

HERITAGE HERALD

NEWSLETTER OF THE EUREKA HERITAGE SOCIETY, EST. 1973 — EUREKA, CA

Spring 2026

Celebrating, Applauding and Awarding Preservation Heroes



Scott and Stephanie Phelps,
918 J Street

Five Preservation Awards will be presented by the Eureka Heritage Society during its annual presentation ceremony at 1 p.m. Sunday, May 17, in the Annie B. Ryan gardens, 1000 F St. The public is invited.

The five recipients are:

- The Westside Community Improvement Association for the adaptive reuse of the 1949 Jefferson Elementary School building, which is now the Jefferson Community Center, at 1000 B St.;
- Scott and Stephanie Phelps for the restoration the 1907 Colonial Revival house at 918 J St.;
- The City of Eureka and Sequoia Park Zoo for the conservation of the Robert Usher fountain and fairy house;
- Pete Johnston (Preservationist of the Year) for his individual efforts in preserving the city's architectural treasures.

- S. William Peer (Lifetime Preservationist, posthumously) for his dedication to the Society's preservation and education mission.

Eureka Heritage Society presents these awards each May as part of National Preservation Month. Over the years, it has given many awards to deserving building owners and individuals who have contributed to the preservation of our exceptional city.

National Preservation Month was established in 1973 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to celebrate historic places, promote heritage tourism, and showcase the economic and social benefits of preservation.

Please join Eureka Heritage Society as it honors some of Eureka's success stories. Bring a friend. Eureka without its unique building stock would not be Eureka.



Bill Peer



Sequoia Park Zoo
Fairy House



Jefferson Community Center



Pete Johnston



Sequoia Park Fountain



Eureka Heritage Society Board of Directors

President: Derek Glavich
Vice President: Ron Kuhnel
Treasurer: Mary Ann McCulloch
Secretary: James Cech
Kathy Dillon
Bob Felter
Mary Glavich
Charles MacQuarrie
Lonni Magellan-Hodge
Meredith Meier
Chuck Petty
Wendy Petty
Ray Swedenburg

The board meets on the second Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Annie B. Ryan House, 1000 F. St. Eureka, CA (and via Zoom)

Committees and Chairs

Annie B. Ryan: Ray Swedenburg and Bob Felter
Events: Mary Glavich
Fundraising: Ron Kuhnel
Historian and Archivist: Open
Education: Chuck Petty
Membership: Committee
Heritage Herald: Committee

Our Mission

The Eureka Heritage Society will provide leadership, education and advocacy that preserves and enhances Eureka's irreplaceable historical structures and neighborhoods so as to ensure a legacy for future generations.

Suggestions or comments may be sent to:

- (707) 445-8775
 - www.eurekaheritage.com
 - eurekaheritagesociety@gmail.com
- The Heritage Herald is published quarterly by the Eureka Heritage Society, P.O. Box 1354, Eureka, CA 95502-1354

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy Spring, everyone! On Jan. 31, the Eureka Heritage Society held its annual meeting at the Clarke Historical Museum. Some important business was taken care of regarding the Board of Directors, and a list of achievements, future plans, and challenges were presented to those in attendance. In

addition, members were graciously treated to a sneak preview of the new exhibit at the Clarke: "Touring Humboldt: The Golden Age of the Redwood Highway."

In retrospect, it was a year of ups and downs for the Society. After years of hard work, we were able to celebrate the successful installation of the Buhne Fence. The year ended with sadness, however, with the passing of long-time board member Bill Peer. He will be sorely missed as a friend and dedicated volunteer, and the Society is still trying to figure out how to cover the many roles he filled.

The Annie B. Ryan is facing a number of other challenges this year. The stately Monterey Cypress trees in the garden have become hazards that unfortunately need to be removed. We have some extensive pest work that needs to be done in addition to painting the

house. This is work that we will need help with, and I encourage you to reach out to volunteer if you are able to help with this important work.

The Society did make a number of positive strides this past year.

We continued to reduce our long-term liabilities, made a number of security improvements to the property, held a successful Preservation Awards ceremony, and pulled off another amazing Home Tour.

