

MONTE VISTA...

Where else would you find such a concentration of people who are enthusiastic about historic houses? Well, now that the city of San Antonio boasts 30 historic districts, maybe we do have some competition, but still...

2019 will bring our 25th Biennial Home Tour, and coming up in the year, we will have more "Third Thursday Socials" that give us a chance to experience the interior of more Monte Vista homes. First, however, we will have the traditional "I Love Monte Vista Party" to kick off the new year. This event, which has been a staple of the Monte Vista calendar, serves as a way to pay dues for the year, meet new neighbors and greet longtime friends. Bring a bottle of wine or sparkling drink and an appetizer to share.



A PAST PRESIDENT'S PASSION FOR ARCHITECTURE



Tony Garcia has a passion for history, architecture and preservation. Moving here from Chicago more than a decade ago, he and his wife Susana went house hunting both outside Loop 410 and inside the Loop in King William and Tobin Hill neighborhoods. When they found their house in Monte Vista, they said, "This is it." They are the proud owners of an Atlee B. and Robert M. Ayres designed home, and they have gone the extra mile to obtain the blueprints for the William C. & Agnes T. Clegg House from the Alexander Architectural Archives at the University of Texas in Austin.

Studying blueprints was an essential part of Tony's profession as a mechanical engineer, specifying HVAC pumping systems for historic and non-historic buildings in Chicago, Austin, and San Antonio. Chicago is where he began his deep interest into researching the Prairie School style of architecture. Over the years he has amassed a hefty library of books on architecture and the arts. He can riff about the Arts and Craft Movement which started in England at the turn of the late 19th and 20th century, and the way the Movement hopped over the Atlantic and kindled an interest in Chicago. Arts and Crafts (in the US, "The Craftsman Style") ultimately influenced not only residential and commercial architectural design, but also landscape layout concepts, interior design, furniture, textiles, and the decorative arts. With relish, he confides that he believes the style of his home is Spanish eclectic, with a discernible slant toward the International Style, an eclectic architecture inspired by San Antonio architect Ayres' travels to Mexico and Europe in the 1920s.

Continued on next page.

CONTACT US

Monte Vista Historical Association

P.O. Box 12386
San Antonio, TX 78212
210-737-8212

Visit us at our website
montevistasa.org

E-mail info@montevista-sa.org

Important Neighborhood Numbers

City of San Antonio Customer Service
(7 am to 11 pm, 7 days a week)
Dial 311

Councilman Roberto Treviño
City Council District 1
1310 Vance Jackson Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78201
Field Office 210-207-0900
Email sanantonio.gov/council/d1

SAPD SAFFE Officer
Robert Rodriguez
210-260-7479 (cell) or
210-207-SAPD (7273)
Email Robert.Rodriguez@SanAntonio.gov

MISSION STATEMENT

"To encourage the preservation of the distinctive heritage of the Monte Vista area; to keep the physical identity of this late nineteenth-early twentieth century district intact; and to educate the public, especially the youth, with knowledge of our inherited neighborhood values which contribute to a wholesome urban environment."



Editor

Larry Powell

Photographer

David Smith

Contributors

Ryan Reed
Larry Powell
Tertia Emerson

Advertising

mail@montevista-sa.org

Vistas is the quarterly newsletter
of Monte Vista Historical
Association.

Continued from first page..

In Chicago, Tony was also an activist who helped start the National Museum of Mexican Art which was a catalyst in exhibiting Mexican Folk and Colonial art, and Mexican and Chicano art, at the national level. Established in 1982, the museum displayed several exhibits curated by Tony. He was on its board of directors for several years during its early stage of development.

When Tony arrived in San Antonio, he was attracted by the missions' architecture and history, and he became a volunteer docent at Missions San Juan, Concepción, and Espada. He also volunteered at the National Park Service's headquarters, cataloguing archaeological items and managing data.

Following in the footsteps of some other MVHA past presidents who have branched out into assorted civic activities, Tony, in the past two years, has served as a city appointee on two task forces made up of neighborhood advocates, developers, and other interested parties. Recommendations on short term rentals and infill development zone were finalized by members of the STR and IDZ taskforce committees in the development of two ordinances passed by the City Council in November 2018.

Within the Association, Tony is a member of the Board, chairman of the Zoning and the Code Compliance Committees, and member of the Architectural Review Committee. Tony and Monte Vista volunteers are working on District 1's Large Area Rezoning Project with an anticipated completion in 2019.

