

The Heritage Society of Pacific Grove NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to Maintaining the Beauty and Individuality of Pacific Grove

Volume 5, Issue 1

February 2005



Point Pinos Lighthouse Celebrating 150 Years

by Jerry McCaffery

The lighthouse at Point Pinos on the southern tip of Monterey Bay will observe its sesquicentennial birthday this February. The building was finished in December 1854, when the first keeper, Charles Layton lived there with his family. The lantern room and the lens (fabricated in France) were installed the following January, and the light was officially lit on February 1, 1855.

The lighthouse is well worth some respect. It served to guide mariners to Monterey and was particularly essential guiding ships from the south safely around Point Pinos and the false bays to the south of it. This lighthouse was the second constructed and lit on the California coast.

The light on Alcatraz was the first, but with the remodeling of Alcatraz due to the prison, Point Pinos owns the title of oldest continuously operating

lighthouse on the West Coast.

The Point Pinos Lighthouse was the first lighthouse on the West Coast to have a woman keeper, Charlotte

her husband at the lighthouse.

The lighthouse's current shape owes much to Emily Fish, another female keeper from 1893 to 1914, who inherited a dull brown lighthouse in

the sand dunes, and left it as a whitewashed centerpiece to a lawn, garden and encircling hedges, with the additions of a kitchen and bath.

Celebration of the sesquicentennial will include re-enactments of key events at the lighthouse by costumed actors: February 5, Emily Fish Retires, Honored with the Efficiency Star; February 12, World War II Years; Coast Guard Patrol. The public is invited also to the annual board meeting of the Heritage Society on February 27,

2 pm, at the lighthouse.

The lighthouse is open Thursday through Sunday, September to May and open daily in the summer months.



Pt. Pinos Lighthouse, Photograph Galyn C. Hammond © 2005

Layton (1855 -1861). While serving on a posse, Charles Layton was killed. The citizens of Monterey petitioned the Treasury Department to allow Mrs. Layton to take the place of

Calendar

FEBRUARY HERITAGE SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

A living history program, highlighted by Robert Louis Stevenson, who visited the lighthouse in 1879.

February 27, 2:00 p.m.
Point Pinos Lighthouse
Asilomar Ave. Free

IMAGES OF THE PT. PINOS LIGHTHOUSE

Exhibit by local artists and photographers, on-going through March.

Museum of Natural History
Forest and Central Avenues
Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 - 5:00

APRIL GOOD OLD DAYS

April 9-10

WILDFLOWER SHOW April 15-17

MAY SECRET GARDEN TOUR MAY 7, 10:00 - 4:00 HERITAGE HOUSE AWARDS

May 20, 7:00 p.m.
Museum of Natural History
Forest and Central Avenues
Free

All opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the Board of Directors, but are meant to stimulate interest in and discussion of preservation issues.



Julia Morgan House, 104 First St.

Firefighters Save Julia Morgan House

by Ken Hinsbaw

The quick reaction by the P. G. Fire department on November 4, 2004, was responsible for saving the newly restored landmark from certain destruction. The alarm was quickly called in by a neighbor. A house-painter's pickup truck that was parked on 2nd street caught fire. The fire spread to an older VW van parked next to the pickup and then to the walls of the Julia Morgan House. The painter had worked on the home in the past. However, all painting had been completed when the fire broke out around midnight. The pickup had oil based paint and solvents stored in the bed that were the probable cause.

Mark Travaille, the contractor responsible for the work on the landmark at 104 1st, reported that Fire Chief Gunter was on the scene in one minute and the

fire truck was there in two. Mark reports that damage to the interior was minimal. The paint in the kitchen was bubbling off the cabinets and could have burst into fire if the response by firemen had not been so quick. Mark expressed his gratitude the next day by taking treats to the firehouse.

Chief Gunter reports that the fire was raging in the street and on the outside wall of the house when he arrived. "It was a very dynamic situation. Gasoline was running down the gutter, the VW's engine was burning, probably because it was made of magnesium, as well as the wall of the house." The firefighters had to use a combination of chemicals and water to stop the blaze.

