



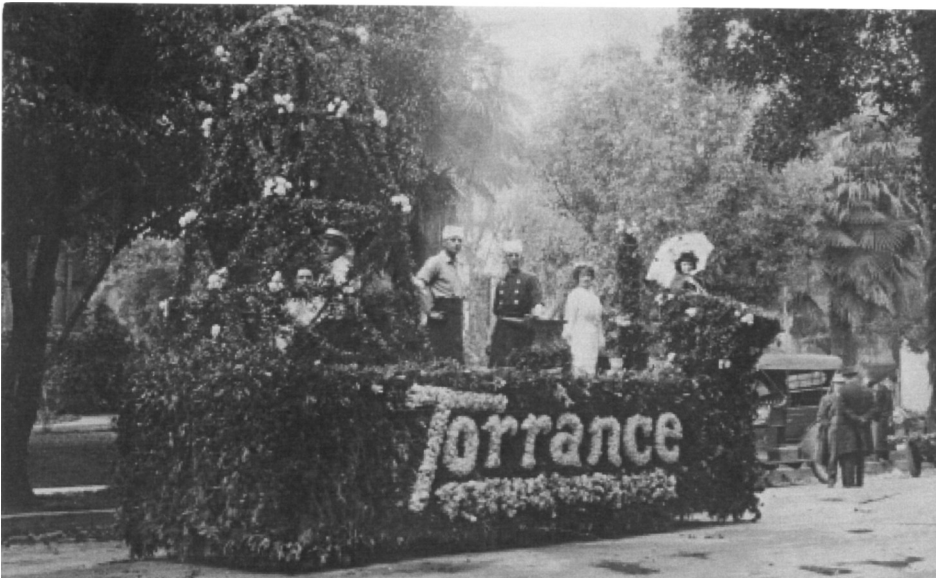
Winter 2010

Trish Stewart,
Editor

TORRANCE HISTORIAN

Newsletter of the Torrance Historical Society & Museum

A Rosy New Year for Torrance



The full-size photograph of the City of Torrance's 1914 Tournament of Roses float can be seen on display at the Museum, along with the complete article from the *Torrance Herald* and a once-lost silver trophy.

According to the January 1, 1914, edition of the *Torrance Herald*, the “zephyr kissed” City of Torrance entered a float in that New Year’s Day Tournament of Roses. The float, titled “Industry,” was lavishly decorated with red and white roses. It featured a young girl throwing flowers to the crowd from a shovel crane, a miniature oil derrick, and a forge (complete with mechanic) from Union Tool Works.

The City has continued this New Year’s tradition for over 50 years now. The entry for 2011 is entitled “Afternoon Tea with Friends” and portrays a whimsical dragon pouring tea for his friends.



Tidbits Needed!

Do you know some interesting tidbits about the City of Torrance? The Torrance Centennial Committee is inviting submissions for trivia questions to be used during the Centennial Celebration in 2012. For example, “How did the City of Torrance get its name?” or “What motto is on the official seal of the City of Torrance?” Send your questions to Tom Rische at TRRische@yahoo.com —and don’t forget to include the correct answers!

With Deepest Appreciation

PRESIDENT’S COLUMN: KURT WEIDEMAN

Each year, the Torrance Historical Society recognizes those volunteers, members, and community sponsors who generously contribute their precious time and energy to benefit the Society and Museum. A “Thanks for Giving” party was held at the Museum on October 28th, allowing us the opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for all their efforts and to say, “Thank you.”

Over 75 people attended this event and experienced the camaraderie and fellowship of the night. There were speeches (brief) and food and drinks (vast quantities). The highlight of the night was when the home owners on our recent “Original Fall Tour of Historic Homes” shared their experiences of having 400+ people over to “visit” for the week-end.

Our organization is blessed to have committed members, volunteers and supporters dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of our city’s history. For those of you who were unable to attend this event, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and thanks for all your efforts.

On another subject, thanks to all who submitted suggestions for our application to the Torrance Centennial Committee for sanctioned events that the

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President's Column

(Continued from page 1)

Torrance Historical Society and Museum will present for the upcoming 2012 Torrance Centennial. We submitted three proposals for consideration, incorporating the ideas that you submitted. Stay tuned for more information, as these have not been accepted by the Committee—yet.

