

270 Norumbega Drive

Mother's Day Tour 2012

Gay & Gary ...bought the house about 2 years ago.
270 Norumbega

Booties required

Front Door Docent -

1. Welcome to this French Normandy Castle officially named "Chateau des Reves", which means castle of dreams.
2. Frederick Melville Du Mond built this, his dream home, in 1920.
3. Frederick was commonly referred to as Mel.
4. The home sits on a triangle shaped lot in the Morningside Tract and is 1/3 of an acre.
5. The home is 1776 square feet and is thought to have originally been two structures (one being a barn) that were joined together to make a single home. The dining room is likely the room that was built to join the two structures into one home.
6. There are many level changes in the home; unexpected steps, so please watch your step as you move from room to room.
7. The address of this house is on Norumbega Drive, however the original name of this street was East Avenue.
8. Mel was born in Rochester NY in 1867.
9. He studied art and architecture in NY and also in Paris, France. He lived in Paris for 20 years where he married twice and had children with both women. Mel and the children eventually made it to Monrovia, CA, but the wives never did.
10. Mel's whole family was very artist and his brother, Frank Vincent DuMond was well known and taught Norman Rockwell and Georgia O'Keefe.
11. You'll notice that the couple who live here now, are very interested in art and they are taking great efforts to preserve the artistic works of Mel, not only the architectural details of this home, but also the artistic elements. Make sure you notice the ceiling painting of Old King Cole in the main living room and the ships painted on the walls of the downstairs bathroom.
12. Mel's first marriage produced a son named Jesse William Monroe Du Mond. Jesse, left Paris, went to New York to live with grandparents and then ended up in Monrovia in 1908. Jesse went to Monrovia High School and graduated in 1912. Jesse also graduated in 1916 from Troop College of Technology, which today is CalTech. Jesse left a legacy at CalTech where he was named Professor Emeritus of Physics upon his retirement. Jesse, the son of Mel, died in 1976 and is buried at Live Oak Cemetery in Monrovia.
13. Mel's second wife and he produced a daughter named Camille Elizabeth Du Mond. After living in Paris for 8 years, Camille also ended up in Monrovia

- with grandparents and she graduated from Monrovia High School in 1921. She went on to study at UCLA and continued studying art her whole life; she died in 1986 and is buried at Lie Oak Cemetery in Monrovia. The owners of this house today were fortunate to find and purchase an original rose floral painting of Camille's, which is displayed on the mantel in the main living room.
14. Before building this home, Mel worked for Pacific Railroad as a commissioned painter where he enjoyed painting the southwest landscapes and things of interest. He also was commissioned by the Mausoleum of Live Oak Cemetery, but sadly that painting is no longer in existence.
 15. Mel built the house by hand with no plans. It is basically made of cement, but rubble and discarded materials, whatever he could find, were included. It has no heat or air, except in the office, which was added in the 1950's.

Living Room Docent -

16. Frederick Melville Du Mond, known as Mel was a real character. Not only did he have a "modern family" having been married twice, leaving both wives, but taking the children, and ending up here in Monrovia, he had a rich creative imagination which you can see in the results of this whimsical home with many details.
17. This whole house was built by Mel. He honed all the beams himself and created the artistic details, which include the a lot of beautiful things in this room.
18. Look at the carvings at the end of the beams. There is a joker and a judge; there is a Devil and a Monk. Everything is balanced, representing Good and Evil.
19. The big mural on the ceiling is sometimes tough to see, as there is smoke damage, which occurred due to a fire in the office, prior to the current owners purchasing the home. The mural is of Old King Cole. On the bottom you can read "Cole" and you can see his face is top left, with fiddlers and a pipe. The current owners will restore the painting one day.
20. The fireplace is made by hand. Left side is Holy Grail and right side is Joseph and...something biblical and the Flur Delis in the center. The current owners rebuilt the interior of the fireplace so that they could create some heat for themselves; the concrete home gets cold in the winter with no heat and many windows. The house has no basement and no attic.
21. This is a picture of Mel and a signed book.....
22. The painting by Mel's daughter is on the mantle and was purchased by the new owners on e-bay. The owner negotiated with the seller by telling the seller than they had just purchased the Monrovia home built by Mel. The painting is signed by Camille and is titled "Lush Roses" -painted in 1925. Camille lived in the upstairs turret bedroom.
23. The current owners have met Mel's grandchildren in person; they invited them to this home and they had a little champagne party. One came from the east coast and the other from Northern CA;; both were in their 80's at the time and this was about 2 years ago.
24. Walk through the big Moroccan door to the office.