Plans are in the works for more fun outreach and events this year, and we look forward to working together with you to continue the important work of historic preservation and appreciation!

Derek Glavich
EHS President



Is your membership current? Check the address on the newsletter to find out. If your records differ please contact us. Eureka Heritage Society memberships are for the calendar year, January 1 through December 31. Members receive the Society's newsletter, enjoy members-only events, and support historical preservation and education in our beautiful city. The Society remains a 100 percent volunteer-operated organization, and your memberships help cover its operating costs. Thank you for your continued support by annually renewing your membership!

Mary Ann McCulloch
EHS Treasurer

Robert Usher's Architecture: Hidden in Plain Sight

Part 2

Eureka Heritage Society and the printers of the Heritage Herald apologize for any confusion and inconvenience caused by misplacement and numbering of pages in the Fall issue of Heritage Herald. The intact version of Part 1 is now available online at eurekaheritage.com. It can be found under the News tab, Heritage Herald 2025, Herald Fall '25

A spotlight was shown on Robert Usher and his impact on Mid-Century architecture in Eureka in the Fall 2025 issue of the Heritage Herald. Truly, it is amazing just how many buildings and artifacts the Hollywood art director's hand touched during his time here.

Sometimes an Usher building can be right under your nose. In researching the man and his time on the North Coast, a researcher for this article discovered that they had owned an Usher building – the former Deb's Drive-In.

Deb's was located at 420 N St., and for its grand opening on March 30, 1956, it was advertised as the "West's Most Modern Self-Service Drive-In." A Fresh Freeze Co. restaurant owned by Stanton Elliot, it was designed by Usher and constructed by Ole Antonsen, who

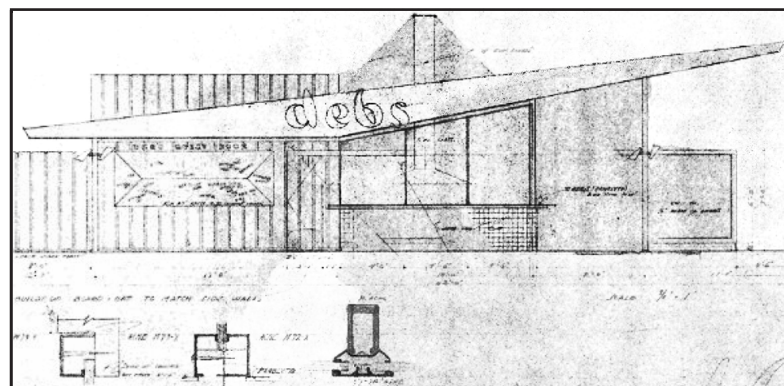
built many Usher-designed buildings.

With trademark Usher elements, Deb's boasted oversized eaves, numerous tall windows, and carefully designed outdoor space. It was all created for a specific purpose: fast and efficient service.

The interior was spacious for a drive-in and could seat up to 64 people. The exterior featured a spacious outdoor patio with open fireplaces, with entrances to the building on both Fourth and Fifth streets. The outdoor patio, as designed by Usher, included another innovation that Elliot believed would be a big hit with younger customers – a carving board. "On this soft wood board," he stated, "initial and figure carving to one's heart's desire is permissible." The board appears to be on the exterior wall, if you look closely at the blueprint photo.



Today, Deb's is a market and laundromat.



A portion of the original Deb's blueprint.

During the summer of 1958, the business expanded to include breakfast. To accommodate this, the building was remod-

eled and enlarged. Deb's closed in the mid-1990s and the building then housed a Mexican restaurant, a video store, and is now a laundromat and international foods store.

Equally important Usher designs include his Mid-Century Modern homes. The unique and captivating one at 2107 Russ St. was built in 1955 by Antonsen for Herman Bistrin. Purchased by Bill McClen-

don and his late wife in 1983, it has remained virtually the same as the day it was built.

