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**The September meeting will be held
Wednesday Sept. 17th
7:30 p.m.
419 Daisy Ave.**

THE WILLMORE CITY ENTERPRISE
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THE WILLMORE CITY ENTERPRISE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLMORE CITY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION SEPT 2008 

September Meeting

The "Quality of Life" topic for our September meeting will be "Burglary Prevention". Officer Jerry Lomeli from the Willmore Community Police Center had a workshop on this topic a few months ago which many in the neighborhood attended but for those of you who were unable to attend then, now is your opportunity. Jerry will be presenting some of the information from that workshop plus additional info. Encourage your neighbor to join you on Wednesday September 17th at 7:30 p.m. Remember - a good observant neighbor is the best security system you can have.

See you at the Willmore Community Police Center (910 Daisy Avenue) Sept. 17th at 7:30 p.m.

There will be a Code Enforcement meeting at 6:30 p.m. for all block captains.

Vacant Buildings Ordinance

In order for Code Enforcement to handle vacant buildings more expeditiously, the City's Vacant Building Ordinance has been revamped. This ordinance, on the books since the early 1990s, had not really been needed until the recent downturn in the economy with its increased foreclosures. The Ordinance has now been strengthened and cost recovery fees added.

If a building is vacant and the owners do not maintain it, the property can be entered into a Vacant & Boarded Monitoring Program. The purpose of this program is to keep the appearance of the property as normal as possible. Once in the program, the property stays in the program until the building is occupied once again. The charge for the monthly monitoring is \$100 per month. Code Enforcement visits the property twice a month and if it's being maintained then there's no action taken, but if it is not, then they will have the needed work performed (i.e. weeding, window repair, etc.) and lien the property.

The City is trying to contact the owners of any vacant properties to make them take responsibility but sometimes it is difficult to track down anyone when there are multiple investment groups involved.

There are two approaches for identifying these vacant properties. One is a reactive approach and the other a proactive approach. The first is when there are complaints and the inspectors go out and find that the property is vacant. The second is a process they plan to use where they can find out a change in property ownership status within a few days of the recording and through this they can get foreclosure details. They will then send out inspectors to investigate all the properties in foreclosure to see if they are being maintained.

Back in the 1990s when we had a similar downturn and lots of vacant buildings, metal security screens were installed on the windows of such buildings. They were good in that they helped deter break-ins but they were awful in that many were left on after the properties became occupied again. No one has been making these types of screens for awhile as there has not been the need

Mark Your Calendar!!

Cheap Therapy: It Feels Good

By Carol McCafferty

"Historic houses are not the same as blight. Historic houses let us know what the past was in Long Beach...that in order to go forward with a wonderful future for the city we really need to preserve that past." This was a wonderful statement made by a supportive city official at the unveiling of the restored house that now occupies 419 Daisy Avenue. Or one might say the second unveiling, as the house first appeared in 1904 at 249 Maine Avenue, where it housed three generations of the Hunter family for 71 years.

You read about the relocation and restoration in our last issue, but these words are worth emphasizing this month. They sum up thirty-plus years of restoration and renovation in Willmore City and the West End, and the spirit of the people who have been, and still are, doing it. It is rare today for anyone to start from scratch the way the Willmore group did, as so few "untouched" houses remain. But, like the Hunter sisters, the children and grandchildren of former owners sometimes stop by to tell us about our houses and follow up with pictures in the mail.

In the meantime new families are creating new memories and the houses just go on quietly performing their purpose - to be a home.

WCHA Gala Oct. 19th

Plans are underway for the 30th Anniversary Celebration of Willmore City Heritage Association. The event will be held at The Willmore (3rd & Cedar). Invitations will be going out in September so save the date on your calendar. We have some celebrating to do!

Vacant Buildings Ordinance continued

and thus vacant buildings are being boarded up with plywood. Tom Slater, Code Enforcement Division Officer, has been in contact with companies that used to make such screens and is going to be putting out a request for bids for them. He will, however, send notices to the property owners that when the properties are sold and/or occupied that they must remove the security screens. (Thank you Tom!)

This sounds like a great program to help our neighborhoods fight the negative effects of vacant buildings. The program, however, will only last as long as our abatement budget exists. Yes, any expenses incurred by the City will be liened against the properties but it can take some time to recoup those monies. So in the meantime the City will be fronting the money to pay for the maintenance. Let's help by alerting them to any problem properties in our neighborhood and forwarding any information regarding ownership of the properties. In this way the Code Enforcement team can make contact with the current owners as quickly as possible and will hopefully insure that all vacant properties are properly maintained.

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"The Unromantic Gardener"

I was astonished to discover that instead of just a typical suburban house, I had grown up in a Mid-Century Modern home! Although this time period tended towards a tropical look, many of the plants were not really tropical at all and are actually low water use.

During those years, everyone seemed to have the same three plants - Birds of Paradise, Jade Plant and Acanthus. We have many more choices now, but the essential concept behind these plants still fit in the landscape.

The lean lines, open floor plan, and huge windows of the ranch style house lend themselves to a more contemporary, stylized garden. Plants with graphic shapes, large, interesting leaves, and subtler colors complement the clean look of this architecture. Succulents with huge rosettes, palms, and yuccas are especially wonderful here. Grasses are very modern looking - just remember to check their eventual size AND width, as well as their possibly invasive (www.plantright.org) nature. The muted grays of native plant foliage are lovely and some have a more regular form as well. If you like to plant things in rows, this is the garden for you. But please, no prissy little bedding plants! Structure is the key word here.

Next month:

A Few Favorite Natives

Kathleen Irvine

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Donations are Tax Deductible

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

WCHA Board Members* - 2007/2008

| | |
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