



Sunnyvale Historical Society and Museum Association

DECEMBER 2014

Volunteer Reception a Huge Success!



Jim Reynolds singing his clever song about the volunteers.



Just some of the glorious food provided for the volunteers.

Once a year all museum volunteers are honored with a thank you reception and this year's reception was very well attended by more than 50 volunteers. Organized by Docent Coordinator, **Rosa Romano**, there was yummy food provided to everyone and wonderful entertainment provided by the **NASA Ames Jazzband** who perform all around the Silicon Valley. The upstairs room at the museum was a-buzz with chatter from all the volunteers exchanging stories about their adventures as a docent, working in the gift shop or other volunteering opportunities they have had throughout this past year.

Two long-time volunteers were honored—**Barb Kyger Overholt** and **Barbara Johnson**—layout designer of the newsletter for the past seven years and Event Planner, respectively. Both have done their volunteer jobs exceedingly well and will be very much missed. Interestingly, they both knew and worked with each other prior to volunteering at the museum so it was like old home week for them seeing one another again.

Presently we do not have replacement volunteers for either of these functions. If you know of anyone who might be interested in helping out, please have them call the museum. In the meantime, volunteer **Rafe Ann Du Bois** has offered to help with the Event Planning duties. Thank you Rafe Ann!

Further entertainment was provided by our museum president, **Jim Reynolds**, another very talented musician, who wrote a song about the volunteers and sung to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic". Jim brought down the house with his clever and heartfelt lyrics.

All in all, the event was a huge success and very much appreciated by all the volunteers. Thank you Rosa and Jim!



The two Bars—Kyger Overholt (left) and Johnson, both retiring as volunteers.

Fantastic Holiday Exhibit Now on Display

Avid collectors like **Meg Stanley**, owner of the Department 56 Dickens' Village on display in the upstairs exhibit room, may know the story behind the creation of these charming lighted buildings. Many of us don't so we hope the information provided in this article will enlighten you and will add to your enjoyment of the museum's holiday exhibit.

It all started at Bachman's retail floral company in Minneapolis, MN in the early 1970s. Ed Bazinet had been named the head designer and gift buyer for imports at Bachman's and began creating new products and looking for new ideas. According to the Bachman's website, one winter evening Ed and some friends were driving into a small Minnesota town and were struck by the beauty of the snow-covered buildings with "lights twinkling against fresh fallen snow." Inspired by what they saw, it was not long before he and the design team were "dreaming up fantastic village themes with buildings and accessories to bring them alive."

Six lighted ceramic buildings were introduced in 1976 and were the first of the Snow Village collection. Those six were retired in 1979 and replaced by 12 new designs and some Village accessories were added.

In 1984 the Dickens' Village Series was introduced as the first in the Heritage Village Collection. These porcelain buildings were designed to "capture the spirit of Christmas in Victorian England" and meant to depict the time of Charles Dickens and relate to his stories of that time.

Why the name Department 56? Bachman's used a numbering system to identify each of their departments. The wholesale Gift and Imports Division that was led by Ed Bazinet and was—you guessed it—Department 56!



The website www.department56.com is complete and you can see the latest creations that are based on the popular "Downton Abbey" TV series as well as photos and videos about these highly collectible miniature lighted buildings.

Be sure and make it a point during the holidays to stop by and enjoy this enchanting exhibit which will be appreciated by all ages.

*Researched and contributed by
Janine Stanek, Museum Archivist*

Calendar of Events

Sat., Sun.,
Dec. 6, 7, 13, 14 2:00 p.m. - Victorian Teas

Mon., Dec. 15 7:00 p.m. - Board Meeting

Wed., Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

Thurs., Dec. 25 Christmas Day
(museum closed)

Wed., Dec. 31 New Year's Eve

Thurs., Jan. 1 New Year's Day
(museum closed)

Mon., Jan. 19 Martin Luther King Day

Sat., Feb. 14 Valentine's Day

Mon., Feb. 16 Presidents' Day



Gift Shop Ready For The Holidays

Don't want to fight the crowds? Don't like shopping malls? Can't find adequate parking? Then do your shopping at the **Historical Society's Museum Gift Shop**. Not only is the environment charming—the items are unique and you will see them nowhere else . . . And the prices are incredible! We know people who shop our gift shop all year long so when the holidays come around, they don't have any shopping left to do and can simply enjoy the holidays with their families and friends.

