

# Capitola Sunset

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

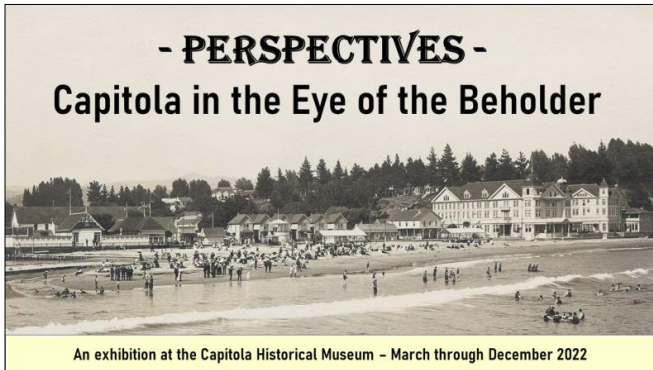
**CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM**  
*Providing a future for our past.*

SPRING 2022

## Capitola Museum Reopens With New Exhibit

The Capitola Historical Museum premiered its new annual exhibition on Friday, March 4, 2022. The new exhibition entitled, "Perspectives—Capitola in the Eye of the Beholder," explores different perspectives of Capitola through both the art and words of its beholders, past and present.

The exhibition features a variety of perspectives: The Pioneers, The Promoters, The Sportsmen, The Pleasure Seekers, The Conventioneers, The Developers, The Artists, The Hippies, and The Residents. The way we perceive a place depends upon why we came there and how we interact with it. The reasons for passing through or coming to stay are diverse and myriad. And so too are the depictions of Capitola over its long history. Taken together, they tell a compelling story.



Accompanying these diverse perspectives are period artifacts and pieces of rarely seen artwork from the museum's collection, including some of the earliest depictions of Capitola to modern views created for the annual Plein Air juried art competition and exhibition held every autumn. One exhibit case brings to life the lobby of the grand Hotel Capitola, built by F.A. Hihn in 1895. The exhibition also provides the opportunity for visitors to share their own unique perspectives of Capitola.

"Perspectives—Capitola in the Eye of the Beholder" will be open to the public throughout 2022. A formal exhibition reception will take place on Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> from noon until 2:00 p.m. to unveil a new painting by Ann Thiermann, renowned local artist and Art Instructor at

Cabrillo College. Ms. Thiermann has created five major California Native American murals for libraries, museums, and California State Parks plus over seventy natural history murals throughout Northern California.

Ms. Thiermann's work graces several visitor centers at our local California State Parks. To dig deeper, go to: [www.annthiermann.com](http://www.annthiermann.com).

The Capitola-Soquel area is the ancestral homeland of the Aptos, Cajastaca, and Uypi people. Ms. Thiermann's new painting, commissioned by the City of Capitola, depicts Indigenous people, just before European contact, conducting traditional fishing and foraging of sea life at what we know today as Capitola Beach and Lagoon. The Capitola Historical Museum will continue to include Native American history and stories, past and present, in all future annual exhibitions.

The admission-free museum is open Friday through Sunday from noon until 4:00 p.m. This is the first annual exhibition by our new Museum Curator, Deborah Osterberg, who came on board last June.

## WANTED ALIVE

### Capitola Museum has immediate openings for new volunteers.

**Find out not only what you can do for your museum, but what your museum can do for you.**

**Call 831-464-0322 or E-mail: [capitolamuseum@gmail.com](mailto:capitolamuseum@gmail.com)**

Volunteers staff the museum in 2-hour shifts during our open hours. During a shift you will greet visitors and answer their questions. Most volunteers report an immediate increase in sense-of-community, personal pride, and general well-being. Come join us!

## Lazy Liz Comes to Capitola

By Niels Kisling

The Carlson Family weekend fishing adventure began in Willow Glen with their 16-foot fishing skiff hitched to the back of a 1934 Chevrolet sedan. *Lazy Liz* was backyard-built along with her wooden trailer, wooden oars and home-made oar locks. Made of Port Orford cedar planks, she was heavy and sturdy enough to run up on the beach. Her long wooden oars served as her only propulsion.

All packed up and ready to go, the pre-teen brothers Al, Jim and Don piled into the old Chevy along with their dad, Albert, for the adventurous journey over the Santa Cruz Mountains. Their mother frequently came along, but she chose to stay home this weekend.



