

# Capitola Sunset

Spring 2014

CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

*"Providing a future for our past"*

## Take Me Out To Capitola

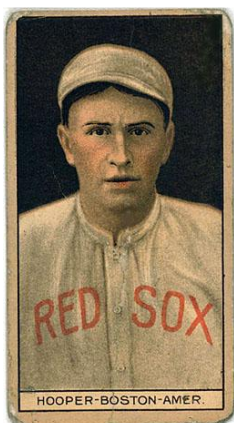
By Frank Perry

Before I began researching the life of Harry Hooper for our exhibition, I knew that he had played professional baseball and that he was Capitola postmaster. I had also heard of "Hooper's Beach," but that was about it.

So just who was Harry Hooper and why do an exhibition? Historian Geoffrey Dunn, in his book *Sports of Santa Cruz County*, proclaimed Harry "the greatest athlete, and sportsman of any type, to hail from Santa Cruz County." Indeed, Harry played on four championship teams for the Boston Red Sox between 1912 and 1918 and achieved national fame for his swiftness, powerful arm, and batting prowess.

But the story of Harry Hooper is also the story of Capitola in the early to middle 1900s. When Harry retired from major league baseball in 1926 at age 38, he did not know, of course, all the challenges Capitola would face over the next few years. Henry Allen Rispin, who owned much of Capitola, would go bankrupt and his holdings would be sold. The Grand Hotel Capitola would burn, and the national economy would begin its downward spiral into the Great Depression. Another fire would come in 1933, charring an entire block.

Paul Zingg, author of the book *Harry Hooper: An American Baseball Life*, remarked that, although Harry eschewed flamboyance, he was constantly on the scene. The same can be said of his involvement with Capitola. When storm waves battered the coast, he was there to help rescue playground equipment from the beach. When fire destroyed part of the town, he led the rebuilding effort. Harry worked for better water and sewer systems, better fire protection, improved streets, and strived to boost tourism during the summer.



Harry loved Capitola, and Capitolans loved Harry. How influential was he? According to former Museum director Carolyn Swift, there were people in Capitola who would not vote until they learned how Harry was going to mark his ballot.

Harry married a local girl, Esther Henchy, in 1912, and the two raised three children in their Cliff Avenue home overlooking the Village. They sold the house in 1962, and moved to Opal Cliffs. She died in 1969, he in 1974.

Several family members still live in the area and generously shared with me their personal stories. Harry's daughter-in-law, Christine Hooper, has nothing but fond memories of "Pops," as he was known to his family. "The children all loved him," she said. "He was a modest man, generous, and liked to tell tales. He and his buddies would get together and talk endlessly about baseball." "He was a very bright man," she added, "and very good at math. He was trained as an engineer."



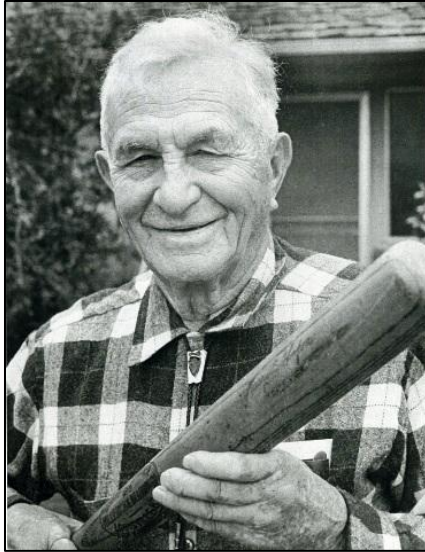
This press photo of Harry Hooper serving as the Capitola postmaster dates from 1935 and appeared in newspapers around the country. He was appointed to the job in 1933 by President Roosevelt and retired in 1957.

Modesty was a recurring theme. "I was staying with Pop and Mom while my husband was sent to China," says Christine. "This was just before Chiang Kai-shek fled and was about two months after we got married. I was reading the local newspaper and saw Pop's name. I said, 'Is this you?' He said, 'Let's see. Yah, that's me.' No one had mentioned that he had been a professional ball player."

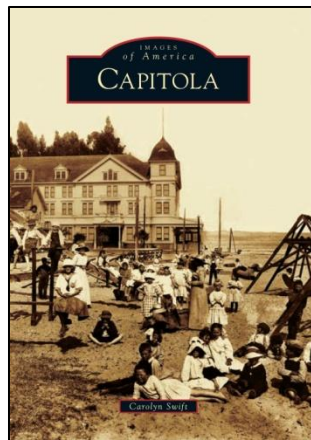
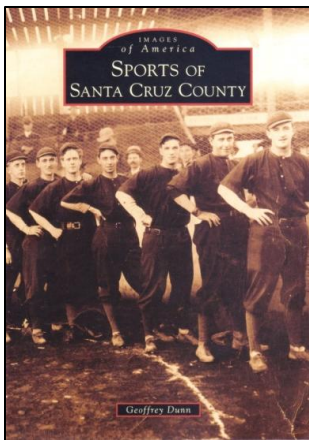
Christine's daughter, Donna Hooper Danza, still cherishes her memories of grandfather. "When he came over for dinner, he would bring me a Victoria Cream chocolate from the Opal Cliffs Market. Other times he would bring a poem."

