

City of Arcadia



Ruth & Charles Gilb



Arcadia Historical Museum



ANNUAL REPORT
July 2008 – June 2009

Department of Library & Museum Services
Arcadia, California

**RUTH AND CHARLES GILB
ARCADIA HISTORICAL MUSEUM**



ARCADIA HISTORICAL MUSEUM COMMISSION

Margaret Barrows
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DIRECTOR OF LIBRARY AND MUSEUM SERVICES

Carolyn Garner-Reagan

Curator

Dana Dunn





HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2008-2009

7,536 Visitors

During the 2008 – 2009 fiscal year, the Museum has continued to present educational programming and innovative exhibits. The Museum's two permanent exhibits have also continued. These are the chronological Local History of Arcadia section and the Arcadia Veterans Local History Room. Temporary exhibits have also been rotated throughout the year. Our school tours and scout programs have been updated and rejuvenated. Visitors continue on a daily basis and our monthly Brown Bag Lunch Talks have tripled in attendance.

Transitions & Challenges

Janet Sporleder, Director of Library and Museum Services, retired on December 30, 2008 and Carolyn Garner-Reagan was appointed as the new director.

During the midyear budget review in February when it became apparent that City revenues would not be as high as forecast due to the economic downturn, staff made several reductions in the office equipment and training budgets.

Budget preparation for the fiscal year 2009-2010 was more complex than in the recent past and required staff to compile a list of cuts adding up to 5%, put in reverse priority order. The budget was passed on June 16, 2009 with the total reductions for the Museum coming to \$10,125.

Exhibitions

Arcadia Veterans History Project: The *Arcadia Veterans History Project* exhibit was presented during June, July and August 2008. The exhibit featured students' work from Arcadia High School, led by teacher Oliver Beckwith, continuing an annual collaboration with the Museum. Students interviewed, recorded and created transcripts on local Arcadia military veterans. These records were sent to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. for their archives and copies will also be added to the Museum's collection.

Firsts in Arcadia: This temporary exhibit ran July 13 to August 16, 2008 and was curated by Museum Curator Dana Dunn and Carol Libby. It opened on the day of the dedication of the Historical Marker for the old city hall site on First Avenue and Huntington Drive. The Historical Marker Project is an undertaking of the Arcadia Historical Society in conjunction with the City of Arcadia. This exhibit featured artifacts, photographs and maps of first items of Arcadia history. Among artifacts exhibited were the first City Council Minutes, City of Arcadia incorporation papers and the first deed. Deputy Chief City Clerk Lisa Mussenden was an invaluable help in our acquisition of some temporary loan items from the City's archives.

September: A Chinese Brush Painting Exhibit: This exhibit, which opened with a reception on September 27 and ran through December 20, 2008, displayed Chinese Brush Painting from the works of Master Tam and his local students. Master Tam, instructor and master artist, chose thirty paintings from his collection and his students' work to display.

Tongva: Our Voice, Our History, Our People: Ms. Dunn met with local Tongva tribal members to commence serious planning of this exhibit which opened on September 13 and ran through November 22, 2009. Ms. Dunn continued to meet with and establish a professional relationship with Tongva people: Cindi Alvitre, Stacy Barlow, Teresa Richau, Mark Acuna, Julia Bogany and Barbara Drake. Multiple meetings were held in which artifacts, themes, sensitivity and history were discussed. Artifacts were temporarily donated by the Tongva listed above. Ms. Dunn contacted Susan Eubank at the Los Angeles County Arboretum to discuss and receive approval for a temporary loan of local Indian baskets and artifacts for this exhibit. The grand opening included Tongva singers and a presentation by the Tongva Tribal Council and the Chairman of the Tribe.



Winter Holidays Around The World: This exhibit ran December 6, 2008 through February 7, 2009. It was a historical exhibit with many visual aspects to illustrate many diverse cultures around the world and their festivities. Items on display included a Chinese lion dance costume, a Jewish menorah, and star lanterns from India. This colorful exhibit brought in people for a fun and informative experience regarding other people and places on the globe.

