



# The Mount Washington Association

Serving the Mount Washington community since 1955.

November 2008

[www.mtwashington.org](http://www.mtwashington.org)

## Annual MWA Food Drive

The current economic crisis has long been a reality for many in our Los Angeles community, particularly those struggling with mental health issues. This year, on Saturday, December 6th from 9 AM to 11 AM, the Mount Washington Association will again be sponsoring a Holiday Food Drive. Your much-needed contributions will go to the North East Mental Health Clinic, where an average of 70 patients are treated each day – patients who are often in need of help to feed themselves and their families.

The Northeast Mental Health Center, located at 5321 Via Marisol, provides outpatient treatment, crisis intervention, life support and care coordination to residents throughout the Northeast Los Angeles area. The Center has many elderly clients who often find difficulty in obtaining adequate supplies of basic nutrition.

Here in Mount Washington we are known for our generosity and our ability to look outside of our community to help address the needs of others. Let's continue that tradition of giving. Please stop by the corner of Elyria and San Rafael (opposite the SRF headquarters) on December 6 and share some time with your neighbors, maybe enjoy a cup of coffee, and most importantly drop off a contribution. Nothing perishable, please – we need canned goods, especially soups and proteins such as tuna, salmon, canned hams and all canned vegetables, as well as such staples as packages of rice and beans.

Thank you for your support. We look forward to seeing you.

## President's Message

*Eliot Sekuler*

### Tough Times Shadow the Holiday Season

Heading into the holiday season, the fallout from the economic distress that grips our country is starkly visible in our own neighborhood. Lately, it's been impossible to

drive from the freeway to our garage without seeing "foreclosure" signs, reminders that lives are unraveling all around us.

This holiday season, the ways in which our community rallies around our food and toy drives take on an added urgency. One of our longtime beneficiaries has been the Northeast Mental Health Center, and the hardship of the Center's clients is being felt more sharply this year than anytime in recent memory.

The Center's building on Via Marisol is non-descript, but since the late 1980's it

has served as a lifeline for over 900 clients who rely upon it for a variety of outpatient services. Clients come through Northeast L.A. for medications, wellness programs, relapse prevention, and assistance in re-engaging with the community following hospitalization or debilitating mental health challenges.



The center's staff of 35 mental health professionals has seen caseloads grow and the basic needs of its clientele become more acute. Many of the Center's clients are elderly and many are in need of food and shelter.

And, of course, the plight of the Center's clients has worsened as the economy has soured. Mita Cuaron, a mental health counselor and registered nurse who has worked at the Center for the past eight years, says

they're bracing for the impact of the economic downturn. "There's going to be an urgent, serious need among our clients, a distress and fear that we haven't seen before."

The Center provides Thanksgiving dinner bags for about 60 of its clients and distributes food donations from the Mount Washington Association and other sources to

many more of its clients who are in need of basic nutrition. The Mount Washington community has been generous, but there's never quite enough food to go around, says Mita.

As noted in our lead story, this year's MWA Food Drive takes place from 9 AM to 11 AM on Saturday, December 6. Please dig a little deeper this year, clean out the cupboards, buy something extra. It's a small effort to make a big difference in somebody's life.

## The Hillside Federation News

*Ann Walnum*

The September and October meetings of the Hillside Federation were dedicated to very serious issues: the Metro Studios at Lankershim project, the nomination of the Griffith Park Historic-Cultural Monument, billboard blight, Los Angeles City implementation of S.B. 1818 regarding affordable housing, and the Northeast Hillside Ordinance. Guests included Councilwoman Wendy Gruel, developers and traffic planners for Metro

Studios, and Los Angeles City Planning Associate Gabriela Juarez.

Consequently it was with great relief that we listened to some good news from Walt Young, Chief Ranger of the Mountains and Recreation Conservancy Authority: MRCA properties, including Elyria Canyon and Heidelberg Park, are now 100% cleared of brush. 24-hour patrols are maintained on Red Flag days.

