

WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION



Newsletter ∞ Winter ∞ 2011

Big Dreams for Ocean Avenue

By Nanette Asimov

Ocean Avenue, tarnished by vacant storefronts and occasional graffiti, has suffered bouts of seediness for nearly half a century. Many see the boulevard as a kind of holding tank for whatever the city has little use for, from pot clubs to surplus nail salons.

Catherine Hickey is not one of those people.

"I think we could bill this as more of a college area," Hickey told the Westwood Park Association recently.

As the first executive director of the newly formed Ocean Avenue Association, Hickey introduced herself to the neighborhood board and discussed her ideas for transforming the blemished business corridor that flanks Westwood Park to the south.

She'll work with an annual budget of more than \$240,000 – money that has become available because Ocean Avenue merchants voted last year to tax themselves. Their decision turned Ocean Avenue between I-280 and Manor Drive into a "Community Benefit District" with a board of directors that hired Hickey this summer.

Her lengthy job description includes managing contracts, talking to city officials and writing reports. But everyone knows what Hickey's job is



Catherine Hickey, the Ocean Avenue Association's new director, is going for a vibrant, college-town feel on Ocean.

really about: Fixing Ocean.

"We'll work together and cobble up a plan with the neighbors," Hickey told the Westwood Park board. "So far, we've been working on safety issues. There have been a couple of robberies – including one at gunpoint in front of the Faxon Garage."

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SEE WHAT THE OCEAN AVENUE ASSOCIATION IS DOING

New Executive Director Catherine Hickey is still working on a Web site.

But you can follow OAA in other ways:

On Facebook:
<http://tinyurl.com/7b9v73s>

On Twitter:
@OceanAveCBD

By email:
info.oacbd@gmail.com

In person:
Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month. But you'll need to email Catherine Hickey to find out where to go, or call 650-273-6223.

598 *Miramar: My Life on the Circle*

Here is an excerpt from an essay by Nancy Larson Zadra, who grew up on the Miramar Circle during the 1950s. It's her personal memoir, but in telling about her family and her neighborhood, Zadra offers us a portrait of an era. Her complete essay is posted on our neighborhood Web site, at <http://westwoodpark.com/documents/598-Miramar.pdf>

By Nancy Larson Zadra

The neighborhood was full of kids, and the outdoors was one huge playground. That's what I remember most about our family's new home on Miramar Ave. I was seven years old and needless to say, play was my top priority.

The year was 1949. My parents, Edward and Doris Larson, realized their dream of home ownership when they decided to buy 598 Miramar Avenue, San Francisco, California.

* * *

Of course, the house was wonderful. My sisters and I loved that there was a complete circular path within the house. We would romp and chase each other down the hallway, through a corner of the kitchen, through the dining room, through the entry hall, back to the hallway, and keep going. It was great fun, and the sound of our footsteps would bounce off the hardwood flooring. The other feature that we enjoyed was the elevated portion of the basement under the living room—we called it the stage, and with our friends would use it for little skits and performances.

* * *

The house was architect designed in a Romanesque style with red roof



Nancy Larson Zadra, mowing the lawn in 1957.

tile and stucco walls. The interior featured hardwood floors throughout, and other beautiful woodwork and tile. Known as the "Chronicle House," it was offered as a prize in a newspaper subscription contest in 1921 when the neighborhood was new. The prize was won by a coach at Stanford with the help of his students and athletes. Old photos show the house with old time cars and crowds in front, coming to take a look at it.

* * *

Our neighbors across the street at 600 Miramar Ave. were the Grahams. The children, Margie and Timmy, immediately became our friends.

We loved the big lion statues that guarded their front entrance. We would sit on the lions, giving them names such as "Sultan" and "Leo," and imagine ourselves transported to Africa. Their backyard included an old fruit tree that all the kids loved to climb. In retrospect this was probably dangerous, as we climbed quite high, but no one seemed to care or be watching. Over the years this house changed owners many times. ...

Mr. and Mrs. Hornung lived diagonally across the circle. They were retired and indulged a matched pair of wire terriers that they kept perfectly groomed. Years later when Mr. Hor-

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Great Volunteers Made a Great Picnic

By Anita Theoharis

Our special community is made up of a wide variety of wonderful people. The Westwood Park Association would like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers who helped make our annual meeting and barbeque so successful on September 24.

Our appreciation goes to:

Joe Koman, our iron chef for many years, and Norman Yee who also assisted at the grill.

Brian Cahill, Kurt Johnson, Michael

Hawk, Roger Shields, Ray Favetti -- and a very helpful young man named Carlos, from Miramar Avenue -- for assisting in cooking, set-up and clean-up.

Margaret Reed, our elections director, who receives and counts the ballots for board positions.

Bob and Karen Gallagher, keepers of the flame, who host our neighborhood grill year-round.

Mark Rogers, who creates great memories by taking wonderful photographs.

Christine Boles, her daughter Elisa Boles, and their friend Cambria Freed-Chou, who provide face painting and donate all supplies.

Jesse Hagelshaw, who supervises sales of t-shirts and Westwood Park DVDs

We owe many thanks to these residents for their tireless efforts behind the scenes that made our meeting and barbeque a wonderful experience.

If you know of other unsung heroes of the neighborhood, please let us know!



Top row left to right: Standing is Kate Favetti, WWP President and seated is Anne Chen, WWP Member at Large; Neighborhood children check out the San Francisco Fire Engine; BBQ volunteers Joe Koman, Brian Cahill, and Norman Yee, a member of the SF Board of Education. Middle row left to right: Westwood Park Association Board member Anne Chen, Shelley Knox of NERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team), and Julie Hagelshaw of the board.; Gathering of neighbors on September 24, 2011; All ages attended the annual meeting Faxon Green. Bottom row left to right: Elisa and Christine Boles; Kurt Johnson; Margaret Reed the WWP Elections Director.

