



NEWS

This Member newsletter is a bi-monthly publication of the SHARPSTEEN MUSEUM ASSOCIATION, a non-profit organization.

VOL. 41, NO. 2 ■ Feb/Mar 2022

Message from the Board

We made it, Yes we did. Another year has begun. Thanks to the continued support of you, our members, we have survived. Since reopening in April of 2021, even though limited hours, our visitor count through December was approx.. 6,000!

The Sharpsteen has hosted visitors for over 40 years from every corner of the world. We have not the words to thank you all personally, but we can wish you a glorious, fresh, healthy and prosperous Happy New Year for 2022.

- Feliz año Nuevo
- Felice anno Nuovo
- Froshes neves Jahr
- Now-ruz
- L'shana tova
- Bonne année
- Blwyddyn Newydd Dda
- Lang may yer lum reek
- S novym godom
- Mutlu yillar
- Feliz año novo
- Xinnian hao

And may all your wishes come true.

In His Own Words: Part 6

Ben finishes his museum story

She (Ruth Durbin) and her husband, Bob, who were both engaged in miniature work, thought the idea (the diorama) had possibilities and were willing to make up one cottage as a sample.

She also made a few incidental figures to go with the cottage and it looked extremely intriguing, extremely professional, and the whole idea totally captured the imagination.

The next thing to be done was to be sure of our scale. It so happened that the scale



Ben

we chose was practical and it meant the display would stand up to 32 feet long, which seemed reasonable.

It was started in my garage here at my home



Steve Della Maggiora (foreground) and Jerry Hass survey the tiny town of Calistoga after there was some water damage on part of the diorama ceiling. Jerry (a contractor) built the "scaffolding" and patched in new surface board and Steve repainted and retouched the area.

but the space we had was only half large enough to do this. I calculated we could make the plan symmetrical, half reversed would serve as the plan for the other half.

We proceeded and made all the important buildings necessary and in a rough way completed one half-end. This left a great deal undone and a great deal was left to the imagination.

There were no roads but we did have a few improvised little wagons and horses and animals. We did have a terrific problem of perspective and design. During my early conception of this after I had made the initial small diorama with Dave Huddleston, I went to Los Angeles on a visit and looked up

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my old friend, Kendall O'Connor, with whom I had worked at the Disney Studio some 40 odd years ago.

I sought his ideas of the logistics in such a thing as this and he was most cooperative with suggestions. I knew he was a man of infinite imagination and that he could apply his talents to a problem such as this.

With his reassurance we progressed a little further with my work at home but beside the building that the Durbins had made we lacked the accurate size buildings that would be on the background. I did not know to whom to go but sought the counsel of several professional artists.

Somehow or other they did not suit me as they did not seem to spark to the problems sufficiently or their importance.

I had made a friend of a young man, Steve Della Maggiora. This young man from Napa had been to art school but had never managed to cast out on his own on a professional basis. I thought he was young and ambitious, not set in his ways, and willing to adapt his abilities to a new challenge. He helped me for two or three weeks

and made some sample flat paintings of the same buildings or comparable buildings that the Durbins had made as models. We were beginning to get the effect that was necessary,

However, Steve did

fiberglass panels that would illuminate corners in our display. We were just set up at one end of the building and naturally there were severe corners that had to be coped with and the only way to do so



A very pleased Bernice and Ben Sharpsteen in front of the finished diorama. "... the whole display is just crowded with human interest from one end to the other."

not have the all-around experience and ability in my opinion to cope with the problems in perspective that were so vital. I arranged to have O'Connor come to my home and see what we were doing, and I got him started at refining the work and redrawing.

In the meantime, I learned about a museum in Santa Rosa called the Coddling Museum which had some diorama work. I found Ben Coddling there, the proprietor, a very friendly and helpful man. He gave freely of his experience and loaned us some forms that we could use for building

was to illuminate them by having fiberglass forms made so that the entire inside of this shell of the diorama was rounded and in looking into it a person got the idea of absolute infinity.

Bob Durbin, husband of Ruth Durbin, who had been in on these discussions, assured me he would know how to build this shell. In spite of all of this planning and trial and error we were going right ahead with the construction of the building and by the time we had it completed to the stage where we could put in this diorama, we were ready to move in all this

preliminary work that had been done at my home.

