



The Hourglass

The glorious early days at the Shadow Mountain Club

Or as we kids knew it, the Shady Hill Casino!

I have raved so often about the wonderful, gentle exciting FIFTIES years I experienced as a teenager at the Shadow Mountain Club (SMC), that the powers that be at the HSPD asked me to tell a bit about it. Well, it'll be hard to cut down to "A BIT," but I shall try.

It was a PERFECT time for us teens from about 1950 to about 1958. At first, there weren't many of us kids in the desert—Joy Olson—Ole Olson's daughter, Brooks Firestone, Dave Stuard whose parents had a great little shop at the SMC, a hand full of kids from Indio & PD and me—but on the loooong weekends and most especially, Easter week—it used to be called that, remember?) there came dozens upon dozens of kids. That vacation week we all had the joy of the gorgeous big pool, the slides, volleyball, badminton, tennis and even a simple jai alai game. But most of all, we talked and talked and laughed, shared stories, swam, got tans, laughed some more and really got to know each other. (And the girls who went to girls' schools, got to know about boys and what made them tick!!!)

Many of those boys came down from the Palo Alto area every Easter as they had grandparents who lived in the desert. We had days of just good clean fun, and WE ALL LOVED AND APPRECIATED THEM! NONE of us "did" drugs nor knew about them, drank, cussed, had cell phones, iPads, laptops, Kindles and ETC.! IT WAS BLISS AND FUN AND COMFY AND NICE! HOW LUCKY WERE WE! AND HOW SAD THOSE DAYS ARE NO LONGER.

Lest I forget, we also had wonderful evenings of dancing with each other, ours and others' grandparents, GREAT grandparents, little sisters and brothers and locals—to the music of those dearest of folks, Art and Dottie Todd. They truly made the ol' SMC come alive and swing!

The club offered us kids years of lessons on life tho' I doubt many of us realized those benefits at the time. It was such a gentle and kind time, and I venture to say that many of us are still locked into those days!

'Til next time, Duchess

—DTE

Event Calendar

Grand Reopening Celebration at the Firehouse

On Saturday, October 6th
10 AM to 3 PM

Museum Hours

10 AM to 3 PM
Monday, Wednesday,
Friday, Saturday

The Museum reopens on
Monday, October 1, 2012

POSTSCRIPT

I've just gotten wind of the terrible news that there is an effort in town to destroy my uncle Randall Henderson's glorious pueblo building in which he printed The Desert Magazine. That beautiful building has always been, by far, the most wonderful one in Palm Desert; it is a true historical "monument" tho' sadly hidden now by modern buildings on both sides. Why does everything have to be modern? That old building goes back to the late 1940s, and it represents the finest of old Palm Desert! PLEASE think twice about destroying such a unique relic!

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A few months ago, when agreeing to be nominated to this office, I had no idea of what lay ahead. That is still the case, but I'm sadder and wiser now. Our city's recent decision regarding the Desert Magazine building has affected me greatly. Our community is about to lose a "pearl of great price."

Owning land and the accompanying property rights are very important in our culture, but are there responsibilities accompanying these rights on the flip side of this coin? I believe there are.

Our neighbors and friends, the native American Cahuilla tribes, are of another culture. Land and everything found upon it,

including themselves, are seen differently. The protection and proper use of lands provided for them, rather than ownership of land, is their cultural foundation. In other words, they are responsible to the land. There is a lesson to be learned here.

We have much going on this season. Please stop by or call the firehouse often to keep in touch. October starts off with a new "watch dog" in our front yard, so to speak. We hope to see everyone on Saturday, the 6th at 9:45 AM, for his dedication, and our opening reception at noon!

It is my hope that we can all work together this season, and that our efforts will be well spent in furthering our stated goals.

—Don Graybill

YESTERDAY'S HAPPENINGS WITH TODAY'S IMAGINATION

"What's this all about?" you may ask. It's how local artist/illustrator Ron Backer describes his love of painting by bringing to life early events, stories, and scenes, and making folks feel they could easily step back in time.

This is not a new direction for Ron. Starting in the plains of South Dakota years ago, this focus on the past in his art has been noticed and loved by many fans, his work purchased, awarded and appreciated in homes, offices and museums. He and his wife Elie are quite the team, having met when each was on a trip back to their home town.

Ron's 'Historic Artist' label is most appropriate here at the historic firehouse. Recently your board decided to purchase his 20"x 24" painting "Birth of a Town" following his generous offer to us, along with reproduction rights. It is our intent to recover our costs by selling copies and giclee prints of this painting, and ultimately raise much needed additional funds.

