

Capitola Sunset

Summer 2017

CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

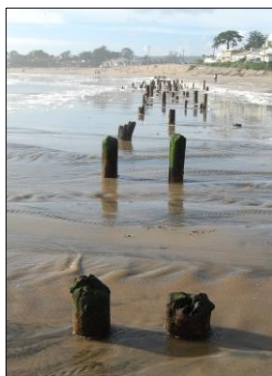
"Providing a future for our past"

Streetcar Memories

By Frank Perry

When I do walking tours of Capitola, I often share the streetcar story my mother used to tell. When she was very little, back around 1923 or 1924, she would ride into Santa Cruz with her mother on the streetcar. The family lived on the corner of 30th and Portola Drive, so the streetcar passed right in front of their house on its route between Santa Cruz and Capitola.

The scariest part of the trip was when it crossed the beach at Twin Lakes. The streetcar track was on a low trestle across the beach, and the waves would be breaking under the streetcar as it drove across.

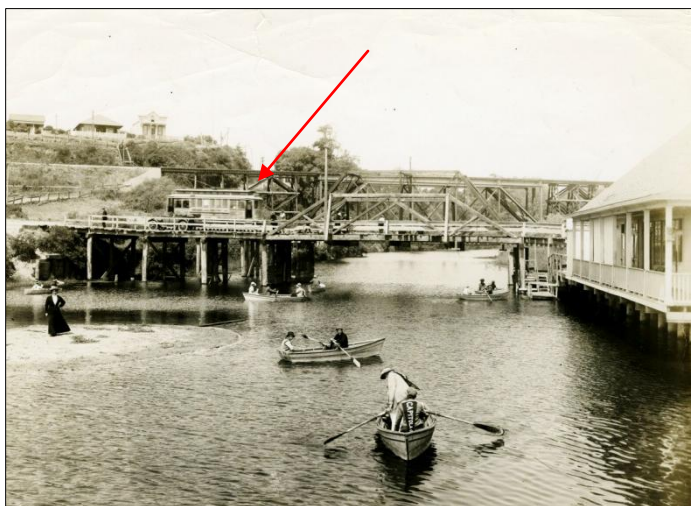


These exposed piles are a familiar sight in the winter months at Twin Lakes State Beach near the yacht harbor. The streetcar line used to run along the beach in this location. We are looking west from Schwan Lake towards the O'Neill Building and Crow's Nest. The streetcar crossed the other twin lake, called Woods Lagoon, near where the Crow's Nest is today and across the lagoon to where Aldo's is located today.

The conductor, Mr. Lucking, was very accommodating. He would stop in front of my grandparent's house so my grandmother could unload her groceries. My grandmother would buy flour in 100 pound sacks and sugar in 50 pound sacks. My uncle, who was around 12, would bring the wheelbarrow down the driveway to the street and Mr. Lucking would help lift the sacks into the wheelbarrow. This was all taking place in what would now be the middle of Portola Drive—not much traffic back then!

It is tempting to call the streetcar a trolley. I never heard my mother use that word. Although the terms are interchangeable, the ones in Santa Cruz and Capitola were always called streetcars and I think it is appropriate to preserve that tradition.

Just for fun, I searched through the old *Santa Cruz Sentinels* (now digitized) for the word "streetcar" and the word "trolley." On those rare occasions when trolley was used, it was almost always referring to another city.



In this image the streetcar is traveling over a trestle that was built right next to the Stockton Avenue wagon bridge. Both were wooden structures. This image was taken by Ole Ravnos and is well-known for the woman posing on the small sand spit in formal attire to the left in the image.

Happy Birthday Paul Parsons!



Paul gave the Capitola Museum a birthday present by volunteering for a shift on his birthday in June. Born on June 11, 1930 he is older than the museum, and he would be the first one to say that he is older than most things in Santa Cruz County. Thanks for sharing him with us Judy.

Thanks for the Thanks

By Niels Kisling

Many of us volunteers volunteer because it makes us feel good and strengthens our bond with community. All volunteers appreciate being recognized and that's just what The City of Capitola did in May by hosting a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at Margaritaville in the village.

