

Capitola Sunset

Summer
2025

410 Capitola Avenue

News, Events & Information

Board President Emmy Mitchell-Lynn Steps Down— Thanks for All You've Done by Brian Legakis



Our Capitola Museum Board President is stepping away from the Board after many years of service. She began as a volunteer along with her mother at the front desk while she was still a student at Cabrillo College taking history classes.

Emmy was recruited to apply for a vacant Board seat by then Board President Niels Kisling and Board Vice President Dave Peyton, with added encouragement from Museum Curator, Frank Perry.

From day one Emmy provided new insights and leadership to our organization. She worked as a professional with both style and panache. Her historical portfolio included

activity on the Boards of the Soquel Pioneer and Historical Association, the Friends of the Cowell Lime Works, and the Museum of Art and History Publications Committee. During these years Emmy also managed to acquire a history degree from UC Berkeley when she shuttled back and forth in time to make our meetings.

Taking over from Board President, Dave Peyton, last year, Emmy had served as Vice President with him and had established a long record of museum accomplishments. She helped with the taking down and installation of Museum exhibits, assisted Curator Deborah Osterberg with inventorying parts of the collection, and became instrumental in modernizing our front desk with credit card donations and offerings of new merchandise. She was involved with numerous museum special events including the organization of the presentation of the historic film, *The Testing Block*, worked and participated on the Beach Festival Hotel Capitola float, and organized benefits for museum volunteers. Emmy worked well with everyone on the Board from our youth representatives in their teens to the predominantly older members. Emmy was warmly appreciated by the Capitola Museum family. She will be greatly missed.



The admission free —
Capitola Historical Museum
at 410 Capitola Avenue,
next to the railroad trestle,
will reopen at noon

Throughout 2025, the
museum will be open every
Friday through Sunday from
noon until 4:00 p.m.

831-464-0322

capitolamuseum@gmail.com

**Past newsletters
available on
our museum website**

UPCOMING EVENTS

2025 Capitola Rod &
Custom Classic Car
Show—June 14 9am-5pm

2025 Capitola Art &
Wine Festival—Sept.
13th—10 am-6pm &
14th— 10 am–5 pm

2025 Capitola Beach
Festival—September
27th & 28th

Beach Festival Lighted
Nautical Parade— Sat.
Sept. 27th after dusk—
around 7pm on Soquel
Creek

In Memoriam: Paul Parsons, Frank Urbancic, and Joanne Kisling

by Emmy Mitchell-Lynn

This Spring, we said goodbye to three individuals whose lives, in different ways, were tied to the story of Capitola and the museum community. Each brought their own spirit to the people and places around them, and we honor their memory with deep appreciation.

Paul Parsons

Paul was a longtime volunteer at the Capitola Historical Museum. Over more than 20 years, he helped staff weekends and special events, but he was best known for showing up every Labor Day Monday without fail. He welcomed visitors with a bright smile and a great story, often drawn from his own life. Born at the original Dominican Hospital when it was located in Branciforte Plaza, Paul grew up immersed in local history. In 1947, he became the first dishwasher at Shadowbrook. He was a skilled sailor, a sharp humorist, and a deeply loyal husband to Judy, his wife of 75 years. Together they raised two children, Stacey (Ely) and Pepe. Paul's warmth and wit left a lasting impression on everyone he met.



L to R: Frank Perry and Paul Parsons

Frank Urbancic

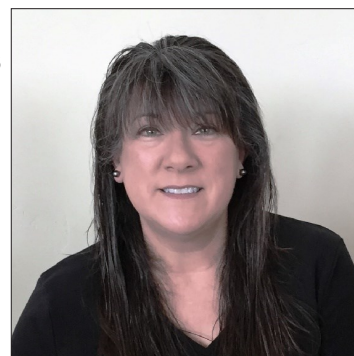
Frank first came to Capitola in the early 1950s for summer visits and settled here permanently in 1966. He and his younger brother Jo Jo became familiar figures on the Wharf, where they spent countless hours teaching kids how to fish. Frank worked evenings cleaning the 41st Avenue Playhouse for the George Ow family, later becoming a trusted handyman for their other properties. He had a love of local history, collecting vintage postcards and photos of the Central Coast, and served as a certified fishing instructor with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. For over 20 years, he and his wife Liz shared their home with Jo Jo. Frank was quiet, generous, and deeply committed to the people around him.