Harry saw (and played in) his first baseball game at age 9 and remained smitten with the sport for the rest of his life. In the 1960s, long before the term "multitasking" was coined, Harry and Esther would watch baseball on TV as he simultaneously listened to a second game with a radio earphone. Now that's a person who *loves* baseball!

Harry enjoyed other sports too, especially hunting, fishing, bowling, and golf. He was ambidextrous, says Christine, and had both left handed and right handed golf clubs. In baseball, he batted left but threw right.



Capitola Museum is proud to present the first-ever exhibition on this remarkable Capitolan. Be sure also to visit the exhibit's companion website: [takemeouttocapitola.weebly.com](http://takemeouttocapitola.weebly.com). There you will find links to online photos and other goodies, a Harry Hooper timeline, quotations by and about Harry Hooper, a Harry Hooper trivia quiz, and a short video.



Geoffrey Dunn's recent book, ***Images of America—Sports of Santa Cruz County*** is available at the Capitola Museum along with the book ***Images of America—Capitola***. Both books are \$22, a donation to the museum.

## Cool Old Stuff Comes Our Way



Terri Morgan recently donated these "Skee Roll" tickets from Capitola Playhouse. They were collected by Gary Sandstrom who moved to Capitola in 1955 at age 8. The donation also includes tickets and an admission book from Santa's Village in Scotts Valley. Thank you, Terri!

## Imagine

*Imagine there's no traffic, getting in your way,  
Imagine only people, walking for just a day.  
You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one....*

This sounds like a dream, or a John Lennon song, but on May 4 it will be time to 'wake up' and experience a car-free Esplanade for real when Open Streets Santa Cruz brings us a community based event called "Capitola Open Streets."

Imagine our Esplanade without cars—where pedestrians are free to walk anywhere, to cross the street anytime, and free to breathe Capitola's fresh, sea air without the influence of nasty car exhaust. Imagine no cars blocking the street bumper-to-bumper, jockeying for that coveted parking spot closest to pizza, surf, and sand.

For five, blissful hours, from 11 A.M. until 4 P.M. on May 4, the Capitola Esplanade will become a pedestrian haven where the community is invited to walk, bike, talk, mingle or just bring a chair and sit in the middle of the street if they wish. This event, intended for members of the Capitola community, invites everyone to come out and see what the Esplanade is like without vehicular traffic.

Several Santa Cruz County organizations, including the Capitola Museum, will host informational displays and family-friendly activities. Village merchants will be offering incentives and there will be live music at the Bandstand, and no cars in the Village.

**For more information on this special, first-time event check out their web site: [www.scopenstreets.org](http://www.scopenstreets.org).**



## Capitola's Merry-Go-Round

*The following story was contributed to the museum along with a mirror in a painted wooden frame by Helene Lomonosov-Sezen. The mirror is from the Capitola Merry-Go-Round and the story speaks of the power of Capitola to create lasting memories and Capitola's ability to bring comfort to many of those who visit our little seaside resort.*

Before they met, my father, Vladimir, and my mother, Nina, were forced out of Russia into labor camps by the Nazi's during World War II. My mother lost her whole family. My parents met in Austria after the war, and I was born in 1947. As displaced persons, we were given the opportunity to come to the U.S.A. in 1952 where we received help settling in San Jose.

Even though those people closest to us were welcoming and helpful, it was still difficult for my parents, having lost everything. Because of this, my sister and I had a sometimes sad and emotional childhood.

Capitola brought some relief to our family, with my fondest memories being the time spent there in the 1950s with my dad and my sister. My father did not drive, so he paid a neighbor to bring us over the hill from San Jose. The best early Capitola memory for me was riding Andy Antonetti's merry-go-round.

Years passed and times changed, but I have always treasured those memories of the carousel. After getting married and having a daughter, Leyla, Capitola soon became one of her favorite places to come. I shared with her my sweet memories of that long gone merry-go-round by the sea.



Helene Lomonosov-Sezen presents Frank Perry with the mirror that she obtained from the carousel many years ago. Andy Antonetti owned and ran the carousel in Capitola Village that Helene used to ride in the 1950s.

Wondering where Capitola's merry-go-round ended up, I did some research on the internet. I soon discovered that it was moved to an inland location in 1964. With great anticipation, my husband, daughter and I drove south to see if we could find it.

The property was fenced, but there was a security guard nearby when we arrived. We explained to him that we had driven all this way just to see the merry-go-round. He allowed us to enter the grounds and take a look.

Approaching the carousel and seeing it was very emotional for all of us. I was saddened by the sorry condition of my beloved merry-go-round. It was behind a fence and we asked the guard if we could save one of the mirrors because I could see myself as a child staring at the same mirror. The guard said to go ahead because the carousel was going to be demolished anyway.

