

# CAPITOLA SUNSET

December 2009, Volume 3, Issue 4

## Fundraiser Extraordinaire

Vann Slatter of Hunter Hill Winery and Slatter Construction grew up in Capitola and came up with the idea months ago—a fundraiser for the Capitola Historical Museum—their first ever. Then his wife Christine along with Michael Clark of Michael's on Main restaurant pitched in. They pulled it off on Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup> with a lively crowd, delightful weather, and perfect food and music.



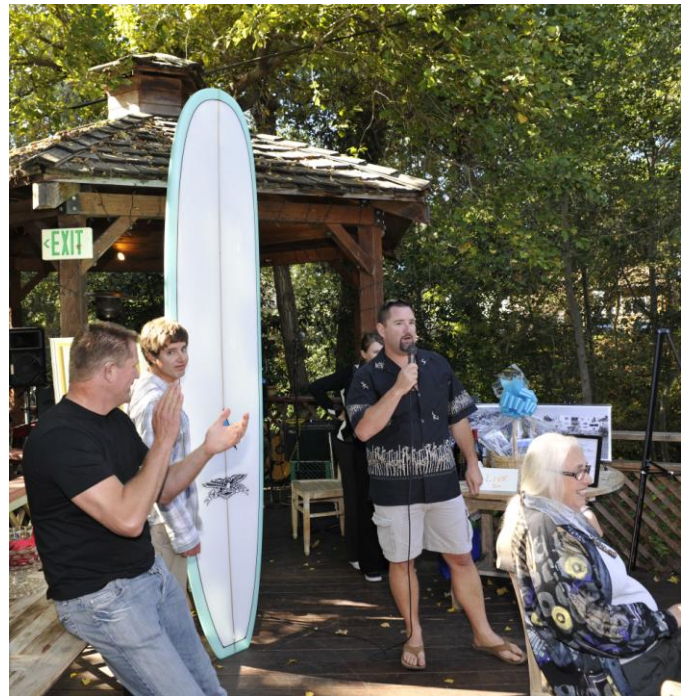
Carolyn Swift, Michael Clark, Linda Smith, and Vann and Christine Slatter enjoy the fundraiser.

The setting was the deck overlooking Soquel Creek at Michael's on Main restaurant in Soquel. As guests perused the silent and live auction items, chatted with each other, tasted local wines, and munched on appetizers, local band Mike Hadley and the Groove played in the background.

Big ticket live auction items included dinner for 12 at Hunter Hill Winery catered by Michael's on Main with local historians Carolyn Swift and Sandy Lydon in attendance, a new custom Pearson Arrow long board donated by Arrow Surf Shop, and an original Olaf Palm painting donated by Vann and Christine Slatter.

Our generous sponsors included Hunter Hill Vineyard and Winery, Michael's on Main, Mike Hadley and The Groove, Shadowbrook Restaurant, The Crow's Nest, Slatter Construction, Santa Cruz County Bank, and Robert Rittenhouse. Thank you sponsors and donors for your generous donations and support. Our gratitude also goes to Carolyn McGlenn-Newton, her daughter Brittany, and Dena Brautovich who made the auction a grand success.

Based on the proceeds raised at this event, ideas to improve the safekeeping of the Capitola Museum collection are being researched and explored in earnest. Future newsletters will include our plans to provide greater protection for Capitola's collection artwork and other historical artifacts.



Attendees bid up the Pearson Arrow surfboard.

## A Landmark History of Capitola

During the creation of every Capitola Museum exhibit, there's a defining spark that gives the

show its character. It's not quite the supercharged, Frankenstein-in-the-lab kind of thing, but something with enough zap to set the mood.

Often it's finding just the right object—a bronze lamp, a wood carving, a fishing rod—or a friend appears with a missing piece of storyline, or a never-seen-before image completes the big picture.

Built by many hands, "A Landmark History of Capitola," came to life in late December with a series of such electrifying moments.

The landmark theme was chosen because so many familiar sights and beloved structures have come and gone from Capitola since it was founded in 1874. Hammered in between two bluffs and set down by the sea, the resort's distinctive personality was shaped by the landscape, its buildings, and the summertime tourist season.

To fully illuminate the idea, the exhibit needed a focus, a visual spotlight to grab the viewer's attention.

Museum Board President Linda Smith found it, and with the generous donation from Jeff and Cathie Thurmond, the museum acquired a stained glass window that once graced the Ohio Building at the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco.

From 1915 until the home was demolished in 2004, the window rested in the Arts and Crafts Style house built on Prospect Avenue by Al Lent, a larger-than-life figure in Capitola's past.

Bringing the stained glass window and other architectural details of the house from storage in Watsonville was accomplished with help from Harry Smeenk of Smeenk Construction. Its arrival and installation at the museum was masterminded by Steve Swift and Nels Westman, who gave it light. On two mornings over the holidays, they and a team of helpers successfully hoisted the heavy glass frame and locked it in place on the ceiling.

Among those shouldering the job were David Shoaf, Larry Smith, Chuck Race, Mike Pesco, and public works staff coordinated by Eddie Ray Garcia and Ed Morrison.