Tony represents the Monte Vista Historical Association on the Tier 1 Neighborhood Coalition (T1NC), a horizontally aligned group of over forty inner city neighborhoods organized to promote broad-based citizen participation in public policy issues, through education and advocacy. Tony's involvement has been instrumental in developing educational workshops for T1NC members. Tony suggests that residents of Monte Vista acquaint themselves with the City of San Antonio Comprehensive Plan. Concerns of residents in older neighborhoods usually center on "loss of character" when new and intrusive structures are built, or when changes in zoning that promote commercial intrusion or dense development threaten residential character. Another concern raised by many is the threatened loss of previously recognized neighborhood plans which were put in place by city sanctioned processes. Tony strongly believes that neighborhood involvement is essential in protecting neighborhood plans, in promoting sensible neighborhood development, and in supporting a comprehensive plan that protects and sustains older neighborhoods like Monte Vista for future generations.

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for information





PRESIDENT'S WINTER LETTER

Ryan Reed

Welcome to returning board members and to our newest members, Amanda Holmes, Lynn Boyd, and Mary Allen-Martin! This year we are looking forward to an exciting Home Tour, celebrated on November 16 in conjunction with Trinity University's year-long 150th anniversary. The homes on the tour will be residences of Trinity University personnel on Oakmont. We also will have a peek into the Trinity campus as part of the day's activities. If you would like to volunteer to make this year's tour a success, contact us by phone or email and we will include you in the planning committee.

Our new officers - Bruce Liesman, Martin McReynolds, Teresa Nunns and James Patrick are discussing a number of new ideas for additional events, ways to increase membership and further support the preservation and beautification of the neighborhood. My personal thanks to Melody Hull, who as past president will continue to support the work of MVHA as an active board member.

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HONOR A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER

The Monte Vista Historical Association accepts donations honoring friends and families of our members. You may send your tax deductible donation to MVHA, P. O. Box 12386, San Antonio, TX 78212.

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THANK YOU, HARRIS K. & LOIS G. OPPENHEIMER FOUNDATION

Vistas is made possible by the John Newman Family Charitable Fund of the San Antonio Area Foundation

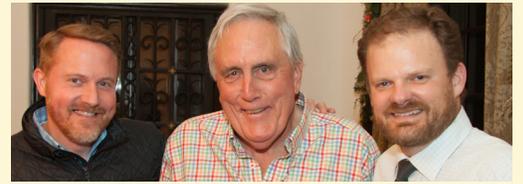
NOVEMBER THIRD THURSDAY 2018 HOLIDAY MARKET

We had perfect weather for this first time event.
Thanks to the San Antonio Public Library Foundation
for hosting the market at their office at 625 Shook.



DECEMBER MVHA BOARD MEETING

It's tradition to have the final board meeting of the year at a home and to invite former presidents of MVHA to attend. The 2018 December board dinner and meeting was at Lieth Askin-Negley's house.



DECEMBER THIRD THURSDAY

From left to right, Paul Kinnison, Linda Daniels and Jill Torbert, joined by Gus, Virginia and Dru Van Steenberg, all past presidents.

The party was held at the home of Susan Toomey Frost and Craig Bunch.



Continued on next page.

Support Monte Vista. Join today.

Continued from preceding page.



Third Thursdays are organized by volunteers

Teresa Nunns, pictured immediately above with Bill Ely in the second photo from the right, has been the organizer of Third Thursday in the past year. It's thanks to her that host homes were recruited and schedules were coordinated for these events. At each, guests bring a bottle of wine and a snack to share. In 2019 we have some new volunteers to keep the tradition alive, Kim Cauthorn and Judy Warren.

2019 Locations for Third Thursday

FEBRUARY

438 E. Rosewood, at the home of Christa and Richard Sauers, I Love Monte Vista Party Sunday, Feb 17 from 2-4 p.m.

MARCH

2807 N. Main, at the home of John and Madeline Tanner

APRIL

231 W. Lynwood, at the home of Keith Sanford and Chris Hammet

MAY

TBA

Third Thursday

A Time to Meet and Mingle

Be sure that we have your current email address so that we can send timely reminders and news from the Monte Vista Historical Association to you. We send notes monthly to our members and community friends. For Third Thursday, sometimes we send last minute emails about parking or weather conditions.

Contact 210-737-8212 or
mail@montevista-sa.org

SIGNS OF ROYALTY IN MONTE VISTA

Street Signs & Architecture Styles

By Larry Powell

Branding rules our lives. The late noted neurologist Oliver Sachs has told us that we store information cerebrally as icons (148, Sachs). Apparently, our brains store information symbolically, a tremendously helpful efficiency for daily living. As patrons of that temple to American culture—the supermarket—we instinctively know that, to have a successful shopping expedition, we have to be able to categorize, classify, grade, evaluate, sequence, and compare, at several levels constantly, as we navigate down the aisles. As we've noticed, the clever supermarket managers help us enjoy our experience by classifying in general ways, the contents of each aisle, on hanging signs with the desired commodities printed attractively on them. At another level are the manufacturers who make their products with distinctive iconically imaged brands. It's the brands that symbolically pack their selling point punches, and it's the brands that interest us in the following look at our historic district.