Lastly, I would like to use this forum to give a special “Thank You” and recognition to someone who couldn’t attend our recent event. Liz Fobes is our Master Archivist and has been responsible for supervising the recent enhancements to our state-of-the-art archives. She has selflessly devoted herself to this project, dedicating over 2000 hours to organizing material and managing volunteers on this project. She is a gem!

2010 Historic Home Tour a Success

The recently completed 2010 Original Fall Tour of Historic Homes continued a tradition begun three decades ago. The Society is grateful to all the people and organizations who helped make this fundraising event a success.

Major Sponsor

Del Amo Rotary Club

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Thanks for Giving Party

Gene Hassan, Janice Plank and

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Research

Liz Fobes, Mike George, Debbie

Hays, Janet Payne and Janice

Plank

Home Tour Committee 2010

Debbie Hays, Janet Payne, Janice

Plank and Ann Smisek

She’s a Winner!

Congratulations to Marian Botello, who won the Marriott Hotel gift certificate given away during the 2010 Original Fall Tour of Historic Homes. The lucky winner and her husband plan to use the prize to celebrate their upcoming wedding anniversary. Staying at the Marriott Hotel is sure to make their celebration especially memorable!



Museum Holiday Schedule

The museum will be closed:

- Monday, November 22
through Tuesday, November 30
- Monday, December 13
through Tuesday, January 4

Regular museum hours are:

- Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays
1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Call (310) 328-5392 for appointments.



Kashiwa Students Enjoy Old-Fashioned Fun

The City of Torrance has had a sister-city relationship with Kashiwa, Japan, since 1973. A highlight of the program is the yearly visit of Kashiwa students, who always make the Torrance Historical Society one of the first stops on their tour of Torrance. This year, the girls and their adult leader heard a brief history of Torrance and took a quick tour of the Museum, “and then the real fun began,” reported Debbie Hays, 1st Vice President, who hosted the Kashiwa group at the museum. “We went out front and tried a sport from the 50s—the hula hoop!” Debbie added that this “hips-on” history lesson was a big hit with the girls, and was topped off with a walk to Fosters Freeze for a good old-fashioned taste of America.

Saving the Day

Making Sure Family Photos Are In Good Hands

by Tom Philo, Archivist/Cataloger,
CSU Dominguez Hills

The family photographs we keep in picture frames, albums, and boxes are invaluable historical documents. As windows into a vanished past, they help us remember key events, give us insight into family history and relationships, and record changes in how the world looked and how people changed with it. Small wonder that when fire, flood, or earthquake threaten our homes, the first thing people think to rescue (well, other than the kids) are the family photographs. We know in our hearts that they

help us define who we are, and we feel it down to our bones that they are irreplaceable.

The sad fact, though, is that, while people would risk much to snatch their photos out of the path of flood or fire, they often ignore other dangers that pose an even greater threat to these invaluable artifacts. As a result, each day family photographs are lost or damaged beyond repair.

And what are these dangers? The main villains who want to steal our photo treasures are the innocent-looking elements of light, air, and water. From the moment that an image is developed to become a photograph, light, air, and water start working—separately or ganging up together—to take it away from you.

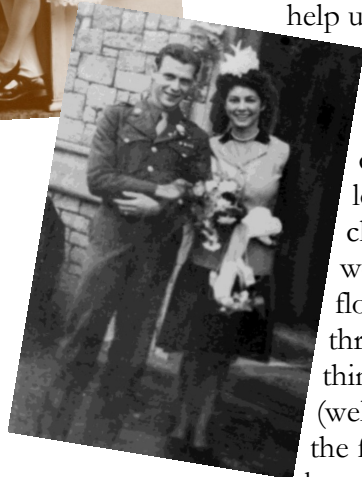
Let's take a quick (and oversimplified) look at how each of these three bad guys poses a threat to your photographs. (Note: while much of what follows applies to all photographs, we'll focus specifically on

color photos. Black and white photographs, while facing many of the same threats, tend to be more stable and durable than color photographs).

