

# Capitola Sunset

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

SUMMER 2021

*Providing a future for our past.*

## Deborah Osterberg Comes Home to Capitola

By Niels Kisling



Your Capitola Museum is lucky to have Deborah Osterberg as our new curator. When Deborah actually goes home, she goes home to Bonny Doon, but her long and winding journey all began in grade school here in Capitola. She was first a Capitola Viking then went on to graduate as a Knight from Soquel High School in 1979.

Deborah graduated college in 1984 from Chico State as a History and Geography Major, and later took graduate classes at UC Santa Barbara in Cultural Resource Management. Her extensive service to National Parks and Monuments reads like several seasons of a reality TV travel show.

During college she volunteered for the Bidwell Mansion in Chico then worked seasonally at Yellowstone National Park and Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks. Her first permanent position was at the US Naval Post Graduate School where she spent two years doing clerical work.

Deborah's first experience with a museum collection came at Sequoia National Park organizing materials for their centennial. Next, she took on her first permanent full-time position with the National Park Service at the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site in Danville.

Geography and history came together for Deborah as her next move took her to Fort Sumter in South Carolina where she spent six years as a Museum Specialist taking care of three sites—Fort Moultrie & Fort Sumter National Historic Park, Charles Pickney National Historic Site and Moore's Creek National Battlefield.

During her six years at Sumter, Deborah enjoyed the costumed reenactments, but most of all she enjoyed being on the team that earned Fort Sumter's accreditation by the American Association of Museums—quite an honor and a big achievement. According to the association, *accreditation offers high profile, peer-based validation of your museum's operations and impact.*

## Thoughts on Retirement

By Frank Perry



On June 30th I retired as curator of the Capitola Historical Museum after eight years at the helm. From the very first day, the museum board, museum volunteers, city staff, and people of Capitola were exceptionally welcoming. I cannot think of a better way to have wrapped up a fifty-year career in museums. The curator job gave me the opportunity to apply all that I had learned over the years about running a museum. I had plenty of opportunities to build exhibits, give lectures, produce videos, and do publications—all things I love to do. Most importantly, I got to delve deeply into Capitola's wonderful history and share what I learned.

I am going to miss the monthly meetings with board members, all of whom I consider friends, and the weekly chats with volunteers. Although I am retiring as curator, I will be continuing to be involved with local history and local museums as a volunteer. No doubt our paths will cross again.

Altogether, Carolyn Swift and I poured 28 years of love and care into this little museum. We did everything from accepting gifts of rare artifacts to washing windows. This was never "just a job," it was a passion.

I am delighted that Deborah Osterberg will be our new curator. Of the several candidates interviewed, she clearly had the most experience with the many key tasks the curator of a small museum has to know how to do. She has worked with volunteers, cared for collections, created exhibits, done historical research, and given lectures and walking tours. Although she gained this experience in many parts of the United States, she grew up in Capitola and went to Soquel High School. She says she is excited to learn more about Capitola history. No doubt she will be able to use some of her first-hand knowledge of the area.

I hope you will all give Deborah a warm welcome as you did me. I am confident our museum is in good hands.

Continued on next page

Mt. Rainier National Park was Deborah's next stop in the late 1990s where she arrived in time for their centennial celebration. She spent six years in Washington State overseeing the processing of the archives for the park. With that experience in-hand, she took a position with the National Archives at San Francisco mainly providing reference assistance for Bureau of Indian Affairs records for California and Nevada tribes.

If you want to find, store, file or research something, Deborah is your top pick.

She 'came home' again in 2014 to organize the estate of her father who passed away after a life well-lived. Bud Osterberg was a Santa Cruz City Firefighter who operated



a side business of making redwood novelties using a wood lathe. He was a one-man mass producer with his miniature vases and collectibles finding their way into gift shops along the Redwood Highway, and many state and

national park centers. His best customer was the San Francisco Airport gift shop which surely helped Bud's novelties find their way to exotic destinations world-wide. Deborah has an extensive collection of her dad's vases, bowls, lamps and clocks, but she continues to search for more pieces that often pop up on E-Bay.

Last year Deborah and her cats were evacuated for a month from their home in Bonny Doon due to the CZU Complex Fire. The residents that remained behind saved the homes on her street by being prepared with equipment needed to fight the ground fire. In the nick of time, however, a fire crew showed up to douse fire developing in the tree line—a fire that the neighbors may not have been able to handle.