L to R: Frank and Jo Jo Urbancic

Joanne Kisling

Though not directly involved with the museum, Joanne Kisling was part of the extended community that surrounds it. She was formerly married to past Museum Board president Niels Kisling and was a regular at the museum barbecues and events he hosted. Joanne passed away on May 19 at the age of 62. She had a successful career in high tech, was a writer with a black belt in editing, and a proud member of both the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and a Capitola women's group. She was deeply devoted to her two sons and expressed great sadness that she would not live to see her youngest graduate from Cal Poly this June. Joanne will be remembered for her sharp mind, her warmth, and the way she stayed connected to the people and places she loved.



We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of Paul, Frank, and Joanne. Their stories remain a part of ours.

Donations

A BIG THANK YOU to those who gave generous donations to the museum in the first 2 quarters of 2025:

Financial Donations:

Craig & Mina French

David Macdonald

Nancie Martinez

Michael P. McDonald

Patricia Murphy-Hupp

David Peyton

Carolyn Swift made a generous financial donation in the memory of Paul Parsons,
Frank Urbancic & Joanne Kisling

Some recent artifact donations included:

Stephanie Sicke (niece of Captain Lindsay) — family photos

Martha Tiedeman—Begonia Festival posters and scans of Capitola photos

Mick Routh—Scans of photos of the first years of the Capitola Junior Guards

Erin Coolman—Scans of photos of her relatives in bikinis on Capitola Beach.



Museum Curator Deborah Osterberg attended a couple of days of the California Association of Museums (CAM) Conference in San Francisco in February 2025. While there, she was able to meet with other museum professionals from around the state and learn some new and valuable information about museum management and volunteer programs. Work will restart this summer to complete the Artifact Storage Room inventory. Before the end of the year, a multi-year project should begin—to add new accession and catalog records and bring older records up to museum standards.

How You Can Help

MUSEUM DONATION ENVELOPE—Inside each quarterly newsletter we mail out, we provide a donation envelope. Our ongoing museum projects include continued work developing our new Native plant garden, building an exhibit case for the Capitola Wharf model, and the purchase of museum quality storage cabinets and containers and emergency supplies for our artifacts and archives. Tax deductible donations to the Capitola Historical Museum may be made anytime. Thank You!

Become a Museum Volunteer



Photograph from the Museum Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast this past May at The Point Kitchen & Bar in Pleasure Point. We honored all our outstanding volunteers including special recognition for Volunteers Patrick White and Kate Clark who tied for the most volunteer hours (62 hours) worked in 2024.

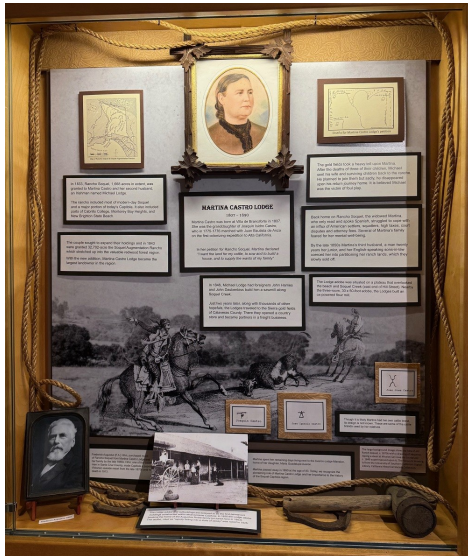
The Capitola Historical museum preserves and promotes the history of Capitola through creating exhibitions, maintaining a collection of historic photographs and artifacts, conducting oral histories, and participating in special events. Our volunteers are the face of the museum and ambassadors to the community.

Museum Docents help greet visitors in the museum by serving at least one two-hour shift, once a month. There are also opportunities to help with special events, festivals, exhibits, and other museum behind-the-scenes projects.

