

# Preserving Forest Grove

Newsletter of the Historic Landmarks Board

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## *The Ranch Style Home*

By George Cushing

Ranch home, Split Level, American Ranch, Western Ranch or California Rambler - no matter what the name, they are all the same - the often-maligned Ranch Style home. Commonly looked down upon, this house style is over fifty years old and is now considered historic. And in spite of its faults the Ranch Style has become a classic and deserves a second look.

It is generally agreed the "Ranch" came into existence in 1932 in San Diego, California with a design by Cliff May. Over the next 20 years this humble home spread throughout the nation. When World War II ended and the young families wanted cars and new homes, they turned to the ranch style home, the home of the future. New subdivisions appeared everywhere with street after street of these look-alike ranch homes. Between 1948 and 1968 about 75 percent of new homes were ranch style.

The ranch style home introduced a radical new design. The house was two rooms deep and

three or four rooms wide. Then, horror of horrors, the garage was added on to the end of the house becoming part of the view from the street.

Garages had evolved from the carriage house and stable that were located in the back of the house and so were traditionally hidden from view of the street. But these young families were proud of their modern cars and wanted them out front. So the garage left the seclusion of the back yard and alley and gained a prominent spot at the side of the house.



With a lot of influence from Frank Lloyd Wright and his Prairie style homes and some subtle influence from the Spanish hacienda this low-slung ground hugging home with its single story changed the way Americans looked at their homes. If a man's home is his castle, women became captains in their new centrally located kitchens that gave them easy access to the rest of the house. The "great room" we now enjoy in newer houses also came from this new way of

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looking at homes. Large sliding picture windows, concrete patios and large back yards opened these homes to outdoor living.

In truth the worst criticism for the ranch style home is the lack of ornamentation and the basic, utilitarian style. This style is characterized by wide eaves, a low-pitched roof and large windows that take advantage of natural light. The inside has a very sensible floor plan with the bedrooms at one end and public rooms at the other. They use a lot of natural materials, often wood floors

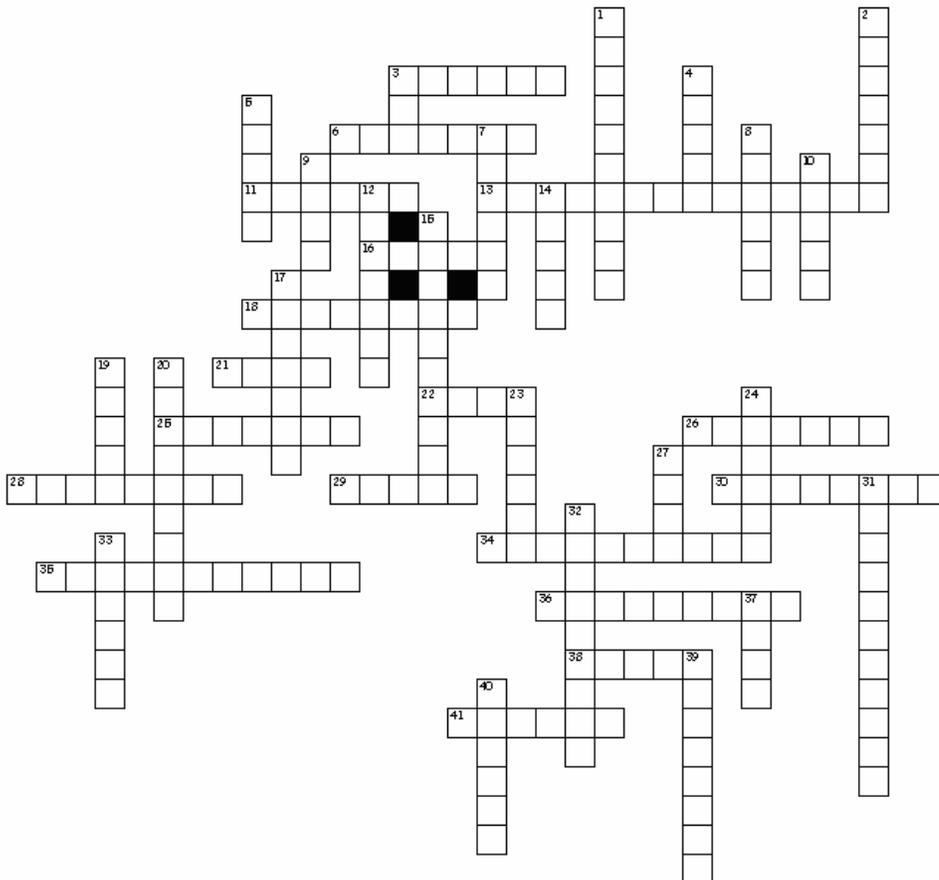
with carpet over them. Wood or brick exteriors make these an economical and attractive home. These homes usually have adequate kitchens and often at least two bathrooms. The three or four bedrooms with actual closets are a real plus compared to older houses. Another big feature with these homes is the large back yards.

