

Capitola Sunset

Fall 2015

CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

"Providing a future for our past"

Historic Signs Come Home

By Frank Perry

"Where the Lights are Dim; Where the Music is Bright; Every Saturday Nite." Like the smoldering ashes after the fire that destroyed it, the famous Hawaiian Gardens nightclub has always been black and white in my mind. I have seen black and white photos of the building and house band, and black and white ads in old newspapers. One of the nightclub's concrete planters, rescued from the ruins and in our current exhibition, is, appropriately, gray.

That is why I was thrilled to see the Hawaiian Gardens advertising signs recently donated to the Museum. They are in color—bold reds, blues, and yellows. They bring the dance hall back to life.

These and several other signs are a recent gift of Kathy Thoma Greytak, granddaughter of local sign-painter Leo Sievert, and Ken Sievert, his son. Leo Sievert painted these 20- to 30-inch-long prototypes before doing the full-size signs. Each of the Hawaiian Gardens signs is different, but all emphasize the Hawaiian theme. One has a surfer, another has a volcano, and one features a dancer.



Leo Sievert was living in Soquel when he painted them, which must have been sometime prior to February of 1933 when the nightclub burned down. Born in 1901, Sievert came here as a child and graduated from Santa Cruz High in 1919. For many years he owned a sign shop at the corner of Soquel Avenue and Trevethan in Santa Cruz. He remained active until he died in 1980 at age 79.

According to his granddaughter, Sievert painted many iconic Santa Cruz signs during the early to middle 1900s. At least one is still up: the giant "Theater Del Mar" sign in downtown Santa Cruz. He was obviously not afraid of heights.

Visitors to our current "Postmarked Capitola" exhibition may have noticed the cachet that Sievert drew based on an old Capitola postcard. Postmaster Harry Hooper commissioned the design in 1938. Sievert's artwork was made into a rubber stamp which Hooper then used to decorate souvenir envelopes for National Airmail Week.



Many thanks to Kathy Thoma Greytak and Ken Sievert for preserving this beautiful artwork for so many years and for now sharing it with the people of Capitola. The signs add still more color to Capitola's colorful history.



INSIDE THIS EDITION: Capitola celebrated its 63rd Annual Capitola Begonia Festival in September. Your museum was right in the thick of it. Look for details on the following pages.

Begonias Gone Wild

By Niels Kisling

If you pick them they will come. We picked begonia blossoms and they came. They came by the hundreds to the Capitola Museum's annual event called, Begonias-to-Go.

Held each year in Esplanade Park on Sunday during the Begonia Festival, this is a lively activity where the museum provides free begonia blossoms to get the crowd involved before the nautical parade. Participants adorn themselves with the brightly colored blossoms creating huge smiles. Creativity is the name of the game and this year's crowd went all out.



These three young ladies worked hard finding just the right colors of blossoms to adorn their hats before the water parade.

What started out years ago simply as a hat decorating event, has blossomed (pun intended) into a no holds barred, festive flurry of decorated hats, dogs, shirts, skirts, bicycles, babies and baby strollers.

It begins the day before in Marina at the property leased by the Golden State Bulb Growers. Here are acres of beautiful begonia blossoms ready to be picked so the plants can go dormant for the upcoming fall. Begonias are not grown here for the beautiful blooms. The plants are grown for the begonia bulbs which will soon be processed, packaged and shipped all over the world to provide living beauty next summer.



This year we were greeted by 17 boy scouts and their parental support staff, 23 people in all. Aptos scout Troop 609, led by Gloria Wells (for Karen Dyck) quickly set out to help us fill 500 beverage flats obtained the day before. Because we were not decorating a themed float, it did not matter what color blossoms we picked. But among our favorite colors were; light red, deep red, medium red, dark and light pink, yellow, orange, deep orange, peach, white...well, you get the idea.

Two hours later our flats were full and it was time to load our two vans. The scouts again sprang into action creating a begonia blossom chain gang and we quickly filled Stephanie Kirby's van sending her home to babysit her begonias in a cool, shady place until the next morning. My van swallowed up the remaining flats and I was soon off to the coolness of my shaded carport in Capitola.

Along with the scouts, the Capitola Museum picking crew this year welcomed guest pickers Jack Kisling, Jennifer Butler and Jen Major. Thanks for all their help!