Judy Steen guided the display building, assisted by workers, photographers, and object donors that included Richard and Theresa Crocker, Charlene Duval, Gary Geyer, Niels and Joanne Kisling, Joe Michalak, Karen Nevis, John and Anne Nicol, Richard Nutter, Jim and Barbara Reding, the Smiths, Gordon Van Zuiden, Ann Wagner, and Dorothy and Donald Washam. These individuals have given "A Landmark History of Capitola" a vibrant spirit.

**Join us at our exhibit opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, February 11, in the museum.**

## New Exhibit Dedicated to Georgette



Capitola Historical Museum Board of Trustees announces the dedication of "A Landmark History of Capitola" to the memory of Georgette M. Dufresne, who served as a board member from 1992

through 2007. The accompanying photograph of Georgette was taken at a time of beginnings, shortly after her appointment as a trustee.

The last email from Georgette is still in the museum computer's inbox. She had just completed chemotherapy and sent a thank you to all the friends who had supported and helped her since her cancer diagnosis. So typical of Georgette, the

message was upbeat, energetic, and laced with humor.

Georgette's passing on January 14 brought unexpected, sad news.

Now we celebrate her life as we hold onto our memories of her zany enthusiasm, vast creativity, and endless commitment.

## Al Lent: Capitola Icon

One of the leading figures of "A Landmark History of Capitola" is Al Lent, an icon in Capitola history. A respected sportsman and mentor for young fishermen, Lent was known to gallop along the beach in a full horseman's regalia, including a Mexican silver saddle.

As a young man, Lent had been a semi-professional ballplayer. He made friends with Harry Hooper, a pro with the Boston Red Sox who lived off-season in Capitola. Hooper inspired the Lents to move here, too, and by 1915 the family—Al and his wife Hattie (Harriet), with children Dorothy and Buzz (Donald)—had settled into an Arts and Crafts Style house perched along Prospect Avenue overlooking Wharf Road.

In later years, the Lents were joined by a granddaughter, Dorothy (Ginger) Lent Washam, who lived with the family during her childhood years. Following Harriet's death in 1940, Al remarried. He and Molly Lent had two daughters, Sally and Nancy, who also grew up in the family home. Molly was an artist known for her wood carvings, particularly of horses.

Like his friend Harry Hooper, Al was a real estate agent, but was best known for his skills as a hunter and fisherman, particularly as one of the first to fly fish for steelhead, which he could see swimming in Soquel Creek from the balcony of his house.

From 1915 until he died in 1969, Al was a congenial host. His home was crowded with

western relics, trophies, highly polished guns, and souvenirs from legendary characters like Will Rogers and Jack London.



This photograph was taken of Al and his son, Buzz, about the time the family moved to Capitola from Concord.

## New Acquisitions

Artifacts came pouring into the museum over the past few months. Jeff and Cathie Thurmond donated a stained glass window from the Lent house, and granddaughter Dorothy Lent Washam donated Lent family photos.

Other photos as well as camera equipment were donated, including Capitola photos from John Nicol; vintage cameras from Paul and Terry Gregory; cameras, tools, and clothing from Ed Hillman; and Capitola storm and high tide photos from Sharon and Joseph Barrington and Gayle Ortiz.

We also received a series of letters from Jim and Barbara Reding, a copy of *Live Oak School History, Revised Edition* from Norm Poitevin, an addition to the music archive from the Santa Cruz Jazz Society, and paintings of Brad and Jack Macdonald by Lewis Sorensen from the David Macdonald family.

## Acknowledgments

Thanks to the following people for their generous donations:

- Emil Edgren
- Erik's Deli Cafe
- Tony and Kathryn Gualtieri
- Tony and Kathryn Gualtieri in memory of Georgette DuFresne
- Marvin Jensen
- Damon Macdonald
- Kate Minott
- Gayle and Joe Ortiz
- Jeanne Russell
- Nels and Susan Westman

## Volunteer Spotlight: Al and Marian Carlson



Like two good cards in a poker hand, Al and Marian Carlson always show up for their museum shift as a pair. They make a good team with her good looks and his long-time association with Capitola. Marian says she sometimes feels like a newcomer since she has “only” lived in Capitola for twenty years.

On covering her museum shifts with Al she says, “He is handy to have along. His knowledge of Capitola goes back to the 1930s.”

Back then, Al's father often towed a rowing dory behind the 1934 Chevrolet family sedan to

Capitola. The trip over the two-lane Old San Jose highway passed through Father Riker's Holy City. Cars had mechanical brakes and poor suspension in the 1930s, so the drive over the hill was always an adventure for Al and his two brothers.

Captain Mitchell, who ran the wharf in those days, would launch their dory by hand using a block and tackle. Al's family often stayed in a cottage in what is now New Brighton State Park, and sometimes they beached their dory near the cottage for the weekend.

Marian is a career school teacher who taught elementary grades full-time in Sacramento. She has a passion for elementary aged children and cannot stop teaching. She still teaches for the Soquel Unified School District as a substitute at their three elementary schools.

After retiring in 1995, Al started serving Capitola by volunteering on the finance committee. His 32 years with the Santa Clara Tax Assessor's office left him with a great background in numbers and how local governments operate. He says that since he used to help approve the museum budget for Carolyn Swift each year, he and Marian might as well volunteer to help spend it.

This is how the Capitola Museum became lucky enough to benefit from Al and Marian Carlson's time, energy, and rich knowledge of our local history. They come in pairs, and they make up the wonderful team of Carlson and Carlson.

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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