



HERITAGE

Volume 32, Issue 1

www.elcajonhistory.org

January 2011

Our Mission Statement:

To gather, preserve, and protect historical records and personal publications about those living in and around the El Cajon Valley. As part of our stewardship we will promote the gathering, display and appreciation of the region's history.

President's Letter

Happy New Year!

Thank you to all members and friends who made our December **Open House and Craft Sale** a success. There were myriad donations and many buyers; lots of edible goodies, handcrafted items, and vintage things, as well. The Knox House was full of visitors, many taking a tour for the first time ever. Over \$700 was made, including a \$100 donation and this helps with operating expenses.

A **Quilt Drawing** is in the planning stages for February with the winner to be drawn at our February 19 Board meeting. Thank you to Cheryl Minchew for the quilt donation. Watch for a separate mailing.

Thank you to the Friends of East County Arts, Inc. for granting our application request of \$615 that will enable us to print additional brochures and to have a banner made for Museum Month.

Museum Month will be February with extended hours of operation – also, we will be participating in **First Fridays** (beginning February 4) in downtown El Cajon, by being open in the evening: 6 – 7:30 p.m. Stop in before or after dinner at a downtown restaurant.

Plan to attend a **book signing** with member and VP, Eldonna Lay, author of *Stolen*, an historical account of an American girl whose father takes her to Russia. This event will take place in March or April. Light refreshments will be served and Eldonna's book will be available for sale, of course!

Work is proceeding on microfilming all issues of El Cajon's newspaper—our goal is to upload this to our website and make it available for a research fee. This fee helps us to preserve and protect the fragile historical items in our collection.

In addition, donations are being accepted from our website for membership using a safe **PayPal portal**. We will gather no payment information but renewals can be quick and easy using the Membership page at **elcajonhistory.org**.

The **Heritage** is being posted online as well. Let our newsletter editor know if you would prefer to receive the *Heritage* by email. Members are invited to write their memories down and share with our newsletter editor – all of us enjoy reading about the early days in El Cajon.

My thanks to those who serve on the Board of Directors for their continuing dedication and thank you for the opportunity to serve as president.

Jonna Waite

Dates to Remember:

- Jan 12, Book Club Knox House 2pm
- Jan. 27, January Quarterly Meeting Chrystal Ballroom, G. Carroll Rice speaker.
- Feb. Museum Days – Knox House open every Sat. 11 – 2pm
- First Fridays – 6pm to 7:30pm

If you'd like to have your Heritage Newsletter emailed to you, please call us or email us at:

michelle@mainstreetus.com

We'll be happy to send it to you electronically saving postage and paper at the same time!



Memories of A Knox House Christmas Dec. 4 2010.

Goodies, grins and great tours!



Carroll Rice gives a tour to visitors. Mr. Rice is a fountain of information. Ask him anything – he knows!



L-R Members, Sharon Jarboe, Eldonna Lay, and Meghan Lay discovering treasures.



Some of the fabulous gift items for purchase at our Knox House Christmas.

Teens to Host and Help at the Knox House

El Cajon's Teen Coalition will help on February 5 at the museum; the Boys and Girls Club will visit one day on a field trip; a Red Hat group will be touring the Knox House this month; everyone is invited to take advantage of free tours at El Cajon's oldest commercial building and also visit other museums: Heritage of the Americas, Fire History & Learning Center, Air Group One WWII Flying Museum, San Diego Aerospace Museum-Gillespie Field Annex, and Olaf Wieghorst Museum & Western Heritage Center.

January Quarterly Meeting: Jan. 27th

Chrystal Ballroom on Magnolia just south of Hwy 8.

For those who've not seen the renovated interior and extravagant mirrored ceiling of the privately owned Crystal Ballroom (formerly the Bank of America on Magnolia and Wisconsin), our opportunity to do so will be on January 27th when you attend our next quarterly luncheon. Our speaker is one of our own board members, G. Carroll Rice, who will tell about early theater productions in San Diego and East County beginning with Spanish "mystery" plays during the Spanish and Mexican eras, then the American era during the late 1900s and first half of the 20th Century dramas, ending with Grossmont High School productions. Parking is at the back of the building and along its north side. Be ready for a tasty and filling lunch followed by Carroll, whose recollections are reliably and amusingly informative.

