

CAMEL



TRACKS

Year 2008

Phone (707)745-5435 email: info@beniciahistoricalmuseum.org website: beniciahistoricalmuseum.org

Jan./Feb.

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Membership

The mission of the Benicia Historical Museum is to engage the community in the evolving history of Benicia and the Arsenal and their influence in the development of our country.

The Museum complex is the center where history is seen, enjoyed and preserved. Through exhibits, events and educational programs we enlighten the public about the history of this unique city.

Revised and adopted 2006

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION RETURNS TO BENICIA

The Benicia Historical Museum in cooperation with The National Civil War Association presents the third Annual Civil War "Winter Quarters"

Conference February 9th and 10th, 2008, at the Benicia Historical Museum in Benicia. This is the only Civil War conference of its kind on the West Coast.

The wide array of topics presented by historians and

scholars will focus on both military and civilian subjects of mid-19th century America. These will include the impact of the California volunteer regiments raised during the war, California culture and society before and during the transition into statehood, United States Army development and occupation in the Bay area, relationships between men and women at the time, and a study of women who disguised themselves and served "in the ranks",

Looking back and looking forward, you can learn steps in genealogy to trace your Civil War ancestors, Photography buffs will appreciate the techniques and products of the mid 19th century photography experience, especially colloidal photography. Another workshop will be devoted to elements of historical accuracy.

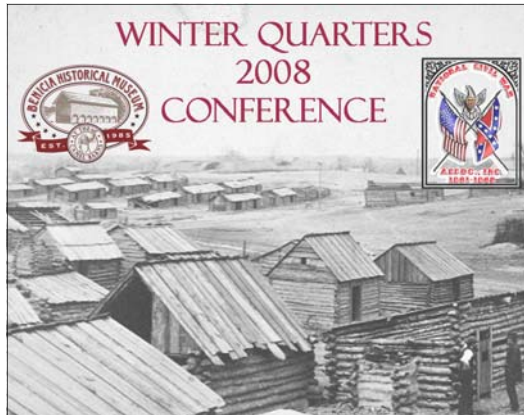
Clothes for men, women and children, adaptations of uniforms made by the soldiers, and proper mourning clothes will be workshop topics. Rations, mess furniture, tableware and food, how to manage spectators in the camp, and the set and elements of a parade give us a look into more everyday events.

Speakers will be nationally known Civil War Scholars Les Jensen, Juanita Leisch, Mark Sekela, Kay Gnagey, Don Smith, Bill Dunningway, and will include Benicia residents Dan Dempsey and Dr. James Lessenger, who will focus on the history of the Bay area, the Arsenal and the Camel Barns.

This event is for Civil War enthusiasts and those who wish to learn more about this time. Events will be held at the Camel Barn, Clocktower and Benicia High School. You will want to register early for this very worthwhile weekend.

Cost for the two day event is \$40. with a special \$20 fee with valid student identification for all students.

For further information contact www.ncwa.org or www.beniciahistoricalmuseum.org



The Museum Welcomes our New Members

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Michael & Donna Baldwin

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Kasma Kelley

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Andrew & Sally Kiname

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Diane Smikahl

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Rev. Tony Ubalde, Jr.

*

Thelma Worthen

*

Barracks

*

AMPORTS

Museum Docents

*

Brad Boel

*

Gloria Lambousy

*

Larry Lauber

*

Jim Lessenger

*

Donna Luksan

*

Phyllis Maliki

*

Elizabeth Murphy

*

Lorraine Patten

*

Ron Rice

*

Bruce Robinson

Thanks Soroptimist for the new Microwave oven for Stone Hall!

From the Board President



As we begin the New Year with high hopes, we are in need of strong input from our membership. Having short and long range planning in place our focus is now to put together a development committee that will assist us in achieving these goals. We are committed to making our Museum the Jewel of Benicia. Preserving our past and preparing for our future is no small task. My focus this year is to build the development committee with a clear focus on our long range needs. Please contact me with your input as we begin to form this most important committee. . We currently have talented members who graciously give their time, energy, and resources to helping us achieve our daily needs. But we need you. The first thing we need you to do is to fill out and return the enclosed questionnaire. Thank you.

*David Galligan
Board President*

Curator's Corner



Creating an exhibit can be a challenging task. Benicia's history is so vast that at times it is difficult to choose a subject for an exhibit. The Museum collection of photos, artifacts and support material is what we have as a resource for our exhibits. Also, research is a large part of telling the story of a particular person, event or place.