Al Carlson (middle) with his brothers, Don and Jim, take a moment to pose for a picture aboard *Lady Liz* as she sits on her trailer in Willow Glen. The weekend adventure to Capitola is about to begin.

In 1939, Old San Jose Highway was not much more than a bumpy, windy two-lane road passing right through Holy City. Father Riker's commune in the Santa Cruz Mountains was a strange society where the inhabitants gave up all their possessions, and most of their human rights, to live there and work for him. A white supremacist cult leader, Riker made the rules and he owned everything in town, even the people.

Holy City was a welcome stop allowing the car, and its passengers the opportunity to cool down after the long, second gear slog up the mountain. The boys got a chance to stretch their legs, relieve themselves, and to enjoy a cool, refreshing *Sunshine Soda*. The 5-cent soda pop was a locally made treat.

The drive over the hill from Willow Glen was much different than it is today. That old Chevy did not have air conditioning or power assist brakes. The suspension was 1930s poor and the car's handling was made worse by towing a 500 pound load. But this adversity might have been the best part of the adventure where both the journey and the destination come together.

At the top of the mountain they turned left onto Summit Road, following it to Old San Jose Road. The winding mountain road came out in Soquel with the nearest boat launch in Capitola.

Captain George Mitchell ran the Capitola Wharf, and he knew the family well. Al says, "I remember Captain Mitchell. He launched our skiff by hand using a block & tackle pulley system. Our boat was heavy so usually there would be a few people around that volunteered to lend a hand on the rope." Al went on to say, "I also remember Captain Mitchell arriving at the wharf peddling a shaft drive bicycle—something we'd never seen before."

George Mitchell came to California in 1894. The Midwesterner quickly fell in love with our seaside town where he spent decades managing the Capitola Wharf, eventually purchasing the lease. He had a passion for fishing and in addition to renting skiffs, he sold boat trips on his two Naphtha-powered launches, *Capitola* and *Bessie* (named after his daughter). Mitchell liked all the kids that came to visit him, and he always had time for them, sharing his stories and patiently offering advice.



Captain Mitchell always had time for the many children that visited him on the wharf. Here he is teaching a child how to tie a bowline. This kid bears a striking resemblance to Don Carlson.

Out in the kelp beds aboard *Lazy Liz*, Al's father coached the boys, saying, "Drop your bait quickly so the blue fish don't get it on the way down."

The prized rock cod lived on the bottom among the rocks that anchor the kelp. The family didn't have rods and reels so they fished exclusively with hand lines. The fish were so plentiful that the family never counted their catch by individual fish—a successful day was counted by how many gunny sacks they filled.

After the long journey over the mountain, and hours spent fishing the kelp beds off Capitola, they ran *Lazy Liz* up on the sand at what is now New Brighton State Beach. With the boat safely beached, the family spent the night in a rented cottage nearby where fresh caught rock cod was the main course at the dinner table. A good night's rest recharged the boys for another day of fishing.

The Carlson kids were raised by two loving parents who instilled in them the acceptance of a good challenge, the love of adventure and a deep respect for nature. Mary and Albert Carlson took their kids everywhere in that old 1934



Albert Carlson with his catch of the day.

Chevrolet sedan often towing a homemade trailer packed with rustic camping gear. Their weekends were full of fun, adventure, and close family time. The seed was planted and it grew big.

80 years later Al Carlson is still an avid fisherman. He keeps his boat in the Santa Cruz Harbor, seasonally fishing for salmon and crab. For decades Al traveled to Alaska on an annual fishing adventure, catching salmon and halibut, and returning home with several large ice chests filled with his catch.

All this began with a little early encouragement from great parents sharing sibling adventures and a little luck brought on by *Lazy Liz*.