So make it a point to come for a visit. The gift shop is open during regular museum hours—Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. Bring a friend along with you. We guarantee both of you will enjoy this shopping experience and will return time after time after time. And don't forget, if you are a member, you get a 10% discount! That's our way of saying thank you for your membership.



There's lots of Santas and teacups.



There's linens, dolls and all kinds of holiday gift ideas.

Need A Unique Child's Gift?



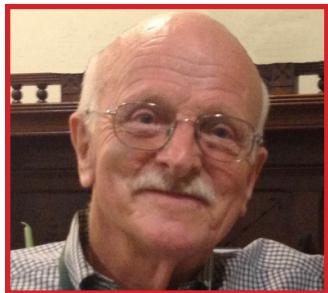
Are you looking for a unique Christmas gift for your child or grandchild in the age range of 6 to 12 years old? In particular, would you like to give a gift that proves you are tech savvy and have an interest in helping kids become smarter in the sciences? We have the perfect solution for you!

A local parent, **Sue Chen** (who we told you all about in our July newsletter) and our President, **Jim Reynolds**, have teamed up once again to interpret another section of our tech wall by elementary and middle school students and create an exciting electronic book.

In addition, Sue and Jim have challenged student artists to enhance the ebook with original artwork. The result is an ebook for iPads that will trace the history of computation and consumer electronics from the abacus to the smartphone. When exploring the ebook there are many engaging side trips you can take like reading the story of Samuel Morse who missed his wife's funeral due to slow communication and dedicated the rest of his life to developing faster communication and hearing the actual sound of Morse Code. Imagine being able to see a video clip of the Babbage Difference Engine in operation displayed in this ebook all on your iPad or iPhone.

Better yet, this gift does not have to be wrapped! All you have to do is come to the museum, visit the tech wall on the second floor, view a demonstration of the ebook on our iPad and pick up a small card with incomprehensible (at least to the non-tech-savvy adult) letters and numbers on it. Then put this card in an envelope with a \$10 bill, give it to your child or grandchild (who will instantly know exactly what to do with it) and watch as they download this treasure to their Apple iPad and lose themselves in the sounds, text and images on the history of the electronic systems they use every day. You will be an instant hero and we think this will be their best Christmas gift ever!

President's Letter



One of the joys of being President of our board is the opportunity to go out into the community and tell people about our museum.

My first go at this occurred about two years ago when our Director, **Laura Babcock**, answered the phone in the museum one day and heard a cry of desperation at the other end, stating that I was, at that moment, supposed to be at a SIRS meeting in Sunnyvale to have lunch and give a talk. The arrangement had been made six months before and I had completely forgotten about it! I decided the only speech I had "in the can" was a docented tour of our museum. I showed up in time for the dessert course and, with microphone in hand, took my audience through the intro room, the parlor, the kitchen, and so on through each room of the museum. For my notes, I used my vision in my head of each of the rooms and what I would say if we were actually there in the museum taking a tour. It turned out to be a great hit and I was still fielding questions as I backed out the door. Since that day, under-preparation has been my credo.

I had an opportunity to give the same talk at a PEO meeting in Los Altos in mid-November. Naturally, being in Los Altos, I had to add the story about Martin Murphy Jr. giving Los Altos to his daughter, Elizabeth, on the occasion of her marriage to William Taaffe. As volunteer, **Janice Havey**, who told me the story, said, "And since she was a woman, you know she didn't get the best land." That evoked a polite chuckle from the Los Altans present. But, as I went through the story, told about how our museum came to be and related the many activities that our dedicated volunteers do during the weeks and months, I found myself to be just as amazed as my audience. I'm sure it showed in my delivery because they all seemed to be spellbound by what we have accomplished and what goes on, day-to-day in our organization. Many of them had been at our Depression Era reception and were nodding to each other, affirming what I was saying. They were still laughing about the fact that we served Spam, Ritz Crackers and Kool-Aid, all things introduced in the 1930s, a fact unearthed by our archivist, **Jeanine Stanek**. It is an honor to stand up in front of anyone who will listen and relate the tale of our museum. Many thanks to all volunteers and members who make all that possible.

In closing, I would like to talk a bit about **Laura Babcock**, our Director. She has been undergoing a round of treatments since October but in mid-December begins daily radiation therapy to help her fight cancer that was discovered in September. She appears to be bringing the same grit and determination to this process that she has brought to all her other museum projects...work as hard as you can and expect to succeed. That attitude has certainly worked miracles at the Historical Society and we know it will do the same with her health. We wish Laura and Ralph the very best.

