

Torrance Historian

Published for members, this newsletter is dedicated to the support & preservation of Torrance History — *share the history with your family & friends!*

November 1998
Debbie Hays, Editor

Home Tour Great Success

Over 500 people & \$10,000 in two days

The Board had to agree, that this was one of the best Home Tours yet! In two days, we had over 500 people tour the seven homes and visit our Museum. This bi-annual event raised almost **\$10,000** for the Torrance Historical Society & Museum!

The streets of Downtown Torrance were a buzz that weekend — people walking from one home to the next, talking about what they liked best and sharing “must see” highlights with others.

Many noticed, and commented on the fact, that the Tour brought about a sense of community spirit and neighborliness. As people strolled from house-to-house along the streets of Downtown Torrance, they admired the quaintness of Downtown, took time to smell the roses (literally) along the way and chat with others who were off to see the next home on the tour.

Thank you to all who supported this awesome event! ☺

Celebrate California's Sesquicentennial with Us

You're invited to participate in *Gold Rush* — A *Literary Exploration*, a series of free reading and discussion groups focusing on accounts of life during the California Gold Rush era. The discussion groups will take place on Wednesday evenings, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. during Winter, 1999,

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Historical Highlights

by Tony Kriss, President

Following many hours of diligent preparation, the 1998 Home Tour Committee, chaired by Janice Plank and co-chaired by Janet Payne, created an outstandingly successful Historic Home Tour in “Old Torrance”.

The key element in the success of this event was the generous willingness of the homeowners of these history-rich homes to allow the over 500 guests to discover the charm and history of their homes. To all those who were so kind, our sincere thanks!

We were overwhelmed by the unsolicited offer, of not only other “Old Torrance” area homeowners to make their homes available for our next tour, but of several homeowners from the Hollywood Riviera — another history-rich area — who offered to do likewise!

Another gratifying surprise was the gift of several historical maps, from Torrance Unified School District President, John Eubanks. Dating from 1877, one of the maps clearly identifies the boundaries of the original Ranchos of our area.

A special note of thanks to our major sponsor of the Home Tour, Virco Mfg. Corporation; the Mayor and our City; the many volunteer docents; the Girl Scouts and Board members whose dedicated support and efforts made this a rich and rewarding experience for all! ☺

Antique Street Fair

The Downtown Torrance Association sponsored their first Antique Street Fair on the same Sunday as the Home Tour. It was *wildly* successful! The Street Fair will be held on the second Sunday of every month on Sartori in Downtown Torrance! ☺

Welcome New Members

Welcome to the new members who joined the Torrance Historical Society the day of the Home Tour — more than a few, I might add, at the encouragement of our President, Tony Kriss:

Bob & Ann Marie Allen
Denise Ayars
Jerry Brannon
Thomas & Susan Loester
Art & Marjorie McKarns
Rosemary Murrey
The Murrey Family
Frank & Joan Paour
Ruth Vogel

Welcome all! ☺

And ... the Winner is ...

As a way to raise additional funds for the Museum, the Board decided to raffle off a garden basket the weekend of the Home Tour. Tickets were sold for \$1 each or six for \$5.

The basket was filled with garden accessories, and at the center was a galvanized watering can hand painted by local artisan, Jeanette Donaher.

There were many who hoped their name would be drawn at the close of the Home Tour that Sunday, but we could only have one lucky winner. And ... the winner is ... Jeanne Mueller! Jeanne said she was “absolutely thrilled to win!”

Congratulations Jeanne, there are many who are green with envy at your win. In fact, Jeanne’s daughter is doing her best to talk her out of the watering can. ☺

Take a Ride with Peter Pan

The City of Torrance entry in the 1999 Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade is entitled “Peter Pan on Parade.” You may “ride” with Peter Pan by donating a rose vial which will be placed on this 35 foot long float January 1st. Torrance has been represented in this parade for 43 years! ☺



California's Sesquicentennial — continued from page 1
at the Katy Geissert Civic Center Library,
Torrance Public Library.

Each reading group will explore selected passages from *Gold Rush — A Literary Exploration*. This anthology contains more than 100 selections of gripping first hand accounts, humorous stories, reminiscences, and retrospective essays about the personal and historical impacts of the California Gold Rush.

The Library has invited two distinguished scholars to moderate the discussions: Dr. Arthur Verge, history professor from El Camino College, & Elaine Zorbas, Head of the Research Section of Pasadena Public Library and author of *Fiddletown: From Gold Rush to Rediscovery*. Participants will be encouraged to ask questions of the humanities scholars and make comments about the stories and readings in the *Gold Rush* anthology.

The first program, scheduled for Feb. 3, 1999, will be sponsored by the Torrance Historical Society. Pre-registration for this free program begins December 16th. Sign-up early as space is limited to 30 participants. For reservations and additional information, call (310) 618-5950. ☺

Torrance Trivia

This interesting bit of trivia was contributed by Torrance Councilwoman, Maureen O'Donnell.

The Torrance City Hall was built in 1974. At that time, the Council offices did not have a women’s restroom — the restroom was for men only, and included a shower.

When Katy Geissert was elected in 1978, it became necessary to have a women’s restroom on the Council floor. In order to add a ladies restroom, the men’s shower was removed.

As a joke, Councilman Daniel Walker, had a special tile installed in the ladies room. The inscription read: “Katy’s Tinkle Room.”

Katy Geissert served two, four year terms as a councilwoman and two, four year terms as the Mayor of Torrance. When she left office in 1994, the tile was removed from the ladies room, and given to her as a souvenir.

Thank you for your contribution Maureen! ☺

1998 Fall Tour of Historic Homes

Thank You to Our Sponsors & Supporters

A special *thank you* goes out to the following homeowners, businesses and individuals who supported the Torrance Historical Society & Museum in hosting the bi-annual Fall Tour of Historic Homes. The financial success of the Home Tour is vital to the Society's existence. The sponsorships, combined with the \$15 donation of each Home Tour attendee, is what helps maintain the Society's ever-growing collection of photos, documents, books, artifacts and other material relevant to the City's past.

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Virco Mfg. Corporation

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Thanks also to our many unnamed volunteers, family and friends — Merideth Grenier - Daily Breeze, Beverly Baird - Torrance People, the Downtown Torrance Assoc., and our GREAT City of Torrance!

Architecture of the Past

Evoking memories of what once was

Won't you join us in taking a walk in the past? From mid November through the end of January 1999, the work of local artist Bob Easley will be on display at the Torrance Historical Society & Museum. Bob creates 1/2" scale models of buildings that have been inspired by his visits to ghost towns in California, such as Bodie. He creates barns, schools, stores, houses and churches. *Meet Bob in person on Sunday, Nov. 22, 1998, from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Museum.* This event is sponsored by **Allied Signal!**

When

Mid November through
the end of January 1999

Where

Torrance Historical Society
& Museum
1345 Post Ave., Torrance

Museum Hours

Tuesday -Thursday & Sunday
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Torrance Historical Society & Museum

1345 Post Avenue
Torrance, CA 90501
(310) 328-5392

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