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The Sept. meeting will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 19th at 7:30 p.m. at the Willmore Community Police Center at 910 Daisy Ave.

THE WILLMORE CITY ENTERPRISE
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Mark Your Calendar!!

THE WILLMORE CITY ENTERPRISE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLMORE CITY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION SEPT 2007

September 19th Meeting

Our new South Division Police Commander Jay Johnson will be joining us at our September meeting on Wednesday September 19th at 7:30 p.m. at the Willmore Community Police Center. If you have questions, concerns or suggestions regarding police issues then this is your opportunity to voice them. Commander Johnson is very familiar with our neighborhood and would like to hear from you what you feel are the priority issues for Willmore. Please join us.

Also joining us at our September meeting will be Robert Garcia from the newly established North Pine Neighborhood Alliance who would like to share with us some information about their new association as well as ask for a few tips from our organization since we've been at it a few years (actually almost 30 years). Robert lives in the Temple Lofts and is a member of the Downtown Visioning Committee and I'm sure would be happy to provide an update on the status of the Downtown Vision. Robert is also co-publisher of lbpost.com which provides some wonderful local news stories and commentaries. If you haven't checked it out yet you should do so.

See you on the 19th!

A Code Enforcement meeting for all *Block Captains* will be held at 6:30 p.m.

Foursquare Garden Coming Soon!

Willmore City Heritage Association has been notified that we have been awarded two grants to assist us in completing a beautiful garden and fence at 419 Daisy Avenue! The Neighborhood Services Bureau's Neighborhood Partners Program has awarded us a matching grant and the Long Beach Water Department's Beautiful Long Beach Landscape program has also awarded us a grant that will help to pay for a fence, arbor, raised beds, and water system to plant the front and side yard of the foursquare house at 419 Daisy Avenue.

Last month, we put out a call in the Willmore City Enterprise for cuttings (slips) of your drought tolerant and old-fashioned favorites and we have already heard from several neighbors who have offered some great plants for this project to help connect this house and this garden to our neighborhood and all of us. These treasures include some incredible plant legacies that share the memory of special neighbors who have passed including Edna Saxlund's irises, Mary Fehr's calla lillies, Dorothy Bembridge's naked ladies, Flossie Lewis' birds of paradise, Harry Leroy Long's plumerias and brugmansias, and Cecil Thane Doll 's mother-in-law's tongues.

Do you have a green thumb? Do you have plants to share? We are looking for you, too! If you have ideas, plants you would like to share, materials for this project, please call us at (562) 435-7752.



T H E W I L L M O R E

New Traffic Signal at 4th & Chestnut

Through grassroots efforts spearheaded by Tom Martin, a much needed traffic signal was recently installed at 4th & Chestnut. For years 4th Street stopped at the Mall but after the mall was torn down a few years ago, 4th Street once again became a through street resulting in an increase in traffic and unfortunately an increase in auto accidents and many near misses at the 4th & Chestnut intersection.

Working closely with the 1st District Council Office and Dave Roseman of the Traffic and Transportation Bureau, Tom succeeded in helping make the neighborhood a bit safer. Thanks Tom for your perseverance! Thanks also to our responsive 1st District Council Office and Dave Roseman for all their help. Through some miracle, Dave managed to get the traffic signal installed a year ahead of the original schedule. Wow! What a great team effort by the neighborhood, our City Council office and City staff!



Tom Martin throws the switch on the new traffic signal at 4th & Chestnut with Dave Roseman and members of Willmore and WECA on hand.

Friends & Neighbors at August Potluck

WCHA members enjoyed a beautiful summer evening last month at Dianne McNinch's house for our August potluck.



Congratulations to the Sochins

We have a new resident in Willmore -- Kelvin Micah Sochin was born August 26th to proud parents Cherie and board member Erik Sochin. We hear that Mom, Dad and Kelvin are doing great. Congratulations!



C I T Y E N T E R P R I S E

Volunteer Opportunities at Bembridge House

A Holiday Tour of the Bembridge House is being scheduled for Dec. 2nd and if you did not get the chance to participate in the last holiday event then this is your opportunity to help with the planning and holiday decorating of the house. It really is a lot of fun!

Also, if you like to sew, we have just the project for you! Nothing difficult -- we are putting the sewing project into "kits" to make Christmas stockings and you can sew them at home. We will be selling them during the tour of the Bembridge House on Dec. 2nd. All proceeds will go to the Bembridge House.

