



Fall 2007

Cliff Numark,
Editor

TORRANCE HISTORIAN

Newsletter of the Torrance Historical Society & Museum

THS Makes History

Digitization: Torrance Documents Come to Life

The Torrance Historical Society has helped spearhead the Digitization Project, which will digitize the City directories, and both the *Torrance Herald* and the *Peninsula Press* — newspapers dedicated to the Torrance area.

All three are the best sources of Torrance history from 1914 through the 1970s.

The project's financing has been supported by the Torrance Historical Society's 2007 Collectible Calendar which was produced as a special fund-

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Architectural Design Guidelines for Homes

For the first time, the Torrance Historical Society, working with the Los Angeles Conservancy and the City of Torrance staff, created a set of voluntary guidelines for Torrance homes.

The guidelines follow the City Council's historic July 26, 2005, unanimous vote to recognize the original boundaries of Torrance as "Old Torrance — Founded 1912."

As part of that measure, signage is featured throughout old Torrance.

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Rock the Block!

Councilman Bill Sutherland in a pink poodle skirt. See p. 3.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, Oct. 28, 1:30 p.m. —
Free Walking Tour, Old
Torrance

Fall 2007 — Volunteer Training

Sunday, Dec. 16 — 'Twas the
Night before Christmas, 4 p.m.

Home Tour 2008 — Oct. 11 & 12,
2008

For more info please visit
TorranceHistoricalSociety.org
and get details for our events!

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: DEBBIE HAYS

A Great, Busy Year!

I have a motto, "Better busy, than bored!" I'm here to tell you that the Torrance Historical Society has been anything but boring this past year. Here's a quick recap of the exciting events, programs, and fun we've had.

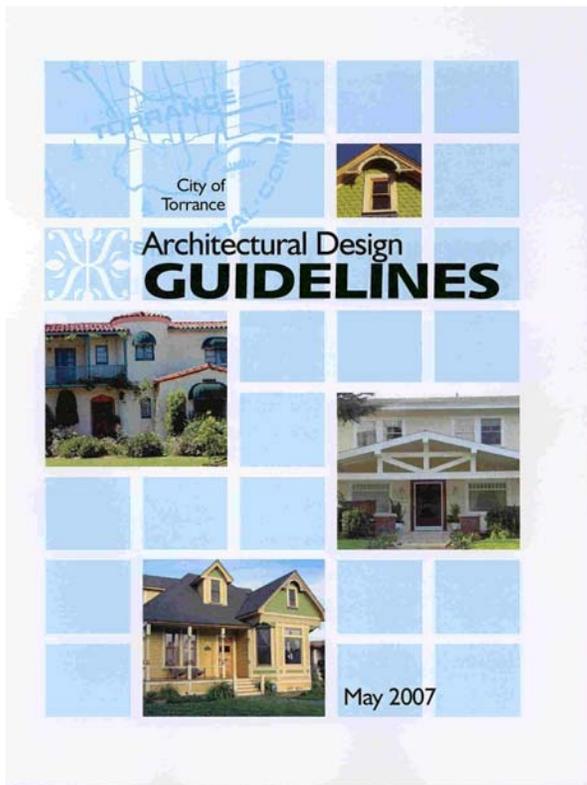
September 2006 - Book Signing. With the *Torrance Airport* book (the first book ever published on the history of the Torrance Airport) hot off the press, we invited author **Chuck Lobb** and **Louis Zamperini** — 1936 U.S. Olympic runner,

World War II POW survivor and Torrance High graduate, who wrote the foreword — to personalize and autograph the book at our Museum.

October 2006 - Original Fall Tour of Historic Homes
Last October, Lane Home Furnishing joined us in hosting the *Original Fall Tour of Historic Homes*. The seven homes on the tour reflected an eclectic mix — from Bungalow, to Craftsman, to Clinker Brick — all which char-

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Architectural Design Guidelines



These historic guidelines are available for \$5 at the Torrance Historical Society.

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As the City nears its 100th anniversary, this type of recognition is all the more important.

The Architectural Design Guidelines are a reference document for those property owners who wish to build, restore, renovate and preserve their homes according to historic styles.

