



Winter 2010

Cliff Numark,
Editor

TORRANCE HISTORIAN

Newsletter of the Torrance Historical Society & Museum

Hardison Sports Center Dedicated

Mayor Frank Scotto and the City Council dedicated the sports center at Charles H. Wilson Park in honor of former Mayor Dee Haridson Nov. 13.

The “Dee Hardison Sports Center” is a 23,000 square foot facility, opened in 2000, and includes an 18,000 square foot gymnasium and 2,000 square feet of meeting rooms. More than 1.3 million people have used the facility.

The sports center was developed under Hardison’s tenure as mayor. A former physical education teacher, Hardison spearheaded the development of the versatile facility. Its dedication honors Hardison’s lifetime of service to the City of Torrance.

Post Offices Saved

Thanks to the hard work of the Torrance Historical Society & Museum, the Old Torrance Neighborhood Association, businesses, residents and our local elected officials — at the city, state and federal level, the U.S. Post Office has decided not to close the historic Marcelina Post Office.

In addition, two other Torrance post offices slated for closure will not be closed.

The Marcelina Post Office was built by the Works Progress Ad-



ministration during the New Deal.

THS, the City and Congresswoman Jane Harman are now fighting to add the building to the National Register of Historic Places.

Upcoming Events

Meet the Author: John Bogert, award-winning Daily Breeze columnist has compiled a book of his best work. Culled from more than 6,000 columns, “Grounded” is just that— children, pets, marriage, life itself, the things that endure, our identity: what grounds us. Books can be purchased at the event. *Sunday, Feb. 21, 2 PM Torrance Historical Society & Museum. Free!*

New Hours! To coincide with the Cruisin’ 50s Cruise Nite, the Museum will now be open on the 2nd Saturday from 3 pm— 6 pm. Make it a downtown day: cool cars and a great museum!

PRESIDENT’S COLUMN: GENE HIGGINBOTHAM

Restoring vs. Reproducing

Happy New Year Torrance Historical Society, and I wish you all health and success!

I’m sure many of you are looking forward to a new year of enjoying our fantastic community and perhaps you are planning some exciting improvement projects around the house. Certainly many of you are interested in historical preservation now days.

Historic preservation is all around us. You see realtors emphasizing properties listed in “historic downtown” neighborhoods. You see homeowners revitalizing their historic homes. And even our local government has included a historic preservation element in the updated City General Plan. Developers are making an attempt to fit their new construction into historic neighborhoods by recognizing the historic atmosphere.

Historic Preservation is on the rise but often the good intentions made by “preservationists” lead to misleading reproductions. Some-

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Great Rocking 'Round the Block

**By Debbie Hays, Carl Kaemerle, Janet Payne
The Rock Around the Block Committee**

Good golly, Miss Molly! Was Old Torrance rockin' or what?! THANK YOU to all of you who either attended Rock Around the Block this summer, helped spread the word, donated time, a prize, a car, or a song. And . . . a BIG THANK YOU to this year's sponsor, **Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center Torrance.**

Each year, Rock Around the Block keeps getting bigger. We were prepared to sell 600 In-N-Out burgers, and we sold 860, and over 300 shakes! We had an army of volunteers who cleaned, set up, organized, coordinated and prepared to make it and evening the community could twist and shout the night away. Jared Sidney Torrance would be impressed by the crowd of people who live, work and play in Torrance that bopped on down to the Museum to rock around the block.

We had an excellent turnout thanks to the Daily Breeze. And . . . our very own CitiCABLE 3 was there to cover the event. CitiCABLE 3 also provided the music. Even CBS 2/KCAL 9 was there to capture the party on film.

The night had all the right ingredients . . . the Torrelle's who entertained guests with their a cappella 50s songs, ukulele players, hula hoop, bubble gum blowing,



cake walk and pie eating contests, peachy keno cars, great music, fun food, and fabulous friends and family from the community.

