

# CAPITOLA SUNSET

December 2007, Volume 1, Issue 4

## Book Making History

An expectant crowd was pacing the sidewalk outside the museum long before noon on Dec. 1, and Capitola history fans came streaming through the door the moment it opened. Everyone hoped to get his or her hands on at least one copy of the *The Grand Hotel Capitola*.



Co-authors Gordon van Zuiden and Carolyn Swift rarely had a chance to look up from autographing the one hundred copies made available at the event. The signing continued until the books sold out.



Mayor Mike Termini gets his book signed by Carolyn Swift and Gordon van Zuiden

Book revisions were wrapped up in November about the same time the finishing touches were done on the accompanying exhibit, "Welcome to the Hotel Capitola."

It proved worthwhile to get both projects done in time for the holidays. Gordon said the book response was "greater than I imagined it could be." Rarely has the museum been so jammed with well-wishers, who—thanks to museum board teamwork—were able to buy books, enjoy refreshments, chat with friends, and see a new show all at the same time.

Larry Smith, nimbly shifting through the crowd with his camera, stopped the action as he captured an impressive series of photographs. Volunteer Minna Hertel was also seen filming the action with her camcorder.

Among those credited in the book's acknowledgments who were also present at the event were Stan Stevens of the Hihn-Younger Archive; Jane Snook of Beyond Photos; Charlene Duval of the Sourisseau Academy, San Jose State University; and editor Judy Steen.

## How to Buy the Book

More books were ordered at the end of the reception on Dec. 1. Those wishing to purchase copies were encouraged to list their names. Also, thanks to Board Secretary Topsy Smalley, who manages the museum website, copies of *The Grand Hotel Capitola* can now also be purchased by following the links at [www.capitolamuseum.org](http://www.capitolamuseum.org).

Available for a donation of \$50, the 95-page hardcover edition showcases exceptionally clear images of the Capitola resort from its beginning in 1874 through the burning of the hotel in 1929 and the post hotel era. The history focuses on the hotel, but also touches on the founding of Capitola, the role of developer Frederick Hihn in determining the shape of the resort's future, and the shift that

took place after 1919 under the ownership of H. Allen Rispin and the Capitola Company.

## Creators of the “Welcome to the Hotel Capitola” Exhibit



Carolyn Swift and Judy Steen aren't exactly sure how many exhibits they've created together since 1993—the year Carolyn was appointed museum director—but they've been able to list more than twenty-eight, an average of at least two a year.

Judy designed all the shows, providing the City of Capitola with roughly 6,000 volunteer hours. Lending both her talent and personal collection of artifacts, she's helped the museum become known for accuracy, originality, and dependability. Capitola Museum owes a large part of its success in the past 14 years to Judy, and the Board of Trustees wishes once again to express its deepest thanks.

Appreciated help on the “Welcome to the Hotel Capitola” exhibit was also given by Joe Michalak, Steve Swift, Larry and Linda Smith, Stan Stevens, Gordon van Zuiden, Jerry Garretson, and Betsy Connors.

## President's Corner

By Linda Smith

The calendar year's end is an excellent time for reflection, and as I look back over 2007, I feel

excited about our progress at the museum and the opportunities ahead.

Capitola Historical Museum welcomed nearly 5,000 visitors to the “Are We There Yet” exhibit that closed in September. Included were 550 guests who took advantage of our new expanded schedule by stopping in on Wednesdays.

Docents increased hours even more by volunteering during special village events such as the Classic Car Show in June and the annual Wharf-to-Wharf race in July. These extra shifts allowed more than eighty people to visit, increasing the attendance by thirty percent over last year on those days.

It's been rewarding to hear people say, “I've lived in Capitola for many years, and now I have a chance to see the museum.” It's the volunteers who've achieved this growth, and we appreciate them for every hour the door is open.

Our programs, too, were enhanced. A DVD illustrating the first century of Capitola history was created, and a “Kid's Quiz” was designed for the exhibit by docent Jen Brackett.

Through generous community donations and help from the City of Capitola, the museum revived the atmosphere of resort summer life, c1910, with a permanent exhibit in the cottage next door. The washhouse relocation followed soon after, and restoration work has steadily progressed. Both activities have significantly increased foot traffic from the sidewalk to the museum door.

These endeavors, by the way, took place while the museum board was in membership transition. We lost several long-term trustees while adding three new ones, all volunteers who are now giving time to board projects as well as regular shift duties.

Settling in with its new membership, the board decided to launch the *Capitola Sunset*. Prepared for publication and edited by trustee Darcy Horton, the newsletter has succeeded in linking the museum more closely to both its volunteers and community supporters.

Saving some of the best for last, we began the holiday season by publishing our first book, *The Grand Capitola Hotel*, and opening “Welcome to the Hotel Capitola,” the complementary exhibit. The reception to these events—discussed more fully elsewhere in the newsletter—surpassed expectation.

