

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY: A LITTLE PLACE FOR BIG THINKERS

by Theresa M. Danna, M.P.W.

If you didn't know it was there, you could miss the simple structure at 2560 North Beachwood near Glen Alder. That would be a shame because the Theosophical Society's Besant Lodge is more than just another quaint 1920s building in our neighborhood. It houses a rich history of arts and philosophy, while continuing to offer a variety of experiences for people willing to enrich their mental and spiritual selves.

The Building's History

Originally a silent movie theater, the building later had a small stage added and became a theatrical playhouse. At the time the Theosophical Society purchased it in 1963, the building was being used for Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. The serene blue-green stained glass windows still there today were donated by John Barrymore's manager. From art openings to study groups, many creative and intellectual people have passed through its doors, including noted thinkers Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard, and Christopher

Isherwood. Over the years, such famous writers lived in the cottage built on the back of the property before it became the home of the current property caretaker.

Presently the Theosophical Society welcomes like-minded groups and individuals to use its facility in exchange for a donation. Current activities include services by a vocal coach and drama coach, Middle Eastern dance and Kundalini Yoga classes (see page 20 for contact number) and a Jungian study group led by Society member Judith Richardson. The Society's own regular events include Spanish-language meetings every Saturday and several English-speaking meetings each month.

The Society's Philosophy:

The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, whose writings helped introduce spiritual wisdom from ancient Eastern cultures to the modern West. The Society is not a religious organization, although it does endeavor to reconcile the religions, philosophies, and sciences of both East and West and to increase awareness of the inner reality inherent in every human being.

According to the current Besant Lodge



Theosophical Society's Besant Lodge On Beachwood at Glen Alder

president, international author/lecturer Dr. Stephan Hoeller, "You don't have to believe in anything to belong." The Theosophical Society encourages people to be liberal thinkers, to compare the teachings of various spiritual paths, and to live whatever universal truths they believe will lead to a brotherhood of humanity.

The Beachwood Canyon lodge is named after one of the Theosophical Society's early leaders, Annie Besant, whose late-1800s published works included an English translation of the Eastern Indian epic *Bhagavad Gita* and guides to trade unions, women's right to vote, and birth control (for which she was arrested and later acquitted).

Other notable Society members have

included inventor Thomas Edison and modern baseball's founder General Abner Doubleday.

For more information, on services and upcoming events, call (323)461-2559.

Theresa M. Danna has a master's degree in professional writing from University of Southern California. This is the third in a series of articles she has written about spiritual places in Beachwood Canyon.



Dr. Hoeller takes time to talk to Theresa & AJ.



Theresa Danna, AJ, her son and Dr. Stephan Hoeller

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

(Continued from page 21)

We as a Community must band together and let our City know that we have been waiting 42 years for the right Fire Vehicle for the Hillside Communities, they exist, we need to fight for one. We are all at risk of losing people we love.

The time to become active has been 42 years in the making. Sign petitions, call the Mayor, call your Councilman (Tom LaBonge), call the LA Times, whatever you can do, you should do. Doing nothing will not help if your home is next - please do something! (See page 8 for access to local government elected officials)

— Michael Gladstone - Born in Brooklyn New York, singer songwriter and sound technician as well as doing handiwork jobs in the Canyon and around town. "I lived in Beachwood from 1974 to 1989 and still fell like I'm part of the neighborhood." If you would like to help lobby at city hall, call Michael at (323) 665 5052.



"The Rescuing Hug"

In the first week of life of a set of twins, each were in their respective incubators. One was not expected to live. A

hospital nurse fought against the hospital rules and placed the babies in one incubator. When they were placed together, the healthier of the two threw an arm over her sister in an endearing embrace. The smaller baby's heart rate stabilized and her temperature rose to normal.

Let us not forget to embrace those whom we love. Never underestimate the power of a hug.

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