Light: It shouldn't make sense. The light passing through a camera lens makes photography possible. Yet, light remains the great thief of color photography. If you've ever left a newspaper outside on a sunny day, you know that in a couple of hours this morning's paper can become as yellowed and brittle as something in your great-grandparents' scrapbook. While you may not ever leave your photos outside, light is nonetheless working on them in much the same way. The inks that are used to create the images are volatile, and when light hits them they react. The result, which can take years, may be as subtle as a slow uniform fading of all colors. More often, though, when a photo is exposed to constant light – that family portrait hanging over the fireplace mantle, for instance – you will notice that only some of the colors simply disappear, leaving everything with a dull pinkish or bluish tint. If you see that, you've been robbed.

Air: This includes both temperature and environmental factors. Obviously, exposing a photograph to extreme summer heat or frigid winter cold is not a good idea, but often people don't narrow the range of high and low temperatures enough for their photos' good. A photograph is actually a whole stack of components, including paper, dyes, and emulsion – all of which react slightly differently to temperature changes. As a photograph goes from quite warm to quite cool, the layers of the photo pull against each other and sometimes decide to go their separate ways, leaving you with a photograph that has literally fallen apart. Environmental factors include smoke, fumes from cleaning supplies or from cooking, and off-gassing from construction materials (such as plywood). That photograph hung in the kitchen or over the fireplace faces a barrage of substances that can weaken colors and damage the paper holding the image.

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Calling all Volunteers!

The FAIR archive project needs your help on what may be the most rewarding project in our Organization's history. If you'd like to volunteer, please call the museum at (310) 328-5392, or email us at: museum@torrancehistoricalsociety.org.

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Water: Any time water comes into contact with a photograph, it is a potential catastrophic event. Water damages paper, makes colors run, and if there is writing in ink on the back of the photo, it can show through the photo or stain nearby photographs. Most water damage, obviously, comes from bathroom or kitchen leaks or basement floods, and keeping photographs



anywhere near those sites is courting disaster. But there is also a hidden form of water damage: When photos have been kept quite cool (as in an air-conditioned house), but then are brought into a suddenly warm environment (such as bringing them to a family picnic outdoors), condensation can form inside enclosures (photo albums) or picture

frames. You may not see it at first, but suddenly you may notice odd wrinkling in the corners of the photo.

Killing with Kindness—A Word About Enclosures:

People like to put photos in albums. They are convenient, orderly, and keep photos away from water, fingerprints, and other bad things. What could be wrong with that? Unfortunately, the clear plastic enclosures on many albums are made of polyvinyl chloride (PVC), which generate acids that interact with photographs, fading them or causing them to stick to the plastic. Few things are sadder than having someone scrupulously arranging and mounting pictures in a photo album he thinks will keep the photos safe, only to find that when he removes a photo from its sleeve, half of it stays stuck to the inside of the plastic sleeve.

Nothing can make photographs last forever, but if you follow this short list of dos and don'ts, you can help extend their life by many years.



1. When you mount, frame, display, or store photographs, keep in mind how they may be affected by light, air, and water.
2. Don't do anything to photographs that can't be undone. (If you have to write on the back of a photograph, for example, write lightly in pencil, not ink.)
3. Try to keep the temperature around your photographs as stable as possible. (Storing them in attics or garages can expose them to intense heat or cold—or both).
4. Do not use paper clips or rubber bands with photos. (Clips can tear photos or leave rust, and rubber bands stick to photographs.)
5. Do not use glue to mount photographs.
6. Do not store photographs in plastic enclosures unless they are listed as "Archival."
7. Do not store photographs and negatives in the same place. (If one or the other is destroyed, it's a comfort to know that you can still make copies.)
8. Find the safest place for your most valuable photos. (Consider a safe-deposit box—it's secure, and the temperature is kept at nearly ideal levels)
9. Do not display a photograph you intend to preserve. (Consider making multiple copies from negatives and display one while storing the others.)
10. Do not use cheap (i.e., one-hour) developing for important photos. (They often use cheap dyes and materials, and give you photos that are even more unstable than usual.)

