

Capitola Sunset

CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Summer 2013

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

A Swift Farewell

I always counted on being able to spot my own “best if used by” date. Approaching my 65th birthday this summer, I saw it as clearly as if it was stamped on my forehead. The time has come to step aside as the caretaker of Capitola’s past.

Capitola Museum is about to move forward with a new curator, one with fresh ideas on how to read between the lines of resort history and interpret it for others.

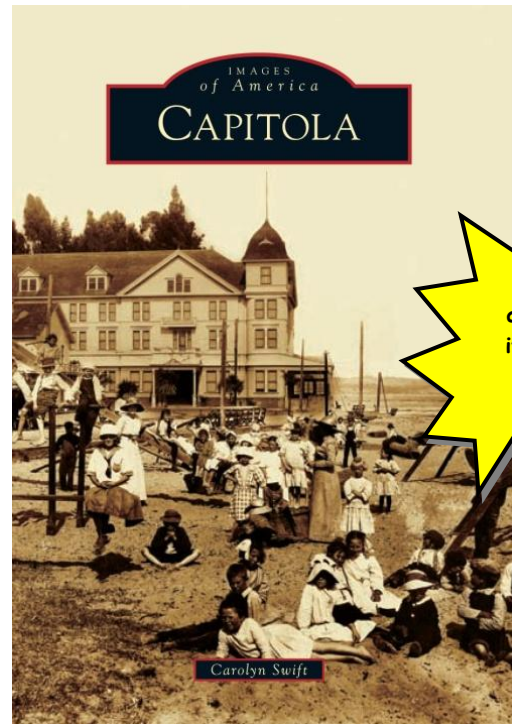
I will be leaving as museum staff but will hardly be saying good-bye. I’ll still do what I love, telling the stories of Santa Cruz County. I’m pleased to be retiring and excited about the possibilities ahead for the museum.

For twenty years I’ve enjoyed a position many would envy. Early on, though, I understood this institution was an entity with a life and mind of its own. Capitola Historical Museum has a strong identity influenced by its founders, volunteers, board members, donors, city leaders, and administrators. I have been privileged to watch it grow.



When Carolyn first came to work for the museum birds twittered and telephones had rotary dials. Here she is with her first and second husband, Steve Swift, on their walk in May along Hadrian’s Wall in England. It was shortly after this photograph was taken that Carolyn decided to retire.

Now that I’m leaving all I can say is thank you. The City of Capitola has treated me exceptionally well. I’ve been mentored by dear and capable friends with many talents and good advice. The best moments have been seeing others enjoy history as much as I do. Thank you.



The long-awaited Arcadia Book; Images of America—CAPITOLA will arrive in early July. Author, Carolyn Swift and the Capitola Historical Museum Board are holding a *Book Signing Event* at the museum on July 13th from Noon until 2:P.M. Come and pick up your advance copy from the limited supply that we will have on-hand and get it signed by Carolyn.

A 'Grand' Grand Opening

April 13 proved to be a lucky day for the Capitola Museum. On that beautiful Saturday in April, the museum board hosted the Grand Opening reception for 'Picture This—Capitola By-the Sea' and museum fans, followers and supporters filled the museum. Carolyn Swift and Linda Smith introduced the new exhibit with a colorful narrative for the captivated guests.

Among the first visitors were eighteen museum volunteers. Our volunteers keep the museum open by staffing it during our open hours of noon to 4 P.M., Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The volunteers were also given a private sneak-peek and orientation led by Carolyn Swift on April 6.



Carolyn Swift and Linda Smith introduce the new exhibit to a museum full of special guests for the 'Grand' grand opening.

The museum board of trustees greeted Capitola city staff, Mayor Stephanie Harlan, along with past and present Capitola City Council and Capitola Planning Commission members. Refreshments included a beautifully decorated cake from Gayle's Bakery.



The graphics on this beautifully decorated cake from Gayle's Bakery added to the festive occasion. It tasted great too, even the camera!

After the grand opening celebration the museum's regular hours were staffed by board members David Shoaf and Gordon van Zuiden.

'Picture This—Capitola By-the Sea' was designed to accompany the new Arcadia Publishing Company book, Images of America—Capitola, due to be released any day now. The publication features over 200 images that best capture the seaside resort's first 75 years. Many of these images can be seen in the new exhibit and some are on display for the first time.



