



THE POPPY PAPER



Official Monthly Publication of the
Boosters of Old Town San Diego State Historic Park
A Non-Profit Organization

February 2009

Cosmopolitan Hotel Update

Did you know that there is a publication called the Cosmopolitan Chronicle which documents the “true tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel?” This weekly publication includes articles written by historians, archaeologist, and project managers who are overseeing the reconstruction efforts.

In three most recent issues, Bill Mennell, District Services Manager for the San Diego Coast District, takes an in-depth look at the development of the bathroom:

“Today, when we think of a bathroom, it has a toilet, a bathtub, and a sink. But 100 years ago, this was not always the case, in fact it was rare, only 14% of homes in 1908 had a bathtub. Although these seemingly simple components have been in one place or another for thousands of years, this combination which almost all of us consider ordinary is a comparatively modern configuration.” (*Vol. II, No. 16*)

“When the Casa de Bandini was completed in 1829, the toilet as we know it today was still decades away from being invented. [Bandini’s] family had two options; chamber pot, and outhouse. In 1869 when the Cosmopolitan opened the guests still had the same two options.” (*Vol. II, No. 18*)

“When Cave Coutts Jr. had the first plumbing installed in the Cosmopolitan in 1930, indoor plumbing was coming into its own in rural America. That year almost half of the U.S. population was rural, and the population of the City of San Diego was only 147,995. Even today, the State of Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development offers ‘zero percent interest, forgivable loans in eligible localities for the installation of indoor plumbing.’” (*Vol. II, No. 17*)

To access and view the complete collection of the Cosmopolitan Chronicle, go online:

www.parks.ca.gov/oldtownsandiego

Then Select “Cosmopolitan Hotel/La Casa de Bandini Restoration.”

Free copies of the latest issue are also available in the Robinson-Rose Visitor’s Center.



Happy Valentine’s Day!

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President's Notes

by Jeanne Ferrell

Another year started, another budget passed. (Maybe we should pass our secrets on the State!) If you're interested, you will find a copy in the BOOT Office.

The BOOT Board met this last week and unanimously passed the budget. Budget slashing (not just cutting) is a way of life now. Everyone, from the City, to the State, to the Federal government needs to make major budget cuts. They are often painful cuts, and everyone feels or will feel, shortly, the effects. We are finding that living within our means is difficult.

Hooray for the volunteers. Those people who give of their time **freely** for a cause that they love; or in our case, for a Park that they love.

Remember, the 31st of January, the Mormon Battalion will do their wonderful day of Living History. Don't miss this day.

From the Editor's Desk...

Bad news is bombarding us everyday - unemployment rates rising throughout the United States, economic crisis at every turn, retirement funds disappearing, and astronomical rates of foreclosure. Many of us find ourselves caught up in circumstances that are beyond our control. We didn't cause the catastrophe, we didn't do anything to deserve this, we didn't see it coming!!!

However, times of great difficulty seem to bring out the best in people, and we find strength in the support and kindness of others. So, when an obstacle presents itself - family, friends, and faith will always get you through the rough spots. Old Town San Diego State Historic Park is loaded with those kinds of people. The kind who you would choose as family - if you had a choice!

Yes, you guessed it --- this author finds that she too will soon be among those statistics of unemployed. (I'm looking, but there's not much out there!) So many volunteers and staff members have lent a listening ear and provided encouragement to me these past few weeks. You know who you are, and I will be eternally grateful for your friendship and camaraderie.

My hope is that I will be able to continue as the Poppy Paper Editor, no matter where I find employment. Next month, hopefully I'll have some Good News!

Happy Reading!

ruthfrench@earthlink.net - deadline is the 25th
(handwritten deadline the 20th - in my volunteer folder)

Treasurer's Notes

by Deanna Turton

It is hard to believe that another fiscal year is starting already. It seems just like a month or so ago that I began the process of doing the taxes and annual reports. Although each year seems a bit easier to do, the time surely seems to be going faster between the beginning of each year and the next.

During December, BOOT had many expenses but in the end we came out ahead - \$689.35. Luckily, the BOOT Store did better this month and, of course, the income from Holiday in the Park helped to defray the extra expenses at the end of the year. Donations were also up to \$43.97 a day, which represented a more normal figure than last month. Overall, donations averaged \$54.02 for FY2008 - which was what we expected it to be with respect to our budgeting expectations.

