

Capitola Sunset

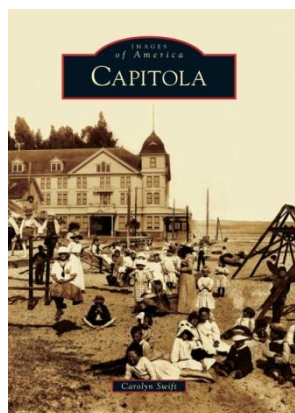
CAPITOLA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Winter 2013

NEWS, EVENTS & INFORMATION

Picture This—Capitola by-the-Sea

School is out and temperatures nudge the triple digits as a great migration begins. Each year, inhabitants of California's sweltering interior valleys journey to the coast. Here they dash toward the surf and sprawl contentedly in the cool mists of a summer day at the beach in Capitola. Some have made this trip annually all their lives. Parents and grandparents owned or



rented cabins on streets named for the stifling cities they'd just left, like Stockton, Sacramento, and San Jose. Opening on July 4, 1874, Capitola is "The Oldest Camping Ground on the Pacific Coast." Its visionary owner, German immigrant Frederick Hihn, shaped it in European style, winding it up to run as efficiently as a German clock. As the resort progressed from a tent camp into a dignified

Victorian retreat by the sea, its character was similarly advanced. Incorporating as a city in 1949, Capitola reached its 75th birthday as a tidy village of historic cottages, beach-oriented shops, and esplanade concessions bordering a seasonal lagoon.

The paragraph above is from the back cover text for the Arcadia Publishing Company's *Images of America* book on Capitola which was completed in January by Capitola Historical Museum Director Carolyn Swift.

Once it is printed and available for purchase—an event expected this summer—the 127-page history book will show off more than two hundred of the museum's best images, each matched with explanatory text related to the overall history of Capitola. Eight chapters span the resort's first 75 years.

The volume is dedicated to the City of Capitola, and all its citizens and visitors who love and preserve its past. It was written with assistance and support of the Capitola

Museum Board of Trustees, with leadership from Linda Smith and research and photograph assistance from

Gordon van Zuiden and Niels Kisling. Judy Steen, longtime contributor and creator of museum exhibits, is the editor.

Those eager for a sneak preview of the book will have the chance when the museum's new exhibit, "Picture This—Capitola by-the-Sea," opens in early April. The show will offer viewers the opportunity to pick out their favorite eras and photographs, from 1874 through the early 1950s.



Phil Walker

Sad news arrived at the museum just as this issue of the *Capitola Sunset* was ready to print. Philip J. Walker, founder of Capitola Historical Museum, died on February 13, just two weeks before his 89th birthday.

Walker's contributions to Capitola are too numerous to detail here, except to note he was elected to the Capitola City Council in 1966 and was immediately appointed mayor. He served as mayor again in 1970 and continued on the council until 1973.

A more detailed story about his life and contributions will appear in the newsletter's spring edition. The upcoming exhibit, "Picture This—Capitola by-the-Sea," will be dedicated to the memory of Phil Walker as well as to volunteer Roy C. Pendley, who died January 13.



This photo of Phil Walker was taken in front of the old farmhouse on Thompson Avenue that he bought for \$25. The house became the home of the Capitola Historical Museum after it was moved to its present location near city hall.

A Gulch with a Noble Name

By Stephanie Kirby

Gulch—a somewhat unlovely name for a deep narrow ravine that marks the course of a stream. Capitola has its own special gulch—Noble Gulch, which begins near Fairway and Bay Heights Drives in Soquel and courses southward under Highway One through Capitola Village, finally flowing into Soquel Creek.

Noble Creek, running through the gulch, was the water source that caused Capitola Village to flood in the spring of 2011.

Augustus Noble is the early pioneer for whom the gulch is named. Augustus, born in 1823 in Maryland, came around Cape Horn to California in 1849 to try his hand at gold mining. He was a cooper by trade and worked old whiskey barrels into kegs. He traded in hides and wool and owned a successful coopers shop in San Francisco.



In 1856 he went home to Maryland to fetch a bride, and returned with her to Santa Cruz County to settle on land he acquired from the final partition of Rancho Soquel, originally owned by the historic Castro family. His land included 120 tillable acres and the Castro's adobe house overlooking the village of Capitola and the gulch.

Ten mountain springs furnished pure water for his use. He planted extensive rose gardens and called his new estate Rosedale—hence the names Hill Street and Rosedale Avenues of today. He established orchards of apples and cherries and a vineyard, raised milk cows, chickens and hogs. He also grew hay and made butter. He and his wife reared six children, were active in society, and lived long productive lives.