*Final Note: Al and Marian Carlson are Capitola Museum Volunteers, having served the museum for decades. We treasure them and our community is made better by their service. By sharing this story we get the rare treat of a glimpse into the past through the eyes of someone who was here 80 years ago, and who experienced what life was like in Capitola back then.*

#### Another family adventure—caption by Al Carlson:

“Here we are stuck in Usal Creek where we pulled ourselves out with a rope block and tackle. Look at our 33” trailer wheels from a Model T. This was about 83 years ago and Usal Road is still a long dirt road. When we were there it was very remote, like a jeep road. My dad had a lot of nerve to travel there alone with a family. My dad’s 1934 Chevrolet was a standard model which had small engine, transmission and rear end. We tried going out the top from Shelter Cove to Highway One, but we couldn’t pull the trailer up one hill. So dad blocked the trailer wheels with rocks and disconnected it. Then he pulled the car and trailer separately up the hill with the block and tackle.”



Carlson Family Collection

## Malcolm Hayford: Capitola Memories

By Gordon van Zuiden

*(This article originally appeared in the Spring 2012 issue of Capitola Sunset. It has been edited to make it fit. Enjoy!)*

I recently had the privilege of interviewing a member of one of Capitola’s oldest families. Malcolm Hayford, 90, currently resides in the state of Washington but he fondly remembers his life in Capitola. I captured some of those wonderful memories in my interview that follows.

**Gordon:** I understand that you were around when the historic Hotel Capitola burned down in 1929—what are your memories from that December evening?

**Malcolm:** I remember, as an 8-year-old, sitting up on the hill by the Lent’s old home (near the corner of Prospect and Wharf Road) looking down at the hotel burning in the village below. Back then it was an all-volunteer fire department and they only had a couple of pump trucks that would pump water out of the ocean to fight the fire. One of those fighting the fire was my father, Thomas, who was the assistant fire chief at the time. At one point during the fire, the fire chief actually fell through the ceiling of the old hotel and my father was able to rescue him! Back then Capitola Village only had about 300 people living in town during the winter and I would guess that about 50-100 of them were helping put out the fire that night.

**Gordon:** How did visitors get to the Hotel Capitola?

**Malcolm:** They often arrived by train from San Francisco and different parts of the Sacramento Valley. They would get off at the old train station (where the Inn at Depot Hill is now) and they would be met by attendants with carts that would walk with them and their luggage down Monterey Avenue to the hotel. They would often stay two to three weeks at a time—or whatever they could afford.



Capitola Museum Collection

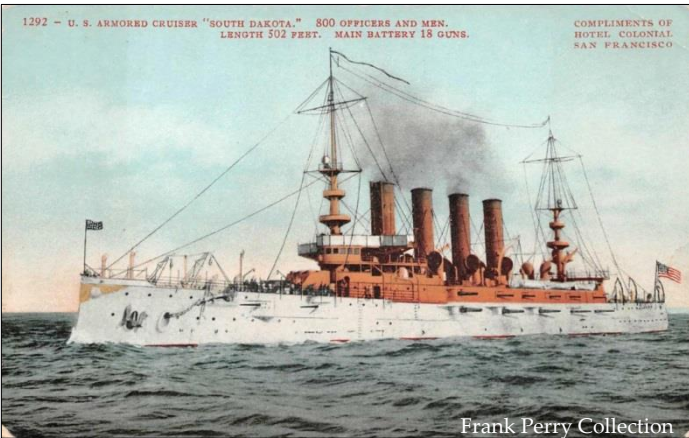
The Grand Hotel Capitola is shown here in 1929 the summer before the fire. Completed in 1897, it featured 160 rooms. The palm tree seen near the main entrance still stands today. It was transplanted in the early 1920s from its original site at the entrance to Depot Hill.

Malcolm also recounted the days when he worked at the old dance hall and of his uncle who ran the original Capitola theater on San Jose Avenue. The original theater burned in 1933 and the dance hall became the Saba Club and burned in 1957. Malcolm also recalls boarding up his house during WWII for fear that the Japanese would land on Capitola beach and think that someone was home!

## A Special Day in 1910

By Frank Perry, Retired Museum Curator

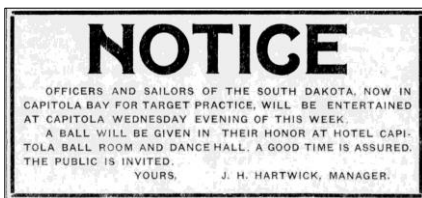
It has been over thirty years since Capitola welcomed the crew of the U.S.S. *Francis Hammond*, a 436-foot Naval frigate. In the early 1900s, however, Naval ships often visited the waters off Santa Cruz and Capitola, sometimes giving public tours and giving officers and sailors some time ashore.