Museum volunteer, Paul Parsons, (right) chats up local historian & preservationist, Frank Perry. Frank was recently honored for his guidance on the restoration of Cabin B, on the UCSC campus, that once housed lime kiln workers. We honor Paul every day as an active volunteer and he is a real-life historical relic of Santa Cruz County.

The Annual Rod & Custom Car Show

This year the 8th Annual Rod & Custom Car Show roared into town on June 8th and 9th. It is just one of many special events that will come to Capitola this summer. The car show is a tourist draw, social event, fundraiser and a unique display of history.

Other summer events include;

- Twilight Concert Series ongoing every Wednesday
- Art and Music at the Beach, July 14 & 21/August 4 & 8
- Wharf to Wharf Race on July 28th
- Movies at the Beach, August 23 and August 31
- 61st Annual Begonia Festival, August 31st to September 2
- 31st Annual Art and Wine Festival, September 14th and 15th



Muscle cars from the 1960s were just part of the draw at the 8th Annual Rod and Custom Classic Car Show. The show offers a little something for everyone and you don't even have to be a huge car fan to appreciate the care and detail taken to restore most of the cars on display.

Reflections on Phil Walker

By Linda Smith

In the winter edition of the *Capitola Sunset*, the Capitola Museum Board of Trustees announced the passing of museum founder Phil Walker, and promised a forthcoming story about his life and contributions. A display featuring Phil's establishment of the museum has since been set up within the current exhibit. However, few of his contemporaries from the late 1960s are here to relate firsthand about the experiences of those early years.

So, rather than a biographical or memorial narrative, I've decided to share some personal reflections on a man who helped shape the future of this city's growth at the same time he began the effort to preserve its past. My good friend, museum volunteer John Nicol, introduced me to Phil in 2010 and I fondly remember our first discussions. I shared some of the stories in the spring 2010 newsletter.

It is difficult to believe now that three years have passed since then. I asked Phil what had been his most satisfying achievement during the spent time with the museum. He replied that it was the acquisition of the 1889 oil painting by Cipriano Dodero, now on permanent display near the entrance.

"Those Lodge sisters were good negotiators," Phil recalled, "I had to work at getting it."

The painting had been for decades in the Capitola Mansion home of Carrie and Lulu Lodge, granddaughters of Soquel Rancho grantee Martina Castro Lodge. It had been commissioned originally by Capitola's owner Frederick A. Hihn but had been in possession of the Lodge family since the 1890s. Today the artwork is one of Capitola Museum's most valued assets and is a testimony to Phil's perseverance.

Phil shared his enthusiasm for museums during our few visits and in a couple of letters. Ultimately, he inspired a road trip that my husband, Larry, and I took in 2011. Along our route were places Phil mentioned.

The first was Independence, California. Here the Walker residence was a small white house known as the House of Golden Dawns. In addition to the home, Phil purchased in the 1970s a building previously moved from Manzanar. He thought of turning it into a soup kitchen called Skeenie's Cuisine, but instead, it became the Pavilion. Today, "Pavilion City," is a ghost town filled with historic artifacts. It sits on Highway 395 next to the Pavilion and the House of Golden Dawns.

Larry and I next visited the Eastern California Museum. Phil had been a director there and involved with moving the institution's collection to its current location from the basement of the Independence County administration building. The present site had been a gift to house the museum, and Phil had spent considerable time in the late 1960s working on the project. Simultaneously, he was serving on the Capitola City Council and establishing its museum.

Asked which museum he considered to be the best he had visited, Phil said he was impressed with one in Tonapa, Nevada: the Central Nevada Museum. It was not only informative but well organized with a cooperative staff. He described it as a gem, a rich resource on history of the region's mining operations.



Capitola Mayor, Phil Walker, helps plant this tree on Capitola Avenue in August of 1966. Depot Hill appears in the background.

Photo courtesy of Covello and Covello Photography.

"What more can I say?" Phil wrote, "The staff knew their stuff and were prompt and generous with information."

My husband and I traveled to Tonapa to see if the museum had survived. We were pleased to find it lived up to its reputation even in the hard economic times of 2011. (If you travel there, I recommend a visit.)

