
Heritage

El Cajon Historical Society Quarterly News

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2002

Summer Band Concert to Feature Traditional Favorites in a New Location

The San Diego City Guard Band, still under the direction of long-time El Cajon musician Gene Vacher, will play a patriotic medley of pieces at the Historical Society's Summer Music Concert scheduled for Sunday afternoon, July 21st. This year, the band will be joined by the La Mesa City Limits barbershop quartet, a group whose performance highlights include appearances at Disneyland, at more than half a dozen Padres games, and at one of the 1998 World Series games in Qualcomm Stadium. Their repertoire focuses on selections from 1890 - 1930, the Golden Age of barbershop singing. Listeners may recognize selections including "Wait 'Til the Sun Shines, Nellie," "Lida Rose," and "The Wiffenpoof Song."

The City Guard Band, a traditional favorite at our Summer concerts, has a long, colorful history. San Diego Historical Society records tell us "San Diego loved its brass bands, especially that of the quasi-military City Guard. Organized in the mid-1880s . . . the City Guard Band was so much the pride of San Diego that a citizens' committee raised \$14,000 to send the 21

town musicians — led by 350-pound drum-major Ike Palmer — on a 40-day promotional tour of the USA."

This year's concert will move to Prescott Promenade, the lovely park on Main Street just east of Magnolia Avenue. Bring your lawn chairs, sun hats, and a picnic lunch — visit with friends, catch up on the latest news, and enjoy a pleasant summer afternoon with cookies and lemonade provided by the Historical Society.

Cookbooks Provide Taste of History's Lives and Times

by Eldonna Lay
Knox House Museum Curator

Published in 1772, *The Frugal Colonial Housewife* — a Cook's Book, was penned by

Boston's Susannah Carter and illustrated with engravings by Paul Revere. It remains the only known cookbook published in America between 1742 and 1796. As such, it provides a record of colonial life in a day when 95 percent of the population lived on farms. Important in determining its standing as the first American cookbook is that, although its recipes are primarily dishes found at that time in England, ingredients also included crops, meats, and fruits native to America.

A later book, *American Cookery*, by Amelia Simmons, published in 1796, is usually accorded the first true American cookbook. However, it contains several recipes previously printed in Carter's book. Since the methods, ingredients, and dishes in that earlier book were not yet being used in English cookbooks, their publication in *The Frugal Colonial Housewife – A Cook's Book* establishes it as the beginning of American cuisine.

Although neither of these two books is in our collection, we do exhibit in our kitchen a copy of another historic cookbook, the 1901 *Presidential Cook Book*, published by Saalfield Publishing Company of Akron, Ohio. That publication was adapted from the *White House Cook Book*, copyrighted in 1896 by Werner Company.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Published during

Grover Cleveland's second term as President, the *White House* book offered recipes, menus, carving lessons, table setting instructions, and etiquette tips. It was co-authored by White

House steward Hugo Ziemann, a renowned kitchen manager in Paris, New York, and Chicago and, at one time, a caterer for French royalty.

A revised and updated version of the *White House Cook Book*, now containing low-fat, non-fat, and convenience foods suggestions as well as recipes from Hillary Clinton and Barbara Bush, is still available today.

1880s Main Street Photo Added to Archival Collection

Our archival collection has recently received a large, framed copy of an 1880s era photograph donated by artist Oscar Marnez. From a viewpoint near today's Claydelle Avenue, the viewer looks toward West Main Street and Fletcher Hills and sees, from left to right, a blacksmith shop, storage, the El Cajon Market, a feed store, a bar/saloon, the Knox Hotel addition, the original Knox House, and a tent.

Our curator, Eldonna Lay, tells us the tent may have been erected for a Fourth of July celebration and adds that, on the frontier west of the Mississippi, the Fourth was celebrated more than any other holiday including Christmas. Entire communities gathered for picnics, baseball games, horse races, adult and children's tug-of-war competitions, other games, dancing, and concerts played by the town bands. The curator's committee will choose a display location for the new photo.