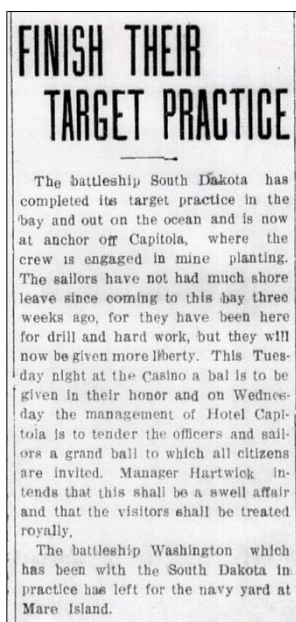
The cruiser *South Dakota* is featured on this early postcard. She was over 500 feet long and carried 800 officers and enlisted men. Built by the Union Iron Works in San Francisco and launched in 1904.

In August, 1910, the U.S.S. *South Dakota* engaged in practice maneuvers off Capitola. The 504-foot armored cruiser had been built at the Union Iron Works in San Francisco and launched in 1904. For their Monterey Bay visit, the sailors shot at dummy targets and practiced laying mines just offshore from Capitola.

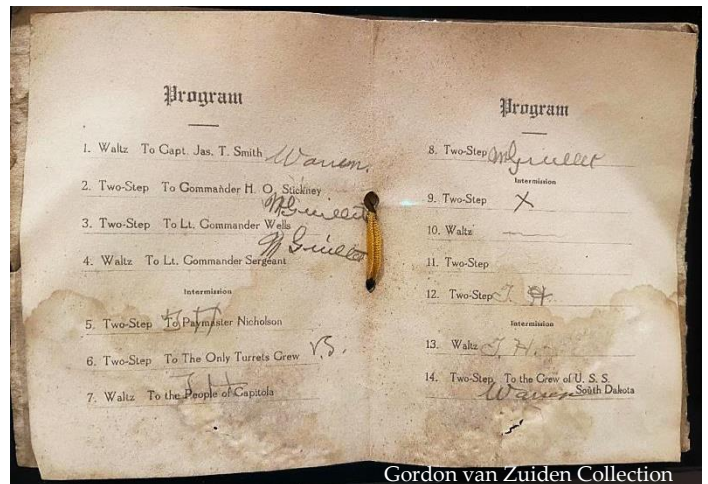
Capitolans and Santa Cruzans vied for the opportunity to welcome the officers and sailors ashore. The Grand Hotel Capitola hosted a special ball on Wednesday evening, August 10th. Newspaper ads invited the public to attend and help welcome the sailors. On the day of the event, launches ran between the wharf and ship, which was several hundred yards offshore.



This notice and short article was published in the *Santa Cruz Evening News*. The article mentions two events for the sailors—one at the Casino on Tuesday, and a 'grand ball' on Wednesday at the Hotel Capitola that is open to the public. Manager Hartwick intends that this shall be 'a swell affair and that the visitors shall be treated royally.'

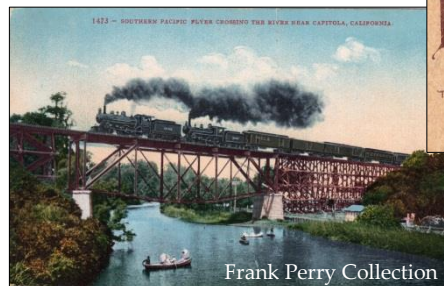


A few years ago Capitola Museum board member Gordon van Zuiden discovered what may be the only surviving dance card from the ball. It belonged to 20-year-old Dolores Flynn and not only lists the songs but was signed by some of the men she danced with. Such a treasure!



This is Dolores Flynn's dance card from the sailor's ball at the Hotel Capitola in 1910. It is probably the last one in existence, but maybe we are wrong. Do you have one to add to the museum collection?

More recently, I discovered another souvenir of the visit. It is a postcard of a train crossing the trestle in Capitola and was mailed by one of the sailors to a Miss Winifred Garhell of Speed, Kansas. What makes it special is that it was mailed on board the *South Dakota*, as evidenced by the ship's postmark.



ABOVE: Look closely and you will see the postmark from the post office aboard the *South Dakota*.