Your Capitola Museum was well-represented with close to 20 museum volunteers there. When it came time for a show of hands, we saw that many museum volunteers are also Begonia Festival, Art and Wine Festival and Capitola Rod & Custom Car Show volunteers.



Our host, City Manager, Jamie Goldstein with Brantly Sandretti, one of Capitola PD's finest, pose for an image. Jamie's assistant, Larry Laurent, is seen in an animated conversation in the background.

Museum volunteer Steve Kayser was recognized with a five year service pin for volunteering at the museum. Capitola Mayor Stephanie Harlan, also a museum volunteer, awarded Steve and other members of our community for five years of service.



From left to right are David Biancalana, Marcia Biancalana, Larry Smith and Capitola Woman of the Year, Linda Smith. David, Marcia and Linda volunteer for the Capitola Historical Museum and all of them give back to the community in many other ways.

Others recognized were Will O'Sullivan—Finance Advisory Committee, TJ Welch—Planning Commissioner, Trevor Lee—Police Department Volunteer in Policing.



Museum Curator Frank Perry (all smiles) along with Pam Greeninger, Museum Secretary, and Dave Peyton. Dave, a museum volunteer, also volunteers for the Capitola Rod & Custom Car Show, the Capitola Begonia Festival, and the Art and Wine Festival. Pam also volunteers for many other community events.

Mayor Harlan also individually recognized each Capitola City Council member, who were all present—Mike Termini, Kristen Petersen, Jacques Bertrand and Ed Bottorff.

Thanks for the thanks, Capitola!

Stairway to Harry

By Niels Kisling

Our own Harry Hooper, Capitola's Major League Baseball Hall-of-Famer, Postmaster and huge town supporter, built these stairs behind his Opal Cliffs home some 50 years ago. Harry studied Civil Engineering at St. Mary's College and helped with many civil engineering projects in Capitola. His accomplishments are seen in the Soquel Creek flume that exists today after years of relentless pounding by winter storms. Harry also had a hand in designing the jetties or spines off of Esplanade Park. These were designed to keep the sand on Capitola Beach from quietly slipping down-coast to New Brighton State Beach.



Although the stairs in this image appear unsafe, it is a testament to his ingenuity that they are still standing at all. What struck me most is that the dirt has eroded some 15-18 feet away from the concrete anchor pier (red arrow). That is a lot of cliff erosion in just 50 years.

They say gravity and time always win. I say gravity and Harry Hooper's design are deadlocked in a tie at this moment of time.

Capitola Dreamin'

The Capitola Rod and Custom Car Show roared into town with the NASCAR exhibit thundering down Capitola Avenue past the museum on Saturday morning, June 10. They were escorted by several Capitola PD cars and motorcycles with lights flashing and sirens blaring.

Hundreds of cars on display the first day conjured up images of days gone by, with stories and memories to match. *Oh, if I had just kept that car!* It may be best to let these images tell the rest of the story.



Capitola Begonia Festival

Courtesy of the Begonia Festival Committee

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.

A goal of the Begonia Festival Committee is to memorialize how this long standing special event touched the lives of so many in our community. As such, a "Gratitude Gala" is being planned for October 14. Festival organizers are seeking memories of written word, photographs, or both to share during the gala event. The festival committee is also interested in identifying those who have a desire to be invited to the Gratitude Gala.

If you have memories to share (please send copies or electronic files only—we are unable to return photos) and/or a desire to join the gala, please provide us with your name, address, phone and email. Please e-mail us at begoniafestival@gmail.com or direct mail to Capitola Begonia Festival, P.O. Box 501, Capitola, CA 95010.

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.

Begonias-to-Go; Going, Going, Gone

By Niels Kisling

The event, hosted by the Capitola Museum, is officially called, Begonias-to-Go-Head to Toe, but that isn't easy to say or spell when trying to promote it. It began innocently a decade or so ago with citizens of Capitola looking to find something cool to do with the extra begonia blossoms that were leftover and available from the many float builders.