Write checks to ECHS for \$15 for each person, and mail to:
ECHS, PO Box 1973, El Cajon CA 92022.

Gift donations for the opportunity drawing
are always welcome.

No need to bring desserts this time.



Please use tear-off on page 8

Carroll's Corner . . .

By Carroll Rice

THE SPOTLIGHTERS El Cajon's Home-Grown Theatre

In the summer of 1947, a group of Grossmont High School students decided that El Cajon needed a theatre program of its own. The San Diego area had a half dozen excellent amateur theatres; La Mesa was well represented, but El Cajon had nothing to compare. The first seeds of the concept grew out of a group of us who had gathered about every two weeks at the home of Charles Lentz at his home off Chase Avenue to listen to music. Initially, the group consisted of Charlie, who had an excellent collection of classical records, Ralph Peterson and me. We were joined by Charlie's sister Barbara and several of her friends who also enjoyed the music.

We hit upon the name Spotlighters for our little troupe, and we went to work at once. I had written a play presenting the Rumpelstiltskin story and suggested that we perform it for the children of El Cajon. From there the idea grew, and Charlie even composed music to accompany the play. We invited friends to join us and Mr. John Montgomery, the School Superintendent, was kind enough to allow us to use the Cajon Valley Elementary School auditorium and the scenery.

Almost everyone has heard the story of the miller who brags that his daughter can spin straw into gold. You'll recall that the king hears of it and puts the girl to the test. She is apparently rescued by a dwarf who spins gold three times, but demands payment each time. The ultimate payment is to be her firstborn child. It seems a safe bet, but the king is so delighted that he marries the girl and sure enough she has a little boy. The dwarf returns and demands the baby, after many tears, he agrees if she can guess his name . . . you know the rest. His name is Rumpelstiltskin, etc., etc.

The play was too short so we also made arrangements to also present *The Ugly Duckling* by A.A. Milne.

The cast was quickly assembled and went into rehearsal. Ralph Peterson played the Miller, Brenda Peterson, the Miller's Daughter, Ray Gastil, Rumpelstiltskin, and John Springer, the stranger who discovers the dwarf's real name. After all these years, the production still stands out in my mind. Adrianna Jones as the Jester, Ralph Brown as the King, and the soldiers, townspeople, courtiers, etc. were played by a group of loyal friends. Anne Geiberger and I played the Princess and Prince in the Milne play and Grossmont drama teacher, Ray Kniss, helped with the directing and technical assistance. Many of the community businesses encouraged us by buying advertising on the program.

The plays were presented three times, with only a few glitches. Glitches? Well, one evening a soldier's sword poked through a 'rock' wall; on another, the lights went out during *The Ugly Duckling*, and my father and others shined flashlights on the stage so we could continue. The children never noticed and nobody called the cops, but on opening night, Rumpelstiltskin's costume failed and created an exposure bordering on the indecent. Visible to only the first three rows, the potential disaster caused a few parental gasps, more after-performance chuckles, and some significant costume changes. All in all it was a success. The children of the audience were delighted and their parents were amused, it was theatre, it was live and it was an *experience*.

As a group, we offered our services to other theatres as ushers, making ourselves known and seeing the best shows that came to San Diego at no charge

The following year, we decided to do it again, without the emphasis on children's plays. Some of the original group dropped out, but their places were filled by an influx of theatrically inclined Grossmont alumni and students in a production of *The Saturday Evening Ghost*; Wilde's *Canterville Ghost* as adapted by Tom Taggart. The play went well; Clifton Kirk, who later had a TV career, played the ghost who is redeemed by the love of Virginia, played by Valerie Thorne. The word of the quality of the play spread, and the Altar Society at St. Louise de Merrilac Catholic Church asked us to play as a fund-raiser at the Crest Community Center. [This involved the discreet borrowing of the curtains out of one church to be used for the benefit of another. The pastor was a good friend and co-conspirator who endorsed a bit of quiet ecumenism!]

The photographs and programs have long since been lost, but I recall especially the dedicated performances of Clifton and Valerie as well as those of Everett Mann, Dick Dunlop, Kathleen Walker, and Carolyn Walters.