MRCA also is testing three types of "force multipliers" – technology devices which patrol or collect information – for dealing with vandalism, especially graffiti. Spec sheets on two of these systems were distributed to enthusiastic homeowners at the meeting. One is a sensitive listening device that is set to react to the particular sound of a spray can being used. The other is a combination loudspeaker and camera system which warns possible violators in addition to photographing them.

## Public Safety

*Cheri Uno*

### Capt. Murphy's Crime Report for the NE Area Division

Year to date, the Northeast Part I crimes are still down 7.9%, one of the best for all LAPD divisions. Vehicle crimes (burglary theft from motor vehicle and grand theft auto) are up 1.5% year to date. This means we still need to be vigilant about keeping our cars free of items that would look enticing, and we need theft deterrent devices on our cars – especially Hondas and Toyotas.

### Programs

The Safe Passages program is getting under way for Franklin High School. Meetings have taken place with school officials and LAPD to determine routes and strategies.

A "Peace in Northeast" group has formed from the "Peace March" a couple of months ago in the Northeast Area.

Teen CPAB has formed and is getting off to a great start with a project for Fletcher Elementary School, because of the disruption in their area by the recent "sweep" of arrests in their neighborhood. Anyone who would like to help with this project or get more information can contact [c23\\_torres@yahoo.com](mailto:c23_torres@yahoo.com) or [30347@lapd.lacity.org](mailto:30347@lapd.lacity.org).

The Mayor's Office is having their Day Of Service on February 7, 2009. Anyone can apply for a Day of Service project. The project should be meaningful and inclusive – anyone can participate. The deadline for acceptance of Project Proposals is December 5, 2008. Contact Abigail Ramirez ([Abigail.ramirez@lacity.org](mailto:Abigail.ramirez@lacity.org)) or Sara Bell ([sarah.bell@lacity.org](mailto:sarah.bell@lacity.org)) for more information and a proposal application.

### C-PAB Meetings

C-PAB meetings are on the fourth Monday of each month at 6 PM. These meetings are open to the public – anyone can attend. If you have concerns about long-standing problems in your area or if you would like to get

## Officers

### *President*

Eliot Sekuler (344-9955)

### *1<sup>st</sup> VP (Action)*

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### *2<sup>nd</sup> VP (Programs)*

Chet Hood (221-8626)

### *3<sup>rd</sup> VP (Membership)*

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### *4<sup>th</sup> VP (Hospitality)*

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Pat Griffith (221-9807)

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Benny Padilla (222-3976)

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Lynnette Kampe (221-1782)

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### *Beautification*

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### *Land Use*

Liz Herron (225-5711)

### *Public Safety*

Cheri Uno (222-0410)

### *Culture/Art/Historian*

Connie Rohman (225-3321)

Web site: Connie Rohman (225-3321)

Bulletin Board: Nancy Lilly (225-7597)

Posters: Paul Girard (221-7822)

Newsletter edited by Scott Burleigh (319-3534)

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involved in Neighborhood Watch, please attend. Call the NE LAPD Community Relations Office at 213-485-2548 to find out about the location of the next meeting. Minutes from the meeting can be found on [LAPDonline.org](http://LAPDonline.org). Also, there is a brochure explaining what CPAB is about. Mount Washington needs more involvement in this organization.

#### Prepared For An Emergency?

Have you thought of your pets? Know the policies for hotels and motels in the area since most disaster shelters will not take pets. With your emergency supplies, have a list of the animal shelters and boarding places where you may need to leave your pet. And never leave your pet behind alone without arrangements for care. You don't know when you may be able to return to your home.