The guidelines include coverage of Queen Anne Victorian, Folk Victorian, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival/English Cottage, French Eclectic, Spanish Colonial Revival, Monterey, Craftsman/California Bungalow, Prairie and Ranch styles.

In fact, all the photos used in the booklet were taken of homes within the Old

Torrance neighborhood.

The booklet is easy-to-read, has many examples emphasizing primary components and architectural features of a "historic" home, has a resources guide, and contains a glossary of sometimes obscure architectural terms.

For example, did you know that a soffit is the underside of an architectural feature, such as an arch, cornice, balcony or beam?

THS members Debbie Hays, Janet Payne, Liz Fobes, Gene Higginbotham, and Michael George contributed to the development of the guidelines.

The guidelines can be purchased for \$5 at the Torrance Historical Society and Museum.

Digitization: Documents Come to Life

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raising campaign to help finance the digitization of the documents.

The Torrance Historical Society has been working with the Torrance Library since 2004 to make these valuable, and fragile, resources available to a greater audience.

Right now, the Katy Geissert Library has only the Torrance Herald newspapers available on crumbling and combustible acetate microfilm. The Museum houses the original newspapers.

They are aging and crumbling, *yet these fragile faded pieces of paper hold the weight of the City's past, and can be used to inform its future.* They are an excellent resource for recounting our City's successes, stories and scandals.

By digitizing the newspapers and mounting them on the Library's Web Site, it will make the history of our City available, without damaging the original resources.

Further,, the papers can be searched by key words.

The Torrance program is in line with initiatives worldwide to preserve newspapers and allow easy access to historical data.

The estimated cost to fund this project is \$60,000. The Torrance Historical Society has pledged \$20,000 to the Library, as have the Friends of the Library.

The City will also make an investment of \$20,000 to make this project happen. *Let the Digitizing begin!*

The New THS Logo: A Work of Art

Glenn Sakamoto, Creative Director of Sakamoto Studio Design + Brand Strategy, designed the new Torrance Historical Society Logo. The logo focuses on the historic bridge over Torrance Blvd., but also references the balanced garden city reflected in the Olmsted design, as well as the greater horizon of California. (See masthead for details.)

Rock Around the Block!

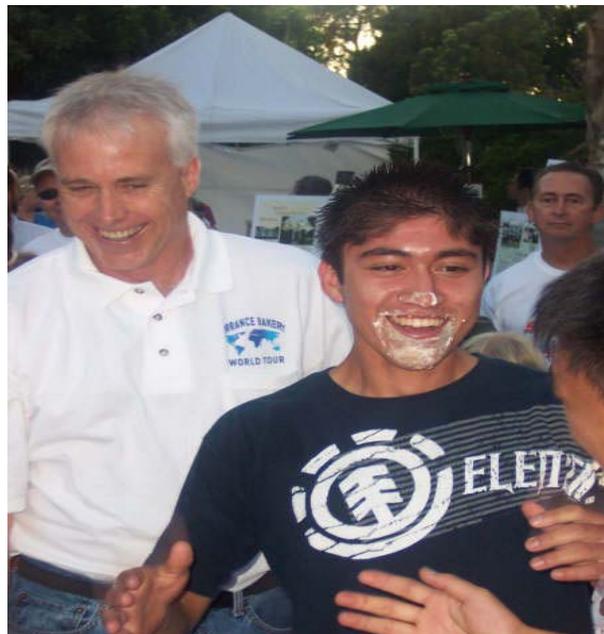
More than 1,000 people rocked around the block for the 1950s-style summer event in Old Torrance.

Sponsored by TOYOTA Motor Sales, Inc. and the Torrance Historical Society, the event celebrated Torrance's All-America City Award in 1956, when the city achieved the award for "growth without strain" way back when Albert Isen was mayor. The event also celebrated Toyota's 50 years in America.

Rockers bopped to 50s music (including songs by the Torrelle's, a group of city employees), dined on IN-N-OUT burgers, toured classic cars, viewed special exhibits (including the original congratulatory telegram from President Eisenhower), paged through the collection of historic high school yearbooks, and slurped milkshakes made by "real" soda jerks Charles Payne, Mike Witkowski, Todd Hays, and Ann Smisek, and Janet Stancliff.