During this time, Steve Della Maggiora, keeping body and soul together, had taken a job at a music store in Napa, not being able to make his living in artwork. O'Connor had done the preliminary planning in pencil lined work for our completed design and we were ready to go ahead with the painting of the mural. He expressed the need for an assistant as he only had so much time to give. He had had four months only and had to leave. Not being able to recommend anybody of his acquaintance, I suggested Steve Della Maggiora who had helped us do the basic work.

O'Connor accepted him and the very first day that Steve started with O'Connor he made good. He was not only a great assistant and painted a great of the mural himself, but when O'Connor was forced to return to Los Angeles there were still some finishing to be done and Steve completed the work.

An important phase of the preliminary work was the laying out and designing of the many figures. We had to have wagons hand carved where we could not buy

Celebrating Calistoga's Mexican Heritage - *Unete a nosotros! / Join Us!*

As we plan our next exhibit, we welcome your participation!

The Mexican-American community is invited to share personal stories of the pride you take in your heritage, and provide a few everyday objects that convey your sense of home and the richness of your culture.

Whether you came here from Mexico or grew up here, are there things that you cherish because they remind you of family traditions, community, faith, food, music, art, work, history?

We're eager to hear and share your stories in a bilingual presentation.



The Mexican-American community is invited to share personal stories of the pride you take in your heritage, and provide a few everyday objects that convey your sense of home and the richness of your culture.

Any interested family members are welcome to

join you with their items and stories as well.

A few notes: we're NOT looking for irreplaceable family heirlooms, and all featured items will be returned at the end of the exhibit, which will run from May 1 - October 31, to coincide with Mexican Heritage Month in September. Please be aware it takes time to put this exhibit together; our submission deadline is February 28.

Everyone interested is welcome to contact me, eaumble@gmail.com, or 707-942-4643. I look forward to hearing from you very soon!

Eden Umble
Special Exhibits
Chair

SOCIAL MEDIA CONSULTING

Goal is to expose great museum to wider audience

My goals are simple: to expose this great museum to a wider audience, and keep our followers up to date about all that's going on here.

Follow us online, and join the conversation! The Sharpsteen Museum is now active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. We'll be sharing fun historical tidbits about Ben Sharpsteen, his labor-of-love museum, the famous diorama, and permanent & special exhibits. We'll also be inviting visitors to share their favorite museum discovery and photos with us.

Eden Umble
Special Exhibits Chair
Social Media CHair



Eden Umble



@sharpsteenmuseum



@sharpsteenmuseum-
calistoga (all one word)



@sharpsteenmuseum



This year's wreath sales brought in \$800 when the Crafty Ladies tried something new.

Wreath-makers sell out in front of museum

The museum's Crafty Ladies tried something new this December. Instead of participating with other vendors in the Christmas Faire in the park we decided to go it alone and sell the wreaths out in front of the museum.

We figured we would attract Farmer's Market attendees as well as faithful museum members. The idea worked beautifully. We sold out early, made over \$800.00 for our wreaths and other handmade items.

Next year we plan to make more. A group of volunteers worked in the museum house the Thursday and Friday before the sale and had a very good time creating the wreaths of bay and evergreens.

Several of the group were beginners and they quickly caught on to the process, All had a very good time!

We look forward to repeating our success next year!

Pat Haynes, Crafts Chair

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suitable ones in the market. These were done by Elwin Millerick of Santa Rosa. Ruth Durbin, ably assisted by her husband Bob, has turned out to be a positive genius when it comes to portraying those little characters scarcely 3 inches tall. Their faces are entirely too small to get any particular expression on them but in some uncanny way she has been able to capture so many interesting things by just how the characters portray themselves, their poses, the chores they are doing, the difficulties they are under.

Fortunately, the plan of the diorama was basically perfect so as we progressed we had something to build on to. In other words, we could keep improving everything so that now we are finished, the whole display is just crowded with human interest from one end to the other.

I hope that this situation is going to play a big factor in the years to come when people come back to see it a second, a third, or a fourth time and perhaps exclaim over something they had missed before.

In addition to making the diorama depicting the

Brannan Hot Springs, I also wanted to high note upstanding milestones in the history of Calistoga based on the outstanding men who pioneered them and achieved them.

End of interview. At this point, the interview (and tape) ends. We hope you have enjoyed this first-hand and only recorded account by Ben Sharpsteen of the early days of the making of the Sharpsteen Museum.