Office Docent -

- 25. This is now an office, but back when Mel lived here this is where he did his painting. It was also probably a stable.
- 26. The floor was originally at a lower level, but previous owners raised the floor.
- 27. The current owners have not done much with this room since moving in, but you can see the roof line is low slung and the design that there was a different purpose for this room.
- 28. Please watch your step as you exit this room; there is a steep step. You'll enjoy the porch and move directly into the dining room. You'll see the gardens at the end.

Dining Room Docent -

- 29. Be careful of the steps and level changes in this room as you move through it.
- 30. The current owner's aunt is an artist and her works are displayed in this dining room. The artist's name is BJ McCoon. These specific pieces of art were chosen to display as the owner of this house had discussions with her Aunt about these pieces and so they have sentimental value.
- 31. The light fixture is not original to the home but the current owners purchased this piece, which compliments the home very well.
- 32. This is the room is likely the room that was built to join the two original structures together to make a single home.
- 33. Notice the whimsical saloon door that leads to Mel's downstairs bedroom and you'll get a closer look at that again when you return to move through his bedroom and into the kitchen.
- 34. The stairs are steep, so please go slowly and hold on going up and down the stairs.

Upstairs Bedroom – Turret room Docent -

This was Camille's room. Camille was the daughter of Mel and his second wife. Camille is the daughter who painted the "Lush Roses" painting displayed in the living room.

- 35. Notice the windows and how, when open, they fold together to allow the windows flat against the wall.
- 36. The current owners created their gardens so that they could enjoy them from their bedroom. The garden and exterior of this home are the two big projects that the homeowners tackled with them bought the house about 2 years ago.
- 37. For those of you that drive by this house, you probably can see a big difference in the energy surrounding this home. The new owners have brought it back to life and are really enjoying and celebrating all the fun, artistic, whimsical and architectural facets of this home. Monrovia residents have commented that they had not seen the windows of this room open for more than 50 years until the current owners moved in.
- 38. Please move downstairs so that others can come up and be very careful of the steep stairs. Hold on to the handrails. Your next stop will be Mel's bedroom through the whimsical saloon door. Be careful of the steps and level changes down there too.

Downstairs Bedroom Docent -

39. This was Mel's room.

Downstairs Bathroom Docent -

40. Mel painted the ships in this bathroom and at one time the lower portion of these walls were sea creatures painted by Camille. The sea creatures were painted over when the current owners purchased the home.

41. The current owners are not thrilled with the light fixture, but it is nautical!!!

42. There is one problem with one of the ships in this painting....the ship is sailing backwards.

43. Please move into the kitchen.

Kitchen Docent -

44. The kitchen is the most recent project completed by the current owners.

45. They wanted to keep the old feel of the kitchen but they removed louver windows over the sink and had these beautiful wood windows created to match the homes exterior and to allow them to view the garden.

46. They put new fronts on the cabinets; bought a new OLD stove from the 1940's.

47. The service porch now has a tankless water heater which allowed for more room to create another beautiful window to enjoy the gardens. The washer and dryer were added here too.

48. Watch your step as you exit to the garden and you'll take your booties off out there.

Garden Docent -

49. You are welcome to wonder through all the gardens that surround the triangle shaped property. Please stay on the paths and don't walk back into the home now that you have your booties off.

50. The owners spent the first year working on the gardens and just prior to the big windstorms had the large trees on the street professionally trimmed, probably saving the trees from falling during that wind storm.

51. The owners brought in 7 truckloads of dirt to create the foundation for their new garden.

52. There is a lot of wildlife in this yard, lizards, raccoons, deer, skunks...

53. This garden has the Natural Wildlife Habitat designation.

Exterior Docent -

54.