CCH Celebrates Community with Steinbeck Project

The California Council for the Humanities recently announced plans to launch *My Story is California's Story*, "a statewide initiative to refresh the story of California with the stories of today's Californians." Writing in the Winter 2002 issue of the organization's Humanities newspaper, CCH Executive Director James Quay says hundreds of Californians were asked last Spring if they had a personal story they believed was part of the state's story. Nearly three-quarters of them not only said "yes," but also told a story of how and why they or a family member came to California. CCH believes "the immigration story is not the only important California story, but it remains the essential one, a common point of departure (and arrival) shared by most Californians." A central conviction of the organization is that the telling and sharing of stories makes communities stronger.

Later this year, CCH will sponsor program activities to encourage every Californian to read John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, the 1940 Pulitzer Prize winning book the organization cites as the archetypal California story.

Quay says "the Joads' particular journey west has deep parallels to the journeys west, east, and north of many Californians. And it's the parallels we're interested in exploring. We want the state to read and discuss the book and ask their neighbors questions: How was my family's journey to California similar to or different from

yours? Who are the Joads of the 21st century? How did they arrive and why did they come? What challenges have Californians faced and do they continue to face in making this state their home"?

Quay asks us to "read one of the great stories of California this year, and then help us write the next contemporary California story."

For the Calendar

September: California History Month

Saturday, October 5 (tentative): Second Annual Antique Appraisal and Auction co-sponsored by the El Cajon Historical Society and the Ladies Auxiliary of St. Alban's Episcopal Church – location to be announced

Saturday, October 19 (tentative): El Cajon Historical Society House and Garden "Collectors' Tour" – locations to be announced

Thursday, October 24: Annual Dinner Meeting and Election of Officers

Local Appraisers Offer Two New Opportunities to Judge Possessions' Potential Value

Owners of treasured old possessions have recently been offered new, convenient opportunities to have expert appraisers judge the potential value of their family heirlooms, collectibles, and other favorite items.

Kathi Jablonsky, a Graduate Certified Appraiser and Accredited Member of the Appraisers National Association, will be at Magnolia Antiques & Collectibles, 456 North Magnolia Avenue, on the third Wednesday of each month to give verbal estimates of the worth of a wide variety of antiques and collectibles, fine jewelry excepted. On site from 11:00 until 4:00 each third Wednesday, Kathi will charge \$5.00 per item, donating all proceeds to the El Cajon Historical Society for our program budgets. Thank you, Kathi!

In October, we will join with the Ladies Auxiliary of St. Alban's Episcopal Church in the Second Annual Antique Appraisal and Auction. Details of the event are now being planned by committee members Ellen Andersen, Janie Bender, Jim Graves, and Fran Hill from the Historical Society plus Patty Bender, Betty Johnson, Sabeth Plummer, Madge Sperry, and Lou Toth from St. Alban's. Read the Fall issue of *Heritage* for date, time, and location details.

"Words of Gold" Literature Theme Chosen for September's California History Month

The California Historical Society recently announced Words of Gold: Celebrate California's Literature as the theme of September's California History Month, honoring authors who have captured California through their writings. Described as "a statewide campaign to celebrate and educate the public about California's diverse and exciting past," the event is a perfect complement to the California Council for the Humanities program described on pages 2 and 3 of this issue of *Heritage*.

Reading recommendations from the state Historical Society include John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*, *Two Years Before the Mast* by Richard Henry Dana, *Americans and the California Dream* by Kevin Starr, and *The Shirley Letters* edited by Marlene Smith-Baranzini.

Recommended children's books include *Blue Willow* by Doris Gates, *Ishi - the Last of His Tribe* by Theodora Kroeber, and Scott O'Dell's *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, named by the Children's Literature Association in 1976 as one of the 10 best American children's books of the past 200 years.

A Look Back

“Nowhere did the age exercise its extravagance and abandon more than in its playhouses. In those dimly lit, sweaty playgrounds, performer and spectator vied for the attention of London society. Star actors wore lavish costumes and employed a bravura style of larger-than-life acting designed to hold the attention of loutish audiences for as long as humanly possible. Ruffians and courtiers alike sported with prostitute orange vendors, harangued the players, and broke into fights.”