David Shoaf, seen in the middle of the 'family affair,' was always our best Begonia coach. He has a special talent for teaching newbies and veterans alike the art of Begonia decorating. Families over the years have brought generations of kids to the Begonias-to-Go event hosted by your Capitola Historical Museum.

Someone pinned a few blossoms to a straw hat, a bike, a dog and a baby stroller, and the act became an event many years later that is hosted by the Capitola Museum.



Steve Swift and our late Museum Treasurer, Tom McGranahan pose to show off their best begonia decorated look. Both of these guys put in many hours volunteering for this event over the years. Steve and Tom, along with the Capitola Museum, have brought tons of smiles to hundreds of people over the years.

Carolyn Swift, Linda Smith, Museum Board President at the time, along with the museum board were asked to host this event and to come up with a name for it. It blossomed into the event Begonias-to-Go and has been a great success through the years.

This year, however, with the Begonia Festival (as we know it) bidding farewell, Begonias-to-Go will also, most likely, be in its final chapter.



Dave Dominguez and his dog Koa are always a part of Begonias-to-Go. We know that you will see them there again this year for the final hurrah.

If you never participated, or if you have ALWAYS participated, this is your last chance to enjoy this year's community building event. It is held in Esplanade Park from 10-Noon on Sunday before the Begonia Festival Nautical Parade.



Members of Aptos Boy Scout Troop 609 have been real 'troopers' showing up in Marina at the begonia fields to tirelessly help us pick and box the begonia blossoms we need to host Begonias-to-Go.

On Sunday, September 3, 2017, Begonias-to-Go will be going, going, gone!



We will all miss these incredible smiles when Begonias-to-Go plays its final chapter this September on Sunday the 3rd.

Flower Fun in the Sun— Six-and-a-Half Decades of Begonia Festivals

1952. First nautical parade on Soquel Creek using floats decorated with begonias. The parade is part of the annual Capitola Water Fantasy event, which started in 1950.

1954. First year the name “Capitola Begonia Festival” is used. First Begonia Festival Queen is chosen, Jeanette Hayford.

1958. Name changes to “National Begonia Festival.”

1961. First Nautical Parade to have a theme: “Fantasy in Flowers.”

1962. The usually well-organized festival is plagued with problems. The site of the annual dinner burns and confusion leads to the selection of two queens.

1966. Begonia Festival organizers change from being a committee of the Chamber of Commerce to being an independent nonprofit organization.

1969. Nautical Parade is moved to city streets this year due to poor water quality in the lagoon.

1971. First Sand Sculpture Contest.

1974. Last Begonia Festival Queen, Teri Bennett, is chosen.

1975. First Skateboard Races.

1980. The word “National” is dropped and it again becomes the “Capitola Begonia Festival.”

1985. Last Diaper Derby and last Skateboard Contest are held.

1990. Honored guest is Barry Wilkins, director of the Ballarat Begonia Festival in Australia. “Sister Festival” relationship is established with Ballarat.

1992. *By-The-Sea: A History of the Capitola Begonia Festival*, is written by Carolyn Swift and published by the Festival for its 40th anniversary.

1998. It takes 50 people to build the “Grand Sweepstakes” winning float, which was titled, “The Capitola Bay Aquarium.” Individual petals instead of blossoms are used to decorate the sea animals.

2001. Last spaghetti dinner fundraiser held.

2002. 50th anniversary. The festival is changed from two weekends to one three-day weekend. There are five floats in the nautical parade.

2003. The Chamber of Commerce becomes a festival co-sponsor and the first horseshoe tournament is held. One float features past Begonia Festival queens and princesses.

2016. A shortage of begonia blossoms and increase in the number of floats (8) leads to a change in the rules allowing non-begonia materials to decorate the floats.

2017. The Begonia Festival comes to an end after 65 years. The source of the blossoms, Golden State Bulbs, decides to cease growing begonias after 2017, and there is no other source for the large number of blossoms.



Begonia Festival Matching Game: Match the float with the theme.