If you wish to join the ranks of our volunteers, you may fill out a volunteer application at this link. For further information about being a volunteer at the museum, you may call the Museum Curator at 831-464-0322.



The 2025 Exhibition — More Than Bathing Suits



Though the Capitola Historical Museum's 2025 exhibition — “The Naughty Surf” about the evolution from the bathing costume to the swimsuit, is the main focus of the exhibit cases, there are several additional pieces of Capitola history also presented. One of these, is the redesigned permanent exhibit case telling the story of Martina Castro Lodge (1807-1890) and her Mexican land grants—Rancho Soquel (1833) & Rancho Soquel Augmentation (1843), combined over 35,000 acres.

Come learn about the woman who was once the largest landowner in Santa Cruz County. “The Naughty Surf” exhibition will run through December.2025. The admission free museum, located at 410 Capitola Avenue is open every Friday through Sunday from noon until 4:00 p.m.

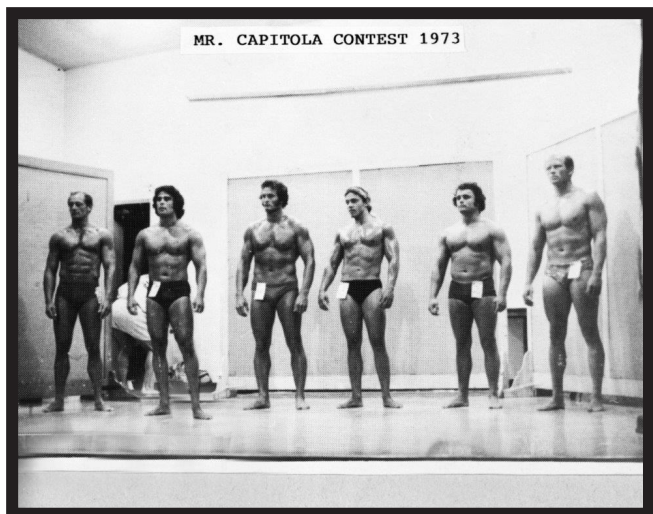
Our Native Plant Garden — A Growing Project



Thanks to our volunteer gardens, Steve Kayser and Mary O'Neill for weeding and watering our museum landscape and making it look so nice. The temporary plant signs we put out give passersby information on how soap-root and yarrow were traditionally used by local Indigenous People. I've seen a number of visitors walking along the sidewalk, stop, and read our plant signs. A couple of additional Native plants will be added over the next few months. Eventually more permanent interpretive signage will be installed once planting is complete.

“Mr. Capitola”

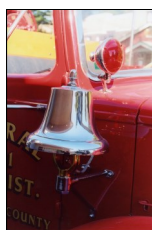
In the early 1970s a “Mr. Capitola” contest for bodybuilders was held in Fremont in association with the “Mr. Fremont” contest. Here is a photograph of the 1973 “Mr. Capitola” contestants. It appears that the Fremont contest was sponsored by Bob's Health Studio and originated as a 1967 fundraiser to benefit the Boys & Girls Club. If anyone has further information or other photographs related to the “Mr. Capitola” contests, please contact the museum. Thanks.



From L to R - Mike Gilligan Mr. Capitola, Chico Castro best arms, Ed Brown, Ron Fallon, Fred Castro, Wayne Shaffer best legs. Photograph of “Mr. Capitola” contestants courtesy of Wayne Shaffer.

Firefighting History in Capitola

We were contacted by firefighter Peter Kearney (below left) of the Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County who wanted to obtain some copies of historic images related to the Capitola Fire Station. We were able to provide the station with a couple of dozen images including a couple which they enlarged for display inside the station.



Above: Capitola firefighters proudly display a photo of the old Mack fire engine. Above: View of both c.1940s engines.



