



THE POPPY PAPER



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

September 2019

Fiestas Patrias

Mexican Independence Day in Old Town

By Megan Curtis, Event Coordinator

Fiestas Patrias, or Mexican Independence Day, is fast approaching. Traditionally celebrated on September 16th, Old Town San Diego State Historic Park hosts our annual special event this year on Saturday, September 14th from 11:00 am until 4:00 pm. After Mexico won their independence from Spain in 1821, California began to change under the flag of Mexico. Adobe structures were built around the central plaza. Trade, commerce, and the beginnings of a community slowly started to take shape. Mexico continued to govern California until the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, when California and various other territories became a part of the United States.

Through demonstrations, crafts, music, and dance, we celebrate this important holiday with the public. Along with the family fun, they can learn a little about California's history when we were still a part of Mexico. Volunteers and staff are encouraged to participate in this special event on September 14, 2019. If you would like more information about the event, or how you can participate, please contact Megan Curtis at megan.curtis@parks.ca.gov.



Stagecoach Days 2019 Comes to an End

By Gregg Giacomuzzi, State Park Interpreter I

As August 2019 comes to an end, so too do Stagecoach Days. This year, the Park presented six distinct special events over a seven-week period. Each of the events had a unique theme and was greatly appreciated by park visitors, both locals and tourists. The July 4th and Twainfest special events, the latter produced by *Write Out Loud*, proved to be the most well attended special events over the entire summer season. We had over 60 California State Park volunteers who participated in the summer special events, along with park staff and outside organizations that augment the events.

These events could not be produced without the contributions of the Boosters of Old Town, Wells Fargo, Fiesta de Reyes, Mormon Battalion Historic Site, and the County of San Diego. Each of these organizations either provided funding or manpower, or both. I would like to recognize two specific staff members, Thomas Rogers and Jesse McLaughlin, for their participation in the cooking demonstrations. With little experience, they took on all the cooking tasks assigned to them, and, after each event, helped with the event cleanup.

Unfortunately, due to a cut in funding from the County of San Diego, there is a real possibility that the quantity of special events may be reduced for Summer 2020. Though this would not be ideal, we know that Old Town San Diego State Historic Park's staff and volunteers will be up to the challenge, regardless of what happens in years to come.

From the Editor's Desk...

This summer Old Town San Diego State Historic Park lost two dear friends, whose decades of contributions to our success are immeasurable. Memorial services for Tom Young (pg. 4), one of the founding members of Boosters of Old Town (BOOT), were held on August 9th. Then, on August 19th, services were held for long-time volunteer and BOOT member, Mary Byrne (*web-link below*).

I met both Tom and Mary on the same day back in the early 2000s, on my first day of volunteer training, led by Tom's wife, the indomitable Mary Ellen Young. At the time, new volunteers were encouraged to join BOOT, as much of the financing for volunteer activities came from the fund-raising efforts of BOOT. Tom was the Membership Chair; while Mary served as the Membership Secretary, as well as the editor of *The Poppy Paper*. So, after completing the membership application and paying my dues to Tom, I was escorted into the back room of the Robinson-Rose Building where Mary entered my information into the computer's membership database. So, I became an Old Town volunteer, a BOOT member, and met a bunch of wonderful new friends...all in one day!

As the years went by, Mary's eyesight began to fail, and she was looking for someone to help. Mary was so pleased that I had competent "office skills," and that I could continue maintaining the membership database for Tom. In the meantime, BOOT President Jeanne Ferrell and Treasurer Deanna Turton tried to keep *The Poppy Paper* going. However, when I became a BOOT Board member, I was told that I needed a "job," so I became the editor in August 2008. Mary was so committed to making it a smooth transition that she personally escorted me to the printers and to the post office to make sure I was comfortable with the process. After the torch had been passed, Mary continued to write articles for *The Poppy Paper*, always highlighting individuals who worked "behind the scenes" and who were rarely spotlighted.

Shortly after I became editor of *The Poppy Paper*, Tom Young asked if I would assist him with the membership duties. However, he did not so easily pass the torch...making sure we met each month to go over the database to make sure everything was accurate! Eventually, I won Tom's confidence and took on the full duties for a few years thereafter.

Both Tom Young and Mary Byrne brought their business expertise and strong work ethics to Old Town as volunteers, and they led as exemplary role models for all who followed them. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families...they were truly very special and will always be with us here in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park!!!

Happy Labor Day and Happy Reading!