The Bartlett Senior Center was open and the Torrance Woman's Club shared 1950s scrapbooks..

The event was hosted in cooperation with the City of Torrance, CitiCABLE 3, COSTCO, Torrance Bakery, and the Old Torrance Neighborhood Association.



Pie on the face. Kirk Rossberg, owner of the Torrance Bakery congratulates the pie-eater (who won a \$5 gift certificate to the bakery).

TORRANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD WWW.TORRANCEHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

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Calendar Giveaway

In celebration and promotion of history, the Torrance Historical Society gifted one of our 2007, 15-month collectable calendars to each and every third grader in the Torrance Unified School District.

We also presented a calendar to each of their teachers, and to all 17 of the principals of the Torrance elementary schools for a grand distribution of nearly 2000 calendars.

We chose the third graders, because this is the grade in which the students *Tour Torrance* in an effort to better know their town and its history. And . . . we hoped to pique an interest in the past, so

they can make a difference in our future.

A special thank you goes to these Life Members who made a generous donation toward the Third Grade calendar program: Paul Gwyn, Gene Hassan, Janet Payne, Janice Plank, Jerry Ronan, Dick Rossberg, and Marianne Strehler.

Yearbooks Galore!

Mitch Brown, an Archivist at Toyota, is one of THS' newest volunteers. He has begun to organize our High School Yearbook collection. He is organizing the books by school and by year. It is a daunting task — and we are glad he's tackling it!

Hardly a Boring Year for THS

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acterize and add to the charm of Old Torrance, founded 1912. We also added an additional tour in the evening.

Fans of the popular television drama *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, had the opportunity to participate in a private, docent-led tour of "Sunnydale" — the fictional suburban town filmed in Old Torrance for the television series.

They also received an exclusive visit to the TV home of Buffy, and enjoyed a gourmet reception in Buffy's backyard.

The Torrance Historical Society's biennial Home Tour has been a long standing tradition for over 25 years, and has become an anticipated event that continues to raise enough money to support the very core of our existence — *the perpetuation of history*.

October 2006 - Calendar. The 2007 15-month collectible calendar hit the streets! Our Calendar was produced as a special fund-raising campaign to help finance the Digitization Project, which will digitize the City directories, and both the *Torrance Herald* and the *Peninsula Press*.

December 2006 - Rose Float Display and 'Twas the Night Before Christmas Reading. To celebrate the City of Torrance's long standing tradition of participating in Pasadena's Tournament of Roses Parade, the Torrance Historical Society displayed a selection of framed favorites from the City's winning floats, and the engraved, silver trophy awarded on Jan. 1, 1914, to the City of Torrance.

We also hosted a reading of the holiday classic — *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* at the Museum for children of all ages and adults who are young at heart. Santa even paid a surprise visit!

January 2007 - History of the Hollywood Riviera and Celebrating 90 Years of Life and Education. One square mile of sloping hills & beautiful ocean views inspired developer Clifford F. Reid to create a community reminiscent of the Mediterranean Riviera — *The Hollywood Riviera*. We invited Marshall E. Stewart, author of *The History of the Early Hollywood Riviera* and nephew of Clifford F. Reid, to our Museum to share history, photos, and Hollywood Riviera Beach Club memorabilia.

As one of the partners with the Torrance High School Alumni Association, we proudly helped celebrate 90 years of life and education by hosting a birthday party for Louis Zamperini and kicking off the beginning of Torrance High School.



Above are two of the beautiful homes open during the original Fall Tour of historic homes.



This bas-relief that once graced the main entrance of the Jared Sidney Torrance Memorial Hospital is all that remains at the original site.

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March 2007 - "That's just the way it was." Jerome, Arkansas. See story on page 6. The unique display features photos, documents and a scale replica of a camp barrack (designed by Min Sueda) similar to those in which over 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry were relocated throughout WWII. The exhibit runs through Dec. 16, 2007.