Holiday in the Park was also successful with over \$1572.00 taken in over the two day event. Additional tickets were also sold in November (\$63.00).

On the expense side of the ledger, the following budget categories had costs over \$200:

- Fourth quarter sales taxes - \$452.00
- BOOT store inventory - \$452.77
- Poppy Paper - \$203.98
- Holiday in the Park - \$2104.90
- Living History supplies - \$678.92

All other twelve proposal categories were under \$200.00.

At the BOOT board meeting, the heavy expenses for the Holiday in the Park event and Living History were questioned and discussed. Costs for Holiday in the Park represent fees for the Christmas tree - \$107.74, a special engraving plate for the printer - \$158.84, entertainment - \$450.00, carriage rides - \$800.00, museum decoration supplies - \$265.22, and several other smaller charges for supplies. Living History charges were mostly items bought to use up the LH budget at the end of the year. These items will be used in living history demonstrations in the future.

Once again, if anyone would like to be the BOOT Treasurer, now is the time to speak up. I have begun the end of year balancing, but there is still plenty of time to learn how to do the tax forms, annual reports, etc. As in years past, I will promise to help anyone who thinks they would like to try their hand at being treasurer. Call me or send an e-mail if you are interesting in learning the job.

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Volunteer(s) of the Month

"Think green " - Buzz words in these days of global climate change - and action words in our own little piece of the globe for our volunteer gardeners - Adrian Fernandez, Nelda Harris, Sergia Castellanos, Don Mayfield and Winnie Adams.

The overall landscaping and maintenance of the park is under the direction of a professional crew of gardeners. However, the gardens at the Machado-Stewart, the Machado-Silvas, and behind the Robinson-Rose and McCoy Buildings are cared for by our very own volunteers. These gardens are planned, planted, watered, weeded and used to provide our BOOT Store with packets of herbs, dried flowers, sachets, and other colorful crafts.

Adrian Fernandez has taken over the circular garden behind the McCoy House and keeps it weeded and planted. He is one of our most versatile volunteers. A former teacher, he also demonstrates the printing press in the Union building on Wednesdays. His home is a showplace of his craftsmanship in woodworking, and he and his wife have graciously consented to conduct a tour of it in the near future.

Nelda Harris has adopted the Machado-Silvas garden, and keeps it watered and weeded. She has a special love for the California poppy which seems to spring up every year. When the garden overflows, she takes the plants home with her and plants them in the canyon behind her house.

Sergia Castellanos likes to prune the lavender, and plant seeds in all the gardens.

Don Mayfield spades, weeds and prunes in all the gardens. Winnie Adams waters the Machado gardens and keeps them looking trim and well tended, hauling the cut herbs home to a special drying area, then hauling them back again for craft days. And, we mustn't forget the watchful supervision of Deanna Turton.

The gardens provide a favorite stop for our tour groups. They are a living testament to the hard work and dedication of our volunteers.



Old Town San Diego State Historic Park leaps into the 21st Century!

By Richard Dennison

Historic Sector Visitor Services Superintendent

Working in partnership with the California State Park Foundation, Old Town State Park has created the first in a hopefully long running series of podcasts detailing aspects of history in Old San Diego.

This initial pod-cast describes the history of the Casa de Pico Motor Hotel. It was written and recorded by Sean K.T. Shiraishi, local historian and Senior Park Aide with Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. It was reviewed and commented upon by Victor Walsh, State Park Historian and produced by the generous support of the kind folks at Johnson and Johnson Architecture.

This snippet from the podcast places the building within the evolution of the hotel, coupled with the Spanish Colonial tradition:

The Casa de Pico Motor Hotel, with rooms arranged around a central patio, represented a change from the more common auto courts of the day: small bungalows or cabins built around a central parking lot. In 1940 the Tourist Court Journal published a 4-page article on the structure just after the motel opened. Though Requa's original drawings have not been located as of this date, the article did provide a floor-plan of the motor court. The article described it as a "tourist court which faithfully follows the traditions of the hacienda for the early Spanish Dons."

