

*TERA Statement of Purpose and Mission:
The mission of this organization is to work
for improvement of the quality of life in
the Eagle Rock Community in
Los Angeles, California, by providing
research and education about Eagle Rock,
participating in land-use planning activities,
and promoting positive community
growth and beautification. TERA is a
non-profit 501 (C) (3) organization.*

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Bob Cota's Fantastic Fireplace

Rock Solid

• by Michael Woodward

The first thing you notice on meeting **Bob Cota** is his grip when you shake his hand. There is great strength in those hands. And great gentleness as well; his is not one of those handshakes that try to crush your hand; the strength is simply there in reserve.

As he points out, "When you lift hundred pound sacks of concrete all day, you get stronger." Mr. Cota is a master stonemason, retired but not weakened.

What might be surprising to some is that Mr. Cota is over ninety years of age. We think of older folks as having been weakened by age. In this case, nothing could be further from the truth.

The next thing that comes to the fore is that Bob and Kitty are two of the most gracious people I have ever had the privilege of meeting. When I first called to request an interview, I left a message on their answering machine.

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Comes Together

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PAST PRESIDENTS

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TIM SANDERS 1995 - 1997

JOANNE TURNER 1997 - 2003

HILARY NORTON OROZCO 2003 - 2005

MICHAEL THARP 2005 - 2007

MARIA NAZARIO 2007 - 2009

NEWSLETTER STAFF

EDITOR

MIKE WOODWARD
editor@tera90041.org

WRITERS

BOB GOTHAM
RENATE KOFAHL
KEELY MYERS
MIKE WOODWARD

DESIGNER

GEORGINA REYES
DISEÑO GRAPHICS
georgina@disenographics.com

PRINTER

WARREN PRINTING & MAILING
graphics@print-mail.com

ADVERTISING

JOAN MACNEIL
advertising@tera90041.org

eLETTER EDITOR

BOB GOTHAM
e.letter@tera90041.org

WEBMASTER

ARTHUR NAKATA
webmaster@tera90041.org

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

.....• by Bob Gotham, TERA President

A representative of the Los Angeles Times called me today. She had seen a poster for our fundraiser **Guess Who's Coming to Dinner** at a coffee shop and thought the event might make for an interesting article. I was pleased with the prospect of greater visibility for our event and, more importantly, for our community. She mentioned that the interest by residents in supporting their communities was a phenomenon that was building throughout Los Angeles. "This is not a new phenomenon in Eagle Rock," I explained, "residents have been unusually invested in this little town for many years."



"What makes it different here?" she asked.

My first reaction was that geographically the boundaries of Eagle Rock are unusually distinct on the east, west and north sides. We have a clearly-defined "center of town" that includes several architectural treasures from the past, including **The Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock City Hall, and the 20th Century Women's Club**, all located in walk able proximity to residents. On the south side of Colorado, the mixed-use structures (retail and residential) have largely retained the original facades. The businesses are individually owned rather than impersonal extensions of larger chains. The process of gentrification has happened gently, with respect for the past.

Because people have continued to be drawn to Eagle Rock, the residential neighborhoods have not fallen into a decline. Our public schools continue to outperform many others in LAUSD. The economic, professional and ethnic mix may have changed over time, but with no detriment to the community. Importantly, for the 25 years I have lived here, there have always been a large number of residents who actively work for the betterment of Eagle Rock. If you love this place and are not involved, perhaps it's your turn.

The TERA Team has been on the move since the last newsletter. Please rest assured that the preservation of the undeveloped Eagle Rock Ridge continues as one of our key goals. In pursuit of our beautification goal, we have had our first meeting with the management of the **Eagle Rock Mall**, urging them to consider improving the perimeter of the mall, which is in poor condition both structurally and visibly. Initial steps have been taken to create a more pedestrian-friendly Colorado Boulevard while introducing bike lanes and slower traffic. I anticipate this will be a multi-year project requiring significant TERA resources. The poor parking and student drop-off situation for a relatively new charter school on Figueroa has captured our attention and action. We also have embarked on a renewed relationship with **Occidental College** as the new president, **Jonathan Veitch**, has taken office. Initial conversations are encouraging. These are highlights, but certainly don't comprise all of our efforts since the last newsletter.

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, our 2010 fundraiser, has been one of our most compelling work efforts in the last few months. If you are not aware of it by now, then we are not doing our job. You cannot do the things we do without incurring expenses. Membership fees provide the important foundation for our basic operating expenses, but we need additional resources if we are to be positioned to most effectively pursue issues that will protect and improve our community. Please participate in this event. (Note the special new member promotion as part of the ticket pricing.) I promise you will have a wonderful evening on the town, helping TERA at the same time. Additional information is provided elsewhere in this newsletter.

