

The Hourglass



Winter 2023

Ed. Merilee Colton

We Begin the 2022/2023 Season in Pictures



The 2022/2023 season started off in a big way with many events packed into a crowded calendar, from **Opening Day** to the New Year. Below is a montage of pictures from some of the events sponsored by the HSPD this Fall.

Even before the Firehouse Museum opened for the season on October 7, **Mini Muster** was in full swing. Co-sponsored by the HSPD, Mini Muster is a yearly event, a full day of fun and teachable moments about fire safety. This year 600 third graders from Palm Desert elementary schools participated in the obstacle courses and instructional sessions. The five student winners of the art contest depicting what they learned about fire safety got to ride in the HSPD fire truck in the **Golf Cart Parade**, at the end of October.



(Clockwise from above left) Hook and Ladder and fire hose display; Mike Lewis (center) and fire department personnel teaching fire safety; the HSPD historic fire truck just before the **Golf Cart Parade** on El Paseo. Special thanks to Mike for volunteering to make Mini Muster a success, and to Adele Ruxton of the Indian Wells Historic Preservation Foundation for her many contributions to Mini Muster.

The first **Friday Night Lecture** of the season on October 21 featured Meteorologist Carl Garczynski, who was with the National Weather Service here in the valley. He spoke about our current and past weather and Coachella Valley history and geology, and how they have affected our weather. Then came the Annual Membership Meeting, AKA **Fall Luncheon**. Once again, we met at Mitch's on El Paseo, where members and guests enjoyed good food and good times, reconnecting with old friends and meeting new ones.



(L-R) Brett Romer, Past President, and Bev James and Don Graybill, current Directors



Mary Young, new HSPD Docent and David Toltzmann, HSPD Director



Vera Pitchford



(L-R) Janet Demarbiex and Maureen Boren, with Bob Tyler, Docent and past Board member, and Leslie Roth, Oral Historian for the HSPD

After the Fall Luncheon came the December **Friday Night Lecture** featuring Richard Oliphant, who spoke about the development of Palm Desert and the many projects he spearheaded, as part of the HSPD's 2022-2023 **FNL** series, Palm Desert Pioneers. The next lecture will be on Friday January 20 and features noted artist and muralist Warner Graves, speaking about his grandmother Lula Graves' postcards and pictures of her explorations in the deserts around the Coachella Valley in the 1920's and 1930's. (6-8 PM at the Portola Community Center.)

President's Letter

One of my favorite writers is Craig Johnson. Craig writes first-person mysteries about a Sheriff in fictional Absaroka County in Wyoming named Walt Longmire. A&E, then Netflix, produced a six-season series about Walt that is still fairly popular even though the show ended five years ago. Every Christmas Day Craig sends out a short story to everyone who signs up for his email list. This year's story, "The Perfect A," did not disappoint.

Craig spoke at the Rancho Mirage Library in 2017. I was lucky enough to hear him and meet him (and have him autograph a book). It was a time in my life when I needed that kind of distraction.

Getting back to this year's story – leading up to Christmas, Craig had mentioned in his newsletters that he was having a heck of a time coming up with a story. He mentioned that he had put things off and it was getting past crunch time. I know exactly how that feels. I sometimes procrastinate in writing the President's Letter for our HSPD Hourglass newsletter – just like tonight. But you wouldn't know it from the story Craig delivered. It takes place at the end of 1972, at the beginning of Walt's career in law enforcement. Here now is my awkward segue:

You are probably reading this in the new year, 2023. Fifty years ago, Palm Desert incorporated and became the City of Palm Desert. Throughout 2023 the city and the HSPD will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of incorporation. Please stay tuned for information regarding these celebrations. I hope you had a great holiday season, and have a Happy New Year.

Rob Pitchford

"Know Your Board"

Beverly James



Hi. I'm Bev James and I have been involved with the HSPD in different capacities since 2016.

But first a little about myself. I was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. I went to Drury University and received my degree in Psychology. After school I worked for different telecommunications companies, dealing mostly with computer requirements, until I retired in 2008.

After I retired, I started visiting the beautiful Coachella Valley more frequently and finally became an official "snowbird" in 2016. As much as I enjoy tennis, golf and hiking in the desert, I also think it is important to do volunteer work. After seeing a small article in "The Desert Sun" that the Historical Society of Palm Desert needed help, I thought that it would be a perfect fit with my love of history. And it was.

I started being a docent, which I still enjoy. I've worked on creating some of our displays and also helped to organize the administration office and some of the other areas of the museum. One of the greatest things about the HSPD is, there are so many different opportunities to be involved in, and so many people to meet - our members, volunteers and visitors to the museum.