Looking forward to 2008, museum trustees will continue to invite people to work with us to preserve and share Capitola history, and to gather suggestions from volunteers that will help make their gift of time a rewarding one. Anyone interested in joining the team can call the museum, 464-0322, and will receive details on volunteer training from Niels Kisling, volunteer coordinator.

In closing, I extend sincere thanks once again to the volunteers who’ve been the voice and smile of the Capitola Museum for the past twelve months: Jen Brackett, Olivia Brugger, Al and Marian Carlson, Dale Cooksey, Judy Craig, Stephanie Harlan, Minna Hertel, Janet House, Lydia Langston, Fran Miller, Paul Parsons, Bill Patterson, Ettamae Shaffer, Mike Sibert, Steve Swift, Valerie Webb, Dorothy Whitmore, and George Wightman.

I hope to see you all in 2008!

## Acknowledgments

Funds received in response to the September newsletter will be used to complete work on the washhouse, which to date has been done without City funding, and begin restoration of other historically significant artifacts in the museum collection. Many thanks to the following generous people:

- Susan Austin
- Mike and Lin Banks
- Robert Begun
- Marion Carlson
- Michael Clark
- Emil Edgren
- Ron and Diane Graves
- Tony and Kathryn Gualtieri
- Carin and Glenn Hanna
- Rick Heblon

- Darcy Horton
- Peter Hubback
- Cynthia Matthews
- Robert and Elda McLean
- Kate Minott
- Paul Parsons
- Jim and Barbara Reding
- Karen Ruland
- Ettamae Shaffer
- Mike Siebert
- Larry and Linda Smith
- Nels and Susan Westman

The Capitola Museum was thrilled to receive its largest single donation to date from Vann and Christine Slatter in memory of his grandfather Herman Kraft.

## New Acquisitions

Visitors have been good to us this fall, bringing in images that give us fresh perspectives for future exhibits!

### Images of China Beach

Ron Olmstead of Hollister gathered photos and taped first-person interviews about the fishing and summer vacation settlement that existed at China Beach before 1933, when the land was purchased for a park.

The original name “China Beach” referred to a



colony of Chinese fishermen who leased the cove from Frederick Hihn from the 1870s through the early 1890s. In 1897, Thomas Lindsay started a seining company on the site. Later his son, Athol “Tom” Lindsay,

built a row of summer cottages that included one owned by Olmstead's family.

When New Brighton Beach State Park was created, family members saved their beach cottage by trucking it to the top of the bluff on Grove Lane, off Park Avenue. In the 1932 photo on the previous page, taken shortly before the move, seven-year-old Lee Lester is showing off his catch in front of Fred Lester's boat.

### Photos of E.V. Woodhouse

Showing excellent timing, John Law Smith of Capitola appeared at the museum one afternoon while work was underway on the new exhibit. In his hand was a copy of a front page *Sentinel* news article dated September 7, 1947, reporting the death of Everard Vignoles "Teddy" Woodhouse, the man who owned the Hotel Capitola at the time of its destruction in 1929. Even more exciting was the CD of photos that Smith copied for the museum from a family album. One of Teddy was immediately enlarged and popped into the exhibit!

### Maude Emery Album

Horton Kooser, whose picture as a boy with his dog was featured in the "Are We There Yet? Destination Capitola" exhibit, visited from Graeagle and presented the museum with an album that had belonged to his aunt, Maude Emery. Included were small snapshots with unusual views of Capitola Avenue near the trestle, c1918. Of particular interest was one showing a line of petite, one-room cabins similar to the restored cottage next to the museum.

## Volunteer Spotlight: Ettamae Shaffer

She's the only volunteer permanently written into the volunteer schedule. Every Friday for the past eleven years, like clockwork, Ettamae has showed up at 2:00pm to warmly greet visitors to the museum.

When she's not at the museum you can find her knitting items to be sold at the Mid-County Senior Center, welcoming you at the Dominican Hospital Rehabilitation Center, or spending time with her daughter or grandchildren and their families, including two great grandchildren. When



questioned, she admits with a smile that her great grandchildren are the "smartest little kids I ever saw...and very polite."

One of her memories of

Capitola involves the end of World War II. According to Ettamae, "People were yelling and hollering and coming off the Capitola beach." Later in the day she and her family visited with friends on Central Avenue. For the first time ever they were not offered any alcoholic beverages during the cocktail hour. The U.S. Government had issued an announcement closing all bars and forbidding the sale of alcohol. Ettamae said they were afraid people would get out of control due to the end of the war.

Thanks Ettamae for all that you do!

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Museum Hours: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 12 to 4 p.m.

**Museum Director:** Carolyn Swift

**Board of Trustees:** Linda Smith (President), Darcy Horton (Vice President), Tom McGranahan (Treasurer), Topsy Smalley (Secretary), Gordon van Zuiden, Bob Anderson, and Niels Kisling