Deborah Osterberg has come home again to Capitola, and it is time for her to get to work. Her priorities will be to work on the catalog backlog, write a comprehensive Curatorial Management Plan, and improve curatorial storage. She is excited about creating the next museum exhibit as well as installing rotating exhibits at the new Capitola Library with an initial theme of highlighting Capitola's many neighborhoods. Once we are past Covid, Deborah hopes to develop some costumed walking tours of the Village. She is excited about the Museum's future and proud to be the one chosen to tell the history of her hometown.

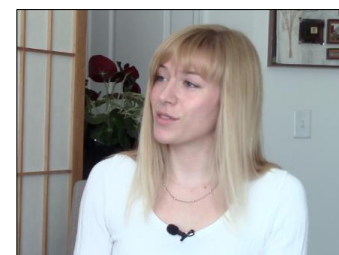


## Two New Videos

Two new videos have been uploaded to the Museum's YouTube channel.

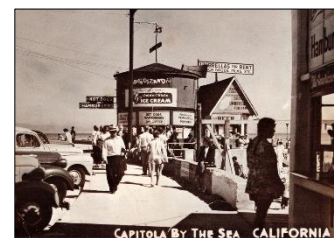
The first is based on the walking tour for the Museum board and volunteers in May. Titled *Reinventing Capitola*, it chronicles the changes made to Capitola in the year after Henry Rispin bought Capitola in 1919. The video explains the important role of Architect George McCrea and how many of his ideas were ahead of their time. Board member Emmy Mitchell-Lynn reads from letters written by McCrea's assistant, Helen Benbow, giving the tour a unique dimension. Emmy and Brian Legakis contributed photographs from the tour and there are also plenty of historical photographs from the Museum's collection. Just search "Reinventing Capitola" on YouTube.

The second is an interview by Emmy with retiring curator Frank Perry. Frank explains how his interest in museums dates back to childhood and about his early career working in museums. He then offers some tips on creating exhibits in small museums. "I have learned a great deal over the years, often through trial and error. I hope these tips will be of use to others in the field, especially those just starting out." This video is also on YouTube. Search "Frank Perry Capitola."



## How About Some Fries with That Shake?

The Bandstand restaurant was originally opened by Babe Yakobovich in 1946. Babe's original restaurant was in the actual Capitola Bandstand that wasn't fully enclosed until 1948.



Yakobovich constructed a new building for the restaurant in the early 1960s.

August 'Babe' Yakobovich sold his business to Wayne and Sue Hansen of Capitola in 1974. The Chamber of Commerce held a retirement dinner honoring the Yakobovich's for running the longest consecutive business in Capitola at the time—29 years.



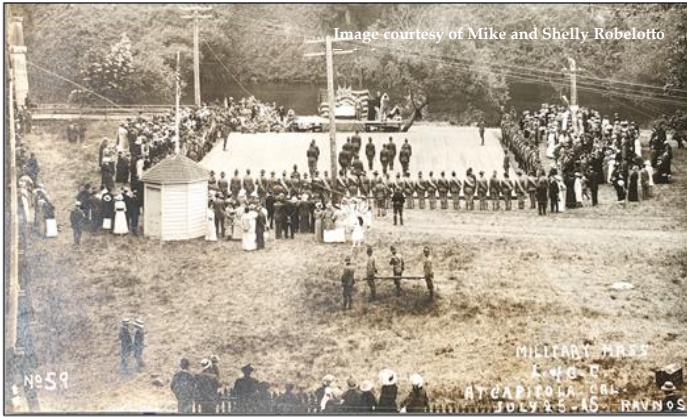
*Look for more details in a future newsletter!*

## League of the Cross Cadets:

### 1915 Capitola Encampment

By Gordon van Zuiden

Recently, the museum was given permission to scan some old photos of Capitola in an album loaned to us by Mike and Shelly Robelotto. In May of this year, Frank Perry, our Capitola Museum curator, received permission from Mike and Shelly to scan this 1915 photograph (below) of a Military Mass performed by the League of Cross Cadets in Capitola held along the Soquel River just across the street from where Capitola City Hall is today.



Military Mass held by the League of the Cross Cadets, July 25, 1915. This was across the street from where the Museum is now. The railroad trestle is just visible along the left edge of the photo.

It's a spectacular photo taken by Ole Ravnos on July 25th, 1915 - the last day of a series of weeklong events held in Capitola by the League of the Cross Cadets. The week included a series of concerts and dances, an athletic day on the beach, and an invitational ball. The League of the Cross Cadets was first organized in 1893 by Reverend Archbishop Montgomery. According to July 14th, 1915 column in the Santa Cruz Evening News, the League of Cross Cadets was organized to "keep together the young men who, when their turn came to leave the parish Sunday school, would naturally cease to have as great an interest in such work as when they were children. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to form some kind of an organization which would hold young men together and keep them in the right track."