As we can see the lowly ranch has a lot going for it and this house design helped to change the way we look at our home.

# Historic Landmarks Crossword

By Claude Romig

Here's your chance to test your knowledge of historic buildings, structures, and local details. Have fun! Answers will be in the next newsletter.



- 16. Name of a Vernacular farmhouse built in 1889. Charles lived here.
- 18. A semicircular or semi-elliptical window over a doorway or another window.
- 21. A curved structure that supports the weight of the material above it.
- 22. Upper covering of a building.
- 25. Structure for venting gas or smoke
- 26. A structural beam above a window.
- 28. The wedge-shaped stone at the highest point of an arch that locks the others in place.
- 29. What the HLB likes to give away to deserving homeowners.
- 30. A room below the rest of the house. A great place to lager beers.
- 34. A row of repeating small posts which support the upper rail of a railing.
- 35. Old wiring style.
- 36. What old houses were

**Across**

- 3. The part of a stairway between two floors.
- 6. A porch, usually roofed and sometimes partly enclosed, that extends along an outside wall of a building.
- 11. An upright pillar or post.
- 13. Jennie and Henry Price lived here.

- sometimes insulated with this.
- 38. Area under the roof, esp. if reserved for storage.
- 41. Sheets of wood, vinyl, aluminum, or other material used to surface the outside of a building.

**Down**

- 1. An architectural style peculiar to a given area.

2. The uppermost section of moldings along the top of a wall or just below a roof.
3. What many old floors were composed of.
4. The triangle formed by a sloping roof.
5. A covered shelter at the entrance to a building.
7. A window which is set vertically on a sloping roof.
8. Type of roof that slopes down to the eaves on all four sides.
9. Carries smoke up to the top of the chimney so it can escape.
10. Thomas and his wife Mary were among the earliest settlers in the Tualatin River Valley.
12. Pieces of wood added to create decoration; often placed around windows and doors and under roofs.
14. FGHLB chairman's last name
15. The lowest part of an entablature resting on the capital of a column.
17. A platform projecting from the interior or exterior wall of a building, usually enclosed by a rail or parapet.
19. Ralph I. and Bessie J. originally owned this historic house on Ash St.
20. Architectural style including mansard roof, emphasis on color, texture, sculptural detail.
23. Any flat horizontal member or molding with little projection.
24. A building for parking or storing one or more motor vehicles.
27. He operated a confectionary shop on Main Street in Forest Grove for many years beginning in the mid-1920s. An historic house is named after him.
31. The upper horizontal part of an order, between a capital and the roof; it consists of the architrave, frieze, and cornice.
32. Late 19th century style: asymmetrical, steep roofs, bay windows, wide verandas.
33. An architectural bracket or block projecting from a wall and supporting (or appearing to support) a ceiling, beam, or shelf
37. The edge of a roof, usually projecting beyond the side of the building.
39. Type of window hinged on one side, most often opening out.
40. A horizontal structural member over an opening which carries the weight of the wall above it.

## ***Board Welcomes New Member Cindy Kistler***

I was born and raised in Austin Texas, where I lived until moving to Forest Grove in 1999. I am a registered nurse, currently working at Tuality Community Hospital. I've been married to Scott Kistler for 21 years. We have two wonderful sons, Reed and Harrison, who are attending Forest Grove High School.

We currently live in the Oscar Brown house, which is approximately 110 years old. During our restoration of the property I grew to appreciate the craftsmanship and detail that was used to construct our house. I look forward to working to help reserve the rich history of Forest Grove's architecture.

### ***New Grant Funding Available***

As most readers know, the Historic Landmarks Board operates a renovation grant program to help property owners offset the cost of doing historically accurate renovation projects. This money is provided by the waste transfer station on the west side of town and is handed out to various groups by the city council. So with each new fiscal year, the HLB gets renewed funding - this year our grant was \$13,500! Have a project that you've been thinking about taking care of on your historic home? Come talk to us. We'll reimburse up to half the cost of the work. Contact James Reitz at 503-992-3233 for more information.

**Preserving Forest Grove** is a quarterly newsletter published by the Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board to help fulfill its duty of public education regarding the preservation of cultural resources. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please call James Reitz at 503-992-3233, or [JReitz@ci.forest-grove.or.us](mailto:JReitz@ci.forest-grove.or.us).

***The Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board Grant Program***

Is your house on our local register? If it is, did you know that your house is eligible for restoration / rehabilitation grant funding? The Historic Landmarks Board has funds to help you with your projects. If you are planning any exterior restoration work such as restoring architectural features or if you have structural work to do such a foundation repair, we'd love to help. We fund projects up to 50% of the cost of the job per grant. Come see us! We can also help you find historically appropriate solutions to any problems you may have.

***The Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board***

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