The following year, I was deeply involved in the joint San Diego State College/Globe Theatre Shakespearian program, and the left the Spotlighters in the capable hands of Everett Mann. Their production of Sidney Howard's *The Late Christopher Bean* was also successful, but school commitments and the usual attritions of youth marked the end of the Spotlighters.



Spotlighters (cont.)

The members of that theatrical effort went on to excel in other fields. Of those whose careers I am aware; Clifton Kirk was a noted television personality until his early death. Dick Dunlop taught at Grossmont High School, directing the Christmas Pageant and three original plays before moving on to get his Ed.D and teaching at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Everett Mann became an officer in the army and followed it with a teaching career. Ray Gastil is an internationally recognized sociologist, working for freedom, democracy, and human rights, worldwide. John Springer taught for many years in the Lutheran school system and became a Lutheran Pastor in Minnesota. Ralph Peterson taught history in the Sweetwater school system, and I pursued a spotted career of presenting school assemblies and technical writing. Dorothy Madden, whose sword went through the 'rock' wall, became a surgeon at Presbyterian-St. Luke's Hospital in Chicago. The other women too, went on to serve as teachers and career business women as well as wives and mothers.

For three summers, the Spotlighters contributed to the arts and culture of El Cajon as well as providing a constructive theatrical outlet for some talented young men and women. It would be a shame if it were forgotten.



1947 Spotlighters Production of *Rumplestiltskin*.

Left to right: John Springer (Stranger),
Ralph Brown (King), Adriana Jones (Jester) and Jo
Peters (Courtier)

Be sure to attend the Quarterly Meeting Jan. 27,

When G. Carroll Rice will speak about theater in El Cajon. Mr. Rice is not only a writer, but was active in the Old Globe as a regular performer. He has been a National School Assembly Speaker in 39 states, speaking on "The Wonders of Science". We could use more of that today! His book credits include 2 novels soon to be available on Kindle; [Celtic Star Rising](#) and [The Great Tellurian Crown](#).

First Fridays – Beginning In February, the Knox House will be hosting a Salon Series (A fashionable assemblage of notables (as literary figures, artists, or statesmen) held by custom at the home of a prominent person - Amaziah Knox.

Our Line-up will include:

Feb 4 - Two acoustic guitarists will perform - beginning at 6:30 pm

Mar 4 - Local author Houston Burnside will talk about his new experience in writing *A Pew-Sitter's Search for God*

April 1 - Native American Fred John will share Alaskan culture with artifacts, drumming, and songs

May 6 - Poetry writers share with readings

June 3 - Andrew Woodruff will share about his passion with American coins and currency

The Schedule may change, but we'll keep you informed. If you have a talent or hobby you'd like to share, we'd welcome your participation. Please call the museum at 444-3800



Welcome New Members:

Brian & Gayle Culbertson
Nancy Arrieta
Earl & Pamela Harper
Foss & Esther Corley
Janice Cuff

Historical Photos are available for purchase from the museum. Any photo owned by the San Diego Historical Society or Ticor Title must be purchased from the San Diego Historical Society. Those funds go to preserve, catalogue and protect the photos.

Photo copy	\$20.00
Scan Fee	\$25.00
Research	\$38.00 per hour

Stolen Dolores Grood Miller
with Eldonna P. Lay

The true story of an American girl “stolen” from her mother and taken to Moscow in 1933 by her Ukrainian-born Jewish father to “protect her from the failures of American capitalism.” Bedazzled by the recent totalitarian achievements of Josef Stalin, Abraham Grood returns to help manifest the aspirations of his revolutionary heroes, Lenin, Marx, Engels, and Trotsky. This is the story of Rya Dolores Grood and her dynamic, high-spirited secular Jewish family. Rya is perhaps the only American child to live through the uncertainty of Hitler’s historic attack on Moscow and the starving and ethically challenging years that follow. Only at 15 in 1946, does Rya learn that she has a mother in Wisconsin who wants her back. This, then, is the story of a loving, idealistic – but ruinously flawed father, and his daughter, Rya, who escapes from communist Russia, to return with her husband thirty years later to visit the ones who’d loved – and saved – her.



