New Exhibition Opens March 25

“The Nature of Capitola” is the first ever exhibition at the Capitola Museum devoted entirely to the history of the town’s natural features. There are displays about the beach, creek, birds, trees, seashells, fossils, and much more. In addition to unusual specimens and artifacts, historic photos and quotations are sprinkled throughout the exhibit. “Capitola has long been celebrated for its natural beauty,” says Curator Frank Perry. “I hope that this exhibition will encourage people to be more aware of Capitola’s natural wonders. There is a lot to see!”

Capitola’s history is closely linked to the region’s natural resources. The town was founded in 1874 as a summer resort because of the beach—still Capitola’s biggest attraction. The beach, in turn, formed due to a combination of geologic factors, including the shape of the coastline, the location of Soquel Creek and its valley, the supply of sand, and the movement of that sand by waves and currents. Without the beach, Capitola would never have been established as a campground and later as a town.

People have long found solace in the region’s natural beauty. The poet Georgina Lecky described Capitola in 1897. Here is part of her poem, To Camp Capitola:

I’ve roamed thru’ every grove and dell
where flora love to dwell,
and strayed along its sandy beach
to gather moss and shell.

I’ve clambered up the giddy heights
to view the scenes around,
and plucked the choicest roses
that everywhere abound.

Since the mid-1800s, generations of children have visited Capitola Beach, one of our greatest assets. Those children brought their children. Like today, visitors come to escape the heat, relax by the seashore and take in the beautiful views.

The opening reception for “The Nature of Capitola” is Saturday, March 25, noon to 2 p.m. The exhibition runs through December.
Kristen is in the foreground with fellow board members during a light moment at the museum’s 50th birthday party. From left to right; Pam Greeninger, Stephanie Tetter and Kathleen Church.

Kristen’s hobbies (seriously, how does she do it all?) include politics, collecting tattoos, playing the guitar and singing (including a previous stint in her mother’s band, “The Room Shakers”). Her unique body art consists of several tattoos, all of them either in honor of her family members and/or representing her values and beliefs.

She is already deeply involved in her duties as a council member, having been assigned to various committees. She is working on a project to bring back Capitola’s Youth Council which once served to give the city’s youth a voice in city government. She welcomes input and feedback from everyone in the community, encouraging residents to take an interest in what is happening in Capitola by attending meetings and/or communicating with the council. You can email Kristen at ladykpetersen@gmail.com or catch her during one of her shifts at the museum!!

The Capitola Museum has recently received generous donations from:

- Capitola Hotel
- Rickey Feldner
- Kathleen King
- Molly & Mickey Ording
- Paul Parsons
- Jerry & Robynn Walters
- Al DaDalt
- Marvin Jensen
- Lynn Lance
- Joe & Gayle Ortiz
- Karen Ruland
- Yvonne Zannis

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

- Jeff Canepa: Scans of photographs
- Richard Emigh: Book
- Ron Graves: Scans of photos and clippings
- Warren Kossub: Photographs and map
- Bruce McPherson: Scans of photo and booklet
- Rick Messina: Capitola booklet, 1952
- Karen Nevis: Paintings of Capitola
- John Nicol: Photograph
- Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History: postcards

Thank you to all of our great volunteers for staffing the museum and contributing at special events. Volunteerism is your gift to the community.
Volunteer Orientation

Each year before the soft opening of our exhibition, Frank Perry puts together a short program for the volunteers to get them oriented with the next exhibit. The museum board hosted this orientation for a few dozen volunteers on February 25.

Before the presentation we honored some of our volunteers with special recognition certificates. All volunteers were honored for their participation last year. There were two volunteers who could not attend the volunteer orientation to receive their awards.

Pam Greeninger is recognized for Outstanding Fundraiser/Party Planner for her efforts to help plan and organize Capitola Museum’s 50th Birthday Party. Pam also arranged for our participation in Shadowbrook’s Community Night where we raised almost $600 for the Capitola Museum.