The house still has those exceptional features envisioned by Usher: a glass ceiling dome and stone fireplace in the cozy family room; a multitude of built-in storage, including tall wooden cupboards between the family room and kitchen; a washroom directly off of the main entrance, hidden behind a simple, yet elegant, door; a grand living room with a large brick fireplace, and another "secret" door that exudes simplicity and function.

A primary suite was added later, but it was done thoughtfully, complementing the original feel and design of the house. The origi-



2107 Russ: exterior.

nal two bathrooms, one with pink fixtures and one with blue, still retain their original Mid-Century elements. In keeping with Usher's design aesthetic, bedroom windows look out to a beautiful redwood setting that encompasses the house, as does the expansive patio.

The house was featured in a 1959 home tour that was sponsored by



2107 Russ: simple door design

the Martha Mary Guild of Christ Episcopal Church, according to an Oct. 20 article in the Humboldt Standard that year.

"The combination of redwood, birch and mahogany paneling is

most attractive and functional," it stated. Years later, Bill McClendon takes pride in keeping the home as Usher intended while adding personal touches with sensitivity to this wonderful example of Usher Mid-Century design.

Other Eureka homes designed by Usher were featured in the guild's annual home tours from 1957 to 1960. The house at 2611 V St., also built in 1955, strongly resembles the Bistrin home on Russ Street.

An article about the 1957 tour said of it: "Mellow wood tones in wall paneling and extensive glass areas are used to create perfect harmony between the inside and the lovely outdoor landscaping."

This could equally be said about the Russ Street house and the Usher-designed homes at 1515

Buhne St. — which will be featured in this year's Eureka Heritage Society Home and Garden Tour — and 1840 Buhne St., which was in last year's tour and our Fall 2025

newsletter. Usher also created the garden at Stanton Elliot's former home at 815 Hodgson St., which was in a 1960 tour.

Research for this article also revealed that Usher did indeed design the Carson Memorial Building at 3015 J St. However, when he



2107 Russ: Usher's style of glass and large eaves.

finished, a portion of the building, which would have extended the western wing south, was never constructed as designed.

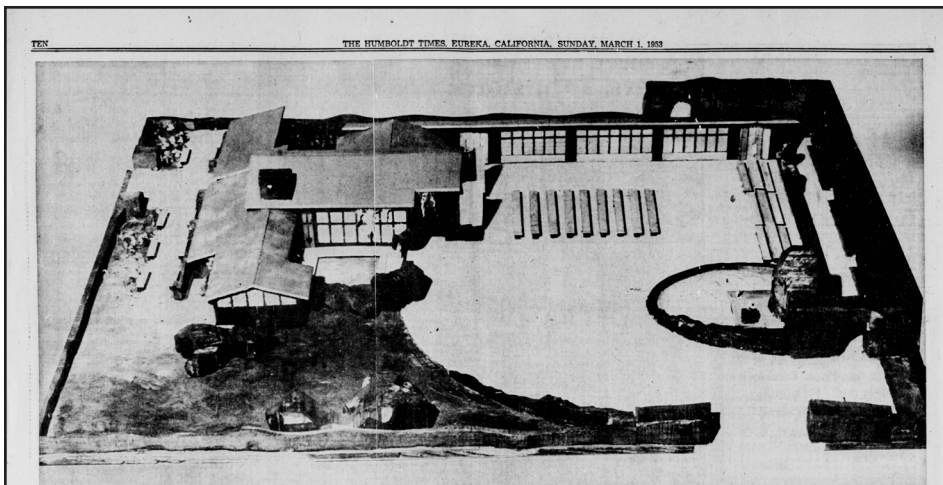
The lack of the wing extension may have led many to later mistakenly believe the auditorium that was eventually built had been a street-car barn that was previously on

the property. Usher was not involved in the completion of the building, and he resigned his position as the city's artist and beautification consultant in November 1953.

Usher also re-designed the building at 620 G St. for Humboldt Federal Savings and Loan,



2107 Russ: glass ceiling dome.



Carson Memorial rendering published in Humboldt Times March 1, 1953

currently home to the Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce and the Discovery Museum. The initial design was meant for a new building at Fifth and L streets. The artist's conception, published in the Humboldt Standard on March, 28, 1957, shows the building as designed by Usher, and it states "profuse use of glass both on the interior and exterior is in evidence."

