

# CAPITOLA SUNSET

September 2007, Volume 1, Issue 3

## Beach Blanket Begonias a Hit!

For the fourth year, the Capitola Museum hosted the very popular hat decorating event called "Beach Blanket Begonias" at the Begonia Festival. The event was again sponsored by Gayle's Bakery.

Museum Director Carolyn Swift and Trustees Linda Smith, Darcy Horton, Topsy Smalley and Gordon Van Zuiden were on hand to distribute begonias, cut wire to secure them and help people decorate their hats, shoes, purses, wrists and more.

Although the event was officially supposed to begin at 11 a.m., the minute Linda Smith pulled her truck into Esplanade Park the festivities were underway. Men, women and children enthusiastically decorated anything and everything with the colorful flowers.

The estimated 500 participants used one hundred flats of begonias. Many thanks to Boy Scout Troop 642 for picking all those begonias!



## A Few Words about Our Painted Lady

She's about to go into hiding for the winter, but our wood cutout, "Capitola Girl," welcomed thousands of curious visitors this summer. Paul Parsons, an active museum volunteer, came up with the idea of creating a figure that would draw attention to the new cabin exhibit next to the museum.



Paul asked his friend and neighbor, professional cartoonist Frank Hill, to sketch our bathing beauty. Hill's work has given the museum a new historic treasure, since he also is the artist who painted the dining couple on the Shadowbrook Restaurant's first tram in the 1950s, and designed Polynesian tikis for The Saba Nightclub on the Esplanade in 1954. Hill, who grew up in Capitola, has contributed to syndicated cartoon strips, including Dennis the Menace.

## President's Corner

By Linda Smith

Hello everyone! I was recently elected President of the Capitola Museum Board by the Trustees. It is an honor and a privilege for me to serve my community in this way.

There are so many exciting things happening at the museum these days. Work on the washhouse is coming along nicely, we have a new exhibit scheduled to open in November, and we have a new book that corresponds with the new exhibit.

You'll read about all of these in detail later in this newsletter.

I am also pleased to announce that we have a new Trustee. Niels Kisling lives in Capitola with his wife and two young children. He has lived in the same house in Capitola since he was eleven and has some vivid memories of Capitola.

Niels remembers playing skee ball and air hockey in the village, bowling at the Capitola Bowl and eating his share of Babe's famous fries at the Bandstand restaurant. He and his friends used to sneak into the crying room at The Capitola Theater and sit on the big, comfy couch, "privately" watching the show. Niels is a 1973 Capitola Viking, having graduated from Capitola Intermediate School, where Wayne Fontes actually paddled his best friend Paul once for being a bad boy. Joe Joe Urbancic taught him how to bait his first hook when he was 12-years-old, and Niels got his driver's license when the town had a 3-car police force. He will be taking over the Volunteer Coordinator duties, so you should have an opportunity to meet and talk with him soon!

Many thanks to all the volunteers for your efforts over the summer months. The Museum reached a peak of over 700 visitors a month!

I look forward to seeing everyone at the opening of the new exhibit in November!

## A New Book with a Panoramic View



A pictorial history of "The Grand Hotel Capitola," will be released to the public and available in the

museum in mid-November. Authors Carolyn Swift, Museum Director, and Gordon Van Zuiden, Board Trustee, have matched writing and research talents with rare Capitola images. A hardback edition, this book tells the story of how the resort grew during the era of Capitola's 160-room hotel, 1895-1929, and illustrates how it commanded a strategic location by the sea. Using crisp, clear photographic images, "The Grand Hotel Capitola" shows how this architecturally distinctive structure stood to define the character of Capitola and symbolized the influence of its developer, Frederick August Hihn.

## Exhibit News

### Such a Lovely Place—Welcome to the Hotel Capitola

Coinciding with the museum's upcoming book publication, work is underway on a new exhibit, "Welcome to the Hotel Capitola," to open on November 10<sup>th</sup>.

After a successful summer season, the "Are We There Yet? Destination Capitola" exhibit concluded in mid-September.

Capitola artifacts, research, and photographs have been collected for the new show, which will be designed to give visitors an impression of what it was like to be a hotel guest a century ago.

### Washhouse: Set on a Firm Foundation

Looking trimmer and sturdier, the vintage washhouse that was moved next to the museum last spring is now resting on its newly completed concrete foundation.