When Jay Adams began his development of Laurel Heights, he, also, to aid buyers in their decision-making, had to produce similar iconic guidance – with attractive names, to encourage those potential buyers. He decided on using various tree species as names to identify streets in the new area. In doing so, he was following a national trend, part of the “City Beautiful” movement (28, Fisher). These trees would not be just any trees, though. Magnolias produce elegant flowers, the mulberry hosts the fabulous silk worm, the cypress grows to commanding heights, the laurel has cultural status, huisache sounds exotic and has a yellow bloom, and so on, just to name a few. No scrappy hackberries, thank you.

As we move north, toward the borderlands of old Laurel Heights, there's a shift in the street naming strategy, after which we find a riff on the earlier tree-naming theme, with a similar kind of reference to different kinds of “woods.” In between the trees and the woods, several streets, with “Summit” street serving as transition, leading to stately “King's Highway,” then followed by “Gramercy,” act as a thematic break to all the arbo-real emphasis; that break in the boughs, though, also carried another influence - a certain Anglophile slant. The slant could also be synonymous with “brand,” and it came loaded with the English “Arts and Crafts” agenda.

The Arts and Crafts (“Craftsman” in the US) brand, or movement, as a reaction against industrialization, was underpinned by certain perceived features of life in a typical English village, as well as the bonding concept of “shared values” often found in personal village relationships (107, Thomas). “Gramercy,” the next street after “King's Highway,” coming from the French “Grand Merci,” can also be a historical reference to a private park in New York City. Property owners in the area surrounding this park were (and still are) the only people with a key to the entrance gate of the park, and the only people allowed inside the park, though a public sidewalk surrounds the walls of the park. Key-holders to the park are also responsible for upkeep of the property, and “Gramercy” is sometimes cited as the first instance of city planning in the United States (3, Wikipedia). The name apparently originates from the name of an English farm. The word “gramercy” (archaic now) referred to any act of kindness - one of those village “shared values”? That village image of huts in a circle – a plan found in Gramercy Park - sharing life, has been re-created in our own corner of the world, with the meandering “Queen's Crescent” street leading to one of Monte Vista's pocket parks.



The bungalows, at least one of which has a shared driveway, all face one another, arranged around a central, curbed landscaped area, officially designated as “Woody Tucker Park,” and the shared circle is found again when “King's Court” street curves into “St. Mary's” street.

The “King's Highway” (and “Princess Pass,” “Queen's Crescent,” “King's Court”) nomenclature, though, allows a hint of class, while still remaining on the periphery of the English village theme of sharing in a community. When that real royal road, the original (Spanish) King's

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Highway, just a few blocks away, was being cut, monarchy as an institution (in the Americas, anyway) was muddling along, doing pretty well, (never mind those Brits south of Canada, or those fifty million Frenchmen) until the dawn of the 20th century – Brazil didn't lose its emperor until 1888. Then came that rough patch when those “born to the purple” people took a drubbing from a few proletarian leaders bent on some major social engineering.

Royalty, though, had a survivor's streak, and hung on. Judging from the amount of coverage that the media gives them, royal families these days seem to be a topic about which the public relishes reading. During the recent past period when Communism held sway in many countries, Karl Marx's ideology did succeed in reaching into the world of architecture, and forging a brand (take a bow, “Bauhaus”), but a couple of royal architectural survivors managed to reign on, if from temporary exile, secure in the divine right of Queens, oblivious to ephemeral politics. One of those monarchs, however, is a royal imposter in real architecture branding terms. But which one? Pray, enlighten this dark corner, oh muse of history. To find out which queen is the real monarch behind the style, stand by for the next issue of “Vistas,” when all will be revealed.

SECOND PART, next issue. *Larry Powell is a retired linguist and a member of the MVHA Board.*

References

1. Oiver Sachs. *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat.* Touchstone, New York, NY, 1998.
2. Louis Fischer. *American Venice: The Epic Story of San Antonio's River.* Maverick Publishing, 2015.
3. George E. Thomas. *William Price. Arts and Crafts to Modern Design.* Princeton, New York, 2000.
4. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gramercy_Park. Retrieved Dec.25, 2018.