Damage was confined to the barn-shingle siding material, two windows and the roof structure over the kitchen. Mark estimates that it will take approximately two months to repair the damage. All of us in Pacific Grove who treasure our older homes are thankful for having such a well trained, responsive Fire Dept.

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Automatic Fire Sprinklers and Historic Homes

by City of Pacific Grove Fire Marshal James S. Gunter

Frequently asked questions about automatic fire sprinklers in historic homes are: Do I need them? How much will they cost? Won't they damage my historic home?

These are the types of questions I am asked. I would like to take a minute to give some answers and information to inform people of the life saving advantages of Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems (AFSS) in both historic and non-historic residential structures.

Currently the City of Pacific Grove has an ordinance requiring AFSS whenever 50% or more of the residential structure is affected during a remodel. However, the formula is not based on square footage.

The California Historic Building Code, a document that addresses the uniform building code as it relates to historic buildings, encourages the inclusion of both automatic fire sprinkler systems and fire alarm systems as a way of helping to preserve historic buildings.

The cost for AFSS in a remodeled residential structure can be estimated at approximately \$3.00 per square foot. This number will give a fair estimate of the cost to provide the system. Structural as well as architectural features may increase that number. New construction will be slightly less. A combination of pendant or ceiling type and sidewall heads can be used to

preserve architectural features of historic homes.

After the system is installed, each sprinkler head acts separately. In the event of a fire only the heads affected by heat activate to extinguish or hold the fire. The sprinkler heads are not connected to the smoke alarm system in any way. A smoke detector activation will not set off the AFSS.

An activation will cause some water damage in the event of a fire. However, the damage caused by a structure fire that is allowed to burn unchecked can easily rise to between \$100K and



James S. Gunter

\$200K and more. The potential cost of repairs to floor coverings or wall coverings is far less than this type of structural damage. In severe cases the structure would not be repairable after a major fire.

The life safety provided by an AFSS is the most important reason to take the opportunity during a remodel project to include this life saving feature to a historic home. A residential AFSS is designed to protect you and your family from fire as you exit your home safely.

If you have any questions regarding the City of Pacific Grove automatic fire sprinkler system requirement, please feel free to contact me at 831-648-3110.

Performing Arts Center Grand Opening

by Ken Hinshaw

I hope you were among the jubilant audience at the opening celebration of the Pacific Grove Performing Arts Center on November 16. The historic middle school's auditorium has been transformed with a serious



James Quinn

infusion of cash and volunteer labor as the Rotary Club's Centenary Project. The look and feel of the 800 seat space has been upgraded by reupholstering all the seats, new floor finishes, new lighting and paint throughout. Architect Jeanie Byrne was responsible for the redesign that complements the historic elements from the 1920s, and contractor Steve Covell supervised much of the work. Many others gave countless hours to the project.

The evening's celebration featured music for every taste, from classical piano to surfer guitar. Amazing original contemporary piano compositions were offered by the youthful Michael Martinez

and seasoned professional Holland Garcia. The hand of Middle School Music Director Gary Stotz was in evidence everywhere, from the Middle School Jazz Combo to the High School Jazz Quartet. The youthful performers astonished many in the audience with their polished performance.

The project has been supported by scores of our local citizens as well as the Heritage Society and its 1000+ members, but more needs to be done. The Rotary is working to raise funds for the remodeling of the restrooms and a free-standing marquee that will advertise upcoming events. You can send checks to PG Rotary, PO Box 51, Pacific Grove, CA 93950.

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New Editors for the Board & Batten

by Gary Sprader

John Billstrom, the Board & Batten editor for the past several years, is retiring. We are fortunate that two willing volunteers stepped forward to replace John. Sally Aberg and Betty Aickelin will be coeditors.

Betty is also on the Heritage Society Board of Directors. She is originally from western Massachusetts and has lived in Seattle and Southern California before moving to Pacific Grove in 1989. She is the manager of a medical office.