Today the orchards, pastures, barns and home are gone, but at the lower end of the gulch, now occupied by Brookvale Terrace Mobile Home Park, the mountain springs still seep.

When the park was constructed in 1972 the gulch was mostly brush and home to fox, deer, raccoons, coyotes, skunks, possums and wild turkeys. Noble Creek was rerouted from the left bank of the gulch to the middle when creating the park, but the springs still percolate to the original stream bed below Augustus Noble's estate.

One of them is in my back yard, and I often try to imagine those long-gone scenes of local industry.

This tiny spring in Stephanie Kirby's back yard is still active after all these years. Augustus Noble used springs like this one to raise many crops and livestock on his 120 acre parcel that used to occupy land where Rosedale Avenue and Brookvale Terrace Mobile Home Park are located today.



Special Thanks to Slatter Construction

In 2009, Jeff and Cathie Thermond, builders and owners of the new home at the north end of Prospect Avenue where the Lent house had once existed, donated three antique stained glass pieces from the original home to the Capitola Historical Museum. One piece was immediately mounted on the ceiling for the "Landmark History of Capitola" exhibit, while the other two—larger and more fragile—were generously kept for the museum until recently, when the storage space was unfortunately no longer available. Hearing of our dilemma of where to move these treasures, Sid Slatter brought in his construction team and set about finding a solution. The Skylight Place donated plexiglass, and Sid and his crew built the frames. Thanks to Craig, Josh, Jared, Todd, and Andy from Slatter Construction, all three of the vintage 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition stained glass pieces are now mounted on permanent display on the museum's ceiling. The museum's board of trustees was amazed and grateful for such an extraordinary gift.

An expression "thank you," can't match the intensity of gratitude, but in words, it is all we can express. Thank you to Sid and Slatter Construction!



This photograph shows the two stained glass windows mounted in the roof as skylights in the old Lent House before it was torn down. Thanks to Slatter Construction the pair of 1915 stained glass pieces are now on permanent display at the museum. Come see for yourself!

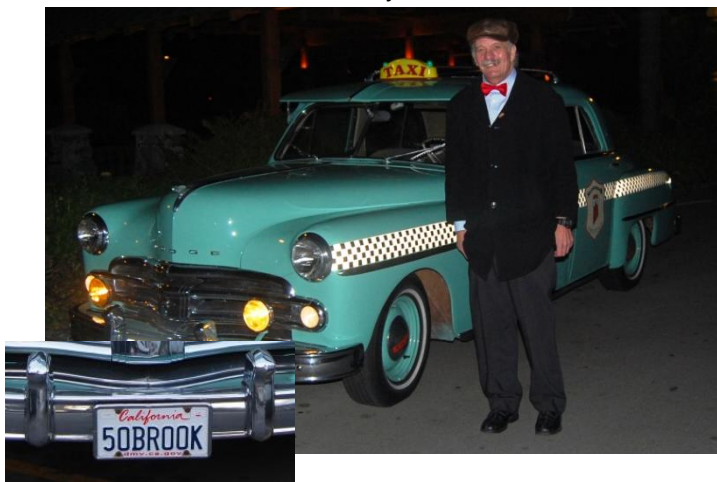
Dining in Elegance & Arriving in Style

By Niels Kisling

“Follow me to the Shadowbrook” appears on the trunk lid of the restaurant’s new Shadowbrook Shuttle introduced last summer. The 1950 Dodge Meadowbrook sports a new coat of creamy green paint and taxi-style checkerboard trim complete with a lighted taxi sign on the roof. This antique classic car is just three years newer than the restaurant.

If you call for a ride from one of our local hotels you will be greeted by chauffer, Richard Preinitz. He works for Shadowbrook owner, Ted Burke, driving the taxi and promoting the restaurant. Richard is a complete package.

Dressing in period attire, he is likely to show up in a red bow tie, wool pants and sports coat, with a chauffer’s cap to complete his outfit. He is a long-time county resident with 16 years of professional driving experience. Richard has two sons who also work for the restaurant; son Justin is a pantry chef and John is a manager. Both have worked at Shadowbrook for 7 and 14 years.



Richard Preinitz poses next to the Shadowbrook Shuttle, a 1950 Dodge Meadowbrook. Both Richard and the taxi are elegantly dressed up to match the fabulous 1950s.

The Shadowbrook Shuttle is promoted at local hotels and motels and the ride is part courtesy, part marketing and always free for restaurant patrons. Most passengers to date, true to Capitola’s long-time tourist demographic, come from the Central Valley.

Shadowbrook co-founder, Brad MacDonald, also had a shuttle in the late 1950s called, “The Duck.” It was an amphibious vehicle left over from WWII. An amphibious vehicle has both wheels and a propeller, allowing it to drive on land or propel itself through the water. One popular pick-up spot in those days was the Capitola Airport. From the airport, the shortest path to Shadowbrook lead through the front yard of the property directly across Soquel Creek, called “Sunnybrook.”

