

Capitola Sunset

CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Summer 2012

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

Hill's Soquel Murals Come to Capitola

When Frank Hill painted murals of Soquel's past on the finished walls above the boxes at Soquel Post Office, he never imagined they would themselves become objects of historical value.

Frank, a well-known artist who regularly contributes to Capitola Museum projects and exhibits, painted the thirteen panels for Soquel in 1985. The murals, generally eight feet long by three feet high, have sections that illustrate Soquel events, buildings and local heroes.

The murals were nearly lost when Soquel's Post Office boxes were moved to another building and the former site was gutted and remodeled to serve the Tara Village School.



"Billy the Barber" is featured on the panel to the left. The barber shop also sold fine imported and domestic cigars. On the right, museum volunteers Steve Swift and Paul Parsons, along with Sky Hemp, carry one panel that features drawings of; F.A. Hihn, John Daubenbiss, 'Early Resident' and a five cent, First Class postage stamp.

The contractor salvaged the panels and left them behind. Sky Hemp of Sky Builders, himself an artist, recognized that although the murals were still connected to wall studs and headers, and therefore massive, they were works of art that deserved to be saved.

Volunteer John Nicol caught sight of Hemp's notice on Craig's list, and he alerted the museum to the opportunity for a rescue. An arrangement was made for the museum to receive the murals from Frank Hill as a gift. Now the work to preserve the murals begins. Partnering with the museum are the Soquel Pioneer & Historical Association and the Capitola Art and Cultural Commission.

Beatrice Macdonald

Beatrice 'Bea' Macdonald died peacefully in her sleep in Utah on May 20, 2012. She and her husband Brad Macdonald left a rich legacy in Capitola. Together, they created Shadowbrook restaurant with cofounder Ed Phillipet. Bea gave the restaurant its name.

They sold their interest in Shadowbrook in the 1950s and went on to create The Saba Club and Caribbean Ballroom at the site of the old roller skating rink. The Saba hosted many famous Big Band acts of that era.

Bea was born in a farmhouse in South Jordan, Utah on May 23, 1923. The house had no electricity or running water. Her husband Brad preceded her in death in November 1999 just after he returned here from Utah for Capitola's 50th Birthday celebration.

Of Bea's death, son David Macdonald and his wife Jeanne said, "Our Grama Bea truly was a delight and joy to many. We could picture Papa Brad anxiously awaiting her arrival and (we) actually felt the joy of their reunion. Their lives and legacy in Capitola are a blessing to all of us."



Brad and Bea Macdonald parade past Soquel Pharmacy in downtown Soquel Village in this decorated horse carriage circa 1949.

Topsy Smalley Retires

On Monday, July 23, precisely twenty years to the day after appointment to the museum board, Topsy Smalley



was the honored guest at a Shadowbrook restaurant dinner hosted by her fellow trustees. The high point of the evening was the presentation of a proclamation commending Topsy, read by Mayor Mike Termini, who graciously came to honor Topsy's dedication to the City of Capitola and its history.

Topsy served as the board secretary the entire time she was on the board. And while the Internet didn't command the attention in 1992 that it does today, in that year Topsy became Capitola Museum's first and only Web Master. She was proud to be able to offer visitors around the world the opportunity to experience Capitola history through the sharing of articles and stories, as well as a photos of the museum exhibits created and displayed over the years.

As an instructional librarian at Cabrillo College, Topsy developed a strong passion for electronic print media. She demonstrated an early Kindle about 4 years ago. Recalling that, she slapped her knee and giggled infectiously, "Do you know how many books there are on Amazon?" Before I could reply, she said, "890,000!" still grinning, as her face lit up.

Her smile and laughter lit up the room as stories were told throughout the dinner. Topsy may be leaving the board, but not the museum. Our longtime friend will continue to be a regular volunteer.

All museum board members agreed they will miss Topsy at the monthly meetings.