Our thanks to W. S. "Bud" Fullerton for the original interview taped in 1978.



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Museum Hours: 12 - 3 pm M-F
11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sat/Sun, closed
Thanksgiving and Christmas.

BOARD MEMBERS:

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Editor: Shari Hanson

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Museum's mission is to preserve and to provide for public exhibitions and study of the history of the community of Calistoga and the upper Napa Valley.

Docents are our ambassadors

Friendly faces, warm smiles greet visitors

Cathy Keag and Sally Page Houk - to those that know them, that's all you need to hear. They are close neighbors and good friends, sometimes working museum shifts on their own, other times as a team.

Cathy has lived in Calistoga with her husband Jim since 1999. Lucky for us she volunteered to become a Docent because she "just loves the museum." She tells us her favorite exhibits are the Doll House and diorama. She feels the Sharpsteen is a "superior hidden gem."

Sally grew up in Calistoga, graduating from

high school. Her life took her elsewhere for 40 years but she has thankfully returned with her husband Truman. "I want to give back to my community" she explained. Her favorite part? "Interacting with the visitors."

Yes, we enjoy a good life, over the years we have weathered storms, fires, floods and droughts but here we are, steadfast with the determination to make life better for others. That is what our Docents do faithfully each day. They are the face you meet as you enter, the heartfelt representatives of our organization.

If you would like to



Cathy Keag and Sally Page Houk, neighbors and close friends, sometimes work their docent shifts as a team.

consider becoming a member of this magnificent team, contact Docent Chair, Jane Bennett @

757-536-1146 or email her at Janemooringbennett@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

BEST OF THE BEST

Team Docent for November & December The following dedicated docents greeted visitors at the end of 2021.

Christine Amey
Bev Barnes
Jane Bennett
Lloyd Best
Sara Boggs
Emily Bucchianeri
Judith Cornils
Lorne Glaim
Marilyn Glaim
BJ Hopgood
Sally Houk

Cathy Keag
Pat Larsen
David Lomax
Michael Mannion
Patricia Murphy
Jo Ellen Noble
Lauren Thollander
Doug Webb
Lamar Webb
Jeannie Williams
Ron Yost



MEMBERSHIP

November 1, 2021
through December
31, 2021

In Memoriam
BJ Hopgood

General Donations
CalMart
Chateau Montelena
Winery
Patrick J Gallagher
Stephen Gallion
Jackie & Bret Lang
Barbara Nechis &
Andrew D'Anneo

Memorial Donations
Marcy Webb

Notes from the Bookstore:*About the greatest post-prohibition winemaker in history*

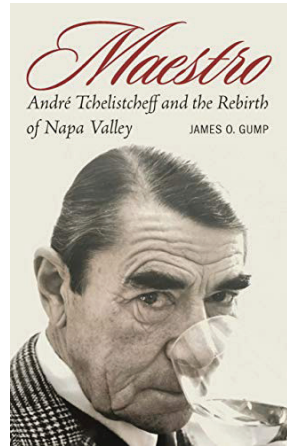
Yes, we are a world renowned premium wine growing region but would this designation have been possible without “the Maestro”?

Also known as the “winemaker’s winemaker”, “the wine doctor”, this new title available at the Sharpsteen by author James O. Gump, “Maestro, Andre Tchelistcheff and the Rebirth of Napa Valley” will explain the rise of the greatest post-prohibition winemaker in history including his influ-

ence with the now famous “Judgement of Paris” wine tasting of 1976.

Born to an aristocratic family in 1901 Moscow, the story follows his incredible journey from being forced from his homeland during the Bolshevik Revolution to his ultimate meeting with Georges de Latour of Beaulieu Vineyards in 1938 Paris during which time de Latour was in search of a new viticulturist-enologist.

Tchelistcheff accepted the position and spent 35



years at Napa Valley’s Beaulieu and another two decades as consultant to other well-known winemakers such as Louis Martini and Robert Mon-

davi.

His greatest legacy? “...mentoring others in the science and poetry of winemaking, how to use technique and imagination to produce wines of subtlety, harmony, and complexity.”

This book is hardcover, 186 pages including index, bibliography, notes to pages and photographs. Price \$29.95 less your member’s 10% discount. Can be shipped for additional charge.



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