



NEWS

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

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Message from
the Board:

Here's to better days!

From all of us to all of you, a Very Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years. Here's to better days ahead in 2021!

Please check our web site @ www.sharpsteenmuseum.org for reopening information. Stay safe and keep your fingers crossed!



REMINISCENCE, PART 4

Landscaping the diorama

by Ruth Durbin

They (the large oak trees) are made from the electrical wiring which consists of numerous copper wires enclosed in a black plastic tube. The plastic was peeled down partially and the exposed copper wires bent out to form the major branches. Smaller wires were welded to the copper wire. Glue was applied to the tips of the branches to hold a thin covering of green steel wool. More glue was applied to the steel wool and a generous coating of a green, ground spongy material was used. Plaster and paint was applied to the black plastic trunk to simulate bark. The smaller trees were made the same way with the exception of the scaffolding which was a ready-made lead product.

Many have been curious about the pig wallow. Dirt and clear nail polish produced the desired



Ruth and Kendall discuss landscaping for the diorama.

effect.

Since I was limited in the colors for the ground materials available for the landscaping, the artists, Kendall O'Connor from the Disney Studio, and his assistant, Steve Della Maggiora had to work closely with me in painting the murals. It was also interesting to

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In 1993, Ruth Durbin compiled all of her memories of constructing the miniature displays with her husband Bob, and of working with Ben and other artists on the museum in the 1970's.

We present her story entitled "Reminiscence" along with photos from the archives in installments as space allows in this newsletter.

Students visit the Sharpsteen with pen in hand, questions & masks

Even though the museum is not yet open, we were proud to host four of the junior high school students from St. Helena Montessori School on Nov. 6 in a very special private tour.

According to their teacher, Abigail Palmer, who accompanied the students, they had been studying local history and needed first-hand historical information.

What better place to achieve those ends? The Sharpsteen Museum.

This tour fit perfectly since we are limited to ten people at any given time. Organized via our magnificent Education Chair Jackie Lang, and with major docent extraordinaire Lorne Glaim on hand to teach and share, the entire hour was



L to R: Students Katie Lynch, Thomas Heil, Porter Lynch and Parker Stephenson.



incredible.

The students came masked with pen in hand and questions. All had done extensive research on their respective topics: Sam Brannan and the original resort; our Donner Party locals; the Napa Valley Railroad & Calistoga Depot; mining;



Docent Lorne Glaim with St. Helena Montessori Junior Hlgh at the museum.

SHARPSTEEN MUSEUM
OF CALISTOGA HISTORY



1311 Washington St., P.O. Box 573
Calistoga, CA 94515
Tel: (707) 942-5911

Email: info@sharpsteenmuseum.org
Museum House Tel: 942-5916
Museum Hours: 11 am-4 pm daily,
except Thanksgiving and Christmas.

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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.

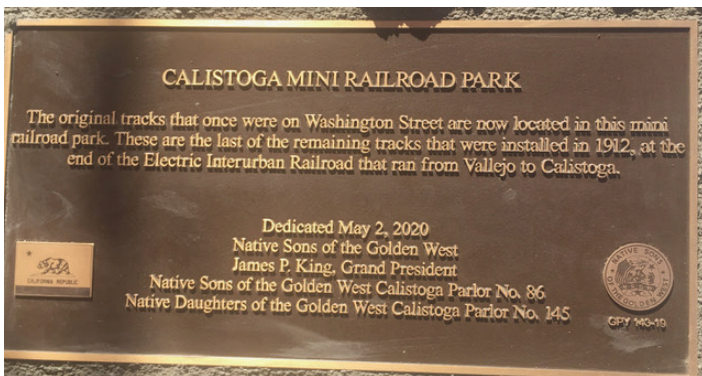
and, most importantly, the Wappo.

It has been eight long months since we closed our doors due to the pandemic, the morning of November 6 was a God-send.

Questions or plans for your student tour? Simply use our web site @ sharpsteenmuseum.org to contact Jackie Lang, and send us a message using the contact option. We will be back in touch.

Keep in mind, parties must be small, masks required, hand sanitizer used, gloves preferable and, of course, social distancing.

Life does go on and for this we are grateful.



The original plaque dedicated in 1999 (right) is joined by a new one installed in 2020.

NSGW dedicates new mini-park dedicated to town's railroad

Native Sons of the Golden West, a fraternal service organization, was founded July 11, 1875. On Saturday, November 14, 2020, Calistoga Parlor 86 dedicated the new mini-park on Washington Street honoring our town's Interurban railroad built in 1912.

The original plaque dedicated in 1999 now sits alongside the new plaque with a dedication date of May 2020. (The Dedication Ceremony needed to be postponed until November due to obvious reasons.)

It was truly an inspiring morning. Dick Kuykendall and the Calistoga Parlor spearheaded this historic project with members in abundance. Walking through the masked crowd were seen representatives proudly wearing their respective Parlor vests: Santa Rosa, Sonoma, Napa, Piedmont, Santa Lucia/Salinas, Excelsior, Ramona, Ferndale, and Norwalk. It was quite impressive.

Mayor Chris Canning spoke to thank Dick and the Calistoga Parlor for their hard work and dedication to the history not only of Calistoga but that of the entire state of California. The mayor also mentioned that since knowing Mr. Kuykendall for so many years "when Dick



Mayor Chris Canning thanks NSGW Calistoga Parlor 86 for its hard work.

calls, I get ready to say Yes".

As current and past Grand Presidents and Grand Officers took their turns proudly speaking, the crowd was quiet, bowing their heads and nodding in agreement. Just as we were becoming overwhelmed by the crowd's reverence, the moment each speaker finished, the crowd erupted into cheers and applause. Simply put, the Native Sons are crazy for what they do, what they have accomplished since 1875 and what they will accomplish going forward. We were reminded their work is never ending, their respect and dedication is deep. Their impetus, as explained, "To the pioneers belonged the birth



and infancy of our state – to us its destiny."

Native Sons of the Golden West is a non-profit, charitable organization. If you would like to learn more, or make a donation, you can visit them on Facebook or go to www.calistoganativesons.org

".....and that your actions be equal to your promises."

DIORAMA

Continued from page 1

work the three-dimensional fences and shrubs into the painted background.

I had difficulty finding material with the right texture and color for the roads. I finally found it practically in my own "back yard." The material of the cut banks on Diamond Mountain Road-pounded and sifted- was perfect.

Setting up the diorama in its permanent location took a lot of thought. Buildings and landscaping were completed on the back half of the 32



feet of tables. These were pushed in against the background. It was then necessary to make any adjustments to tie the two together. Once again I was required to do my

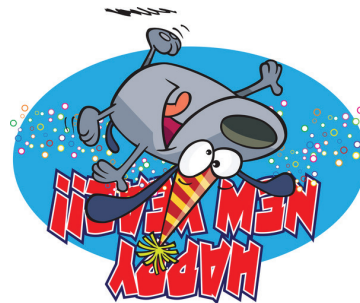
landscaping and people were then placed permanently on that section. Lastly, the two wings were attached and final work done on them.

work perched in a very undignified position on the unfinished front half of the platform. The buildings,

One might think I could now sit back and enjoy the finished project, but "no". Ben had already started talking about a series of small dioramas, namely the Spiers Stable, Chinatown and the Old Toll House. There was simply "no rest for the weary."

Since six horses were needed for the stage coach diorama, and having hand-carved ones made was so expensive, I settled for Breyer horses. They were 3/8" scale which made dressing figures and locating accessories much more difficult.

To be continued...



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Sharpsteen Museum Association
1311 Washington St., P.O. Box 573
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