Architect Frank Phanton provided the plans, and Steve Swift coordinated with city staff members Steve Jesberg, Daniel Kostelec, and Mark Wheeler to construct the concrete slab. Tony and Kathryn Gualtieri generously donated funds for the concrete.

A few weeks later, on Sunday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, Swift and a small crew under the guidance of Kevin Payne, and including Nels Westman, gingerly shifted the structure toward its new site. Chris and

Wendy Tryde, who were passing by, jumped in to provide the last bit of needed “umph” to glide the washhouse into place.

The Capitola Museum Board of Trustees is grateful to all those who donated time, money, and labor toward the preservation and rehabilitation of the washhouse.

### **Washhouse Fundraising Campaign**

The fundraising campaign to complete work on the washhouse is continuing, and the Museum Board of Trustees has set a goal of \$2,500. Donations sent to the museum in the envelopes attached to this newsletter will be used to get the job done this winter. Thanks to the Capitola community and the friends of the museum, it is possible to preserve and share the resort’s historic identity.

### **Acknowledgments**

We received additional donations in response to our June newsletter. This money will be used to develop museum exhibits and educational programs as well as acquire historical artifacts and photographs. Many thanks to the following generous people:

- Ted Burke
- Joe & Gayle Ortiz
- Yvonne Zannis

Specific donations for the restoration of the washhouse were gratefully received from:

- Mike Banks
- Rick Heblon
- Kirby Nicol
- Emma Rock
- Larry Smith

### **New Acquisitions**

Artifact donations were received this summer from museum Trustee Niels Kisling, museum volunteer Dorothy Whitmore, David Foster of the Community Development Department, City of Capitola, and Cecilia Riddell.

### **The 63<sup>rd</sup> Coast Artillery and Camp McQuaide**

The 63<sup>rd</sup> Coast Artillery Regiment first set up an anti-aircraft battalion on Delaware Street in Santa Cruz in the fall of 1924. Evidently the site was so bad that regiment officers told Santa Cruz Mayor Fred Swanton they would not be back unless he could find a better field.

This was how the first anti-aircraft base on the California coast ended up in Capitola in 1926, initially as the 63<sup>rd</sup>, and later as the 250<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery.

Permanent barracks for the summer encampment were built along Park Avenue. Every summer the guns fired at targets attached to either boats or airplanes that lifted off from Hihn’s field, which became the Capitola Airport.

Camp McQuaide took its name from a National Guard Chaplain, Joseph P. McQuaide. Born in 1867, McQuaide was a graduate of Santa Clara University, and served both in the Spanish American War and World War I. He died March 29, 1924, about the time the Capitola encampment was established.

The military camp remained here through 1936, when the announcement was made that it had worn out its welcome. Local poultry ranchers took the blame.

“Poultrymen in the Capitola region who used to complain that the noise of the big guns kept their hens from laying and frightened the chicks nearly to death can rest without fear of further demoralization of their feathered flocks,” stated a reporter for the Santa Cruz Sentinel.

In 1938, Camp McQuaide moved between Manresa and Sunset beaches on San Andreas Road, a site

that is today the home of the Monterey Bay Academy.

## A Personal Connection to the 63<sup>rd</sup> Coast Artillery and Camp McQuaide

When Cecilia Riddell discovered family albums with images of Capitola's Camp McQuaide, she drove to the museum from her home in Oakland and allowed a number of exceptional images to be copied.

Camp McQuaide existed for ten years on the site occupied today by the New Brighton Middle School. Riddell's father, Ferris Wakefield Miles, was a young man stationed with Battery B of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Coast Artillery in the summer of 1928—just a year after the camp was moved from Santa Cruz to Hihn's field in Capitola.

In addition to rare views of the officers' quarters, tents, trucks, and artillery, Miles provided an



explanation for how the guns were fired out to sea. Referring to a tower in the distance in one snapshot, he wrote on the back, "The tower is an observation post for the safety officer. If there are boats in the field of fire, he causes the battery to cease firing."

The "cease firing" system was effective, no doubt, but it must have created a little nervousness within the Capitola fishing community that made its way along the coastline on a daily basis.

## Volunteers, We've Got Name Badges

The next time you volunteer at the museum be sure to pick up your new name badge. Darcy Horton, one of our Trustees, created the badges for everyone so that people would know who we are.

**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
- Niels Kisling

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Museum Hours: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 12 to 4 p.m.  
**NOTE: Museum will be closed September 17th through November 9th and will re-open on November 10th.**