This Capitola postcard was mailed to Miss Winifred Garhell of Kansas. The post office aboard the cruiser *South Dakota* postmarked it August 9, 1910 at 8:A.M.



Over the next few years the Navy started reserving state names for battleships, and in 1920 the U.S.S. *South Dakota* was renamed the U.S.S. *Huron*. The mighty ship was decommissioned in 1929 to conform to a treaty between the U.S., U.K., Japan, Italy, and France to reduce naval armament. In 1942, however, a battleship named the *South Dakota* was launched.

The dance card and postcard are but tiny reminders of just one day in Capitola history, but they record the richness of our town's past and gently remind us of an era very different from today.

## Patrick White—More Than Just a Good Cop

By David A. Peyton

For a number of years, museum volunteer Patrick (Pat) White looked across the Capitola City Hall parking lot admiring the museum. But as a member of the Capitola Police Department, it seemed he never had the time to check out the police station's neighbor. Fast forward; after a 28-year law enforcement career and additional years spent sailing his boat up and down the California coast, Pat finally got a chance to become familiar with the Capitola Historical Museum.



Pat White takes a break for this photo opportunity during a recent work day where he was helping curator Deborah Osterberg prepare the new exhibition for 2022.

A California original, Pat was born in Livermore and enjoyed his well-spent youth roaming the rolling hills and open spaces of the East Bay. Carrying a hunting license and shouldering a long gun, ten-year old Pat roamed the miles of orchards seeking game birds and the occasional tin can. A few years later, Pat could be seen scooting up and down his tract home neighborhood on a Honda 50 motorcycle dreaming of the day when he would be mounted on a more powerful motorcycle cruising to many adventures. As he entered his teen years, he got his introduction to the life-long love of surfing and began visiting Capitola and the Santa Cruz area, often sleeping overnight in his car in order to catch the first waves at daylight. This also marked the point at which he and his buddies began letting their hair grow long to the obvious consternation of their parents.

His early jobs reflecting the area's agricultural past included picking 'cots (apricots to the uninitiated) and other seasonal fruit—tough jobs that led to the promise of something better. Being raised by a police officer father

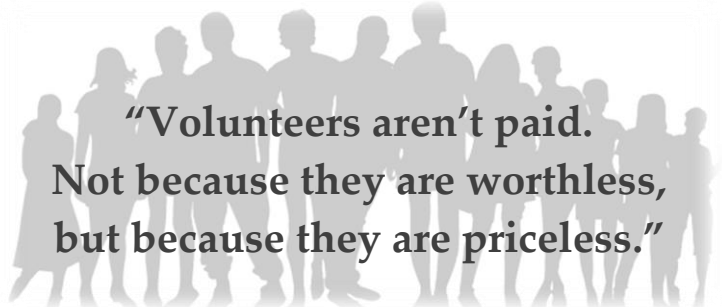
and a schoolteacher mother it's no surprise that many of those early jobs, including becoming one of the youngest Union City Post Office letter carriers at 18 years old, eventually led to a career in law enforcement. Along a circuitous path, Pat provided security at Dominican Hospital, had an early introduction to police work with Capitola P.D., and became a sheriff in Butte County. A stay with the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department, cut short by Proposition 13, led to his return to the Capitola Police Department.

It was during this time in Capitola that Pat met his wife while she was working at Cindy's restaurant on 41st Avenue, and what a surprise, she became a teacher! They are blessed with a daughter and a grandson who live in the area. Reflecting on his time as a police officer in Capitola (he retired in 2003), Pat describes his favorite duty as a motorcycle officer—finally getting that chance to ride a powerful motorcycle. When asked about what qualities are important to a successful career in law enforcement, Pat is quick to say, "Being a good listener is essential. An officer is a referee of life, making decisions every day that impact the lives of others."

Pat is especially grateful to the City of Capitola for providing financial support and work shift flexibility, based on the labor contract during his time with the Capitola Police Department. His pursuit of a college degree in Business Management began at Cabrillo College and concluded with a degree from St. Mary's College in Moraga. Pat says, "Volunteering at the museum is a great way to say thank you and to pay it forward."