Jesse W. M. DuMond

1892-1976

A Tribute by Felix Boehm

JESSE WILLIAM MONROE DUMOND, professor emeritus of physics, died in Pasadena on December 4 at the age of 84. He had been associated with Caltech since his freshman year in 1912.

DuMond was born in Paris in 1892 into an American family of artists. He spent his childhood in Paris and in Rochester, New York. In 1916 he graduated from Throop College of Technology, as Caltech was called then, with a degree in engineering, the only option offered in those days. The following two years were spent as an electrical engineer at General Electric in Schenectady, New York. In 1918 he enlisted in the U.S. Army in France in a sound-ranger regiment commanded by Colonel Lyman, the famed physicist from Harvard. After a brief year with Thomson-Houston Company in Paris and at the National Bureau of Standards he rejoined Caltech in 1921, the year Robert Millikan took charge, and earned his PhD in physics in 1929. So great was his idealism and his devotion to Caltech that he turned down an associate professorship at Stanford to remain here as a research fellow, although Caltech did not pay him a salary until he was appointed associate professor in 1938. He became a full professor in 1946.

During 1937 DuMond extensively visited the laboratories in Europe and the USSR where the new physics took shape. The great pioneers of x-ray physics such as Bragg, Maurice de Broglie, Auger, von Laue, and Ewald left a strong personal imprint on him.

DuMond's early scientific life was under the influence of Millikan, the Chief, as he was teasingly called by his

associates; this influence was the basis of DuMond's deep involvement with the fundamental constants in physics. His fascination with the constancy of the laws of nature in relation to each other bore its first fruits in his important work on the Compton effect, and the determination of the Compton wavelength, followed by the determination, from the continuous x-ray spectrum, of the relationship between Planck's constant h and the electron charge e . "Here at Caltech is a rather young physicist, DuMond by name, whose work, in my opinion, ranks among the most significant accomplishments in experimental physics of the last few decades," wrote Albert Einstein in a letter following a visit to Caltech in 1932.

Improving the accuracy of the physical constants required the development of new instrumentation in spectroscopy. DuMond pioneered this development by inventing several unique

spectrometers and — resorting to his engineering skill — carried out design and construction himself. The most famous of these instruments is the focusing curved crystal spectrometer, at present referred to as the DuMond spectrometer. Copies of it were built in many laboratories all over the world.

In the fifties and sixties DuMond's spectroscopic work branched off into nuclear physics. His spectrometers in the West Bridge laboratory provided the key to today's understanding of nuclear energy levels in rare earth nuclei. During this period and until past his retirement in 1963 DuMond continued his active role in the field of physical constants in which he was the world authority for 20 years, and for which he was honored by a doctor *honoris causa* from the University of Uppsala and another from the University of Manitoba. DuMond was a member of the National Academy of Sciences. By the time of his retirement he had built up a



laboratory with 20 associates, students, and employees.

There was not only DuMond the physicist, but also DuMond the humanist and man of letters. He owed this enthusiasm to his great teacher Clinton Judy, who was for many years chairman of the division of the humanities at Caltech. He delighted his friends and associates with his vast knowledge of French and English literature, reciting poems by Victor Hugo or quoting from Shakespeare. His unpublished autobiography is a literary

masterpiece full of subtle reflections on mankind and written with a Proustian sensitivity.

DuMond had strong convictions and an intense feeling for intellectual integrity and justice. He abhorred the spirit of the "establishment" and of the power seeker. "Physics had become big business and with it had come a new type of personality, the man who 'makes history' even though at the same time because of his grossly inflated prestige may also be making colossal mistakes," he wrote, describing

the developments after World War II. He was critical of our materialistic society, reflecting in his autobiography, "It is human, though illogical, to evaluate all acquisitions, goods, and services on the basis of what they cost, rather than what they may truly be worth."

He leaves his wife, Louise, and his daughters Adele Panofsky and Désirée Wilson.

Felix Boehm is professor of physics at Caltech.

J. Niles Puckett Jr.

1943-1976

**A Tribute
by Martha Chivens**

IHAVE READ tributes in *E&S* to people who have made contributions to Caltech throughout their distinguished careers. I wonder if you would consider honoring a Caltech graduate who made contributions to Caltech as a student and would have continued to make them if he were alive today.

