

# Capitola Sunset

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Welcome to the first edition of the *Capitola Sunset*, the Capitola Historical Museum newsletter published by its board of trustees to let the museum's friends—our supporters and volunteers—know what has been happening in the little red building next to the Capitola City Hall.

We've chosen the title *Capitola Sunset* because it was the name of a news bulletin published daily in Camp Capitola by the partnership of "Sanborn and Barney" in 1897. The paper was issued every evening except Sunday and delivered both by carriers and by mail. The subscription price was 25 cents a week.

Unlike the original news publication, however, the museum's newsletter will only appear quarterly, and it won't cost a nickel!

## Are We There Yet?

No matter how they came—hiking on foot, sailing on steamers, riding in trains, or flying planes—travelers nearing Capitola traditionally repeated one phrase. It consisted of only four words: "Are we there yet?"

From the moment vacationers first arrived, Capitola visitors eagerly anticipated fun times ahead. The expectation of sticking one's toes in wet sand has been a joy shared by children and adults for more than 130 years.

To honor the journey and thousands of arrivals and departures, the Capitola Museum is currently displaying an exhibit entitled, "Are We There Yet? Destination Capitola."

This exhibit brings to life the timeless excitement of reaching a favorite summer home, whether a tent, hotel room, family cabin, or bungalow apartment.

*Are We There Yet? Destination Capitola* will be featured at the museum through the summer of 2007.

**New Expanded Hours:** In addition to being open from noon to 4:00pm Friday through Sunday, the museum is now open on Wednesday from noon to 4:00pm.

## Director's Message

By Carolyn Swift

In 1967, forty years ago, the newly established Capitola Museum left its cramped quarters in the backroom of a cabin downtown and moved into a 700-square-foot house that had been relocated from Live Oak and set in a corner of the City Hall parking lot.

Museum founder Phil Walker assisted by his friend and neighbor Ed Koski refurbished the building to give it the appearance of a little red schoolhouse. Longtime residents loaned or gave heirloom treasures, while members of the first board of directors spent hours creating museum displays.

The contribution of time and support from the City of Capitola and its community has continued ever since.

Our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary provides an opportunity to thank all those who offer time, energy, and resources to keep the museum open. More than ever, we are aware that volunteering is the gift that allows the museum to accomplish its mission.

In addition, the year 2007 promises to be an ambitious one as we will be celebrating our first

expansion. In December, the City Council approved the contract that has allowed work to start on the cottage next door. The necessary exterior work includes moving it forward, adding a foundation, and providing wheelchair access. These renovations are now nearing completion, and we are in the midst of collecting materials for an exhibit to be unveiled in early summer. The new show will demonstrate how vacation life was lived in Capitola c1912–1920.

Originally one of the “Cottage City” structures built across the street from the Santa Cruz Boardwalk, Capitola’s little cabin was sold and moved to Capitola in 1941. It was set on a rear lot on Oak Drive and enlarged as a private residence. Threatened with demolition in 2004, the original building was saved when the City Council agreed to relocate it as an extension to the museum.

When all the work is done, the museum will be able to offer visitors a glimpse of history whenever they choose to enjoy it. Although the doors will be closed, viewers will be able to peek inside to see vintage swimsuits, warm weather dress clothes, and the furnishings of a typical vacation holiday.

## New Acquisitions

One of the museum’s newest possessions has come to us with the help of a former volunteer, Jean Wolff, who called one day to set up an appointment for herself and a cousin, Jackie Coffin of Los Gatos. Jackie brought in a collection of photographs taken by her grandfather, Gilbert Clarence Varey, who was a visitor here in 1944. The photographs are unusual because they were taken in November in the off-season when businesses in Capitola were closed. In addition, they were taken during World War II, when film was more difficult to buy and hard to get developed. The photographic subjects also offer rare views of the village downtown.



Some people have said that this building at Capitola and Monterey Avenues was the Capitola Fire House in 1944. Does anybody know if this is true?

Varey family photo.