“Through the eyes of a child the reader sees a grim but engaging story – expertly told with a riveting portrayal of a flamboyant, dedicated father against the shadowy background of Stalin’s maneuverings in bordering Slavic countries, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. *Richard Crawford, Supervisor, Special Collections, San Diego Public Library; history columnist, San Diego Union-Tribune.*

Dolores and her husband, Mike, have lived in Fletcher Hills for many years, and were for decades the proprietors/operators of the popular “The Little Café” in downtown San Diego

Eldonna Lay is our current Vice President and author.

Plan to attend the Book Signing in early Spring.
Announcements will be made.

Cookie Dough

From “Inside Grandma’s Notebook”
by G. Carroll Rice

When I was young and troubles came
And tears began to flow,
My Mom would take me in her arms
(The way that mothers know).
She’d dry my tears and hush my fears,
And make some cookie dough.

My children, too, had frights and doubts
When storms began to blow.
I’d squeeze them in protective arms,
Then watch their faces glow
As I said, “My dears, let’s dry those tears
And make some cookie dough!”

Now that they’ve gone, and I’m alone,
My troubles seem to grow.
I sometimes think my heart will break,
And hours can be so slow.
But I dry my tears and quell my fears
As I make some cookie dough.



Guess Who – Guess What?? Ans. On pg. 7



El Cajon Historical Society Board

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KARNA WEBSTER, ELLEN ANDERSON, BONNIE FREDENSBORG, DICK LAY ,

G. CARROLL RICE

COME JOIN US!

MEMBERSHIP:

\$10-	INDIVIDUAL
\$15	FAMILY
\$25	ORGANIZATION
\$35	BUSINESS
\$500	LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Your membership and donations are very much appreciated and help to preserve our Knox House and the artifacts within - pictures and documents for future generations to enjoy and learn from.

KNOX READERS – HISTORICAL BOOK CLUB

Still going strong. We had a great discussion about the [City of Dreams](#). At our next meeting, Jan 12, we will be discussing [Calico Palace](#) or [Half Broke Horses](#).

Come join us Jan, 12 at 2:00 pm in the Knox House Museum.

Essay Contest Just Around the Corner

Plans are already underway for the 2011 Third Grade Essay Contest. Our Award Ceremony will be held on Monday, June 6, 7 p.m. at the Ronald Reagan Community Center. All members are invited to attend and assist – in checking in students, serving refreshments, or serving as essay readers.

Packets are posted on the website for public and private schools: www.elcajonhistory.org Schools will be notified this month and we really gear up in April when we will need readers to read those very interesting and sometimes comical essays.

The essays will be distributed in May to the readers.

Essays are great fun to read; it is amazing what kinds of facts third graders discover! If you would like to be an essay reader, contact Chairperson, Alice Rodriguez at alicerod@san.rr.com . Or call us and leave a message at 619 444 -3800



Docents Needed! Please consider getting involved or re-involved by leading tours of the Museum. Training provided. Only about 3 hours a month is needed; we would like to be open every Saturday.

Knox Readers Book Club is bursting at the seams – if we get much larger we'll need to meet at the library. Our next discussion is May 12 at 2 p.m. Fiction of an historical nature is our focus.

El Cajon's Centennial is approaching. The city is forming a committee to plan for a 100th anniversary in 2012. El Cajon was incorporated in 1912 – anyone remember that?

Remembering....

I had the privilege of interviewing Mr. Stephen Hulbert, grandson of Dr. Charles Johnson (for whom Johnson Ave. is named), who lived in the El Cajon Valley in the 1890's. Dr. Johnson had had an office downtown San Diego on 5th between F and G Streets. Interestingly enough, he had 7 telephones on his desk, because there were 7 telephone companies in San Diego, at the time, and they couldn't talk to each other. No wonder there was a Ma Bell monopoly later on! Imagine how many cell phones you'd have to have today! Dr. Johnson also owned grape vineyards, growing Muscat grapes for raisins. He had donated part of his El Cajon land for the flume that came from El Capitan reservoir in exchange for water rights. He didn't use them, however, because he preferred the well water on his property. The water from El Capitan was runoff – I imagine it was harder water and not as tasty.