Make sure your emergency supplies have food, water, medications, vaccination records, pet photos (write the pet's name on the photo), poop bags or litter box, blanket for your pets. Also, always have an ID tag on your pet. Make arrangements with a trusted friend or neighbor to take care of your pet in case you can't make it home. Forming a Neighborhood Watch with your trusted neighbors could also help you during a disaster should you not be able to get to your pet. **Where are your evacuation map and list of things to take?**

#### Participate in the Great American Shake Out

The ShakeOut drill will occur in houses, businesses, and public spaces throughout southern California at 10AM on November 13, 2008. With a goal of at least 5 million participants, the ShakeOut drill will be the largest in U.S. history. To participate, go to [www.ShakeOut.org/register](http://www.ShakeOut.org/register) and pledge your family, school, business, or organization's participation in the drill. Registered participants will receive information on how to plan their drill, connect with other participants, and encourage a dialogue with others about earthquake preparedness. There are many ways to take part, but at the least participants should Drop, Cover, and Hold on at 10 AM on November 13. It all begins with registering, which is free and open to everyone.

#### CERT REFRESHER DRILL

Sunday, November 16, 2008

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM (Registration starts at 7:00 AM)

LAFD Fire Station 88

5101 North Sepulveda Blvd.  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

Hosted by the Los Angeles Fire Department.

SIGN UP NOW at <http://www.cert-la.com/refresher.htm>

The drill is open to all graduates of CERT training programs.

Come practice and refresh the skills you learned during the Basic CERT Program Course.

## MWA Nominating Committee Board Recommendations 2009

#### **Officers:**

- President – Eliot Sekuler
- Action VP – Carol Rumble
- Programs VP – Chet Hood
- Membership VP – Cheri Uno
- Secretary – Natalie Seaman
- Treasurer – Bennie Padilla
- Hospitality – Maria Gray

#### **Board members:**

- Anna Carpenter
- Ann Walnum
- Bill Rumble
- Rob Schraff

## Draft Minutes of the September 2008 General Membership Meeting

*Pat Griffith*

The meeting began about 6:40 PM on the tennis court of the Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters.

President Eliot Sekuler introduced Stephanie Kingsnorth, an Associate and Director of Preservation Projects for Pfeiffer Partners Architects, who is overseeing the upcoming preservation process for the SRF. Stephanie led us through the efforts to discover the original structure and uses of the old Mount Washington Hotel and the changes it has gone through over the years. Her observation was that, while there have been additions to the main building, nothing seems to have left the site – structural features seemed to have been moved and used elsewhere. Many of Pfeiffer Partners' historical discoveries have been assisted by research through the LA Times archives, as the hotel was a favorite location for society functions. Then, after the SRF purchased the grounds in 1925, Paramahansa Yogananda was also a well-followed public figure in Los Angeles in the 20's and 30's, so the LA Times continued to provide much information about the site. Stephanie then led us through the main lobby of the center and around the building to observe the renovations planned.

After we had returned to our seats, Eliot introduced Charles Fisher, our own best-known historian, author of [Highland Park \(Images of America: California\)](#), and native Mount Washingtonian. Charles showed us over 100 photos of early Northeast LA, focusing on Highland Park and the many famous personages involved in its growth and development. Charles's knowledge of how our local buildings were used over the years, and the role Highland Park played in the development of Los Angeles, was truly fascinating. There were many

questions, and we were eager to bring Charles back for more.

The meeting was closed with announcements.

## Grayson Cook: An Appreciation

*Bill Rumble*

Grayson Douglas Cook, a long-time Mount Washington resident and former president of the MWA, died on October 14 of a stroke suffered at his Avenue 42 home.

Grayson was born on September 3, 1938, and grew up in Los Angeles. He graduated from UCLA in 1960 with a BA degree in Humanities. In 1967, following service as

an officer in the US Navy, he began a thirty-one year career with the Los Angeles County Probation Department, eventually attaining the position of Supervising Deputy Probation Officer. Early on in his career, he became fast friends with fellow "P.O.s" Richard and Michelle Lewis and Judy Call. At one time, all four lived in Mount Washington. Richard and Grayson became "walking buddies." Richard recalled wistfully their last walk together up the Arroyo Seco – one that ended with both men agreeing that the hike had been positively magnificent.