"Adopt a Room" During the year different volunteers have "adopted" individual rooms at the Bembridge House to care for and decorate for special events. There are still a few rooms left for adoption. This is a special opportunity to participate in the loving care of this fabulous historic home.

To sign up or for additional information please contact Jill Anne Black (562)495-3377.
jillblack7@yahoo.com

W I L L M O R E C A L E N D A R

- | | | | |
|------------|---|-----------|--|
| Sept. 19th | Code Enforcement (Block Captains) 6:30 pm
WCHA Meeting 7:30 pm
Willmore Community Police Center | Nov. 14th | Code Enforcement 6:30 pm
WCHA Meeting 7:30 pm
Bembridge House
Speaker: "The Color Diva"
Learn about house colors |
| Oct. 17th | Code Enforcement (Block Captains) 6:30 pm
WCHA Meeting/Tour 7:30 pm
Home of Nancy & Cindy Smith
953 Daisy Ave. | Dec. 19th | Holiday Potluck 7:00 pm
Home of Mark & Cheryl Perry
351 Magnolia Ave. |

Willmore City Heritage Association

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

WCHA Board Members* - 2007/2008

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| Sherron Leno, Secretary * | 432-5140 |
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| WCHA Voice Mail | 436-8611 |
| Police Center Chair: Carrol Goddard | 618-9507 |
| Willmore Community Police Center | 570-1146 |
| 1st District Council Office | 570-6919 |

visit us at our website: <http://www.willmorecity.org>

Recently I called someone a Willmoron and got a confused reaction from one of our newer residents. It's time to explain it and welcome anyone else who wants to be called a Willmoron. I moved to Willmore in 1986 and the term was in common usage then. At the time, most of us were buying totally unrestored houses because none had been restored yet. But we saw potential. Today houses are for sale that can use some more restoration, but few homeowners today are pulling old rats' nests out from behind crumbling plaster as our houses revealed themselves.

There were lots of parties then, probably because we sought validation from each other; validation that we often weren't getting from our families. I usually joined the men in the kitchen, where the talk was about stripping techniques, tools and formulations, and finer points of construction that didn't require being on site to actually see it. The other homes were being restored by the men, but I was doing it on my own with the help of a hired carpenter. I learned a lot and eventually got to where I dared a suggestion: use lacquer thinner instead of messy stripper after the woodwork has been heat stripped. I got some real looks and rolled eyes, but one of the men tried it and reported back that I was right. At last I wasn't just an eavesdropper; I had joined the fraternity.

We also staged a lot of intimate suppers on our front porches - candles and all that - and I think I want to get back to it. I think we quit when we finished with the dining rooms.

The exteriors of houses were being heat-stripped at a rate of about one per block. (don't do it today; paint formulations have changed and new paint won't stick.) Eventually the houses got coats of colorful paint. The yards had often been planted by then. And we realized that, one by one, the shoddy rentals on the block were being painted and cleaned up. Apparently no landlord wanted to have the ickiest place on the block.

We became convinced that, by example, we were chasing out the slumlords; the new owners were taking more interest in appearances and health issues. Not all, but many. Some of our questionable neighbors moved away and were replaced by families who didn't want any trouble. I am convinced that gang banger kids steered their parents to neighborhoods where they thought they would find it easier to pursue their interests. That's not to say we didn't still have problem buildings, but there were lots fewer of them, and it happened one building at a time.

Graffiti got to be more of a problem, but we took to meeting on Sunday mornings and going out with Ed Gonzalez's truck full of paint and rollers to paint it out. The city's graffiti crews were only allowed to go fifty feet into the alleys with their paint; we allowed ourselves full access. At that time you needed the owner's permission to paint out his graffiti. Maybe you still do. We knew who would welcome our efforts, who wouldn't care one way or another, and who would never see our work. It was guerilla warfare. We felt like ruffians and loved every minute of it.

We found that our neighbors hadn't been calling the Police, so we introduced the concept. Since the LBPD was having internal problems, we didn't always get a response, but we kept on calling and eventually LBPD cleared up its problems. Fortunately, their improved response coincided with our one-on-one campaign. After awhile we got our Police-shy neighbors to report to us and we made the calls. Power trip all the way.

The gunshots took a long time. I haven't heard any around 11th and Maine in years, but some neighbors still report hearing them. The night I moved into my house a bullet came through the kitchen window. Scott Ringwolski had one come through a bedroom window, while he was in the bedroom, pass through the room and through the door to the hall, where it fell to the floor. Mine had pooped out after it hit a window muntin and immediately fell to the floor. I guess if we'd had any brains we'd have left. Am I getting any closer to the definition of Willmoron?