In September of 2008, the Museum is planning to open an industrial exhibit in Building #7. We are now in the planning stage and will need articles and stories about our industrial history. The tanneries, canneries, creameries, railroads, shipbuilding, Pacific Mail, farming, dairies and many others will be covered in this exhibit. We will need items as well as stories from those who worked in these industries or knew someone who did.

There is such a resource of people in Benicia that we feel can assist us in creating this exhibit. Tell your friends! Call Beverly at the Museum 745-5435

*Beverly Phelan
Curator*

From the Director

HAPPY NEW YEAR



The carolers are resting their pipes and the strains of Auld Lang Syne are trailing off very rapidly with the realization that there is work to be done. The round of Crab Feeds are about to start and the slate of the year is waiting to be written on – what will be the message that we convey? We, here at the Museum, have high hopes. There are a number of things that we expect to bring to fruition.

At this time next year, we expect to have refurbished Stone Hall with new bathrooms, acoustics and lighting and Spenger Garden in full bloom. You have been privy to these plans for some time. However, what has been going on, perhaps slowly, but progressing at a steady pace is the conversion of Building #7 into a museum exhibition area. Work will soon be starting on ADA compliance projects. The area has been cleared of superfluous materials and storage has been moved to the bunker. It is our plan that only artifacts will be stored on the upper level of Building #7. Other things have been or will be removed. We have cleared out a lot of unusable things. There were several hundred civil defense barrels and lots of old but not archival materials that have been unearthed. This work has been accomplished in most part through the efforts of Jim and Leslie Lessenger, Roberta and Jim Garrett and Chuck and several Elders from the Church of Latter Day Saints who have assisted Chuck in various jobs around the complex.

We also are in negotiations with the National Parks Service for a loan of the stern of the Galilee which we have hoped to get

for a number of years. With that comes the plan for a restructuring of the education area behind Building #7. It will be necessary to build a structure to protect it and the bow, which we already have, along with the Scampo, our Monterey fishing boat, given to us by the late Joe Gaerske. We will utilize the full 100 feet that is ours behind the building. We will need to resurface which we have already planned to do. The bow will be displayed with the stern. The education area will be increased considerably.

This exhibit will tie in nicely with the Industrial Exhibit which we plan to open in Building #7 the first week of September when we will have the Hunley. We may even have the old Quarry cleaned up and ready for exhibit. We will probably have the dedication of the garden and the grand opening of the exhibit, and hopefully the Galilee at the same time. Sounds like party time, doesn't it?

It takes a lot of planning, juggling and money to do all these things. We are weighing our options on all fronts. We intend to move forward and for the time being have not included the Powder Magazine as there are major projects involved in getting it ready for regular admission, including ADA compliance. We are eager to get it under way.

In order to be prepared for opening new exhibits, we are recruiting and training docents. If you are interested in becoming a docent, please contact us. We need at least fifty trained docents by September. Our next training is on January 12th at 10:00 a.m. and will include junior docents, high school students who may or may not have affiliation with a service organization. Service hours are available.

*Ann Hansen
Executive Director*

6th Annual Love Poetry Contest



February 14th is the deadline for poems submitted to Benicia Historical Museum's annual love poetry contest. The contest commemorates the 1806 California romance of Concepcion Arguello and Nikolai Rezanov.

"The love poetry contest is open to everyone," said Benicia poet laureate Joel Fallon. "Love comes in many flavors. The contest doesn't focus on the love story of Concepcion and Nikolai. We're looking for poems about romantic love not limited by time or space. This year we are introducing participation by young poets of High School age."

Details and rules for submitting poetry are found on Fallon's web site at (<http://www.poetrymatters.150m.com/index.html>) and on flyers available at the Public Library, Book Shop Benicia, Café Voltaire, Java Point, and Roseanna's Bakery (on Military).

First Place winner will have his/her name inscribed on a perpetual trophy at the Benicia Historical Museum and receive a plaque. Second and third place winners will receive medals. All contributing poets will receive one free copy of a poetry chapbook containing their poem.