I learned from Phil about the importance of sharing history with the community. This is what Capitola Historical Museum strives to do for the city's residents and visitors.

Phil remained a researcher and author on topics related to Capitola history until his passing on February 13. He continued to interview people, compiling a substantial record of their stories, a collection of historic images, oral histories, news clippings, and books. His guidance and interest in history lives on at the museum he founded. He will be remembered, and is missed.

Volunteer Spotlight: Kathleen Sullivan

Raised in Santa Cruz County, Kathleen first visited Capitola as a teenager with her family renting a home along Soquel Creek and where her future husband was a frequent visitor. Capitola was still a small town, recently incorporated as a city, and she still remembers many of the landmarks now kept as memories in the museum.

After a 30 year professional career in Secondary School and Administration in San Mateo County, she and her college professor husband retired to Capitola where they had purchased a four room beach bungalow in the village early in their marriage, and where they had spent most subsequent summers with their children. "We had always felt a sense of community here. Now we wanted to belong to it."

In retirement, each found ways to connect with activities in Capitola. She volunteered with a number of Capitola events such as the Art and Wine festival, helping her husband with the Twilight Concerts, and now the Museum. "It is fun, and I get to meet visitors and locals alike when the Museum is open," she explains.



Kathleen Sullivan and her husband raised five children which is amazing in itself, but they also managed to send all five through college. She is now retired and living in Capitola just a short walk away from her volunteer duties with the museum.

Asked who her most memorable visitor to the Museum has been, Kathleen is quick to share the story of an older man who rode up to the Museum on a bicycle. "He was on a family quest to learn more about his grandfather who had owned a steamship company which carried cargo from Oregon to San Diego, frequently calling at the Capitola wharf. As the gentleman was inspecting the displays, he told me of his memories of the stories his grandfather had told him of Capitola at the beginning of the 20th Century. I was terrifically impressed and wished I had a voice recorder to capture both his tales and his enthusiasm in telling them."

When asked what she gets out of volunteering at the Museum, Kathleen says, "I love meeting people who visit here. I learn as much from them as they learn from the museum. I love seeing mothers bring their children here, those who have memories to share and those who are on a family search. I get a lot back as I, too, learn about Capitola from them."

The Capitola Museum is, indeed, honored to have Kathleen Sullivan and we thank her for her generous gifts of time and experience.

(Editor's Note: Recent studies indicate that your health and well-being can be dramatically improved through volunteering for your community. Museum volunteers take 2-hour shifts to keep our museum open. They meet & greet visitors to the museum and often experience the same history they are sharing with others. We are always looking for volunteers so if you want to improve your well-being you can call us or contact us through the museum website at www.capitolamuseum.org.)

Capitola Historical Museum recognizes the following volunteers who gave their time in April, May and June:

Bob Anderson, Joan Armstrong, Ron Beck, Marcia Biancalana, Al & Marion Carlson, Stephanie Harlan, Minna Hertel, Niels Kisling, John Nicol, Paul Parsons, Will Patterson, Ettamae Shaffer, David Shoaf, Linda Smith, Kathleen Sullivan, Gordon van Zuiden, Sandy Wadhams, Valerie Webb, Marilee White, Vicki Woods and Mary Zimmerman

Capitola Museum has recently received generous donations from the following people:

Lorie Bross	Steven & Diane Burbank
Emil Edgren	Rick Feldner
Ron and Diane Graves	Robin Lasser
Karl Mertz	Katherine Minott
Paul Parsons	Jim & Barbara Reding
Ettamae Shaffer	Sandy Wadhams
Donald & Dorothy Washam	Nels and Susan Westman
Demian Sherinian & Yvonne Zannis	
Stephanie Harlan <i>in memory of Stuart Hurt</i>	
Stephanie Harlan <i>in memory of Evelyn Meyer's 98th birthday</i>	
Marvin Jensen <i>in memory of Phil Walker</i>	
Robert McLean <i>in memory of Ebee McLean</i>	
Stan and Carly Stevens <i>in memory of Phil Walker</i>	

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The Capitola Historical Museum
410 Capitola Avenue
Capitola, California 95010
Website: www.capitolamuseum.org
E-Mail: cswift@ci.capitola.ca.us
Telephone: 831-464-0322

Museum Hours: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday from Noon until 4:P.M.

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 Kisling