Rob Pitchford



I was born in 1958 in Palm Springs at Desert Hospital. My family moved to Palm Desert from Rancho Mirage when I was in 2nd grade. I have a brother, Trevor, who lives with his family in Santa Barbara and a sister, Ginny, who lives with her husband in La Canada. Growing up, I went to Washington School and Palm Desert Middle School, and graduated from Indio High School in 1976. I earned an AA Transfer degree in Architecture at COD, then went on to Cal Poly Pomona and earned a Bachelor of Architecture.

During and after school I apprenticed with architects Carl Cox in Indio and Bernard (Bernie) Leung in Palm Desert. I moonlighted for B.G. Structural Engineering. I opened my own design firm in Palm Desert when

Bernie retired to Las Vegas. I have designed several additions and remodels throughout the valley, including custom homes in PGA West, Mission Hills, Cahuilla Hills and Avondale Country Club. I also designed Barkingham Palace and Garagetown, next door to each other in Palm Desert.

In 1990 I married the coolest babe I've ever met – Judi. We have a son, Robert, and we live in Bermuda Dunes. When Robert was old enough he joined Cub Scouts, so Judi and I volunteered as leaders. When Robert joined Boy Scouts, I soon became Scoutmaster for Palm Desert Troop 76. The Scouts would help out with the yearly HSPD yard sale at the Firehouse. In 2016 the HSPD President at the time, Don Graybill, who was my 4th grade teacher at Washington School, asked if I would be interested in joining the HSPD Board. And here we are today.

In addition to the Historical Society, I still volunteer as the Eagle Scout Coordinator for the Sunrise District in the Inland Empire Council of Scouts BSA. In my spare time my son and I are building a Meyer's Manx dune buggy.

Ed. Note: this is the fourth in a series of biographies about the Board members of the HSPD.



Archivist's Corner

Have you ever wondered what is in the HSPD Archives? Over the past two years, we've been reviewing our collections in an effort to make materials easier to find. Our mission is not only to collect the history of Palm Desert but also to make it available to you. We have been organizing photos and other historic materials by primary subject category. Most collections are organized alphabetically by name, with some collections organized into sub-collections. Here's an overview of the current organization at the HSPD:

Buildings (aka Architecture) - Mostly photos and plans of buildings. Includes commercial, residential, community structures and mixed-use complexes.

Business - an entity engaged in commercial, industrial, or professional activities. Organized by type of business: Industry, Dining, Lodging, Retail, Services.

Organization - a group of people organized for a joint purpose or dedicated to a particular interest or activity, or a business, society, or association.

Event - a planned public or social occasion. Often these occur annually (or otherwise regularly). Note: sometimes the event will be filed under the host organization.

Government - the governing body of a nation, state, or community. Organized alphabetically by governmental division.

Maps - a diagrammatic representation of an area of land or sea showing physical features, cities, roads, etc.

Neighborhood - a district or enclave within a town or city. Includes some gated and non-gated developments.

Other Desert Cities - Any of the other cities, communities or unincorporated areas not Palm Desert or Cahuilla Hills. Includes "day-trip" destinations outside of the Coachella Valley.

Parks - Public physical locations, spaces and/or facilities like parks, nature preserves, open space areas, greenways, trails. May include built structures for sport, recreation, or arts programs.

People - Individual persons and distinct groups of people (AKA Native Americans and their tribes, LBGTQ, etc.)

Recreation - Resources and services provided for the purpose of leisure, entertainment, and recreational pursuits.

Special Collections

If you would like to research our collections, a volunteer will be happy to help you. Call 760-346-6588 for an appointment.

Rochelle McCune, HSPD Archivist

HSPD Architecture and Design Committee Report



I was grateful to be able to welcome nine of our twelve Architecture and Design Committee members to an in-person meeting at my Sandpiper home on November 22nd. Although we had some general business, our focus was on the direction of the committee going forward. During a roundtable discussion each member spoke about the priorities they envisioned.

We concluded that we would like to design and implement more walking tours. The preference would be to have these docent-led, but we could have routes and information available at the Firehouse Museum for the public. We could produce pamphlets that contain important and useful information for those interested in historic homes in the area, similar to the booklet produced for our Modernism Week Walking Tours.

There are many possibilities for tours in South Palm Desert. The ones for Modernism Week are in Shadow Mountain. Going forward, we see one beginning at Kings Point (Hugh Kaptur) west of HWY 74 and travelling through the streets just down the hill (Beavertail, Hedgehog and Pitahaya with architects Walter White, Patten and White, and others) then going into the Sand and Shadows development (Harold Bissner, Sr.) and ending at Sandpiper Circle 3 (William Krisel). We refer to this area as Painters' Path.



Another route focuses on the small inns that are near the Shadow Mountain Resort beginning at the Mojave Inn, then east on Shadow Mountain, winding down various streets in the area and ending at Shadowcliff (John Outcault). And the third idea is West Shadow Mountain including individual private residences, the Purple Hills Estates group (Charles E. Du Bois), and some small condos on Ocotillo (John Outcault).