Ruth French, Editor, poppypapereditor@gmail.com

(Deadline for submissions is the 20th of each month for inclusion in the following month's issue.)

Mary Anne Byrne

September 5, 1917 – July 6, 2019



<https://www.times-advocate.com/articles/mary-anne-byrne/>



Old Town Native Landscape

Saturday, September 14th, 9am to Noon

Come help us grub weeds and snip shrubs in the Landscape. Park in the lot off Calhoun and Taylor Streets. The landscape is next to the parking lot, by the McCoy House Museum yard. Bring water and have sun protection. We have garden gloves and tools, but bring your own if you prefer.

Questions? Email Kay or Peter at OldTownLandscape@cnpsd.org



Treasurer's Notes

By Deanna Turton

We normally think of July as the time for family picnics, patriotic celebrations and fireworks. Rarely do we think of financial fireworks, but that is exactly what happened in the BOOT accounts this past month. As mentioned in previous articles, the BOOT Board authorized some special projects which were very expensive and it turned out that many needed to be paid during July. Hence, in July I wrote checks totaling \$29,071.47. That was \$10,941.74 more than we earned in July, so it is a good thing we have a strict budget which could cover all of these expenses!!!

Here are the July expenses over \$300:

- \$10,000.00 - Final payment for the new Seeley sign on the Cosmopolitan Hotel and Restaurant
- \$ 5,225.00 - Construction of reproduction display case at the Cosmopolitan Hotel and Restaurant
- \$ 3,799.94 - Park aide salaries in the Schoolhouse from 2018 RIUA funds
- \$ 2,229.68 - Blacksmith/animal handler salaries for 2019 (partial payment)
- \$ 1,617.00 - Sales Taxes (second quarter)
- \$ 1,427.33 – The Park Store (inventory replacement)
- \$ 900.00 - BOOT (liability insurance)
- \$ 659.00 - Period Attire Bank (subsidies and new purchases)
- \$ 569.92 - Stagecoach Days (stage rental)
- \$ 458.01 - July 4th

Plus 15 other spending categories at \$300 or less.

Despite all this red ink, BOOT was very lucky to earn \$18,129.73 in July. With *The Park Store* bringing in over \$10,000, we also managed to achieve a daily average in the donation boxes of \$93.75, both of which are record highs for the Park! Other large sources of income were:

- \$2,178.65 - July 4th*
- \$ 719.00 - Descendant Day (raffle and additional income)
- \$ 609.00 - Guild Sales
- \$ 569.00 - Period Attire (purchases)
- \$ 250.00 - Membership
- \$ 220.00 - Quilt Raffle
- \$ 100.00 - Donation from the Seeley Family
- \$ 100.00 - Donation from the Daughters of the American Revolution

*On July 4th the main ticket booth earned \$950.15 and the BOOT food booth made \$1228.50. So, that was another record broken! Jeanne Ferrell and I sold tickets almost nonstop all day, with folks wanting to stay and buy more tickets at 4:00 p.m. when the event closed down. **Many thanks to all the volunteers and park aides who made our Old Fashioned July 4th event such a big success!**

On the first day of ComicCon, I rode the trolley with many ghosts, goblins and superheroes to turn in the grant report to San Diego County. The report was over an inch thick, so I hand delivered it. (One year they lost it, and I had to redo the whole thing. Lesson learned!) Now, I always hand it to them and get a receipt. Other business completed was to apply for a new raffle permit for Sep. 2019-Aug. 2020, and reported raffle earnings for Sep. 2018-Aug. 2019.

The Board members are currently submitted agenda items for the upcoming meeting in mid-August. We have many irons in the fire to prepare for the 2020 budget. This year will be especially challenging because the County informed BOOT that we will **not** be receiving a community enhancement grant this year. That was a huge disappointment because we had created a wonderful video presentation to accompany our grant request. So that means the \$8,000.00, which had been funding many Park events, will no longer be available. In addition, Wells Fargo has reduced their annual grant, so that was another loss.

It is my guess that the Board meeting is going to last much longer than two hours in the upcoming months!!!

Thomas Richard Young

March 31, 1921 – July 25, 2019



Tom Young was a San Diego original. Eldest of two sons, he was born at 933 I Avenue, Coronado, to a Navy ship's chief commissary steward, Percy James Young and Eva Lorena Nunamaker Young. A few years later his brother, Robert was born. Both brothers grew up living in the Normal Heights area when San Diego was a growing, prospering community where tuna fleets filled the harbor and dairy farms covered Mission Valley. Tom always possessed a curious and adventurous nature – as a boy he could be seen riding his bike down Texas Street, just a dirt path, to the river and to Balboa Park. In 1927 at the age of six, his curiosity was rewarded when he was allowed to observe up close the “Spirit of St. Louis” on the mudflats just minutes prior to the initial leg of Charles Lindberg's historic nonstop solo airplane flight across the Atlantic Ocean from New York to Paris. That early introduction inspired Tom to pursue an aviation career, first in the military and later in civilian life.