An Aug. 21, 1957, article added



Carson Memorial, soon after construction. Note similar door to 2107 Russ.
Photo courtesy of Humboldt County Historical Society



Former Humboldt Federal building, 6th and G. Streets, now home to Greater Chamber of Commerce and Discovery Museum.

that the entire G Street frontage "will be done in glass and windows, and the Sixth Street parking lot north wall will be covered 70 percent with glass."

Usher was also a practical artist. He recessed the entryway to provide shelter for customers "for waiting in the event of a downpour."

Robert Usher not only impacted Eureka's architecture, he also had a profound influence on Sequoia Park. He considered it unique and "one of the most beautiful places on earth," according to an Oct. 7,

1952, newspaper article. Former Mayor George C. Jacobs credited Usher with saving Sequoia Park.

Usher believed the park should be one that everyone, young and old, could enjoy. Some of his visions for it included a children's trout fishing pool, improved playgrounds, a fountain in the middle of the duck pond, and improvement of a large redwood cabin that stood near the duck pond at the time. Today, only a refurbished fireplace and foundation of that cabin remain. The log cabin, if memory serves this author correctly, was – mostly – still standing in the late 1960s, but has since disappeared.

Usher also envisioned an aviary with a Hansel & Gretel wonderland, which may



Usher's design of the Monkey Cage. Published in the Humboldt Times March 23, 1952.



Usher's rendering of the fountain, published in the Humboldt Times March 23, 1952

have resulted in the Fairy House that still exists in Sequoia Park Zoo. His conceptual drawing for a monkey cage shows a small house similar to the Fairy House. We can only speculate.

The concrete cantilevered fountain designed by Usher at Glatt and T streets in Sequoia Park was featured in the Fall 2025 Heritage Herald. A Humboldt Times article dated March 23, 1952, shows a conceptual drawing of it, although the caption says it was for "Eureka's Sequoia Duck Pond. Usher also seeks to put redwoods there." It's possible that Usher meant for the fountain to be placed on the duck pond island, not in its current location. Again,



The Usher's Fairy House as it looks today in Sequoia Park Zoo.

only speculation.

What is not up for speculation is whether Robert Usher left his mark in Eureka. He most certainly did – and Eureka is better for it.

By Mary Ann McCulloch, Dixie Johnson, Wes Johnson, and Thomas Swanger.



Usher's cantilevered concrete fountain in Sequoia Park.

Eureka Heritage Society new & renewal memberships



November 1, 2025 through February 28, 2026

Greg & DJ Anderson
Janet Anderson
Terry Baker
Susan Benzinger
F. Joseph Bonino
Carol Brannan
Teresa Bugeaud
Laura Cangas
James Cech
Carolyn Chamberlin
Penelope Chastain

Sue Cook
Jill Coombs
David Cooper
Susan A. Dodd
Gabe R. Douglas
Lisa Elizarraras
Nicki Ellerd
Karole Ely
Kay Escarda
Kara Fales
Carole Farlan

Bob Felter
Marilyn Field
Leo and Louise Fredrickson
Joan Gibson
Jeffrey & Mary Glavich
Kerry & Meri Jean Glavich
Kimberly Goodman
Paul & Pam Gossard
Roy Grieshaber
Jean Guthrie
Anna Hamilton

Kathy Herrera
Shelley Holstein
Heather Busan & Joe Meade
Pamela Johnson
Wes & Dixie Johnson
Patrick Kelly
ZoAnn & Glenn Kinsey
Maggie Kraft
Marc & Amanda Kunze
Michelle Lee
Heather Levy
Stephen Lewis
Ted Loring, Jr.
Lonni Magellan Hodge & Del Hodge
Ruth & Michael Maitlen
Theresa Malloy
Barbara E. Maxon
Royal McCarthy
Randi & Brian Mead
Elizabeth Monroe
Jack E. Moore
Michael S. Mullen
Menna Newmeyer
Melissa Nicholson
Colleen Partida
Jose Quezada
Lila Bollman & Randall Younger
Stanton & Anita Reynolds
Kim Rhoads-Brooks
Paula Rhude
Joy Ehlert & Rick Gustafson
Nikki Strobe Roberts
Peter & Shirley Santino
Barbara Saul
Stephanie & Jake Schultz
Lynette Sheldrake
Nancy Spruance
Sanford Pyron & Thomas Swanger
Doris Timm
Dolores Vellutini
Janet C. Warren
Fran Watson
Belinda Zander