(L-R) Karen Prinzmatal, Juleen McElgunn, Rick Holden, Wayne Connor, Darrell Cozen

The committee is very interested in hearing from anyone who may have insights into any of the homes or developments in this area, or anywhere in South Palm Desert. Contact the Firehouse Museum at 760-346-6588 and leave a message. We are also looking for interested historians who would like to assist with leading the tours.

Last year the Committee began a tradition of hosting one of the HSPD's Friday Night Lectures. Steven Keylon spoke on landscape architect, Tommy Tomson. We will be continuing the tradition on Friday, February 17th. We have an architect in mind, as yet unconfirmed. Stay tuned!

You may see our three Modernism Week Walking Tours in the Shadow Mountain Area on the mornings of February 23rd and 24th. Be sure to wave! These tours completely sold out in one day on the Modernism Week website, which shows that there is a keen and abiding interest in the architecture of South Palm Desert.

Linda Holden Clode, Chair, Architecture and Design Committee



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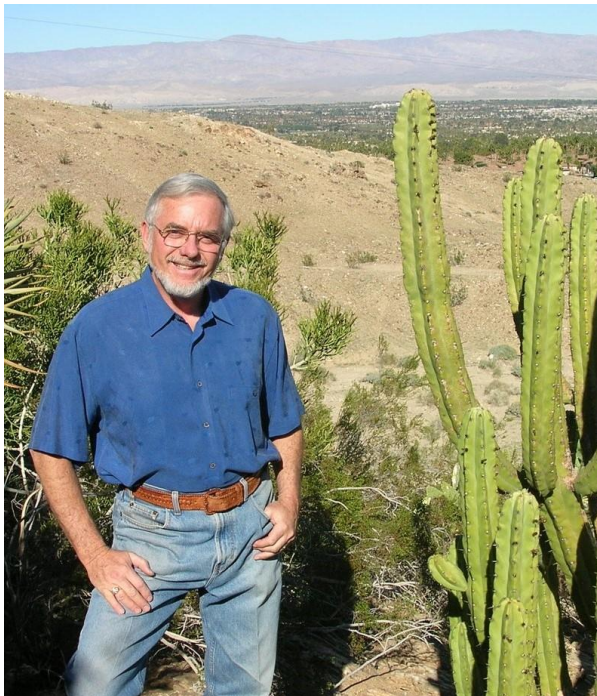
IN MEMORIAM

BUFORD CRITES

Buford A. Crites passed away peacefully in Palm Desert on November 12, 2022. He was born in Owensville, Missouri in 1948. He graduated from Owensville High School in 1966, received a BA (double major) in Geology and Communications at Southwest Missouri State Teacher's College in Springfield and obtained a Master's degree in Communications at Illinois State University. After completing PhD work in Montana and the University of Utah, he moved to Palm Desert in 1976 to teach speech at College of the Desert. Buford had a 30-year career at C.O.D. teaching oration, speech preparation, and debate tactics.

Buford spent his life in service to others and to his community. He served on the Palm Desert Planning Commission followed by 20 years on the Palm Desert City Council, including four terms as Mayor. He oversaw the expansion of Palm Desert and at the same time worked to conserve and preserve the surrounding areas for future generations. Buford was a member and supporter of the Historical Society of Palm Desert, and served on its Board of Directors after retirement.

An avid conservationist, Buford fought for open space and conservation of the Coachella Valley, the place he called home for almost 50 years. He was a founding board member of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy and the Friends of the Desert Mountains. He helped establish the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, dedicated in 2000. Over a 10-year period he helped broker the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan that will guide development and conservation in our part of Eastern Riverside County for decades to come.



Buford served on numerous boards and committees including the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, the Coachella Valley Conservation District, the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the Mojave Desert Land Trust, the Living Desert, and the California Rare Fruit Growers, Inc. Governors Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jerry Brown both appointed Buford to the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Buford was very knowledgeable about the history of the Colorado and Mojave Deserts, and particularly about his favorite pioneer, Randall Henderson. Buford saved a portion of Randall's archive and was involved in the creation of the Randall Henderson Trail.

After retirement, he renewed his interest in birding and traveled extensively throughout the world. Buford lived life to the fullest, and the beauty of the mountains that surround the Coachella Valley is his

legacy that will live on for many generations.

To honor Buford and to keep his vision alive, a special donation fund has been created in Buford's name on the Friends of the Desert Mountains website at desertmountains.org. A memorial celebration, including a hike, is planned for Tuesday, January 17 in Palm Desert. RSVP at desertmountains.org.

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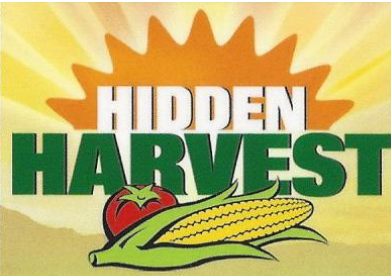
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