This is just a short look at threats to family photos and some preventive measures. Check books and websites for more detailed information. The family photos that are in your care are a gift from the past. If you take good care of them, your family will be thanking you for generations to come.

Share the Benefits of Membership

You enjoy being a member of the Torrance Historical Society & Museum — why not share the fun with a friend? Those who join now will receive bonus months: their membership will be current until February 2012. And while you're thinking about it, why not renew your membership, too? You'll find a handy form on the back of this page.

The Rewards of Research

By Jerry Ronan, Historian

Names on the Wall project researchers continue to have revelatory and life-changing experiences. For example, Elissa Davey’s dedication to the process has been rewarded with lasting effects. During her research, Davey learned that SP4 Bernard Bailey was one of two soldiers killed on August 24, 1969; SP5 Larry Shea of Eminence, KY, was the other. Bailey and Shea were service pals. Davey took a “side trip” in her research to contact with the Shea family. As a result, the California and Kentucky families can communicate about their shared losses and enrich each other’s memories.

While researching Ralph Breitfeld, Davey discovered that Breitfeld’s parents had fled Germany’s Third Reich and became U.S.



The Veterans Memorial Wall is at the corner of Torrance Boulevard and Maple Avenue.

citizens. This decision eventually cost them their son, who gave his life for his parents’ adopted country when he was killed at Heartbreak Ridge in North Korea on September 19, 1951.

Davey also researched Bert S. Crossland, namesake of the Torrance American Legion Post 170. She learned that he died in World War I and remains buried in Flanders Field, Belgium.

Crossland was one of over one hundred thousand U.S. service men and women who were killed in World War I; about a third of those remain buried in foreign soil. In 1919, a movement was initiated to give Gold Star mothers a trip to Europe to visit their children’s graves. (“Gold Star” mothers are women who have lost a child in the service of their country.) Four presidents later, and over the objections of the funeral directors’ lobby, free trips were made available to mothers from 1930 to 1933. Women who went on these trips found a chair, floral wreath, and flag at each gravesite, with ceremony-free time over a period of several days to spend with their loved ones. Mothers of black service personnel were given separate, more moderate accommodations. (Their trips were brightened by the warm, non-discriminatory treatment they received in Paris.)

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- Library Liaison – Dana Vinke

Would You Like to Help Write History?

The names carved on the Veterans Memorial Wall honor 145 military service personnel who died in military engagements beginning with World War I. In many instances, there is scant record of those too short lives. Your Torrance Historical Society Board has embarked upon a project to put a face on each of those names. It aspires to research and place in the Museum archives the story of each of these heroes.

The task is great, but with the help of volunteer researchers, it can be done. We need additional hands and eyes to make this a reality by the 1912 City Centennial. Working on this project is a rewarding, often poignant, small-world experience. Help us gather and preserve the stories. Contact the Museum at (310) 328-5392 or send an e-mail to Museum@TorranceHistoricalSociety.org.



**Holiday Gifts Available
in the Museum**

**Books, note
cards, T-shirts,
and more!**

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The Torrance Historian

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COMING SOON: 'Twas the Night Before Christmas



Children and adults are invited to the Torrance Historical Society & Museum on **Sunday, December 12th, at 4:00 PM** for a reading of the holiday classic, *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*. **Former Torrance City Councilman Paul Nowatka** will cozy down in an antique wingback chair and delight listeners with this magical tale. Be prepared for a surprise visitor! (Hint: His arrival will be heralded by the jingling of sleigh bells.) Each guest will leave with a treat (compliments of COSTCO), and one lucky winner will depart with their very own copy of *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*. Guests will also have an opportunity to win a teddy bear. This free event runs less than one hour and is open to the public. Reservations are not required.

Torrance Historical Society & Museum Membership Form

Name _____ Address _____

Home Phone (____) ____ - ____ Email _____

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

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

Donation \$ _____

Please mail this form with your check made out to "Torrance Historical Society" to:

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1345 Post Avenue
Torrance, CA 90501