The organization was comprised mainly of young Catholic boys from the San Francisco area, starting at the age of 14, who took an oath to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors until the age of 21. Those that joined the League of Cross Cadets were given "handsome" uniforms and participated in summer camping trips, like the one held in Capitola, throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

Unfortunately, on Friday, July 23rd, 1915 disaster struck the League of Cross Cadets when 16 year old David Courtney, a bugler for the Cadets, went swimming in the ocean immediately after consuming a large quantity of apricot pie which became lodged in his throat after being

struck by a wave and asphyxiated the young man. He was pulled out of the water by his fellow cadets and a pulmotor (a device first used in war time to try and pump oxygen into an injured person's lungs) was used for 3 hours to try and bring him back to life - but to no avail. His body lay in state at the Pacific Coast undertaking parlor that evening until it was brought to the Capitola Depot at 6PM the next day for transportation back to his home in Oakland. The entire regiment of Cross Cadets went to the depot that Saturday evening to attend the train's arrival and departure with the late David Courtney on board.

The Military Mass held the next day must have surely mentioned the passing of David Courtney. A description of a similar League of Cross Cadets mass held on August 5, 1905 was described in the Sacred Heart Review as follows:

*"In the background towered the great cross, which dates back to the foundation of the mission of 1777. On either side of the alter the American flag and regimental colors floated to the breeze. The officers of the regiment took their station in the form of a cross in front of the alter. Around, in the form of a hollow square, the cadets stood at attention. At the Elevation, the order "Present Sabers" rang out. Instantly the cadets dropped on their knees, the sabers flashed in the sun, the drums rolled solemnly, and the old mission chime rang out from the college."*



David Courtney could well be one of the Cadet band members pictured in this photo taken during their 1915 visit to Capitola.

This detailed recollection of this memorable week in Capitola's history began with the receipt of this Ravnos photo as a gift to the museum from one of our benevolent patrons. This photo, coupled with the other photos in my Ravnos collection and the newspapers columns from the early 1900s tell a rich story of the encampment of young boys along Capitola's Soquel Creek in the summer of 1915. The next time you are walking by the Windmill house on Soquel Creek take a moment to reflect on this wonderful moment in Capitola's history over 100 years ago. If you listen closely maybe you will even hear the solemn drum rolls and the old mission chime ring out once again!

## 90 Years of Capitola Cachets

By Frank Perry

I think it is fair to say that most people who are not stamp collectors are unfamiliar with the term “cachet” as a type of postal memorabilia. Quite simply, a cachet is a design added to an envelope to commemorate a special event. Usually, the stamped envelope is postmarked on the day or days of the event.

The hobby of collecting these inexpensive souvenirs was especially popular in the 1930s during the Great Depression. Many commemorated the arrival of Naval Ships at a particular port or were issued for the dedication of new airports. Others were issued for historic anniversaries. The hobby began to fade in the 1940s but continues to this day. Most contemporary cachets are created for the issue of a new stamp and are postmarked on the first day the stamp is issued by the postal service.

Nobody ever kept a list of Santa Cruz County events commemorated by cachets, so over the past few years I have been trying to track them all down. So far, I have found 62.

The oldest I have discovered was designed for the dedication of the Santa Cruz Airport (which was in Capitola) on August 23, 1931. In November 1934, another cachet was issued when the airport was remodeled and rededicated.



Capitola's oldest cachet, postmarked April 23, 1931.

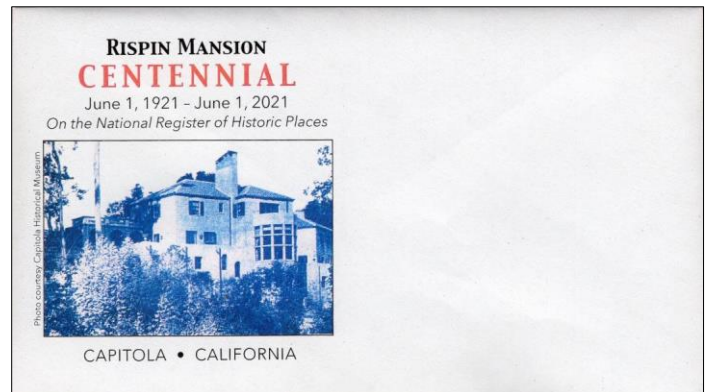
In May of 1938 the Capitola Post Office joined hundreds of other post offices around the nation in creating a cachet for National Airmail Week.