Mr. Hulbert's brother was a friend of the Chase's. One of the sons (or maybe more of them) was a real estate broker. He said he never made so much money as he did doing *short sales* during the depression. Foreclosures were rampant during the 30's, just as they are today. Needing money for college, Mr. Hulbert had worked for the Haskell Company (who owned lots of mortgages) cleaning out homes that had been foreclosed on. Haskell also owned part of the Washington Mine in Julian, so Mr. Hulbert went to work in the mine, shoring up the walls with timber and hauling out the rubble created by dynamite. He said the ore was very rich, but not very plentiful. Also, the mine was never proofed because no one was sure who owned what – the claims overlapped and there would be too much litigation. The Washington Mine is still there, but not active.

Loving the water and boating, he also worked for San Diego Marine Construction as an apprentice shipwright. When he realized the salary he'd be making in the shipyards, he reconfirmed his plans to go to college, earning 2 engineering degrees - one from Berkeley and one from San Diego State. He satisfied his love of the sea by being involved in the Sea Scouts for about 60 years. As a teenager, he remembered meetings on the Star of India, staying overnight, and cooking in the galley! The Sea Scouts had their own sailing vessel named "Star of India". At that time, the ship we know as Star of India was actually the Euterpe. The Euterpe had been a British Ship. In order for it to have an American registry, after it was purchased, it was sailed to Hawaii. There it was modified a bit, and when Hawaii became a state, it was able to be registered as an American Ship. It became an Alaskan Packer, and would go to Alaska loaded with fishermen and empty tins. When the fish were caught, they would pack the salmon in the tins right then and there. Then they'd head back to San Francisco, where the Euterpe was docked. During the 1930's Expo in San Diego, Euterpe along with the Star of Alaska (otherwise known as the Pacific Queen) sailed down to San Diego.

Always seeking adventure, the Sea Scouts would sail over to Benson Lumber (just East of the 10th St. Pier) where the lumber, from Northern California, was floating in a pond. The scouts would run and jump on those logs, rolling them from one end to the other - a very dangerous thing to do due to the sheer size of the logs and their ability to roll. The foreman at the lumber yard saw the boys and debated whether he should chase them off or not. He never said a word. Years later, when Mr. Hulbert visited his own father in a nursing home, that same foreman just happened to be in a nearby room. They talked about those days, and the foreman told him he didn't have the heart to stop them, because they were just having so much fun!

For more info on the mines of Julian visit - <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/books/pourade/glory/glorychapter4.htm>

If you have stories to share, we'd love to hear them and write about them. – The Editor

Using GoodSearch to help out the museum.

Good Search gives us a penny each time you use their site as your search engine. Simply go to [GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com) and put in ECHS in the space provided for your charity.

In addition, when you purchase anything when using the GoodShop button, we can receive a percentage of the purchase. The GoodShop button is on the GoodSearch website or on the tool bar which you can download.

Many of us do quite a bit of shopping on the internet. This is a painless way to give to our museum.

<http://www.goodsearch.com>

Membership due dates are on your address label.

We appreciate your membership support, helping to preserve our El Cajon History.
Kindly mail your payment to ECHS, P.O. Box 1973, El Cajon, CA 92022

Knox House Museum
280 N. Magnolia
P.O. Box 1973
El Cajon, CA 92022

Museum Hours:
Currently Open
1st Sat. 12:30 – 3:15
3rd Sat. 11am – 1:15pm

Call first for specific hours
619 444-3800

Guess Who Ans. – Blacksmith McFadden's children circa 1880's, painted by member Phoebe Burnham

El Cajon Historical Society
P.O. Box 1973
El Cajon, CA 92022

*Return Service
Requested*

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Be sure to attend:

***Quarterly Meeting: Thursday, January 27
The Chrystal Ballroom***

414 Magnolia Ave., Just North of Wells

11:30 check in – people with reservations will be seated first

\$15 per person

Kindly cut off the form and mail to ECHS before

Please Reserve My Seat (seats) at the Quarterly Meeting Luncheon, January 27 2011 at 11:30am.

Chrystal Ballroom, 414 Magnolia Ave., El Cajon, CA

Mark your choice of () chicken and beef kabob combo, or () fish as your main dish.

Number Attending _____ X \$15.00 Amt. Enclosed _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address: _____ City _____

Email _____

Mail Reservation checks to: ECHS, P.O. Box 1973, El Cajon, Ca 92022 See you there!