

Golden Nuggets

JANUARY 2007

SCHS Presents Collectors Night

Tuesday, January 23, 7:00 PM at SAMCC
551 Sequoia Pacific Boulevard

Our January "meeting" is a special Collectors Night, a chance for some of our members to haul out their private treasures, and share them with us. There will be no formal meeting—just a wondrous and varied one-night-only display. Whether it inspires you to begin your own collection or to clean out your garage is entirely up to you. But you won't want to miss this one. Here is a sneak peak at some of our collectors and their obsessions.

Blame it on her fascination with Saturday matinee westerns, 1950s and 60s western TV shows and a chance thrift store acquisition some years ago.

Mary Helmich has accumulated a remarkable collection of cowboy hat ashtrays. Most were produced between the 1920s and 1960s. Some are souvenirs marked with names of towns; others are advertising pieces for a company or an event. They represent



Sombrero ashtray. EBay

an array of traditional cowboy hat styles in metals and ceramics. All are great cowboy kitsch.

Drawn to sparkly, colorful rhinestones, 6-year-old Susan Ballew pried a half-inch square dark red rhinestone from the ring she received as a prize for being a cooperative customer at Groth's Shoes in Town & Country Village. With each visit to Groth's, she added another beauty to her collection. She was hooked! Her tastes in jewelry broadened over time. She'll be showing a collection of jewelry including some of her baubles made by Lisner, a New York manufacturer of very nice costume jewelry, mostly in the 1940s and 50s.

Research as an intern at the California State Archives sparked historian John Allen's interest in hydraulic mining. He began buying old post cards with scenes of hydraulic monitors ripping away at the earth. Then he added old prints, photos and stereo views as well. As time went on, he sought letters, legal documents, advertisements, ephemera, political literature, and technical reports. He often shows these to his college classes, but you can see these powerful images and artifacts tuition-free.

Not just "the baseball guy," Alan O'Connor will be sharing some of his other interests. He'll have a collection of historic Sacramento postcards illustrating the cityscapes from around 1900, including river and street scenes, public buildings, parks, old breweries, old ball teams, and shots of long gone hotels and stores. He's also showing memorabilia from Sacramento's historic Buffalo and Ruhstaller breweries, including bottles, trays, advertising signs, drinking glasses, cribbage boards, and a wonderfully aged wooden Buffalo Brewery barrel that he promises "will make your trip to SAMCC worthwhile."



Buffalo Brewery bottle dug up in Old Sacramento. California State Parks

Bill and Shirley Gaylord began collecting antique advertising trinkets and giveaways about 40-plus years ago, when they weren't all quite so antique. In the late '60s and early '70s Bill wrote a series of articles for the *Western Collector* magazine, dubbing these artifacts "advertiques," and defining them as "advertising novelties or trinkets over 40 years old, used to promote a product or company, and given as premiums or souvenirs, that have

a useful purpose in addition to that of advertising." Bill plans to display a collection of pocket mirror "advertiques."

Dr. Bob La Perrière will have a collection of masks representing Africa, New Guinea, South America, Mexico, Northwest Coast, Indonesia, Canada and the United States. He claims most were picked up stateside from flea markets, garage sales, and individuals who did the long-distance traveling. His collection reflects his interest in varieties of "cultural art" from Native American basketry and other art forms to masks and statuary.

And there's more—sad irons from Becky Caruthers, Grateful Dead memorabilia from Clare Ellis, military patches from Mory Holmes, antique toys from Shirley Hines, and school-related ephemera from Suzanne Hicklin of the Old Sacramento Schoolhouse. Last, and hardly least, the SAMCC crew is planning a display of artifacts that must be seen to be believed.

SAMCC Happenings

By Dylan McDonald



With the demise of a Sacramento icon, Tower Records, SAMCC staff are attempting to collect and preserve materials related to the store and chain. Due to the liquidation of Tower's assets, SAMCC was unable to obtain photographs or artifacts that document the business, particularly here in Sacramento. We are in the process of contacting former employees, music collectors, and other Tower aficionados about donations to SAMCC. We especially seek photographs, advertisements, signs, and other ephemera. If you can assist, please phone Carson Hendricks and/or Dylan McDonald at (916) 264-7583.

Senior Archivist Pat Johnson and the Sacramento State graduate students in her Archives and Manuscripts class recently completed their semester. Students met at SAMCC to study archival theory and gained practical experience arranging and describing 12 previously unprocessed collections. Now available for research, they include the Galt Independent Order of

Odd Fellows Collection, the Ernest "Pete" Hepting Collection (mainly baseball material), the AAUW - Sacramento Branch Collection, the Soptimist International of Carmichael-Fair Oaks Collection, and the C.J. Evans Collection (environmental reports of various projects throughout the county). SAMCC relies on students like these to help preserve donations and make them available for researchers. We appreciate the students' excellent work.

Back by popular demand, SAMCC's Open House will be held Friday, May 11. This year's theme will be Sacramento history as told through recorded sound—from garage bands of the 1960s to oral histories of prominent community members, to KFBK radio recordings of live broadcasts and programs. Mark your new calendars right now for this always enjoyable evening!