Get Your Kicks on Route 66: This highly visited exhibit showed images from the famous Route 66, which spanned from Chicago to Los Angeles. Spotlighted were images from Route 66 in Arcadia, including artifacts from Eaton's Hotel and Restaurant. Many visitors enjoyed reminiscing about this nostalgic period and roadway, sparking many conversations among community members. This exhibit ran from January 10 through March 28, 2009.

The Artwork of Walter Mc Nall: On display from February 21 through March 21, 2009 was the fantastic artwork of Walter Mc Nall, a resident of Arcadia since 1950. His artwork is a mixture of naval scenes, seascapes and landscapes. An evening reception accompanied the opening of this exhibit at which over sixty people toasted Mr. Mc Nall.

History Lives Here Exhibit: Museum Staff took in entries for the Arcadia Historical Society's contest with local school children, the "Creative Expressions Contest." The entries were hung as an exhibit by Museum Staff and prizes were given by the Arcadia Historical Society to the winners of the contest. This exhibit ran from March 28 through May 9, 2009.

Arcadia Juried Photography Contest and Exhibit: The Museum took in entries for its Juried Photography Contest and Exhibit, which ran from May 30 through August 15, 2009. Twenty-one entries were received. Three judges decided which entries would win the place categories of Student 1st, 2nd and 3rd places, Adult 1st, 2nd and 3rd places and Judge's Favorite. The judges were Rachel Fermi, photography instructor from Pasadena City College; Lloyd Fujiwara, photography instructor from Arcadia High School; and John Fang, professional photographer from Fang Photography. This exhibit project was co-curated by Ms. Dunn and Arcadia High School senior Iris Chen.

Honorable Mention: Mayors of Arcadia: "Mayors of Arcadia" was a historical exhibit, looking at Arcadia's Mayors from Elias Baldwin in 1903 and ending in 2009 with John Wuo. This exhibit required extensive research in local archives and utilized the Museum's collection of photographs. Also featured was the first woman Mayor, Floretta Lauber. Mrs. Lauber graciously, temporarily, donated her artifacts, which were placed on display. This exhibit began on April 11 and ran through May 30, 2009.



Arcadia Through the Ages: Annual Arcadia High School

Honors History Student Exhibition: Oliver Beckwith and his students created and organized this exhibit. This year the students interviewed a variety of people from Arcadia. These interviews were conducted with people of all ages, cultures and walks of life to show a representation of Arcadia today. A reception was held on June 5 in which the students and their proud parents attended. This exhibit ran from June 5 through August 29, 2009.

Arcadia Veterans Local History Room: The Museum's Veterans Exhibit has continued to rotate individual veteran's stories throughout the year. Featured this year were the stories and artifacts of Warren Shaw, Gene Glasco, Al Bippert and Mary Ball. A digital movie camera was purchased and an oral interview was completed with Mr. Glasco and placed in the Museum's Veterans Oral History Archive. Interviews with Mr. Bippert and Mrs. Ball are scheduled for the summer of 2009. A list is being kept of future veteran exhibitors, which will continue to rotate in the exhibit space. Two veterans' registries are also being consistently updated.

Off Site Exhibit Spaces:

- Off site exhibit spaces are being maintained by the Curator. The first space is the display case in the lobby of the City Council Chamber. A new display requiring extensive research was added entitled "Famous Arcadians, Part I". This includes photographs and biographies of famous Arcadians. Part two will be mounted later in 2009.
- The second exhibit space is in the Community Center lobby. On display is information about the Museum and upcoming events. The Museum's rotating Veterans Exhibit was moved over to the Community Center on a temporary basis so that local seniors with mobility limitations may view the exhibit as well.
- Two cases in the lobby of City Hall will be maintained in the future.