I unloaded my begonias in Esplanade Park first thing Sunday morning and like clockwork, Stephanie and her husband Dennis showed up at 9:00 A.M. to help set up the tables and signs. Also, like clockwork, the people began circling around us by 9:30 and to the delight of the anxious children, restless participants, we started Begonias-to-Go a half hour early. Everyone was fired-up and ready to begin sporting the colors of the beautiful blooms that were harvested the day before.



Many thanks go out to our scout pickers; Brandon Allen, Shane Baxter, Jacob Flippo, Joshua Flippo, Brian Hajduk, Julian Harris, Jared Hill, Peter Kehoe, Shea Maher, Zack Manning, Max Matheny, Conner Matt, Joshua Peters, Xander Ratledge, McCay Ruddick, Devin Stires, Alex Tao and special thanks to Scout Master, Dan Flippo, and to the scout troop parents that helped also.

With 500 flats to give away, the frenzy continued for well over two hours. It's funny how it took months of planning, weeks of preparation, a half day of picking and just two hours for all the begonia blossoms to disappear and disperse into the crowd of begonia festival revelers.

Living proof that—if you pick them they will come!

Begonia Highlights—*these images are just too good not to share...*



Scout organizer Gloria Wells did a marvelous job filling in for Troop 609 Leader, Karen Dyck who could not be in Marina on Saturday. Fortunately, Gloria is a trained professional and she has orchestrated the scouts for many years.



Koa the dog attends the Begonias-to-Go event regularly and usually brings her owner Dave Dominguez along, partly because Koa cannot reach the pedals on the bike. She is a crowd favorite and is probably the most photographed dog in Capitola.



Scouts from Aptos Troop 609 seemed tireless picking blossoms for the museum until the very end when both of our vans were full of beautiful bounty from the fields leased by the Golden State Bulb Growers who donated all the colorful blooms to the Begonia Festival.



The Riverview Rascals came up with another brilliant concept this year, creating the shark that almost ate Capitola. Nels and Susan Westman are the creativity behind this and they host the float building party every year going on twenty in a row now.



Your newest Capitola Museum Board Member, Kathleen Church joined the fray this year and fully immersed herself, (literally from the ground up), into the beauty of the Capitola Begonia Festival. She had trouble figuring out which color begonia blossoms were her favorite.



The nautical parade is an explosion of color in Soquel Creek. Each year, masses of visitors and locals crowd the bridge, trestle, restaurants and banks of the creek to witness this spectacle. The Capitola Begonia Festival celebrated 63 years this summer.

BYOH—Be Your Own Historian

The Capitola/Soquel Chamber of Commerce invited your Capitola Museum to interact with visitors at the recent Capitola Art and Wine Festival. By providing us with a spot right under the historic Canary Islands date palm, museum volunteers encouraged visitors to provide us with facts and stories about the three aerial photographs chosen this year by Museum Curator, Frank Perry.



Capitola Museum Board Member, Kristen Petersen worked the crowd and the camera at the museum booth. Her roots go deep in Capitola. Her great-grandparents, Walter and Lois Petersen owned the Petersen Coffee Shop in the Esplanade. And, Kristen's grandfather, Herb Ross served for many years on the Capitola Police force.

We once again discovered that history is most interesting if you allow the public to be the docents. Volunteer Alex McGuffin worked both days and she told us that interactive history is much more fun than her history class at Cabrillo College. She was there to help guide visitors through their journey into the past. Many told us, through their eyes, about the rich history they have experienced through generations of living and visiting Capitola.

Visitors to the museum booth were invited to place sticky notes on the aerial images based on what they saw as important to the history of Capitola. Some found their homes, while some found empty lots where their homes would one day be built.



One of the props this year was a can of 'guilt-free, engineered potato chips' from the 1950s. We filled the can with new chips and challenged visitors to sample a chip from the past—'just 50years old and still tastes good!'

Here is Alex hamming it up for our photographer, Jack Kisling. The routine was followed by offering visitors a taste from a can of real bomb shelter water, also on display from the 1950s.

Others noted structures that have since been torn down like the old St. Joseph's Church on the corner of Bay and Capitola Avenue across the street from the old Chevron Station that no longer exists. The church was torn down

when the new church was built on Monterey Avenue at its present day site across from New Brighton Middle School in the late 1960s.