Today, Pat still rides a motorcycle—a BMW that he hopes to take across the Canadian Provinces from west to east with a lifelong friend. He and his wife Deb live in Soquel after years living near the Small Craft Harbor. Pat prides himself on being one of the founding members of the "Sons of the Beach" a ukulele club that played at the harbor, and early on strumming his uke at Bocci's Cellar with the Ukulele Club of Santa Cruz.

Recently, Pat has been assisting museum curator Deborah Osterberg with setting up the 2022 exhibition and looks forward to greeting visitors with good cheer, a robust sense of humor (a caller to his old-school land line will be greeted with, "you have reached the White house!") and stories of Capitola's history—many that he's experienced firsthand.



## Volunteer Orientation—March 19<sup>th</sup> 10-11:30

This year we are holding a hybrid Volunteer Orientation.

The first part is a meeting by Zoom on Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup> from 10-11:30. Anyone can attend this meeting. As we reach out for more museum volunteers, you are encouraged to contact us for the Zoom meeting link. Our existing volunteers will be automatically provided with the link by direct e-mail.

Secondly, museum curator Deborah Osterberg will be at the museum before we open on March 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:30. Deborah will answer your questions and you get to check it out before the public arrives. Anyone wishing to walk through the new exhibition while she is there is encouraged to show up at the museum on Saturday, March 19 at 11:30.

Lastly, we are creating a video orientation of the new exhibit that can be viewed on our Capitola Museum You Tube channel. Our You Tube channel contains many *Capitola Memories* videos and other great information about Capitola. Follow the link below or search, "Capitola Museum You Tube Channel."

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsa9zNW4NrmuJHyP8mM6cPw>

The orientation video will be posted on our You Tube channel *AFTER MARCH 19<sup>th</sup>* for your anytime viewing pleasure throughout the current exhibit.

### The Capitola Museum has recently received generous donations from:

Jack & Shirley Brain	Margot Bauer
Ricky Feldner	Craig & Mimi French
Marvin Jensen	Kathleen King
Lynn Lance	Nancy Lenox
Paul & Judy Parsons	Dave & Jeanne Macdonald
Cynthia Mathews	Joan Gilbert Martin
Don & Karen Masters	Betty Mello
Bonnie Meyer	Gayle & Joe Ortiz
David Peyton	Ken & Michelle Svane
Jerry & Robynn Walters	Susan & Nels Westman

Wayne & Sue Hansen (Honoring Babe Yacobovich)  
Carmel Stamp & Coin Shop  
Sarah & Thomas Pattison—Donation from Guided Tour  
Santa Cruz County Association of Realtors  
Shadowbrook Restaurant  
Deborah J. Vilotti (Honoring Christine Hooper's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on October 16, 2021.)  
Linda Wilshusen & Rock Pfothenauer



**Grand Opening Reception!!!**  
**Saturday, April 2, 2022 from Noon-2:P.M.**  
Please join us for the grand opening of  
**PERSPECTIVES: Capitola in the Eye of the Beholder**  
Refreshments will be served and our painting by  
local artist Ann Thiermann will be unveiled.

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

**Yvonne M. Despard**—Two circa 1920s postcards of Capitola Village

**Jackie Morris**—Six color photographs of Capitola Village (1969 to 1972)

**Mary Brooks**—Six watercolor sketches of the Rispin Mansion painted by her students. Ms. Brooks, an art instructor, taught adult watercolor classes at the Capitola Community Center at Jade Street in the 1970s-1990s. Her gift included assorted newspaper clippings and color photographs of her class at the Rispin Mansion.

**Tom and Connie Unsicker**—Four framed paintings (on Masonite boards) by Olaf Palm. All paintings are in excellent condition. A free appraisal of the paintings was provided by **Brian W. Curtis**.



Capitola Sunset is published by:  
**The Capitola Historical Museum**  
410 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010

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Email: [capitolamuseum@gmail.com](mailto:capitolamuseum@gmail.com)  
Telephone: 831-464-0322

Museum Hours: **Friday-Sunday Noon-4:P.M.**

Curator: Deborah Osterberg

Board Members: Niels Kisling (President), David Peyton (Vice President), Pam Greeninger (Secretary), Brian Legakis, Emmy Mitchell-Lynn, Dean Walker (Treasurer) and Gordon van Zuiden  
Museum Youth Board Member: Joshua Henshaw