Grayson was a genuine bon vivant. He relished gourmet dishes, fine wine, and his bachelorhood. He adored the company of beautiful women. He enjoyed travel, especially to archaeological sites in Mexico and Central America where he could indulge his interest in the civilization of the Maya Indians. He lived his retirement life according to a strict daily regimen. Neighbors fondly (?) recall being awakened daily at 6 AM by the classical or jazz strains of Grayson's carefully chosen morning

music selection. Saturday mornings found Grayson seeking treasure – passing the morning on a yard sale circuit which began in the suburbs of the San Fernando Valley and ended whenever Grayson's stamina or resources ran out. Grayson passed his evenings watching films, attending the theatre or live jazz performances, or cataloguing his extensive collection of autographed screenplays which filled several bookshelves of his living room.

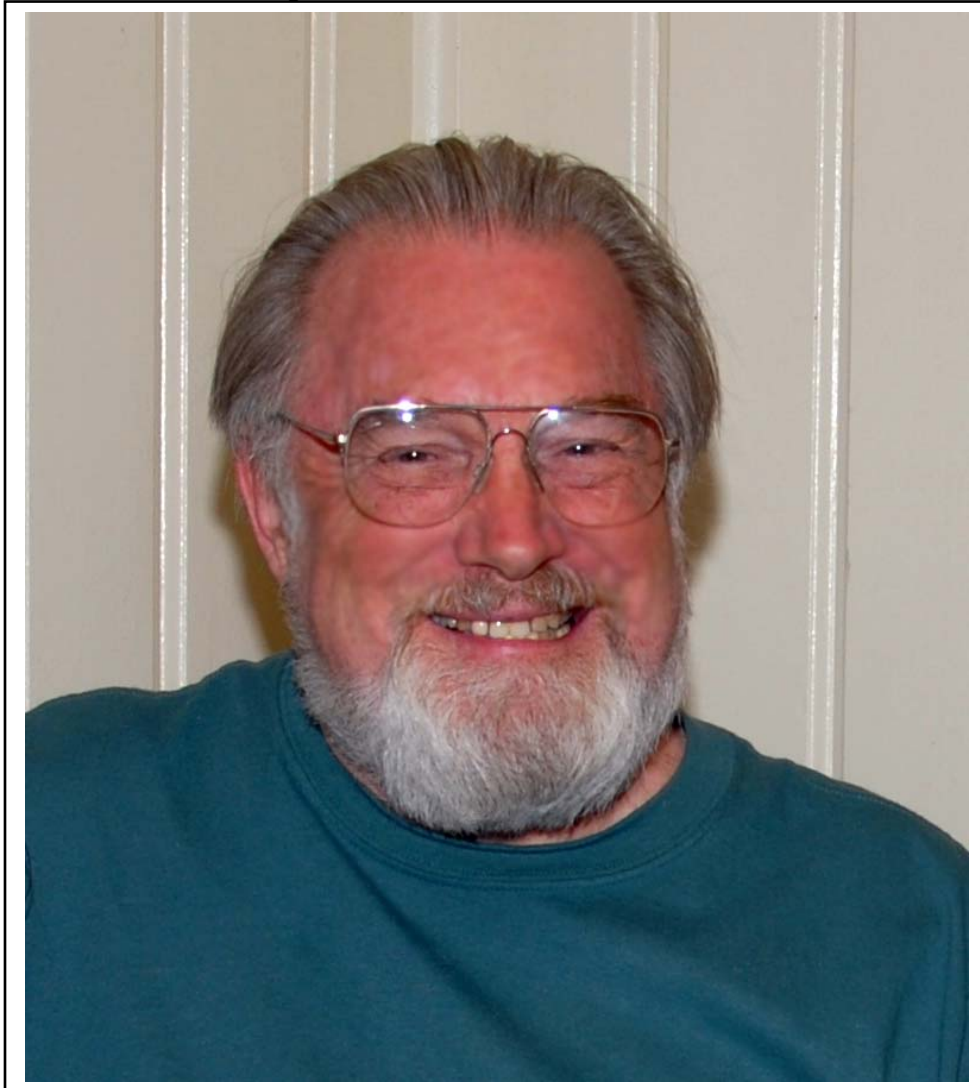
Grayson understood that the dilettante consumes culture while the true connoisseur disseminates it. To that end, Grayson donated generously to the Southwest and