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|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Herman Neeley | 6. Pete Glover |
| 2. Jimmie Totten | 7. Commissioner Tony Botti |
| 3. Chief Harold Jarvis | 8. Unknown spectator |
| 4. Dave Vaughn | 9. Harold Jarvis |
| 5. Officer Bob Mondell | 10. Jack Garland |

The engine was a former Willow Glen/San Jose Fire Department 1924 General Motors Corp-American LaFrance. 135 Horsepower Hall Scott with 3 speed manual transmission, mechanical brakes, four wheels, 100 Gallons Per Minute gear pump, 200 gallon water tank, 500 foot 2 1/2 inch hose. Purchased from the South San Jose Fire Department in 1946 or 1947 for \$3500.00.

The young spectator was a summer resident from the Santa Clara Valley.

Above: This photograph of the 1924 General Motors fire engine purchased by Capitola from the south San Jose Fire Department was recently donated by Martha Tideman. A copy of the image was given to the Capitola Fire Station. Right: Capitola fire engines respond to an incident on the Esplanade, c. 1980s.

The present Capitola fire station was built at 405 Capitola Avenue in December 1955.

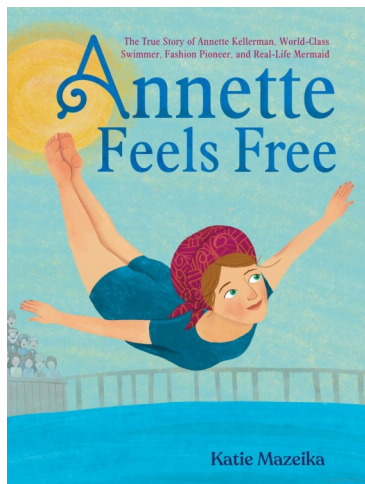
At that time an auditory alarm was used to signal to volunteers the general location of a fire. Two blasts indicated Capitola Village, three for Depot Hill, four for Fairview Heights, and five for Opal Cliffs.

Capitola had an all volunteer fire department until the 1950s. Though some of the crew were paid from that point onward, the crew still contained some volunteers into the 1960s.

Today all fire staff are paid. In 1987 the Capitola Fire Protection District, established in 1937, merged with the neighboring Central Fire Protection District.



Visit our
Website



Our latest addition to the museum bookstore is the children's picture book, *Annette Feels Free*, which tells the fascinating story of Australian swimmer and swimsuit designer revolutionary, Annette Kellerman. The book is available for a suggested donation of \$18.

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Newsletter published by the
Capitola Historical Museum



"Moo Cow"

The "Moo Cow" brand was a line of products produced by the Brown Bulb Ranch. The Brown family, later famed for their begonia bulbs, began farming their land (along today's 41st Avenue) in 1911, as a strawberry farm.

In 1917 the Browns began a dairy operation. They opened "Moo Cow" retail stores in Santa Cruz, Capitola and Watsonville. In the 1930s a store was located within the circular Bandstand building on the Esplanade. Their products included ice cream, candies, soda pop, milk, butter, and eggs. Ice cream flavors included fruit salad sherbert, peppermint candy, honeymoon special (?) and prune. By far their most popular creation was the "Moo Cow Pie." The Browns didn't waste anything. They even bagged and marketed their cow manure as fertilizer. "Moo Cow" dairy closed by the 1950s and is now the site of the Brown Ranch Marketplace on Clares Street.

The museum has a Brown Family Collection which consists of Moo Cow Pie labels and wrappers, a milk bottle, an ice cream box, milk bottle tops, milk bottle seals, and "Moo Cow" dairy paper bags and "Moo Cow Natural Fertilizer" bags.

If you know what the "honeymoon special" ice cream flavor was, please let us know.

Junior Guards — 45 Years Strong



Photograph of one of the first Capitola Junior Guards sessions in the early 1980s. This year marks the 45th Anniversary of the establishment of the Junior Guards in Capitola. The annual program provides instruction in the fundamentals of ocean water safety, first aid, lifesaving, fitness, and good sportsmanship. This summer look for exhibits on the history of the Capitola Junior Guards at both the Capitola Library and the Capitola Mall. Photograph: courtesy Mick Routh, Junior Guard Patrol Collection, Capitola Historical Museum