aaron Landworth has served two terms as vice president. He took a big role in organizing our 2007 and 2008 conferences, and for a board meeting last year arranged dinners, selected wine, and toured us around Malibu. Libby Simon is leaving the board to concentrate on her landscape architecture studies. In addition to serving as membership secretary, she has been a tireless organizer of events and helped with 2007 conference in Lone Pine. She collected our money and greeted us at each of our Tours and Talks around the Los Angeles area. And she's maintained our membership roster with a sharp eye. Sandra Price ends her second term on a high note, as the successful convener of an informative and delightful conference. Kelly Comras, though departing from the board, will continue on as chair of *Eden*'s editorial board for another year. Her leadership assured the continuation of *Eden*, for when Marlea Graham, our founding and longtime editor announced her retirement by the end of 2009, Kelly led the search for a new editor, found Barbara Marinacci, then formed an editorial board to support her.

My best wishes to all departing board members, along with deep gratitude for all they've done for CGLHS.

—Judy M. Horton

Chris Stevens of the National Park Service thanked HALS Northern California Chapter members for their extensive contributions to HALS' 2012 Mission Challenge: "Your documentation projects will be great additions to our collection at the Library of Congress. Secondly, I'd like to congratulate all of you for your Chapter's exemplary communal effort in documenting 16 of the California Missions. We had many great submissions this year, and our panel of historians selected your California Mission entries as a whole for third place!" (HALS CA-66; 71-75; & 79-88, California Statewide Historians). Not only that, but the *1st-place winner* was Denise Bradley, for her submission for Mission San Francisco de Asis in San Francisco (HALS CA-83). Denise is a longtime CGLHS member, and she joins five other CGLHS members who share in that 3rd-place award given for the 16 California Mission entries that altogether were submitted: Cate Bainton, Cathy Garrett, Janet Gracyk, Libby Simon, and Sarah Raube. The awards were announced at ASLA's meeting in Phoenix in late September.

—Marlea Graham

Briefly Profiling the 2013-14 CGLHS Board of Directors

Left to right: Ann Scheid, Sarah Raube, Nancy Carter, Judy Horton, Phoebe Cutler, Christy O'Hara. Photo: Leslie Comras Aiken.

President (2nd term): ***Judy M. Horton*** has been a garden designer in Southern California for 20 years. Mostly self-taught, she studied landscape architecture and horticulture at UCLA Extension, and has used her training as a librarian, her interest in history, and her love of travel to study garden and landscape history and the challenges of preservation. She organized the first Garden Conservancy's Open Days Program in the LA area, is on the board of the Los Angeles Arboretum Foundation, and currently represents CGLHS on the Coalition to Save the UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden. Her design work has been published in numerous books and periodicals, including *Veranda, Martha Stewart Living, House Beautiful,* and *Metropolitan Home*.

Vice President (1st term): ***Nancy Carol Carter,*** a lawyer, law librarian, and legal educator, has long been interested in gardening, public landscapes, botany, and horticultural history. A past president of the San Diego Floral Association, she chairs the editorial board and is an associate editor of *California Garden* magazine, which carries her regular column on notable horticulturists. She has also been published in *Eden*, *Pacific Horticulture*, and the *Journal of San Diego History*. She continues an in-depth study of San Diego nurserywoman Kate O. Sessions and her impact on California horticulture.

Treasurer (2nd term): ***Christy Edstrom O'Hara*** earned bachelors' degrees from Stanford University in English and Art History, and a master's degree from the University of Washington in Landscape Architecture and Preservation Planning. On the faculty at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, she has lectured both nationally and internationally on landscape preservation as well as its application to sustainable landscape design and construction. She also practices landscape architecture and historic landscape restoration, and is on the advisory board for the Dana Adobe in Nipomo, as well as a trustee for the National Association of Olmsted Parks. She has published articles in *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, *Pacific Horticulture*, *Pioneers in Landscape Architecture*, and *Eden*.