I cherished this mirror for many years, as I could look into it and picture myself as a child again. Remembering those sunny days by the seashore in Capitola with my dad and my sister in the 1950s brought me comfort. Then one day I thought that I should share this mirror with the Capitola Museum so that it might bring joy to the many visitors who will see it.

## President's Corner

By Linda Smith

Everyone loves seeing old photographs of Capitola. Images of the grand Hotel Capitola, the 'yacht club' at the base of the historic Capitola Wharf, historic Cliff Avenue homes, and the beloved merry-go-round on the Esplanade are just a few favorite images that remind us of days gone by. Although protecting the Six Sisters/Lawn Way Historic District keeps much of our history visible in the Village, visitors may not realize how much Capitola still represents its heritage. That is about to change.

This summer, iOS users will have the opportunity to see how Capitola has changed, yet stayed very much the same. Having a passion for the public art placed throughout the city gave Jenny Shelton of the Capitola Art and Cultural Commission the idea for an app that would provide a self-guided walking tour of the public art sites. Museum Board trustee, Gordon van Zuiden, had shared his dream of adopting a 'then and now' app that would showcase Capitola's historical sites. These two dreams have come together, and the app is currently underway.

Based on an app developed by Matt Galloway of Architactile for Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Capitola app is expected to be released sometime this summer. For the initial release, the museum has captioned 27 of its historic photos taken from some of the most popular sites around the Village. Users will be able to overlay the current scene onto the historic photo, and produce an email, Facebook or Tweet post that shows the old image and current scene side-by-side. In addition, the app will showcase a self-guided tour of public art sites throughout the city.

We will be sure to keep you advised on the release for this exciting new app! We look forward to seeing you soon at the museum!

## Volunteer Spotlight—Steve Kayser

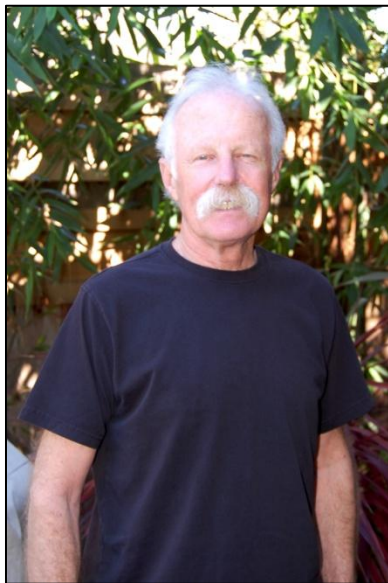
By Niels Kisling

Like most Museum volunteers, Steve Kayser gives his time in return for a “sense of community and a sense of belonging to a community.” He and his wife, Terri live in the Jewel Box in an empty nest after having raised four boys who all “flew away” to be on their own. Steve is a retired Professor of Pharmacy from UCSF, yet he still keeps hours there seeing patients in the Coumadin clinic and teaching classes a few days a week.

The Kayzers have a house in Novato, but Capitola feels like home to them. Terri’s mother lives nearby in the Surf and Sand mobile home park at the end of 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue. She settled in Capitola in the park more than thirty years ago, joining many long-time friends including Dick and Anita Arthur.

Steve credits Terri and her mom as his influence to come to Capitola. When their boys were very young the family would come to Capitola to play. Steve and Terri began coming here in the mid-1970s to run in the Wharf to Wharf Race, and they haven’t stopped coming here since.

In his retirement, Steve enjoys mountain biking, especially in the hills above Santa Cruz County. It was while riding around town that the old bicycle on display first drew Steve into the Capitola Museum. Luckily, our volunteer coordinator, Bob Anderson, was there and we caught ourselves a great volunteer willing to give us some of his time.



Steve feels like the museum gives back in the form of all the wonderful people he meets while greeting visitors and interacting with the other volunteers. About bikes and living here, Steve says, “I love repurposing bikes. I am the mountain person and Terri is more the beach person, so we have the best of both worlds here in Capitola.”

It’s hard to know who is luckier, Steve Kayser or the Capitola Museum—it’s probably a wash as it’s a win-win for both.



## Capitola Museum has recently received generous donations from:

Lorie Bross  
Mike Clark  
Emil Edgren  
Tony and Kathy Gualtieri  
Joan Martin  
Emma Rock  
Ettamae Shaffer  
Oscar Valdez

Dianne & Steven Burbank  
Mike and Nancy Davis  
Anna Guagnini  
Kathleen King  
Butch Mudgett  
Jeanne Russell  
David Tirri  
Nels and Susan Westman



Guess the year in which this photo was taken and you can earn bragging rights next time you visit us at the Capitola Museum.

Look for the answer on our new **Facebook Page** and check out our **You Tube Channel** under: *Capitola Historical Museum*  
Participate in our video history quiz.

### Published by the Capitola Historical Museum

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Museum Hours:

Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 12 to 4 p.m.

**Museum Curator:** Frank Perry

**Board of Trustees:** Linda Smith (president), Bob Anderson (vice president), Tom McGranahan (treasurer), Stephanie Kirby (secretary), Gordon van Zuiden, David Shoaf, and Niels Kisling