BOB GOTHAM
TERA PRESIDENT

For those who are members, thank you for your support, we couldn't do it without you. For the rest of you, get on board, become a TERA member.

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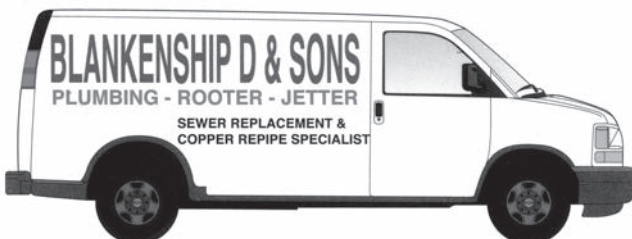
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TERA hopes it will be you.

Each year TERA organizes an activity that we hope will showcase the neighborhood we live in and love. It also helps us raise funds for the kind of work TERA is known for: keeping an eye on Eagle Rock.

The night's festivities will kick off with a festive poolside reception at the home of **Michael and Eugenie Nogueira**. There will be appetizers, refreshments, a no-host bar, and live music before the serious business of eating and enjoying yourself gets under way.

After the preliminaries the guests will scatter to the four winds, well, actually the homes of eighteen of Eagle Rock's finest citizens. We know they're fine because they are hosting, and we are very appreciative of all that they are doing.

Guests will be able to choose from an international variety of menus including Cajun, contemporary Mexican, vegetarian, Indian, Middle Eastern and Italian. One of the homes has even arranged for our own local celebrity chef, **Chef Eric of Fred 62**.

Wining and dining is just the beginning. There will be entertainment as well. This reporter has heard rumor of belly dancers, sitar players, and pianists in some homes.

The food will be great, but even better will be the company. Eagle Rock is home to a wide and interesting variety of people. This is a great chance to sample both food and friendship.

We are still looking for volunteers to help with this event. As you might imagine the work of organizing eighteen dinner parties for a single night is formidable. If you would like to help, or if you are interested in more information, please email us.

The address is TERAdinner@TERA90041.org or give us a call at **323.799.1190**.

Tickets are \$75, but for \$85 new members get the reception, the meal and a year's membership in TERA. If you are unable to attend the entire event, but still want a chance to meet and mingle with your neighbors come to the reception for \$40. That will give you a chance to see old friends and make new ones while supporting TERA. Host homes may be viewed and tickets may be purchased at www.TERA90041.org.

Don't wait to hear about how great these dinners were. Come and find out for yourself.

Editor's Letter

.....• by Michael Woodward



As I write this it is the first day of March. I sit on the deck and, while it is not noticeably warmer, there are unmistakable signs of the spring to come.

There are a few daffodils in bloom up on the hill. Poppies and Clarkia are growing nicely though neither of them has started to bud yet. And the sweet peas I plant each year trying to hide the City's six-foot chain link contribution to the **Community Garden** are inching their way up that fence. I have often wondered why the first thing the City did after allowing us to have a garden was to put up a fence to keep out the Community.

I want to thank those who wrote me with words of encouragement after the last issue of this newsletter. I appreciate the kindness of the sentiments as well as the suggestions for future interview subjects. There is no shortage of interesting people in this neighborhood.

I hope the readers will agree that I have been able to find another such subject for this issue. **Mr. Bob Cota** has lived here since 1919 when he was born. I had a great time listening to him talk about life in Eagle Rock as it was many years ago. The pay for this job is minimal, actually nothing at all. But the perquisites are just fine thank you.

I want to thank **Mrs. Norton**, the subject of last issue's lead article. It turns out that a good friend of mine had an on-going dispute with his wife that Mrs. Norton was able to resolve. My friend's wife had never believed there was a theater called **'The Dirty Dime.'** Now she knows it to be a fact. Here at the TERA newsletter we strive not only to bring you news of the community, but also to resolve domestic disputes as well, all part of the service.

There is an update on the prospective Ridge project. The property is, once again, for sale. We will continue to monitor any changes in the status of the San Rafael Hills and keep the readership informed.

The other land use issue that was covered in the last edition was the extension of the 710 Freeway by tunnel or overland. There is continuing and growing opposition to this project. A daylong conference was held at Occidental College in January under the auspices of the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute.

Speakers at this forum included a keynote address by **Assemblyman Anthony Portantino** as well as attorneys familiar with the issue, physicians and Metropolitan Transportation Authority Chairman, **Ara Najarian**, all of whom spoke in opposition to the project. TERA is pleased to join that opposition.