This FREE 1950s-style family event was hosted in partnership with Costco, Torrance Bakery, Old Torrance Neighborhood Assoc., City of Torrance, CitiCABLE 3. Some of the others who contributed to the success include Crusin' 50s South Bay, Daily Breeze, Fosters Freeze, Fox Drugs, In-N-Out Burger, Johnny C's, Oscar Mayer Weinermobile, Palos Verdes Bowl, South Bay Strummers, Red Car Brewery & Restaurant, Torrance High School Alumni Assoc., Torrance Public Library, Torrance Torrelles, Torrance Woman's Club.

Look forward to seeing you at next year's Rock Around the Block: Thursday, July 15, 2010 from 5 pm - 8 pm. Be there or be square!

In the Top 3: Our Museum Named Tops in LA County by MyFOXLA

During the fall, myfoxla, the local Fox affiliate, conducted a poll of the "best of" LA County – and the Torrance Historical Society and Museum was ranked number 3 in the museum category, behind the Getty and the Heritage Square Museum in Downtown LA (and ahead of the LA

County Museum of Art!)

Results can be found at myfoxla.cityvoter.com/winters/best-of-the-la-hotlist/4747.

The contest was live, so Torrance Historical Society members tried to rally the troops between the voting period of Sept. 7—Nov. 6!

The goal of the contest was to determine the best businesses and sites in LA through popular vote.

The site was closely monitored—so that people couldn't vote multiple times from the same computer and the technology specifically prevented people from manipulating the vote.

AYSO Founder Honored by City

This fall, the City honored Hans Stierle, who 45 years ago founded the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), an organization that has more than 50,000 teams and 650,000 players.

At the time, Stierle organized youth soccer games for the Los Angeles German Soccer club in North Hollywood, but he wanted his children in Torrance to have a chance to participate in the sport.

Stierle took a bag of soccer balls to the Jefferson School field so neighborhood kids could play—and from that simple origin the future of youth soccer, and arguably professional soccer in the United States, was born.



Hans Stierle, along with the first AYSO team in Torrance in 1966. Photo courtesy John Sloway.

The first league started with nine teams and rapidly grew. As the league prospered, Stierle developed the AYSO philosophy: “Everyone Plays,” designing a lineup card so that every child played at least half the game.

Stierle also designed the AYSO logo and the “PLAYSOCCER” slogan. In 1991, Stierle was named one of the “20 Men of Influence” in American soccer.

Stop by the museum this spring to see our AYSO exhibit!

TORRANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD
WWW.TORRANCEHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

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President’s Letter

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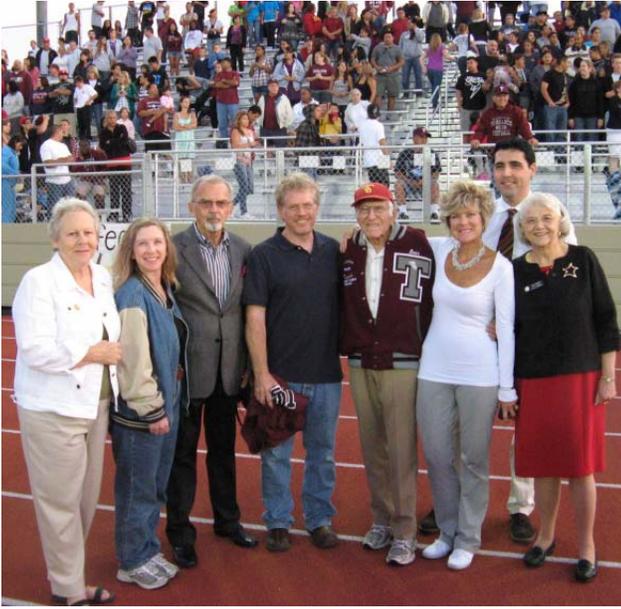
times it’s hard to tell the difference between a new house and an old house. So I thought to kick off the New Year, I would explore the differences between restoration and reproduction.

Restoration is the process of restoring an item back to its original condition. Stripping off paint, repairing broken parts and replacing old wiring are some of the tasks.