Artifact of the Month: The Museum has continued to post the Artifact of the Month on its website and places a special display of the item inside the Museum. Presented in these mini-exhibits were the following artifacts with accompanying histories: a Tongva ceanothus silk moth cocoon rattle, Master Tam's Chinese Brush Painting instruction portfolio, a Jewish dreidel and Route 66 ephemera from Eaton's Santa Anita Hotel.

Acquisitions

- Acquisitions are artifacts purchased for the Museum by the Curator. Some of the items acquired this year were: an unopened envelope and letter stamped "US Air Mail Service by Helicopter First Flight," and postmarked from Arcadia; and copies of two photographs from the World War II Santa Anita Assembly Center for the Japanese, c.1945.

Donations

- The community continues to recognize the importance of preserving history by donating interesting Arcadia artifacts to the Museum. Some of the artifacts included: a vinyl record "Arcadia Unified School District Combined Junior High Music Festival"; class photographs from Holly Avenue School, 1961 – 1964; Santa Anita Racetrack tickets and Santa Anita Park Turf Club Coupons, c.1930s; a photograph album of the Schweinfurt-Regensburg Mission with photographs taken by W. Arnold Van Steenwyk of Arcadia during World War II; a 1996 Mayor's Prayer Breakfast t-shirt; Arcadia High School memorabilia; 1984 Olympics Equestrian clothing; and a hand made quilt by Helen Jackson, famous Arcadian quilter and long-time resident.

Collections

- Individual adult Museum volunteers continue to work in specific portions of the collections where they are accessioning, cataloging, numbering and preserving Museum artifacts. Ms. Dunn is working with these volunteers one-on-one and teaching them about preservation, handling and accessioning. The following collections were worked with this year: the art collection, the military collection, the photograph collection, the archives, the hat collection, the telephone collection, the postcard collection and the research library's collection of books.
- Ms. Dunn continues to work on reorganization of the collections area. Collections are being assessed and placed into category types, then stored with like items and topics. This aids in the processing of accessions into the PastPerfect database. As Ms. Dunn is organizing, checks are also being conducted for pests and the condition of artifacts.
- A large work table, special lighting and magnification, extra storage shelving and a permanent area for photographing artifacts with special lighting were added.
- Ms. Dunn is in the process of cleaning up, organizing and proofing all artifact entries in the PastPerfect database, checking for and correcting any mistakes or inconsistencies.



Programs

School Tours: The Museum's annual round of tours for third graders continued. During this academic year, Museum Education Coordinator Lindsey Sun implemented a revised approach on handling school tours. Instead of dividing students into several groups and ushering students between different stations which created problems with time and scheduling docents, students sat on individual mats on the Museum's gallery floor with their entire class. Hands-on artifacts were incorporated into the gallery tour which kept the students actively engaged.



Scout Programming: The Museum's Girl and Boy Scout programs were reworked so that more historical elements from Arcadia's history could be incorporated into each program. The badge requirements were scrutinized by Ms. Sun and the Brownie's *Listening to the Past* program and the Junior Girl Scout's *My Heritage* program were revamped to meet the standards. Cub Scouts were able to engage in a 30 minute gallery tour at the Museum in place of their den meetings.

Family Fun Days:

Fearless Firefighters: Arcadia's Firefighters spent the afternoon at the Museum showing local children their fire equipment and educating them on fire safety. They exhibited one of their fire engines, a fire battalion truck and the old 1928 vintage fire truck.

"Old Time" Family Fun Day: Over 70 children and their parents enjoyed making home made ice cream and playing games from the past, before computers and electronics.

Tongva Family Fun Day: Over 70 people and numerous Cub Scouts attended this Family Fun Day. Children had an opportunity to make Tongva games and toys which included a tule doll, bead necklace, ring toss game, and a bull roarer. The



pump drill, a tool to drill holes into shells entertained children and adults. Julia Bogany, a Tongva elder, told a creation story to the audience about two sisters and a sea shell.

Inventor for a Day: Children had the opportunity to make inventions which included “Play-Doh,” home-made paper, invisible ink and a tambourine. At the hands-on table, girls and boys were able to view artifacts up close and learn about their importance. The end of the program culminated in a Hula-Hoop contest to honor Arcadia inventor and co-founder of Wham-O, Richard Knerr.