In this issue the land use questions we are covering are the changing face of Colorado Boulevard and the issue of charter schools in the community. I want to thank **Mr. Frank Parrello** for his input on the Colorado Boulevard article. I also want to thank **Mary Tokita** for spearheading talks with the Cals Charter School on Figueroa as well as vetting my article on that subject for accuracy. Finally a thank you to **Maura Duval Griffin** who kept me on track for the piece on the upcoming TERA fundraiser. Bon appétit



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Rock Solid

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The message must not have been clear. When Kitty returned my call she pointed out that Bob was no longer doing stonework. After I explained that I wanted to talk about Eagle Rock history she immediately invited me to their home.

Mr. Cota was born in Eagle Rock in 1919, the son of a builder and stonemason. He learned his trade at his father's side. There is a rumor that the senior Cota had been in the area so long that he had laid the foundations under the Eagle Rock. Mr. Cota said, with a twinkle, "I can't say that that's true, but I don't doubt it either."

We all know that things were different in earlier times, but conversations like this one remind us of just how different. One of the things Mr. Cota did to earn a living in his youth was fur trapping on the slopes of Mount Wilson. Perhaps that's not so surprising when you consider that they may have to open a bear season in present day Monrovia.

Still, the idea that within a few miles of downtown Los Angeles, and within living memory, it was possible to make a living trapping coyote, mountain lion, the occasional badger, skunks (both striped and spotted, weasel, and raccoon is a bit startling.

Mr. Cota was at pains to point out that in those times, before the phrase 'sustainable' became fashionable, he never over-hunted or over-trapped. His living was made with respect for

the animals and their environment. "Always with the thought of preservation, not wasting, not over-doing it," he says. Good hunters and fishermen have always had that sort of regard for the world that provides for them.

During the Great Depression Mr. Cota put his hunting skills to use in a more local venue for a more local

game, but every once in a while was fortunate enough to get a deer.

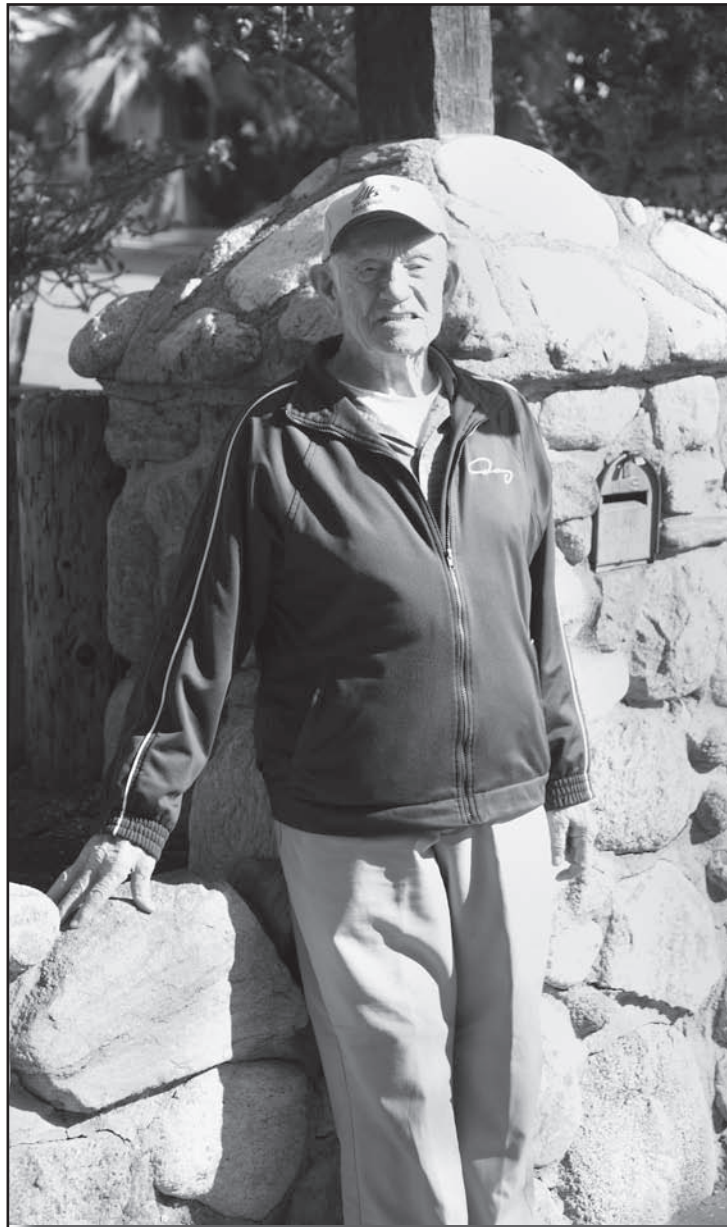
The maze of freeways and other development around those hills has decreased the amount of wildlife in the area. Sometimes it seems there is also less of that kind of community spirit. We are very lucky that it continues in our neighborhood.

