

CAPITOLA SUNSET

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A Fun and Successful Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

The museum director and trustees held their annual volunteer appreciation dinner on May 25 at the home of Linda and Larry Smith. The festivities started at 4 p.m. with cocktails followed by dinner. Invited guests included City Manager Rich Hill and his wife Laurie, as well as former Mayor and current Planning Commissioner and Art and Cultural Commissioner Mike Termini and his significant other, Kim Hogan. Paul Gregory was on hand tending bar, while Terry Gregory and Cathy Carlson kept the food flowing.



photo by Larry Smith

Part of the celebration included a surprise 90th birthday cake for Ettamae Shaffer. She was born on June 24, 1919, in Cambria, California. Her Italian grandparents immigrated to this country in the 1800s along with her father, who was 4 years old. A classic tale, they came to this country to provide a better life for themselves and their family. According to Ettamae, her grandfather's first priority after settling in his new country was to learn to speak English and become a citizen. Her father eventually became an engineer for an oil company fifty miles west of Bakersfield in an

oil town called Lost Hills. She remembers getting up at 6:30 a.m. each morning to catch the school bus to Taft, which was forty miles away.

Capitola's Birthday Weekend

Pirates swaggered through the seacoast village of Capitola By-The-Sea on May 16, recruiting youngsters for a treasure hunt that took them from the bandstand to the longest stairs, then to the tallest flagpole, and along the wood-splintered planks of the wharf.



photo by Karen Nevis

It was part of the fun of the city's 60th birthday bash weekend—two full days of parading, singing and dancing, bouncing and climbing, movies and popcorn, and cotton candy.

The scuttlebutt around town is that Michael Termini, head of the birthday committee, started a food fight during the pie-eating contest. He'd gotten totally into his role as "Terrible Termini," the pirate, so the flinging of cream filling was certainly in character.

The history of Capitola was center stage on Friday evening, when Sandy Lydon, Cabrillo College history professor emeritus, and Museum Director Carolyn Swift compared stories and traded barbs over the finer points of Capitola's past.

The party was fun, but it's not over till the fireworks, and those are still to come. Stay tuned.

History of the Capitola Art and Cultural Committee

With the excitement of all the events in May, Capitola's 60th municipal birthday celebration nearly eclipsed another important date in 2009—the Capitola Art and Cultural Commission's twenty-fifth anniversary.

A quarter century ago this autumn, in October 1984, the Capitola City Council set up the commission with a directive to encourage existing and new programs in the arts and to assist projects that "enhance the cultural climate of Capitola."

Appointees Minna Hertel, Jim Vandergrift, Robert "Robbie" Echert, Mahlon Conly, Ardith Porter, Angela Headley, and Barbara Reding sat down at their first meeting the following April. Reding, as the first president, led a "trial and error" exploration of creative ideas that fit the eclectic tastes of a seaside summer resort and sophisticated city. She remembers today that former City Manager Steve Burrell supported the commission's establishment and favored "thinking big." "Although there wasn't much money," she said, "he encouraged us to use our imaginations."

Everyone on the commission worked without staff help on their pet projects. Hertel wanted to acquire the works of local artists and to set up "Art in Public Places." Headley organized a senior art show, and Porter worked on plans for a foreign film festival at the Capitola Theater, while Reding, also a founder of the Capitola Art and Wine Festival, lobbied in Sacramento for statewide art funding. Echert, listening to his own inner musician, came up with a brainstorm that's become a Capitola Art and Cultural Commission signature event, the Annual Twilight Concert Series, which he continued to coordinate annually for ten years.

The concerts debuted in 1985 and played out their first few summers on the deck at Zelda's, a venue that in time became too-tightly packed. "It took awhile to catch on, so initially there wasn't a problem for servers to get food to customers during a concert," explains Hertel. "But once the audiences got bigger, we had to move."



One of the first Capitola Twilight Concerts featured Red Malone on the deck at Zelda's in August 1985

Concerts were shifted down the block to Esplanade Park in 1989. Immediately, organizers dreamed of a bandstand. The wish finally came true in 2007, although others—including hopes of seeing a cultural center in the Rispin Mansion—remained in the wings.

When Reding stepped down as president in 1987, she joined the Citizen's Advisory Committee for the Rispin Mansion to help decide its future. Hertel became the second president, and served several years before turning the gavel over to Sam Storey, who is today a Capitola City Council member.

The legacy handed on by the original commission members has provided a sturdy platform for the inspiration and talent that exists in the membership today. Capitola Museum Board of Directors—always interested in celebrating history—offers congratulations for the first twenty-five successful years, with best wishes toward an artistically radiant future!

Soquel Pioneer and Historical Association Picnic

Enthusiasts of Capitola and Soquel history will get an exceptional treat at the Soquel Pioneer and Historical Association's annual picnic this year, for speaker Frank Hill is not only "locally grown" with colorful memories, he's a congenial speaker and professional artist ready to back up his words with his skills as a cartoonist.