Diagonally across the intersection was the site where Gayle's would be built in the early 1970s, placing a date on this photograph of somewhere between 1967 and 1971.

Another image was trickier as most of the bluff along Opal Cliffs was undeveloped and the lack of cliff erosion fooled many people. One person recognized her home built up near 41st Avenue in 1938—dating this image as after 1938. Many people placed sticky notes on this image guessing the date to be in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s.

We used this same image last year and one family, the McGyntys from Bain Avenue, found their house that they live in today on Bain Avenue. There were no other houses nearby when this image was taken.



Our cartoon cutout was a big hit as usual. With most everyone walking around these days with a camera phone, people were posing non-stop. In this image, Capitola Museum's newest Board Member, Pam Greeninger is posing with her son, Nick and his dog, Willi (Nick is on the far left).

Another interesting aerial image this year showed Capitola Village in the late 1960s. In this shot the sand was missing from our beach. This places the date of the image after the Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor was built in 1964, but before the groins (first and second jetty) were created in 1970. Also, the Harbor Lights motel was under construction when the image was taken.

All in all it was a great blast from the past that brought out the historian in many.

The Big Five-O

The Capitola Historical Museum opened on July 9, 1966, featuring photographs, artifacts, and other items to help pre-serve and share the story of Capitola's fascinating past. Its first home was a rented storeroom behind 115 Capitola Ave.



Next year the Museum will mark the 50th anniversary of its founding. The Museum curator, board, and volunteers are just starting to plan some special events for the occasion. If you have old photos, clippings, or stories relating to the Museum's early years, please contact curator Frank Perry at 831-464-0322 or email fperry@ci.capitola.ca.us.

Bob Anderson Retires from Board

It was with great sadness that the Capitola Museum Board said goodbye to long-time board member Bob Anderson. Bob and his wife, Liz, have moved to Washington to be closer to family.

Bob began volunteering at the museum over ten years ago and was one of the museum's most dependable volunteers. He served on the Board of Trustees for eight years, much of that time as volunteer coordinator. "Bob was especially loyal to the volunteers and dedicated to their well-being," said former director Carolyn Swift. Last year Bob also served as Vice President. Besides all that, he also assisted with exhibit openings and special events.

At the Sept. 24th City Council meeting, Mayor Dennis Norton presented Bob with a Certificate of Appreciation for his service to the museum. We will miss Bob, but will remember with fondness his years here as part of the museum family.



Board Welcomes Two New Members

Two new board members were recently approved by the Capitola City Council and sworn in at the recent board meeting. Capitola Museum Board Members serve three year terms, volunteering and helping to steer the museum towards *providing a future for our past*.

Welcome Pam Greeninger

Pam has lived in Capitola for over 36 years. She grew up in Southern California and lived in Honolulu, Hawaii, for 10 years. After marrying Stewart Greeninger in Honolulu the couple moved into his family's beach house on Depot Hill with her son, Chris Peterson, who was 6 years old at that time. In 1982 they had their current home built and raised a family adding daughter, Jocelyn and son, Nick.



During those years Pam was very active in the Junior Lifeguard Program, being on the first Parents Club, a scorekeeper for Little League, decorating floats for the Begonia Festival and volunteering at the Art & Wine Festival. The children have grown and now they have a grandson, Riley Peterson. Son Chris is the owner of

Cadillac Designs, a local graphics business that designs signs, banners, T-shirts, hats, etc.

Pam worked for the City of Capitola for over 32 years before retiring December 31, 2011. The positions she held included Secretary to the City Manager and to the City Attorney, Records Coordinator and elected and appointed City Clerk. During her tenure she worked closely with the city's boards and committees developing bylaws and guidelines.

Now that Pam is retired she enjoys taking fitness classes and working out at InShape, cycling, walking, gardening, sewing, women's bible study, and taking classes at the Apple store on her Mac computer. She was recently presented the "Kim Clary Award for Community Service" by the Junior Lifeguard's Parents' Club president, Denise White, at the end of summer awards ceremony.

With her city government experience, Pam will be a strong addition to the Capitola Museum Board, keeping us legal in the dance between government regulation and bringing the past to the people.

Welcome Kathleen Church

Although she has no memories of the Azores, that is where new board member, Kathleen Church was born. As her father was in the Air Force, the first 12 years of her life were spent in some interesting places. Saint Mihiel, a small village in northern France was home for several years, as well as New York, Florida and New Hampshire.