Hopping into Spring Festival: Activities included crafts, games and hands-on education which allowed children and their parents to learn about the animals of Arcadia.

Summertime Celebration: This program provided families with entertainment as well as historical information about what life was like in Arcadia during the 1950s. Families enjoyed root beer floats which reminded them of old-fashioned soda fountains from the 1950s. Children had the opportunity to make their own Mr. Potato Head the old-fashioned way using real potatoes.

December’s ***Snow Festival*** is an annual event at the Museum and Community Center. This year visitors made crafts tailored to winter holidays around the world including making dreidels, carnival masks, Kwanzaa baskets and gingerbread ornaments. Children also tried their hand at ice fishing and a snowman dartboard game. The event finished with two performances by the legendary Bob Baker of the Bob Baker Marionettes. Attendance this year was 815.

Brown Bag Lunch Talks:

Brown Bag Lunch Talks continued every third Thursday of the month. During this past year, the Museum is proud to report that the attendance for the talks has tripled. This year’s presentations were: Floretta Lauber, *Growing Up in Arcadia*; Gene Glasco, *Arcadia Before the Big Mac*; Vince Foley, *Hollywood at the Arboretum*; Gary Kovacic, *Building a Sense of Community in a Changing Community*; Carol Libby, *Arcadia Street Names and Their Origins*; Roberta Ramsell, *Arcadia, Life in the 1920s*; and Arboretum Curator Mitchell Bishop, *The Cultural Landscape of Rancho Santa Anita*.

Special Events:

Night at the Museum: The Museum coordinated a *Night at the Museum* with the Recreation and Community Services Department’s *Kid’s Night Out*. Ninety-six children, in groups of twenty, were brought over every 30 minutes to participate in a scavenger hunt and to learn about the significance of museums. A hands-on component allowed the children to discuss such artifacts as the candlestick telephone and the stereoscope. After the Museum portion, which ran from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., the children then went back to the Community Center to watch the movie *A Night at the Museum*.

Penny Carnival: The Museum participated in the annual Penny Carnival at Eisenhower Park. The theme for this year’s event was the Hawaiian Luau. Staff created children’s games: Pineapple Bowling and a Hawaiian themed basket toss. Museum and Library staff collaborated by working together on the same program and sharing the venue. Many local school children and daycare groups visited the booth.

Docent for a Day: This year saw the continuation of the Docent for a Day program. This program encourages students who have come for school tours to come back with their parents and be docents themselves, taking their families on a tour of the Museum’s exhibits. This year, instead of holding it just one day per year, students and parents can come any day of the year.

Museum Staff held the annual ***Volunteer Appreciation Brunch*** at the Museum. Over thirty volunteers were in attendance. All volunteers were lauded for their individual talents and help they have unselfishly given to the Museum over the past year and were awarded certificates of appreciation along with a nice luncheon.

Ms. Sun participated in the annual ***Camino Grove Elementary School Community Day***. She spoke to all second grade classes about what Museums are for and what the jobs of Curator and Education Coordinator are.



Grants and Awards

The Museum was awarded a grant from the Santa Anita Racetrack's Derby Day. The Museum used the funding to present the Juried Photography Contest and Exhibit.

Commission Activities

Commissioner Charles Gilb resigned and his unexpired term was filled by Ruth Gilb.

The Commission was informed about all of the Museum's activities in regular meetings, where the Commission was duly advised and worked with staff on current and future plans.



Collaborations

Arcadia Police Department: Ms. Dunn continues to sit on the Police Department's Historical Board where she offers curatorial and historical advice to the members in the organization, development and set up of exhibits and archives at the Police Station. This year the Board was successful in setting up a display in the lobby of the Police Department and also in the waiting lounge, where the Board placed an exhibit of photographs of all past Police Chiefs as well as a display of artifacts. The Board also held a special day to have invited guests come to the Station to look over many of the photographs from the Police photograph archive. This event, with a luncheon, was very successful and gleaned much information about the people, places, events and dates in the photographs.