Being amphibious, The Duck could drive through the front yard and down the creek bank right into the water. Its propellers powered it across the creek where it once again drove right up the bank and across the front lawn of Shadowbrook Restaurant to deliver its passengers. It must have been an exciting ride!



The Duck, Shadowbrook’s amphibious shuttle from the late 1950s is pictured here transitioning from land to water in order to cross Soquel Creek. They are entering the creek at the ‘Sunnybrook’ property that is still located on Riverview Avenue across from Shadowbrook Restaurant.

Frank Hill, the first dishwasher at Shadowbrook in 1947, knew Brad Macdonald well. One day I overheard Frank telling the story of the demise of the duck. She was lost in the kelp beds off Capitola on a party cruise where she sank late one night—or early one morning—leaving the crew of festive revelers treading water with the sea lions.

According to Frank, all hands made it home OK after a sobering swim to shore.

Today’s Shadowbrook Shuttle may not be as exciting as a ride in The Duck, but driver Richard Preinitz will deliver you safely and elegantly to and from Shadowbrook every time.

Capitola Museum recently received generous donations from:

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|---|------------------------|
| Lorie Bross | Steven & Diane Burbank |
| Cal Cornwell | Judy Craig |
| Emil Edgren | Linda Hanson |
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| Margy Cottle in memory of John Macpherson | |



Volunteer Spotlight: Marcia Biancalana

With 30 years residency in the Soquel and Capitola area, Marcia Biancalana would certainly not qualify as a recent arrival. Born in Minnesota, she followed two of her sisters to the area just before the Soquel floods of 1982, settling into mid-Santa Cruz County. She met and married her husband there. They have one daughter, a graduate of Soquel High School and USMA, West Point, who is now beginning her career as a Lieutenant in Military Intelligence.

Marcia started her volunteering efforts while her daughter was in school and was quite active in many areas supporting both the schools and her daughter's interests. Marcia helped her husband's efforts to grow beautiful begonias over the past 15 years at their home in Capitola. Because of that and attending many events in Capitola over the years, Marcia began volunteering for various Capitola activities including the merchandise booth for the Begonia Festival.



When asked why she chose the Capitola Museum, Marcia explains that local history has actually been a part of her relationships with her community and her husband's family. "I didn't realize I knew as much as I do about Capitola until I started working at the Museum," she says. "All those stories I have heard my

family tell among themselves proved to be one way I felt connected to this community. I like meeting new people and sharing the stories with them. This makes the Capitola Museum an excellent place for me to do that." Moreover, Marcia feels it is important to preserve the past in order for people to feel that they are a part of the community.

Asked to list her top 3 or 4 stories she finds herself telling to visitors to the museum, they are:

- The Waterslide into the Lagoon
- The Old Hotel Capitola
-burning and being rebuilt
-the manager at one time, Patty Reed Lewis, being one of the Donner Party survivors
- The Carousel on the Beach
- How Capitola Really Got Its Name

Marcia's favorite parts of the museum are the cases where everyday clothing and utensils are displayed. "I find it amazing how small people were in the past. I usually point out how small the women's clothes were and the small shoes in the glass cases."

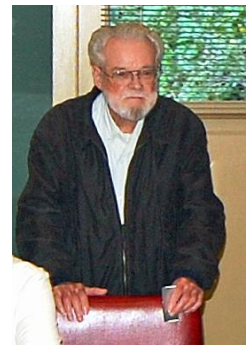
Marcia's advice for anyone thinking about volunteering with the Capitola Museum is, "Come and check it out! It is a great place to meet new people and learn about the past."

The Capitola Museum is delighted to have people like Marcia Biancalana as part of the volunteers that keep the doors open during its exhibits and for other preservation projects.

The following gifts were donated by:

- St. Josephs Church postcard brought in by Carolyn Morris
- The Story of Old Soquel brought in by Chris Marin
- Photograph of 1983 storm, donated by Debra E. Sundberg of Graham, WA
- The Study in Democracy: Capitola (pamphlet)
- Dixieland Jazz Band poster donated by Red Malone

On January 23, 2013, Rosalia Pendley lost her husband of 59 years. The community and the Capitola Historical Museum also lost a great volunteer in Roy C. Pendley. Visitors of the museum were always greeted by this gentle and kind-spirited man who knew more about Capitola than most. The museum board recently agreed to dedicate our next exhibit to our good friend and volunteer Roy C. Pendley.



Capitola Sunset is published by:

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

Museum Director: Carolyn Swift
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