To uncover further interesting facts concerning the Casa de Pico Motor Hotel, and to hear the podcast for yourself, please visit Old Town State Park's website:

www.parks.ca.gov/oldtownsandiego

Field Trip in April!

Adrian Fernandez and his wife are planning a tour of their historic home in April. More details in next month's Poppy Paper...

HOW THE PANAMA CANAL CAME TO BE

By Estelle Lauer

Here's some interesting trivia that shaped the world...

When Columbus set sail from Spain intending to return with ships loaded with spices from the East Indies, he hadn't counted on landfall in South America to delay his journey.

However, he convinced Ferdinand and Isabella that there were more important considerations than pepper, nutmeg and cinnamon. So, eventually the ensuing Conquistadores followed the current and launched plundering expeditions wherever they found gold and silver.

Peru was a treasure trove. And, Spanish galleons made their ways around the horn to stock up on the shiny stuff. That route was teeming with treacherous trouble. Many a ship lies in the ocean depths at the southern tip of South America because it was blown to pieces by the gale force winds. (In fact, sailors always wore one earring made of precious metal which could be collected by the captain after he had prayed over the dead deckhand. Of course, in that situation the Captain was also in dire straits, but no one was authorized to pray over him. There were probably no survivors to collect payment in precious earrings anyway.)

Well, after the mined metal had been loaded onto the galleons, the same perils existed for the return trip to Spain. So, a local hero was born when Vasco Nunez de Balboa discovered that the Isthmus that connected North and South America was a mere 50 miles across. It was so much simpler to transfer the precious cargo from ships to mules to ships.

Settlements had formed on both sides of the Isthmus, and Señor Balboa was weakly a governor of the town of Darien. Because he had heroically blazed the trail across the Isthmus, he set out to seek greater glory. He shouldn't have left town because, in his absence, a local named Señor Pedrarias Davila usurped B's position. Somehow Vasco's father-in-law helped to trump up a charge of treason against the King of Spain and, after a speedy trial, Vasco and four friends had their heads chopped off in the town square. It makes one wonder if the Balboas grew apart because of his many absences from home.

Anyway, when gold was discovered at Sutter's mill, business boomed on the Isthmus trail. Now the ore was transported south by ship to mules to ship.

There was two-way traffic. Gold seekers crossed the Isthmus and, upon arrival on the western side, waited for a steamer that would take them north to the California gold fields.

Business boomed along the way. And the Isthmus became a giant mall. Lots of people saw economic opportunity so they joined the throng of merchants, married locals, went forth and multiplied, and established new genetic components to Panamanian population.

It was in 1880 that the French attempted to simplify all this cargo shifting. It was under their direction that the first shovelful of dirt was dug with the dream of uniting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

It should have been simple. But Yellow Fever and Malaria did the project in. By the time they gave up in 1903, the only successful excavations were for some 6,300 graves.

"Remember the Maine" was the rallying cry of the US during the war with Cuba. And, Teddy Roosevelt made a name for himself when, on horseback, he charged up a hill to do battle with the enemy. Besides providing opportunity to create name recognition for a future President, the war set American doctors on the path to identifying and eliminating the sources of Yellow Fever.

That done, engineers turned their attentions to digging the ditch that would change the economics of world trade.

The canal was completed in 1914. And in that year the Panama Canal Exposition hit San Diego. Señor Balboa was locally immortalized by having a park, at least one street, and a school named after him. And the Naval Hospital bears his name.

It is nice that after 400 years he was officially elevated from his transgressions. And, ha ha, history books barely mention his father-in-law or Señor Davila.

CALENDAR PAGE



NOTICE: If you have a friend who would like to learn more about San Diego History, enjoys meeting people, and likes to have a good time, give him/her this application form to fill out and send in. New members are always welcome. And, if you have forgotten to renew your membership...it's never too late to send it in. We miss you!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

___ NEW or ___ RENEWAL
___ \$ 10.00 - Single
___ \$ 20.00 - Family
___ \$ 7.00 - Senior/Student
___ \$ 30.00 - Golden Poppy Contributor
___ \$150.00 - Life Member

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I belong to the following group(s): Docent___ Military___ Descendants ___ Californios ___
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Make check payable to: BOOT
Mail to: Thomas Young, Membership Chairman, 3268 Par Drive, La Mesa, CA 91941



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