Sally was born in Southern California and raised in the Central Valley. She previously lived in Berkeley before

moving to Pacific Grove in 1996. She is a writer, editor and studio manager for a fine arts photographer.



Sally Aberg and Betty Aickelin

Betty developed an interest in historic research while working as a docent during Christmas at the Inns. She has been learning research techniques from John Billstrom for the past year. Both Sally and Betty live in the Retreat area and appreciate how the Heritage Society helps preserve the character of our historic neighborhoods. They both cited the willingness of Heritage Society members to fight battles when preservation issues come before the City Council.

There will not be many changes to the Board & Batten format. There will only be 4 issues per year with an issue coming out around the middle of each calendar quarter. Each issue will contain more than one topic and there will be regular features, such as answers to questions, in each issue. We look forward to the first issue from the new editors.

Thank You

Thank you to Michael and Carol Mazur for opening your beautiful home at Trimmer Hill for an elegant holiday party on behalf of the Heritage Society. Also, thank

you Carol Patterson, Secretary to the H.S. Board, for arranging the countless details that made the Trimmer Hill event so successful.

The Heritage Society is thankful for a \$500 grant from the Robert Stephens and Julie Packard Fund at the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County. These dollars are to go towards preservation, restoration and education of our precious historic buildings.

Nominations for Heritage House Awards

If you would like to nominate an outstanding example of a historic house remodel, addition, or new-paint-and-maintenance application that complements the historic integrity of a house, please contact Jan Rose.

TedJanRose@webtv.net

Help Wanted Volunteer Opportunity

The Historic Home Resource Guide is in need of updating, and the Heritage Society is looking for an organized computer-literate volunteer to take on this important project.

If you would like to tackle this interesting job, contact: Ken Hinshaw at kbinsba2@aol.com

New Members

Eric Nay
Marcia Keely
Sheila Keifetz
Jean and Thomas Martin
Roy Carson Sprague

Total members **1029**

Regional Preservation News

Marsh's Oriental in Monterey Threatened: Why Should We Care? (Opinion)

by Ken Hinsbaw

The Catholic Diocese of Monterey has submitted a 100 page engineering report to the City of Monterey, concluding that the Marsh Building needs to be demolished. This document should not be the last word. A second opinion by engineers who spe-

cialize in historic buildings needs to be solicited. The Diocese hasn't said what it has in mind for the property, but it is clear that the Marsh Building is in the way.

Marsh's, across from Lake El Estero, opened in 1927 to cater to the wealthy collectors of Oriental Antiques. I remember visiting Marsh's in the '70s with the same awe that I felt entering the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco; this exotic gallery was filled with rare Chinese and Japanese furnishings.

Why be concerned? Monterey, more so than most communities, is the sum of many cultures coming together. The early Chinese immigrants settled in our area surviving as merchants, fishermen, and laborers. They came here hoping to work and survive. Marsh's brought the art, creativity, and expressions of the wealth and opulence of Asia to Monterey. The Marsh building is both a symbol of the melding of cultures as well as a familiar façade at the gateway to Monterey.

This familiar landmark, built in the Northern Chinese Residential style, could be lost if citizens of the area don't

support the preservation of the building. There must be a win-win situation where the Diocese could either incorporate the building in its plans, or sell it to raise money for their project.

The Monterey History and Art Association is planning a lecture in the spring on the Marsh building. Watch for details.

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Researcher's Bulletin: New Access to Sanborn Maps

by Ken Hinsbaw

A couple of months ago, I outlined the steps needed to access the online Sanborn Map's database, one of the key documents for research on Pacific Grove's homes. Access was shut off even before the information arrived in your Newsletter. With the help of Jean Chapin at the PG Library, I have found easy access through the San Jose Public Library. Travel to that

great city and walk through the door of one of their branches to get a free library card. Library cards are available to anyone, no matter where you live. With the card you will have access to the library's online databases. The system works great! Peruse the website and download maps for any city in California.

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