Heritage Square Museums and served on the board of directors of the Highland Park Heritage Trust, volunteering his home for meetings and for the 2005 Holiday Party.

Grayson's highest calling was as a Storyteller. He gave tours of Highland Park landmarks as a Los Angeles Conservancy docent, played Mr. Shaw at Heritage Square's Holiday Lamplight Celebration, and served as a guide at the MWA's annual Jack Smith Walk.

Grayson was devoted to the youth of northeast Los

Angeles. He regularly collected books from his friends and neighbors, boxed them up, and distributed them to students at Mount Washington and nearby elementary schools. He had an especially close relationship with the staff and students of Aldama School. He visited each third grade class two or three times a week telling stories, sharing travel experiences, and tutoring slow readers. Ann Walnum recalls Grayson explaining his devotion to struggling readers as deriving from his service as a probation officer. Most of the young people in trouble with the law were either poor readers or could



not read at all, he noted. In 2005, Aldama teachers nominated him for the prestigious Los Angeles Unified School District's Volunteer of the Year Award. Out of a field of several hundred entries, Grayson won the award.

Grayson's largesse extended to the men of Discovery Four, a board and care facility for people with brain diseases. He regularly hired residents and put them to work maintaining his home and garden, boxing his books and mementos, and shelving his screenplays.

Carol Jacques remembers the many years Grayson spent teaching probation officers how best to work with youthful offenders. All humans fall into several personality types, he taught. Most are Blues, Golds, and Greens. Grayson was an Orange. "Oranges are risk takers," he explained. "They think out of the box. They find solutions to every problem. Only 10% of all people are Oranges...and 90% of the 10% are in jail. The rest are the people who climb Mount Everest."

Grayson is survived by his sister, Kasey (Doug) Wade of Healdsburg, CA; his nephews, Riley and Jake Wade; and his cousin, Donna Lefurgey (Steve Fox) of El Prado, New Mexico.

The MWA will show footage of Grayson's seventieth birthday party and remember him at its next regular meeting. The meeting will take place on Monday, November 17, at 7 PM, at the Mount Washington Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room. All are invited.

## Green On Green

*Lynnette Kampe*

### Fall in the Mount Washington Countryside

It's such a beautiful day today I can hardly bear to pull

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together this article. A few moments ago the first few drops of rain fell, but now it seems the rest will hold off for a bit. Here we go.

We know that fall is the best planting season for natives – and actually for just about all plants in Southern California. We have a year-round growing season but natives in particular are adapted to root growth in the fall and winter, then green growth as the days begin to warm and lengthen again. Gardeners (defined as people who like to get their hands dirty) get the itch to start something new. It just feels good to be outside.



Our hardy neighborhood beautification consultants

Fall color is here. In our hills and canyons you can see the native Walnuts turning a lovely yellow. A few rare old Coast Live Oaks in Moon Canyon, below San Rafael show off their dark green leaves once the Walnuts go

bare. The Toyon berries are turning bright red, to the delight of resident and migrating birds. We have just a few native Hummingbird fuchsias left – this would be a good plant to add to your garden. You can see some of their bright orange/red flowers, with soft grey foliage, growing along dirt Glenalbyn, south of Mount Washington Drive. (Don't try the road after a rain.)