Recording Secretary (2nd term): ***Phoebe Cutler*** earned a graduate degree in Landscape Architecture from UC Berkeley. Her thesis on the work of two New Deal agencies led to a job helping to launch the California Conservation Corps; it was published as *The Public Landscape of the New Deal* (Yale, 1986). Combining her BA in Art History from Harvard and the MLA from Berkeley led her to garden history. She has contributed to *Horticulture*, *Landscape Architecture, The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*, and *Eden.*

Membership Secretary (1st term): ***Ann Scheid*** holds degrees from Vassar College, the University of Chicago, and Harvard's Graduate School of Design. Specializing first in Germanic languages and literature, she gravitated into historic preservation after arriving in California in the 1970s. She worked for the City of Pasadena as a preservation planner and for the State of California as an architectural historian. She has written on Pasadena history, with a special interest in landscape design and City Beautiful plans in Pasadena and Southern California. She has served on the boards of the Pasadena Historical Society and the Southern California Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. Practicing semi-retirement, she is curator of the Greene and Greene Archives at the Huntington Library.

Members-at large:

Carolyn Bennett **(1st term)** runs a garden consulting business, CDB Gardens, in Los Angeles while also managing an 11-acre farm in Ojai. Happiest in the garden, she is passionate about educating others about the need to document and preserve significant cultural landscapes and gardens. She holds an MA in the Conservation of Historic Landscapes, Parks, and Gardens from London's Architectural Association School of Architecture. She has organized lecture series, written articles for *Garden Design* and *Pacific Horticulture*, and contributed to *Shaping the American Landscape*. She is a trustee of The Cultural Landscape Foundation and the Los Angeles County Arboretum Foundation. She has served as regional head of the Garden Club of America's Garden History and Design Committee, and is on the GCA's national speakers list.

Sarah Raube **(1st term)**, a licensed architect and landscape architect, works for the Facility Management Division of the National Park Service's Pacific West Regional Office in San Francisco. She received a BS from UC Berkeley in Architecture, but after a few years her love of plants, gardening, and the California landscape led her back to UC Berkeley, to earn an MA in Landscape Architecture—the third generation of her family to do so. After eight years in several private sector landscape architecture firms, including her own, she is happy now to be working with some the biggest and most unique of our national preserved landscapes. She loves backpacking, camping, travel, and endless personal house and garden design and construction projects … and is fortunate to share it all with a horticulturally inclined husband.

EDEN

***Eden* (ISSN 1524-8062) is published four times yearly (Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall) by the California Garden & Landscape History Society, a nonprofit organization as described under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code.**

Editor: Barbara Marinacci, 501 Palisades Drive, #315 / Pacific Palisades, CA 90272-2848.

Phone: 310-459-0190. E-mail: *eden@cglhs.org*.

Eden: Call for Content

Eden solicits your submissions of scholarly papers, short articles, book reviews, information about coming events, news about members' activities and honors, and interesting archives or websites you have discovered. In short, send us anything pertaining to California's landscape history that may be of interest to CGLHS members. Also, more regional correspondents reporting on local landscape preservation concerns, efforts, and accomplishments will be welcomed, along with other relevant issues.

For book reviews, notices of interesting magazine articles, and museum exhibits, please write to Associate Editor Margaretta J. Darnall, 1154 Sunnyhills Road, Oakland, CA 94610. Or contact *eden@cglhs.org*.

All other submissions should be sent to *Eden* editor Barbara Marinacci (see above for contact information). Deadlines for submissions are the first days of January, April, July, and October.

Material may be photocopied for academic purposes, with appropriate credit.

Our heartfelt thanks to these organizations and individuals who support us at the Sustaining and Institutional levels:

CGLHS's Institutional Members

Brooklyn Botanic Garden Library
Descanso Gardens
EBSCO Editorial Department
Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden
Elizabeth C. Miller Library / Univ. of Washington Botanical Gardens
The Garden Conservancy
H.C. Russell Library / SF Botanic Gardens
Historic Resources Group
Homestead Museum
Huntington Botanical Gardens
Isabelle C. Greene & Associates, Inc.
Lenhardt Library / Chicago Botanic Garden
Rancho Los Alamitos
Schynert's Gardening
Storrier-Stearns Japanese Garden
UC Berkeley / Environmental Design Library
UC Riverside / Science Library

Honorary Life Members of CGLHS:

Virginia Gardner, Marlea Graham, and William A. Grant

CGLHS's Sustaining Members

Elizabeth Ames
Helena Babb
Karen Bartholomew
Carolyn Bennett
David Blackburn
John Blocker & Thea Gurns
Denise A. Bradley
Stafford Buckley
Nancy Carol Carter
Ric Catron
Susan Chamberlin
Sally Clark
Betsy Clebsch
Kelly Comras & Michael Lofchie
Patricia Cullinan
Beverly R. Dobson
Mr.& Mrs. David S. Dvorak
Ann M. Dwelley
Thomas Eddy
Gerald Flom & Marlea Graham
Norma P. & Thomas Frey
Betsy G. Fryberger
Mark Goldschmidt
Elizabeth Goodfellow
Frances M. Grate
Sherrin Grout
April Halberstadt
Mary Pat Hogan
Judy M. Horton
Saburo Ishihara & Mary Swanton
Aaron Landworth
Gary Lyons
Carole McElwee
Nancy E. Mead
Margaret Mori, FASLA
Donivee & Merrill Nash
Denise Otis
Paula Panich & Bill Linsman
Michael James Reandeau
Julianna Roosevelt
Ann Scheid
Kathleen & Don Slater
Peggy & Bruce Stewart
David C. Streatfield
Judith B. Tankard
Judith M. Taylor, MD
Marc Treib
Judy Triem
Noel D. Vernon
Sam Watters
Jacquoline Williams
Lucinda Woodward

Join CGLHS—or Renew Your Membership

☐ New ☐ Renew

Membership Category:

☐ Individual $30 ☐ Household $40 ☐ Sustaining $60 and above.
☐ Institutional $50 (organizations and businesses that support the mission of CGLHS)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone: Work _____ Home _____

E-mail _____

Profession/organization affiliation/area of interest:_____

_____

Return this form along with your check made payable to CGLHS to:
Christy O'Hara / CGLHS Treasurer / 11730 San Marcos Road / Atascadero, CA 93422

Please send address and other changes or questions to *treasurer@cglhs.org*

California Garden and Landscape History Society (CGLHS) is a private nonprofit 501(c)(3) membership organization devoted to: celebrating the beauty and diversity of California's historic gardens and landscapes; promoting wider knowledge, preservation, and restoration of California's historic gardens and landscapes; organizing study visits to historic gardens and landscapes as well as to relevant archives and libraries; and offering opportunities for a lively interchange among members at meetings, garden visits, and other events.

The Society organizes annual conferences and publishes EDEN, a quarterly journal.

For more information, visit *www.cglhs.org*.

Locations & Years of CGLHS's Conferences

1995 – Santa Cruz (founding)
1996 – Santa Barbara (Spring)
San Diego (Fall)
1997 – UC Berkeley (Spring)
Huntington Gardens, San Marino (Fall)
1998 – Sacramento
1999 – Long Beach (Rancho Los Alamitos)
2000 – Monterey
2001 – Sonoma County (city of Sonoma)
2002 – San Juan Capistrano
2003 – San Francisco Peninsula (Stanford University)
2004 – Riverside
2005 – Napa Valley (10th anniversary)
2006 – Westside of Silicon Valley (Saratoga)
2007 – Los Angeles (for Japanese-style gardens)
2008 – Lone Pine and Owens Valley
2009 – UC Berkeley (SF Bay Area)
2010 − Santa Cruz County (15th anniversary)
2011 − San Luis Obispo County (city of SLO)
2012 − Sonoma County (Santa Rosa)

CGLHS Board of Directors (2011–2012)

Officers

President ..... Judy M. Horton
Vice President ..... Aaron Landworth
Recording Secretary ……..... Phoebe Cutler
Membership Secretary ..... Libby Simon
Treasurer .... Christy E. O'Hara
Immediate Past-President ..... Thomas Brown

Members-at-Large

Nancy Carol Carter, Kelly Comras,
Phoebe Cutler, Sandra Price, Ann Scheid

Founder: William A. Grant

CGLHS Committee Chairs

Communications ……..…… Kelly Comras
Governance ..……..……..…… Nancy Carol Carter
Finance ….……. Christy E. O'Hara
Events ……... Aaron Landworth & Sandra Price

California Garden &
Landscape History Society
www.cglhs.org

Libby Simon / 3302 Descanso Drive / Los Angeles, CA 90026

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Address Correction and Forwarding Requested

Contents in this issue of Eden

This sea serpent is only one of many fanciful play-sculptures populating the historic La Laguna de San Gabriel playground in Vincent Lugo Park, San Gabriel. Photo: Lu Zhang.