

# PRESS RELEASE

## EWMS PTSA



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**      **CONTACT: Rosie Ordonez-Jasis**  
**RELEASE DATE:**                    **657-278-5951**

**East Whittier Middle School PTSA Welcomes Author Harvey Smith**  
***Distinguished Panel to Discuss the School's Historic WPA Era Murals***

**Whittier, CA:** April 9<sup>th</sup> 2015 East Whittier Middle School, which was established in 1913, houses New Deal era, Works Progress Administration (WPA) commissioned murals. These murals, made of tile mosaics by muralist Caspar Duchow in 1937, are installed in the school's media center. It is with great pride that the East Whittier Middle School PTSA welcomes author Harvey Smith, for a book signing and a night of art education and appreciation of these historic works of art. There will be a distinguished panel of experts, including Dr. Rod Hernandez, artists Yoshio Nakamura and Wayne Perry. They will discuss the history of the murals and what the WPA and the New Deal represented to local artists and craftsmen, as our country lifted itself out of The Great Depression. Following the panel presentation, a dessert reception in the media center will be centered on the viewing of the murals. The event is free, open to the public, and family-friendly.

**The Author:**

**Harvey Smith** is President of the National New Deal Preservation Association and an expert on New Deal art. In 2010 Harvey was co-curator of “The American Scene: New Deal Art, 1935-1943,” in Walnut Creek, California. He received a B.A. in English and an M.A. in Public Health from the University of California, Berkeley, and he has worked as a union carpenter, public health worker, radio journalist, horse rancher, and public school teacher. He is the author of *New Deal Berkeley* (Arcadia Press, 2014) and a member of the Living New Deal non-profit board of directors.

## **The Panelists**

**Rod Hernandez** received his Ph.D. and M.A. in English from Stanford University, and a B.A. in English from UCLA. His areas of expertise are twentieth-century American literature, ethnic studies, and Chicano/a literature and culture. From 2001-03 he was a UC President's Postdoctoral Fellow in English at UCLA, where he researched transnational and cross-cultural approaches to postwar American poetry. His work has appeared in *The Américas Review*, *Callaloo*, and *XCP: Cross-Cultural Poetics*. An essay on U.S. Latino/a poets and the Black Arts Movement will appear in a new anthology to be published by Rutgers University Press.

**Yoshio Nakamura** was the first faculty member to be given a contract at the newly opened Rio Hondo College over fifty years ago. He added administrative duties to his teaching role, becoming a Dean and eventually a Rio Hondo College Vice President. Since retiring he has dedicated himself to his art, but also found time to volunteer for a number of art-centered community groups, including Whittier's Art in Public Places Committee and Cultural Arts Commission. At USC, he earned a BFA (Magna Cum Laude) and an MFA.

**Wayne Perry** centers his work in and around the Los Angeles experience from the Eastside point of view. He often creates in the space of conflicting aspects of nature, culture and personal relationships in an urban environment. He plays with the ironic elements and complex tensions of this often cruel paradise. He maintains a romantic optimism and rich colorful sense of this city that he calls home. He explores this very universal experience on a personal level through his studio work as well as public art projects.

For more information on this event please call Dr. Rosie Ordóñez-Jasis 657-278-5951

*The East Whittier Middle School PTSA is dedicated to promoting students' health, well-being, and educational success through strong parent, family, and community involvement. The PTSA support enrichment initiatives that support high quality education and a nurturing environment for all students.*

*It is the aim of the East Whittier City School District to provide students with the knowledge of those academic skills and concepts which they must learn and apply to function effectively in our society. The District, in partnership with parents, endeavors to motivate, inspire, and encourage all students to use their unique potentials to reach their highest level of academic achievement and emotional and physical well-being.*