Graduating from Grossmont Union High School in 1940, he worked for two years at Consolidated Aircraft Corporation assembling wings and gas tanks and installing propellers, engines and generators prior to enlisting in the US Army Air Corps in November 1942. He served in World War II in the European Theater of Operations in 1945 and 1946 supervising enlisted men inspecting and maintaining various aircraft, P-47, P-51 and P-38 fighters and C-47 cargo planes. On the C-47s Tom served as an aerial engineer and assisted the pilot during flight. Returning from the war, Tom received his pilot's license and managed flight maintenance teams at North Island which serviced airplanes, helicopters and jet aircraft post-WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

Tom met Mary Ellen, his future wife, on a blind date at a YMCA big band dance in San Diego and were married a year later at St. John of the Cross on January 25, 1948. After a few years they moved into their new La Mesa home where they raised three children. While Tom continued his career, he also attended night school engineering classes at San Diego City College and SDSU. He excelled in mechanical and aeronautical fields which aided his advancement at North Island. An Eagle Scout in his youth, he was an avid outdoorsman and volunteered years later as a fish and game warden for the State. On various weekends for years, Tom would join his brother, Bob, a civil engineer, surveying large sections in east San Diego County. In his lifetime Tom was a voracious student of World and American history – facts learned from readings and travels were seldom forgotten and often discussed.

Having retired in 1979, Tom and Mary Ellen joined a new volunteer group in Old Town, Las Amapolas de Oro (The Golden Poppies) and the Park's nonprofit cooperating association, Boosters of Old Town (BOOT). They both immediately immersed themselves into the activities of both organizations, spearheading the first guided tours in Old Town and developing the educational and interpretive programs. Together, they were the very first docents in California to wear period attire. Since he was known to be so handy, Tom graciously accepted many assignments to design, build and repair most anything BOOT requested. He served many years as BOOT Treasurer and board member and accompanied Mary Ellen in the 1980s and '90s when she served on the Board of Directors for the California League of Park Associations (CALPA) headquartered in Sacramento. Tom and Mary Ellen were lovingly called the “Old Town Ambassadors” and were so honored by the State Parks Director who declared July 31, 2013 as “Tom and Mary Ellen Young Day” in the city and county of San Diego for their 35 years of service to State Parks.

Submitted by Tom's daughter and son-in-law, Kathy and Jim Kramer.

THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS!

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Balboa Park Plaza
 3033 5th Ave., Ste. 210
 San Diego, CA 92103
 (619) 546-5196
 mtaylor@nwbenvironmental.com



Jeanne Ferrell
 Cell: (619) 995-0787

2448 San Diego Avenue
 San Diego, CA 92110
 coldstoneotsd@yahoo.com

619-543-9057

MONTHLY BOOT BOARD MEETINGS

BOOT Board Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday, 1:00 pm, at Café Coyote. Monthly Board Meetings are always open to the public.

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Poppy Paper Ruth French
 Editor: poppypapereditor@gmail.com
 BOOT Website: <http://boostersofoldtown.com/>
 Park Website: www.parks.ca.gov/oldtownsandiego



BOOSTERS OF OLD TOWN

San Diego State Historic Park
4002 Wallace Street
San Diego, CA 92110

Membership Application or Renewal

- _____ **\$20.00 Senior (62 yrs. or older)/Single Student**
- _____ **\$25.00 Single Supporting Member**
- _____ **\$30.00 Senior Couple (62 yrs. or older)**
- _____ **\$40.00 Family (2 or more individuals)**
- _____ **\$155.00 Life Member (62 yrs. or older)**
- _____ **\$55.00 Corporate Basic Membership***
(includes window decal and 1 month business card sized ad in *The Poppy Paper*)
- _____ **\$130.00 Corporate Enhanced Membership***
(includes window decal and 1 year business card sized ad in *The Poppy Paper*)
- _____ **Donation Enclosed (Or Gift in Honor of: _____)**

**Corporate applicants only: Please enclose a business card or logo for inclusion in The Poppy Paper.*

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