Soon the hills will be turning green again – I hope! Even though it's impossible to grow wildflowers through the faster growing wild oats, I still love to see the green. I'll bring packets of poppy seeds to the next meeting for anyone who would like to tell some wild oats to make way for some sun loving flowers. Poppies can grow any place that gets enough water and sun for healthy weeds and the non-native grass is easiest to weed just after it pops up.

Please try to avoid herbicide, or use it carefully and protect valuable habitat plants. Come up with a plan to replant the barren area with lower growing wildflowers or native grass. Low growing dwarf Coyote Brush is recommended by the Fire Dept. for holding slopes. And if you don't plant anything, you'll likely come up with a crop of Tumble weeds, Mustard or some other pushy weed and be worse off then when you started.

This is a good time of year to visit some of our community benches. Most of them were located to capture favorite views. Sunrises appear daily above Moon Canyon, with two benches – and moonrises as well. Sunsets this time of year occasionally throw in a sparkle of water when viewed from the second bench on Seaview Ave. And in Elyria Canyon Park, entering from Elyria Drive, you will find the two benches dedicated to Lucy Lemmon and Pat Samson, and a little further down,

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one dedicated to author and naturalist Elna Bakker. All have great views, especially after a rain. Carpe diem!

## ASNC Elections

*Pat Griffith, Joe Riser*

2008 will indeed be the LAST annual election for the ASNC....

No, the Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council – your own local band of volunteers, activists, concerned stakeholders, and "community organizers" – isn't going away, and the board members haven't elected themselves "representatives for life". But this year's election (2008), the sixth such, will be the last held annually for this local city-certified advisory board representing our five smaller Northeast communities, including Mount Washington.

Due to a rules change required by the City of L.A., all 90 or so neighborhood councils will begin holding board elections every OTHER year (even-numbered years), beginning in 2010, in order to allow the L.A. City Clerk's office to help manage and run them. Also different this year, the ASNC has once again expanded its stakeholder definition in the interest of being more inclusive.

So, here's information on this year's vote.

### **Our Neighborhood Council**

The Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council (ASNC) was certified in 2002 under the Charter of the City of Los Angeles to advise its elected officials and departments regarding local and citywide governmental issues on behalf of the stakeholders of **Sycamore Grove**, Hermon, **Montecito Heights**, **Monterey Hills**, and **Mount**

## Washington.

It is, effectively, the focused voice of these communities on a whole range of important issues: the delivery of city services, public safety, land use and open space, economic development, the environment, arts and culture, and more. In the past five years, the ASNC has also dedicated more than \$100,000 from the City funds it is provided to neighborhood improvement projects and community building events.

There are a total of 19 positions on the ASNC board. All positions are now for two-year terms:

**Geographic** – Twelve positions representing specific communities:

- four from Mount Washington (two to be elected in 2008)
- two from Montecito Heights, two from Monterey Hills, two from Hermon, and two from Sycamore Grove (one from each of those four communities to be elected in 2008)

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**At-large** – Seven positions representing community-wide interests (all to be elected in 2008):

- retail, wholesale & service businesses;
- faith-based organizations;
- education & youth;
- recreation, culture, & the arts;
- environment;
- community non-profits;
- healthcare & seniors

A full list of declared candidates can be found at:

<http://www.asnc.us/Elections-2008/092708-DeclaredCandidates-2008.htm> However, write-in candidates will continue to be accepted by the IEA through November 23, 2008.

For the two Mount Washington representative positions, the following candidates have filed and will present their positions at the November 7 Candidate Forum:

- Paula Sirola
- Gintaras Valiulis
- Scott Folsom
- Louis Mraz

The candidates will also have an opportunity to speak at the Mount Washington Local Issues Committee meeting, November 12 at the Mount Washington School library.