Mr. Cota's attitude about nature and neighborhood arises from his deep, abiding faith. "It's a wonderful feeling to wake up in the morning and thank the Lord for a wonderful night's rest. I think that I have this or that to do today, I'll finish what I didn't do yesterday and if you think of anything else, why, give me a nudge." Second World War Mr. Cota served in the Aleutian Islands when the Japanese Empire was trying to use that chain in their own 'island-hopping' strategy. "Cold and windy" is how he remembers the island on which his unit built an airstrip.

Mr. Cota married Theresa McLeod in 1944. Returning to Eagle Rock after his service in the U.S. Army, he began building his career, constructing rockwork all over Southern California. Theresa was bookkeeper and office manager and they operated their business out of their home on Loleta.

The deep-set property even provided space for his masonry material yard. They were blessed with two daughters, Carole and Cindy. Theresa was very active with the Dahlia Heights PTA and other community organizations. She passed away in 1965.

Mr. Cota was quite active in the local Kiwanis Club serving as its



Mr. Cota Beside The Mailbox His Father Built.

purpose. He walked the San Rafael Hills to put food on his family's table as well as his neighbor's. "You have to take care of those around you," he said. He would hunt mostly small

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I Love It When a Plan Comes

In the old TV series, "The A Team," there would always come a moment in which George Peppard's character would lean back overlooking the chaos swirling around him and say, "I love it when a plan comes together." It usually hadn't,

whether this was the result of careful planning, a happy accident or some combination of the two.

At this point, full disclosure. The writer is anarchic where governments are concerned and very skeptical where plans are involved. While I

do not discount the good work done by the citizens of Eagle Rock in restoring their old downtown area, being lucky did not really hurt.

Times changed and, more to the point, cars changed. The day of the shade tree mechanic is long gone. Now being a mechanic requires continuing education and expensive equipment.

In addition, forget about working on your own car. Most of us have. When I pop the hood on a modern automobile there is nothing under there that looks even vaguely familiar. Much of what used to be mechanical on a car is more electronic and software related.

Other factors were involved as well. The neighborhood was re-discovered as rising real estate prices force people to look beyond Los Feliz and Silverlake. They were surprised to find good hous-



Formerly Stapps Auto

but through happy circumstances the desired result was achieved.

Eagle Rock is in the position of the late Mr. Peppard.

The Colorado Boulevard Specific Plan "envision[s] the gradual transition away from auto-related and strip-mall development to a more pedestrian-friendly business district by preventing an increase of such uses."

To a large extent, that has happened. There has been a decrease in the number of businesses that are auto-related. There are more restaurants and boutique shops. There is even rumor that the old Winston Tire dealership is being shopped as a restaurant complex.

We seem to have gone from vehicles to victuals. The question remains



Formerly A Used Car Lot

Together

by Michael Woodward

ing, interesting housing in Eagle Rock and Highland Park.

Trader Joe's happened. It would be easy to underestimate the cultural shift that occurred with the advent of a market that sold good wine inexpensively and had snack foods beyond the chips and onion dip variety. It turned



Formerly A Gas Station



Formerly Red Lion Gas Station

out to be a good match the taste of Eagle Rock was ready for the tastes of Trader Joe's.

And, no offense to my friends in Silverlake, we had a TJ's long before they did. You could say that Trader Joe's would not be the huge success they are today if they hadn't come here first.

Below you will see photos of a number of places that used to be auto-related that are not that way any more. Some of the change is due to the Specific Plan and some long pre-dates that plan.

So a toast to Mr. Peppard and to those of us who have been the lucky recipients of a 'plan coming together.'



Used to be Williamson's Auto Parts.

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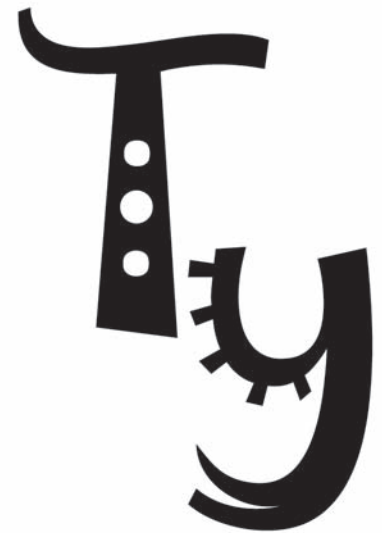
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This is My Town

•by Keely Myres



When I sat down to talk to Brian in his corner of the Center for the Arts' office, we quickly bonded because we both attended Eagle Rock Montessori School as kids and graduated from Eagle Rock High School. It's easy to quickly bond over anything

with someone who says he lives by a simple rule: be kind. During our conversation, Brian talked about what he is most passionate about: music and the Center for the Arts.