Themes (with year):

1. The Circus Comes to Capitola (1980)
2. Nursery Rhymes (1977)
3. Hawaiian (1962)
4. Around the World with Begonias (1967)
5. Flights of Fancy (1991)
6. Alice in Wonderland (1986)
7. Capitola Goes to the Movies (1979)
8. Begonias on Broadway (2014)
9. The Sunday Funnies (1984)

Floats:

- A “Phantom of the Opera”
- B “Dutch Windmill”
- C “Cow Jumped Over the Moon”
- D “Seal with a Ball”
- E “The White Rabbit”
- F “King Kong”
- G “Humpty-Dumpty”
- H “Volcano”
- I “Bill the Cat”

Answers: 1 D, 2 G, 3 H, 4 B, 5 C, 6 E, 7 F, 8 A, 9 I

Volunteer Spotlight ~ Betty Mello



It is a pleasure to introduce one of the Museum's newest volunteers, Betty Mello. Betty has been volunteering at the Museum since August of last year, after attending the Capitola Historical Museum's 50th Birthday Party in July. She was interested in learning more about Capitola's history and felt this would be a great way to do that, as well as to welcome visitors.

Betty is not new to volunteering in Capitola, which she has called home since 1976. While working for the telephone company, she didn't have time to meet her neighbors, let alone get involved in community activities. However, after retiring Betty became involved with the Capitola Begonia Festival, volunteering and working on the committee. She and Sue Dallas co-chaired the Annual Sand Sculpture Contest on Capitola Beach for 10 years. She continues to serve and looks forward to helping out for the 65th & final Begonia Festival, to be held this year.

Betty met many wonderful people volunteering with the Begonia Festival which led her to become involved with the Capitola Soquel Chamber of Commerce, where she has volunteered for the Capitola Art & Wine Festival, the Capitola Rod & Custom Car Show and other Chamber-related community events. Although she prefers not to take a leadership role, Betty is always happy to help out wherever she is needed. According to Betty, the best thing about volunteering in her community is the ability to meet new people and try new things. She really enjoys the diversity of tasks that are necessary to put on an event. She has made many long-lasting friendships through her involvement in volunteering.

Sue Dallas, who Betty worked with on the Sand Sculpture Contest has become her traveling partner, and they have enjoyed many adventures in Europe and abroad. This year they will be traveling to Europe for the third time with plans to see London, Paris and the Amalfi coast of Italy. Although she loves traveling abroad and seeing wonderful places, one of Betty's favorite vacations is tent camping. Her grandfather started her out when she was very young camping at Yosemite. She fondly remembers the Firefall at Glacier Point and yelling out, "Let the Fire Fall" at sundown. Zion National Park is Betty's second best place for camping, hiking and just enjoying Mother Nature.

Other interests include line dancing and gardening. Betty truly believes "Variety is the Spice of Life," and volunteering has helped her live that dream.

The Capitola Museum has recently received generous donations from:

Ed Bottorff	Ted Burke
Michael & Barbara Clark	Calvin & Carla Cornwell
Capitola Hotel	Ronald Graves
Marvin Jensen	Sally & Brian Legakis
William & Diane Nelson	Paul Parsons
David Peyton	Barbara Reding
Karen Ruland	Linda Sanders
Maria Smith	Joan Gilbert Martin
Susan & Nels Westman	

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

Panoramic Photo of Lilydale:
Transfer from the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History
Historic photos, memorabilia, & clippings: Ron Bengston

Who Refurbished the Streetcar Cut-Out?



Soquel Artist and Cartoonist, Frank Hill, created the original Streetcar Cartoon Cut-Out in front of the museum. He recently took it home for a complete refurbish—it's back up & running and it looks great! The cutout brings joy to so many visitors passing by the museum. Thank you, Frank, for this generous gift of your time and energy!

Capitola Sunset is published by:

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Curator: Frank Perry

Board Members: Niels Kisling (President), Stephanie Tetter (Vice President), Pam Greeninger (Secretary), Kathleen Church (Treasurer), Georgette Neal, David Peyton and Gordon van Zuiden