Over the past year, admirers of Capitola Museum's current "Just Beachy—Capitola in the 1950s" have enjoyed Hill's artwork and heard the stories of how

he was hired by Brad Macdonald to help create the interiors of The Shadowbrook Restaurant on Wharf Road and The Saba and Caribbean Ballroom on the Esplanade.

Since he began his career in the 1950s, Hill has been associated with a long list of comic strip characters, including Dennis the Menace, the Peanuts gang, Bugs Bunny, Tom and Jerry, The Flintstones, The Jetsons, Yogi Bear, the Pink Panther, and Felix the Cat. A feature that carried his name for a time was Short Ribs, which ran in more than 500 newspapers.

Hill has recently assisted the museum with the latest exhibit, the artwork for our popular Tiki T-shirt, and creation of the "Take A Peek" figure that invites guests to look inside the museum cottage. His view of the past at the upcoming picnic promises to be one-of-a-kind.

The Soquel Pioneer and Historical Association potluck picnic on Saturday, July 25 starts at 1 p.m.

Participants are requested to bring a dish to share and to arrive early to have time to look through old scrapbooks and photo displays. The event is held at Pringle Grove on Pringle Lane, off Main Street (across from Bargetto's Winery) in Soquel.

President's Corner

Although the summer days are long and warm at last, Capitola Museum's calendar is already starting to make the shift toward the autumn months, when plans get underway for our new exhibit and festivals hint at the inevitable changing of seasons.

On the drawing board for this year is an exhibit titled, "Location, Location, Vacation—The Landmark History of Capitola By-The-Sea." The focal point will be the visible markers—from fossil beds to bed-and-breakfasts—that have, over time, given Capitola its character. The new show will replace the current "Just Beachy—Capitola In the 1950s" at the end of Capitola's birthday year in December.

Meanwhile, museum trustees are ready to pilot the annual Capitola Begonia Festival's "Begonias To Go, Head To Toe," event once again on Sunday, Sept. 6. Festival organizers provide hundreds of blossoms so the public can experience the thrill of wiring and wearing begonias on hats, shoes, belts, and even their clothes. The fun starts around 10 a.m. in Esplanade Park, and lasts as long as the boxes of begonias. Themed "Capitola Takes Flight," the 56th Annual Nautical Parade will follow from 1 to 3 p.m.

Also in the planning stages is something new in museum history, a benefit event scheduled for Sunday afternoon, October 4. Supporters are encouraged to save the day and watch for announcements regarding a festive wine tasting and auction to be coordinated by Hunter Hill Vineyard and Winery and Michael's On Main in Soquel. Proceeds will support preservation of the museum collection, particularly its art collection. Board trustees are excited and honored that the museum has been chosen to be the recipient of this generous support. More details are forthcoming soon.

Acknowledgments

Funds received in response to our last newsletter will be used to restore historically significant artifacts in the Museum collection. Many thanks to the following generous people:

- Mike and Lin Banks
- Nancy and Ken Campeau
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- Kathleen King
- Kate Minott
- Ron Olmstead
- Paul and Judy Parsons
- Linda Sanders
- Ettamae Shaffer

Volunteer Spotlight: Minna Hertel



Nurse, photographer, supervisor, innkeeper, instructor, editor, commissioner and world traveler, Minna has done it all. Born and raised in Southern California, she graduated from Stanford with a nursing degree and worked as a nurse before taking a year off and traveling around the world.

On her return, she landed in Santa Barbara and taught nursing before she took off once again for another year, this time to travel the fifty states. As a lifelong Californian, she was amazed at the how different everyday life, culture and immigrant influences were in other states. She remembers feeling uncomfortable in the deep South because she had long straight hair and wore pants, something any self respecting southern belle would not be caught dead in. After her trip, she returned to nursing as the head nurse in a neonatal intensive care unit until she retired in 1975.

Not one to rest on her laurels, Minna and her mother purchased the Capitola Hotel that same year. Rooms were a modest \$35 a night and guests could grab breakfast across the street at The Pelican or enjoy the spaghetti dinner special at Capitola Joe's, a pool hall where Margaritaville now stands. At the movie theater, the popcorn was so good that people bought it and skipped the movie.

Minna then worked as a science content editor for McGraw Hill, retiring a second time in 1999. She sold the hotel a few years later, after the death of her mother, who was just shy of her 100th birthday. She now spends her time volunteering at the museum where she looks forward to visitors' stories as a way to feel connected to Capitola. Capturing her family history in various computer formats is another passion. She's completed one iBook and plans another of her black and white photos of Capitola.

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410 Capitola Ave., Capitola, CA 95010
Website: www.capitolamuseum.org
Email: cswift@ci.capitola.ca.us Phone: 831.464.0322
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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 Kising