Brian is the longest running employee of the Center, starting his employment at the ripe old age of 17 when he became a guitar teacher to help pay for college. Later, as a Getty Multicultural Intern, Brian curated art shows during Latino Heritage Month, which he describes as a very soul-searching activity, being half Mexican and half Japanese himself. Through that experience, Brian took more and more of an interest in the

Center. He continued working at there while completing a degree in Jazz studies at California State University, Los Angeles.

Since then he has progressed to his current role as Director of Events, doing everything from the putting together the Eagle Rock Music Festival to setting up art shows and performances at the Center. Brian acts as

the "partnerships guy," building relationships with organizations, artists, and musicians around Los Angeles. He describes it as being a great mix of music and friendship, being able to help local musicians and get their help with the music festival.

He has been instrumental in making the Center a place people know to come to. He has been a strong force in taking the Eagle Rock Music Festival from a small, local event to a large-scale musical event that is known well beyond Eagle Rock's borders. Last year's festival drew 60,000 people (up from 12,000 in 2005) to Colorado Boulevard for an eclectic and unique mix of music. While he has been praised for his work in planning, organizing, and finding the local talent for the festival, Brian is quick to emphasize that it takes a group of people working countless hours and a really great community helping to pull everything off.

Brian wants to be known for finding things that haven't been done before, or finding a new way to do them. In a city with so many subcultures that's an ambitious goal to have, but he (and the Center as a whole) has a mission to be multicultural and innovative in the Northeast Los Angeles Community. The music festival is a great example of how his dream is becoming a reality - the lineup of musical acts is becoming known for presenting the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Los Angeles music scene. It draws a crowd from a wide range of backgrounds, ages, and musical tastes, which "makes it more challenging and the most fun with lots of reward."

Still, Brian sees it as simply a good start. In his mind, there's more experimenting to be done. "We're not a thriving art center if we're not taking chances," he tells me. "Yeah, things are finally moving that I didn't think would happen, but there is still

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Garden Spot

• by Michael Woodward

Spring's here.

The hills are green, the air is warming, and the flowers are beginning to bloom. Even the road to the landfill at Scholl Canyon is lined with coreopsis daisies and Matilija poppies. The monkey flowers are budding if not fully open for another month or so.

It's not just the natives that are blooming, either. All the annuals are out. There are sweet peas on the fence across the street. Iceland poppies seem to be a favorite in gas stations. I don't know why this is true, but I am grateful.

There are lots of flowering trees showing off as well. One of my favorite trees, although maybe it's a shrub, the pomegranate, should be in flower as this edition is published. It is such a great tree for the landscape since it has great showy flowers followed by a very liquid green leafing out. Then comes the fruit, only to be followed by a decent display of fall color, something unusual for Southern California.

Another tree that works well in local landscapes is the tabebuia. I have the yellow flowering aurea in my garden. If you travel along Maywood, by Eagle Rock Elementary, T. impetignosa is being used as a street tree. I could be wrong about my identification of the ER Elementary trees. If I am, I hope someone will be good enough to correct me.

Many people make the trek to the desert this time of year to view the Poppy Reserve, which is threatened by development. It's also possible to follow the whole wildflower trail from Anza-Borrego north, with the spectacular displays moving north as the season progresses.

Parts of the northern California coast and higher elevations of the Sierra will still have flowers when the rest of the state is beginning to experience fall.

The Theodore Payne Foundation's Wildflower Hotline can keep you posted on where the best blooms are throughout the season. Just call.

Driving all over the State may be fun, but it is not necessary. The Eagle Rock Canyon Trail is full of flowers. There are the naturally occurring shrubs like lemonade berry, sumac and toyon. And, for the past couple of years, the area has been seeded with native annuals like poppies, lupine and clarkia. Come to our own mountain and get its glad tidings.

Other local spots to look for flowers include the La Tuna Canyon area, which generally has a great display of monkey flowers in May and June. The slopes of Mount Wilson, where our own Mr. Cota used to hunt and trap, has a regular show of ceanothus.

I would normally send you up the side of Brown Mountain where there is a fine stand of lupine; but this area was burned during the Station fire. As of this writing, I have not been able to ride my bike up the fire road behind JPL to see what things are like. Since the rains started, the road has been impassable.