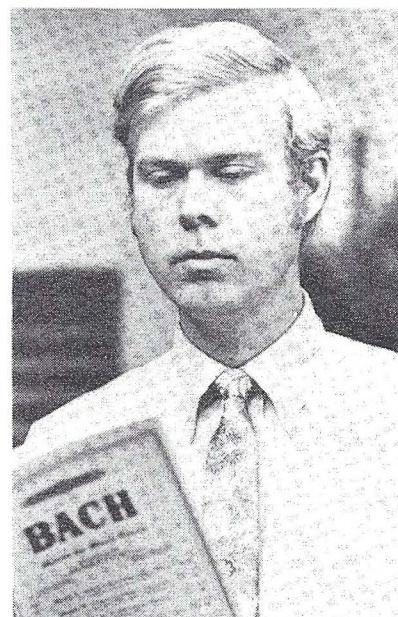
J. Niles Puckett Jr. died on May 13, 1976, after a three-year struggle with cancer. He was 33. In 1961 he was a freshman at Caltech from West High School in Phoenix. Although his field was electrical engineering, he was active in the Glee Club and Madrigal group, and in Cinematech. He was interested in photography and languages, and he cultivated numerous Caltech friends. In 1975 at the class's ten-year reunion, Ricketts House had a large representation because Niles had made a few phone calls. No one seemed to notice that at 32 he walked carefully with a cane.

His three Caltech degrees were in electrical engineering — in 1965, 1966, and 1971. The names Hardy Martel, Carver Mead, Tom McGill,

Cary Lu, and Steve Kurtin came out in conversations with him during those last five school years. Another special person was named Anna Maria Heneis, from Austria. She became Mrs. Puckett in April of 1970.

Dr. Stephen Kurtin wrote the following tribute about Niles's career: "By education, Dr. Puckett's expertise lay in the fields of circuit theory and electron statistics in semiconductor devices. Upon joining Lexitron, at its formation in 1970, Dr. Puckett was a major contributor to the invention and development of Videotype equipment. In this pioneering development, Dr. Puckett's primary responsibility was the display subsystem, but his influence was felt throughout. The display hardware which Dr. Puckett developed and patented in 1970 and 1971 is still today unequalled in capability and cost-effectiveness. Subsequently, Dr. Puckett designed complex text-processing hardware and led the development of other state-of-the-art advances."

While Niles was working at Lexitron, Dr. Hardy Martel worked hard to encourage him to join the faculty at Caltech. It was an opportunity that Niles wanted to take advantage of, an opportunity that would have realized his potential, but he had work to finish at Lexitron and time was too short. Like a detached scientist watching a rat in an experiment, he watched himself, never complaining.



Niles had a gift for seeing the best in people and saying the right thing. When he died, his friends created a perpetual fund at Caltech to support special Madrigal and small choral ensemble projects, which Niles had helped to start while he was at school. The J. Niles Puckett Jr. Memorial Fund will help the song to be heard that his friends and family sing in their hearts for him.

Martha Chivens is married to Don Chivens, friend and fellow student with Niles. Her father, C. K. Parks, worked in Caltech's accounting department for over 25 years.

Subj: Du Mond house
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Title: MeetingNews – tour of 270 Norumbega
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Author: Jim Wigton
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PhotoCredit: Photos: Gary Falasco and Gay Mitchell

PhotoCaption: MOHPG member Gary Falasco says evidence suggests the house built by artist Frederick Melville DuMond, above, was fashioned from two existing structures, which may have been barns at a stagecoach stop. Below, a vintage photo shows the handmade door, ironwork and fireplace in the living room.

PhotoCredit: Photos: Gary Falasco and Gay Mitchell

PhotoCaption: A vintage photo, above, shows the house's exterior in its early years. Below, DuMond painted a mural of a seafaring ship in one of the home's bathrooms.

PulloutBox: Join Us

What: Tour of Le Chateau des Reves

When: Saturday, June 19, 2010

Time: 4 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Where: the 270 Norumbega Drive, at the intersection of Greystone and Shamrock avenues

Kicker: Meeting News

Hed: Monrovia's Castle of Dreams

Leadin graph: MOHPG members will get a private tour of one of Monrovia's forgotten gems — "Le Chateau des Reves" — built by artist Frederick Melville DuMond, on Saturday, June 19.