For additional information contact: Benicia Historical Museum or Joel Fallon at 746-6070 (joelfallon@aol.com)

California First Love Story



The historic love story of Concepcion and Nikolai will be told on Saturday, February 23 at 2 p.m. in the Benicia Historical Museum's Stone Hall. The Museum and the Benicia Public Library present this free program to the public each year to recall the story that began in 1806 between Concepcion Arguello, daughter of the San Francisco Presidio's commandante, and Chamberlain Nikolai Rezanov of Russia. After Rezanov's untimely death, Concepcion never married, joining St Catherine's Convent in Benicia, where she is buried. There will be a screen presentation of excerpts from the chamber musical by Candace Forest "Viva Concha-Rose of the Presidio". The poetry readings will be followed by the announcement of the poetry winners. This year there will be a representation of Spanish music. There will also be Spanish and Russian food available.

AND SO THEY WERE MERRY



Melody Singers, Christmas trimmings, lots of good food, prizes and jovial visiting – what more could we ask. It was the second year that the Benicia Historical Society and the Benicia Historical Museum banded together for their annual holiday parties. One would look long and hard and not find a face that was not lit up with holiday cheer.

The hall, without question, was decked out. Kasma Kelley spent the entire preceding week decorating. Though she ran out of time and perfectionist that she is was unable to accomplish

all she wished, it was breathtakingly beautiful. The beautiful decorations were a great backdrop for the Melody Singers, who will probably be back by popular demand for next year's party.

Who could rate all that food that the tables were laden with – ham, turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy and all the individual dishes brought by members. I would suspect that there was not one unpopular dish provided. It was a great meal – a great party but it was but the beginning.

The day before the party, there was a lovely wedding in the hall – ceremony and all. Parties followed one after another as the weeks before the holidays unfolded. The lady employees from the city had their party here along with corporate merrymaking in days that followed. It was a season to be jolly!



ARE YOU INTERESTED?

Your membership in the museum tells us that you are interested in some way in what we are doing here. Is it that you want to know about Benicia's history? Is it that you want Benicia's history to be preserved and shared? Or are you just a great history buff, interested in all history?

Do you know that Benicia was pivotal in the communication and transportation from north to the Bay Area and on down? Do you realize that manufacturing in the state of California had its origins here? Did you know that the leak of "gold in them thar' hills" happened in Benicia? Did you know that Benicia was important in every war from the Civil War through the Korean War? Did you know that Benicia was once known as the Athens of the West?

If you find any of these facts interesting, if you wonder about any of Benicia's history, you are interested. Wouldn't you love to share that interest with your fellow citizens and visitors to the area? You have a wonderful opportunity to steep yourself in all that is and was Benicia. Sign up for training as a docent and spend one, two, three or more days for a few hours each month – what your schedule allows – and become a part of a great organization intent on creating a superior museum for the community.

The next training is January 12th at 10:00 a.m. Call the office and ask to be included in the training. High school students are welcome. We are forming a Junior Docent program and welcome your participation.

BE ALERT

There are so many things that happen here at the Museum. Throughout this newsletter, you will find various activities that you can take part in. There is docent training, there is a flyer for the upcoming concert by the Black Irish. There are events such as the After Hours of the Chamber of Commerce. The coming Winter Quarters is an exciting event that we hope many of you will take advantage of. There is an upcoming military exhibit that is being worked on at the present time. All the things that go on here will need volunteers to help. Keep your eyes and ears open for opportunities.

MUSEUM HOSTS CHAMBER

As a member of the Benicia Chamber of Commerce, the Museum has the opportunity to host the members of the Chamber in their After Hours mixer. We often take part in the mixers that are held at various members' locations. It is a good opportunity to meet other members and get to know the players in the various businesses and organizations. We will be hosting the event on the 17th in Stone Hall from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.



Congratulations to our "Taste of Pasta" Winner!

Martino Oviedo receiving the First Place award from Board President David Galligan and his wife Gloria for his "Pandrata Bacon Parmesan Cheese" pasta dish



Calendar of events

WINTER QUARTERS CONFERENCE 2008

Benicia Historical Museum
February 9 & 10, 2008

BLACK IRISH BAND IN CONCERT

Saturday, February 16, 2008
Stone Hall
8:00 pm

CALIFORNIA FIRST LOVE STORY

Benicia Historical Museum
Saturday February 23, 2008
Stone Hall

WOMEN'S APRECIATION DAY

Monday, March 17, 2008
Stone Hall

FOUNDER'S DAY FIESTA 08!

Saturday, May 17, 2008
Clocktower

HUNLEY IN BENICIA

September, 5,6&7, 2008
Powder Magazine

MOLLY'S REVENGE IN CONCERT

Saturday, October 25, 2008
Stone Hall
8:00 pm