Welcome Our New Board Member

At the July meeting and by unanimous vote, museum board members recommended Stephanie Kirby to the City Council for appointment as a trustee. Stephanie will fill the vacated seat of Topsy Smalley, who has served with dedication for twenty years.

Stephanie has been a Capitola resident for sixteen years and has lived in Santa Cruz County more than thirty-six years. A retired elementary school teacher, she is active in civic volunteer activities that have included service as a docent at Long Marine Labs and as Mountain School District board member and secretary. Stephanie has also researched and written newsletter articles on Capitola history and related topics.



Currently, Stephanie is a genealogical researcher and member of the Santa Cruz Genealogical Society. Gardening, cooking, reading, archaeology, sewing and graphic arts are favorite leisure pursuits.

The Capitola Museum Board welcomes Stephanie Kirby as an incoming member and looks forward to working with her.

Our Volunteers Make it Happen

The Capitola Museum Board would like to recognize and give thanks to the following volunteers for staffing the museum in May, June and July:

Bob Anderson
Marcia Biancalana
Stephanie Harlan
Niels Kisling
Paul Parsons
Roy Pendley
Ettamae Shaffer
Linda Smith
Carolyn Swift
Gordon van Zuiden
Valerie Webb
Vicki and Ken Wood

Joan Armstrong
Al & Marian Carlson
Minna Hertel
Ann & John Nicol
Bill Patterson
Bill Roberson
David Shoaf
Kathleen Sullivan
Steve Swift
Sandy Wadhams
Marilee White

Living History on Wharf Road

By Niels Kisling

To many people, the Rispin Mansion holds the most historic interest on Wharf Road. Others might vote for Shadowbrook. But my vote goes to Ed Hill.

Ed once told me my property was a dump. Before I could give him a piece of my mind, he said, "Yeah, the town's people used to drive up here, back their cars up to the cliff and dump their trash."



My boys and I found this old California license plate at the bottom of our property just above Soquel Creek during a creek walk on Mother's Day 2007. We assume it was dumped off the cliff on our property.

Ed went on to say, "Me and my friends used to climb the big oak trees that were over there with our toy guns and wait for the soldiers. They had to march up the creek and then up the cliff to Wharf Road. They'd pass right under us, not even knowing we were spying on them from those big old oak trees." The soldiers sometimes hung around on maneuvers for hours and Ed and his friends were afraid to come down from the trees.

Ed Hill and his brother Frank grew up on Wharf Road. Frank Hill is an artist and illustrator in Soquel who has donated many projects to the Capitola Museum. Ed still lives on Wharf Road in the same family home that was owned by his grandmother and then by his mother, Doris. Ed's house is right across the street from the old redwood house that my wife and I own.

Our house used to be the water tank house that provided water for the summer home that became Shadowbrook restaurant. Shortly after buying the property in 1945 with partner Ed Phillipet, Brad Macdonald and his wife Bea moved into the two-room tank house. Two more rooms were added to the cramped quarters by local carpenter Lee Gutterman. Ed Phillipet and Brad Macdonald went on to create Shadowbrook restaurant from the rundown, overgrown summer home located on the hillside property below.

Ed clearly remembers the day in 1952 when Jack Macdonald and his son Brad, jacked up the four-room house in front of the restaurant, put wheels under it and rolled it down the street to its present location. Ed told me

that Jack drove up and down the street, supervising the operation from the comfort of his 1947 Lincoln Continental.

Ed and Frank's mother, Doris Hill, lived in the Hill home at 1829 Wharf Road until her passing in December 1999, one hour before the millennium. Now Ed and his wife Mitzi live there. Together they own the *Over the Hill Saloon* on Portola Avenue. Their house hasn't changed much in outside appearance since the days when the soldiers from the 54th Coast Artillery used to storm the bluff.