It’s hard work but the outcome is very satisfying — restoring something may give you a completely fresh look to what was once just old and uninteresting. I recommend from experience that a restoration project be conducted in baby steps, not all at once. The work is too great. If you want to restore all the wood work, doors and windows, do so one at a time. One completed door will inspire you to move on to the next but without messing up your entire house.

Old style design is very popular and chic. You can buy almost anything reminiscent of the old days. Beautiful reproductions are conveniently found in large “restoration” chain stores or simply found on line. You can buy door knobs, light switches, moldings, even refrigerators and ranges that look exactly as they did 90 years ago.

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Torrance Historical Society Board Members with Louis Zamperini at ribbon cutting.

Zamperini Stadium Rededicated

More than 70 years ago, Torrance Legend Louis Zamperini ran track at Torrance High School. The first Zamperini stadium was opened in 1962 in his honor.

On Sept. 17, the stadium was refurbished and rededicated through Measure Z, which Torrance voters passed by an overwhelming majority to overhaul sports fields, among other items.

Team Organizes Museum Archives

Our Files Assessment, Integration & Reorganization project (FAIR) began August 26, 2009. Its scope is vast, involving the inventory and review of every collection and file in our archives so we can preserve local history and organize it in a way to make it more accessible to the public.

As a result, the museum will limit its weekday hours of operation, allowing tours and special research by appointment only.

The initial FAIR volunteer team has a range of experience: CFP, IT engineer, bank manager, MBA, MPA, regional director and executive assistant for major national NGOs, retired and active city commissioners, even a rocket scientist.

FAIR is designed as the next logical step to the *Torrance Herald* and city directory digitization project undertaken in partnership with the city and library foundation. This step will allow us to begin to organize, stabilize and preserve the other historical photos and documents in our collection and expand public access online.

The final phase will be to draw on professional expertise to evaluate our collections for historical significance and take further action to preserve documents, photos, artifacts and ephemera. This probably will take years and grant resources to accomplish.

In Memoriam

Minori Sueda, 90 years old, Redondo Beach, California-born Nisei resident of Torrance passed away Nov. 17. Sueda built the scale model replica of a camp barrack in Jerome, Arkansas, in which over 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry were relocated. Sueda served in the U.S. Army 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and his wife (they were not married at the time) was interned at Jerome, Arkansas. This display was exhibited at the Museum during the 65th Anniversary of United States Executive Order 9066.

He is survived by his wife, Yayoi Sueda; son, Roy of Nevada; daughter, Irene; brothers, Masamichi (Sally), Tatsuo (Rusty), and Asama (Terry) Sueda; sisters, Sachiko Ohara and Fumi Nakano, and many other relatives.

60th Anniversary of Seaside Planned

By Tom Rische

Torrance's Seaside area isn't by the sea, but it's only two miles away.

After World War II, *Seaside Ranchos*, one of the city's first housing tracts, arose from a former swamp. Its Seaside Elementary School was the first built in Torrance's brand-new Unified School District. The Ranchos later also became the site of a twinkling Christmas lights festival.

On Saturday, March 20, as spring begins, Seaside Homeowners Assn. and Seaside PTA will host a 60th anniversary celebration. The HOA seeks memories and pictures of the area from residents and ex-residents. If you grew up in that area and/or have memories or pictures from those earlier days, please contact President Tom Rische (52 year resident), trrische@yahoo.com, (310) 375-0486. Although it isn't Halloween, Seasideers are looking for "ghosts" of its past.

Volunteer Opportunity Honors Vets

By Gerald T. Ronan

The Torrance Historical Society Board persists in its project to gather and preserve the too-short life story of each of the 146 Torrance military personnel who gave their lives in service to country. Using the scant information from local public records, the Society provided study guides and enlisted the help of the local high schools. During the Spring school semester of 2008, students at North and Torrance High Schools collected information on some of those listed on the Memorial Wall at Torrance Civic Center.

Much remains to be done to achieve the objective. Help is needed. Michael George, Society Board member and Reference Librarian at the Katy Geissert Library, will present two fact finding seminars for volunteer researchers. They will learn techniques for gathering information from yearbooks, newspapers, directories and government records.