Restoration England: the late 1600s
Performing Arts Program
 Globe Theatres, April 2002

Recent Book Details 200 Years of White House History and Decorative Style

The White House: Its Historic Furnishings and First Families, published in November 2000 to coincide with the 200th anniversary of White House occupancy, offers a fascinating and beautifully photographed glimpse into a building which serves as both a private residence and a location for state functions. The

author, White House curator Betty C. Monkman, produced the book in partnership with the White House Historical Association.

Monkman, now assisted by a staff of four, has been employed in the curator's office since 1967 and has tended to the tastes of eight presidential families. Her work includes the conservation of more than thirty thousand objects. Stories in the book include that of the Resolute Desk made from wood of the H.M.S. Resolute, a British Royal Navy arctic discovery vessel abandoned north of the Arctic Circle in 1854. Found by an American whaling vessel a year later, the ship was refitted and sent to Queen Victoria as a token of goodwill. When the ship was retired in 1879, the Queen commissioned a desk made from its timbers and presented it to President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1880. Every president since Hayes, except Presidents Johnson, Nixon, and Ford, has used the Resolute Desk, the same one young John F. Kennedy, Jr., played under when his father was in office.

9/11 Statistics Reaffirm Worldwide Connections in World Trade Center Tragedy

An April 19, 2002, article in The New York Times recounts an analysis of death certificates for more than 90 percent of the estimated 2,825 people who lost their lives in the World Trade Center attack last September 11th.

According to the article, three times as many men as women died, the youngest victim was under the age of 4, the oldest was over 84, and the greatest number who died were between the ages of 35 and 39. Ninety-eight percent of the victims were at work. Sixty-four percent of the dead lived in New York state and one quarter were from New Jersey.

One fifth were foreign-born, coming from 115 countries. Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg was quoted as saying “the diversity of people that were working there talks about how business in an international city is really done”

World Renowned Cellist Begins Experiment in Musical Multiculturalism

Internationally known cellist Yo-Yo Ma has long been intrigued by the flow of ideas among different cultures along the Silk Road, the network of historic land and sea routes which connected Europe and Asia from ancient times through the 13th and 14th centuries. Art, music, literature, gold and metals, herbs and medicines, foods and spices, political thought, and religion flowed in both directions along the trade routes.

The Silk Road Project, created in 1998 and led by Ma, acts as “an umbrella organization and common resource for a number of artistic, cultural and educational programs,” according to the Project’s publicity material. “By examining the cultural mosaic of the Silk Road, we seek to

illuminate the heritages of its countries and identify the voices that represent these traditions today.”

In an article in the June 2002 Smithsonian magazine, Ma adds “[f] know what music you love and you know what music I love, we start out having a better conversation.”

“Whenever two cultures meet, it’s the little things that make a big difference. In music, you learn that different phrasing, timing, rhythms, mean very specific things. In classical Azerbaijani music, the goal is to transport you to a different place. That was also Beethoven’s goal. It’s universal, but every culture will find its own way of achieving that goal.”

The Silk Road Ensemble has performed this year in locations including France, Germany, and Belgium. In this country, they have appeared in New York, Berkeley, Seattle, and at this Summer’s Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C. The Ensemble will perform at the University of California at Irvine in October and at both UCLA and Stanford University in November.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture is the leading financial supporter and a key creative partner of the Silk Road Project. Ford Motor Company and Siemens are Global Corporate Partners.

Thanks to our Community of Friends and Fans!

El Cajon’s Historical Society and the members of its Board of Directors are delighted

to have the support and encouragement of many, many individuals and businesses in the community who provide their time, talent, ideas, and enthusiasm to help preserve and promote our city's history. Those friends and fans include

Paula Ann Bollman, a member of the Sprites class of 2002 who wrote "My favorite Sprites activity of all times was volunteering at the Knox Museum. I loved mixing my interest in history and my ability to talk a lot to be able to help teach others about a significant time in our city's past. Also being able to hang out in such a beautiful place of history was pretty neat, and I learned a lot!" Paula was a member of our first class of Junior Docents.

The talented folks at Crystal Cleaners, one block from the Knox House on Magnolia Avenue, who took meticulous care of a recently donated and badly soiled quilt. We have asked for their help with challenging projects on several other occasions and have always been impressed by their skills!