All images in this montage are found in our recently published book on Palm Desert's history, and they make a good pair. It's hoped that this 'written word/visual art' team will boost efforts in getting our story out there. "Birth of a Town" is scheduled to appear in two local showings of Ron's work this season, along with many of his other oil on canvas originals.

The Mission and Purpose of the Historical Society of Palm Desert (HSPD)

To preserve, record and provide access to its historical collections.

To relate an on-going history of the City through exhibits, publications, media, programs and events.

To support, with volunteer efforts, activities sponsored through the Society and co-sponsorship with other private and public agencies.

HSPD is organized as a non-profit corporation that supports its mission and purposes in a responsible manner. The Society cares for the materials and pieces in its possession as unique and irreplaceable objects of local history and strives to protect and preserve its collections for posterity.

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Newsletter

Duchess Emerson, editor
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Newsbits

Sad News: The Desert Magazine Building

This past June the San Diego-based owner and a local architectural firm presented plans, through the city's Façade Enhancement program, to make changes to the exterior of one of the most historically significant buildings in Palm Desert, Randall Henderson's Desert Magazine building.

The city's planning department determined that this architecturally-unique structure, its national-known magazine connection, and its city-founding owner were not of enough historical significance to qualify as a 'historical resource' under CEQA guidelines, and therefore was exempt from an environmental review. They recommended to council that the planned changes to the structure be approved. A few folks strongly urged against any "substantial adverse change in the significance of this historic resource," but planning department's recommendation of approval prevailed.

In 2008, when the city's new 'Cultural Resources' ordinance was being discussed in public hearings, the council's primary concern was protecting the property owner's rights, and that they voluntarily participate in the program. Responding to a request from the city historical preservation committee, the present owner said that he did not wish to participate in 2009, confirming this wish again in July 2012. Efforts are being made to work something out with the owner and architect.

The question some are asking is whether the exemption status claimed by the city is accurate. If not, then some of the planned changes should not be allowed.

This is the situation. What to do is the question. Your input is requested.

Walking Tours Along Portola

There's much to see in this part of town if you're up to taking an hour plus walk, starting at the old library, now the Portola Community Center. We prefer to keep the groups small, six people or less, and starting time is flexible. Give Ann a call at the firehouse, (346-6588) letting her know of your interest in a tour, and when a few are on the list, we'll arrange a meeting date and time, and off we'll go. Special access has been arranged at a few places, so take advantage of this opportunity to see

things up close, and without being in a hurry. Cameras are welcome. Call soon!

Our Side of the Fence

Perhaps you've noticed a change in the fence along the driveway at our firehouse. It's recently been subjected to the powerful stream of water coming from Brett's pressure washer, blasting off loose paint and revealing the natural wood partially hidden for several years. We're waiting for cooler weather to finish the job, applying a final coat to protect the wood while keeping the natural look. Thanks may be expressed to both former and present presidents.

Donations of appreciation so designated will be added to the 'Preserve the Fence Fund,' for that above-mentioned final coat. Any additional funds will be placed in the 'Birth of a Town' art fund, soon to be established. More on this coming soon.

Collection of Yard Sale Goodies

Through the efforts of Adele and her troop of gatherers, sorters, pricers and lay-away personnel, the bin is filling up with bags of like clothing, boxes of priced treasures, boxes of books and assorted donated items of great and not-so-great value. Item of great value are preferred, while most items are accepted. Preference is given to items NOT left over from three week-ends of private yard sales. Furniture is stored outside, so waiting until the sale is requested, if possible.

Stone Lined Ditch and Pipeline

There used to be a stone lined ditch that ran from Deep Canyon down to what was early Palm Desert. Do you have any information about this ditch or any pictures of it? There also used to be an old 4" steel pipe water line running out of Carrizo Canyon. I never knew where it went as what was left of it stopped short of old Highway 74. I believe it actually started at the spring I knew as "Hanging Gardens." There were about six lengths of pipe there for many years. Do you have any information about this pipeline or any pictures of it. Short notes to lengthy writings are all welcome.

— Harry M. Quinn

Business Members

We are fortunate to have the support of several local businesses. We encourage you to visit these businesses and when you do, please let them know that you appreciate their support of our Historical Society.

Backstreet Bistro

Casuelas Café

*College of the Desert Alumni
Street Fair*

Desert Map and Aerial Photo

Hidden Harvest

Jeff Frisco for Hair

Jillian's

Robert D. Reed, D.D.S.

Shadow Mountain Resort & Club

The Inn at Deep Canyon

Wayne Connor & Associates