The Research Training will take place at the Torrance Historical Society Museum on Monday, January 25th from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM, and Sunday, January 31st, from 3:00 - 4:30 PM. Volunteers are urged to contact Jerry Ronan at 310-328-1972, GTRonan@aol.com.

President's Letter

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Often these items are purchased to replace originals that cannot be restored because the originals no longer function or are no longer safe to use. This is referred to as “replacing in-kind” because the original item is still in your possession, and it is therefore considered the blue print for a reproduction that can be incorporated back into the design.

The best thing you can do when replacing “in-kind” is to keep the original item and preserve it. Do not discard it because you are discarding irreplaceable history. With a little creativity you might be able to utilize the original item now in a different setting. Call it art!

What are your options when the original is no longer available to act as your blueprint?

Let's say you own a house that was originally built well before TV was invented and it still has all the charm of a historic home. The wood siding and original windows are still intact, the original plaster walls and decorative tiles are sound, and everything is historically accurate except for maybe the kitchen which was “upgraded” during the Brady Bunch series. (The orange counters and avocado appliances once so popular just don't have the appeal that they used to.) Good-bye 70s, hello 20s!

Most likely, the original kitchen is no longer available to act as your historic blueprint so there is nothing to restore and there is nothing to replace “in-kind”.

You can still install a “period” kitchen that is reminiscent of the 20s but consider showing respect to your house's original design. Make it obvious that the new kitchen is not original. You don't want to mislead. Pay tribute to certain original design elements in your house

that you like such as a special molding detail or a beautiful light fixture — just don't overdo it. Any original item takes precedence over a new item because the original has historic importance.

A good rule of thumb when you are paying tribute to an existing design element is to always “dumb it down”. Make the new molding or light fixture simpler or plainer so that you show respect to the original item that has survived all these years.

You can also install a contemporary kitchen in your old house. It's okay, really. After all, that's what someone did back in the 70s! There is no reason to avoid modern amenities in your old house, and paying tribute to historic design elements is a plus. If you are lucky enough to have remnants of original items, sometime you can get creative by incorporating the old with the new. The point is to stay honest so that there is a clear definition between old and new.

What about the brand new house or building designed to look historic? An appropriate reproduction will blend in just fine but the question is how important is it to maintain design consistency in an otherwise eclectic neighborhood? Perhaps not blending in is the appropriate response because diversity is truly honest. There is no misleading when a contemporary house is built next to a historic house, just like there is no misleading when a contemporary kitchen is added to a historic home.

So, will you take on a restoration project or will you replace in-kind, or go contemporary? These are good questions to consider when you are planning your New Year's project.

What's important is to have fun, be safe and be honest.

Torrance Historical Society & Museum
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The Torrance Historian

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INSIDE

- Post Office Saved
- John Bogert Book Launch
- AYSO Founder Honored
- Wanted: Seaside HOA Memories
- Volunteer to Help Torrance Vets
- Organizing the Archives

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE NAMED



The City of Torrance has appointed a 29-member committee to organize the city's centennial celebrations in 2012.

Among those appointed were former Mayor Dee Hardison; City Clerk Sue Herbers; Torrance Unified School District board member Don Lee, and Donna Duperron, CEO of the Torrance Chamber.

Other members of the Torrance Centennial Committee are Hubert Chan, Melanie Dreike, Stephanie Ernster, Judy Gibson, Keri Gilbert, Debbie Hays, Barbara Heughins, Mary Hoffman, Kathryn Joiner, Tammy Khan, Daniel Lee, Dr. Laurie Love, Kristin Matsuda, Gail Morgan, Frances Mullan, Terri Nishimura, Janet Payne, Michelle Polcari, Tom Rische, Pat Sandt, Cindy Scotto, Dr. John Stecker, Stuart Sunshine, Marifrances Trivelli and Stephanie Yee. Also, Councilmember Gene Barnett, Councilmember Tom Brewer and Councilmember Susan Rhilinger are on the Committee. Dr. Love and Hardison serve as the chair and vice chair, respectively.

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