Byline: by Jim Wigton and Sheila McCarthy

Gary Falasco and Gay Mitchell, who joined MOHPG in 1993, thought they had found their dream home in 1998 when they purchased a circa-1915 Craftsman on Palm Avenue, next door to the Community Center. During the ensuing years, they carefully and correctly restored the home they loved. It was their intention to remain in the house for many years. But the building of the new public library, while welcomed by most in town, caused them concern as they watched many of the park's beautiful trees fall to the ax to make room for the new building.

While still not wishing to move and leave behind all their hard work, they began casually looking at other homes for sale in the Monrovia area. Then, this past February, they happened on the home that would become their new residence. As soon as they walked inside the 1920 French-Norman cottage with prominent tower, Gary said, they knew they had stumbled onto something unusual. Inside the rustic structure are high ceilings; massive, hand-hewn beams; whimsical, carved figures; handpainted murals; poured concrete walls; and original hardware: lanterns, sconces, door handles and hinges.

On the fireplace mantel was a photograph of a painting by the artist Frederick Melville DuMond, and Gary and Gay were told that DuMond had built the house and lived there until his death in 1927. The current sellers had lived in the home some 40 years and had left it virtually unchanged but somewhat shabby.

Gary said he and Gay were not looking for another "project" house, but they felt an instant affinity for the cottage and a desire to restore it. As soon as they started researching DuMond and the house, they realized what a treasure they had stumbled upon. They learned that DuMond named the house "Chateau des Reves" (Castle of Dreams) and that he made all the doors, painted the murals, shaped the walls, and probably created the light fixtures.

"We're absolutely stoked to find this house," Gary said. "We're the right people for this house. Anyone else would have come in here and ripped everything out."

Gary and Gay purchased the house, moved in and immediately began its restoration. They are repainting the house, using what would have been the medieval French colors for its style. "It should look stunning," said Gary. Some of the exterior wood trim has water damage and is being restored. After painting the house, they will begin to add plants around the exterior. They have hired a carpenter to replicate the original front gate based on a vintage photo they found.

Gary said the home's poured concrete walls keep the house cool and quiet. "I love it here," he said. "It's so calm. I feel like my blood pressure has lowered since I've been here. I haven't slept this like this in over 12 years."

Although Gary and Gay have previously restored two homes in Monrovia, Gary says the Castle of Dreams is the last one. "We don't plan on ever leaving this house," he said.

Gary and Gay are opening their new home for MOHPG members to tour on Saturday, June 19, from 4 to 6:30 p.m. They will also share

what they have learned about the house and the accomplished DuMond family. Light refreshments will be served.

The house, at 270 Norumbega Drive, is located on what was once the boundary line between ranchos Santa Anita and Azusa de Duarte, at the intersection of Norumbega and Greystone and Shamrock avenues on a triangular-shaped piece of land. While the exact date of construction of the home is unclear, city historian Steve Baker believes that it was built in 1920. Gary said that his research indicates DuMond made the house by joining two existing 1904 structures that were possibly barns at a stagecoach stop.

DuMond was born in Rochester, N.Y., in 1867 to French parents. He moved to Paris to study art and, with his artist brother Frank Vincent DuMond, operated a summer art school in France. After teaching art in Italy and in New York City, DuMond moved to California in 1910 and taught at the Los Angeles School of Art and Design. He eventually settled in Monrovia, where his parents lived.

DuMond was a lauded painter of the Mojave Desert and the Southwest until his death in 1927. Collections of his artwork are held by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company in Texas, the Jonathan Club in Los Angeles, and his descendants in Northern California.

DuMond married a painter, Louise Kerr. His son, Jesse, became a physicist and taught at Caltech, while daughter Camille became an artist. The family is buried at Live Oak Memorial Park in Monrovia. There are no remaining family members in Southern California.

tagline: Jim Wigton is MOHPG President and Sheila McCarthy is MOHPG Newsletter Editor. City Historian and MOHPG member Steve Baker provided much of the history for the DuMond House.

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