

# Capitola Sunset

CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Fall 2011

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

## Begonias A-Go Go

When the museum decided to host the “Begonias to Go, Head-to-Toe” event on both Saturday and Sunday this year, all of us involved in the traditional happening felt we were in fine step with the 2011 Begonia Festival theme, “Let’s Dance.”

On Saturday, we brought from the Brown Bulb Ranch growing fields a full truckload of freshly-plucked begonias. Thank-you, Boy Scout Troop 642! We got into a rhythm as hundreds of blossoms were given away in what looked like a two-hour free-for-all.



Museum Board President Linda Smith is seen here in the back of her pick-up truck staging begonias for the decoration frenzy.

In reality, participants were making their choices carefully, each dancing to their own tune. Did they want the lace begonia, or a double ruffled picotee? Would they tie them to a hat, a baby’s stroller, bicycle, scooter, or the dog’s collar?

By noon on Sunday, the entire lot of flowers had danced away, as festival-goers hopped, bopped, and boogied on down to the lagoon for the nautical parade.

Extra thanks are extended to Julia Garcia for dancing with us until the colorful, petal-strewn, end.



Families came together to decorate and the smiles lingered long after the begonia blossoms were gone.

This baby probably didn’t know it, but she was celebrating her first Begonia Festival.



## Open for Business

Capitola Self Storage is open for business at 809 Bay Avenue and the Capitola Museum archive is at last under one roof!

Craig French and Red Tree Properties designed a custom storage space for the museum to lease and we moved today—October 4. The artifacts threatened by the March floods and those stored in an office space next door, moved last December, have been united in the mega-sized second floor unit. Steve and Carolyn Swift along with two city workers moved our treasures as we go to press.

In appreciation for the bighearted help we've received—and taking advantage of an opportunity to expand to a new audience—the Capitola Museum recently decorated the bare walls inside the public promenade with historical photos from our archives. Craig French's generosity continues as he hired a professional builder to assist museum helper Steve Swift in hanging the display.



Museum photos decorate the main promenade in the newly opened Capitola Self Storage facility at 809 Bay Avenue. Come take a look!

Together it took them eight hours to meticulously arrange and hang the photos. These images of Capitola's past really brighten up the concrete interior walls and add a bit of Capitola flavor that sets this storage facility apart from the rest. The public is welcome to view the display by simply asking the office staff for a peek.

Another neat feature inside is that all the aisles are named after Capitola streets. The aisles bear names like Stockton Ave., Hollister Ave., Capitola Ave., San Jose Ave., and so on. It's very clever!

We are grateful to Red Tree Properties and to Craig French for providing us with safe, climate controlled space for the museum archives. Capitola Self Storage and the Capitola Historical Museum are both providing a future for our past by keeping our historical treasures safe and dry.

## Capitola History: Uncorked!

By Niels Kisling

Historically speaking, the recent Capitola Art and Wine Festival was a smashing success for the

Capitola Museum. We 'set up shop' with a small exhibit in the village and the people came. A few days before the festival, I sorted through our old photographs and artifacts in the storage unit on Bay Avenue.

I was looking for just a few items to fill a table display and my challenge was to pick just a few things. The museum owns so many treasures that are now easy to browse through since they are organized and spread out in a comfortable place with space and light. I wanted one of everything!

I picked a few vintage photos that used to hang in the City Council Chamber. One of the Hotel Capitola and one of our iconic trestle with two steam locomotives pulling the train over Soquel Creek. Both were taken in the early 1900s. I also selected a ceramic tile that museum trustee Gordon van Zuiden had commissioned years ago featuring a photograph of the then-1000 foot long Soquel Landing (now Capitola Wharf) with a freighter tied up alongside.



Larry Smith and Paul Gregory stopped by to toast our mini-museum located beneath the palm tree that Teddy Woodhouse moved to the village in the 1921. We forgot to ask them if they were browsing for art, hungering for history or looking for wine.

Locals and visiting 'historians' came out of the woodwork to share with us their stories of Capitola's past, and everyone delighted in sharing a blast from the past. (Everyone is an historian; you just may not realize it yet.)

Capitola, the oldest resort on the West Coast, continues to be a fun destination for locals and visitors alike; especially when you throw in a little history, good conversation, art and wine.

## Camera Ready

It took a little while for visitors passing by on the sidewalk to get the new invitation the museum is offering. Once they understood that artist Frank Hill's trolley car cutout was a chance for some old-fashioned fun, kids and adults began lining up to get their pictures taken.

Frank also created our "come take a peek" swimsuit figure at the little cabin next door, so the new attraction is an ideal accompaniment to the museum exterior.

Three "faces" in the scene can be either dropped down or left-up, depending on the number of people posing for the camera.



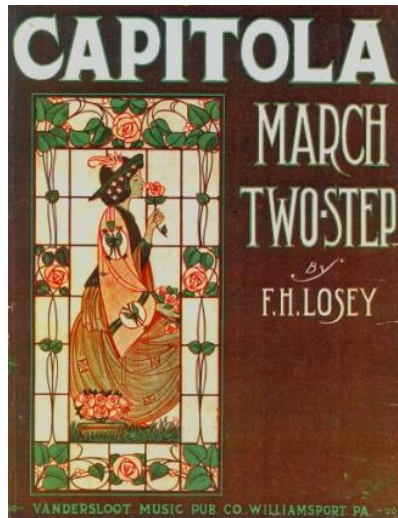
Frank's art career began in the 1950s and has been linked to a long list of comic strip characters, including Dennis the Menace, Bugs Bunny, and one that carried Frank's name for awhile, Short Ribs, which ran in more than 500 newspapers.