Los Angeles County Arboretum: Ms. Dunn continues to develop the relationship with the Arboretum and has established a new relationship with new Curator Mitchell Bishop. In addition to being a speaker for the Museum's Brown Bag Lunch Talk, he and Ms. Dunn are collaborating on research about Anita Baldwin and Anoakia for a new Museum exhibit.

Arcadia School District, Youth Services Coordinating Council: Ms. Sun continued to attend the meetings of the Youth Services Coordinating Council, which is a group made up of community professionals concerned with children's programming in Arcadia. Ms. Sun was able to communicate about the Museum's children's programming and education to the teachers and community through this Council.

San Gabriel Valley Tongva Tribe: Ms. Dunn established a relationship with the local Native American tribe, the Tongva. A collaborative exhibit and a children's program were organized and completed. This relationship is now established for the City to gain in future consultation on historical and cultural accuracy about the history of the tribe. Ms. Dunn introduced tribal member Julia Bogany to Marsha Burkhalter of the Arcadia School District. From this meeting Ms. Bogany participated in multiple workshops with the teachers, which helped to implement a programming relationship and will also help in addressing correct and current historical and cultural information about the Tongva to teach the children of Arcadia.

Community Support

Arcadia Historical Society: The Society Board continues to meet once a month at the Museum to conduct business. Their quarterly financial contributions to the Museum help greatly with care of the collections and historical educational programming.

Major Gift Committee: The Society's Major Gift Committee, chaired by Commission Chairperson Floretta Lauber, continued to meet throughout the year. They have been working on architectural and fundraising plans for a new Museum Education Center that would sit between the Museum and Community Center.



Friends of the Museum: This group meets once a month to discuss projects of interest for the Museum. They held a Garden Party Tea this year as a fundraiser for the Museum. In addition, they help as greeters and run the Gift shop during our programs.

Volunteers: The Museum is fortunate to have many young adult and adult volunteers. They have continued to help staff our Family Fun Days and programs. In addition to the regular functions at the Museum, the young adult volunteers from Arcadia High School have been invited to have their own personal projects. They are required to write up a proposal for their original project and submit it to Ms. Dunn, who then works one-on-one with the volunteer to see to the completion of the project. When the volunteer graduates and moves on to college, they will then have a binder of projects they have done at the museum along with letters of recommendation. The Museum also enjoys the help of adult volunteers who help with collections accessioning and as greeters in the Museum.

Staff

- The Museum welcomed Education Coordinator Lindsey Sun to the Museum staff in December 2008.
- Ms. Dunn attended the three-day California Association of Museums conference in San Francisco. She attended workshops on collections management and exhibits.
- Ms. Sun attended a workshop titled: "Interpretation for Young Audiences" at the La Habra Children's Museum.
- Ms. Dunn was invited to speak at the Community Center for their annual Veterans holiday lunch. She talked about the Museum's Veterans Exhibit, Veterans Registry and Veteran's Oral History Program.
- Ms. Dunn gave a talk to the Daughters of the American Revolution in Sierra Madre. She presented a PowerPoint presentation about the Museum, focusing on the Veterans Local History Room and Oral History Project at the request of the Association.

Publications, Publicity and Community Relations

- Flyers were created for all of the Museum exhibits, events and programs. These flyers were available in the Museum, Library, Community Center and Chamber of Commerce.
- Invitations are created and printed out for all major exhibits. They are mailed out to Historical Society and Commission members.
- Carolyn Garner-Reagan, Director of Library and Museum Services, was instrumental in getting publicity out to all of the area newspapers, the Peacock Buzz, the City Newsletter and the Arcadia Hot Sheet.
- Scott Hettrick has posted Museum information, and sometimes video clips of Museum events, on his Arcadia's Best website.
- Staff continues to post all events and exhibits on the Museum's website and blog.