2026 Eureka Heritage Society Membership Form

___ **New** or ___ **Renewing Member** (January 1 through December 31)

___ \$30 Individual	___ \$50 Nonprofit Sponsor	___ \$150 Patron
___ \$40 Family	___ \$75 Private Sponsor	___ \$300 Benefactor
___ \$20 Student/Senior	___ \$75 Business Sponsor	___ \$500 Life Member
___ \$30 Senior Family		

Additional Contribution(s) to the Eureka Heritage Society:

\$ _____ **Annie B. Ryan House & Garden Fund**
 \$ _____ **Buhne Fence Fund**
 \$ _____ **Carson Carriage Maintenance Fund**
 \$ _____ **Scholarship Fund**
 \$ _____ **General Contribution**

Enclosed is my check in the total amount of \$ _____

made payable to the Eureka Heritage Society

Interested in volunteering or need further information?

Contact us by phone: 445-8775, email: eurekaheritagesociety@gmail.com, or circle below

- Events, including annual Home Tour: docents, host/hostess, serving refreshments
- Education
- Publications, including writing articles, research, and mailing
- Muriel Dinsmore Library archival and research
- Serving on the Board
- Annie B. Ryan House and Garden maintenance

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Cell _____

Email _____

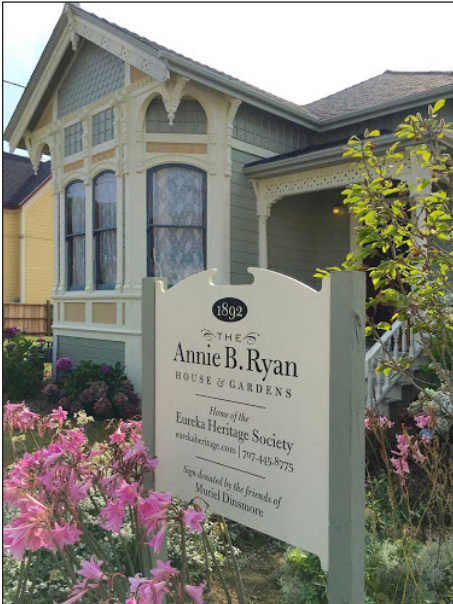
Send completed form to: Eureka Heritage Society, PO Box 1354, Eureka CA 95502-1354 or email to address above



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OUR HOME

Annie B. Ryan House & Gardens
1000 F St., Eureka, CA

Heritage Action Calendar

All of the following meetings take place at Eureka City Hall, 531 K St., 2nd floor, City Council Chambers. Check online agendas for more details.

City Council

1st & 3rd Tuesday, 6 p.m.

Historic Preservation Commission

1st Wednesday, 4 p.m.

Design Review Committee

2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 9 a.m.

Planning Commission

2nd Wednesday, 5:30 p.m.

Home & Garden Tour June 28th

The Eureka Heritage Society's annual Home & Garden Tour will be held from noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday, June 28.

After the tour, join the Society for music, refreshments, and merriment in the Annie B. Garden. This year's tour has returning favorites, as well as new sites – none to be missed! Of course, the Annie B. Garden will be open in all of its splendor!

Pre-sale tickets will be available beginning May 19 at Eureka Books in Old Town, Green Lot Nursery in Ridgewood, Bev's Real Kids in Henderson Center, Green's Pharmacy in Fortuna, Ring's Pharmacy in Ferndale, or online at eurekaheritage.org.

Please join us for this important event supporting the Society and its programs.