When Kathleen's father retired from the military the family returned to New York, this time to the beautiful Mid-Hudson Valley. It was probably this early exposure to different countries and cultures that resulted in Kathleen's lifelong interest in history and architecture.

Kathleen's initial travels led to return trips to Europe in her early twenties. Later, her fascination with California and desire to study architecture resulted in a permanent move to the West Coast. Out of the many Californian cities in which she's lived, Santa Cruz is her favorite. The natural beauty of the area, the rich history, the cultural opportunities, along with the architectural diversity and the fascinating people, make this area especially engaging. Kathleen is looking forward to her involvement with the Capitola Museum and learning more about all the things and people that make Capitola so captivating.

As a volunteer for the Museum of Natural History, Kathleen understands the challenges we face bringing local history alive and preserving it for future generations.

Come to the History Fair

The Capitola Museum will be one of over 20 local organizations participating in the first-ever local "History Fair" on Saturday, October 24th, from noon to 4 p.m. Anyone interested in local history will want to attend this event. There will be displays of historical photographs and artifacts, demonstrations, information on how to do historical research, and lots of hands-on activities for children. There will also be five short talks by local experts.

The fair is being organized by the Friends of the Cowell Lime Works Historic District at UCSC and will be held in the newly-reconstructed Hay Barn near the UCSC main entrance. Visitors will not only be able to see the interior of this remarkable structure, but Santa Cruz Timberframes will be on hand to explain how it was built and do some demonstrations. Parking and admission are free.

The Capitola Museum will be joined by the San Lorenzo Valley Museum, the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, the Agricultural History Project, the Heritage Foods Project, Evergreen Cemetery, the Santa Cruz Public Library, Mobile Ranger, the Santa Cruz Archaeological Society, and many more. For a full list of participants and a schedule of the talks, visit www.limeworks.ucsc.edu and click on "History Fair."

What will the Capitola Museum have on display? Well, you will just have to come and see.

Visitors from All Over!

While many Museum visitors are from Capitola and nearby areas, others are from far away. Here are some samples from the current exhibit guest book:



California Towns:

San Francisco, Grass Valley, Chico, Pleasanton, Fairfield, San Diego, San Jose, Manteca, Stockton, Sacramento, Fresno, Turlock, Visalia, Modesto, Hollywood, Moraga

States:

Tennessee, Indiana, Massachusetts, Washington, New York, Arkansas, New Mexico, North Carolina, Illinois, Nevada, Oklahoma, Arizona, Colorado, Maryland

Countries:

Canada, China, New Zealand, El Salvador, England, Germany, Italy

The Capitola Museum has recently received generous donations from:

Steven and Diane Burbank	Toni Castro
Wendy Cumming	Al DaDalt
Stephanie Harlan	Marv Jensen
Winnie Johnsen	Joan Martin
Cynthia Mathews	George Ow, Jr.
Paul Parsons	Barbara Reding
Mary Renz	Karen Ruland
Peter Silva	

Recently, the following artifacts were generously donated to the Capitola Museum:

Ken Sievert: prototype signs by Leo Sievert
Kathy Thoma Greytak: prototype signs by Leo Sievert
Barbara Oyama: poster for 1988 Art & Wine Festival
Martha Tiedeman: Fire Dept. photo and badge; fish market shovel
Barbara Reding: Capitola coloring books, scrapbook, and photos
Gerald Morlidge, Jr.: Crest Apartments demolition photos
Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History: assorted historical artifacts
Minna Hertel: postage stamp machines used in Capitola
Jerry Clark: commemorative hats from U.S.S. Francis Hammond's visit to Capitola, 1989
Pamela Taylor: aerial photo of West Foods Mushroom Farm, Soquel
Marvin Jensen: collection of Capitola postcards

Thank you to all of our great volunteers for keeping the doors open. Volunteerism is your gift to the community and a gift to yourself because it makes you feel good.

Capitola Sunset is published by:

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Museum Hours:
Wednesday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday 12-4 P.M.

Curator: Frank Perry

Board of Trustees: Niels Kisling (President), Pam Greeninger (Vice President), Stephanie Kirby (Secretary), Kristen Petersen (Treasurer) & Carolyn Swift (serving for Gordon van Zuiden who is on leave for 2015)