To end on an optimistic note, wildflowers are usually among the first plants to recover. A few years ago there was a great stand of lupine at the top of the Brown Mountain Fire Road, which had not been seen for years as it, was covered over by the chaparral.

It's the time year to stop and smell the roses, don't let it pass you by.

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Read! Books

.....by Michael Woodward

There is a secret in Eagle Rock that is far too well kept. In fact, the secret has been given an award. In 2009 READ Books on Eagle Rock Boulevard was given recognition by LA Weekly for being the Best Unknown Bookstore.

This article is the attempt by the Editorial Board of the TERA Newsletter (that would be me) to make sure they do not gain such recognition again.

As long as I have lived in Eagle Rock, everyone has talked about how

there and try to pretend I was in a bookstore, but it simply was not the same.

Now we have a bookstore and it is a good one. It is personably and personally managed with a wide range of good books and magazines. The owner is **Jeremy Kaplan**, a refugee from the Los Angeles Unified School District.

The store has been open for three years and counting. I asked Mr. Kaplan how business was going in this difficult economy. "Well, I haven't had to get a job yet," was the reply. As anyone who



The Literary Heart of Eagle Rock.

we need a bookstore. Oh, sure there was a B. Dalton's in the Plaza, which later became a Crown, though now I cannot be sure which came first. Those were chain places with more calendars than were necessary. I used to go in

has tried to leave LA Unified knows, that is a heck of an endorsement.

As with any good used bookstore, there are more books than can be taken in with a single visit. Mr. Kaplan's taste in books is both good and wide-rang-

ing. There is plenty of fiction running the gamut from literature to escape, in French and Spanish as well as English.

They also carry a good selection of books for children and young adults complementing the tutoring and reading groups available for students. Tutoring is available individually and in groups. In addition, Saturday is story time for toddlers.

For more adult tastes there is the arts section, incorporating Art History, Collections, Design, Architecture, and Photography as a start. But wait, there's more. The non-fiction section is fully stocked from biography to travel, from history to current events.

What makes this bookstore personal, and a great fit for Eagle Rock, is that Mr. Kaplan knows his customers and having found what their tastes are saves books for them. That's a service that companies like Amazon try to provide through complicated algorithms but

which an actual human being can give with simple and conscientious contact.

I also asked him how he happened to choose Eagle Rock as a location. He said it was a combination of the right rent and the "right people." A happy coincidence for both Mr. Kaplan and Eagle Rock; we are literate and affordable.

Continuing in that theme, we talked of the changes he had seen in his time in Eagle Rock. He won my heart by saying that while he liked all the new restaurants and shops he hoped it did not turn into "another Old Town Pasadena."

Mr. Kaplan, the bookstore owner, has another identity as well. He is Senpai Kaplan of Eagle Rock Karate Dojo teaching martial skills and discipline to local kids. These classes are held at the American Legion Tuesdays and Fridays.

I was pleased to note that in addition to martial skills students are expected to practice outside of class even if it means giving up television or video games. Imagine that, giving up video games to learn real world skills.

There is a tradition in martial arts of scholar warriors. Miyamoto Musashi is the archetype of such discipline, being both a master swordsman and an accomplished Zen brush painter. Eagle Rock is lucky to have landed such a person.

READ Books is located at **4972 Eagle Rock Boulevard**. If you have not done so already, spend an hour wandering around this great little spot. He has a very nice couch for reading.

They can be found online at www.readbookseaglerock.com. Information about the Kyokushin Karate classes can be found at www.eaglerockkarate.com.

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What You Don't See

• by Bob Gotham

Over twenty years ago Kathleen Abrahamson and her desire to preserve a historic structure in Eagle Rock founded TERA. Appropriate land-use and historic preservation were established then, and remain today, as key elements of TERA's mission. In times past, land-use and preservation issues have sometimes pertained to larger properties, capturing the attention of not only TERA, but the community at large. In these cases, TERA's efforts were visible and well known. However, much of the work TERA does in these areas, especially in these days of modest development, relates to smaller properties, and is less visible to the community or our membership. This is especially so when we are able to exert influence that ultimately prevents undesirable development.

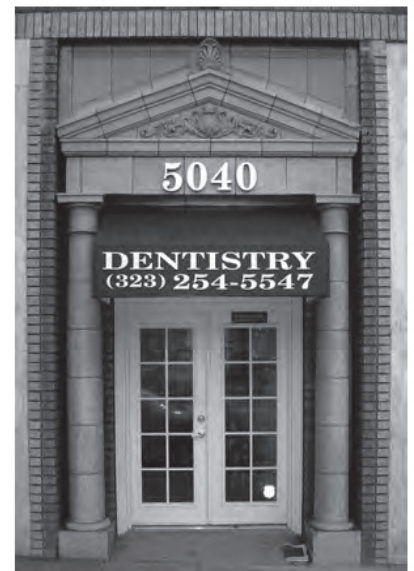
TERA's response to recent reports regarding the destiny of the American Tire building (the corner of Colorado Boulevard and Glen Iris) provides a good example of TERA in action, but in a way that attracts little visibility. An eletter reader reported that Pep Boys intended to open a new store at that location. This would represent a new automotive business in Eagle Rock, something neither TERA nor the eletter reader would support.