Jim Reynolds, SHSMA President

New Members—Welcome!

Helen Sherman—She and her husband first located to Sunnyvale in 1946. She has been familiar with the museum as her husband works at the Bianchi Barn right next door to the museum.

Fran Torii—joined to honor recently deceased long-time docent Bob Harms who was a close friend. She is going to work in the gift shop and has already worked the garage sales as a volunteer.

Welcome to you both. We are glad to have you onboard.

Pay Your 2015 Dues Now

Avoid the rush of holiday bills and get ahead of the game by renewing your museum membership early. Check the label on the back page of this newsletter and if it does not say "2015" or "Lifetime", fill out the form and send us your check. As the saying goes, "You'll be glad you did. Use the easy-to-use form on the back of this newsletter to renew your dues and send in today."

We have many plans for 2015 and many terrific speakers on a wide variety of subjects, as well as new rotating exhibits so you won't want to miss a thing. We will see you there!

We Want Your Feedback

In the past, as you our loyal members know, we have tossed around the idea of sending our newsletter electronically and have asked you to send us your email addresses. Many of us don't like giving out our email addresses because we receive enough emails as it is. However, **we promise our membership** that we will guard their information closely and will ONLY use your addresses to keep you advised of Historical Society events.

We are always looking for ways to keep our costs down in order to continue to offer our museum open to the public free of charge. Sending the newsletter electronically would cut printing and mailing charges dramatically. We would continue to print a small number of newsletters to send to those members who do not use email and have a few copies available at the museum for guests.

As you all know, change in our lives is inevitable and can sometimes be difficult. Most of the time change is healthy and often causes us to re-evaluate circumstances. For the past seven years since we went to a new newsletter format, Leslie Lawton and Barb Overholt have been our newsletter editors. Barb has recently stepped down from this volunteer responsibility and we are in the process of looking for someone to take over the job of designing and preparing the content of the newsletter (both text and photos) for printing and posting to our webpage. If you have access to a computer, please go to our website at www.heritageparkmuseum.org and have a look at a sample newsletter online and let us know what you think. One advantage to viewing the newsletter online is all the photos are displayed in color. When we print our newsletter it is only printed in black and white to save on printing costs.

We also send an email copy of our "e-news" once a month that gives a brief description of what is up-coming at the museum.

Due to the change in our volunteer newsletter staff, we have an opportunity to re-evaluate our newsletter procedures. We are asking ourselves questions like: Do we really need a monthly newsletter or could we combine issues during the year? Could we publish every other month or even quarterly or on an as needed basis? Could we send electronic copies rather than hard copies through the mail and therefore save on printing and postage costs?

Here's where all of you come in. Please take a few minutes to fill out the form in this newsletter and give us your valuable feedback. We would greatly appreciate you returning the form to us (address on back of this newsletter). Please help us decide our next steps. Thank you.

(Please cut here, fill out and return to the museum.)

Would you like to receive a monthly email newsletter? Yes____, no____. If yes, please provide your email address:

Would you like to continue to receive a monthly hardcopy newsletter via the postal service? Yes____, No____.
Do you receive our monthly "e-news" email? Yes____, No____. If no, would you like to? Yes____, No____. If yes, please provide your email address.

Any comments?

Would you like to receive a newsletter every other month? Yes____, No____.

Would you like to receive a newsletter on an as needed basis only? Yes____, No____.

Please share with us how important the existing newsletter is to you:

Please offer any other suggestions you might have. We would very much like to hear your comments.

Become a Member or Renew Membership

Name _____

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Your membership options:

- Individual \$30 Family \$45
- Individual Senior \$25 Lifetime Member \$600
- Business or Organization \$125

Remit your annual dues to:

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Email: info@heritagemuseum.org

To Our Readers:

If you have a story about Sunnyvale, please forward by the 15th of each month to: Leslie Lawton
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This newsletter is published for
Historical Society members and friends.

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Museum location and hours:

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Sunnyvale, CA 94087 • 408-749-0220
Tuesdays, Thursdays, Sundays
12:00 p.m. — 4:00 p.m.
FREE ADMISSION

Board of Directors meet on the third Monday of each month
at the Heritage Park Museum, 7:00 p.m.

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