On July 1, 1971, the Capitola Post Office released a cachet to mark the establishment of the United States Postal Service.

In 1987 there was a cachet and special postmark for the Capitola Post Office centennial and in 1999 one for 50th anniversary of Capitola becoming an incorporated city.

In honor of the centennial of the Rispin Mansion earlier this year, the Capitola Museum created a special cachet and had each envelope postmarked by the Capitola Post

Office on June 1. According to old newspapers, the Rispin family moved in “on or about” June 1, 1921, so we adopted that date. The cachet features a historic photo of the mansion and explains that it is on the National Register of Historic Places. Philatelic fanatics may wish to get one of these very special souvenirs at the museum. Only 20 were made. The suggested donation is \$5.00.

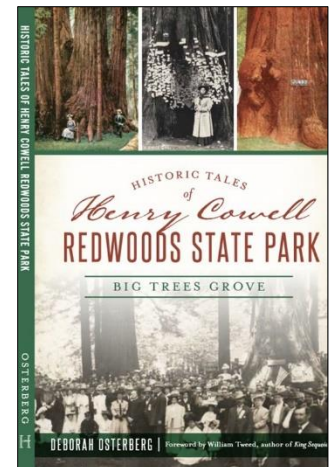


Capitola's newest cachet, postmarked June 1, 2021.

January 2024 will mark Capitola's 75th anniversary as an incorporated city—perhaps another opportunity for commemoration through these fun collectables.

## Curator Deborah Osterberg Publishes Book

In 2020 Deborah published the book, *Historic Tales of Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park – Big Trees Grove* which traces the history of the first redwood resort (1867-1930) and the role it played in the evolution of redwood tourism and the beginning of the redwood preservation movement. The book sprang from Deborah's work as a volunteer park docent where she learned that the Welch family purchase of the grove came 35 years before the establishment of Big Basin as a state park. Big Trees Grove introduced the public to the majesty of the redwoods and the resort became one of California's most popular tourist destinations. Though Big Trees Grove attracted tens of thousands of visitors from across the country, there was no single book which told this engaging history. Deborah's book sheds light on Big Tree Grove's ground-breaking role and popularity, creating a vivid portrait of the people who promoted, enjoyed, and preserved these famed monarchs.



*The proceeds from the book are being shared with the Mountain Parks Foundation.*

*Search: Arcadia Big Trees Grove.*

[www.arcadiapublishing.com/Products/9781467142953](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com/Products/9781467142953)

## Capitola Museum Safely Reopens

After a 15-month closure for Covid-19 the Capitola Museum opened again on May 1. We have safety precautions in place including air filtration, sanitizers and free masks for those visitors and volunteers that want to feel most comfortable. The current exhibit, *CAPITOLA—Then and Now* ran for less than a week in 2020 so we finally get a chance to show it off. We had 637 visitors come through the door in May.

This year's theme is "then and now." How has Capitola changed through the years? What things have stayed the same? "It's a fun topic—one I think visitors will enjoy," says past curator Frank Perry. "Every exhibition has its challenges," he said. "For this one it was trying to narrow down the choice of historic photographs from the many in the Museum's collection." While some may look familiar, Frank tried to showcase ones that have not been used much in previous exhibitions. A few are recent acquisitions that have not been seen before.



The Red & White Grocery at the corner of Capitola Avenue and San Jose Avenue in the 1930s was located right next to the Capitola Post Office. Capitola Avenue was the main street in Capitola before business shifted to 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue.



This recent image shows that the focus of business in Capitola Village has shifted more towards tourism with shops featuring clothing, souvenirs, beach accessories, art galleries and gift stores.

No "then and now" exhibition would be complete without a nod to changes in technology. Frank decided to focus on Capitola's telephone history, from the 1880s to the present. "The Museum has some fascinating antique phones and directories in its collection, and this is a splendid opportunity to display them," says Frank.



### CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

410 Capitola Avenue  
Capitola, CA 95010

July 2021

Dear Friends, Family, Volunteers, and Community Members,

This is an open letter to all past, present and future Capitola Historical Museum volunteers. I'll be frank—we need your help. By now, you are all aware that our museum has re-opened, and that we're working to return to our previous agenda of providing a future for our past.

You may also know that our wonderful little museum can only operate if we have a volunteer base to do so.