TERA's primary land-use expert, Frank Parrello, researched city records,

finding that the only permit information in file was when the property was cited for a possible medical marijuana violation. No permit for a new business was found. Frank did determine that the property changed owners in 2009. Identifying the new owners will require more extensive and more challenging research. Frank then contacted the Planning Department which reported that the property no longer had the right of a non-conforming business (automotive is non-conforming). However, as Frank shared "We need to stay vigilant, there are many ways a developer may attempt to circumvent Specific Plan Guidelines." Frank then contacted the Council Office, requesting that they closely monitor any further developments with this property. In addition, he informed the Council Office that, as a community stakeholder, TERA would like to be informed whenever new development plans for that property becomes available.

The American Tire property and its potential development provide an excellent example of TERA in action, but in a way that does not create headlines. This type of quiet vigilance is essential and possible because of skilled and committed board members like Frank Parrello and because of your support.

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Rock Solid

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

President. Service organizations such as Kiwanis helped to knit the fabric of communities such as ours long before residents' associations like TERA came into being. We are in their debt.

He also did extensive work on his own home on Loleta. Building, among other things, the beautiful fireplace shown in this article. The home had originally been built by Mr. Cota's father, Paul Xavier Cota and his wife, Amelia, on a street to be named after one of their three daughters, Leota. Yes, the current name of that

out and it has stayed in the family for nearly one hundred years. Mr. Cota's daughter, Carole Gelfuso, and her husband Frank live there now and are joint owners with Carole's sister, Cindy and her husband, Reed Pendleton, who reside in the Bay Area. This is the third generation of one family to live in this home, something rather unusual in Los Angeles.

The Gelfusos have also continued in the tradition of fine homebuilding. They have restored thirty significant homes in the Pasadena area in addition to work they've done on their own significant home.

Some readers may be saying to themselves that the name **Carole Cota**

separates this house from all others; she would not let us leave without giving us some sweets for the road.

While we were in the living room taking pictures of the house there was an Eagle Rock High School mini-reunion. Bob Cota had graduated from the High School in summer of 1937. His daughter Carole graduated in winter of 1964. Harry Chamberlain, who was taking the pictures, is a summer of 1960 graduate. And Carole's sister, Cindy, graduated in summer of 1969. It seems everywhere you go there are Eagles in this place.

My wife and I are newbies in Eagle Rock, only having moved here in the mid-seventies, but we have always felt at home here. I believe this is because the people who formed this community long before our arrival made it a place of grace and quiet charm. They really did build the foundations under the Eagle Rock.



Securing the Mail

street is due to a transcription error. It does make a good story, though.

Mr. Cota's father continued to live in his family home, adding more stone enhancements including the legendary wishing well and massive stone mailbox in the front of the property, until his passing in 1964.

Bob and Theresa together designed the extension of the original home. The home is simply stunning inside and

sounds familiar. It should be, as she was the Rose Queen in 1966, the first Queen from Los Angeles. She still has the royal wave down pat.

More than continuing the tradition of craftsmanship, Carole and her husband continue the graciousness which marks this family. Not only was she willing to allow my friend **Harry Chamberlain** and me into her home to take photos of the wonderful rock work that



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Cals Charter School

• by Michael Woodward

Commuters at the north end of Figueroa near Von's noticed it when the kids arrived. Until then, the major renovation going on just south of the Chevron station could have been an office re-model.

Then the traffic ground to a halt as parents let their kids off. The McDonalds across the street was a magnet to twelve and thirteen year olds with the judgment of, well, twelve and thirteen year olds. Fortunately, this traffic disaster was short-lived as the school found its bearings and set limits.

There have been other problems with the other aspects of fitting a new business into a neighborhood. The kids are noisier than the old auto upholstery that went out of business.

Parking along La Loma Road and adjacent side streets is an issue. The bell and PA system wake the neighbors. Some of those neighbors said they wake the dead.

A meeting was arranged with the school to discuss the issues the neighbors had with the school and vice versa. Full disclosure: I live in the neighborhood discussed here. I'm a newbie to ER, coming in 1976, but I can remember when two cars a day on my street was a real rush hour.