Creepiest Homes in the 'Hood

By Julie Hagelshaw

Thanks to all the neighbors who participated in this year's Halloween Contest. The judges prowled the neighborhood the night of October 30 by light of a waxing crescent moon.

What they found would have pleased Poe, mortified Morticia and even frightened Frankenstein. Maybe.

In any case, Westwood Park's alliterative intercessors were impressed. Their decision was tough this year, but they came up with these wonderful winners:

1st Prize: 555 Miramar – The car in this front yard was the victim of spectacular imagination! A family of skeletons – all spare arms and legs – chauffeured this suspected hearse amid smoke and flashing lights. Prize: \$50.

2nd Prize: 130 Hazelwood – Ode to the pumpkin! Carved up gourds, large and small, filled this front yard.

Prize: \$25.

3rd Prize: 799 Faxon – Lights away! Ravens kept watch over this home, assisted by a pair of googly eyes affixed to a street sign out front. The judges are still wondering: How did they get those lights all the way to the top of the street lamp? Prize: \$10.

Honorable Mention: 91 Hazelwood – A witch that had crashed into the street lamp remained firmly lodged up there, but even her unnerving presence could not dim this festively lit home.

SPECIAL NOTE: We are looking for volunteers to take over the Halloween judging next year from exhausted board members. We will put out the word during 2012, but in the meanwhile, if this terrifying task interests you, please contact the Westwood Park Association at 333-1125 or board@westwoodpark.com.



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Tackling street crime isn't her only hurdle.

"If you know of anyone who has desk space, let me know!" Hickey laughed. So far, she's been working from home and out of Ocean Avenue's hospitable cafes.

But Hickey -- a native of Dayton, Ohio with a degree in Latin American studies and economic development from the University of Cincinnati -- has faced worse. In Flatbush, Brooklyn, for instance.

The residential neighborhood of New York City resembles Westwood Park, she said. Its business district of 125 storefronts was similarly depressed, "with one restaurant and horrible bars."

"By the time I left, it was restaurant row," she said, as the Westwood Park board members looked encouraged.

Hickey's resume touts a decade of

economic development experience, including managing five retail districts, organizing three merchant associations and establishing one neighborhood association. She's also been a small business loan officer.

"What's your main priority for Ocean?" asked Anita Theoharis, the Westwood Park board's vice president.

Hickey said that with City College anchoring the eastern end of the business district, Ocean Avenue should have a more vibrant, college-town feel.

"Once Whole Foods moves in, there will be 2,000 additional residents," she said. "That's going to put pressure at the top of the street, and you'll see momentum moving down the street."

Already, merchants are sprucing their awnings, a CVS pharmacy is poised to take over the old Blockbuster site at Dorado Terrace, and a new tenant has signed a lease for the Bank of

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America building -- but this newsletter has agreed to let the tenant announce itself in January.

As the Westwood Park board members listened to Hickey's confidence and enthusiasm about Ocean Avenue, it was hard for them not to dream. Someone even ventured a comparison with West Portal.

"Oh, we'll get there," Hickey said. "I promise."

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nung died, his body lay in state in his own living room. I accompanied my dad one evening to pay our respects, and the open casket illuminated by large candles was a striking sight for my young eyes. Dad explained that this was an old Irish custom, as was the whiskey poured for the mourners.

On the other corner was the Perkins family, whose three children, Billy, Mary, and Jamey, all went to Catholic School.

Our neighbors to the south on Miramar were Will and Dolly Petri. He was a retired San Francisco Fire Dept. captain, and his experiences went back to the days when the fire carriages were drawn by teams of horses. He loved to reminisce and tell us stories from the old days.

Our neighbor to the east was Miss Alice Kunhle, who taught at the old

In my dreams I am sometimes transported back to the old house and the old neighborhood. They will always be indelibly marked in my consciousness, a starting point for all my later adventures.

Lowell High School. She died an untimely death, killed in an automobile accident on the Yolo Causeway near Sacramento. I recall this detail, that her dog survived the crash. When the house sold, Art and Edyth Meisel and their daughter, Shirley, moved in. Art worked for the U.S. Postal Service,

and Edyth had worked for some years in the fashion design industry. In his retirement, Art kept a perfectly manicured lawn and garden, setting a high standard for the neighborhood. As kids we tried our best to stay off his lawn.

* * *

In my dreams I am sometimes transported back to the old house and the old neighborhood. They will always be indelibly marked in my consciousness, a starting point for all my later adventures. I treasure my memories of 598 Miramar and the Westwood Park neighborhood. Writing this account has stirred old memories, and makes me proud of 598 and my life on the circle.

With all respect,

Nancy Larson Zadra

July 2011 Missoula, Montana



INSIDE THIS EDITION:
 An excerpt from an essay
 by Nancy Larson Zadra,
 who grew up on the
 Miramar Circle
 during the 1950s.

Winners of the
 2011 Halloween Contest!

Ocean Avenue Update

Happiest of Holidays
 and Best Wishes
 in the New Year.



Westwood Park Association Board Members

Kate Favetti, President
 (term expires 2012)

Anita Theoharis, Vice President
 (term expires 2012)

Tina Johns, Secretary
 (term expires 2013)

Julie Hagelshaw, Co-Treasurer
 (term expires 2013)

Greg Clinton, Co-Treasurer
 (term expires 2014)

Anne Chen, Member at Large
 (term expires 2012)

Nanette Asimov, Member at Large
 (term expires 2013)

Members of the Westwood Park Association Board of Directors are volunteers elected to serve three-year terms. Board meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of each month at the home of a board member, and begin at 7 p.m. For more information and the location of upcoming meetings, visit www.westwoodpark.com.

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