Unfortunately, due to the various impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the lives of many people in our community, our museum is currently challenged by a shortage of volunteer staffing. This has made it difficult for the museum to remain open to the public during our usual hours of operation (Thu-Sun, 12-4:PM).

So, I write to you today with a request for your assistance in helping us stay open. Keeping the museum doors open allows the museum to continue to provide the public a glimpse into Capitola's fascinating history. More than ever, we need your time and energy as museum volunteers— as little as two hours per month— reciprocated by our undying gratitude and appreciation for your efforts.

Volunteering is good for the soul and an excellent way to give back to your community.

Whether you have volunteered at the Capitola Historical Museum in the past, have ever thought about volunteering, or if this is the first time you've ever considered it, we need your help. Please contact us for more information or to apply.

Capitola Museum: 831-464-0322 or by e-mail at [capitolamuseum@gmail.com](mailto:capitolamuseum@gmail.com)

Sincerely,

Emmy Mitchell-Lynn  
Trustee, Capitola Historical Museum

## Deb Aaron – Volunteer Spotlight

I was born and raised in San Jose. Like many Bay Area residents, I spent most of my summers quite happily on Santa Cruz beaches. My husband, David, also grew up near the beach, so we share a love for the coast and its way of life. We both had careers in the Bay Area, and always considered the privilege of actually getting to reside in Santa Cruz County, a far off (and unachievable) dream. For many years, we happily spent most of our weekends at the beach, feeling thankful that we lived close enough to get away as often as we did. We continued that habit after we became parents, and we were thrilled to discover that our daughter also enjoyed being near (and in!) the water. As we got to know our daughter better, we realized that the pace in Silicon Valley was too fast for her, and that she needed one parent to be home with her full-time. As we considered our options, it became clear that moving to the coast would benefit all three of us. We found a house in Aptos, and we have never regretted relocating to this county.

While living in Aptos, we got to know Capitola and fell in love with the town. We enjoyed wandering the Village, dining in the restaurants, and relaxing on the Esplanade. We also discovered the Capitola Historical Museum and looked forward to the new exhibits. The more time we spent in Capitola, the more we started considering trying to find a home there. Several years ago that dream came true! We love the sense of community here as well as living in an area where we can walk to so many wonderful places.



Deb and Audrey pose for this picture at one of their favorite places—Capitola Beach! The Capitola Museum is lucky to have Deb and this mother and daughter are lucky to have each other.

I continue to be a stay-at-home mom. My family and I run several times a week. We enjoy many of the local races; Wharf-to-Wharf, Surfer's Path series, and the Little Wharf, (for example). My daughter and I spend most of our days exploring and enjoying the Village together, often relaxing on the beach or on a bench along the Esplanade. We both enjoy opportunities to get to know both residents and visitors. We all enjoy participating in the many events the city hosts; music on the beach, the car show in June, Capitola Beach Festival, etc.

About a year ago, I saw a post in NextDoor announcing openings for Museum volunteers. I was so excited to find an opportunity to give back to and participate in a community I have come to cherish and appreciate. I have always enjoyed visiting the Museum, so volunteering to spend more time there is an easy commitment. I am fascinated by the history of the town and all the twists and turns its story has taken over the years. It is fun to chat with tourists about their excitement in being here and to share some of the history of our town. It's also a treat to meet people who grew up in the area and are back in town to visit their favorite haunts. I think it's the shared appreciation for what a special place Capitola is that makes my time at the Museum most rewarding. That, and an occasional coloring session with one of the visiting youngsters!

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

Jennifer & John Anderson	Steven & Diane Burbank
Calvin B. Cornwell	D.A.R., Santa Cruz Chapter
Robert T. Deacon	Kathryn & Tony Gualtieri
Jan Jensen	Kathleen King
Joan Gilbert Martin	Betty Mello
Kim & Skip Natuk	Molly & Mickey Ording
Paul Parsons	Dave Peyton
Elizabeth Porter	Barbara Reding
Linda Sanders	Steve & Carolyn Swift
Pajaro Valley Historical Society	
Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History	
Strock Real Estate	

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

Mike and Shelly Robelotto: scans of Capitola photos, circa 1915-1920  
Irene Berry: Capitola Theater memorabilia  
Leslie Nielsen: pile from Capitola Light Tackle Club  
Becki Carmichael: part of lane from the Capitola Bowling Alley (collected by her father, Frank Sutherland)  
Niels Kising: Scan of O'Neill Winter Storm of 1983 poster

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: **Thursday-Sunday Noon-4:P.M.**

Curator: Deborah Osterberg

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