March 2007 - All Gussied Up! In celebration of Women's History month we held a program at the Museum entitled "All Gussied Up!" by honoring the memory of Gussie Kriss — one of the most successful designers of burlesque costumes, and a long-time Torrance resident. Liz Goldwyn, documentary filmmaker and author of *Pretty Things — The Last Generation of American Burlesque Queens*, was on hand to autograph her book, and take guests back to a time when the hourglass figure was in vogue, striptease was an art form, and the costumes left little, but enough, to the imagination! We even had two former Burlesque Queens in our audience that afternoon!



Debbie Hays, Dayna Berman and Keri Gilbert gussied up!

June 2007 - Lunch at Fire Station #1

This year our annual meeting and installation of officers was held at Fire Station #1 — Mayor Frank Scotto was on hand to install the new officers of the Torrance Historical Society. We had a chili luncheon (compliments of the Soup Plantation) in the firemen's dining room, and heard from former Fire Chief Dick DeYoung what life was like at the fire department almost 50 years ago. We capped off our day with the unveiling of our new logo and a private tour of the station!



The New officers of the Torrance Historical Society are installed by Mayor Frank Scotto.

July 2007 - 3rd Annual Rock Around the Block Party. Talk about shake, rattle and rollin' . . . good golly, Miss Molly we had fun at our 3rd Annual Rock Around the Block event! Over 1000 people joined the Torrance Historical Society and TOYOTA for a 1950s-style family summer event in celebration of Torrance's All-America City Award in 1956— one of America's original and most prestigious community recognition awards. The hula hoop, bubble gum blowing, and pie eating contests were exciting and fun.

So, you see we've been busy, not bored! None of these programs could take place if it weren't for the unwavering support of the City, our hundreds of volunteers, and . . . our major sponsors COSTCO, Lane Home Furnishings and TOYOTA.

Stop by the museum and see what we have available for your year-round gift needs. Thank you, thank you! I hope to see you at one of our next events!

Debbie Hays :)
President, Torrance Historical Society



Picture of Torrance High School. Liz Goldwyn with her book, "Pretty Things."



That's Just the Way It Was: Jerome, AK



Jerome, Arkansas, May, 1943. Jeff, Ray and Dennis Nakata seated in front of barracks.

February 19 marked the 65th Anniversary since the issuance of United States Executive Order 9066.

This was a presidential executive order issued during World War II by

President Franklin D. Roosevelt who, using his authority as Commander-in-Chief, used his war powers to send "ethnic groups" (mainly of Japanese ancestry) to internment

camps. The result of this legal action was the relocation of more than 120,000 people from their homes to camps throughout the duration of the War.

In remembrance, the Torrance Historical Society & Museum organized a special exhibit "That's Just the Way It Was" Jerome, Arkansas.

The display features photos, documents and a scale replica of a camp barrack similar to those in which over 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry were relocated.

This exhibit opened March 6th and will run through December 16th. The Torrance Historical Society & Museum is open Tuesday - Thursday & Sunday, from 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM. Special tours are available.

Pat McIntyre

Councilwoman Pat McIntyre, a 40 year resident of the South Bay, passed away on June 25, 2007. Pat was serving her second term as a Torrance City Council Member.

Pat was a longtime supporter of the Torrance Historical Society.

In addition to her outstanding service to the city, she was committed to historical preservation and many other community initiatives throughout Torrance.

Pat McIntyre had been a teacher at Chadwick School in Palos Verdes, and was previously employed at Salvation



Army's headquarters. She also served on the City's Civil Service Commission and Planning Commission.

She was a thoughtful and intelligent public servant, who made a difference to Torrance residents.

Happy Birthday

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the Interior in 1987.

Emceed by Pat Coulter, the voice of the Armed Forces Day Parade, guests were entertained with the not-so-well-known-stories of Zamperini's life, e.g., when he was with Bugsy Siegel and his girlfriend in Las Vegas for the grand opening of The Flamingo Hotel.

Zamperini was a Torrance High School athlete, world famous runner (1934 - set a world interscholastic record for the mile - clocking in at 4 minutes and 21.2 seconds), 1936 Olympian, and a survivor.