Refugio Rodriguez, school administrator, Phyllis Robbins from ER Neighborhood Council, Mary Tokita of TERA, and this reporter were moderated in a sit down by Zenay Loera of Councilman Huizar's office. The meeting was cordial and frank.

The residents presented their concerns. We want to alleviate the traffic congestion; we were concerned about safety; we were concerned about the noise; and there was a problem with parking; local residents were unable to park by their own houses.

Mr. Rodriguez talked about wanting to fit in with the community and that the school wanted to be regarded as an asset to the neighborhood, not a detriment. He talked about the history of the school, how they had come to be a California Distinguished School. He talked about how happy they were to be in their new building, that it gave them the ability to do even more for their students.

As the conversation continued, Mr. Rodriguez agreed to continue to encourage parents to drop their children off on Colorado instead of on Figueroa or La Loma. He also agreed to curb the use of the loud speakers and to address the pedestrian safety issues.

One thing everyone agreed on was that many of the issues about parking, congestion and safety could be ameliorated if an entrance to the school off Colorado Boulevard, through the Edison right of way, into the back of the school could be secured.

As part of an Occidental Day of Service Mary Tokita coordinated a petition drive to show Edison the community support for such a right of way.

I spoke with both Mr. Rodriguez and Ms. Robbins a month after our meeting at the councilman's office. I also took a walk by the school to see how it looked.

The consensus was that there has been some progress. The noise has lessened, the parking is better and parents were letting the children off at the safer location on Colorado Boulevard. The other morning I noted there were two people directing student traffic on the corner of Figueroa and La Loma and another supervising drop-offs on Colorado Boulevard above the bus stop, close by the Edison right of way.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

Mr. Rodriguez is working with Edison to secure a pedestrian walkway through their property. At this point Edison remains unwilling to allow vehicle passage. Mr. Rodriguez remained hopeful.

One of the things that both Mr. Rodriguez and Ms. Robbins were pleased with was that dialogue had been established and that a venue for addressing issues had been created.

This may be the take away lesson from the episode. Regardless of how you feel about them, in a larger sense, charter schools are coming into our neighborhoods. They are occupying non-traditional spaces like the old upholstery shop or what used to be Pillars.

Parking, traffic and safety concerns have to be addressed in each individual case. Not every administrator will be as forthcoming as Mr. Rodriguez and not all neighbors will be as collaborative as we are. Dialogue between neighbors and new businesses whether they be charter schools or anything else is critical.

Editors Letter

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

I also want to thank **Harry Chamberlain** for taking the time to take the pictures of Mr. Cota's remarkable stonework. Readers will note considerable difference between the pictures of last issue and those in the lead article this time. I took the ones last time with the digital equivalent of a brownie whereas Mr. Chamberlain is a professional with real equipment. The difference is dramatic.

Finally, I want to thank someone who wishes to remain anonymous, lest he wind up on 'some committee,' for the following land use suggestion.

Regarding the scar on Colorado at Linda Rosa, that half-finished concrete abomination this individual suggests that we tear down the bunkers that line Colorado Boulevard, but keep the tall concrete cylinders in the back. We then persuade various City Fathers to pay to have their likenesses put on those now bare towers. The name of this project? We call it "The Pillars of the Community," of course.

This is My Town

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

more to go. You have to be really patient and that's the key to how I've worked here so long."

In between planning the annual music festival and all the other events that take place at the Center (art shows, classes, private parties), Brian somehow also finds the time to pursue his own musical interests. He plays upright and electric bass, along with other instruments, and he plays with a variety of different musicians (such as Erykah Badu and Shafiq Husayn, among others). He describes his current band, Blank Blue, as "electric-I-don't-know-rock-kind-of-thing," with a goal of bringing back musicianship in music. He also works with L.A. Record, a music publication he likens to what Rolling Stone was in the 1970s.

At the end of our interview, I ask him if he has anything else that he wants the TERA newsletter readers to know. Without pausing, he says "I hope when people read this they learn a little about me, learn about the Center, go and check out the website. We need support to grow, and people should know how accessible these events are. I am totally up for what I have to do, I love Eagle Rock. This is my town."

So there you go. Check out the next event at the Center, you won't be disappointed. Eagle Rock is lucky to have someone so dedicated to bringing the arts to our community. <http://www.centerartseaglerock.org>

You can also check out some of his music at <http://www.myspace.com/blankblue>

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The Eagle Rock Association could not exist without the support of its members. Thank you to all those listed below who have either renewed their memberships or have joined for the first time. The list is as of date of printing and renewals/new memberships since then will be acknowledged in subsequent newsletters.

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