Gordon van Zuiden is recognized for Best Museum Presentation for his off-site Ole Ravnos presentations at the 2nd Santa Cruz History Fair and at the Capitola Museum Volunteer Appreciation event held last summer at Stephanie Harlan’s house.

Light refreshments were served at the morning orientation. Coffee, tea, cheese and crackers with a veggie plate, and best of all, home baked cakes and chocolate covered butter death bars were organized and created by Stephanie Tetter, Deborah Lorber and Kathleen Church.

The volunteers all enjoyed being recognized, well-fed and well-oriented by Frank Perry and the Capitola Museum Board.

Capitola Begonia Festival

The 2017 Begonia Festival returns for its 65th annual and final festival on September 1-4. The Begonia Festival celebrates the begonia growing and water festival history of Capitola. The brilliant begonias remain the festival’s focal point even as the number of additional festival events has blossomed. The “gem” of the festival is the Nautical Parade of begonia covered floating barges, highlighted by the arrival of millions of begonia blossoms. Nearly every Capitola resident has memories of building a float, picking begonias, or watching the parade.
Begonias once grew in Capitola. In the mid 1970’s, the growing fields moved to Marina and Brown Ranch Begonias, now known as Golden State Bulb Growers, continued to be the generous and now singular source of flowers for the festival.

Golden State Bulb is retiring from the business of growing begonias. They have, however, agreed to partner with the Begonia Festival Committee to grow begonias one last year for the 65th annual and final festival.

The Festival Committee and Golden State Bulb encourage all who have been a part of the Begonia Festival for the last six decades to come out in September, share your memories, and celebrate the end of a long time Capitola community tradition.

Volunteers Make It Happen
By Niels Kisling

It takes two volunteers each day we are open to run the museum, and we need you.

“Volunteering at the museum is one of the easiest volunteer activities I do,” says Dave Peyton. “I open the doors and for the next two hours I get to meet some of the coolest people while hanging out in the coolest museum in Capitola.”

Our volunteers open the museum on the first shift from noon-2 p.m., or they close the museum at the end of the second shift from 2-4 p.m. During your two hour shift you greet and interact with visitors.

We have no minimum time service requirement. Some volunteers give two hours a month, some give two hours a week and some give much more. It’s up to you.

You don’t have to be a history expert either—all of the answers are usually in the captions of the exhibit. Some questions are asked so frequently, the answers become second nature.

The best way to see what we do is to visit the museum during open hours, Thursday to Sunday, Noon-4 p.m. Meet the volunteer on duty and see if this might be a fit for you. There’s a volunteer brochure at the desk for more information on how to sign up.

This year, Dave Peyton, has volunteered to mentor new volunteers. You will not be alone as you begin your experience volunteering for the Capitola Museum.

Give us a try. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain! E-mail Niels Kisling at nkisling@pacbell.net.
Capitola Memories Project
By Niels Kisling

For the past few years the Capitola Museum has been accumulating interviews with citizens of Capitola and Santa Cruz County who have a story to tell about our past. Most are ‘old timers’ who have been associated with our town for a long time. Several have been here for a few generations and give us a unique snapshot of what Capitola was like in the pre-1900s.

The Capitola Memories Project is a series of interviews captured on video by Kathy D’Angelo of VisualContact at the direction of Frank Perry. The videos are now available in the public domain on YouTube. This allows everyone—even those not born yet—instant access to these historically important snippets for generations to come.

**YouTube 101**—For those (of us) who may be technologically challenged (old), here is a brief description of how to find these videos on YouTube. First, search on your Internet Browser (Google, Yahoo, Firefox, AOL, Safari) for www.youtube.com, or simply use the words ‘YouTube.’ Once you are on the YouTube website, simply search for ‘Capitola Historical Museum.’ Our site, called a channel, will be at the top of the list. Click on the picture of the museum and all of our videos will be there!