Gifts from Father Christmas

By Pat Turse

Dolph Gotelli, a.k.a. Father Christmas, shared some unusual Christmas images as he spoke to SCHS in December on Victorian Christmas traditions. Among the most memorable were a Christmas card showing an all-insect orchestra and another with woodland elves roasting a rat over a fire for their Christmas dinner. They illustrate the Victorian sense of humor and use of animal images. Another card showed a Christmas turkey and plum pudding with human-like arms and legs "marching" cheerfully into the dining room, being greeted by equally happy diners at the table.

Gotelli presented an array of card styles and subjects featuring the Christ child and other rebirth symbols, as well as more secular images—sometimes on the same card! A spectacular, two-sided, die cut card showed robins on one side and little girls with brim caps opposite the robins' beaks on the other.

Although the upper classes first adopted the Christmas tree idea, nineteenth-century magazines promoted the family gathering at Christmas as a middle class tradition. Some graphics showed touching contrasts between rich and poor at Christmas. It was all fascinating fare.

Glancing Back While Moving Forward

As we come to the end of 2006, I would like to reflect on the past year and on some of my hopes for the Society's future. The previous 12 months have been very busy.

Last January, Joe Moore brought information and resources to our attention about African Americans in the Gold Rush. In February, Dr. Richard Orsi shared insights he gained while researching the Southern Pacific Railroad for his book, *Sunset Limited*. We especially enjoyed sharing our program with the Leland Stanford Mansion docents at the Mansion. In March, the Society presented its annual Awards of Excellence. Presentations



followed a dinner held at the Sacramento Valley Medical Building and a chance to see the Medical Museum. We congratulate past award recipients and look forward to our 2007 awards in March. April brought a look back at the 150-year history of the Sisters of Mercy in Sacramento with Sister Katherine Doyle. Dan Winkelman followed in May with a program on the development of electric power and streetcars in Sacramento. He also gave us a special tour of the historic Folsom Powerhouse. In June, Mas Hatano offered a rare look at the stories of the Japanese who were involved in railroad building in the West.

In September, after a summer hiatus, we had a delightful sunset barbeque and tour of the historic Old City Cemetery with Dr. Bob LaPerrière and Alan O'Connor. The Society celebrated National Archives Month in October with our speaker Dr. Barry Pateman, editor of UC Berkeley's Emma Goldman Papers project. Our annual "Taste of History" moved to the Towe Auto Museum in November. For the first time it involved a host of historical and cultural groups from around the region. It proved a huge success. (We plan to visit the California State Railroad Museum this year.) In December we met Dolph Gotelli, otherwise known as Father Christmas, for a retrospective look at Christmas.

Your calendars will be full once more with the Society's plans for 2007. Please check your

newsletters and join us. Bring a friend!

Having now served on the Board of Directors for the past six years, I have gained an insider's perspective of the Society. As this is the New Year, I have made a wish list for improvements for the Society in 2007. They are to:

- ◆ Resolve our problems with the U.S. Post Office Bulk Mail section. It should not take 3-4 weeks to deliver to a local address!
- ◆ Keep the Society's website up-to-date with current newsletters, while establishing an accessible archive of past ones.
- ◆ Expand the Society's outreach on its website with downloadable, informative stories for replaying on iPods.
- ◆ Republish many of the Society's out-of-print *Golden Notes* in digital form on our website.
- ◆ Create web page activities with Sacramento-related history content for young historians.
- ◆ Officially formalize the Society's relationship with the Sacramento Archives and Museum Collection Center.
- ◆ Organize the SCHS archives for future historians.

If you have other ideas, please let us know by emailing us at info@sachistoricalsociety.org or by calling 916-264-7073.

You have my best wishes for a Happy New Year!
- Mary A. Helmich, President

Our Imperfect Bulk Mail Delivery System

Well, it happened again! If you live in the 95816 area code, as about 25% of our membership does, you received your December newsletter on the 16th. It was mailed November 29. Every other local area got their newsletters between December 1 and December 5. This is not the first time this has happened, nor the only zip code affected. One route supervisor says that bulk mail sometimes goes to Berkley, Oakland, or elsewhere and sits for weeks before it comes back for delivery. We will be working on this later this month. If you know other groups who have had this problem, email me at newsletter@sachistorical.societyorg. -Editor

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GOLDEN NUGGETS

Pat Turse, Editorial & Layout
Email newsletter@sachistoricalociety.org
Contributions Deadline: 20th of month

Please deliver by January 9, 2007!

Out & About

Date	Time	Event	Place & Contact
January 20 Saturday	10 AM - 4 PM	Gold Discovery Day at Coloma Commemorate James Marshall's Jan. 24, 1848 world-changing find. See new museum exhibits, visit historic structures, and learn historic crafts.	Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park. On Highway 49 at Coloma, near Lotus Road. Phone 530-295-2170. www.coloma.com/calendar/discoveryday/
23 Tuesday	7 PM	SCHS Collectors Night Private collections of our members are sure to create shock and awe. Be there!	SAMCC , 551 Sequoia Pacific Blvd., off the Richards Boulevard exit of Interstate 5. Phone: 916-264-7073.
February 3 Saturday thru 1 April	11 AM - 4 PM Tues. - Sat.	Take Me Out to the Ballgame Our own Alan O'Connor hosts an extensive baseball exhibit on Sacramento's rich baseball history.	Folsom History Museum 823 Sutter St., Folsom Phone 916-985-7288
27 Tuesday	7 PM	Sutter's Fort Archives Steve Beck will give us an insider's view of the Fort's fabulous collections.	SAMCC More details next month.