I miss those days, the late 80's and early 90's, and the memories help tie me to the neighborhood. It seems a little dull sometimes these days compared to the Wild West I first encountered, but I am enjoying the problem solving required today. And I haven't yet gotten to saying, "You think that's bad? Let me tell you..."

So what does Willmoron mean? It used to mean, "Did I really pay money for this falling-down house in this iffy neighborhood? And now I'm fixing it?" That definition is somewhat, but not entirely, out of date. Over the years it has always meant getting to know my neighbors just because I/we had/have some problems that we're going to solve together, while possibly working on the third stage of that restoration - getting to the little stuff.

The Caplinger Boys Fought in World War II

PBS is running a long documentary, by Ric Burns, about World War II. So it seems like a good time to talk about the war effort in one Willmore City household. Jack Caplinger lies in the house where he grew up, on 11th Street. I was there one evening and noticed a World War II service flag, framed.

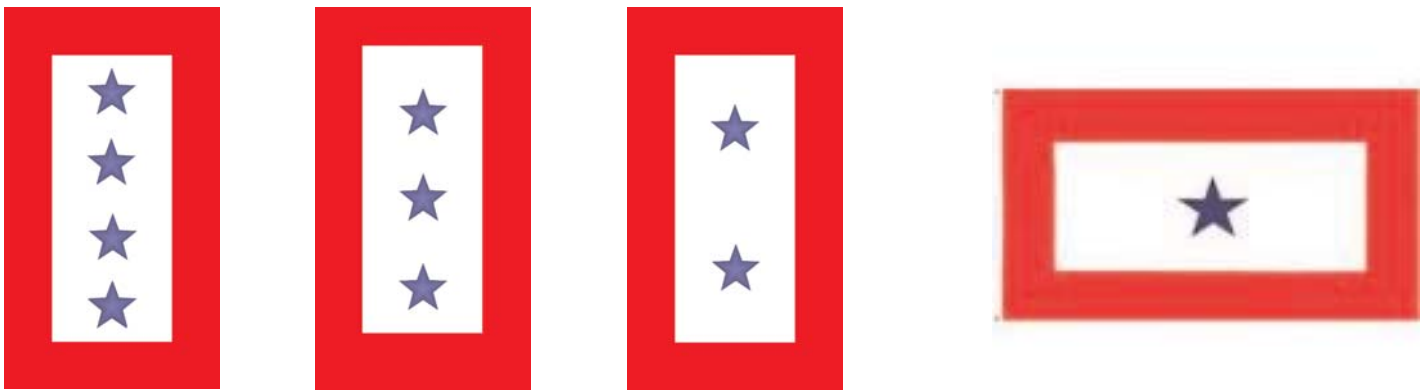
The service flag is an idea that bears reinvention. It was a little silk banner about four inches wide by about six inches long. It had a blue border on a white background, with a red star or stars in the center. If a household member was serving in the armed forces, you bought a one-star flag and hung it in a front window. Two household members warranted a two-star flag, and so on. A death in the service gave you the right to hang a flag with a gold star.

The flag in Jack's living room had four stars, which was unusual. When I commented on it, Jack said, almost offhandedly, "There were five of us, but they didn't make five-star flags."

There was a sixth brother, but he worked in the port at the Naval Shipyard and was frozen on his job, which meant he had to stick out the job for the duration. In all, ten little Caplingers grew up in that three bedroom house. One upstairs bedroom was the boys' room, the other the girls'. All of which makes me wonder what people do with those mega-mansions.

The Caplinger parents were married for over 60 years, which goes a way to explaining why Jack, a World War II veteran, can still ride his bike everywhere and put in hours each week helping out with athletic programs at Poly High and elsewhere.

Carol McCafferty



More About Gold Stars, Not Far From Willmore

On Santa Fe Avenue is a large, fenced complex called American Gold Star Homes. Originally it was called Truman Boyd Manor and was named for the deceased son of Dr. and Mrs. Truman Boyd. Mrs. Boyd was instrumental in the formation of the Gold Star Mothers of America and in founding the housing complex. It was for widows who had lost their sons in the war, and thus their sons' support in their declining years.

Dr. Boyd operated the Boyd Clinic, in the building now occupied by the New City School, on Pine Avenue just south of Anaheim Street. In the seventies and eighties it was the home of the Long Beach Free Clinic. The Free Clinic director told me there is a penthouse on the building, where the Boyds lived.

Carol McCafferty