**Dick Arthur**
The actual web address is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3gZTBIChVY

**Jerry Clarke**
The actual web address is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8T8VjcZJ6LE

**Ron Graves**
The actual web address is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83U7-K_0W3A

**Tom King**
The actual web address is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubVqM947T_A

**Steve Lawton**
The actual web address is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o77CNpRRv-8

**Ted Maddock**
The actual web address is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ClG0Ls6jHM

**Barbara Reding**
The actual web address is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HUeL2cJ_8

**Jo Jo Urbancic**
The actual web address is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r69QCkZb9n4

**Venetian Court (Skipper Nurre & Rosemary Shaffer)**
The actual web address is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G97_r46iH_8

There are ten videos in the Capitola Memories Project series (so far). There will be more. Kathy D’Angelo painstakingly uploaded these videos to YouTube—a feat in itself.

I had the pleasure interviewing Jo Jo Urbancic. Even though I have known him for 45 years, I quickly discovered that I didn’t really ‘know him.’ His story is good and for me, it captures why I love to live in Capitola. Our tight sense of community clearly comes out in the story Jo Jo tells.

The people of Capitola quickly embraced Jo Jo when he arrived here to live permanently in June of 1961. He came to Capitola with basically nothing but a high school degree from Balboa High School and the clothes on his back. Moving away from his family in San Francisco, Jo Jo was familiar with Capitola, having come here with them since the 1950s. According to Jo Jo, for a month after his arrival he slept under boats, in storage sheds and here & there. He was quickly accepted by our community, and Capitolaans have never stopped loving him and helping him to provide for himself.

His huge heart and inspirational soul come out strongly in the interview. The rest of his story, as they say, is history that you will have to experience for yourself by watching the Jo Jo Urbancic interview, now part of the Capitola Memories Project.
A Volunteer’s Journey

Georgette Neal came to Santa Cruz County in 1964 and graduated from Santa Cruz High School a few years later. After traveling the United States and Europe, she attended Cabrillo College and graduated from UCSC in 1978.

With a career as a paralegal, she raised her family in the Bay Area and moved back to Santa Cruz County in 2011 to retire. In her own words, she says, “I came back to Santa Cruz to rediscover the history of my youth.”

Her first self-appointed volunteer position was providing companionship and caring for a former high school journalism teacher, and former water department official. Both suffered from dementia. Both had contagious fervor for local history and Georgette caught the history bug.

After their passing, part of Georgette’s healing process was walking through Capitola Village, along the creek and to the end of the wharf—a ritual she continues today. Her walks took her past the Capitola Museum and she was always intrigued by the façade as it captured her attention.

Her association with the museum began last April at a meeting for Vision Capitola. She visited the museum display at the meeting and discovered our volunteer recruitment brochure, soon joining the ranks of volunteers for the Capitola Museum in May 2016. It didn’t take long for her to realize that she had really found something worth her time—the museum seems to fit her calling well.

And, it didn’t take long for the museum to discover that we had someone special among the ranks of our newest volunteers.

Georgette’s arrival last year was timely for curator Frank Perry. As the Programs Officer for the Santa Cruz Bird Club, the museum has taken advantage of her knowledge in ornithology as we prepared the current exhibit centered around, and titled, “The Nature of Capitola.”

Georgette is also a voracious reader and has now consumed dozens of local history books from the museum’s book collection. She and recent board appointee Dave Peyton are said to be having a reading contest to see who gets through all of the hundreds of books in our collection first. We will keep you posted.

With deep roots in our community, Georgette doubled-down last month on her commitment to Capitola and to the museum by applying for, and being chosen, to serve as a Capitola Museum Trustee. About her appointment, she says, “I look forward to involving the young in the wealth of what has made our beautiful community what it is, and the ways in which we can build on it.”

It is safe to say that the public will be well-served by Georgette Neal. And, we are confident that the Capitola Museum will be able to hold her attention as the history bug tightens its grasp on her.