Dickens, the Willful Hound
Larry's Dog

Views from the sidewalks
in Monte Vista and nearby.

There's plenty to see while walking the dog...

A ring to tie up a horse, and a griffin who guards a rooftop.



ONLINE AUCTION Monte Vista artist Claudia Langford donated a print to the on-line auction of Nov.-Dec. 2018. To her delight, the buyer was Dru Van Steenberg, who has been involved in arrangements to restore the Kelso House, which was the subject of the picture. The 1906 house is at 107 W. Craig.



Crumbling Monte Vista home to be poster child for historic restoration

Steve Bennett | April 19, 2017 | Updated April 20, 2017 10:07 a.m.

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mypergents.com

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Short Term Rentals

Short term rental permits are being required by the city from Feb. 11, 2019 on, for renting out garage apartments and other residential spaces for short periods of time, such as an Air BnB. See <https://www.sanantonio.gov/DSD/Resources/Codes#176642678-short-term-rental>

Properties used for short term rentals are divided into two categories: owner occupied and non-owner occupied. Non-owner occupied properties are under stricter regulation in order to assure compatibility with residential neighborhoods.

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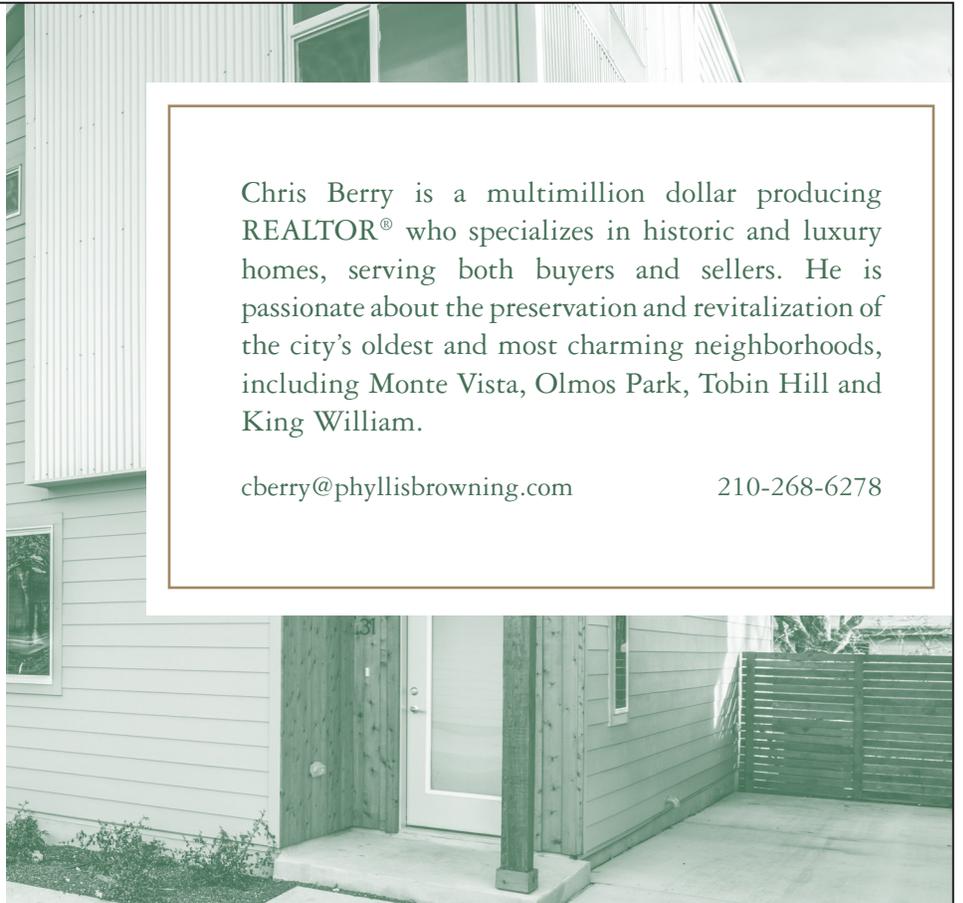


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At the Landa Library Annex. Drop-ins are welcome.

MVHA Board Meetings

6:30 - 8 p.m. 2nd Tuesdays of the month

The Landa Library Annex meeting place is in the wing to the left as you face the Hannah Landa Memorial Library. Meetings are open to the public.

I Love Monte Vista Party

Bring a bottle of wine & snack to share

February 17, 2 - 4 p.m.
438 East Rosewood

Meet and mingle with friends
and neighbors.

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THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF MONTE VISTA

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2019 Membership Form

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List a topic or activity for the MVHA board to pursue: _____