On May 27, 1943, while on a reconnaissance mission, Zamperini's B-24 went down 800 miles south of Hawaii. After drifting 2000 miles in a raft for 47 days, he was "rescued" and taken to Wotje in the Marshall Islands. For the next two years he endured torture, humiliation and faced death many times.

Torrance Makes May Preservation Month

On Tuesday, May 15th, 2007, Mayor Frank Scotto presented the Torrance Historical Society with a Proclamation declaring the month of May 2007 as National Preservation Month.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation commemorated the third annual National Preservation Month in May 2007. While the theme of this year's National Preservation Month—Making Preservation Work—is new, the idea behind preservation month remains the same; celebrating the country's diverse and irreplaceable heritage by participating in local events throughout the nation.

Throughout May, the National Trust and its thousands of partners across the country demonstrated the importance of our nation's heritage as they focused on many aspects of the preservation movement, including historic travel, heritage education, historic homeownership, and community revitalization.

Local celebrations highlighted the unique culture and traditions of different areas of the country. In coordination, the Torrance Historical Society kicked off its annual Walking Tour of Old Torrance on May 27th.



THS President Debbie Hays and Board member Janet Payne receive proclamation from Mayor Scotto at the City Council meeting.

Welcome to Torrance Kashiwa Students!

This summer the Torrance Historical Society & Museum hosted the Sister City Association Kashiwa exchange students in this 35th year of the exchange program.

Accompanying the students were association President Hazel Tanaguchi, the local translator, six Torrance exchange students and the Kashiwa adult leader.

After introductions, the group left the Museum for a cool morning walk to the bridge over Torrance Boulevard, with board members Janet Payne, Ann Smisek and Jerry Ronan, who served as hosts.

The students were in awe of our National Historic landmark, especially the view from on top! We then stopped by the Pacific Electric Railway Depot pointing out the plaque and saying hello to Michael Shafer the owner/chef.

We walked to Kennedy Square in front of Wells Fargo Bank to see the beautiful and sparkling, clean John F. Kennedy Memorial fountain.

Then we visited International Costume Shop

where we saw outfits for Minnie Mouse, Elvis and Captain Jack from Pirates of the Caribbean!

The Kashiwa group was treated to Fosters Freeze, where President Debbie Hays greeted the students on her way to work. Many shopkeepers came to their front doors to say hello to the students giving them a feeling of Torrance friendliness.

Stopping at El Prado Park we could glance up the park to Torrance High School and back the other way to the Depot so they could have a sense of where they had been earlier. We then spent the last hour touring the Museum and finally looking at Torrance High School's yearbooks.

At day's end, they boarded the bus wearing the Torrance Historical Society & Museum bridge pins and carrying a tote of Museum souvenirs as a memory of the day with cameras full of digital images.

We were pleased to be part of this annual student exchange program and hope this kind of cultural exchange continues for many years.

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- Architectural Design Guidelines
- “That’s Just the Way It Was”: Jerome, Arkansas Exhibit
- Welcome Kashiwa Students!
- May was National Preservation Month

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Return Services Requested

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The Torrance
 Historian

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY TORRANCE HIGH AND LOUIS ZAMPERINI

On January 27, 2007, Torrance High School and the Torrance High School Alumni Association celebrated 90 years of life and education by hosting a birthday party for Louis Zamperini and kicking off Torrance High School's beginning.

Born on January 26, 1917, Louis Zamperini championed his way into becoming a hometown hero, and put Torrance on the map

from a national perspective.

Built in 1917, Torrance High School opened its doors on September 11th, and has provided many generations with the gift of education.

The festivities began with the Tarter Knights & Tarter Ladies giving guided tours of the campus -- the first property in Torrance to be placed on the



National Register of Historic Places of the U.S. Department of

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Torrance Historical Society & Museum Membership Form

Name _____ Address _____

Hm Phone (____) ____ - _____ Email _____

Adult – \$20 Family – \$30 Youth (<18) - \$10 Senior (65+) - \$15

Business/Organization – \$50 Individual Life Membership – \$350

Please mail this form with your check made out to “Torrance Historical Society, **1345 Post Avenue**

Torrance, CA 90501