The election will be held on November 24, 2008, from 4 PM to 8 PM, at Ramona Hall, 4580 N. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90042. Ballots have been mailed to all currently registered members, and you may simply mail your ballot back in. Or carry it in to Ramona Hall on November 24, if you prefer.

If you did not receive a ballot or are not currently registered, you may also register on election day and vote at that time. No one who affirms his/her stake in the community will be denied the chance to vote.

Full information about the ASNC and the election, including forms and instructions, can be obtained from the web at [www.asnc.us](http://www.asnc.us).

## Restaurant Recommendation: La Abeja

*Eliot Sekuler*

Mexican food is blessedly plentiful in our neighborhood and people tend to be as partisan toward their favorite Mexican eatery as, well, all those other things about which we tend to be partisan.

Despite competition from a plethora of nearby Mexican restaurants, few neighborhood places inspire such affection and loyalty as does the venerable La Abeja.

Located on the corner of Figueroa and Avenue 37, La Abeja's facade would be unremarkable save for the amazing, museum-quality Leo Limon murals that sprawl

across the storefront's exterior. Inside, the restaurant is far less ambitious in its décor: neat but spartan formica tables and booths fill its two rooms and scattered portraits of toreadors, Frieda Kahlo and, inexplicably, a shrine-like display of Three Stooges memorabilia decorate faux walnut paneling.

La Abeja's menu features simple breakfasts and lunch plates prepared with care and craftsmanship that belie the remarkably economical prices on the menu. It's simple food done well, and with some dishes, done exceptionally well.

A pork in red mole sauce is rich, tasty and so tender that each chunk almost collapses at the touch of your fork. The adobada – justly renowned as a house specialty – is mouthwatering, the slices of meat marinated in a mixture of spices so complex that it presents a mini-fiesta of delicious flavors.

Green cheese enchiladas are outstanding, the sauce rich and creamy, the enchiladas plump with white queso ranchero.

Breakfasts are more-or-less standard: huevos rancheros, huevos con chorizo and, of course, menudo. The egg dishes are served with sides of wonderfully grilled potatoes that provide a tasty boost to the carb-load.

Burritos and tortas are great bargains, ranging from \$2.60 for a rice and beans burrito to \$3.90 for a torta of the aforementioned adobada, an amazingly good deal.

There's good bottomless coffee service for \$1.25, plus a selection of Mexican and American soft drinks.

A nice touch is a plastic cup of dried oregano on each table. It adds a savory accent to the frijoles that are ladled abundantly onto each plate.



**La Abeja at Figueroa and Avenue 37**

Truly a neighborhood treasure, La Abeja has been open for about 40 years, owned and operated by two generations of the Fonseca family. Cash only. Open weekdays from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Sundays, 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Closed Tuesdays.

Addr.: 3700 N. Figueroa Street. Phone: 323-221-0474

### Coming up...

- November 12 *ASNC Mount Washington Local Issues Committee meeting* at Mount Washington School. 7 PM.
- November 17 *Mount Washington Association General Meeting* at Mount Washington School. 7:30 PM.
- November 24 *Arroyo Seco Neighborhood Council election* at Ramona Hall. 4 to 8 PM.
- December 6 *MWA Food Drive* at Marmion & San Rafael. 9 to 11 AM.
- December 6 *Marmion Way Beautification Team* – meet at Marmion Way and Figueroa to help beautify this entrance to our community. Stop by if you can, even if for only part of the time. 9 to noon. Contact Jerry at (323) 225-2748 form more information.
- December 13 *Native Plant Propagation* in Elyria Canyon Park. Meet at the nursery area behind the Red Barn. Please call (323) 221-1782 or email [lynette@pacbell.net](mailto:lynette@pacbell.net) for more information. 9 AM to noon.
- January 17 *Rainbow Canyon Springtime visit* – walk the trail and see the canyon in springtime. Please RSVP to (323) 221-1782 or [lynette@pacbell.net](mailto:lynette@pacbell.net). 9 AM to noon.