In recent years, Frank has assisted the museum with a number of projects, including one of our favorite past exhibits, "Just Beachy—Capitola in the 1950s."

## A New Step to the Two-Step

Museum volunteer and videographer Minna Hertel, videographers Wallace Boss and Megan Orr, songwriter Joe Ortiz, and musical performer Ukulele

Dick recently completed an original, exuberant tribute to Capitola.



Hertel had the idea, and then approached Ortiz, who wrote a song to F.H. Losey's 1913 sheet music "Capitola March Two-Step."

Ukulele Dick strolled, strummed and sang his way through the village. In the video, Boss and Orr blended the images of contemporary Capitola with historic photographs to create "Capitola Serenade." The result is a fresh and thoroughly enjoyable perspective looking backward in time at a place "where land and sky meet the sand and sea."

"Capitola Serenade" is among three new video works completed by Hertel, Orr and Boss. Another presents scenes of the March flood in the village, using footage filmed by Linda Smith and Sean Dowling, mixed with scenes of the current exhibit, "Capitola—It's About Time." The third video is a behind-the-scenes exhibit tour with Museum Director Carolyn Swift.

## Capitola Museum has recently received generous donations from:

**Dori and Bruce Arthur, in memory of Dave Lynn**

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Lori Bross              | Dianne White Burbank   |
| Mardel Carnahan         | Mike Clark             |
| Lucille and Emil Edgren | Carol Fuller           |
| Ron Graves              | Linda Hanson           |
| Marvin Jensen           | Kathleen King          |
| Joan Gilbert Martin     | Betty Mello            |
| Anna and William Mork   | Gayle and Joe Ortiz    |
| Paul Parsons            | Susan and Nels Westman |



# Gordon van Zuiden Hunts for the Picture-Perfect

By Gordon van Zuiden

When we bought our beach bungalow in Capitola Village in 1992, I discovered it was an original Sears Kit Home built on Fanmar Way in 1930. I was at first intrigued by the home's background, but soon fascinated as well by Capitola history. Reading "Soquel Landing to Capitola by the Sea," written in 1978 by Carolyn Swift and Sandy Lydon, I learned about the past and was enchanted by the remarkable photos that depicted the character and appearance of our town in its first century.

Shortly after reading the book, I met Carolyn and she introduced me to the Capitola Historical Museum's photograph collection. As soon as I saw these photos, I began searching for more. I became an enthusiast intent on locating as many of these treasured images as I could find to share with the museum, my family, and my friends.

It's exciting to look at detailed photographs of children playing on old, wooden swing sets on the beach in front of the old concert bandstand (see the Britton family postcard below), or a World War I era band marching down the Esplanade. Viewing images like these, I feel as if I'm reaching back in time getting a feel of what life in Capitola was like in past generations.



Today I can walk along any avenue in the village and reflect back on what these streets looked like a century ago, and how people enjoyed themselves in town, with such activities as riding on mules down

the Esplanade, dancing and skating in the large recreational pavilions, or sledding down a four-story slide into the lagoon—all visions brought to life in the photographs that I've enjoyed collecting and sharing with the museum over the last 15 years.

Becoming a Capitola Museum Board trustee gave me the inspiration to start compiling an online photographic database that matches extraordinary Capitola images with relevant history. I admire and search for photographs rich in visual detail, and have been able to gather a collection categorized by themes, while Carolyn is supplying each new find with interpretive narration and Linda Smith provides technical assistance.

## New acquisitions:

**Stanley D. Stevens, Librarian Emeritus and Coordinator of the Hihn-Younger Archive.**

**F.A. Hihn Company Record Books, Volume 17-21  
Cumulative Subjects Headings, Volume 1-21 and  
The Water Volume.**

**Diane Emigh-Family photographs of Capitola and  
New Brighton**

**Jennifer Morse-Family photographs of Capitola and  
New Brighton**

**Doree Steinmann-Videotape of the 2010 Capitola  
Theater demolition**

**Minna Hertel-Videotapes of the April 2011 flood and  
"It's About Time" exhibit**

Thanks for joining the museum as new volunteers:

**Joan Armstrong**

**Tony Barnett**

**Marcia Biancalana**

**John Doty**

**Beth Silcott**

**Carol Walker**

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410 Capitola Ave., Capitola, CA 95010

**Website: [www.capitolamuseum.org](http://www.capitolamuseum.org)**

Email: [cswift@ci.capitola.ca.us](mailto:cswift@ci.capitola.ca.us) Phone: 831.464.0322

Museum Hours:

Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 12 to 4 p.m.

**Museum Director:** Carolyn Swift

**Board of Trustees:** Linda Smith (president), Bob Anderson (vice president), Tom McGranahan (treasurer), Topsy Smalley (secretary), Gordon van Zuiden, David Shoaf, and Niels Kisling