One thing about the house did change back in about 1932. Museum volunteer and Santa Cruz native Paul Parsons told me the story of the windows in Ed's house: They come from the cement ship. Ed's grandmother worked on the ship and acquired the windows when the ballroom was being dismantled, and unwittingly brought a little more historic interest to Wharf Road.



Ed Hill and his wife Mitzi live in the same home on Wharf Road that belonged to Ed's grandmother. Windows from the cement ship were installed in the back of the house in 1932.

In the late 1800s, Soquel-Wharf Road was a dirt road used by horse-drawn wagons full of redwood lumber on its way to Soquel Landing (Capitola Wharf). In 1921, Henry Allen Rispin built a mansion that became home to the Order of the Poor Clares in 1941, and then in the Sixties was a hangout for hippies. In 1947, Paul Parsons and Frank Hill were the first dishwashers at Shadowbrook, an enduring mecca for prom dates.

Wharf Road has contributed more than its share to Capitola's rich history, but Ed Hill remains my top pick for the most interesting "historic point of interest" on Wharf Road today.

Volunteer Spotlight: Linda Smith



Born in Texas and raised in Kansas, Linda Smith spent her high school days overseas and migrated to California in 1985. She fell in love with Santa Cruz during her first visit to Aldo's beach in 1984. "I closed my eyes, and it was as if I had been here before" she says, "the world went

black and white, and I could hear music and laughter coming from the Boardwalk." It was at that moment that she knew she would live here someday.

Linda was born second of four siblings, to an oil family in Texas. Her dad, W.T. Rigsby, was a mechanical engineer whose expertise in drilling kept the family moving around the world during her school years. After graduating high school in Jakarta, Indonesia, Linda returned to her roots in Texas. It wasn't until after starting a career in the technology industry that she found her way to California.

Moving to within blocks of that spot on Aldo's beach, Linda married the man of her dreams, Larry Smith, in 1990. While selling real estate in the early 1990's, Linda found Capitola and the Jewel Box neighborhood. A decade would pass before she found a way to move there, but the mystery of the Jewel Box had already taken hold of her imagination.

Linda joined the volunteer ranks of the Capitola Museum in 2005, with a goal to research and find the story of how the Jewel Box came to be. When she joined the Board of Trustees in 2007, she began working closely with Director Carolyn Swift to document the museum's archives digitally using a software program designed specifically for museum applications. Linda was also involved with the Capitola Begonia Festival, and earned the Capitola-Soquel Chamber of Commerce designation 'Volunteer of the Year' along with her husband, in 2009. Needless to say, her original mission to write the story of how the Jewel Box got its name has not yet been completed.

Linda continues to put energy into helping the Capitola Museum thrive. She says, "A wise man once said, 'you can't know where you are going until you know where you've been'. The Capitola Museum is how we can be sure all Capitolans - new and old, will know where we came from. Maybe that will help Capitola remain the wonderful city it is today."

Acknowledgements

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- **Lynn Baldenweek—A 1902 series of glass plate slides by Arthur Ladd, and a Capitola scrapbook of sea mosses**
- **Anonymous—A Vogt-Jensen historic photograph**
- **J. Allendorph of Discovery Bay—Rainbow Manufacturing of Capitola 1930s Marvel leaves designer paper pad**
- **Kathy Kelly—family heirlooms and treasures from her Pacific Cove Mobile Home**
- **John Nicol—a traveler's cup in vintage case**
- **Anonymous—History books, Art and Wine posters**

The Capitola Historical Museum Board wishes to thank the following people for their generous donations:

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410 Capitola Ave., Capitola, CA 95010

Website: www.capitolamuseum.org

Email: cswift@ci.capitola.ca.us Phone: 831.464.0322

Museum Director: Carolyn Swift

Board of Trustees: Linda Smith (president), Bob Anderson (vice president), Tom McGranahan (treasurer), Stephanie Kirby (secretary), Gordon van Zuiden, David Shoaf, and Niels Kising