New Historical Society individual member Kathi Jablonsky and family members Bill and Shereil Parsons.

Third Grade Essay Contest winners Morgan Gallo, Sebastian Revels, and Danielle Hiel. The first of the their three winning essays will appear in the Fall *Heritage*.

Dr. Alice Rodriguez, Cajon Valley Union School District's Director of Curriculum & Instruction, who worked with Historical Society program coordinator Tammy Goodwater to make this year's Essay Contest such a success.

The relatives and friends who encouraged students to participate in the contest and who supported them at the May 17th awards night celebration.

The Valhalla High School students of 1982 who interviewed local residents and donated the audio tapes to our archival collection. The Historical Society Board plans to add to that collection this year. We're currently looking for local residents and business people who would like to be interviewed, interviewers to work on the project, and names of individuals who should be included. To help, please call us at 444-3800!

The Inside Back Page

Of Tombstones, Tales, and Treasured Memories

by Judy Garrett, *Heritage* Editor

What lessons await the student of history, the curious tourist, the family member, the casual visitor to cemeteries? What perspectives do the graveyards offer about our cultural beliefs, our successes and failures, our lives, ourselves? What moments in our societies are reflected in the quiet burial grounds of our pasts?

Cemeteries bring history alive in ways the finest books and movies cannot. A walk through historic Boston not only focuses on the meeting places, the markets, the churches, and the churchyards of the heart of American independence, but teaches us how closely placed were the larger-than-life locations we learn about in school. A person on foot or on horseback could easily navigate the center of the community in minutes.

Memorial parks and potters' fields of the world are rich in the history of the inhabitants of those places. Wars, diseases, epidemics, and life spans are all captured in the epitaphs chiseled on headstones. I remember walking through a rural cemetery with nieces and nephews several years ago, sharing their curiosity about life in a small community so devastated by the influenza epidemic of 1918, the worst infectious disease outbreak in human history, the killer of more than 675 thousand Americans and more than 20 million people around the world.

In this country, the westward movement of the 19th century is reflected in the far-flung birth places recorded on simple grave markers. The 'boot hills' of the wild west give us colorful histories of the cattlemen, the killers, the adventurers, and the tradespeople who left their mark on our young communities. Indian burial grounds record the history of peoples whose ancestral territory was challenged by trappers, by military men, and by settlers.

Each culture pays homage to its dead through its own beliefs and practices. The Day of the Dead, a Mexican tradition with its roots in ancient Aztec customs, is a celebration of the cycle of life and death in which extended families gather to clean and decorate the family graves, enjoy a picnic feast at the cemetery, visit with other relatives, and share stories of their ancestors. The world's religions are rich with traditions related to life, death, and remembrance.

Cemeteries have, for centuries, provided a colorful setting for ghostly tales of headless horsemen, unrequited lovers, mad dogs, and stories which begin on the proverbial 'dark and stormy night.' European and American history is replete with authors fascinated by spectral legends, a topic shared by writers from Asia, the Middle East, and every corner of the world.

Burial places also lend themselves to use within communities as quiet parks, as open space, as contemplative sites within busy urban cities. Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, near Boston, was the country's first "garden cemetery," dedicated in 1831 as a place of such natural beauty and serenity that people would want to go there for spiritual refreshment.

Thought for the Day

" . . . thanks to the Internet and satellite TV, the world is being wired together technologically, but not socially, politically or culturally. We are now seeing and hearing one another faster and better, but with no corresponding improvement in our ability to learn from, or understand, one another. . . .

"At its best, the Internet can educate more people faster than any media tool we've ever had. At its worst, it can make people dumber faster than any media tool we've ever had."

"Global Village Idiocy," Thomas L. Friedman
The New York Times, May 12, 2002

Knox House Museum hours:

*12:30 - 3:30 p.m. Thursdays and
Saturdays*

Heritage is published quarterly for members and friends of the El Cajon Historical Society. Send comments and materials for publication to the El Cajon Historical Society, P.O. Box 1973, El Cajon, CA 92022-1973. Phone: (619) 444-3800.

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-- details inside --